

# Friends of Adaklu

## Annual Report

2023



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# Friends of Adaklu Annual Report ~ 2023

## 2023's Inspirational Thoughts

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the 2nd best time is now.



Not the mission of a moment, but of generations.



## Motivations and Lessons from 2023



Helping the community take the long view.

### **Invest in People not Buildings**

Although we are just as keen to increase enrollment rates in Adaklu's local school rooms as we are to bring health care to Adaklu's communities we know that a beautifully built classroom or clinic, without a qualified and well-supplied staff, are simply just rain shelters. It is critical to be aware of the quality of what you are serving up in the way of people and services because those are what really matter to those whose needs we aim to meet. At FOA we put our funds and efforts into always pushing for improvements with the addition of tools and dedicated, well-trained staff. Superficial improvements, such as brick and mortar classrooms and desks and benches, while important and absolutely welcome, do not address the underlying issues of rote learning, poverty, malnutrition, lack of knowledge and the social and gender barriers that affect education and health care in Ghana.

### **No One Wants to be a Refugee**

Nobody wants to strap themselves to the undercarriage of a train and leave everything and everyone they love behind, in the hope of finding a better life. Refugees the world over would be ecstatic if they could build happy lives where their families and their stories are. FOA's primary goal is to help the people of Adaklu build satisfying, rich lives where they live. We work to make it possible for them to stay home surrounded by their families and their histories, and to use their ingenuity and ever-present entrepreneurial skills to build lives where they feel safe and fulfilled.

### **Investing in Small Steps can Make a Big Difference**

One of the barriers that stands in the way of improving health care and education is generations of illiterate parents who have not benefitted from either, but who have managed, through sheer ingenuity and perseverance, to make their way anyway. While they may pay tribute to the value of education it is hard for them to value it or to imagine the huge change that it might make in their child's life, so when they need a child minder or an extra hand in the fields, they pull their child out of school. While not ideal, there is good news here, because that child can now read where his parent cannot, so we have to count that as a success. Perhaps that child's child will finish high school, attend a trade school, or perhaps even go to university. At FOA we have chosen to take the long-term view and to measure our successes in the accomplishments of the people we serve and work with. Every word that child learns to read is a step towards a brighter future for themselves and for their community. It's slow going but it's steady and it's towards strong, resilient, self-determining communities.



What sort of future do they imagine for themselves and for Ghana?

### **Avoiding the Danger of the Single Story**

We also need to be aware of what Chimamanda Adichie calls the 'danger of the single story'. What she means is that if we continuously hear only a single story with only a single perspective about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding that makes us blind to other perspectives. Many Ghanaians are fixated on the USA and are keen to adopt its ways without fully understanding that the perspective they are getting from American movies and TV programs is completely untrue and unrealistic. The danger of this was brought sharply to my



attention by a young man who told me he wanted to go to the USA because they have superheroes there.

What we want is for our children to have wide horizons, so we need to make sure they get the multiple perspectives that provide them with fresh stories and invigorating approaches to the lives they want to build. FOA accomplishes this through partnering with other like-minded organizations from around the world. Coming in 2024 will be a series of international on-line conversations that will broaden our students' scope of what the world is all about and how they may fit into it.



Mannequins in Ho's marketplace – a silent but invasive message.

### **Education Revamp**

FOA is also aware that Ghana's education system is struggling with how it teaches students. It is in the first steps of revamping itself from one of rote learning to one that is self-examining, open to the uniqueness of the young people in its programs, and able to reflect the strengths of Ghanaian values, arts, culture, and history back to its young people.

Education is ultimately about transformation and in order to be fully successful it needs to see students as individuals and to encourage them to explore and define their identities, the things they believe in and the things they strive for. It also needs to impart the value of respecting the rights of others to have their own ideas, dreams and ways of going about things. These are big goals for the current education system, but making room for imagination and critical thinking skills can only help Ghana foster the talents, passions, and entrepreneurial skills of its students, thus making it possible for them to get to where they want to go and become who they dream of being.



Recognizing and respecting each child's individuality is difficult but necessary to the success of the child and of the country.

### **Charity Doesn't Work**

Several times when I have been in Ghana, and in the midst of celebrating one of our community's achievements, someone has come up to me and said, "You brought them a health clinic, or a farm, or a bicycle. What did you bring me?" What goes unrealized and unsaid in this encounter is that what we really brought was the opportunity to change your life through your own efforts.

FOA knows that free help has no value. The proof of that can be found all over Africa; there are an endless number of donated pumps that no longer work, countless latrines that are not maintained, abandoned school buildings that house animals or are used as storerooms. They are not looked after because the community has no investment in them. If you work, you have ownership. In Adaklu



communities and individuals work together to build a brighter future for themselves. Adaklu is where they build lives, and they must have a stake and a say in those lives.

FOA's motto, A Hand Up, Not A Handout, captures my disillusionment with charity in a soft way. Charity is humiliating, belittling, dehumanizing, and reeks of the failure of the recipient. It is also a form of colonization and of control because it rarely comes without strings attached.



Our shirt says it all.

I believe that Africa needs to save itself in its own way. It is immensely rich in resources and in unique ways of coming at things that have not yet been tainted by the stains of the western ways that are collapsing all around the world. Africa has much to teach us, and its innovative, untried problem-solving skills may yet provide solutions that are not only ineffable to the first world but also unimaginable. Instead of trying to change them into us let's help them become more of themselves and see where that takes all of us, after all we already know where our path leads so why do we want to go down the same road. Perhaps we need to shift our perspective from saving Africa to letting Africa have a go at showing us new ways of being and seeing that can lead to new ways of coming at our problems and uncovering new solutions.



### Arresting Teen Pregnancy – A Brain Busting Problem

Sadly, in Adaklu, as in most parts of Ghana, cultural norms make teen pregnancy acceptable and often expected. In this deeply religious culture babies are seen as gifts from God, even though the often unmarried, child-mother has little means of taking care of, feeding, clothing, and educating her child. The fathers, frequently also little more than children themselves, are also completely unprepared to assume the responsibilities of fatherhood and disappear. The epitome of this conundrum is that young women trying to escape poverty, or a violent home, see pregnancy as a way of engaging a male partner to be their savior and rescue them from the poverty and abuse of their parental homes. All these young women end up doing is replicating the poverty cycle and sinking themselves deeper into lives that lack education, health, and income.

This problem is exacerbated by the lack of sanitary protection for menstruating girls who often trade sex for sanitary pads and by the lack of concern by community elders, leaders, and even teachers, who undervalue the young women of the villages and fail to advocate for respect of their body boundaries.



Who can you turn to when sexual abuse is seen as normal in your community and even teachers and police can be abusers?

Uncoupling violence and power from masculinity is difficult but not impossible.

The teen pregnancy problem has led FOA to do a lot of head scratching and we have decided on a program that encourages Adaklu's youths to plan their pregnancies around their goals.

In 2024 we will be initiating the FOA DREAM TALKS where our students will meet successful people from around the world who will discuss their life's goals and

trajectories with them. We are hoping that their stories will inspire our kids to understand the huge impediment having a child at a young age is to achieving their ambitions. We want them to think before they act so they can finish their education, earn an income and set themselves and their children on a path toward healthy, productive lives.

Another issue frequently found in Adaklu is that children of low-income families often become adults without receiving the love and attachments they need to become healthy, caring adults able to care for their own children in a loving, supportive way. Putting off pregnancy will reduce the number of children born into the despair of poverty, will reduce the number of mouths to feed and will make it easier for families to provide for the children they have thereby ensuring their survival.



Age, residence, literacy, and menstrual cycle knowledge are the key determinants of adolescent pregnancy. So, education is not just the key to their employment future but also to preventing the early pregnancies that trap young women in the poverty cycle.

Families are the weft of the tapestry of society. Ghana should look for ways to support every life and make sure it is rich, healthy, and able to contribute. Providing educational opportunities for young women, helping them become economically stable and helping them prevent teen-pregnancies will go a long way towards reducing the number of children dying from malnutrition and lack of medical care. It will also reduce poverty and prevent sexual abuse and the trafficking of children.

Taking on teen pregnancy is a big challenge for FOA but one we are willing to undertake for the sake of the lives, born and unborn, that are at stake.

### Putting an End to Period Poverty

Adolescent girls are the most vulnerable and marginalized group on the planet. They face the double whammy of being female and young; they are the last ones to be educated and are subject to child marriage and early motherhood. Period poverty contributes to the inequality these girls face. Menstruation supplies are expensive, especially for economically challenged families like many of those found in Adaklu. Without a safe, sanitary, and dignified way to manage their periods, both the health and education of these girls are at risk.

A while back FOA received a donation on behalf of a beloved mother stricken with Alzheimer's disease. Known as Alma's Gift this very generous donation was used to buy reusable sanitary pads for 100 girls in the Adaklu school systems. Not only did Alma's Gift enable the girls to stay in school during their periods but it also protected them from sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies.



Some of the recipients of Alma's life-changing gift.

While on the surface this gift may seem purely practical, it has the power to dramatically change the lives of many of Adaklu's young women who are so desperate for sanitary protection that they trade their sexual selves for sanitary pads. Having their own, reusable, sanitary pads puts them in the driver's seat giving them control of their bodies and their lives. It is strange to think that something as simple as a sanitary pad can be culturally transformative, but it is and we have Alma's Gift to thank for transforming 100 lives by giving these young women a safe and dignified way of dealing with their menstrual issues.





**We're so Proud that....**

### **Mimi Clinic is Now the Mimi Regional Health Centre**

Hooray! We did it! Ghana's Ministry of Health has upgraded our beloved, Mimi Clinic to the Mimi Regional Health Centre. This is in recognition of all the effort, money, equipment, and resources FOA has poured into the clinic.

Of course, the highest accolades must go to the Mimi RHC's tireless staff whose superhuman efforts provide the highest possible health care available in the region.



**After years of hard work, the Mimi RHC is finally living up to our dreams.**

### **Nunya Village – Come for a 100% Ghanaian Experience**

In just 2 years Nunya Village has grown from an idea into a functioning, fun-filled reality. In the spirit of marrying culture with creativity, and entrepreneurship with sustainability, Nunya Village has already started meeting its goals of preserving culture, providing youth employment, and boosting the local economy.

The Kpafoe Clan headed by Togbe Senyo IV donated the 1.5 acres of land for Nunya Village to FOA in the hopes we would use it for a social enterprise that would benefit their community. Other community members also chipped in - Christian Atti, who is an Elder and a member of the Kpafoe Clan, donated over 25 African Palmyra trees for the construction of the bead and Kente cloth buildings. Mr. Atti is a true friend to FOA and demonstrates the strength of our ties to the community. He is passionate about the development of Adaklu's youth and communities and is always ready to make donations as well as support FOA in bringing development to Adaklu by harnessing the talents of the youth.





Nunya Village's 3 goals are:

- 1) Create youth employment
- 2) Preserve culture
- 3) Bolster local economy



Super proud, young entrepreneurs with their first, hand- made beads. They will make these beads into jewelry to be sold locally and on-line.

Once the land was secured FOA Policy Advisor, Robert Tornu, took the helm by funding the purchase of building materials as well as sponsoring 9 students, and our wonderful Stella Kudah (FOA Ghana Director), in a glass bead making workshop. They learned the whole process from start to finish and are now making beautiful beads which they string together with cloth beads to make necklaces, earrings, keychains, bracelets and headbands.



The structure of the 2nd hut is in place.

Nunya Village is built using traditional methods and materials and will resemble a typical village in Adaklu.

Visitors can make jewelry, stamp Batik, cook, carve, dance, make pottery, weave, build a drum and then take a drumming workshop with a master drummer. They can also learn about local farming methods and crops, as well as the animals found locally.



We're getting there.

The crafts produced at Nunya Village will be sold to tourists, as well as in hotels, tourist bureaus, and on-line. We are very proud of our bead making venture; a sustainable way of protecting our environment and preventing climate change and of turning a problem into profit and economic security for the people of Adaklu.

It is FOA's intention to turn Nunya Village into the go-to tourist attraction in Adaklu. Tourists will come to try their hand at making their own Ghanaian arts and crafts, or cooking Ghanaian food the Ghanaian way. To help them along, specially trained arts facilitators and crafts people will be there to offer assistance and talk about the history and cultural significance of the crafts they are making.

It is anticipated that the impact of Nunya Village will extend past Adaklu and into Ho (the closest city) because the tourists coming to Nunya Village will need places to sleep and eat, giving the whole region an economic and cultural boost and bringing much needed employment opportunities to the people of Adaklu.

Here's to Adaklu's young entrepreneurs (Akpe na wò! Èwò nuku ñtò) and to Robert Tornu and Stella Kudah, who know how to make dreams come true.



Glass and cloth bead earrings made by young arts facilitators at Nunya Village.

### **Good Life Centre is Already Doing Good Work**

From start to finish it took 4 months of hard, steady work, under Stella's watchful eye, for FOA's Good Life Centre to come into existence. Built on land gifted to me by Stella and Robert, and with funds donated in honour of my wonderful Mum, Dr. Helga M. Haberfellner, the GLC is already the buzzing hub of online learning, as well as Stella's snazzy, new office. FOA sponsored students, and their friends in the Tsrefe community, pitched in to build our beautiful headquarters and community hub. They even helped to level the floors before the masons cast the cement.

The Good Life Centre features a large conference room outfitted with a custom-made table, a kitchen, a storeroom, a reception area, washrooms, Stella's office and a spacious rooftop deck that catches the breeze and has a beautiful view of Mount Adaklu. It is the bricks and mortar manifestation of FOA's commitment to the people of Adaklu. We're here to stay!





**The Good Life Centre, in all its purple glory, is a standout building in the community.**

### **FOA Finally has a Set of Wheels**

FOA is now the very proud owner of a beautiful 4-wheel drive Toyota, Tacoma truck with a double cabin and an extended, covered truck bed. Having our own wheels means Sterling-Moss Stella can go anywhere she needs to go whenever she wants to without having to rely on motorbike taxis. In its short time with FOA the truck has already made frequent trips to fetch students, books, bikes, office supplies, equipment and furniture, and Helga and Paul (it's very comfy and has air conditioning). Thanks to Dr. Helga M. Haberfellner for making this, so very necessary truck, part of her legacy.



**With her new set of wheels Stella is no longer at the mercy of bike-taxi drivers who often find Adaklu's roads too arduous to navigate.**

## Bikes Improve Education

Less walking more learning!

That's the goal of FOA's Pedal to Excellence Program, which had its best year so far thanks to Berkeley, California's Academy School; their walkathon raised enough funds for 100 refurbished mountain bikes which were donated to students who walk more than an hour to school each way.

These refurbished bikes are critical to a student's success; students who have the option of cycling instead of walking long distances to and from school improve scholastically because they arrive less tired and are, therefore, better able to pay attention in class. They also do better because they have more time to study at the end of the day. And even though the bike is donated to one child it often conveys 2 or 3 to class, because cycling that way is lots more fun.



FOA's Pedal to Excellence Program doesn't just transport children to school; it conveys lives into the future. That is why it is supported by a workshop on bike care and repair for each recipient, as well as by a monthly maintenance plan.

Our deepest gratitude to The Academy School for working so hard to help the children of Adaklu reach their potential.



## Partnerships

A large part FOA's success stems from its ability to create strong, lasting partnerships. Our partnership with the Academy School of Berkeley, California, means that 100 children got bicycles this year. And FOA's partnership with the African Library Project put books in our libraries and our joint efforts with Crosscause Charity and with NAWA put a roof on the Mimi Clinic, while our partnership with the 5 North Project brought 30 computers to Dawanu's Library and Research Centre.

Our latest partnership with The Give Right Foundation and the Irvine School of Medicine will see professors of medicine making yearly visits to train staff across Adaklu and Togo, as well as donating life-saving medical equipment.

It is one of our goals to become a portal for NGO's looking to work in Adaklu - a place where NGOs come when they are looking for a project or a partner; that way we can fill in each other's weaknesses, grow stronger together and have a wider reach. Hats off to our partners. Thank you for walking with us on our journey.

## The Give Right Foundation Partnership is Underway

FOA owes its Policy Advisor, Robert Tornu, an enormous vote of thanks; it is due to his determination and extraordinary negotiation and facilitation skills that FOA has forged perhaps the most significant partnership of its young life. This immensely important and decisive partnership is with The Give Right Foundation and California's Irvine Medical School who will be sending a team of doctor/educators to Adaklu annually to train the Mimi RHC's staff, as well as healthcare givers from around the region and in Togo, to use the Butterfly Handheld Ultrasound Device. This revolutionary technology, combined with the training provided by Jean-Paul Sewavi, Dr. Frederick Heath, and their team, provides not only a gigantic change in the way maternal medicine is practiced, but will likely also bring about social change in the way children are viewed in the community. For the people of Adaklu the arrival of this wonderful medical team has an impact equivalent to that of man landing on the moon; it is such a giant step forward that it is hard to fathom how much of a game changer it actually will be.





## **Dance Competition Leads to FOA Becoming UN Ambassador for Child Safety**

A well-rehearsed troupe of dancers made up of FOA sponsored children **WON** the UN's My Body Is My Body International Dance Competition. With Stella acting as choreographer, instructor, and coach the students created a dance that combined traditional Ghanaian dance forms with a message about body boundaries. It was stupendously well received by the online community with 35% of voters selecting our dancers – not a small feat since there were over 300 entries.

Our dancers' success opened the door to FOA being invited to becoming an official ambassador for the MBIMB program. Our deep gratitude to Chrissy Sykes for coming up with this joyful, highly educational way of protecting our children and teaching them that they have a right to say no.



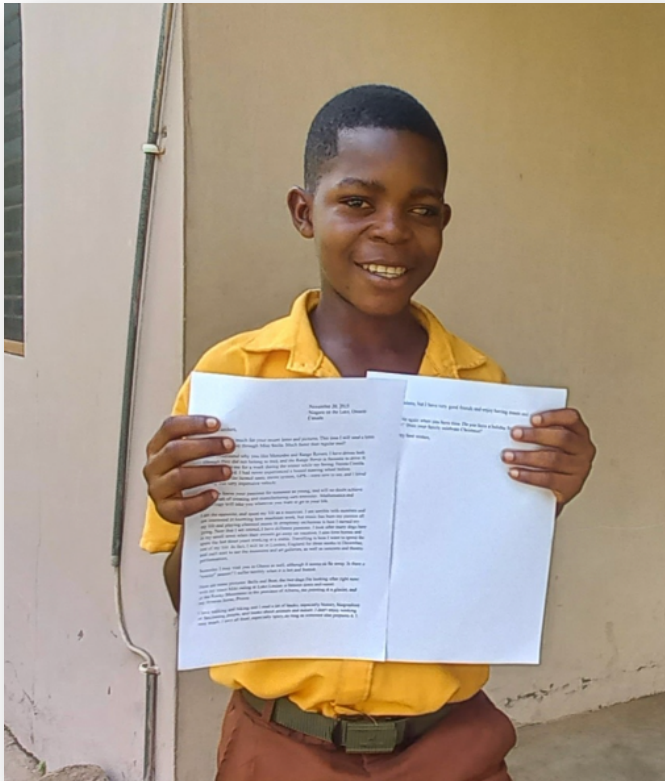
**FOA's World Champion dancers with their Winners' Certificates. Ya done good kids!**

## **The Academy School (Berkeley, California, USA)**

### **1) Pen Pal Program is Building International Bridges**

It's hard to imagine how much joy can be found in an envelope until you see the face of one of our kids getting a letter from their pen pal. It's now three years that the kids in FOA's Pen Pal Program have been writing to students at the Academy School in Berkeley, California. Sharing news about their lives, their schooling, and their dreams this program builds both personal friendships and cross-cultural bridges. It makes English literacy interactive and fun and encourages our students to perfect their ESL communication skills.

Perhaps this program's greatest strength is that it creates a way for students from starkly different cultures and economic statuses to get past their differences and see each other as human beings. Stella and the teachers at the Academy School should be lauded for what they have accomplished. They have put in a lot of time and effort to keep this program going because they see its value in building citizens of the world through mutual understanding.



Getting a letter from a friend means literally the world to our children.

Besides building international friendships FOA's Pen Pal Program also strengthens the English literacy skills so very necessary for success in the digital economy.

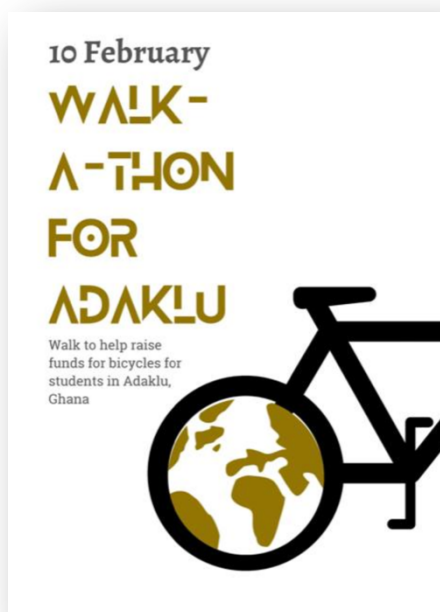
## **2) The Academy School Walkathon made 100 Bikes Possible**

Friday, February 10th, 2023 was a big day on two continents. Berkeley California's Academy School held a walkathon on behalf of students who have to walk more than one hour to get to school each day. The Academy's students also sold beautiful bracelets they made from donated Ghana beads (Thank you Robert!). All in all they raised close to \$21,000 CDN. That's enough to buy over 100 refurbished mountain bikes.

FOA's USA Communication's Liasion, Christina Randazzo, initiated the walkathon and was chief organizer. She said, "... contributing to the Pedal to Excellence Program ... [is] transformative for the ... [Adaklu communities], because when we support one child, we make it easier for the family to send another child to school, or for a parent or an older child to go out and work, shifting the economic stance of the village."

The Academy School, its teachers, and parent volunteers worked hard to make the event festive, fun and educational. They even decorated their school and the walk-a-thon route with balloons in red, gold and green - Ghana's colours! The Academy School really lived up to the walkathon's slogan - 'We walk so they don't have to'. Their generosity and efforts paid off big time and made an enormous impact in the Adaklu region.

FOA would like to raise its collective hats to all the teachers, students, families, parents and organizers who made this possible. You are truly amazing and we are deeply grateful.



### **3) The XYZ Math Program Provides On-Line learning for 2 Students**

Once again we owe a debt of thanks to Christina Ranfazzo for introducing FOA to the XYZ Math Program and for funding the participation of 2 of our students. XYZ Math is a 6 week on-line program that teaches advanced math concepts in a fun way and having 2 of our FOA sponsored students participate gives them the chance to improve their math skills, as well as experience on-line learning.



#### 4) The Girls Who Code Program Teaches Computer Skills

8 girls from Adaklu were welcomed as International Students to the “Girls Who Code” Program. This program offers free online summer computer coding classes for girls between 14 and 18.

And to be sure NOT to leave the boys behind, at the end of each day’s training session, the girls spend an hour sharing their newfound knowledge with selected boys. Not only will this help the girls internalized their new knowledge, but it will also make the girls the empowerers of the boys, thereby switching up the typical dynamic and building gender equality and respect.



#### United Planet Program is Opening the World to FOA’s Kids

FOA has joined the United Planet Program’s Virtual Exchange Group Project. This project invites students from around the world to get to know each other and share information about events and situations that affect their lives. Stella oversaw our first virtual meeting at the Good Life Centre where 20 students interacted, via Zoom, with students from Indiana, in the USA. The conversation was lively and covered subjects such as arts and culture, environment and climate, and equity and gender roles.

Quite a few parents showed up to watch their children participate in the ZOOM call and they were so delighted with what they saw that they stayed until the end and then participated in a discussion about the program’s worthiness. Many were so impressed they asked to have their relatives’ children join the program.



Children bringing their parents into the information age in FOA's Good Life Centre.

Stella was deeply proud of FOA's children and felt reassured that they could hold their own even though they come from one of the most challenged regions of the world.

### Waloyo

Once again we have to thank Christina Randazzo for connecting us with our newest partner, Waloyo, a South African NGO that helps young people acquire computer skills. Their year long, on-line program will provide training for over 100 youths across the Adaklu region. We hope to kick it off in 2024.

### FOA's Partnership with GRF Will Change Health Care in Adaklu

Super, super BIG NEWS!!!! It's official!!!!

FOA is the official partner organization of Lansing Michigan's **Give Right Foundation, Inc.** as well as the **University of California's Irvine School of Medicine.** Our stalwart Robert and Stella have worked hard for a long time to bring this all together and Woohoo, they have succeeded!!! The Give Right Foundation will be coming to the Mimi Regional Health Centre in January of 2024 for an Ultrasound Training Program for our staff. They will be bringing ultrasound equipment, which they will donate, to FOA for the Mimi RHC.

I think it is only right that I let our indomitable Robert tell you about it: "The purpose of our partnership is to enhance quality health care delivery through an innovative ultrasound training program... This collaboration will provide an opportunity for our partners to teach and train healthcare providers in ultrasound and to facilitate health screenings, which will empower the health care providers in the Mimi RHC and in other health care facilities in the Adaklu District communities.



In our quest to promote healthy living through quality health care, this program will build the capacity of health care providers by giving them the skills they need. The donation of the ultrasound equipment and training will help us address some of Adaklu's major health issues... We look forward to hosting the team as we work towards fulfilling FOA's dream of this partnership."

FOA is beyond excited about this collaboration. We want this partnership to be ongoing and hope that medical students from the Irvine School of Medicine will make annual trips to our wonderful Mimi RHC. Needless to say, this collaboration has the potential to transform medical care in communities throughout the Adaklu Region and beyond.

### **Madame Stella Kudah Promoted to FOA's Director for Ghana**

Friends of Adaklu is currently the most active nonprofit established and operating in the Adaklu District. It is small but has a big impact. Most of this is due to our tireless and endlessly determined Stella and in recognition of her herculean efforts on behalf of FOA she has graciously accepted the title of FOA's Director for Ghana.



Our stellar Stella at Nunya Village showing off our handmade glass beads.

Her hands are always full but never too full to help.

She devotes so many hours to FOA and works so hard at helping the communities we serve that you would never know that she has a fulltime job as a Jr. High School principal.

She is the definition of amazing.

## Education

### More Children Going to School

In 2023 four new scholars joined FOA's School Sponsorship Program. Thanks to the outstanding generosity of our donors and sponsors there are currently 78 FOA sponsored students, where last year there were 74. A few families left the Adaklu community and so forfeited their sponsorship, but we quickly transferred their sponsorship to other needy students.

Thanks to the continuing generosity of our sponsors there is 1 child in kindergarten, 18 students in Primary School, 34 students in Junior High School, 23 Students in Sr. High School, 1 student who graduated from the Agriculture Program at Cape Coast University and 1 student who graduated from a forklift training program. The number of students in High School is a marker of FOA's success because it is when the children reach puberty that they can be most helpful to their families and are often removed from school to help their parents. That 57 children from the community are in High School is a testament to FOA's efforts in, 1) imparting the value of education all round, 2) in helping their families attain financial security and 3) convincing the parents of the importance of educating girls.



Afeafa Fianyoy, who is in her 2nd year of Kindergarten, needs her headmaster's help carrying all her donated school supplies.

## **Donation of School Supplies**

School supplies are vital to our sponsored students' success so at the beginning of each school year Stella collects the sponsor-donated funds and heads to Accra to purchase school supplies, textbooks and backpacks, and then travels far and wide across Adaklu making sure every student gets exactly what they need to succeed in their courses that year.

The more communities we expand our resources into, the deeper into Adaklu Stella has to drive FOA's truck to make sure our FOA sponsored students in Kindergarten, Primary School, Jr. High School, and Sr. High School received their brand new, sponsor-donated school supplies.

Many of our students have never had anything new that belongs just to them so when Stella arrives with the school supplies there's lots of excitement in the community, not just because Stella is the bringer of gifts, but because the community has come to know, and welcomes, the value of learning. They recognize that the school supplies represent the future of their children, their community and their country. They have also come to see that education means financial security and that it makes it easier for their children to step into all the world has to offer. So, no wonder there are joy-filled celebrations when they see FOA's truck heading their way, its truck bed filled with textbooks and backpacks.

## **After-School Program**

A great favourite with all the participants, FOA's After-School Program fills learning gaps for those students who cannot attend school regularly. Every Sunday, without fail, Stella collects the children in FOA's truck and takes them to Dawanu where they spend the day reading, playing educational games and learning to interact as a team. At the end of the day, she drives them home.

The After-School Program turns Sundays into days filled with fun and excitement, devoted to nurturing the innovative and creative skills of both FOA's Education Sponsored and Pen Pal students. It's a great place to brainstorm and test burgeoning ideas.

Aside from basic education Stella takes advantage of the After-School Program to talk to the students about career options, how to choose a career that meets their aptitudes, and what steps to take to work towards it. She also talks to them about the power of storytelling and uses storytelling to teach moral lessons, and to try on 'what if' scenarios.





Many FOA sponsored students have to help their parents during school days. Missing out on schooling creates learning gaps. The After School Program helps these students keep up with their classmates.

### **The Reading Made Hobby Program Fosters Reading for Fun**

Knowing the magical, expansive power of books, our Stella decided to nurture a love of reading for reading's sake in our students. Because of our Reading Club and our After School Program, many of the children read quite well, but mostly they read for information. Stella decided that they should get to know reading as a hobby so that they would learn to LOVE to read and would turn to books for the magic they contain. The Reading Made Hobby Program is a huge success. Stella says, "All students both Primary and from the Junior High School living in and around the school community are invited to come to the school's library, pick a book and read."



Reading for fun inspires innovation, imagination, conceptual thinking, world knowledge and dreams.

## Adaklu Visit

In September and October of 2023 Paul, Stella, Robert, and I bumped along the muddy track to Adaklu in FOA's 4-wheel drive truck. Of course, we visited numerous communities and had meetings with the villagers, their Chiefs, and elders, as well as other stakeholders, to talk about how our programs were affecting their communities and to discuss next steps.

We also met with the wonderful staff at the Mimi Regional Health Centre where we caught up on the latest issues they were facing and celebrated the clinic's promotion to Regional Health and Training Centre.

The best thing about this year's trip was that Paul and I got to spend a lot of time with the young people at Nunya Village. They showed me how to turn recycled glass into beautiful glass beads and together we figured out how to make colourful cloth beads from cloth scraps donated by local seamstresses. It was wonderful to see the creative spirit fire in these young entrepreneurs and to see them get excited about the potential earnings their creativity could bring them.

Of course, it was also beyond wonderful to see Robert and Stella and to share stories of the past year's struggles and accomplishments. How Paul and I ever found such amazingly perfect partners I will never know, but I am so very grateful for all we have accomplished in the last 11 years.



**The FOA 4 together in Adaklu.**

## FOA Makes the NEWS

..... several times. It seems word is getting out.

### Bicycles

[https://www.myjoyonline.com/friends-of-adaklu-distributes-bicycles-to-enhance-access-to-education-in-adaklu-district/?fbclid=IwAR3y4mLi7CC4CazWVuZsiUCIrNzdzKxOFGztILy3\\_4ynAReznq5yq\\_UqRo](https://www.myjoyonline.com/friends-of-adaklu-distributes-bicycles-to-enhance-access-to-education-in-adaklu-district/?fbclid=IwAR3y4mLi7CC4CazWVuZsiUCIrNzdzKxOFGztILy3_4ynAReznq5yq_UqRo)

<https://www.facebook.com/helga.l.haberfellner/videos/1455583335252567?idorvanity=1392167074390195>

<https://www.facebook.com/helga.l.haberfellner/videos/1455583335252567?idorvanity=1392167074390195>

### Girls Who Code Program

[https://www.myjoyonline.com/friends-of-adaklu-roles-out-girls-who-code-programme-to-bridge-rural-urban-ict-gap/?fbclid=IwAR3plbWo2nvITm5UEY-TkXtOUEMw43e2\\_evWEG0x1I3g1Sz0V9\\_asBR7IA8](https://www.myjoyonline.com/friends-of-adaklu-roles-out-girls-who-code-programme-to-bridge-rural-urban-ict-gap/?fbclid=IwAR3plbWo2nvITm5UEY-TkXtOUEMw43e2_evWEG0x1I3g1Sz0V9_asBR7IA8)

### Mimi RHC and Give Right Foundation Partnership

<https://www.myjoyonline.com/friends-of-adaklu-to-improve-healthcare-delivery-in-adaklu-district/?fbclid=IwAR0WaCNeFoe19fC6ZDxK8FAF-HBMCadVmpDMYSXYOxc9JLORjrWgX08liRc>

### Nunya Village

<https://www.myjoyonline.com/friends-of-adaklu-initiates-project-to-preserve-ghanaian-african-arts-crafts-and-culture/?fbclid=IwAR00ejPD9EQGaGm-Tau4v9nrvdh8xoHvcJg2nX4vYdMDvIXoS6Zt4vfj0DQ>





## Things to Keep In Mind As We Head Into 2024

- Young, industrious adults are falling through the cracks because they do not have programs to support them in their efforts to succeed.
- Since Adaklu is located in one of world's most impoverished and challenged regions, climate change has an exaggerated impact shrinking natural resources and increasing people's struggle for survival. That's why our projects need to be bolder, long-term, environmentally friendly, and sustainable.
- Problem situations are opportunities for growth.
- Grassroots activity influences political will.
- We need to influence, inspire, and amplify.
- We need to be aware of equality, inclusivity, and fairness – so no one gets left behind; leaving people behind is dangerous, belittling, dehumanizing and destructive.
- We need to keep forming partnerships with like-minded partners, so we don't have to reinvent the wheel.
- We need to plant trees.
- We need to strengthen Stella's voice in Adaklu – education, mentorship, leadership, and training. A natural leader, she has tirelessly stepped up to the plate mentoring, facilitating, and encouraging the community to work towards solutions.
- FOA may be small but it is a significant and recognized Change Agent in Ghana. FOA has demonstrated tangible successes that have led to better lives in a better world and people have taken notice. As small as we are, we are a global example.
- Investing in people is more important than investing in buildings.
- Each FOA recipient is a potential ambassador and facilitator.
- We need to help people build happy, fulfilled lives where they live.

## FOA's 2024 Wish List

**Every year I create a** wish list that's based on where we have been, what we've learned, and where we want to go on our continuing journey with the people of Adaklu. It's a sort of 'next steps' and helps me stay focused on, and prioritize, our endeavours for the coming year.

**Here's my wish list for 2024:**

- Expand Mimi RHC's role in the community as a health care provider and training centre.
- Purchase items on Mimi RHC's wish list and improve efficacy and capacity.
- Extend our effectiveness by getting communities to help each other and share information.
- Figure out something to do with our biowaste.
- Increase Stella's power in the community as FOA's ambassador.
- Get more children sponsored.
- Create a foundation to fund FOA through the coming generations.
- Create a sponsorship program for graduated students and for young adults.
- Get more bikes for kids and health care workers.
- Finish Nunya Village and get on-line store going.

## Want to Help us Help?

If you're inspired by all that is going on, then here's how to help:

- 1) Sponsor a child's education. Your sponsorship pays for all books, notebooks, backpacks, pencils, pens erasers, rulers, After-School Program, etc. We ask that each sponsor do their best to sponsor their child until they graduate from High School. The annual fees are listed on our website: [www.friendsofadaklu.com](http://www.friendsofadaklu.com)
- 2) Buy a bike for a child or health care worker
- 3) Contribute towards the farms, and community and school gardens, to buy seeds, fencing, gardening tools and other supplies
- 4) Contribute towards the Dawanu Research Centre and help us buy books and software, and pay for an Internet connection
- 5) Contribute towards the further education of a graduated student
- 6) Contribute towards buying equipment and supplies for the Mimi RHC
- 7) Contribute towards the WIN Pastry Project and help us train more women and buy cooking supplies and utensils
- 8) Contribute towards the SHE Liquid Soap Initiative and help train more women and buy dispensing bottles for our soap
- 9) Sponsor a pioneering farmer
- 10) Talk to people about what we are doing
- 11) Work in the media? - you might want to do a story on what's going on in Adaklu.
- 12) Hold a fund-raising event.



1 of FOA's rules is 'leave no one behind'. It is currently popular to focus on girls, and justly so since they have borne the brunt in many patriarchal cultures, but we need to be careful not let the pendulum swing too far in the other direction; leaving people behind breeds the resentment, jealousy and rage that are at the root of the social change we are working towards.

Young men have hopes and dreams that deserve fulfilling, too. If we are deaf to them then we are losing the productive potential of half a culture and are throwing away the opportunity to find ways to build purposeful, self-reliant, communities.

## 2023 Financial Statement

All funds in Canadian dollars

<b>Education Sponsors</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Adaklu Education Program – K 1&2 \$175 X 1	175.00
Adaklu Education Program – Grades 1- 3 \$235 X 6	1140.00
Adaklu Education Program - Grades 4-6 \$250 X 12	3000.00
Adaklu Education Program – Jr. High School \$280 X 34	9,520.00
Adaklu Education Program – Sr. High School \$400 X 23	9,200.00
Adaklu Education Program – Agriculture School, Cape Coast University – (1 Term) 1 X 300	300.00
Forklift Training – 119.22 X 1	119.22
<b>Adaklu Education Program - Subtotal</b>	<b>23,454.22</b>
<b>Donations</b>	
Linda Rickwood – Sanitary Pads	72.41
Andre Cousy – Mimi Clinic	144.88
Rachel Bartels	20.00
Helga-Liz Haberfellner & Paul Andrew – Good Life Centre Construction	53,579.87
Helga-Liz Haberfellner & Paul Andrew – Toyota Truck Purchase	53,000.00
Christina Randazzo & Mum– Girls Who Code Program	2840.01
Christina Randazzo & Mum– United Planet Program	403.62
Helga-Liz Haberfellner & Paul Andrew – Nunya Village	600.00
MBIMB Winning Prize Money	399.29
<b>Donations - Subtotal</b>	<b>111,060.08</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>134,514.30</b>





**Thank You** for bringing hope into the world and for keeping it alive through your continued sponsorship. The funds you have given to the people of Adaklu have transformed their lives from ones of exhaustion and despair to self-reliance, pride and accomplishment. You are their champions, and they cherish the opportunities your donations have brought them. They will work unimaginably hard to maintain your faith in them and will never let you down.

We, at FOA, promise to keep working with Adaklu's communities to help them build rich, sustainable, fulfilling futures. With you by our side we will get there.

## We are the Friends of Adaklu



**Robert Tornu**

Policy Advisor & Director of  
Programming



**Stella Kudah**

FOA- Ghana Director



**Paul Andrew**

Chief Financial Officer & Media  
Officer



**Helga-Liz Haberfellner**

Founder & Executive Director



**Christina Randazzo**  
USA Communications Liaison



**Dr. Mimi Divinsky**  
FOA's Raison D'être