

PYGMY REPORT - JULY -AUGUST 2022

(Way Alege)

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8: 28)



Since leaving Ataloholu on **11 April 2022**, it has been hard to comprehend the will of God. However, we have come to understand that He does everything with a purpose. Surely as faith comes from hearing, God is using us to encourage and share the Gospel to the Pygmies. On Sunday 7 August, two decided to follow Jesus. But there is need for more prayers and teaching. Our prayers are that as they believed, they will obey the Word of God as well.

Security

On Sunday **7th August 2022**, we were supposed to go and camp by the road side, 5kms away from Ataloholu, and then move in to clear the bush and plant palm trees on the **8th**. However, on Friday **5th**, the ADF rebels carried out a bloody incursion as they killed innocent civilians and burnt down houses in the same area. Two of our students at Ataloholu were kidnapped to be trained as rebels. They witnessed all the killings before they miraculously escaped while several other people were taken hostage. We praise God for His protection even though many bodies have not yet been recovered around Ataloholu and Kangakolo. Having preserved the forest in these places, the ADF rebels have found them convenient for hiding. We are concerned about the way the government is handling this issue.



This new incursion has caused another new movement of relatives to the camp as our group of Pygmies from Ataloholu serve as hosting families. Above in the two photos, the captain of the police came to the site to advise the Pygmies to observe law and order as they are now out of the forest. This change is always hard for them as they are used to moving freely in the forest compared to savannah villages where every movement is limited to one's own property. This means more responsibility for us.

Water



We thank God for providing the Pygmies with clean water. Initially we planned to have sufficient water to be pumped electrically and shared with neighbours. However, the technician advised us to use a manual pump as water flows through underground rocks to feed the reservoir. Though this process seems slow as the waterbed lies at 25 metres, it is suitable for drinking and the manual pump is easy to maintain. .



As the area is rocky, it took 10 days, instead of 3, for the team to complete the drilling process. We have sent a sample of the water to Kampala for laboratory analysis so that we are legally covered.

Sanitation



Currently, we have approximately 280 Pygmies on the property. This has forced us to improve sanitation measures by digging and building more pit latrines on the site. Unfortunately, as the underground is rocky, it has proved difficult to go deeper. We are studying other sanitation possibilities.



Hygiene



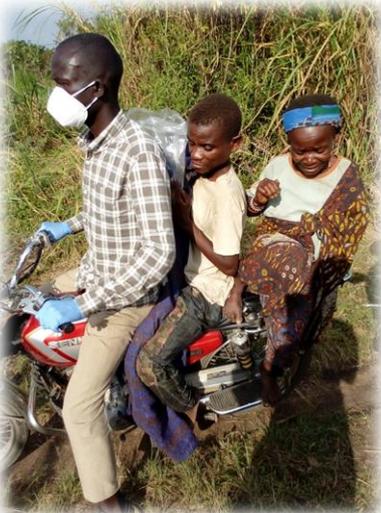
When the number of Pygmies increase, there is more kitchen waste. Therefore, we are designing new ways to manage waste by storing it and transforming it to compost then use it in gardening. This will help us increase our vegetable yield without using commercial fertilisers.

Health

As reported earlier, the number of Pygmies have grown to over 3,000 in and around Komanda. Some of them have no access to health facilities because of their traditions, poor health management system or simply because of discrimination. This is hard for those who are not living on our site. Many are left to suffer and die without medical care. Sometimes, dead bodies are not given proper burial either. The old man in the photo, has never been attended to. He was finally left to die alone.



In the photo below, a young man died alone in his hut.



Shalom and one of the teachers discovered the body two days later in another site. They had to carry the body on a motorbike for burial. Culturally, the Pygmies fear the dead. They could simply move to a new site in case of death. But this Pygmy lady who happened to be a relative had no choice except to sit behind the dead body to avoid it from falling.

Below right are eight of eleven children we brought to the general hospital in Bunia for medical care. We praise God that all are alive and are slowly recovering but have to



be closely monitored. Among the 11, two are suffering from tuberculosis, one of asthma, one of waterborne disease, one of congenital hydrocele, and others of malnutrition. They all need proper feeding and medical care. The medical team at Shalom University led by a missionary doctor (Dr Mindy) are helping in this area. We praise God for her concern for these little souls. Teachers and students that are in the internship are helping in cooking appropriate meals, following up the tuberculosis treatment.

Assistance

For the first time, our Pygmy site has been shortlisted for assistance from the government. We received 425 kg of rice, approximately 250 kg of beans and some



clothing. We praise God that our work is gaining roots in the community



and drawing government's attention. Our prayers are that more assistance is delivered so that we can attend to the forgotten groups of Pygmies. We are requested by the Provincial government to fill out more papers to make our organisation to abide by the law. Even though this requirement is time and resource consuming, we believe that it will open new opportunities.

Agriculture



The new Pygmy movement to our site has led us to more reflection. Among them are two old people, both are between 65 and 75 of age. This is an exception because the Pygmies are not believed to have a long life expectancy. Therefore, we have taken advantage of these elderly ones to inspire the younger generation to develop new surviving strategies in the savannah. After two hours of discussion, the healthy and strong Pygmies have resolved to engage in farming. They asked me to look for a bigger field than the one we bought for farming.



We thank God that the person from whom we bought the property gave us approximately 2 hectares for quick growing plants. We can use the land as long as it is not sold out. This is a breakthrough for us because there is no other Pygmy group that has decided to farm in Komanda while in displacement. As long as Ataloholu is not secure, it is good to keep the Pygmies out of danger as they have become vulnerable to rebel exactions.

Vegetable Garden

We are using every available space on the property for growing vegetables. Students and an Agronomist, Benedict has volunteered to help us in this matter while we are busy. He gives

orientation to students and the Pygmies. This is an advantage as we have more land for farming and growing vegetables to cut down living cost.



Tree planting



As we cannot access the seedlings we have left in the forest, we have resolved to install a shade net on the site. We have embarked on planting tree seedlings to be planted on our property and also to supply people around and outside Komanda. Students are actively involved in selecting tree species for forestation and flowers that can be sold to generate some income in the future.

Housing

Ataloholu



While ADF rebels have been burning down houses, God has protected our school buildings, offices, staff houses, and those ones at the Pygmy camp. Despite the recent attacks, we are informed that no damage so far has been done to our houses. We praise God for His care and believe that He will keep His eyes on this project.



New housing at Komanda



We praise God that we were able to safely evacuate the timber from Ataloholu to Komanda before the recent attacks. This helped us build a three bed room house with three bath rooms, a corridor for placing a shelf for stocking stuff, a living room and a veranda. Shaddai helped us design and implement the house. We have fixed the doors, but there are still more to be done for the finishing step. However, we are already using the house. Behind the new house, on the right in perspective, is a small house that we have hired for US\$5 per month. That is where some staff and students are living. In total there are 19 people living there (15 internship students and 4 staff). It sounds impossible, but it is hard to find housing in Komanda as there are many displaced people. Rent for better housing is very high and not affordable for ordinary people.

Praises

We praise God for:

- Clean water. It is a timely and God-given gift
- His protection, healing and care
- The opportunity to share His word
- The ministry He has entrusted unto us
- The 1,000 square metres property for teacher's housing
- My appointment to the leadership of church and community development at Brethren church.

Pray for:

- New school year to begin in two weeks. We have no appropriate shelter to organise classes.
- Teachers. All of them are ready to go back to Komanda. We may not be able to host them all.
- Healing for the children who are still under medication. They have to survive on a special diet.
- The new responsibilities that I am undertaking to encourage our local assemblies and population in a very difficult context (security wise and on bad roads).
- Playing ground and trauma healing activities. Many children are traumatised because of multiple displacement, watching dreadful events, starvation and violence. Some of them are not even willing to talk and this will affect them at school.
- Safety as Sylvia has gone to visit her elderly father.