

*Ahotokurom, also referred to as Padre Pio Rehabilitation Centre, was set up 1983 near Cape Coast in Ghana as a centre of Christian hospitality for the disabled and disadvantaged. Friends of Ahotokurom support their work to provide health care, social care and education, encouraging personal growth and independence.*

## This is Vida's Story

Vida is 22 years old. She grew up near Cape Coast in Ghana. She is the youngest of five children. By the age of 13, both her parents had died and life was hard for her and her siblings. Her dream has always been to finish high school, however in 2012 she suddenly got high temperatures and skin lesions. She went to see different doctors in three different hospitals but nobody could help her and each time she was sent home.



She started to develop deformities on her hands, feet and face. Finally, somebody recognised the symptoms and she was assessed by Dr Otabir, a specialist doctor at Ankaful Hospital, who recognised her condition as a severe case of

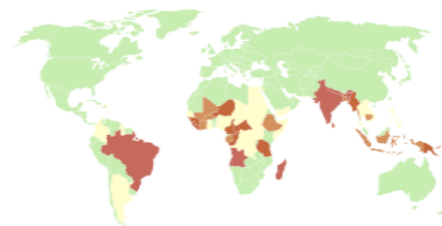
leprosy. The right treatment was initiated, but she was very sick and suffered a reaction that nearly killed her. Recovery has been slow and Dr. Otabir has sent her to Ahotokurom centre for leprosy rehabilitation.

Ahotokurom has supported Vida. Her leprosy is cured, however the delay in receiving treatment has left her with deformities. As a young woman, facial deformities are hard to accept and this causes Vida huge emotional suffering. Ahotokurom is slowly helping her build her self-esteem. She has found a sense of purpose, helping to care for those more disabled than herself. With your funds, Ahotokurom is helping her return to health, to think about her future and when she is ready she will be supported to study and gain the skills necessary to get a job, move on and support herself.

## Vida would like you to know about Leprosy

Leprosy is not at all eradicated. According to WHO statistics, there were 210,758 new cases of leprosy diagnosed globally in 2015 – around one every two minutes. 3 million people live in the world with disability caused by leprosy. Leprosy is a mildly infectious disease caused by a

bacterium related to tuberculosis. If it is left untreated, leprosy causes damage to nerves in the hands and feet or even the face so that patients simply don't feel it when they hurt themselves. This causes wounds and ulcers which lead to disability, loss of limbs, blindness and despair.



Vida has experienced that leprosy is one of the most stigmatising diseases in the world - affecting her education, her work and her future marriage prospects.

## Energy from solar power

Energy supplies have been very unreliable and very costly for Ahotokurom (Padre Pio Rehabilitation centre). Costs have risen by 25 percent and that's despite a very unreliable supply. The 25-year-old diesel generator is not able to cope with almost daily power outages which affects the operation of the entire centre.



Ghana has sun in abundance and therefore photovoltaic energy is a clean and cost-effective solution. With your help, a sustainable source of energy supply for the centre can be funded and installed.

## Our project in figures

### 8 Students

supported by the education programme will complete their education in summer 2017.

### 28 Disabled and Frail Residents

are able to live with dignity and care at St. Clares residential centre

### 32 Children

come to the St Elizabeth's Special needs centre every day. Their number has doubled since January 2017 and more children want to come. To cope with the demands staff training in special needs and a computer is needed

### 208 Children, Young People or Adults

whose lives are touched by leprosy or disability are supported in the community in order to become independent contributing members of society

### £ 2,192

total cash donations were received from local people last year. Given that the average wage is \$2 a day, this shows a tremendous level of local interest and support for the work of Ahotokurom.

### £ 108,532

will be needed this year to cover the costs of running the centre.

## Palm Crosses

Children at St Elizabeth's Special Unit have been busy making palm crosses for many parishes in the Southwark Diocese. Not only does this enable the children to learn new skills but it also enables them to raise a further £1,700 in donations from the parishes. It is also a focal point for prayer as each family takes their palm cross home. We draw closer to our brothers and sisters in need this lent.



## More Projects

There is much more going on at the Padre Pio Rehabilitation centre where fundraising is required:

- St Clare's residential home is planning important **renovation** work
- St Elizabeth's Special needs centre is looking for a special needs **teacher**
- Completion of the **irrigation project**
- **Ecological farming** and animal husbandry engages people with disabilities in the work of the centre and enables them to raise some funds themselves!

## Everyone can join in



In this season of lent we are asked to reflect on what we can do with our **talents, time and our treasures**. Donate today or come and join our team of volunteers. Spread the word by passing this newsletter to a friend and encouraging them to get involved.

## Daughters of Mary and Joseph

The Daughters of Mary and Joseph (DMJ) are the religious sisters who helped to found Ahotokurom. Friends of Ahotokurom have operated within the DMJ English Province charity up until now, however a new registered charity has just been set up for the purposes of better management of the DMJ work and funding for Africa. From 1st January 2017 DMJ Friends of Ahotokurom will operate under this new charity: DMJ Congregation Fund CIO, registered Charity Number 1163470. You won't notice much difference – we are still a group of friends, all supporting the work on a voluntary basis – so **EVERY PENNY you donate goes directly to the work of Ahotokurom**. If you have standing orders and gift aid declarations in place, we will be in touch at some point to ask you to sign over to the new charity details. Thank you all for your continuing support.