

2010

AKROWA AGED-LIFE FOUNDATION



**RESTORING DIGNITY
TO AGEING**



Akrowa Aged Life Foundation

Dear Delegate,

We fully welcome you all to the 1st. International Seminar on Ageing in Ghana being organized by our foundation and partnered by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Employment & Social Welfare.

The fight against hopelessness at old age has just begun. It is a declared 'holy war' to liberate society from the fear that engulfs the approach of old age. The clock of joy is ticking away; sunset is fast approaching, hope speedily fading and light, dimming on our aged kinsmen and women. We must eliminate fear, anxiety and pain; dispel disillusion, uncertainty and shame. Help make old-age a welcomed life experience by joining the crusade to re-define ageing.

Help restore lost dignity to ageing. Each minute late gets the grave closer, deeper and hotter.

We wish you a pleasant seminar.

Ambassador Charles Agyei Amoama,
(Board Chairman)

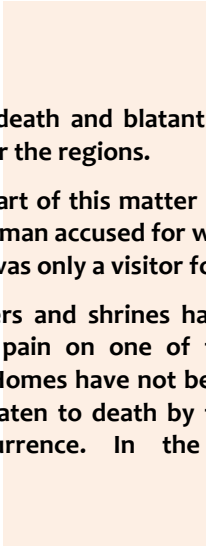


Preface:

The drastic deterioration in the care of the Aged and its consequential social implications are fast becoming a global phenomenon. It is one weighty subject that has escaped several prolific writers in recent times.



Only a few years into eldercare has forcefully brought home the issues of ageing and the ills associated with aged-life in Ghana. Delving in this matter reveals vivid and graphical instances of abandonment, battery, neglect, social isolation, poverty, rejection, stigmatization false



accusation for witchcraft, death and blatant human right abuses suffered by the aged all over the regions.

Deeply imbedded in the heart of this matter is the recent burning to death of a 72-year old woman accused for witchcraft for straying into a room in a house she was only a visitor for two days.

Witch camps, prayer centers and shrines have been turned into avenues for perpetuating pain on one of the most vulnerable groups of our population. Homes have not been safer either. True stories of aged persons beaten to death by family members, is a minute by minute occurrence. In the communities, this

maltreatment is so rife that certain aged persons in witch-camps find such places safer havens than their own homes. The belief that people have in witchcraft and the super-natural is amazing. It is not an issue of education, it has nothing to do with social status and not the least associated with finances. There are professors, politicians and business magnates with entrenched belief in witchcraft.

Low wages and high levels of unemployment make social security and pensions systems unattractive. The sorry and pathetic states of pensioners are a measure of the efficacy of these schemes. Sadly enough At least 80% of the workforce is located in the private

informal sector where peasant agriculture is the mainstream economic activity and social security is unknown.

In the nutshell, there are virtually no social strategies, social safety-nets and programs that address the issues of the aged. The life of the aged is one of regret. and only goes to support the old adage “Wo benyin a betu” meaning “you would grow up to experience it”. What is the ‘it’? the unbearable hardship associated with old age!! The situation finds expression in several people tampering with their ages to push ageing as far away as possible. But gradually, it will catch up with us all.

The effort of government must be recognized with the introduction of the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) program. Whilst parting government in the back for this singular laudable policy, managers of the program must be encouraged to exhibit high level of commitment and fairness in its implementation and demonstrate patriotism and good judgment to the cause of the aged to realize the vision of the program. AA-LF shall call on government to enhance the program with an upward review of the level of the intervention. As more young family members head to the city or abroad for jobs, or “to find their fortune”, and the aged and children are left in the village to eke



Finding economic solace in the dangerous streets of the big cities

out an existence on the dwindling family land without proper tools, proper systems and support, the care for the aged as accorded in the African traditional society is now a shirked responsibility.

SOME CHILLING EXPERIENCES

1. Aunty C

‘C’ was abandoned, battered by the community and forsaken by her only child, a daughter. At 91 she had been accused for witchcraft and abandoned and confined to a small half roofed one-room hut allowed for flow of water in times of rains. AA-LF offered her total relief with daily homecare. She regained her dignity,



Pictures show various stages of her recovery.

respect and rightful place in life after one year on the program. She made a passionate appeal:

'I AM NOW SO HEALTHY YOU MUST FIND ME A HUSBAND'

2. Mama 'S'

Paralyzed for the best part of seven years, AA-LF made a discovery of her and took her through a regimented daily physio routine with simple rollators, a clutch and a walking frame. Just seven months into the program she walked out to the Activity Centre all on her own with only a clutch. She also benefited from the free supply of care bed, mattress and beddings. The 90-year old lady only sees her



recovery as magic. Pretty Madam 'S' would have been paralyzed till death.

The totality of the poor state of the aged in Ghana is the driving force behind the dream of a Ghanaian musician based and trained in Denmark as a social and health care helper, in the establishment of

AKROWA AGED-LIFE FOUNDATION (AA-LF)

The birth of AA-LF and the creation of the 'Hope for the Aged' (HoFTA) platform seek primarily to address and reverse these canker through forging alliances between the exuberance and

sheer strength and raw energies of youth groups through public and community interactive education, advocacy and capacity building aim at restoring dignity and value to the aged and making ageing a welcomed and acceptable life experience.

The platform recognizes

1. Medical and regenerative health care
2. Social engagement and reintegration
3. Economic re-engineering

as vehicle through which issues of ageing in the Ghanaian context could be dealt with decisively. AA-LF introduces a 'home-visit care'

Collins Woode Mensah – FOUNDER



system that offers the aged hope and a greater desire for life by re-invigorating the traditional Ghanaian social system of community oneness with a touch of modernity.

"THEY HELPED US GROW OUR TEETH; LET US HELP THEM LOSE THEIRS"

Our objectives

- **Combat poverty**
- **Reduce isolation**
- **Challenge neglect**
- **Defeat ageism**
- **Prevent future deprivation.**
- **Enter into partnership with civil-society aged groupings**
- **Offer training in geriatrics for the youth**
- **Undertake awareness campaigns on ageing**

AA-LF's ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR.

1. **Establishment of the Mobile Medical Brigade**

The system offers door-to-door medical care to the aged and removes long distance travels to seek unavailable medical care.



2. Registration on National Health Insurance Scheme
AA-LF pays and gets the aged registered to benefit from the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS).



3. The Care-giver-‘Volunteer Force’

With a volunteer force of very young persons of varied backgrounds, AA-LF offers a 24/ 7 live-in Home Care in such areas as, but not limited to the following for free:

Cooking and light house-keeping, Laundry, Bathing, dressing, grooming assistance, Assistance with walking and transfer from Wheel chair to bed & vice versa, Physiotherapy.



4. Distribution of free equipment

THE aged persons receives free donation of various items including care beds, wheel chairs, mattresses, clutches, rollators, walking frames, beddings, clothes, mosquito nets, etc which AA-LF received from some Danish donor partners.





5. **The Trojborg Local Activity Centre**
Situated at Danfa, it was opened for the aged to socialise to kill boredom, social isolation, deprivation and neglect. Here, they play games, watch TV, organise choir and share companionship. Monthly durbars are held for general socialisation at which medical check-ups are organised.





6. Forging of Partnership

In view of the three-prone approach to finding lasting solutions to the ills of ageing, AA-LF recognised three areas of collaboration and is pleased to mention the Partners as:

a. **HEALTH CONCERN NURSING COLLEGE**

Health Concern Ghana is a private institution in Accra accredited by the Nurses' and Midwives' Council of Ghana to run the Ministry of Health



approved Health Assistant Training (Clinical) programme. Health Concern is offering free geriatric training for volunteers on AA-LF's project. It is a training facility for Danish Nursing students on internship with AA-LF in Ghana.



(B). PENTECOST HOSPITAL

It is the medical facility for geriatric care for aged on the AA-LF program and also a practical field for nursing students from various institutions including Heacon College and Social & Health School (SOSU) in Denmark on practical attachment with AA-LF.



**AA-LF Members with Director Bente Strager
and Coordinator Else Pihl & SOSU students**

(C). SOSU SILKEBORG, DENMARK

**Social & Health School (SOSU),
Silkeborg sends student for
internship with AA-LF in Ghana prior
to graduation.**



**(D) ACCRA PREMIER LIONS' CLUB – APLC has been and continues
to be a worthy partner as it continues to sponsor and actively
participate in the AA-LF annual programs.**

7. AA-LF DONATIONS

Since its inception, AA-LF has made significant donations to some institutions with the view to assisting them offer top-range medical assistance to the aged and their communities at large in fulfillment of its social responsibility towards humanity.

a. Danfa Hospital. AA-LF made a donation of hospital equipment to the Danfa Health Centre.



a.

b.

b. Barclays Bank/Red Cross – AA-LF made a donation of medical equipment to the



TARI No.1 Hospital constructed by the Barclays Bank and the Red Cross society to mitigate medical setbacks as a result of the floods in the north in 2008-2009. According to the Barclays Bank, this was the first and only time the august bank has received from the society

c. Apos Pentecost Prayer Camp

AA-LF continued its social responsibility program with the donation of basic equipment like care beds, mattresses, rollators, walking frames, bedside tables etc to the prayer Okanta for use of the aged inmates of the camp.





Recent Events

1. **Free eye-screening and distribution of spectacles**
Partnered by the Accra Premier Lions' Club and the Pentecost Hospital, AA-LF organised free eye-screening and distribution of lenses to about 300 aged in the Ga-East municipality in 2010



2. Geriatrics & Nursing Training for Akrowa Volunteer-Caregivers

Eighteen youth volunteer-caregivers with AA-LF have received free basic training in geriatrics and general nursing at the Health Concern Nursing School after a three month intensive course.

3. Denmark trip by Members of the Board of Directors – Four members of the AA-LF Board undertook a two-week tour of Denmark as guests of SOSU Silkeborg and visited the Danish Parliament in Copenhagen and met with Michael Aastrup Jensen, the youngest Mayor in Danish history.



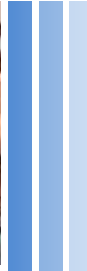
The way forward

AA-LF invites individuals, corporate organisations, churches, retired professionals and society at large to join hands with us to embark on holistic agenda to realise our core objectives:

combat poverty, reduce isolation, challenge neglect, offer professional training in geriatrics for the youth for employment creation and to undertake awareness campaigns on ageing

- **To seek partnerships to raise capital to build facilities that will provide a one-stop service for the Aged**

- To support hospitals and clinics to incorporate geriatrics into their daily operations and to lobby for inclusion of geriatrics into the nursing curriculum as a matter of urgency
- To improve on services through continuous education and capacity building for staff and volunteers
- To help formulate and offer a more aged-friendly insurance service to the aged.
- To create the aged-forum to discuss matters on ageing and to offer solutions.



**P.O.Box CT- 4017
Cantonments Accra. Ghana
Tel: +233 24 4 029216**



**Louis Hammerichsvej 13 4tv
8200 Århus N. Denmark
Tel: +45 5 0 352038**



**E-mail:
carefortheaged@aalf.info**

**Website:
www.aalf.info**