



After years of research, Ashanti Development has finally found a way to provide clean water to villages where previously the technical problems had seemed insurmountable – a development which promises a dramatic fall in the death rate, particularly among newborn babies.

The solution lies in the Aquafilter, developed five years ago by a Sunderland-based charitable company, The Safe Water Trust ([www.safewatertrust.com](http://www.safewatertrust.com)). Aquafilters, which only cost £35 each, were designed for use in developing countries, where they can make biologically contaminated water from dirty streams and swamps safe to drink. They are portable, operated by hand and therefore don't rely on uncertain electricity supplies, and can each provide for a whole household's water needs.

“This is a major breakthrough for us,” says technical director David Williamson, one of our original founders. “Right from the start, I knew that clean water, sanitation and hygiene education were of prime importance for development. After all, it’s much harder to work on the farm or at school if you are suffering from chronic diarrhoea or dysentery, and over time your health will certainly deteriorate.

We had no trouble providing sanitation or hygiene education, but till now the difficulties of providing clean water everywhere seemed insoluble,” he says.



### Water Shortage

The Ashanti Region has become drier over the last few decades. Martha Boadu, who was born in Old Daamang but came to live in the UK in 1982, remembers how shocked she was on her first visit home in 2000 at the problems people had in finding drinking water. Streams had shrunk and were much dirtier, and no-one grew cocoa as a commercial crop any longer.

The problem is not helped by deforestation, with most of the hardwood trees already harvested for cash. Our country director, Nicholas Aboagye, is doing his best to combat this. He has arranged for schoolchildren to plant and look after over 2,000 trees over the past few years, and many schools are copying his example.

The best way of providing clean water in our home villages has always been by borehole but, because the ground is laterite, it's difficult to know how to position a drill rig to give it the best chance of success. Our early experience was that four out of five drillings were dry. Later, with the help of consulting engineers Arup and volunteer hydrogeologist Simon Scholl, this improved to a success rate of around two out of three, but at around £3,000 per drilling this was still an expensive option. What is more, Simon's investigations convinced us that for some villages, borehole drilling was unlikely ever to be successful.



Arup made a prolonged study of other possibilities in the area for us and we concluded that the only viable solution was by rainwater harvesting. The roof of every Ashanti home is large enough to collect enough water for the people living beneath it for a whole year, but the problem is that the roof must be in good condition – which means periodic replacements – and must have gutters, fall pipes and storage tanks. The cost of these for a whole village would be prohibitive.

At the same time, David studied every water filter that came on the market, but found nothing that he considered suitable. Some filters needed special maintenance, cleaning or filter changes which we doubted the villagers would carry out. We were also aware that if villagers were forced to return to polluted stream water after drinking clean water for some time, they would have lost their immunity and the danger to their health would be even higher than it was in the first place.

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### **Aquafilters Arrive**

Then we discovered the Aquafilter. Aquafilters were developed as part of a Rotary-funded project, and were meant for use in disaster areas. We trialled Aquafilter for the best part of a year at Dadease and Mpenya villages, being careful to train each householder in the simple maintenance involved. During the trial, several filters broke, and Gill and John Griffith, who developed the filters, visited Ashanti to find out what the problem was. When they decided it was down to poor handling, we increased the training.

Gill and John were kind enough to write about Ashanti Development on their website, as a result of which a donor paid for eighty household filters for us. These are currently on their way out to Ashanti, and we are trying now to raise more money to provide filters to many more villages.

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### **Sustainability**

Because the Aquafilters have only been on the market for five years and none has ever worn out during that period, we don't know how soon they will need to be replaced, but to make them sustainable users should save enough money through their village Water and Sanitation Committees (WATSANs) to be able to buy replacements when the time comes.

There are problems connected with this. First, it will take time before the villagers come to realise that clean water really is associated with good health. At present, some say they prefer 'real' water with a taste and may therefore be reluctant to accept Aquafilters, let alone pay for them.

Second, government regulations have provided that membership of all village committees should be based on political affiliation, rather than by election as in the past. Further, each committee must now cover several villages. This has infuriated long-serving committee members, who find themselves thrown off committees because they don't support the governing party. In addition, there are now too few people on the committees to cover the requirements of each community. This means that WATSANs may have great difficulty in collecting the money.

However we feel strongly that it is not for Ashanti Development staff to collect Aquafilter money, and that the community must work out some method of doing this for itself.

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### **The Bigger Picture**

On a rough count, Ashanti Development has financed some 1,300 household latrines, providing for about 13,000 people in thirty-one villages.

We've done less well on water provision, for all the reasons set out above, but by one means or other, we've provided clean water to about twenty villages, and borehole drilling is currently underway in the village of Mpantuaase.

In the meantime, we note with great pleasure that in Gyetiase village, which now enjoys both clean water and sanitation, there have been no infant deaths for well over a year.

**Volunteer dietician, Izzy Bandurek, describes Ashanti Development's first fund-raising party, which she played a major part in organising. The scene was set: a warm, sunny day in July, a balcony terrace in Central London, and several months of hard work. The time to party had arrived!**



Martha Boadu, our Ghanaian in residence, founder of Ashanti Development, and all round life-of-the-party, had put together a delicious menu of authentic dishes including Chicken Groundnut Stew, Fried Plantain, Sweet Coconut Rice Balls, Gyetiase Cake, and Rice and Beans in Tomato Sauce. The Ghanaian tastes and flavours were new to some and enjoyably devoured by all (although I understand that Paul, our committee chair, was particularly delighted with the Fufu!). Martha and her small army of kitchen helpers did a fabulous job with creating a true taste of Ghana in the middle of London.

Penny, Ashanti Development's co-founder, commented on the marvellous variety of people who came along to share the day: all ages, all ethnicities, all sexualities, all together. The fantastic kaleidoscope of people proved a great recipe for a party, where everyone was able to meet, greet, chat and laugh with each other, bonding over this excellent cause (although a dash of beer and wine helped with initial introductions...) definitely the best sort of party to have!



As well as superb food, a great atmosphere, and some brilliant tunes, the party boasted a raffle, a stall of local Ghanaian trinkets, and an organic honey stall. Paul Bloch and Dawn Williamson very kindly sold honey to raise funds for Ashanti Development, brought up from their own organic bee hives. They are also working closely with people in the Ashanti villages of Dadease and Mpenya to develop bee keeping skills, providing new opportunities for trade, investment and local livelihoods.

After months of planning, several brilliant hours of partying, more people going back for seconds than I can count, one or two speeches, and a smile from every person, we raised a total of £984.35, With a net profit for Ashanti Development of £784.35. The fundraising committee are utterly delighted with the final figures and cannot thank those who attended enough for their generosity and spirit on the day. We are also excited to announce that a Taste of Ghana will now become an annual event and discussions to make 2015's event bigger, brighter, and better have already begun!

Thanks to all for being involved in such a wonderful day!

The Ashanti Development annual sponsored walk will be on Saturday September 20 at 2pm. To register and get a sponsorship form, contact Albert Antwi:

[Albert.Antwi@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Albert.Antwi@camden.gov.uk)  
[info@ashanti-development.org](mailto:info@ashanti-development.org)  
Or ring 0207 837 3172.

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**Networking Meeting**

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Ghanaians living in the UK, including members of Ghanaian clubs and NGOs, are invited to attend a meeting in London on Saturday October 11 at 2.00pm. The aim is to see if we can all work to better effect if we share information, best practice and experiences.

It will be an informal meeting with short presentations and lots of time for questions and answers, Drinks and snacks will be served.

To obtain more information or to register, please contact:

[info@ashanti-development.co.uk](mailto:info@ashanti-development.co.uk)  
Or ring 0207 837 3172.

There are thousands of online shops who are willing make a donation to Ashanti Development for every online purchase made from them, and we recently partnered Givingabit who can make this happen. Please join Givingabit, and raise money every time you shop online.

1. Sign up for free at [www.givingabit.com](http://www.givingabit.com)
2. Then, from your 'Quick Links' box, click on 'Find a good cause to support', search for Ashanti Development and join our community!
3. Before you shop online, go to [www.givingabit.com](http://www.givingabit.com) and click on the links to the shops.

You can also download the 'forgetmenot' widget, so whenever you search on Google or visit a shop that is 'givingabit,' the 'forgetmenot' lets you know – you don't even need to visit [www.givingabit.com](http://www.givingabit.com) first! Shoppers who have the 'forgetmenot' widget raise even more.

Please join, and raise funds for Ashanti Development whenever you shop online.

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### Down the Towpath

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Kevin Ford is going to spend two days walking a massive 100km down the Thames Towpath to raise money for Ashanti Development, starting on 13 September. Right now, he's up in Scotland, doing 16 miles practice walks and (probably) push ups in preparation.

It would be great if some of you could support him. He's collecting on <https://www.justgiving.com/K-Ford/>

Mobile phone company Tigo recently invited Ashanti Development to apply for a project falling within their area of expertise.

The application we finally made asked for a Skype-style link plus projector (to make the image larger) between Ashanti and UK primary schools, which should enable the children to get to know each other a great deal better and even to share some lessons.

Tigo say they like the project but before going ahead with it will need to strengthen the internet signal in Ashanti. They've asked us to contact them again in November to see what progress they've managed to make.

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### Communications

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Visit our new, improved website at:  
[www.ashantidevelopment.org](http://www.ashantidevelopment.org)

Stay up to date with all our future events:



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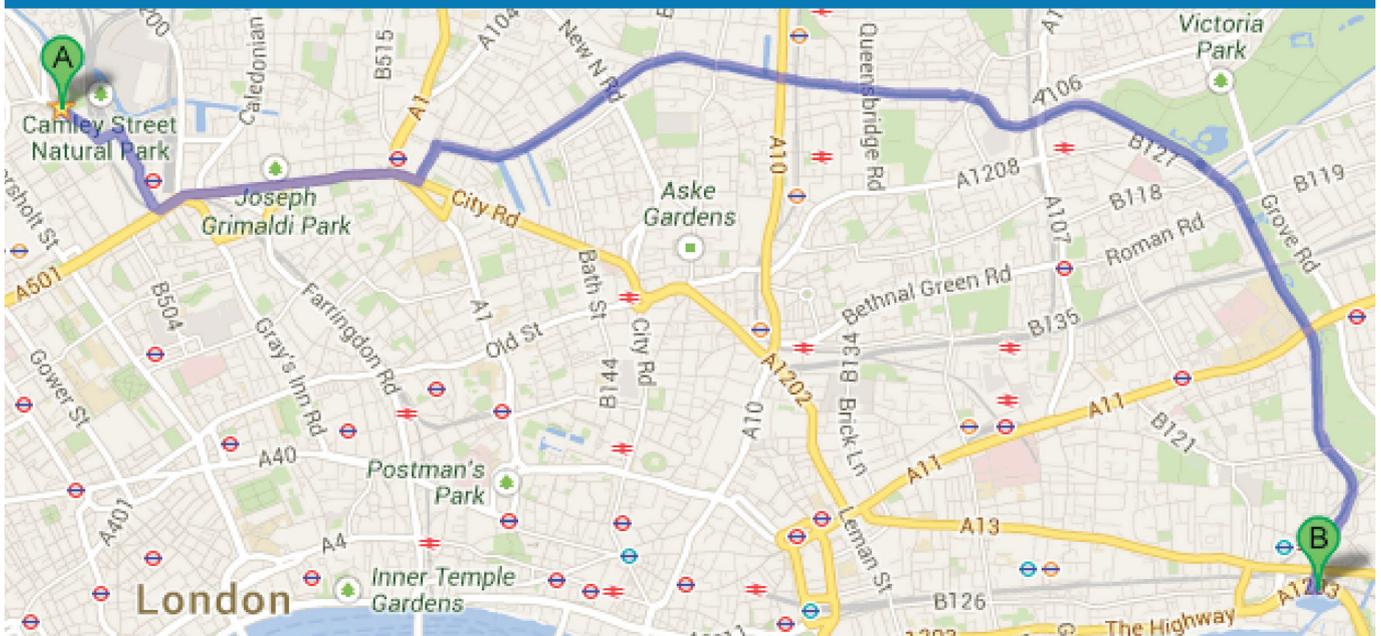
Development

Local Charity **W**alk

We are organising a sponsored walk on behalf of Ashanti Development, a registered charity working to combat extreme poverty in Ghana. The walk will consist of an eight mile stroll down Regent's Canal from St. Pancras Old Church to Limehouse Basin and will take place on:

**Saturday 20th September**

**Meet: 2:00 pm at St Pancras Old Church, Pancras Road, London NW1 1UL**



Ashanti Development work with the poorest of the poor in Central Ghana, providing benefits including clean water, hygiene training, sanitation, help with education and healthcare, micro-credit, farm support and free school meals for children most at risk. We are a group of volunteers and pay no salaries or wages in the UK. We also send volunteers to Ghana, for example to teach in Ashanti schools.

If you would like to register as a walker & obtain a sponsorship form contact Albert Antwi on:

Albert.Antwi@camden.gov.uk. or email [info@ashanti-development.org](mailto:info@ashanti-development.org) or ring 0207 837 3172 // 07713 743 398.

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