

Newsletter January 2018

Dear members of SAREPTA Suisse, friends and donors,
Very Happy New Year 2018!

This newsletter will tell you of the recent trip of the General Secretary of SAREPTA to Côte d'Ivoire and the beginning of the project work, i.e. the drilling of a well and the construction of a storage house as mentioned in our last letter the second semester of 2017.

We arrived in Abidjan November 28, 2017 and, as anticipated, spent that first night there. On the 29th we took a taxi to the airport and caught our flight to Korhogo arriving with a 2 hour delay due to the arrival of the French President in Abidjan for the Summit meeting of the African Union.

The deep well drilling project

On the 30th of November we met with Mr. Soro Karime, President of the local representation, and together went to the office of the NGO I.D.E.A.L, the structure contacted to do the drilling and instillation of a hydraulic pump on the site of the SAREPTA medical center in Tangafila.

We discussed the work and negotiated a price with the Director of the NGO (Mr. Ouattara). After several minutes of discussion we were able to obtain a reduction in the proposed price of 6,000,000 francs CFA to 5,500,000 francs CFA. We therefore decided to meet on the site of the project in Tangafila on the 1st of December.

That day the drilling project team came as well as the future construction manager for the medical center (Mr. Soro Gnamidjo). Our objective was to decide on where to drill the well and where to place the medical center on the site.

After a long day of working with the magnetic water detectors in order to find the best place to drill, we found a spot indicating a high water content. Mr. Ouattara required our initial payment to have been deposited in his account prior to beginning the work and so it was not until the 9th of December that the drilling began.

Work began the morning of the 9th and it was not till 5 PM that the drill hit water. Unfortunately though the hole collapsed around the pipe due to unstable soil. So the detection process began again and a different site was chosen and work began again the morning of the 10th. Mr. Ouattara called me around 7 PM that day to tell me that they had found water

and that the drilling was finished. He also indicated that on Tuesday, the 12th, they would return to cement the area around the well and then on the 14th they would place the hand pump. All went as scheduled and so, in this manner, the well project was finished on December 14th, 2017 at about 10 AM GMT.



The storage house project

The construction of the storage house began on Monday the 4th of December since the bricks were already made earlier in mid-November just before our arrival in Côte d'Ivoire. The local representatives of SAREPTA supervised the making of the bricks. It was therefore quite easy to begin the foundation of the structure

already December 4th. The young people of the village organized themselves by sub-division to provide laborers (>15pers/day) and food each day for the workers.

We had given instructions to the village chief that the village needed to be an integral part of the work and that we desired that the village provide the day laborers, the water for construction and the food. There was a global, as well as individual, mobilization by the population. The village chief was an indispensable aid by his simple presence on site which galvanized the young people and encouraged them. Every time we needed something, he gave his counsel and suggestions and sometimes suggested people that we might contact. This was the case when we needed a night guard for material that could not be protected otherwise... as with the aluminium roofing sheets. The chief himself even spent a portion of the night next to the material as he waited for the guard to arrive. This touched us profoundly and showed us his determination to see this project finished. The groups of workers spent one day and then were replaced the next day by another group. They thus rotated the work among themselves until the project was finished.

The water pump was ready for use for the plastering of the storage house and saved on time and fuel for the transport of water from elsewhere, which had been being done in large plastic containers with a 3-wheeled motorcycle with trailer. The masons finished their work on Friday the 22nd of December around 6 PM GMT following the placement of the roof.



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Meeting with the local primary school staff of Tangafila

We met with the primary school teaching staff of Tangafila in order to request usage of a classroom for a planned meeting with the population on the 30th of December. The school Director, Mr. Touré Lonzeni, standing, (3rd from the left in the photo) was very helpful and he took the occasion to explain the difficulties of the existing two grade schools sharing the facilities of one. They are forced to have one group of students meet in the morning and another in the afternoon due to insufficient classroom space.

The students must cross a major paved highway which divides the village in order to get water from the nearest water pump. They are therefore exposed to the high risk of accidents every day. The Director would like to have a well and pump in the school courtyard in order to reduce risk to the students and staff and supply their needs in water



Meeting with the population

On the 30th of December we gathered at the grade school in Tangafla for a meeting with the population so as to share about the work done and the objectives for 2018. The meeting began late due to technical difficulties with the electrical system which would not supply a consistent current to allow us to use the video-projector for our powerpoint presentation. We finally abandoned the idea and proceeded to facilitate the meetings without the video support.

A large number of people attended the meeting (women and men, young and old). This demonstrated their good will and great desire to see the project become a realization. They thanked the SAREPTA staff for all that had been accomplished and expressed their desire and impatience to see the medical center constructed and functioning.



A brief note

During our stay, we transported two women to Binguébougou, some 17 kilometers distant from Tangafla, for necessary healthcare:

The first was a pregnant woman riding on a motorcycle behind her husband and held in place by the second wife riding behind the pregnant lady. The following day the husband stopped us and asked us to take the second wife back to Tangafla while he remained with the pregnant wife at the health center. Transporting pregnant women on the back of a motorcycle is a common happening in this area and we witnessed it!

The second case was a woman taking her sick child to the clinic in Binguébougou. She was waiting on the side of the road for public transportation when we arrived. It costs a person 1500 francs CFA for the travel from Tangafla to Binguébougou. This is another reason for a medical center in Tangafla... in order to save money on transportation to a more distant clinic.

Urgent need!



When we arrived in Tangafla we noticed that the two hydraulic water pumps in the village were non-functional. We decided it would be unrealistic to drill a third well and install a hydraulic pump while leaving the other two unusable and the population in desperate need of potable water. It was reported to us of some people criticizing the project for thinking of drilling a well outside the village with their immediate need within the village. We communicated with the SAREPTA Suisse committee in Switzerland and asked that SAREPTA take it upon themselves to meet this need so that the population would no longer need to fetch water at a dam near the village of Ogari some two kilometers from Tangafla. We were persuaded that this gesture on the part of SAREPTA would reinforce our credibility with the people and with

our funding agencies, as well as the authorities with whom we work in both Switzerland and Côte d'Ivoire.

In the end, the first village pump was repaired the 22nd and 23rd of December and the second the 2nd and 3rd of January 2018. We thank the committee for their cooperation and support in meeting this urgent need, which had to be taken care of at the same time as our scheduled activities.

Administrative steps taken in Abidjan

The 9th of January, 2018 we met with the Director of Technical Services, Mr. ROBE, at the DEPS (Department of Health Establishments and Personnel) concerning our project folder. After consulting our documents, previously presented and registered with his department, he informed us that we needed to pay the expenses of the trip (travel and lodging) so that his personnel could make the necessary observations of the land where the center was to be built and then grant our request for an agreement of conformity as to the suitability of the parcel of land for our purposes. Once the payment was made a visit would be scheduled in the following few weeks by the technicians who would make the observations needed. Ms. Robin Hampton, general secretary of the local representation, will prepare for and follow up on this visit.

From the DEPS we crossed the street to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to see Mr. TIA, who is supposed to follow our application for a tax exempt status as a public utility institution for SAREPTA in Côte d'Ivoire. He informed us that he had just returned from an extended medical absence and that he would do what he could to find and follow our documents. We did need to make one correction in the document and so that was done and the corrected version returned to Mr. Tia. We were also able to have the correction made on the computer copy of our document in the correspondence reception office. This process will be followed by Ms. Robin Hampton.

In summary, we were able to meet with the necessary authorities and we hope for favorable replies in the near future.

Expenses of the Work

	CFA Francs	Euros	CHF
Well and pump	5'500'000	8'369	
Storage house	2'728'550	4'153	
Repair of 2 village pumps	300'000	457	
Administrative cost	798'461	1215	
Total	9'327'011	14'194	16'708.-

Conclusion

Our time in Côte d'Ivoire was definitely successful. While there we were able to publish two articles in Côte d'Ivoire: the first publication was on the internet site « Abidjan.net » on the 3rd of January 2018 and the second in the newspaper « Soir Info » on the 12th of January (no. 697). We hope that local funding agencies and the Ivorian authorities will react favorably and get involved in our project.

We left Abidjan at 10:40 PM on the 10th of January and arrived in Geneva the 11th at 5 PM – a 17 hours trip including a two hour delay in Tunis due to the current political happenings in Tunisia.

As of today, we can say « Mission accomplished! » thanks to the dear members, friends and donors of the association. A BIG THANK YOU from the bottom of our hearts!

The objectives of 2017 were reached and we now look to those of the New Year 2018:

1. Fundraising
2. Beginning construction of the SAREPTA Medical Center in Tangafila.

By Navigué Pierre SORO
Secretary general of SAREPTA Suisse

