

# TRAVEL TEAM REPORT

The latest news and updates from the travel team in Ghana



*Meeting with the Jirapa district of the Ghanaian Health Ministry.*

## UPDATES

### MEETING WITH GHANAIN HEALTH MINISTRY

### MEET ULLOS NEWEST RESIDENT!

### STOVES BEING ASSEMBLED

### NEW YEARS CELEBRATIONS!



## Monday, December 30th

By: Jack Hanley

Our day started bright and early at 6:00AM. It was a big day. We had a meeting with the Jirapa district of the Ghanaian Health Ministry (GHM) and the Jirapa district representative of the Catholic Diocese of Wa. Dr. Maier, Joe, Paige, Reed, Paul, Zack, and I drove all the way to Jirapa, leaving John, George, Hannah, and Sarah to fend for themselves. We arrived at the GHM Jirapa district administration building and assembled everyone in the conference room. Joe took the reins on this one and lead the meeting, and he did an amazing job. The discussion was extremely productive. Their exact words were "We will do everything in our power to make sure that this clinic is successful." There is no doubt in my mind that they want this project to succeed as much as we do, and I am excited to see where this project takes us going forward.

We went back into Jirapa to run some errands. Oh, and see the baby. That's right! A baby! He is currently four days old and the newest addition to the Ullo community. He is the younger brother of Jakeem and Malik and was born on 26/12/19 at the Jirapa municipal hospital. He was so chunky and had that new baby smell. He was so cute. He will be named this Friday at a formal naming ceremony. Per Islamic tradition, they usually wait to name the baby until a week after they are born. Paul insisted that he looked just like Dr. Konwar (which he totally does).

We finally arrived back in Ullo around 5:30PM, just in time for dinner. No one had communicated to them that we were running way behind. No one believed that it would be a quick in-and-out trip, but no one expected it to be an all-day affair. Sarah and Hannah had agreed that if we weren't home by 8:00PM, they would worry, and at 9:00PM they would panic. Thankfully, it never came to that. In any event, Sarah and Hannah constructed the 6-brick stoves today with rebar ties and they honestly look really good. I'm excited and optimistic. We put it in the kitchen with Moomie and Memuna and we can't wait to see how it performs tomorrow.

Towards the end of the night, by chance, the Ghanaian equivalent of the governor of the Upper west region saw Reed on the side of the road as he was passing by. He stopped at the palace and the next thing we know Zack is telling us that he would like to meet with us. We gathered outside, and I gave a brief speech about our team, who we represent back home, who we are as EWB-ISU and what we do, and our project work in Ullo. He seemed very impressed with us. He was so pleased with us, that he demanded we allow him to host us at his house in Wa before we leave. That is cool as hell, and I am very much looking forward to it.

In any event, I am very tired. It's bedtime. Goodnight.



*Sarah collecting water, Ullo style!*



From Dr. Maier: This baby boy was born to the family in whose compound we live. Kassim, the brother of Zack. His wife was referred from the Ullo clinic to the Jirapa hospital because she needed blood transfusions. She was taken in our van. Who knows what might have happened. It reminds us of the preciousness of life and the importance of a new clinic for Ullo! There will be a naming ceremony for him on Friday.

## Tuesday, December 31st

By: John Jennison

It is New Year's Eve. For the most part, our team isn't working on our project today because the community has invited us to holiday celebrations. The only exception is some testing that George and I are doing at the bore hole. George is a great addition to our team.

George is Dr. Maier's grad student and he recently completed his masters in agricultural engineering at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana. He will attend Iowa State after our trip to work towards his doctorate. He and I have been working at the bore hole together for the last few days and he is very knowledgeable in solar technology from his schooling. Today we did solar panel tests before the New Year's Eve celebrations.



At breakfast our team had an interesting political discussion where we questioned if economic development is always congruent with progress. At noon, our team attended a homecoming celebration at the high school cafeteria. The homecoming celebration lasted about 3.5 hours. Community chiefs, the police chief, politicians, the school headmaster, and many community members were in attendance. The celebration included speeches and traditional dancing. Prominent community members and politicians gave the speeches in which they reflected the progress in Ullo for the past year and the problems that they have to work on to solve this year. Then the community insisted that we dance with the traditional dancers, so we danced with the dancers in front of the entire crowd.

Most speeches praised EWB and ISU for our successful partnership with the community. Jack and Dr. Maier were also invited to speak. They both gave great speeches about the mission of EWB and about the future of our partnership with the community.

The last bit of excitement for the night was when our team was sitting around our courtyard and we heard drumming. A group of about 20 women and children showed up to greet us and dance for us. They also gifted us a rooster. They beat their drum, danced, and sang with us for about 20 minutes. Our team has high moral and is ready to get back to work tomorrow.



*Malik and Hannah!*

## Wednesday, January 1st

By: Joe Kim

Yompala (translation: "Happy New Year!")! Even though the start of the decade, the day was pretty normal for the team. Most of us woke up around 7:30 to fried dough balls (we also found a great hack of adding Nutella, peanut butter, sugar, or some combination of them to make them taste even more amazing) and rice porridge (also great in a soothing way).

After everybody ate, we all head our separate ways. John and George were the first to leave and went to the borehole to take some more measurements. After that, Sarah and Reed went to work on the kitchen and household stoves by testing the bricks (it involved dropping bricks). The test showed that the bricks were stronger than anticipated, so overall, it was a success.

Next, everyone went to the Ullo Dam. While there, I got to try my hand at being a Civil Engineer for the day by doing a survey (which involved lots of flags, a 16-foot pole, and a 300-foot tape measure). Through the surveys, we were able to get valuable information that we could use to help improve/repair the dam from flooding.



*Reed with the new baby!*



By then, we had all stood out in the sun for a few hours and head back for lunch where we had a delicious stew with rice. Afterwards, Hannah and Dr. Maier interviewed the head of the agricultural department about the rainwater catchment system. They found out that many are very excited and supportive of a project being implemented, which was very encouraging. In the meantime, John, George, Sarah, and Jack worked with Paul and Justin to help prepare the school tanks for the return of the students (next Monday). Paige and I started a survey on one of the potential clinic sites then prepared for a meeting with the elder's tomorrow morning.

We all met again for dinner (rice and bean stew with eggs), debriefed, then went to Professor Bruce's house where we ate lots of meat and socialized in a fancy room while listening to what I think was reggae and 80s Christmas music. At some point, it morphed into an impromptu dance involving Dr. Maier dancing around the room. It was definitely a successful start to the new year.



*The travel team joining in a traditional dance!*



*Assembling the 6 brick stoves for community households..*



*Schock chlorinating the polytanks at the girls dorm.*



*Cleaning out water storage tanks.*



*Dancing in the new year at professor Bruce's!.*



*The team with Professor Bruce and his family friends.*