



Newsletter June 2024

Dear friends and supporters,

As we reach the midpoint of 2024, it's the perfect time to reflect on the journey we've had so far this year at PANKO. We've been dedicated to serving children and young people, fostering an environment of growth, collaboration, and community. Let's take a moment to revisit the first half of the year, celebrating the stories and achievements that have shaped our unique story.

Join us in celebrating this wonderful space for stories of progress and improvement!

From Caterpillars to Butterflies—90% Achieve Reading Proficiency.



Our core program focuses on literacy, numeracy, and academic support for young people, who come to the center from Monday to Friday. We are proud to share the remarkable success of our program, which has significantly impacted the lives of these children in our communities.



Our after-school literacy program, conducted daily in our conducive Hanpet, KiNiKi, and other learning spaces, serves 124 beneficiaries, equipping them with essential skills. We are excited to announce that 90% of our participants, who initially struggled with reading, are now proficient readers. This success is largely attributed to your support, our dedicated staff, and the highly effective Jolly Phonics method.



The success of our after-school project led to high demand for a preschool program, which we launched in 2022. With over 200 applications for just 30 spots, our preschool program has also seen significant achievements, with 60% of preschoolers already reading and writing. We plan to graduate these preschoolers in September 2024, preparing them for enrollment in community day schools.

Looking ahead, we plan to focus on intensive English-speaking activities to further enhance our students' skills. Together, we are building a brighter future for our community, addressing the literacy gap, and providing quality education to more children.

A New Partnership with KiNiKi: Strengthening Our Support For Children and Youth

We are thrilled to announce our latest strategic partnership with KiNiKi, a renowned German-based organization. KiNiKi is committed to supporting children and young people in challenging situations, regardless of their skin color, religion, or political background. We are grateful for KiNiKi's unwavering support over the years and are proud to now call them our partners.

Together, we will focus on fundraising and sharing knowledge to amplify our impact. This collaboration promises new ideas and progress for the benefit of those we serve. We are excited about the opportunities this partnership will bring and look forward to working closely with KiNiKi to create a brighter future for our youth.



Panko Earns A Spot in EU's Youth Dialogue Platform



We're proud to announce that PANKO has been selected to be part of the Youth Dialogue Platform by the Directorate General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) of the European Commission.

This platform, outlined in the Youth Action Plan (2022-2027), aims to foster regular dialogue with youth organizations globally.

As a member, you will have the opportunity to participate on meaningful discussions and contribute to shaping EU policies affecting youth.

We are excited to embark on this journey together and can't wait to see the positive impact we will make!

Nurturing Digital Seeds Towards Prosperity

At PANKO Youth Center, our ICT for Education and job creation project is transforming the lives of children and young people. Many of our students, who once struggled to use a mouse and keyboard, are now confidently navigating the internet for educational purposes. They complete homework, assignments, and have even begun learning coding skills.

This digital literacy is more than just technical skills; it's a gateway to a brighter future. By mastering these tools, our youth are gaining invaluable skills that will open doors to new educational and career opportunities. The confidence and competence they develop here will empower them to pursue their dreams and contribute positively to their communities.

Your continued support is making this possible, and together, we are shaping a future where these children and young people can thrive in an increasingly digital world.



Let Them Be Kids Not Brides!

Our Drama Club just performed an amazing skit about child marriage. In the story, a father forces his school-going daughter to marry an older man. She gets pregnant and sadly dies during childbirth. Both her husband and father are arrested, showing how wrong child marriage is.

We invited parents and the community on our movie day to watch the skit and to discussion around the topic, making everyone feel the pain and unfairness the girl faced. It was a powerful reminder to protect children's rights and let them finish school.

We're so proud of our Drama Club for their hard work. This skit is a big step in helping our community understand the dangers of child marriage. You can watch this touching performance on our YouTube channel. Let's keep working together to make a safer and brighter future for all our children!



Preserving The Past And Protecting The Wild

On Saturday, April 20th, staff and beneficiary kids embarked on an unforgettable journey to three remarkable tourist centers: Mole National Park, Larabanga Ancient Mosque, and Larabanga Mystic Stone in the Savannah region of Northern region of Ghana.

Our adventure was part of our mission to learn about different cultures, nature conservation, and to take action as nature protection ambassadors. It was exhilarating to see elephants, warthogs, antelopes, monkeys, and other animals in their natural habitats.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission for their excellent work in protecting the wildlife from poachers. Special thanks to our tour guides, whose knowledge and insights were invaluable. The education provided to our beneficiary kids will have a lasting impact on their understanding and appreciation of nature.

This journey has inspired us all to continue our efforts in promoting nature conservation and cultural appreciation.



Celebrating World Book Day, One Book At Time

We recently celebrated World Book Day with great enthusiasm! The theme was "Changing lives through a love of books and reading," and we had a blast.

The day was packed with fun activities like a spelling bee, a general knowledge quiz, and reading competition. It was a day full of excitement and learning, ending with smiles all around.

At PANKO, we believe good choices come from the right information, and reading is key. Promoting literacy among our kids is a top priority.

We encouraged our kids to take reading seriously and seek help when needed—at home, school, or the center. We also reminded them to use our library and make books their best friends. Together, let's improve literacy, one book at a time!



From Trash To Treasure: Reducing Waste & Enriching The Soil

Before the rains began, we rolled up our sleeves and got our garden ready for planting. Our garden isn't just for growing veggies—it's where we experiment and put our learning into action.

We collected free dung and waste from a nearby poultry farm to make compost. By growing chemical-free and healthy crops, we're also conserving the soil and promoting eco-friendly farming practices.

Virtually all of our kids come from farming families, so this knowledge extends beyond just the kids. It's about giving them skills that can help their families and improve their futures. Whether they become farmers themselves or teach their parents about soil health, the benefits are huge. Let's keep growing and learning together!



Fine Motor For Academic And Physical Development



Within the 2nd quarter of this year, our preschoolers have been actively participating in fine motor activities, which we believe significantly contribute to their overall development. The use of their fingers and the sense of accomplishment they experience after completing a task bring them immense joy and boost their confidence and creativity.

We are driven by the belief in a holistic approach to learning, which is why we provide our beneficiaries with all the necessary resources to help them achieve their goals. By engaging in these activities, the children not only develop their fine motor skills but also enhance their emotional and psychological well-being.

Struggling Schools Turn To Panko For Literacy Guidance

We've been on a mission to support struggling schools, and it's been incredible to see the positive changes happening. Recently, we visited Target School Complex as part of our self-initiated FM4CHANGE Project. The school invited us to help tackle challenges with students' reading abilities and classroom behavior. Our workshop, "Phonics for Fun and Easy Reading," was a hit! We shared engaging methods to make reading enjoyable and build a reading culture in early childhood education.

But that's not all—we've been busy hosting workshops at other schools too. At Future Ambassadors Educational Complex, we focused on fine motor skills, and at Bright Kids Academy, we highlighted techniques for creating an English speaking environment. Each workshop was filled with interactive learning and valuable discussions.

We're excited to continue working with these schools and others, making a positive impact on education together!



Celebrating Differences & Fostering Harmony



May 21st was a special day at Panko Youth Center as we celebrated the "International Day for Cultural Diversity" with joy and enthusiasm! This year's theme, "Diversity, Engine for Sustainable Development," reminded us of the beauty of our differences.

Our beneficiary kids, hailing from various backgrounds, came together to share and learn about the customs and traditions of Northern Ghana. It was heartwarming to see them proudly showcasing their cultural apparel! The highlight of the day was a captivating performance by our drama club, making it a memorable experience for everyone.



Our director, Mubarak, emphasized the importance of unity and understanding. He led the kids in an exercise called the "Four Corner Game" (Game credit goes to Dr. Gitta Zimmermann) to explain the difference between needs and strategies as a metaphor to emphasize the idea that despite our differences in culture, ethnicity, or background, there is a common thread that unites us. He highlighted the importance of embracing diversity while striving for harmony and cooperation.

We will continue to celebrate our diversity and grow together as one big family!

Hunt For Football Talent

Did you know that there's raw football talent in the communities we serve, with many young people enthusiastic about becoming professional footballers? This presents an opportunity for investors in the football business, as evidenced by some footballers playing in Europe who hail from Northern Ghana.

On the light of this, Game Changers Academy visited Panko Youth Center recently to learn firsthand about our activities and search for talent for their academy.

At Panko, we believe every child deserves attention for their unique talents and abilities, making this visit significant for us. It's important to emphasize that Ghana has abundant raw football talent. With THE right connections and your assistance, we aspire to establish a football academy that will tap into the abundant talent within our communities.

Together, we can nurture these promising athletes, helping them fulfill their potential and pursue successful careers in football, while also fostering positive community impact and promoting social and economic growth.



Scoring Goals, Spreading Peace And Unity

Guess what happened on April 6th, 2024? We played football with our friends from the Kanshegu community to celebrate the International Day of Sport. We were very excited to play and had Fun with our neighbor.

We lost the game 5-2, but who cares? We were laughing too much to worry about winning. The spirit of unity and joy prevailed throughout the day. We want to give a big shoutout to our friends from Kanshegu for joining us in this celebration of sportsmanship and unity. For the defeat, better luck to us next time!

We love sports! Every Thursday, we dedicate the whole day to sports and activities. This helps build strong relationships among staff and kids, creating a safer space for everyone. Our football team even includes girls, showing our support for inclusion and fighting gender bias.



Caring For Our Environment In The Simplest Way

This year, "World Environment Day" got us thinking deeply at PANKO Youth Center. Should we just stick to the usual rhetoric, or should we demonstrate true care for nature and our environment?

We chose action. We cleaned the center, removed plastics indiscriminately discarded by society, and taught our beneficiary kids how to properly handle waste.

After some rains, weeds began sprouting everywhere on the campus, potentially becoming a breeding ground for dangerous creatures. With hoes and cutlasses, we cleared the weeds, making the campus safe once again.

We also started preparing the soil to plant more trees on our campus. As we raise ambassadors who care for the environment, they have the answers to "WHY" and also know "HOW" to protect, serve, and preserve our environment.



Your support has continued to be the driving force behind all these transformative experiences. Through your generosity, we've made significant steps in impacting the lives of children and young people, shaping a brighter future for the communities we serve and beyond. As we move forward, we are excited about the opportunities ahead and grateful for your firm support.

Sincerely,



Mubarak Alhassan
(Managing Director)

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