

The Purdue Peace Project Post



Dear Colleagues,

January marks a year since we began work as the Purdue Peace Project through the generous support of Milt Lauenstein. After careful deliberation about areas that would be best suited to our approach and the means we had available, we began work in Berekum in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana in late spring. Our work with the community there has been to help them resolve a long standing chieftaincy dispute that is preventing progress and development in the community. Throughout the year we have made numerous trips to the region to work with the community and the Berekum Peace Committee, which was established as a result of our work, and to gather evaluation data on what has worked and what has not.

In addition, we have been fortunate to have had several opportunities to interact with and learn from professionals working in the peacebuilding and violence prevention fields. Through the COPE summit in Washington D.C. (featured in last quarter's newsletter) and interactions with important figures here at Purdue (see p. 4 of this newsletter) PPP has both enjoyed and benefitted from becoming more connected to key organizations in global peace efforts. We are very excited about opportunities to work with these groups in the future and contribute to the knowledge base on peacebuilding.

This year promises to be full of new opportunities and we are excited about working with community members on new initiatives in West Africa. We are hopeful that our work will help citizens reclaim a sense of peace in their communities and would like to thank you for your continued interest in our work.

Wishing you a New Year of Peace and Hope,

The PPP Team

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Further Work in Berekum

October, 2012

Berekum, Ghana



Dr. Stacey Connaughton (left), Rosaline Obeng-Ofori, members of the Berekum Peace Committee, and Christina Jones (far right)

This fall PPP members Dr. Stacey Connaughton, Christina Jones, and Rosaline Obeng-Ofori travelled to Berekum to work with the Berekum Peace Committee and gather more data on the current situation and the impact past efforts have had. This trip was a part of our continued efforts to help the community resolve their chieftaincy dispute, which has prevented progress in the community for years. Through their meetings with the Berekum Peace Committee PPP team members were updated on the strategic plan of the committee and their continued efforts to push forward on the issue. The Committee has begun several outreach programs in the schools to talk about upcoming events and the importance of maintaining peace for the good of the society as a whole. In addition the Committee has also begun work with women's church groups, who are largely influential in the community, in an effort to involve them also in building and maintaining peace in Berekum.

Aside from meeting with the Peace Committee PPP members were also able to meet with other community members and participate in important local ceremonies. They met with other local chiefs and witnessed a ceremony to install a new chief in a nearby area. Pictures of some of these events are on the next page.

Christina Jones said, "The trip to Berekum was extremely rewarding. Not only did it expand my knowledge and understanding of the area, the culture, and the dispute, but it also provided me with an appreciation for the passion and commitment of the people there who truly want to see a message of peace promoted to all citizens and will work without end to see that happen."

For more information on the Berekum project please see the Projects page on our website www.cla.purdue.edu/ppp

Photos from the October Visit to Berekum



During their visit, the PPP team was able to witness the installation ceremony for a new village sub-chief. Pictured is the sub-chief (in the middle), family members, personnel, and community members.



The PPP team was also invited to take part in the traditional first meeting between the new village sub-chief and an existing nearby sub-chief. Here, a member of the new sub-chief's personnel takes part in a ritual of the ceremony, pledging his allegiance to the existing ruler.



A large part of the PPP team visit to Berekum was meeting with the current sub-chiefs in the area to better understand the nature of the chieftancy dispute. Pictured here are Stacey, Rosaline, peace committee member Dennis, and an existing sub-chief seated at his throne with his personnel to his left and right.



Pictured above is the Peace Committee meeting on day 4 of the visit to Berekum, discussing the forthcoming action plan.



Sharing the Work of PPP

November, 2012

Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN

On Friday November 9th, members of the PPP had the opportunity to meet with Ambassador Donald Mahley to present the work of PPP and get his insight on peacebuilding efforts in Africa. Mahley, although officially retired, continues to work as a special negotiator for the U.S. Department of State in Non-proliferation.

Mahley applauded the utility and importance of the community-centric PPP approach. Our conversation also reaffirmed that the PPP approach is complementary to many other peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts.

In addition Mahley helped brainstorm with PPP key ways to disseminate successful conflict resolution processes to other areas that are in need of similar solutions.

For more bio information on Ambassador Mahley see http://www.cla.purdue.edu/alumni/gs300/Fall_2012_Mahley.html

This fall also provided PPP with an opportunity to present its work to top university administrators at a spotlight on the College of Liberal Arts hosted by Dean Irwin Weiser. Dr. Stacey Connaughton and PPP members Agaptus Anaele and Christina Jones presented to Acting Purdue President Timothy Sands, Acting Purdue Provost Vic Lechtenberg, and Vice President for Research Richard Buckius.

PPP received a great deal of interest in their work. The spotlight provided us an opportunity to raise awareness about PPP and our efforts as well as gain support and interest from our local academic community.

As a result of this presentation, the Office of the Vice President for Research invited Dr. Connaughton to record a video interview, explaining PPP's mission and its work. The Vice President for Research utilizes portions of these video interviews in presentations he gives to various audiences.



PPP Welcomes a New Team Member

Kai Kuang, Graduate Research Assistant

is a doctoral student studying Health Communication at the Brian Lamb School of Communication. She received her Bachelor's degree from Communication University of China in 2009 in Broadcast Journalism and in 2011 completed her Master's degree in Public Relations at Purdue University. Her research interests include public perceptions about health and environmental risk, message design, and media effects in risk communication.



Beering Hall of Liberal Arts and Education, Purdue University

PPP Online

Please visit our website
<http://www.purdue.edu/ppp>
to learn more about the PPP,
our team, and to contact us.

We are also in the process of
launching our Facebook
page. Look for us there in
February to keep up to date
with our own work and oth-
er efforts in peacebuilding
and violence prevention.

In the next Issue...

We are currently finalizing new areas for our work in 2013. Look for an-
nouncements of these new locations and projects in March. We are
very excited about these opportunities to expand our peacebuilding
efforts and work with more communities to prevent political violence.

Comments, Questions, or Suggestions about the Newsletter?

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