

# PANKO YOUTH CENTER

Tamale, Ghana



## **Liebe Freunde und Unterstützer des Panko Youth Centers,**

das Jahr 2026 hat für uns 6 Frauen ganz besonders begonnen – denn wie schon im letzten Newsletter angekündigt, hatten wir die unglaubliche Möglichkeit, zwei Wochen im Panko Youth Center direkt vor Ort zu verbringen.

Unsere Motivation für diese Reise war für uns von Anfang an klar: Wir wollten etwas zurückgeben und uns bewusst sozial engagieren. Gleichzeitig war es uns wichtig, das Projekt nicht nur aus der Ferne zu unterstützen, sondern vor Ort mitzuerleben wie die Arbeit in Ghana konkret umgesetzt wird, wie der Alltag im Center aussieht und vor allem auch die Kinder sowie auch Lehrer persönlich kennen zu lernen.

Die Zeit im Center war für uns alle sehr intensiv und bereichernd. Wir konnten nicht nur den Alltag hautnah kennenlernen, sondern auch viele Projekte begleiten und aktiv unterstützen. Besonders schön war es, die Kinder persönlich zu treffen, mit ihnen zu lernen, zu spielen und zu lachen. Die gemeinsamen Momente haben diese Erfahrung für uns besonders gemacht.

Schon im Vorfeld unserer Reise lag uns das Projekt sehr am Herzen. Durch zahlreiche Aktionen und Initiativen ist es uns gelungen, gemeinsam mit eurer Unterstützung rund 23.000 Euro an Spenden zu sammeln. Dafür sind wir unglaublich dankbar!

Ein großer Teil dieser Spenden fließt aktuell in den Bau der neuen Bäckerei – und wir konnten uns selbst davon überzeugen, wie gut die Bauarbeiten voranschreiten. Es ist ein tolles Gefühl zu sehen, dass dieses Projekt nun Realität wird. Die zukünftige Backstube wird nicht nur die Versorgung verbessern, sondern auch neue Chancen für Ausbildung und Gemeinschaft schaffen.

Außerdem haben wir 12 Laptops mitgebracht, die nun im IT-Unterricht eingesetzt werden. Somit können die Kinder nun jeweils an einem eigenen Gerät arbeiten, was ganz neue Möglichkeiten für den Unterricht eröffnet und die digitale Bildung nachhaltig stärkt.

Ein weiteres Highlight war unser Besuch an der öffentlichen Schule vor Ort. Dort wurde dem Panko-Team großer Respekt und viel Anerkennung entgegen gebracht. Besonders stolz hat uns gemacht, wie positiv der Bildungsstand der Panko-Schüler in sämtlichen Bereichen wie Rechnen, Lesen, Schreiben oder Englisch bewertet wurde. Es besteht großes Interesse daran, künftig enger zusammenzuarbeiten und erfolgreiche Lernmethoden zu teilen.

In diesem Newsletter berichten wir euch noch ausführlicher über unsere persönlichen Erlebnisse, Begegnungen und Eindrücke vor Ort. Wir wünschen viel Spaß beim Lesen!

Herzliche Grüße,

**Franziska, Melanie, Katharina, Sina, Josi & Rebecca**



## ***A Smooth and Welcoming Arrival***

Our journey began in the best possible way—well organized, smooth, and reassuring from the very first moment. We were picked up and immediately felt safe and supported. As a group of six women arriving in a new country (Ghana), this meant a lot. Driving through the city in “Yellow Yellow” (like a Tuk Tuk), was already a fun and unique experience. Our accommodation with Abdullah was clean, secure, and well managed, giving us the perfect base for everything ahead.

## ***Our First Day at PANKO***

Our first morning at PANKO Youth Center is something we will never forget. As we drove into the entrance in the “Yellow Yellow” (like a Tuk Tuk), children ran toward us with excitement—laughing, waving, and calling out. Within seconds, we were surrounded by pure energy and joy. There was no distance, just openness and warmth. Some children held our hands, others stood close, smiling. Very quickly, we were all laughing together.



## ***Learning Through Play and Connection***

From that day on, we shared our time in so many different ways. Each day was a beautiful mix of learning and fun. We practiced math, letters, and listening exercises, but it never felt like strict teaching. Everything was interactive and playful. We brought materials and worksheets, and it was beautiful to see how engaged and curious the children were. Alongside learning, we played games, painted, and spent time together. Music and dancing became part of our everyday life without planning it – it just happened, and everyone joined in.

## ***Laptops and Learning Materials for the Future***

We also brought along 12 laptops and some teaching and learning materials for PANKO, carrying as much as we could on our flight. Seeing how excited the children were to learn and explore made this contribution even more meaningful. It meant a lot to support their learning in a way that will continue even after we have left. We could already see how useful these tools will be in their daily lessons. They will open up new opportunities for the children to develop important skills.



## ***A Wall Full of Memories***

One project that was especially meaningful to us was painting the front wall of the center. We created two large trees, and every child and teacher added their own handprint as a leaf. It was such a joyful process – full of laughter, color, and creativity. When we finished, the children proudly showed each other where their handprints were, pointing out their colors and comparing them with their friends. The feedback from the team meant a lot to us as well – they told us how much it brightened up the entrance and how it would remain a lasting memory of our time together.



## *Connecting Through Culture and Language*

We were introduced to the Dagbani language, which we truly appreciated. It helped us connect more deeply and showed us the importance of approaching everything with openness and respect. It was a small step, but it made a big difference in how we experienced daily life.



## *Inspired by the Team*



What stood out deeply was the work of Mubarak and the entire team. Their dedication goes far beyond what you see at first glance. The focus they place on the children, their development, and the continuous effort to improve teaching concepts and learning structures is truly inspiring. You can see how much thought, care, and persistence goes into everything they do. And even more, you can feel it – in the way the children interact, in their trust, and in their joy. The sense of unity within the team and the connection between them and the children is something very special.

## *Experiencing Life Beyond the Center*

Alongside our time at the center, we were also able to experience life in Tamale and beyond. Visiting the Red Clay Studios by Ibrahim Mahama was incredibly impressive. His work gives new life to materials that might otherwise be forgotten – airplanes, trains, sewing machines, rice sacks – all transformed into powerful pieces of art that connect history, present, and future in a unique way.

Another highlight was the Tamale Market. The intensity of the impressions – the smells, the sounds, and the movement – was something we had never experienced before. We tried kola nut, a very bitter local specialty. It was explained to us that many children eat it because it can help suppress hunger, which gave us a moment to pause and reflect more deeply.



## *A Heartfelt Goodbye*

The welcome we received at the beginning and the farewell at the end were equally unforgettable. The warmth, openness, and kindness we experienced throughout these two weeks stayed constant. The final performance and the dresses we received as a goodbye gift meant more to us than we can express.

## *A Perfect Ending at Mole National Park*

After our time in Tamale, we continued our journey to Mole National Park – a perfect and peaceful ending. There, we had time to reflect, to share our thoughts, and to let everything sink in. On two safaris, we were lucky enough to see elephants, crocodiles, antelopes, and a wide variety of birds – a truly special way to close this chapter.





## What We Take Home

So what do we take home with us? Gratitude, above all. And a new perspective. We can wholeheartedly encourage anyone to come to Ghana, to visit the PANKO Youth Center, and to experience this work and this country for themselves. Whether as a gap year, in the middle of your career like us, or later in life – there is so much to learn, to give, and to take away. Supporting this project truly makes a difference. The work on site is meaningful, transparent, and impactful.

## We Will Be Back

And the last thing we said before flying home? We will be back! We don't know when – but we know that we have to come back, because a part of our hearts will always remain in Ghana.



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