

Report on visit to Amaudo – 23rd-31st January 2017

Aims of visit:

- Training of Helping Hands teachers
- Training of Project Comfort workers
- Review of Workshop activities in Amaudo 1
- Follow up of issues raised during December visit
- Assess maintenance needs and assist with the implementation of maintenance programme
- Review water and sanitation project
- Discuss current funding needs and projects with Very Rev Kenneth

The visit took place between 23rd and 31st January 2017. As always, we were warmly welcomed by staff and residents, some of whom had only been picked from the streets the previous week. During our stay there were also 13 student psychiatric nurses staying from Calabar, which were replaced by another set of 15 just before we left. We also had the opportunity to meet with the Bishop of Uzuakoli, Chair of Amaudo Board, Most Rev Rapheal Opoko, Archbishop of Umuahia, and the Prelate of Methodist Church Nigeria

1. Helping Hands School

- Sarah carried out training with the 6 teachers at Helping Hands School on the topic of "Play in a School Setting" – the workshop covered 1 day with 2 follow up visits to the school on other days.
- The training was well received and the staff thanked Amaudo UK for their interest and encouragement
- Very Rev Kenneth explained the need to keep the school running as its closure would lead to huge issues with the community which in turn would impede Amaudo's work. There remains a great need for a school in the community but currently the number of pupils is too low to raise enough income to pay for its running costs. Teachers had not been paid their December salaries.
- I talked at length with the headmaster about the need to increase attendance and we discussed various strategies he could employ to achieve this. There are various things he has said the school requires but these are secondary to the need to be able to raise enough money to pay staff salaries. Very Rev Kenneth reiterated that Amaudo (and therefore Amaudo UK) is only responsible for supporting the primary section of the school – there is a small secondary section which was established despite the difficulties maintaining the primary section, as such Very Rev Kenneth has explained to them that his priority is to support and sustain the primary section at this time.
- Currently they do not have enough teachers to teach each class separately so at least 2 teachers are teaching 2 classes at a time, side by side.
- The school is keen to have the school bus repaired for excursions but Very Rev Kenneth is clear this is not a priority and should only be considered once the school have built up reserves which allow them to consider these "extras"

2. Water Project

- The water project is virtually completed in Amaudo 1. The faulty taps have been replaced which has eliminated the leakage at the standpipes.
- To ensure that there is a constant supply of water, it is proposed to replace the original tank as the tower on which it is placed is in good condition.
- There is still work to do at Amaudo 2. In discussion with Very Rev Kenneth, it was agreed that there should be some additional standpipes in the centre so that there would be one standpipe between two houses as is the general pattern in A1. Because of the problem with the tower framework at A1 as mentioned in Kate's report and the

additional piping required at A2 because of the location of the borehole, it is possible that there will be insufficient funds to fully complete the project. Very Rev Kenneth will put together an additional funding bid for consideration by the trustees of Wealdstone Methodist Church.

3. Review of Workshop at Amaudo 1

- Residents attend workshop every day from 10-1pm. There are currently 2 teachers (who are also house-parents and therefore residential staff). Sadly the other workshop teacher who travelled in each day from Okopedi died during our stay.
- Very Rev Kenneth has clear plans for the workshop this year which include:
 - Moving to a model where all workshop teachers are also house-parents and all house-parents have a role in teaching in the workshop. This has already begun and other house-parents have been asked to consider what skill they could bring to the workshop. This will also remove the problems of recruitment and retention of workshop teachers who are very part time and also provides improved continuity of care for the residents
 - Reviewing the resources in the workshop based on the skills these house-parents can bring and updating and restocking as required
 - Changing the environment in the workshop with the introduction of a radio and possibly a TV to make it a more lively, interactive environment for both residents and staff
- Sarah facilitated a discussion amongst all house-parents about these changes (although they had already been introduced to the ideas). This went well and they were very receptive with good ideas about the development of the space and workshop sessions. There was lively debate about how residents engage or otherwise in the activities and plenty of discussion about how this could be enhanced and improved, led by the staff themselves. We were also able to think a lot about using themselves as thermometers – if they enjoyed the workshop times then it was likely the residents would be too. This really helped them to think through how things could be improved.

4. Maintenance project

- Initial site plans for Amaudo 1 and 2 had been developed using the Google Earth images and these have been added to during the week and have been brought back to be updated and refined. This will allow all buildings to be clearly identified when carrying out assessments.
- A major purpose of the visit was to look at the practicalities of the employment of a Maintenance worker. Using the template drawn up by Kate and Dan, a thorough evaluation of a residents' house was undertaken to assess the level of works required.
- The nature of the houses means that the works required fall into four sections – brickwork and concrete repairs, electrical works, carpentry and painting. Having discussed this with Very Rev Kenneth, it became apparent that this was too wide a range of skills for one person. There is already a carpenter, Monday, on site who is willing to undertake the necessary tasks. John O is an electrician living locally who was trained by Amaudo as part of the Millennium project and would be best for all electrical and painting tasks. Chief Francis from Mbukwa has been involved with brickwork and concrete works in Amaudo almost from the beginning. It would cause significant political problems if this work was given to anyone else.
- House 2 – a four roomed building – with some significant issues was identified by Very Rev Kenneth as the target for the renovation project to be undertaken during the week.
- The blockwork and concrete repairs were almost completed with some minor filling in still to be done.

- It was agreed that all light switches, power sockets and light fittings would be replaced irrespective of their condition and this was achieved. Low energy light bulbs will be used in future.
- The carpentry works were not started but have been fully discussed with Monday and will be undertaken shortly.
- Some of the rooms have been painted – the paint is already purchased and this will be completed once all other works have been completed.
- £140 was passed to Very Rev Kenneth for start-up costs for the maintenance project. A rechargeable Bosch drill and bit set plus various other tools were presented to encourage those participating in the work by JP.

5. Maintenance – the way forward

- Based on the assessments and works carried out and on discussions with Very Rev Kenneth, the employment of a single maintenance person is not practical or politically possible. Work would be allocated to relevant person as identified above.
- Health and Safety is the major driver and it was agreed that the electrical works would continue as quickly as possible, with the priority within that being the external lighting on both sites.
- The replacement of roofs will also be a priority and all existing funds held by AmaudoUK should be forwarded to Amaudo as soon as possible. It is estimated to reroof houses in Amaudo 1 costs in the order of £1880, the Amaudo 2 houses being less as the buildings are smaller. There are also other buildings in Amaudo 1 and 2 that require reroofing such as the clinic and guesthouse.
- Costs will be obtained for the replacement of the existing windows per house. There are some metal window frames on site awaiting installation. Priority will be given to those houses where repairs are urgent
- The assessment forms have been redrafted based on the experience of using them and these will form the basis of an ongoing record for each building.
- Very Rev Kenneth will oversee the programme of works with the Coordinators of Amaudo 1 and 2. A monthly update will be provided on progress.

6. Furniture and fittings

- New bed frames and new foams with washable covers have been installed. Furniture such as cupboards, storage for clothes, table and chairs for residents are either in poor repair or missing entirely. Very Rev Kenneth will identify and cost a suitable metal cupboard and hanging rails will be installed.
Externally, it is proposed to remove the concrete seats – some are in poor repair, gaps between the seat and the house wall allow infestations of insects. It is proposed to replace these with wooden benches.
- Mosquito nets are not fitted as standard as when new residents arrive, there can be issues with their use due to the lack of familiarity.

7. Project Comfort

- Sarah held a training session for Project Comfort Fieldworkers, Co-ordinator and a visiting Physiotherapist on managing the child with multiple disabilities. This went really well and was led by the questions the staff themselves had about these children
- Following the training we were all able to travel to Okopedi to see one such child who was profoundly disabled and whose family kept locked in the house most of the time. The family were very welcoming and we were able to have a good teaching session, talk at length with the family and return a few days later with the carpenter to design a special chair for the child
- Reinforcing the training with immediate practical experience was extremely valuable

and feedback was very positive

- It is apparent that Project Comfort is thriving in Ohafia and Isiukwato Local Government Areas but has somewhat stagnated in Bende LGA. This is in part due to the success of the volunteer fieldworker programme which has been implemented in Ohafia and Isiukwato and not in Bende
- The co-ordinator has consistently shown a lack of initiative in moving the project forward or managing the fieldwork and to this end Very Rev Kenneth is planning to develop the leadership of the project by recruiting a new physiotherapist to the team. The project previously had a physiotherapist who visited occasionally but was incredibly busy and this has not proved very satisfactory
- The physiotherapist's remit would include managing and developing the fieldwork, assisting fieldworkers with cases where needed, and establishing the volunteer fieldworker model in Bende LGA
- We had a long discussion about the ongoing request for training on managing complicated cases and this was felt to be reflective of a lack of understanding about those children who will not "get better", largely by the co-ordinator
- It is proposed that David Cundall who is visiting later this month from NHCP will build on the training done during our visit
- Very Rev Kenneth reflected that a conference for PC staff was not a priority at this time and he would like to use the remaining Vitol money for the establishment of the physiotherapist role. I would echo the wisdom of this having spent time with both him and the project.
- We discussed the issue of the Special School at Ntalakwu in depth. There have been a handful of children pass through the school but not for long periods. There have also been problems with parents leaving their children and then disappearing. There are currently 2 teachers seconded by government but they had not returned from Christmas break during our visit so we were not able to meet with them. Children who do attend currently only pay for food. No school fees are charged as the consistency and quality of education are not adequate. The location remains a great challenge to both staff and potential pupils
- Very Rev Kenneth plans to leave the school as it is for another year whilst actively seeking new pupils. He is very realistic and knows this may not make any difference – he plans to review the situation in 1 year.

8. Further Training for Very Rev Kenneth

- Very Rev Kenneth has explored training opportunities mentioned in previous report further but the course is no longer running and they themselves have suggested a course being run in South Africa, aimed at mental health workers in Africa. The course involves 3 weeks residential training in Cape Town and then 2 years online learning, the second year being a research project

9. FINANCE

9.1 Inflation

- Major issue facing Amaudo is that of inflation, currently running at over 18%. This is severely impacting on the costs of rice and other food and on fuel. Diesel is now 275 Naira per litre compared with c160 Naira before Christmas. All indications are that inflation will continue to rise at the same rate over the coming months.
- Material costs for the maintenance programme will also increase.
- The current exchange rate is helpful in the transferring funds to Nigeria and should be taken advantage of pending any reversal because of action by the Nigerian government.
- Fortunately, Amaudo has a healthy reserve position which will help to act as a buffer in the short term. Because of the pressure on State and Local Government budgets,

grants will not increase to match the inflation rate – if anything, grants may be reduced.

9.2 Transfer of funds from AmaudoUK

- To enable projects to move forward as quickly as possible, it is proposed after discussion with Very Rev Kenneth that all donations received in each month in restricted funds should be transferred to Nigeria by the middle of the following month. AmaudoUK should not hold back any monies in restricted funds unless specifically requested by Very Rev Kenneth to do so. This regular cash flow will enable the various programmes and projects to run more smoothly.

9.3 Potential fundraising idea

- The naming of individual buildings was discussed both to recognise the contribution by individuals and to celebrate those who have played a major role in the development of Amaudo. It is also suggested that buildings could then be adopted by individuals or groups who would take some responsibility in fundraising to keep the building in good condition. It would also be possible to provide such individuals/groups with an annual update on the progress of residents living in a particular house.

10. Comms

- It was clear that the training carried out by Dan in December had been well received and appreciated by staff
- After reflecting on some of the suggested developments of the training, Very Rev Kenneth had reservations about individual members of staff sending photos or stories directly to AUK, via WhatsApp or FB. His main concerns centred around the need to ensure all stories and photos were fitting of Amaudo's image and also around the issue of data protection. He was keen that no photos showing residents faces, or those of anyone who had not expressly given consent, were used on social media due to the possible consequences of relatives seeing them
- He suggested that he educate staff to submit photos and stories and news of events and activities to him, he will review and send on as many as possible to us
- We discussed the way AUK hopes to approach twitter, FB and website news over the coming months using a planned calendar – Very Rev Kenneth requested that he was prompted 2 weeks before the next month starts to inform him what the topic is and he will then gather relevant recent images and stories to supplement anything we already have here

11. Recycling and rubbish disposal.

- There are various items left after the burning of rubbish which are becoming a problem such as tin cans and light bulbs. Very Rev Kenneth has a plan to dig rubbish pits behind each block so that all rubbish can be burned and the residue retained – this will help to prevent rubbish blowing around the site. There are also regular cleanup days when all residents and staff are responsible for cleaning their own areas.
- Very Rev Kenneth is also thinking about introducing some form of recycling where materials can be put in specific containers and made available to anyone who could use them. A potential small source of income for Amaudo.