

# THE ARK FOUNDATION, GHANA

## *REPORTING TO OUR COMMUNITY AND CONTRIBUTORS: WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING WITH YOUR MONEY IN 2020*

*December 31, 2020*



*“Rejoice always; give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” I  
Thess 5:16-18*

2020 was a challenging year as the world was hit with the COVID-19 pandemic. Economic activities came to a halt in most parts of the world. Many countries went into lockdown. Adults and children, men and women had to spend more time at home. Consequently, many people were stuck at home with their abusers. The halt in economic activities also brought to bear economic hardships to families and individuals, compounding prevailing gender and social inequalities and vulnerabilities, leading to the increased risk of abuse particularly during the lockdown.

At The Ark, a total of fifty-five (55) cases were received from January to December 2020, out of which eighteen (18) survivors were provided shelter services. These cases were direct referrals from the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service. Thirteen (13) out of those provided shelter were discharged and resettled into various communities. These services and support are made available to survivors at The Ark’s Crises Centre and shelter: *counseling, case-management and social enquiry, educational /skills training support, medical, legal, psychological and pastoral aid support, feeding, clothing and other basic needs, child care, referrals, reintegration and re-settlement.*

## Sharing some of our stories

**Afi** (*not her real name*) had been suffering years of emotional, physical and financial abuse from her partner with whom she had a daughter (**Ani**), but who had refused to marry her. He threatened many times to throw her out of his home, and did so finally soon after the lockdown was announced. With no place to turn, she contacted a relative who placed a distress call to The Ark's hotline. When The Ark rescued Afi and her two-year-old child, she was scratching her body from her head to her toes. She had a skin condition that caused her to itch so much it made it difficult for her to even hold her daughter. When asked about her condition, she said, "Ani's father's girlfriend cast a spell on me after she moved in to live with us". Afi spent some months in the Ark Shelter, where she received medical care from a dermatologist; counselling and some skills training. Before her discharge Afi was completely healed of the skin condition she had thought spiritual and almost impossible to treat. She happily narrated, "My skin is now like that of a baby". Afi expressed the desire to re-open her hairdressing business. The Ark helped secure decent accommodation for her as well as items to re-open her salon. Afi is now working and has enrolled her daughter in school.

**12 year old Esi**, (*not her real name*) stayed at the Ark Shelter for over one year. While at the shelter, she was enrolled in school and helped with her studies. Esi had allegedly been defiled by her own father with whom she had lived. In order to prevent a family cover-up and to protect her, DOVVSU reached out to The Ark for shelter while processing the case for court. Esi exhibited some of the likely impacts of abuse, such as unexplained bursts of anger, restlessness and moodiness. These were handled through counselling and lots of empathy and care, including pastoral care. The perpetrator was finally sentenced to twenty (20) years imprisonment for incest and defilement. After thorough social enquiry and consultations with her maternal family and DOVVSU, Esi was resettled with her maternal grandparents. Esi can now enjoy her childhood again.

**Akua** (*not her real name*) and her 11-month-old daughter were referred to The Ark by DOVVSU after they were ejected from their home by her co-habiting partner in the middle of the night. They had nowhere to go. Akua's partner had subjected her to emotional abuse for years. Like Afi above, she was constantly faced with threats of being thrown out till it happened. The Ark worked with the Dept. of Social Welfare (DSW) and DOVVSU to secure child support from her partner and some money to rent a room. However, The Ark gave Akua additional support to complete a small building she had started before coming to the shelter. While at the shelter, Akua learnt how to make pastries and soap. She expressed her wish to set up a bakery business after she was discharged for which The Ark also provided the capital support, as well as some funds to live on while all those arrangements were being made. She hopes her bakery will help generate the capital needed to fund her dream business i.e. a Chemical Shop. Esi and her daughter are now thriving in their own little home in a new community.

**Patricia** (*not her real name*) called the hotline one weekend, sounding depressed and having suicidal thoughts. She had been referred by DOVVSU to speak with a psychologist at The Ark. Patricia had suffered emotional abuse and threats of death from her husband. He had stopped her from running the school they had both set-up for over 15 years, without any explanation. He also stopped providing for the upkeep of the home. Because of her husband's change of behavior Pat began to blame herself to the point where she wanted to end her life. The Ark arranged for her to have several sessions with our psychologist, which had the impact of changing her outlook completely and releasing her from self-blame and false guilt. She called The Ark to say, "I thank God you arranged for me to speak with your psychologist. I feel so light now after carrying the blame for so long." Pat has now started her own business and is moving on with life.

There are other women and young girls we are still working with to help bring healing and recovery. It's not an easy road to walk, working within our context. Also every client's story is different and this needs to be carefully taken into consideration; however because there are common patterns in abuse and the impacts of abuse, employing tested strategies of empathetic care and counselling, educational and other support services go a long way to bring about healing, empowerment and a sense that life is still worth living.

### **Philanthropy/Donations**

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated challenges, The Ark received overwhelming support in both cash and in-kind donations. Donations have been received from individuals, networks, church and para-church groups and corporate organizations. Through this, a total of **Ghc417, 545.82** was realized. In-kind donations of food, clothes and other items were received and distributed to shelter clients, fifty (50) walk-in clients who visited our Crisis Centre at Haatso, and to rural communities in the Greater Accra and Eastern Regions.

To recognize one such donation, The Ark expresses its gratitude to the Vodafone Ghana Foundation and Vodafone Ghana Staff for their timely support of **GHC120, 000** towards the refurbishment and completion of a Transit Shelter for survivors, which includes a mini Digital library and a recreational area. This donation was in response to the rise in The Ark's clientele base in the wake of the pandemic, with more survivors needing shelter services while awaiting their COVID-19 test results (as there was the need for them to be tested before being moved to the main shelter).

The Ark is highly indebted to all who in diverse ways have supported our work with survivors in these troubling times. Ayekoo to you all and God richly bless you! We will continue to solicit for your support in the coming years because these vital, front-line services have to be sustained. When valuable friends like you share our project with other friends and family, spread the word about what we do and helps us grow our community of supporters. So keep sharing with your networks, family and friends and we would be very grateful.

*How you can make a Donation to The Ark*

- *MTN Mobile Money: +233243777773*
- *Bank Transfer: Ecobank, A/C 1441001929302, Reinsurance House*

*Look for us or contact us for more information about The Ark Foundation Ghana:*

- *Main Organization Website: <https://www.arkfoundationghana.org/cms/>*
- *Shelter Fundraiser Website: <http://www.arksheltercampaign.org>*
- *Facebook: <http://www.arkfoundationghana.com>*
- *Email: [thearkgh@yohoo.co.uk](mailto:thearkgh@yohoo.co.uk)*
- *Hotline: +233243777773*

*GOD IS OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH*