

PYGMY REPORT - JUNE 2024

(Way Alege)

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said "Till now the Lord has helped us". 1 Samuel 7:12

It is 12 years since you decided to walk along with us in ministering to the Pygmies. These vulnerable people are not only suffering from hunger, poverty and sickness, but are insufficiently reached by the Gospel and currently are threatened by insecurity.



We have reached this far thanks to your generosity. Now we are able to provide breakfast and solid food three times a day for nursery children and others. Despite the quality and quantity of the meals we offer, this symbolic act is capital for relationship building between teachers, children and their parents.



During the week and on Sundays, teachers have the responsibility to share the Word of God at Sunday school and with parents. While others continue their outreach at the hospital. The hospital team is led as usual by Robert Mokili.



On July 2nd, it is the end of the school year 2024. Children and teachers will be on vacation for two months. However, before teachers go for full vacation, they will need to submit all the reports to the school inspectorate. Besides, some of the staff will be ministering on the site, on Sundays and at the hospital while others will be working on plans to reinforce food security through farming.

This is very important since the last food assistance from NGOs was received in April, and there is no hope that more will come this year. As far as we were concerned, we had

already made plans to farm in preparation for our return with some Pygmies coming in August.

However, the situation so far seems to be too volatile. The work in the hospital during the month of June has not been easy for the team; but thanks for your prayers the team is encouraged in difficult moments.



As you might have read in our past newsletters, the Alliance Democratic Forces (ADF), a rebel group that originates from Uganda was known for threatening the Pygmies in the forest. However, since the beginning of this year, successful farmers and businessmen are using delinquent youths to threaten the Pygmies so that they leave the forest for timber logging and farming. This aggressive attitude towards the Pygmies and discrimination is growing. Recently, Anna Anita who lived approximately 10 kms away from Ataloholu, lost her husband in an attack, she was raped and injured by unknown people in the forest. Anita lost her right ear and part of her neck.

Anna to Nyankunde hospital where she is being treated. Our visit at the hospital was a big encouragement for Anna who walked by herself out of the hospital, and was able to open up and talk to me. It was a very sad story as she told us the horror she went through. Seated next to Anna in the photograph below is Albert Gorille's father and Albert who



was also abandoned at Komanda hospital. Albert, (on the right) before surgery suffered from a malignant tumor



Albert's family and doctors (at Komanda hospital) had lost hope. Thanks to God, the

tumor was safely removed and there are no signs of cancer. When Albert was brought to Nyankunde hospital, a few people were informed. You may be one of those who prayed for him and can rejoice and thank God that Albert and his father were both able to give their lives to Jesus while in the hospital. Keep praying so that this precious gift is not snatched from them by the enemy.



Advocacy

Despite the fact that our advocacy has not been a priority in the eyes of the government authorities, Shalom was able to use opportunities during public meetings to inform people about the atrocities and discrimination the Pygmies go through. Property ownership by the Pygmies is one of the major points that is not on the government agenda. In many cases, leaving the Pygmies in virgin forest is considered as waste of land and natural resources and yet they are the best preservers of the environment.



Thanks giving:

We praise God for the medical results of Albert as they show that he is not suffering from cancer. The family and the team are all encouraged. On 28th June, we all met at Nyankunde hospital without a

prior arrangement as the team came from Komanda to Nyankunde hospital and so did I. It was a very special moment just to sit, read the Bible and pray with the Pygmies. This was a time they felt far from their family members and out of their natural environment, but surrounded by the love of God.



We thank God for the return of our Pastor Afise.. Afise is a native to Ataloholu, but fled the war hundreds of kilometers south of Komanda. Apart from sharing the Word in his native language that they share with the Pygmies, Afise helps us to settle disputes among the Pygmies. We missed his language skills while away. He could not travel to Komanda because of insecurity. However, God finally helped him when we really needed him and thank God for bringing him safely to Komanda.



We are also thankful to the two Pygmy ladies. We have been encouraging them to think about stopping child bearing. In the photo above, the one between the Pastor and me bore 10 children and one passed. The other one bore 8 children. Both of them were

brought to Bunia in 2022 for medical care. All are alive thanks to God and you for your prayers and assistance.



Prayer items

Keep praying so that we recover the entire piece of land that is allocated for school development, playground for children and farming for teachers. So far the financial assistance given



to our teachers is inferior compared to what other schools pay to teachers and the rate set by the government. In our terms of agreement, teachers were supposed to supplement their expenses by growing their own food as we provide land. That was possible when we were in Ataloholu. The limited access to their gardens in Ataloholu gives them less chance to get enough food for them and the children.

We prayed for the new government that is already in power. However, it has come out with new regulations at far as NGOs are concerned. We are given three weeks to get papers from the Ministry of Justice in order to operate legally. The lack of proper permits might affect money transactions with the banks in the near future. Pray that we meet the required costs.