

SEASONS GREETINGS



Abakaliki 27 December 2016

Dear Friends,

Belated holiday greetings to everyone! I returned yesterday from spending Christmas, (for the sixth year in a row!), at Offia Oji and Ephuenyim Health Centers. It was inspiring to welcome the Christmas babies, distributing Christmas packages to poor families and simply be with the health workers.

We are in the Hamartan season. Temperatures, above 40 only last week, has dropped to the chilly ☺ low 20s, and everyone's reaching for their winter coats. Every surface is covered by dust.

2016 was a year of consolidation and strengthening the team for us in AMURT Nigeria. We are happy to now have the services of four experienced midwives. Mary Jane, Agatha, Rita and Norah, and they are all resident in the rural health centers and have made a big difference. Throughout the year we had five doctors working full time, including Dr. Omogo, who now lives at Akparata Health Center, while also taking care of the new health center at Inikiri that opened in October.

In 2016 we finally gave family planning the attention it deserves. Chinwendu joined AMURT this year as family planning and health education coordinator. Together with the health workers and the Maternal Health Promoters in the villages, she has taken the campaign to every village in our project areas, to increase awareness, acceptance and access to family planning.

Family planning was the lead topic in Health Rallies organized in villages in three project areas. They combine health education (talks, Q&A and educational dramas, with displays of local culture. In each village hundreds of men, women and children enjoyed a colorful festival atmosphere while also increasing their knowledge of key health issues. The program has strengthened the relationship between the villages and the health centers.

BIRTHS



1950 + births

AMBULANCE REFERRALS / EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE



**240 + emergency referrals.
Financial assistance for over
150 patients, incl. surgeries
HEALTH RALLIES**



**Health education and
cultural rallies in
eighteen villages .**

The Water and Sanitation Team were very busy, installing 17 new boreholes in three local governments, including Ezza North where we focused on villages affected by last year's cholera outbreaks. Chukwu and Ejike worked hard and were able to overcome the bad roads to reach remote villages with the heavy drilling machines and compressors. They also repaired dozens of broken boreholes and monitored all the boreholes we have done the last six years.

The Economic Empowerment program, for women who are sole breadwinners in their families, doubled in size and reach. Close to 90 women, mostly widows, were empowered to start their own business. Our model is a revolving credit fund cooperatively managed by the women themselves. These women's groups are now operating in Odeligbo, Elugwu Ettam, Ephuenyim and Offia Oji, and we hope to start another early next year.

Our four ambulances did incredible service in 2016, saving so many lives. This year the number of referrals increased to over 240, more than 50 % obstetric emergencies. Our ambulance drivers, Emmanuel, John, Emmanuel and Joseph never failed, and were always at their post.

In 2016 we saw the cost of emergency referrals rise dramatically. Nearly all our patients are poor farmers. Without financial assistance most would refuse the referrals. Seven referrals resulted in surgery for children paid for by AMURT.

Our construction was boosted by a generous donation of 1100 bags of cement from the Dangote Foundation. Paul and Sunday were running daily between Abakaliki and Inikiri, and from to Odeligbo and Ephuenyim, carrying construction materials and supervising. The communities have been responsible for the labour. The clinic management committees have demonstrated how to handle operating expenses and maintenance and at same time save for expansion and improvement.

With new lab equipment and laboratory scientists, Daniel and Stephanie, joining the team, the quality of care in the clinics received a big boost. We had over 80 blood transfusions in the village. All were successful and many key in saving children close to death from anemia caused by complicated malaria.

NEW HEALTH CENTERS



**Inikiri Health Center
opened in October**

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



**90 women assisted to
start own business**

WATER & SANITATION



18 new boreholes drilled.



WATCH AMURT NIGERIA DOCUMENTARY

www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0atqdpzYzI&t=38s

Our main focus remains maternal and newborn care. The number of births in the health centers rose close to 2000, in some areas close to 90 % of deliveries were at the health center. We had the joy of three triplets births,, all nine triplets are alive and strong.

Respect and appreciation to our doctors and health workers who do the main work. Dr. Agu and Dr.Christian were joined by Dr. Omogo and Dr. Clifford who takes care of Odeligbo and Elugwu Ettam. We also enjoyed having Dr. Titilayo with us for most of the year and Dr. Serge joined in December. The courage, care and competence of our doctors and health workers saved so many lives and they are the reason that the health centers have won the confidence of the communities.

AMURT Nigeria has chosen to work in remote areas. The AMURT drivers carry heavy loads on bad, near impassible roads every day. Chief driver Ozze, with his team, Peter, Sunday, Marvelous and Lawrence, carried us safely the whole year, without a single accident, often coming back long after dark. We are grateful to them.

The office and accounting staff, Ndidi, Martha, Aflenu, and Michael kept the office and accounts in order and made sure that we met all our obligations as an N.G.O. in Nigeria. They were the center that held things together.

Our deep gratitude to Philippe and staff at GMT Limited in Lagos, our main sponsors. We also thank Dangote Foundation, Hearts2Africa, Voice of a Child, AMURT Italy, AMURT UK, AMURT Spain, AMURT U.S., and all the individual donors in Switzerland, Norway, Australia, U.K., U.S. and other countries. The individual donations were channeled for the emergency assistance and helped to save lives, the main reason why we are here.

To bring primary health care to the rural population is a huge challenge. Ebonyi State has a very long way to go. The whole AMURT Nigeria team is determined to continue the efforts to improve the quality of care and to reach more and people in need.

Happy New Year to all

Dada Daneshananda

Dada Daneshananda - Project coordinator

Updates and photos: www.facebook.com/AMURT-West-Africa



SCHOLARSHIPS & TRAINING



Health workers in School of Health on AMURT scholarships.

CONSTRUCTION



Inikiri Health Center concluded. New wings at Ephuenyim and Odeligbo are close to completion.

AMURT TEAM STRENGTHENED



New staff in 2016: 4 midwives, 2 doctors, 2 lab scientists, family planning coordinator and 10 new CHEWs