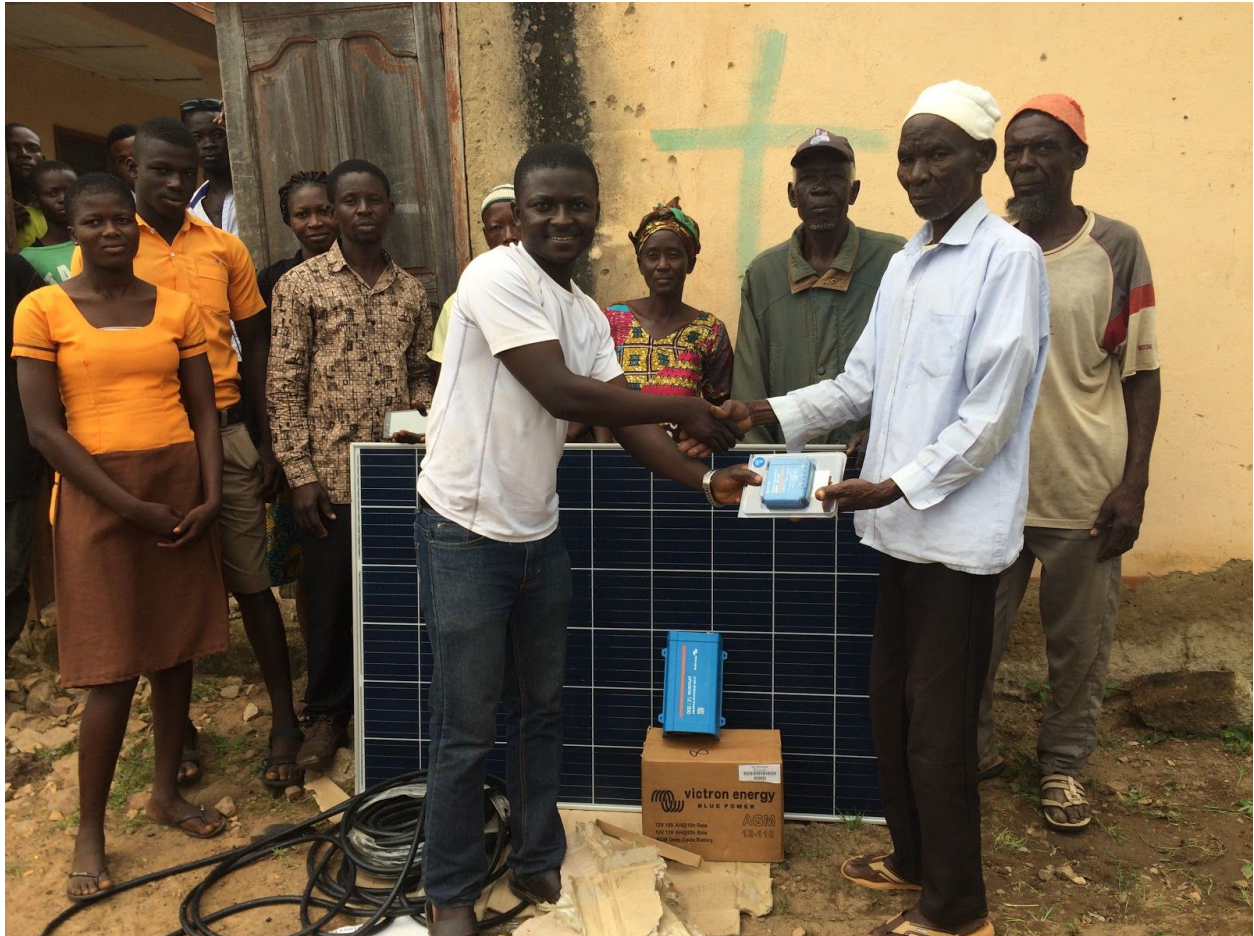


Empower Kids Through Technology

[GoFundMe](#)



“Support interventions in rural Ghana (on northern border with Burkina Faso) to provide children in school with access to the Internet and computers with solar panels. Youth empowerment issues, cultural and computer literacy and ending cycles of poverty.”

Final Group Project

HRTS 595A

Kendra Duran, Estefanie Govea, Marie Renaud

About

For our final project for HRTS 595A, we are helping with the fundraising campaign of Francis Abugbilla, a PhD candidate in International Studies at the University of Washington. He is working on bringing additional solar panels to his village school in Kpantarigo, Ghana, West Africa where he is originally from. Lack of electricity creates many obstacles to education and solar power technology is one way to assist the kids and the people in his village. These solar panels will be used to power up computers that the students are using in order to study for an important ICT test at the end of their Junior High. Additionally, Francis hopes to be able to empower not only the school but also the community by opening up a community center where people from the village can go to be able to charge their mobile phones.

Initial Goals Set By Francis

Our conversation began with Francis as he shared with us all his background for the grant proposal, the GoFundMe page details, photos of the first phase of the project, and his goals for the project. The primary focus for this project was the material for the campaign as well as the delegation of the three of us becoming fundraising captains.

What Transpired?

Social Media Campaign

We have helped Francis create a storyboard outlining his project and fundraising campaign that has been added to his GoFundMe page. We believe that the power of visual storytelling can help capture the interest of an audience in a way that other mediums cannot.

[Storyboard
Material](#)

[About Francis](#)

[Social Media](#)

The storyboard and social media campaign content was a moderate success. We made a suggestion to use another platform for fundraising, but respected Francis' decision to remain with GoFundMe. Our hope was to plug in the video and media sharing directly to the website to grasp our audience quickly. We do believe some members of the audience clicked the link to view the material, and greatly hope that it relayed the important work that Francis is doing. Overall, we are satisfied with the outcome of

the social media campaign and hope that Francis was too. We hope to continue to share this story so as to meet his financial goals.

Additionally we shared the campaign within our own social media network, with friends, family, and our personal workplaces where appropriate.

We were able to successfully share on all Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Free Computers?

Through a connection in Barcelona, Estefanie learned that she could get in touch with someone who is part of a non-profit in the European Union whose main job is to take refurbished computers to underrepresented communities around the world. Below is a link to the non-profit we can potentially be working alongside with.

<https://www.labdoo.org>

“I have made contact with Ousman Umar - Wow. Just wow. I have never been more inspired. Please watch the following video before you continue reading.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRICYDoKEAc>

Okay. So now that you've watched what Ousman is all about. I first just have to say how lucky I feel to have met him in such a simple way - at a bar drinking a glass of wine - and having a really extensive conversation about Ghana and Africa in itself. He is incredibly humble and very much interested in helping Francis. After having a long discussion we realized that although Ousman can help Francis in attaining computers for his village, it is incredibly important to first attain electricity in Francis's village of Kpantarigo. Ousman and I discussed the potential to make his current schools in Ghana - there are currently 4, and he is in the process of making an additional 3 - fully electrified with solar energy. I discussed the donor connection of the solar power that was donated to Francis by Marcy Migdal Fund for Education. In this conversation we discussed the potential of possibly collaborating with the Marcy Migdal Fund for Education so that they were able to give Ousman a good deal on integrating solar panels all throughout his 4 schools (soon to be 7) due to Francis's connection. I stated to him that I would put him in contact with Francis so they too could discuss the integration of having Ousman assisting Francis with getting computers to his village. I also discussed that the first initial problem to solve would be to get Francis's village empowered with solar panels. My hope is that once speaking with both the Marcy Migdal Fund for Education and Francis, we can establish a connection between both of them to be in collaboration with Ousman. I see this as a win win situation - the NGO of Marcy Migdal Fund for Education would be rewarded for making a

good deal with Ousman and switching over his regular electricity into solar power - additionally they could even be known for having this collaboration with Ousman as Ousman is becoming highly important in the fight against eradicating African migration through education. I believe that once Marcy Migdal Fund for Education is aware of who they can be working alongside - we might be able to get Francis's school fully empowered, by having additional solar powers installed (since this is what the initial GoFundMe fundraiser was about) and potentially getting a full computer lab installed. The installation of this computer lab would require proper infrastructure in Kpantarigo's village school - which is why it is important to have Ousman speak with Francis. A full computer lab for Ousman is 45 computers - 5 as back up's. These computers are integrated with intranet which is actually an 80% download of all the content on Google uploaded onto servers so that the students are also equipped with internet browsing while in the computer lab. Additionally, Ousman has equipped his computer labs with 5 teachers that he pays out of pocket (480 euros divided between 5 individuals is 96 euros a month and that is the equivalence of 2,726.88 Ghanaian or 545.12 Ghanaian Cedis per teacher) and I imagine that he will also would help Francis with placing a teacher in his school.

I am excited about the potential that this meet-up could have on Francis's initial project and overall his village and i'm happy to share this contact - as I have already mentioned to Ousman - with the University of Arizona Human Rights Practice Master program for any additional information or future conversations for a course." - Estefanie

Kpantarigo is on a Map?

After having an extensive conversation with Francis, we realized that it was incredibly important to be able to have a visual representation of where the Kpantarigo village was. By use of distance from the farthest city that people from his village travel to - Accra and Takoradi - we were able to first make a draft map for Frances. Through an old professor of Geographic Information Services at the University of Arizona - Dr. Stephanie Herrmann - Estefanie was able to help Francis put his village of Kpantarigo on the map. Dr. Herrmann was kind enough to create a true GIS map with very close approximations of Kpantarigo on a real GIS server. Since this has now been created using real time data and through a GIS database, Kpantarigo is officially on the Ghana map. Having once spoken with Dr. Herrmann and having a better idea of where some of these areas were using distance and some ground references such as; grasslands, desert shrubs, as well as a dried lake bed and other lakes around, Dr. Herrmann was able to create a reference map. In the email thread between Estefanie and Dr. Herrmann, Estefanie made sure to forward the work to Francis to verify. Francis is incredibly happy with the result of the

map. For the sake of this report the following picture below is just a screenshot of the map, but the true image is a '.tif' format image, which is seen to GIS software.



Engineering Connections for Installations

We have connected Francis with an engineering firm in the states so that in the case of questions during installation, answers may be provided pro-bono.

Decolonized Science Lessons?

One interesting thing of note came to be our conversation about his connection with Kansas State University and their development of a science curriculum for the village school. After our Zoom meeting discussion on eurocentric education and the #FeesMustFall movement, we asked how he was ensuring the curriculum was a good fit. He said that he hadn't thought of that before and that he would now research this

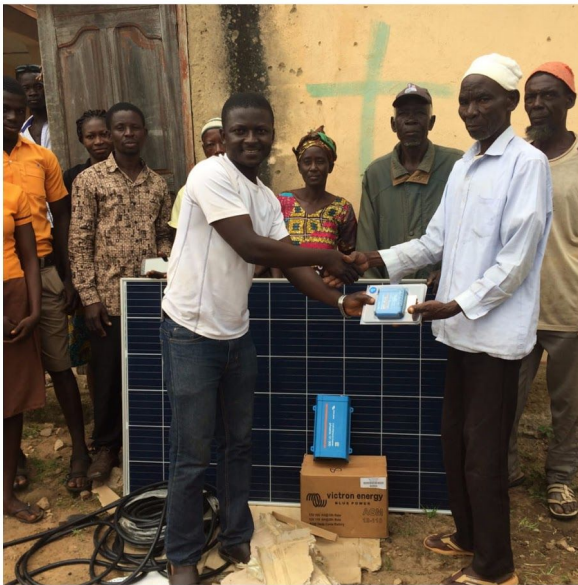
information and share it with his team. We were grateful for the knowledge and grateful to have been able to use it for benefit so quickly.

What we Learned

Francis shared with us his story of cutting weeds by use of a 'machete' in the fields as young adolescent in order to save money for his school tuition. He explained to us that this was no longer a practice his fellow villagers were able to do since weed plant insecticide began to be used so widely across Ghana. His concern for his fellow villagers now extends to the only other options left to make income traveling to the southern coast to participate in mineral mining activities (Galamsey) or load carrying (Kayayei). These stories left us both heartbroken and motivated. After a two hour conversation, we promised to continue our connection with him and help as we may. The implementation of solar panels in Kpantarigo have already provided some additional freedom and improved the educational barriers that some of the youth in this area have been experiencing. The implementation of additional solar panels will make it far much easier for the youth to study, especially at night, which promotes their right to education. The electricity that will be provided from the solar panels will enable students to use the current Chromebooks (Laptops) they have to be able learn computer savvy skills that will equip them to successfully pass an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) exam at the end of their Junior High career. It is imperative that students are equipped with a good orientation for this ICT exam as the exam is the determining factor in the high school they will be attending the following year. With a good exam score, students are then able to attend a good high school. A good high school will most likely push the students towards going onto a University education and equip them with the curriculum necessary to achieve the national standardized test in order to place into a University. This is why we are so motivated to be able to help Francis with his current fundraiser to be able to first install electricity into the community and then second, bring in more computers into his community's school to be able to further the students right to education. Furthermore, we learned that Francis overall mission is to electrify his community of Kpantarigo and create a community center where the villagers are able to charge their mobile phones. In charging their mobile phones they will be equipped with the ability to make payments or receive payments if they participate in entrepreneurial activities. More importantly, Francis hopes to one day make Kpantarigo self sustainable by eventually purchasing a solar powered grinding mill for the village. In the Kpantarigo region cereals are the primary crops that dominate the agriculture sector. The notion is that if the community can grow its own cereals, grind their own grains through the solar powered grinding mill, then they will be able to create a sustainability fund to eventually have sufficient cash flow to empower others in the community to have small business ventures by giving out grants. Additionally, there is a neighboring village that has a grinding mill - but because of shortages of electricity - some of these activities don't get entirely processed until 4 days after they initially began. Francis discussed the potential of bringing other village members to also use their 'solar powered grinding mill' for a small fee.

Moving Forward

We will be following up with both Francis and his mentor very soon to continue this important work and help where we may. We hope to be a part of the youth empowerment programs as they unfold and cheer Francis on as he changes the lives of villagers in Kpantarigo! We are grateful to have had this opportunity and to have met Francis.



Francis Abugbilla

Francis is a PhD candidate in International Studies at the University of Washington at Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies. His research primarily focuses on conflict resolution, peace-building, and reconciliation. While in elementary school in his village in West Africa, Francis used kerosene lamps in order to do his homework late at night.

Francis found a way to bring electricity to the kids in his home village of Kpantariou, Ghana, West Africa by attaining an initial grant through his university and thanks in part to the Marcy Migdal Fund for Educational Equality who donated the first solar panel installed at the local community school in Kpantariou.

FRANCIS ABUGBILLA NEEDS OUR HELP

"Lack of electricity in my village of Kpantarigo is having a huge negative impact on the educational outcomes of school kids. Most of them cannot study and do their homework at night, except for a few who have access to kerosene lamps and torchlights. As a community native with firsthand experience of this problem, I am collaborating with a team of students at the University of Washington to provide solar energy to my village. This fundraiser seeks to purchase an additional solar panel to expand and increase electricity access to the entire school, with the eventual goal of expanding to individual households. Through your donations we together can help uplift the educational outcomes of students in Kpantarigo, Ghana, West Africa."

- Francis Abugbilla



"The reason that computers are important is because the students are required to take an ICT exam in Theory and Practice at the end of Junior High. If they don't score well on this exam they can't get into a good high school. If they don't get into a good high school, they most likely won't go onto a University"

- Francis Abugbilla



ENDANGERING PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

KPANTARIGO NEEDS YOUR HELP

During the rainy season in the village, the youth work on their farms. The area is prominent in growing different types of cereal grains. During the dry season the male youth travel down to the southern part of Ghana to participate in modern day 'Galamsey' activities. This is work getting paid by the day in illegal mining sites mining gold and other minerals. These activities are chemically intensive and include the use of mercury, liquid hydrocarbons, and dynamite that require an extensive network of infrastructure and severely pollutes the environment. Those students who haven't ever been able to afford to pay for school are found there during the dry season. Students who are in school are there during their holiday period to make money to pay school tuition.



ENDANGERING PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

KPANTARIGO NEEDS YOUR HELP

The female youth travel to the south to be part of the "Kayaɛi" system. These young females, sometimes younger than 10 years old, are hired for a set of hours to help elite women carry their belongings from point A to point B. Once the journey is done, they are left unattended and to fend for themselves - often having traveled so far from home, they are unable to earn sufficient money to ever travel back home from 1 to 2 years since arrival. These young women are to sleep in over crowded areas and are susceptible to dehydration as well as waterborne illness. Additionally, they are almost always exposed to dangers such as theft, human trafficking, and sexual abuse.



THROUGH
YOUR
DONATIONS
WE TOGETHER
CAN HELP
UPLIFT THE
EDUCATIONAL
OUTCOMES OF
KIDS IN
KPANTARIGO,
GHANA, WEST
AFRICA.



"We have abundant sunshine all year round and the solar electricity will immensely improve the socio-economic wellbeing of the people."-Francis Abugbilla

SOLAR WILL BE THE
MOST VIABLE
SOURCE OF ENERGY
IN THE COMMUNITY

Solar power will reduce school dropout and create employment.



WOMEN CAN USE THE SOLAR ENERGY TO RUN SMALL BUSINESSES TO SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION.

Under current conditions women are forced to use deforestation techniques to feed their families.

THE COMMUNITY CAN USE THE SOLAR ENERGY TO PROVIDE NEEDED REFRIGERATION FOR FOOD SANITATION AND POTENTIALLY A MEDICAL FACILITY

Lack of refrigeration in such a warm climate is incredibly dangerous.

YOUTH WILL HAVE OPTIONS OF EMPOWERMENT AND ADEQUATE & CONSISTENT EDUCATION

solar power will reduce school dropout and create employment



WE CAN BEGIN THIS SUMMER



PLEASE CONSIDER CHANGING THEIR WORLD

Through your donations we together can help uplift the educational outcomes of the youth in the Kpantarigo village of Ghana, West Africa



THANK YOU
