

**PROJECT: PANKO YOUTH CENTER**  
**Tamale, Northern region, Ghana**



**Newsletter**  
**PANKO Project**



**June, 2021**

**SPECIAL ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER**

**MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR**

PANKO Youth Center is extremely glad and grateful to be celebrating our 1st anniversary, marking a significant milestone achieved in serving less privileged children living in rural communities in the Northern part of Ghana, which we are extremely proud of.

Education can serve as the foundation for children to achieve a brighter future and for communities to thrive. This belief in the transformational power of education is what drives us at Panko. So our immediate objective is to support school-going rural children who are below 18 years to succeed in school and beyond.

These children are carefully selected from low-income families in rural communities and are subsequently assessed and placed at appropriate cluster levels. They come to the youth centre everyday for two hours after school to participate in activities surrounding education, Nonviolent Communication, sports, recreation and social skills—laying the foundation to lead self-determined lives. We are currently engaging 64 children in our programs, which include; Literacy and Numeracy, Homework support, Feeding, Life skills, Sports and Recreation.

I realized with deep gratitude that our work and growth is possible because of our founders for their compassion and love for children. Also, I cannot think of any better moment than today to celebrate and appreciate my team for their hard work, loyalty and diligence. My team has been an essential part of the project's journey and success. Special thanks go to our donors and the handful of sponsors who have been the core of our finances, and the many interested individuals who engaged us with genuine love and interest as we tell people about Panko Youth Center.

We are happy to share with you our success stories on our exciting journey to finding better lives for children in Northern Ghana and I am hopeful you will join us in this life-enriching and fulfilling journey.

With Sincere Gratitude

Mubarak Alhassan

# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OVER ONE (1) YEAR OF OPERATION

## Beneficiary Children Now Use After-School Hours Productively and Safely

Each child spends an average of 10 hours per week or 40 hours per month or 480 hours per year studying after school at the Panko Center. Before this project, the kids were not engaged in any learning of a sort after school hours.

Also, each child spends an average of 4 hours per week or 16 hours per month or 192 hours per year in sports and recreation at the Panko Center. Before this project, the kids did not have safe places and equipments to play with and have fun. Spending their time at the center keep them away from danger and other social vices.

## A School Dropout Went Back to School

**Asana** is a 12 year old girl, who is an orphan and was a school dropout so obsessed with PANKO. She lives with her aunty in a village, about 400 meters away from PANKO. According to her aunty, Asana dropped out of school because she did not like school and prefers to play about in the community. After enrolling Asana in PANKO and having a discussion with her and the aunty, Asana is back to school and she is doing well both at Panko and her school. The teachers are reporting improvement of her literacy skills and other learning subjects.

## Improved Physical Training, Football and Volleyball Skills

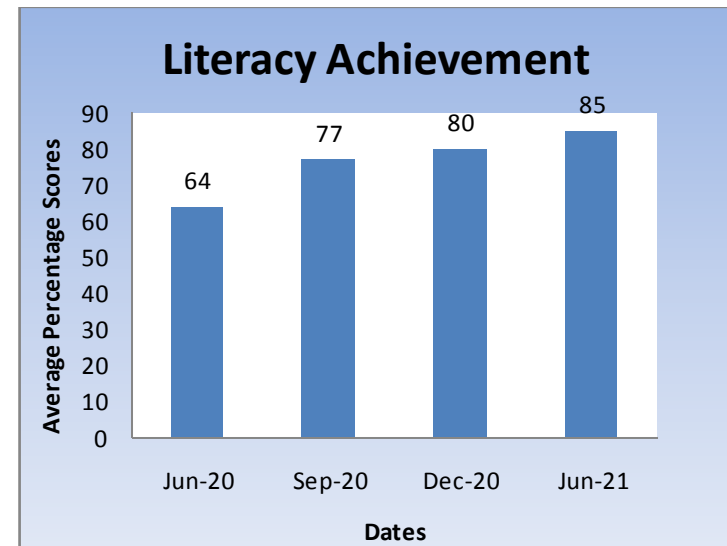
Panko serves as an avenue for the kids to keep themselves entertained and in keeping fit through sporting and indoor/outdoor activities. The kids' sports skills and level of physical fitness have increased through sports training. They learnt a number of fitness exercises, football and volley ball skills. Some of them can now lead their colleagues in physical training sessions. The kids are learning to play a new sport (volleyball) for the first time. About Twenty (20) of the children learnt basic rules and can now play volley ball.



## Improved Literacy

Project staffs and volunteers have reported improved literacy, and life skills ability of the children. According to them, the project had helped the rural kids to improve on their literacy skills, considering where they were at the inception of the project and how they had improved within this one year period was amazing.

Teachers teaching in public schools, where the kids attend school, have also noticed that Panko beneficiary children in their classrooms have surprisingly improved in academic performance, raising their confidence levels in the classroom and are more likely to stay in touch with their studies and school.



## Improved Life Skills

Most of the kids adhere to schedules at the center. Almost all the kids participate in the cooking and have learnt some cooking skills. Also, most of them can now make liquid soap with little guidance. They have also been introduced to gardening of vegetables and planting and caring of trees.





## Feeding Program Promotes Gender Equality

Our Feeding Program not only provides a healthy meal for the kids, but also contributes to achieving the SDG 5—Achieving Gender Equality. The culture in Ghana is deeply entrenched with patriarchal norms where boys are usually not given tasks in cooking and other household chores. Cooking is mostly assigned to women and girls, creating much burden on girls, contributing to their poor performance in school. Panko is bridging that gap by distributing the workload equally for both girls and boys in our feeding program. The kids are put into groups and assigned days to cook their own meal. The boys, unlike in their homes, are given the chance and they even lead their groups in the cooking. This is a way Panko can help inculcate the sense of equality in the kids and contribute to achieving the global goals.



## Improved Communication Skills

The ability to communicate effectively can be described as an essential life skill in the 21st century skills for kids. Most of the kids at Panko youth center used to be shy and lack confidence. Now from our observations, Some of them can now speak in public and are motivated to participate in group discussions and activities. Also, The kids are beginning to understand peaceful conflict resolution and show some respect to their peers and adults.

## Improved Nutrition and Hygiene Practices

We have observed improved hygiene practices through regular hand washing and personal hygiene lessons. Because of this, we use more of liquid soap at the center, so the kids are taught how to make liquid soap and we now produce liquid soap at the center for our own use.

At Panko, the children are provided with nutritionally balanced afternoon meal; either as a lunch or to supplement food provided at home and improves the children's food intake. Even though providing afternoon meal is not the sole determinant of the children's nutritional status, food consumption in terms of quantity, quality, and diversity, plays an important role in determining nutritional status and provides a conduit, linking the afternoon meal to nutrition outcomes.

## SELECTED TESTIMONIALS FROM STAFF, PARENTS AND CHILDREN

### Testimonies from Parents

Parents have also noted improved academic performance of their wards. Others also reported increase in positive behaviors including respect for others and improved personal hygiene practices.

“Though I am an illiterate, but I have noticed my child has developed interest in reading and school. Even one of my literate neighbor visited me one time and heard my son read and my neighbor past a positive comment about my son's reading ability.” – **Hamdu Imoro**

“...my child used not to greet me in the morning and surprisingly, he started to greet me every morning, and when I asked him who taught him that, he said he learnt that at Panko” – **Shani Yahaya**

“I also noticed, on several occasions, at dinner time where one of my daughters who is a beneficiary of Panko project admonish the younger ones to wash their hands before eating.” – **Alimatu Adam**

“...because of the project, a lot have changed in my daughters, I have observed a change in their behavior and an improvement in their ability to read and write. When they come home they say what they have learnt and even practice some of them.” – **Fouzia Yakubu**

## Testimonies from Children

The children had reported that their reading skills had improved and had learnt other new things at the center. Find some selected testimonies from the children below.



*“I wasn’t good at reading but when we came to Panko, my reading skills have improved. I am very happy!”*

**–Amina Abdulai**



*“I was a school dropout and Panko picked me up and I am developing more interest in school once again. I was not good in class and since joining Panko, I have learnt to read and that gives me confidence. I am back to school.”*

**–Asana Abukari**



*“Before coming to Panko, I did not know the sounds of the alphabets but now I have learnt all the sounds and can now better than before.”*

**–Muhsina Sulemana**



*“Panko is really helping us. Things I didn’t know, I have now acquired them, Panko gives knowledge and what I like about Panko is how the teachers give us more attention and time to learn.”*

**–Abdul Razak Mbangba Hamdu**



*“I like to be at Panko because of how we learn, play and have fun.”*

**– Yahaya Iddrisu**



*“The reason I like coming to Panko is that, here we play and cook together, we play volleyball and football and also play with the swing and others.”*

**–Latifa Abdulai**

## Project Achievement from Teachers Perspectives

Project staffs and volunteers have reported improved literacy, and life skills ability of the children. According to them, the project had helped the rural kids to improve on their literacy skills, considering where they were at the inception of the project and how they had improved within this one year period was a amazing. Also it had served as an avenue for the kids to keep themselves entertained and in keeping fit through sporting and indoor/outdoor activities. Some aspect of this project also contributed in the kids learning and living more hygienic lifestyles than before. The staff also recounted how the project had helped to expose them to new experience and techniques in handling kids. They concluded that their ability to tolerate and manage kids had improved massively than before. Teachers teaching in public schools where the kids attend school have also noticed that Panko beneficiary children in their schools have surprisingly improved in reading and general academic performance, raising their confidence levels in the classroom and are more likely to stay in touch with their studies and school.

## Covid-19 Situation In Ghana

Ghana recorded its first two cases of **COVID-19** on 12 March 2020, when two infected people came to Ghana, one from Norway and the other from Turkey. On 15 March, 2020, government banned all public gatherings and closed down schools and a lockdown and restrictions of movement was temporary established in the two most populated regions of Ghana (Greater Accra and Ashanti). Later, there were border closure and travel restrictions.

On 15 June 2020, final year students in all school levels returned to their respective campuses for few weeks of classes and final exams. Finally, in January 2021, Government of Ghana reopened schools after 9-month of closure.

Early this year, the UN-partnered COVAX initiative, which aims to provide equal vaccination for all, sent 600,000 doses of Astra Zeneca vaccine to Accra. Ghana became Africa's first nation to receive vaccines from the COVAX facility and on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, the vaccination exercise began against the virus.

As at 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2021, Ghana recorded a total of 95,476 COVID-19 confirmed cases with 93,269 recoveries with 1,412 active cases and 795 deaths. However, 852,047 vaccines have been administered. In Northern Ghana, a total of 1,657 COVID-19 cases have been recorded, 1,625 recoveries and only 3 active cases. Despite having only 3 active cases, the children are educated in hygiene and other self-protection measures to prevent the spread of the virus. .

## SUPPORT US

We actually need your support in various ways and every support we get, takes us one step closer to achieving our vision of a world where all children have opportunities to develop their skills and talent and the chance to reach their full potential.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION Contact the following persons

**Christiane Wimmer**

Email: [wimmer.christiane@t-online.de](mailto:wimmer.christiane@t-online.de)  
Tel: +49 1728238465  
Germany

**Gitta Zimmermann**

Email: [dr.gitta.zimmermann@icloud.com](mailto:dr.gitta.zimmermann@icloud.com)  
Tel: +49 15222625317  
Germany

**Mubarak Alhassan**

Email: [mubarakstateman@yahoo.com](mailto:mubarakstateman@yahoo.com)  
Tel: +233 243976453  
Ghana

Website: [www.projectpanko.com](http://www.projectpanko.com)