

United Nations Millennium Development Goal 5

Improve Maternal Health

Project 5: September 2010 – June 2011

To help finance the building of a Health Clinic

WHERE: Sivame, South East Togo, West Africa

COST: Approximately £17,000 will build the Clinic

PARTNERS: MMS (Ireland) and the Methodist Programme for Community Development in Togo, who will direct the Project in partnership with the leaders of the local community. James Brown on behalf of Funeral Services Northern Ireland has agreed to partner the funding of a Health Project Manager for three years.

PURPOSE: To provide and support much needed health care and health education for women and children.

HOW:

- Reduce the mortality rate in childbirth and in young children
- Education for women in family planning, antenatal and postnatal care
- Education in health care and HIV/AIDS prevention
- Promote good hygiene within the home
- Encourage the use of safe, modern medical treatment

OUTCOME: Improved healthcare for the community, especially women and children, through education and training.

CHEQUES: **made payable to WFM&UCW - Ireland Unit**

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BACKGROUND TO PROJECT 5 –SEPT 2010 – JUNE 2011

- 1 Sivame is a village situated in the Lacs District, an area in the South East of Togo, bordering with Benin. It is about 20 kilometres from Aneho, the former capital. As indicated by its name, the district of Lacs is a very swampy area, particularly prone to infestation of mosquitoes. Life is very difficult, particularly during the rainy seasons.
- 2 The population of Sivame and surrounding villages is approximately 10,000 people and comprises three tribes; the Guin-Mina, Xla and Adjias.
- 3 Health care in the area is very poor. There are very few 'health clinics' and the buildings are small and in very poor repair. Patient care is extremely limited, not only because of the state of the buildings but also because of the lack of equipment and trained staff.
- 4 There is a severe shortage of food and drinking water in the district, especially in the rural areas. In some villages the people have to travel very long distances to look for water. This can be found mainly on the shore of the Mono River where the quality of water is not good and so is the cause of much disease, particularly amongst children.
- 5 Farming in the area is very poor, with many of the coconut plantations dying because of disease.
- 6 Because of the poor infrastructure in the country access to the villages is difficult, particularly during the rainy season when the dirt tracks become flooded and at times impassable.
- 7 Although the land is fertile it is difficult to grow crops, because the soil is clay like and muddy and the area liable to flooding. Because of this many men leave the area for Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Benin. Women are therefore left with the total responsibility of caring for and bringing up their families.
- 8 There are many health related problems, particularly amongst women and children, as there is no health care structure. Pregnant women continue to give birth in very dangerous conditions (use of traditional tools and inappropriate obstetric instruments). This exposes them to risks of infections like HIV Aids. Death rate amongst children and pregnant women during childbirth is high.
- 9 Malaria is endemic with no mosquito nets available. Cases of parasitosis are also frequent due to the consumption of contaminated water.
- 10 Malnutrition amongst children is over 45%. Anaemia affects 75% of children and over 40% of women of childbearing age.
- 11 **Despite the many problems facing them, the women remain very motivated and are determined to improve upon their living and health conditions if opportunities are given to them.**

This project is a further development in the continuing partnership between MMS (Ireland), the Methodist Church of Togo and Methodist Programme for Community Development in Togo, (MPCD).

The Methodist Church of Togo opened its first medical clinic in the village of Zouvi in the south of Togo, in February 2009. This caters for 10 villages and looks after pregnant mothers, minor ailment surgery and has a birthing room. In many cases minor ailments and pregnancy difficulties, without treatment, can lead to death. They would like to set up a second clinic catering for the group of villages around Sivame. The cost of building this is £17,000.