

Sunday November 6th

Dear all fhn supporters,

Hello from Ghana! I've now been here for a week and wanted to let you know the reasons why Nick Trueman and I are here. This is going to be perhaps the most crucial visit for the future of our project.

There have been welcome ruminations over the past year that the Ghanaian government wants to step in and take over the running of the clinic from fhn. This would equate to integrating the Huttel Health Centre into the Ghana Ministry of Health network.

As everyone knows, our ultimate endpoint for all our projects is its longterm sustainability. fhn works on the proviso that our 'foreign' aid has a definite time-scale. A partnership with the host country's government and especially its Ministry of Health is the key to this sustainability. We find communities that are in need of certain services, and we decide to offer these services only if the communities will work with us to achieve the necessary goals. For our projects to run and run, we need the government to recognise the need of their people and the viability/logistics of running a project there. Over the last few years in Ghana, we have provided enough evidence of the above and now the Ghanaian government wants to get involved.

The same situation was echoed in Ecuador over 2 years ago, when the Ecuadorian Ministry of Health provided support to the project there, which equated to cheaper medicines, personnel provision and training opportunities. Crucially, they provided a doctor, nurse and midwife.

Most of you reading this who have been to the developing world and those of you who know the origins of the project in Ghana, will have some alarm bells ringing! fhn is fully aware of the ramifications and possibilities of negative consequences that government intervention could equate to!

Personally, having visited many government health facilities in Ghana, I am not overly anxious surrounding the medical care that they afford - it is of the same standard that we are offering. However we are lucky, that if our equipment is damaged, or drugs are needed etc. we have fhn staff in place who can fix this quickly. Government clinics may be a little slower.

My real concerns are over the global transparency of the project. fhn UK has spent the best part of 4 years building up the charity to the state it is in today. Our money has been raised in the UK through donor knowledge that every penny or cedi goes exactly where it is meant to go. I cannot compromise the trust invested in me, and the rest of the guys involved in the charity. If there is any doubt about sourcing, or reluctance to show monthly receipts and accounts (basically, if the government will not allow fhn Ghana and fhn UK to directly supervise the running of the clinic), then I will be unable to pass the reins onto the Ghana Ministry of Health.

fhn cannot jeopardise its transparency and ethos just to make our lives a lot easier. With government help, salaries for medical staff would be taken care of, thus alleviating the tremendous pressure we are under to raise sufficient funds every year.

With the government's financial input, fhn Ghana and fhn UK could then really commit to education development, more fresh water or even start this process again with another clinic and provide health to thousands more local villagers with no health provision.

I digress. What I am trying to say is, I will sit down with representatives of the Ghana Ministry of Health over the next week and ascertain what they intend to do, how they intend to do it and what fhn's role is. I will bring this information back to the UK, disseminate it to the other charity bases and to you guys and we will come to a decision!

We have run this Ghana project very well over the past few years and if we decide against involving the Ministry of Health and remain running it by ourselves in a fully accountable way for the foreseeable future, then so be it. That way we have no conflict of interest and you, the supporters, can be confident that the support you provide is for the people and goes to the people.

Thanks for reading

Ed