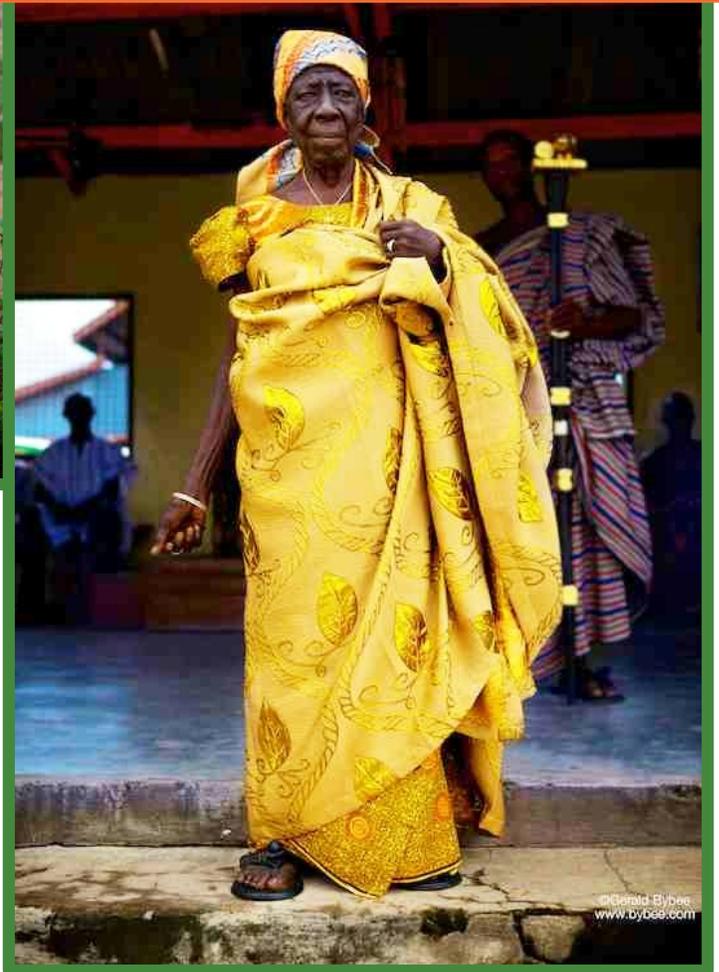




## Annual Report 2015



Project OKURASE, Inc.  
[www.projectokurase.org](http://www.projectokurase.org)

## Message from THE Leadership

Dear Friends of Project OKURASE,

This annual report covers the activities of Project OKURASE, an NGO in Ghana and Project OKURASE a 501 c 3 nonprofit in the United States for the year 2015. This was a year of program development, growth, and greeting visitors from many lands while continuing to solidify our relationships in Ghana. Nana Ama Yeboah continues to work as Project Coordinator in Ghana. Linda Norton continues to serve as Executive Director in the U.S. We are very fortunate that Project OKURASE continues to have stable, dependable, and highly capable management. This stability and commitment have fostered the great successes (discussed below) that we have had over the year towards our 5 objectives. Now we will share special events with you.

### Farewell to Barima Twum Ampofo III

From the start of Project OKURASE, we have had strong support from our Chief. She was with us every step of the way, helping the NGO attain land to build the Nkabom Centre, supporting every initiative, being ever available to greet and listen to us and greet our guests and partners around the world. In October we had to bid her farewell. We are very sad to face her death and we thank her for everything she did for Project OKURASE and Okurase. We will continue to make her proud.



Nana Ama Yeboah,  
Project Coordinator Ghana



Linda Norton  
Executive Director, USA

### Ghana and U.S. Partner on a Child's Behalf

In July we heard the great news that after 2 years of efforts, a child from Okurase, Francis, and his legal guardian had permission to travel to the U.S. for a thorough evaluation and possible treatment for Francis's loss of vision. After the Village Health Outreach, Francis and Owu traveled to Charleston, South Carolina. Students from the Miami Valley School had been to Okurase and met Francis. They returned home from their service learning trip to raise the funds for Francis to travel. One of their teachers, Anne Griffith, petitioned the doctors at Dayton, Ohio Children's Hospital to provide services at no cost and the doctors said yes. The medical care has been a huge blessing for Francis and all is still in process. While in the U.S., Francis has been learning English, attending school, and sharing Ghanaian culture through drumming. He is a member of the Nkabom Children's Cultural Troupe in Okurase.



### **What's the Relationship between a Village Health Outreach and a Library?**

In July we held our 7<sup>th</sup> annual Village Health Outreach (VHO). We had record numbers of Ghanaian volunteers from private practice, Government Nurses, and Acts in Afrika. It is so nice to see these long-term relationships continue to grow. Sometimes the VHO is attended by nonmedical folks who have other skills they would like to put to use. This was definitely the case when several people came together, cleaned, sanded, painted a room and made shelves. The library was born and a librarian on the trip, Wendy Taylor was just the right person to grade the books and put them in order. A big thank you goes out to all at the VHO who helped with the library.

### **A New Way to Address Waist Pains**

2015 was our first year to include therapeutic massage in our VHO. Many people with waist pains and frozen arms benefited in life changing ways. Cathy Meryanos, a licensed massage therapist, wrote about her work with one client and submitted it (with the client's permission) to a case study competition with the Massage Therapy Foundation. She won the gold prize. This has encouraged us to go forward with extending our massage therapy services.

As we move fully into 2016, we ask that you think about how you might like to be involved with Project OKURASE. We can surely use your help in Ghana or Charleston Medaase Paa! Together we can make it happen.

### **With Gratitude,**

Dr. Samuel Nkrumah "Powerful" Yeboah  
Director



Dr. Samuel Nkrumah Yeboah  
Director and Founder, Ghana

Dr. Cynthia Cupit Swenson  
Co-Director



Dr. Cindy Cupit Swenson  
Co-Director and Board Chair, USA

## About Project OKURASE

“Project OKURASE” is a 501 c 3 nonprofit in the United States and an NGO based in the rural village of Okurase, in the Upper West Akyem District of the eastern region of Ghana West Africa. Okurase is about one and one half hours from the capital of Accra. It is home to approximately 3,500 people, one-half of whom are children. Most of the adults are subsistence farmers or carvers. Though the people of the village are hard-working, they face many difficult challenges. The mission of Project OKURASE is:

*Collaborating with the village of Okurase, Ghana to develop sustainable, replicable solutions to life’s biggest challenges and sharing lessons learned with other impoverished villages*



Project OKURASE has a particular focus on women and orphans & vulnerable children across 5 objectives. These overarching objectives are focused on transforming the lives of the village by creating *collaborative, sustainable, and integrated* solutions to address the following areas of need: 1) Water and Sanitation; 2) Health and Nutrition; 3) Education and Technology; 4) Economic Self-Sufficiency; and, 5) Buildings and Energy Sources. Critical to our mission, **Okurase is positioning itself as a *Teaching Village*, a place for others around the world to visit to see solutions in place that were developed at a grassroots level, to be inspired, and to be empowered to put in place their own solutions.**

*A key underlying principle of Project OKURASE is the recognition that the people of the village know what is best for improving their lives and how to attain sustainability.* Thus, all programs are locally determined and locally led. Outside collaborators offer assistance with resources and ideas for implementation. While external collaborators are respected and valued, the elders and leaders who live in the village have the ultimate authority about whether a program will be initiated and how it will be adapted to the culture of the village. Using this model, the majority of projects to date have occurred after discussion with village leaders and as resources or expertise have become available. The village residents contribute labor (sweat equity), and collaborators help with expertise, fundraising and grants.

*A second underlying principal of Project OKURASE is the spirit of Nkabom, a Twi word for bringing people together in unity.* Nkabom refers to bringing the community together but also expanding the reach of the community to other villages and beyond. Indeed people from all over the world have come to Okurase to be involved.

### Objective 1 - Water and Sanitation:

Since Project Okurase began, unsafe water in the village has been a primary concern. In addition, there are few toilets in the village. As in many African villages, open defecation is the only option. Flying toilets (use of a plastic bag as a toilet that is throw on a rubbish heap) are also common. The health problems from such practice are immense. This and other refuse has created several mountains of rubbish, which spawns disease. The Odikro (Village Chief) and

Elders of the Village and everyone is interested and committed to finding a solution to these key issues. A summary of key areas of focus:

- a. Maintain a safe, clean water system – We have continued to enjoy safe water from the Amanda’s Legacy Safe Water System that was completed in 2014 but something very wonderful has happened. When we moved into the dry season (the Harmattan) this year, a time when no one usually has water at all, we were the only village in the area with water. As such, people from as far as an hour away came to Okurase to buy water. We are very happy to be a resource for many communities. We still need to expand our water pipes to the 7 subcommunities so that people far from the Marketplace will use the safe water instead of stopping by the closer river. It’s a health concern we are ever aware of. Solar lights installed at the Marketplace continue to provide light for us to gather water after dark. We are working to find funds for Phase two of the water system in Okurase which includes piping and extending the safe water to taps to locations in each sub community within the village.



- b. Build a sustainable toilet system – On the subject of “green” toilets, we continued on with the biogas system through a grant funded by the Global Center of the Medical University of South Carolina and working with Ghana’s top biogas specialist, Dr. Aklaku from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. After the biodigester was complete, the engineer in charge told us we needed to build 8 additional toilets so that we would have ample waste to create gas and fertilizer. We partnered with the village to raise the money and used local builders. We are looking forward to the next few months of use of the biogas system. Then we will interview residents and elders to see how it is going.



- c. Establish a pattern of environmental cleanliness by removing the waste mountains and managing day-to-day rubbish – Locally, a waste bin has been placed at the Marketplace to manage day-to-day rubbish. We have completed an initial assessment for removal of the two largest waste mountains. We have not yet secured the funding or identified a



partnership in order to start the waste mountain removal. Our plan is to remove the waste mountains and repurpose the land with parks, playgrounds, and soccer fields to prevent the creation of another waste mountain in its place.

## Objective 2 – Education and Technology:

Educational opportunities have been very rare for children and adults in Okurase. Most people are aware of the importance of education to well-being and job attainment. Project OKURASE's education and technology objectives span a variety of activities that include job skills training, formal education, and education in the arts. To be competitive in school and the job market, knowledge of computers is essential. Finally, Okurase wishes to serve humanity by educating people from around the world in how to solve serious problems in a sustainable way.

Our greatest accomplishments in Education and Technology in 2015 were to continue to fund 15 village children for school fees, expand the use of our Electronic Classroom, attain the funds for internet services, continue to support the Nkabom Children's Cultural Troupe, and expand our service learning program to welcome students around the world to Ghana and Charleston.

Okurase Electronic Classroom - We have students from schools outside Okurase coming in to use the laptops and learn keyboarding in the Okurase Electronic Classroom. This raises the esteem of our village to be able to serve other communities. A major breakthrough for us was to attain the funds to establish internet in the Electronic Classroom. Do you think it is easy to bring internet to a village that has no internet and no internet possibilities? This was no easy task and has taken nearly a year of intensive efforts and many contacts on the part of our U.S. Executive Director, Linda Norton and a College of Charleston intern, Eden Katz. We are down to deciding among 3 providers. The costs are astronomical and we will continue to fundraise ongoing as this service alone will greatly support education and learning in the entire village.



Electronic Classroom

Service Learning in Okurase -- In Okurase we have enjoyed having students come in for the last 6 years to join with us in service learning.

Okurase feels that they have much to offer in life lessons to the students. Our major goal in service learning, other than to complete a specific project, is to instill in students the importance of understanding that people who are the "recipients of help" already know what they need and how to implement projects in such a way that they are acceptable to the community and sustainable. For our brand of service learning, students can attach to current projects that can be completed or come with an



idea. If the latter, they must interact with the community to learn if a project is acceptable to the community and if it is, how to implement it in the local and culturally respectful way. They learn that outside forced ideas and aid rarely works and is generally never sustainable. Project OKURASE views these as essential lessons for people working in other countries.

Service Learning in Charleston, SC -- On the Charleston front, this year marked the FIRST year of a service learning project in Charleston. Miami Valley School (of Ohio) spent about a week in Charleston learning about African and African American History and current day issues. We started with a libation ceremony at Ft. Moultrie where slave ships landed from Ghana and other West African Ports. They visited Angel Oak, the slave museum and College of Charleston Avery Research Center. This Center was a hub for Charleston's African-American community from 1865–1954 that trained its students for professional careers and leadership roles. They also viewed the MUSC Exhibit, "Okurase: Portrait of a Village" to get to know Okurase. They ate Gullah-Geechee cuisine prepared by local Gullah-Geechee cooks. They worked at the food bank and partnered with Citadel Cadets (under the leadership of Dr. Conway Saylor) to work in economically disadvantaged schools reading to children.



They spoke with young men and elders from an economically disadvantaged community to understand how it is to try to break chains of poverty. They learned about the school to prison pipeline and the mass incarceration issue African Americans face. This group of High School freshmen will now go to Ghana to do service learning in Okurase and in so doing we complete the "Circle of Hope". All of us had such a great experience that in addition to extending our service learning trips in Ghana, we will open up the Gullah-Geechee cultural service learning trip to more schools in the United States (and even beyond if it is to be).



Internships -- Finally, we are seeing growth in our internship program. In 2015, Maggie Panetta spent 10 weeks and Shannon McGue, and John McGue spent 6 weeks in Okurase accomplishing important projects to help with infrastructure of our program. Maggie tackled admin work with Ghana and then moved into the library. A librarian was hired and Maggie trained her in the set-up of the library. John tackled the Electronic Classroom and got the computers in shape (viruses are so common) and helped Project OKURASE hire Ben to oversee the Electronic Classroom. Shannon conducted interviews with different people throughout the village to



understand what they would be taught in the Vocational School, near completion, outline procedures for Project OKURASE volunteers, helped with bookkeeping and created an initial outline for a microfinancing program.

### Objective 3 – Health and Nutrition

Health problems in Okurase certainly relate to environmental issues such as unsafe water and lack of sanitation. In addition, low food security and lack of nutritious foods foster malnourishment that sets the stage for even greater health problems. Historically, Okurase has had limited medical and health care services and little support in the way of children's nutrition. Health and nutrition objectives primarily target specific medical needs and nutrition.

Our health and nutrition progress has been in three important areas. First, we completed the pouring of the foundation and pillars for the Medical Centre. As funds come in we are well on our way to realizing this dream. Second, we held our 7th annual Village Health Outreach, treating nearly 1500 patients. We had record high participation of Ghanaian volunteers and a great force from the U.S. Third, 2015 was



the first year that licensed massage therapists, Cathy Meryanos and Louise Tracey joined us for the VHO. This service allowed us a new way of helping people with “waist pains” (neck and back pain), a common complaint by women from headpanning. Cathy treated one woman who had broken her arm and was frozen and unable to use her right arm and hand. One week of massage therapy unfroze her and allowed her to resume normal functioning. The right hand is important to restore because it is culturally taboo to give or receive with the left hand. Cathy wrote about her work with this client and submitted it (with the client's permission) to a case study competition with the Massage Therapy Foundation. She won the gold prize. This has encouraged us to go forward with extending our massage therapy services. In the preventions realm, our organic community garden continues to operate. We look forward to opportunities to extend the organic gardening to family homes.



## Objective 4 – Economic Self-Sufficiency

Limited job training opportunities and lack of resources for business start-up have been major barriers to men and women moving forward in their lives and educating and feeding their children. Project OKURASE's economic self-sufficiency objectives address training and support of business start-up for men and women but with a special focus on women, who have less opportunity and greater obstacles to overcome.

The Women's Gari Cooperative continues to operate. In 2015 they offered a microloan to a woman who wanted to start her own fish frying business and this business has become very successful. It is important to also add that one woman in the village was trained in basic therapeutic massage by the licensed massage therapists and we look forward to extending her training and training others. This is a very viable business that can allow the village to provide its own health care in such cases.

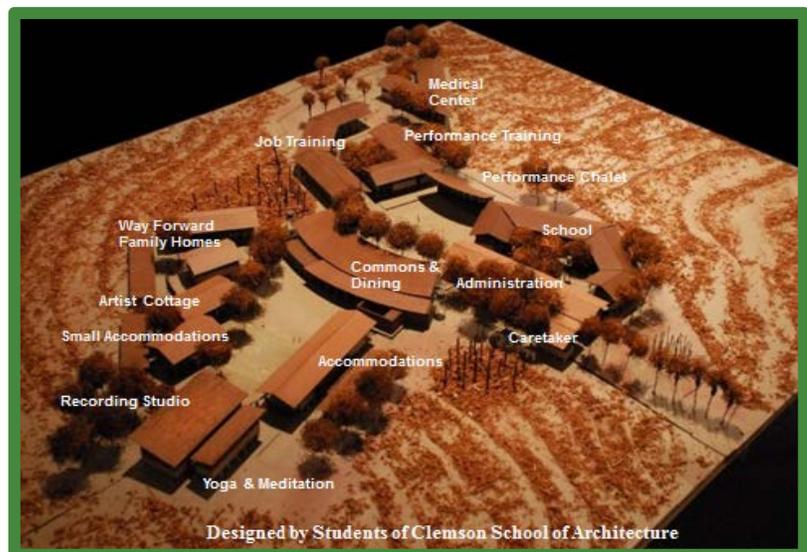


Women Gari Makers

## Objective 5 – Building and Energy Sources

Central to the vision for Project OKURASE is to build the Nkabom Centre for Skills Training and Formal Education. When the Nkabom Centre is completed, it will contain 17 buildings. The building process itself has offered an opportunity to teach construction-related job skills. Furthermore, Ghana has had significant challenges with electricity outages and the cost of electricity is soaring. Okurase is a village with few electricity resources but with a great resource in the sun. As such, solar power is a strong priority.

We are about ready to look at our final punch list for our first building in the Nkabom Centre for Skills Training and Education, our 18,000 sq ft Vocational



Skills Training School in Progress

School. As we near completion of the School, we have begun construction of the toilets that will support it. We hope to have the school open in 2016. Currently, we are evaluating building a road through the village to more effectively reach the School. Fundraising and development for this project is ongoing.



## Conferences, Research Papers and Active Grants

### **Conference Presentations**

Swenson, C. C. (2015, November). Small Business Development as a Strategy to Eliminate Depression Among Women in Rural Ghana. Invited presentation for Grand Rounds, Medical University of South Carolina

Spratt, E.G. Presented the results of a grant from the MUSC Center for Global Health, *Pilot Study: Home Visitation Interventions to Improve Nutrition in Rural Ghana*.

Drs. Linda Plunkett and Cynthia Cupit Swenson delivered a presentation entitled *Economic Empowerment of Women as a Development Strategy in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Report from a Village in Rural Ghana*, at the Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium in Oxford, England.

Nana Assah, a doctoral student in Pharmacy at the Medical University of South Carolina delivered a presentation entitled, *Developing a Partnership Between MUSC and Okurase*, for the MUSC Center for Global Health in Charleston, South Carolina.

Linda Norton, Dr. Cynthia Cupit Swenson, Dr. Sarah Logan, Shelley Kawamura, Austin Logan, Matthew Norton, Nana Akosua Yeboah, and Damorea Johnson held a Project OKURASE Showcase presentation at the National Youth Leadership Conference in Washington, DC.

Dr. Eve Spratt gave a lecture on Project OKURASE and global health for the Medical University of South Carolina Global Health Class.

### **Research Papers Submitted for Publication**

Meryanos, C. (2015). Utilizing the massage chair to address women's health in rural Africa: A case study. Presented as case study competition to the Massage Therapy Foundation. Winner of the Gold Prize.

Drs. Linda Plunkett and Cynthia Cupit Swenson submitted a manuscript on *Economic Empowerment of Women as a Development Strategy in Sub-Saharan Africa*. This manuscript was submitted to the Conference Proceedings Publication of Oxford Women's Leadership Conference.

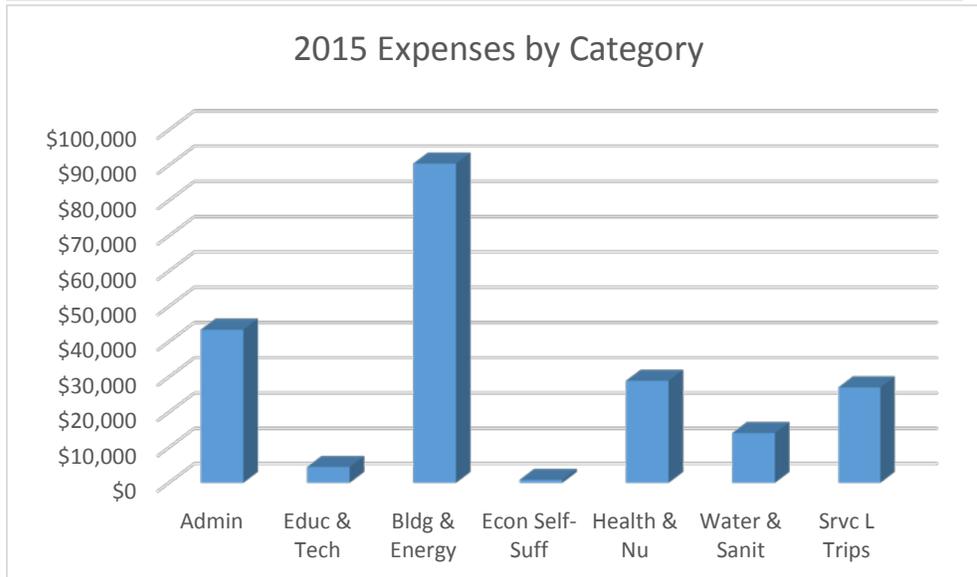
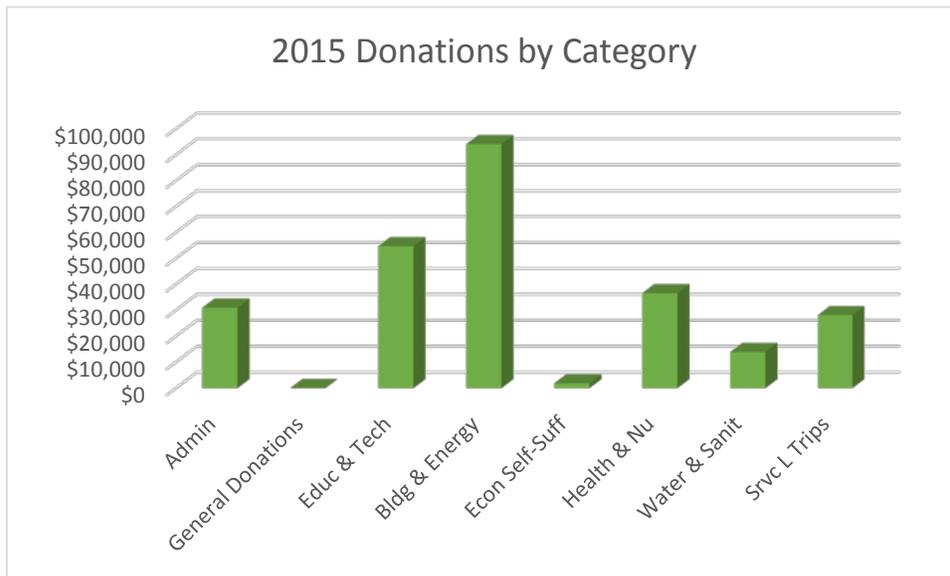
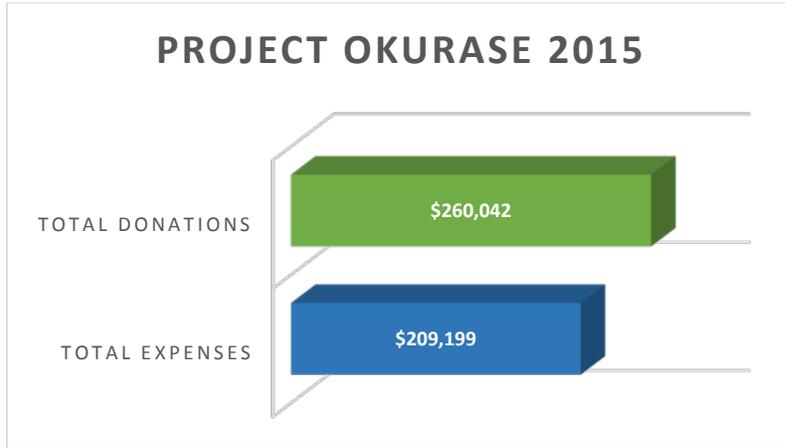
Dr. Cynthia Cupit Swenson, Dr. Samuel Yeboah, Nana Ama Yeboah, Dr. Margarite Archie-Hudson, and Dr. Eve Spratt submitted a manuscript on Okurase as a model for a new type of foreign aid to an international public affairs journal.

***Active Grants in 2015***

Swenson, C.C., & Logan, S. received a grant from the MUSC Center for Global Health, *Improving Health Through Implementation of a Village-Based Complex Biogas System*.

## Resources and Financial Management

In fiscal year 2015, Project OKURASE made progress on all objectives and continued to grow. Here's a summary of our donations and expenses in total and by objective:



## Donate and Make a Difference

As you saw in our financial report above, your donations primarily support jobs for people in the village as they work to build the school, medical centre, and biogas systems. In addition, donations help us purchase medicines and supplies for our Village Health Outreach, cover school fees for children, and run our local programs. Our service learning and internship programs stand on their own and do not operate on private donations.

Importantly, in Okurase there are no handouts. Our view is that handouts create inequality. Every resource put into Project OKURASE is met with work and commitment from the village.

If it is possible for you to make a financial donation, we would be very grateful and will use the funds with highest integrity. Donations may be made in the following ways:

- Through our website: [www.projectokurase.org](http://www.projectokurase.org)
- By mail: Project OKURASE, c/o Dr. Cindy Swenson, 176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 104, Charleston, SC 29407

There are many ways to be involved with Project OKURASE other than financial donations. Donating time, resources, skills, and ideas are ways others have been involved. Here are some ways to consider:

- Stay in Okurase and work on a service project
- Help raise funds
- Donate resources such as solar devices, clothing, building supplies, technology, a vehicle
- Sell merchandise made in Okurase
- Bring your sustainable solution that's aligned with our objectives and test it in a safe and supportive environment
- Assist with grants
- Provide training
- Bring your students

The spirit of volunteerism and our global partnerships are our main support! We look forward to working with you. Here's how to reach us:

- Linda Norton: [Linda.norton@projectokurase.org](mailto:Linda.norton@projectokurase.org)
- Dr. Cindy Swenson: [swensocc@musc.edu](mailto:swensocc@musc.edu)
- Nana Ama Yeboah: [nyeboaa@gmail.com](mailto:nyeboaa@gmail.com)
- Dr. Samuel Nkrumah Yeboah: [powerfuldrums@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:powerfuldrums@yahoo.co.uk)
- [www.projectokurase.org](http://www.projectokurase.org)

## Friends Who Help Project OKURASE

### *Individuals*

Over the past 9 years as we have started Project OKURASE, many individuals from around the world have made donations and contributions that have made it possible for us to meet our objectives and change and save lives. We are grateful beyond words for all the people involved.

**Organizations and Groups**

Following is a list of organizations or groups that have been or are currently involved with Project OKURASE.

<b>ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS</b>	<b>NATURE OF INVOLVEMENT</b>
<b>UNITED STATES</b>	
MST, Inc.	Corporate Philanthropy donor towards building the skills training school.
Amanda's Fund	Raised money to hire Water Missions International to develop a safe water system in Okurase that opened in January 2014.
United Support of Artists for Africa	Grantor for several small projects.
National Christian Foundation	Funds for medical care and towards building the skills training school.
The Citadel	Service learning projects with Project OKURASE; Faculty visit to the village.
Church of the Holy Cross	Donated funds for medicines and shipping.
John's Island Church of Christ	Donate clothing and medical supplies to Okurase for the annual Village Health Outreach.
Clemson University	Internship program with Project OKURASE; Service Project – produced architectural design for the Nkabom Centre and made brickmaking machines.
College of Charleston	Internship program with Project OKURASE and Service Learning Projects in Ghana – provide course credit for high school and college service learners in Okurase.
Medical University of South Carolina	Global Center has funded 8 small grants for Project OKURASE; service learning by medical students and residents; university president funded a photo exhibition with images of the village by Gerald Bybee from San Francisco- the exhibition is on permanent display at the Medical University.
Studies Abroad for Global Education	Arranges service learning trips to Okurase and Charleston.
Porter Gaud School of Charleston	Service learning projects in Okurase; raised funds for Project OKURASE.
La Jolla Country Day School	Service learning projects in Okurase – worked with the village to build an electronic classroom.
Miami Valley School of Dayton, Ohio	Service learning in Ghana, raised money to bring an Okurase village child going blind to be treated in the U.S.; Raised funds for Nkabom Children's Cultural Troupe to conduct a tour in the U.S.
University of Leeds, UK	Sent student service learners.

American International School in Riyadh	Service learning in Okurase.
The Clinton School, Little Rock, Arkansas	Internship program with Okurase.
Possibilities without Borders	Student organization at the College of Charleston that held a fundraiser for Project OKURASE to help support the work of students going to Ghana.
Gethsemani Circle of Friends	Nonprofit fiscal agent until Project OKURASE attained 501 c3 status, also raised funds for Project OKURASE.
Gethsemani Quilters	African American women quilter's group that has made quilts for orphans and vulnerable children in Okurase for 7 years. They traveled to Okurase 2 years ago and taught a week-long quilting class to women.
Djole African Dance and Drum Company	Children's dance company in Charleston, SC that raised funds for school fees and medicines for children in Okurase.
The Charleston, SC Chapter of The Links, Incorporated	African American women's service organization that held various drives to donate items for Okurase programs – such as the sewing centre, health outreach.
Baker Seeds	Donated seeds to allow us to develop an organic community garden.
Pedals for Progress	A nonprofit in New Jersey that donated bicycles and sewing machines to Okurase.
Gerald Bybee Studios, San Francisco	Volunteered his services to develop an exhibition of images of the village for the Medical University of South Carolina.
Congresswoman Barbara Lee	Wrote letters of support and presented Project OKURASE to the Congressional Black Caucus. Led to a visit with Congressman Clyburn.
Rhion Magee, Creative Director of DreamWorks Animation, Los Angeles California	Designed early marketing materials and developed the design for what is now the Okurase market bag that is made in the village.
Chris Wilson of Moving Pictures, Inc., Charlotte, North Carolina	Volunteer filmmaker who created some short videos for Okurase.
Mayor Joseph Riley of Charleston	Declared January 22, 2013 Project OKURASE day and has been supportive in encouraging Charleston to be involved with Okurase.
Mason Preparatory School	Helped design a science class for Okurase children. Donated clothing.
Water Missions International	Hired by Project OKURASE to develop a safe water system in the village.
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>	
Mayor's Office, Totnes, Devon, UK	Held a fundraiser for Project OKURASE.
Unity Train – an African drumming and dance group in the UK	Held fundraisers for Project OKURASE.

North Devon Respect Music Festival	Used some proceeds from the festival to help put a roof on the skills training school.
Grove School	A primary school in Devon, UK that held a fundraiser for Project OKURASE.
Dr. Dominique Chadwick and Patrick Chadwick, Filmmakers from Cambridge, England	Volunteer filmmakers for a women's fruit drying project in Okurase.
<b>EUROPE</b>	
Ambassadors Club Westland – Belgium	Men's civic club that held a fundraiser to help with building the skills training school.
<b>GHANA</b>	
Royal Keep Fit Club	Helps with cleaning job site and fitness events at time of the annual Village Health Outreach.
Action Keep Fit Club	Helps with cleaning job site and fitness events at time of the annual Village Health Outreach.
The Lincoln School – Accra Ghana	Service learning project in Okurase.
Okurase Keep Fit Club in Okurase	Organizes a run for the startup of every annual Village Health Outreach.
Upper West Akyem District Municipal Chief Executive - Ghana	Attends project functions to give speeches of support.
Canadian Business Association in Ghana; His Excellency Alhaji Nantogma Abdulai	Donation of supplies for digging trenches.
African Women's Development Fund	Grantor – 2 small grants.
Adeiso Health Centre	Supports the annual Village Health Outreach medical clinic; provides medical services to volunteers as needed.
The Churches of Okurase	Provide fresh vegetables to feed volunteers at the annual Village Health Outreach.
Sight for Africa in Accra	Helped with vision care at the annual Village Health Outreach.
OIC International in Accra	Grantor – a feeding grant for Okurase orphans and vulnerable children.
Peace Corps, Ghana	Volunteer helped with our Village Health Outreach.
ACTS in Afrika	Volunteer medical support of our annual Village Health Outreach.
Infanta Malaria	Volunteer medical support of our annual Village Health Outreach.
Nkabom Artists and Craftspeople Association	Volunteer support of all Project OKURASE events.
Alero Olympio Trust	Loaned Project OKURASE a brickmaking machine that allowed the startup of the first skills training program in brickmaking.
Ataa Lartey and the Street Children's Academy in Accra	Artistic support of Project OKURASE events.

Abibata Mahama, Filmmaker in Accra	Volunteer support of filming for a fruit drying project.
Medical Assistance Program (MAP)	Donation of medicines and malaria testing kits for annual Village Health Outreach.

## Wish List

There is always so much that can be done. If you have an interest in helping with one of our wish list items, please contact us to discuss the details. Here is Okurase's current wish list:

### Key Building Projects

- Purchase a Kia truck for hauling supplies and materials.
- Complete the toilets at Nkabom Centre.
- Complete the road from the marketplace to the Nkabom Centre
- Complete the medical center – We have completed the foundation and pillars to support the second floor.
- Complete the security hut.
- Build a fence/protective barrier around the Nkabom Centre.
- Solar Energy – install solar energy for skills training school building, medical centre, and security hut, Nkabom House compound, and Project OKURASE office.

### Health and Nutrition

- Develop the Franics Yevuga Eye Care Centre.
- Implement a Therapeutic Massage School.
- Build household organic and medicinal gardens

### Water and Sanitation

- Biogas Toilet System – install additional toilets and build systems in other subcommunities
- Expand Safe Water System – In January 2014 we opened a safe water systems that pumps water from near the Nkabom Centre to the village marketplace with 6 taps. We plan to extend the pipes to all sub communities.
- Remove waste mountains from the village and repurpose the land with playgrounds and soccer fields.

### Education and Technology

- Internet Access, Electronic Classroom and Internet Cafe - we need to complete the installation of the satellite internet service and hire a technology person to help manage it and the electronic classroom and to get the Internet Cafe implemented. Funding is needed to support the ongoing costs of Internet access in Okurase.
- School Fees for Village Children – The fees depend on the school the child attends and the city in which that school is located. Range of fees = \$200 – \$800 annually
- Community Organic Garden - we invested in a community garden and we would like to expand it and encourage the community to eat healthy vegetables and learn organic farming.

### Economic Self-Sufficiency

- we need to ensure the Gari business is continuing to move forward with marketing, packaging and expanding the market

- We would like to develop a training course to teach basic business skills and entrepreneurship to people who start small businesses through Project OKURASE
- We would like to support the women of the gari cooperative to continue to provide microloans to women in the community.
- We need to purchase vehicles to help reduce costs for the building of the Nkabom Centre and to implement a small business around using and maintaining them. We would like to train a group of women and men to do vehicle maintenance and repair and driving. These are all businesses that could go forward well in Okurase.

## Looking Forward

In the U.S. and Ghana we look forward to working together to meet several goals in 2016.

### **Finance:**

We expect to increase funding by 5% through online donations, in order to expand unrestricted funds, and hope to initiate an annual online fundraiser by year's end.

### **Objectives:**

Water and Sanitation: We expect to complete gathering statistics on our biogas toilet installation and define a strategy to implement a toilet solution in Okurase. We will start a recycling program in Okurase to begin to manage the waste problem. In addition we will pursue grants and other funding to expand the clean water system to all sub communities.

Education and Technology: We expect to implement a Satellite Internet system that will support the objectives of the Okurase Electronic Classroom as well as an Internet Café to support our Economic Self-Sufficiency objective. We will continue to fund school fees for children who are unable to attend school otherwise. We will continue to help and support local schools as much as we can. We will continue to work with the Nkabom Children's Cultural Troupe. We will continue to implement and expand service learning trips and internships.

Health and Nutrition: Our annual Village Health Outreach will be conducted July 2016. We will continue to help village residents who need medical care as much as possible outside the health outreach. We will continue to build the medical clinic at the Nkabom Centre. We are investigating funding to develop the Franics Yevuga Eye Care Centre and a Therapeutic Massage School that would be located within the Nkabom Centre. We will work with the Peace Corps to attain a village-based Peace Corps Volunteer. We will work to sustain and expand our organic garden program and add medicinal gardens.

Economic Self-Sufficiency: In 2016 we will continue to support the expansion of business for the Okurase Gari Cooperative and encourage them to continue to provide microloans to women to support small local businesses. We plan to work with entrepreneurship groups to develop business-related training for village residents starting up small businesses.

Buildings and Energy Sources: Our primary goal in 2016 is to open the Vocational School at the Nkabom Centre. We will work to find funds to build toilets at the Nkabom Centre and install solar lighting and power. We will continue to build on the medical clinic as much as our funding allows.

### **Administration**

We plan to complete the implementation of our new website and implement an online donation system and a donor management system that focuses on donor retention.

*We hope that you will join Project OKURASE in any way that you can. We remain grateful for the leadership of the people of Okurase and all our volunteers and supporters.*