

Introducing children to the magic of books

This year we opened our first two libraries in two of the ten communities where we operate.

The first library was opened in March 2013 in Brahabebome, a small village in the northwestern part of Kakum while the second one was opened in September 2013 in Ekabaku, in the Amanzuri wetland.

A good number of books on geography, African tales, European classic stories, environment and science as well as puzzles and memory games were provided to the newly created libraries. Given the large choice of topics, even adults are

interested in some of them!

Those books have been donated by supporters of Microsfere from the USA, France and Greece.

In Kakum, a local librarian has been appointed in order to oversee the operation of the library and organize the activities for the children. In order to improve her skills, the Osu Children's Library Fund has kindly accepted to provide training to her.

As the Fund's founder, Kathy Knowles, has indicated to us «The strength of the library relies on the appointed librarian!» We thus want to make sure that the Brahabebome librarian has all the required skills required to make the library flourish. In Amanzuri, the library is operated by

the elementary school teacher.

Microsfere is very happy to have been able to introduce the children to the magic of books, and intends to open a couple more libraries in the coming year.



A new pilot microenterprise: Handicrafts in Kakum National Park

In mid 2012 we started a pilot microenterprise with two seamstresses in the village of Brahabebome in Kakum National Park. This village is quite remote and working opportunities are limited to cocoa production. The aim of this project is to diversify the incomes of the ladies by using local skills and resources.

Microsfere provided technical support to the seamstresses by supplying sample products, advising on the quality control and on the importance of using local materials. A number of handicrafts items were tested, and finally the seamstresses produced a range of products using ghanaiian fabrics, such as key holders, brooches and embroidered Tshirts.



A first batch of products was sold in 2012 directly to a french company, Fabrika, which supports Microsfere, with all proceeds going to the seamstresses.

A second batch was sold in 2013 to the Ghanaian NGO, ATAG (Aid To Artisans in Ghana), which operates the shop in the visitor centre of Kakum National Park. The rationale behind this trial sale to ATAG is for the NGO to test the products and if their sales are good, then the ATAG shop can become a permanent market for the handicrafts produced in Brahabebome.

A third batch of products was sold to Microsfere and then from Microsfere to the public in various handicrafts markets in France, in order to promote the goals of the NGO and to raise money for the support of our various activities.

Our aim is to enlist more seamstresses in the project and to be able to continue our technical support to this microenterprise which has proven to be a good source of income diversification for the ladies. involved in this project.



Interview : Clement, a great success story



Clement, a 54-year old father of five, used to be a pig rearer. However, in 2010 he decided to join the Microsfere project and requested a loan of 100 euro (200 GHc)

in order to sell sachets of water. Nevertheless, he immediately diversified to a number of foodstuffs such as sugar, milo, and milk on small scale.

At first, his "shop" was limited to a small table that he used to put out in the main streets of his village, Elloyin, in the Amanzuri wetland and sell the basic foodstuffs in the evenings. Initially, his business was too small, and he barely had any profits from it. The limited profits he made were used up to cover some basic family needs and none was left to reinvest in his small business.

He thus asked for three consecutive rounds of loans, with his last loan amounting to about 325 euro (650 GHc). Thanks to those consecutive loans, he has managed to increase his business by purchasing larger stocks of products.

The sales have been very positive and with the profits he managed to build a store to house his business. He is also building little by little his house.

At the same time, he has managed to make savings with a local savings union, and this money is his security in case of need either for his business or for his family.

If you want to read more success stories, please visit our website www.microsfere.org