

Introduction

The Child Education Support Scheme (CESS) is a child aid and development project initiated by the Christian Rural Aid Network (CRAN) with the overall goal to facilitate access to basic education for disadvantaged and needy children in rural communities mainly, who for reasons of poverty and other related factors are denied the opportunity to obtain basic formal education at their formative stages.

CRAN is a development non-governmental organization committed to rural poverty reduction and the promotion of rural development in Ghana.

Since its incorporation in 1993, CRAN has been working among the poor and the disadvantaged within remote and distressed rural communities supporting their efforts to build themselves a better future.

Why the CESS project?

It is a truism that the gap between the urban and the rural sectors of the national economy has widened precariously in recent years. Perhaps one crucial factor that has aggravated the situation is the Structural Adjustment reform programme (SAP) initiated by the Government of Ghana since the early 1980s.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the effects of these SAP reforms have been devastating for the poor and the vulnerable most especially the rural poor, women and children. Government's cost-saving and cost-recovery policies have meant increasing and widespread poverty among the vulnerable and the rural class. Indeed, growing rural poverty as a result, does not only threaten the very survival, growth and development of the rural child of today but also erodes the very socio-economic base that should provide the necessary support to the child of tomorrow.

The rural child to a very large extent is deprived and disadvantaged in many ways, particularly with regard to access to formal education, adequate health care, proper nutrition, opportunities for proper growth and development, proper parental care etc. The result is that we have a generation of rural children who in future cannot be properly integrated into the national economy because they mature as misfits.

The signs are very clear as demonstrated in the phenomenon of "street children" in our cities. A phenomenon which has aroused considerable interest and concern among the Ghanaian populace in recent years. The fact indeed remains that the problem of "street children" is a rural problem exported from the villages into the urban centres.

Recent studies have shown that the majority of children of School-going age living off the streets in our cities migrated from the rural areas. And economic reasons particularly poverty, deprivation and want most invariably constitute both, the push and the pull factors.

It is therefore logical to state that the phenomenon of "street children" is a by-product of the worsening economic situation in the rural areas, which situation itself has triggered an upsurge in the urbanward movement of the rural population.



Thus, as far as CRAN-Ghana is concerned, the root cause of the problem of "street-children", as prevalent in our cities today, is the increasingly impoverished and deprived state in which most of these children live in the rural areas.

Equally worrying is the growing army of children in rural communities who are not enrolled in school due either to poverty or lack of school facilities.

For instance, in one of CRAN's project villages in the Western Region of Ghana, an initial baseline survey indicates that out of a total number of 2000 children of school-going age, only 650 representing 33% were actually enrolled in school. The remainder 67% lived outside school (including drop outs) due mainly to poverty on the parts of parents and also limited school facilities.

Several other surveys have shown that the most significant cause of school non-enrollment and non-attendance among children is the inability of their parents to pay for their education and also provide for their food and shelter. Often times however, it is this category of children who eventually find their way into the cities to live off the streets.

It is against this backdrop coupled with CRAN's few years of experience acquired through working with the rural poor, that the Child Education Support Scheme (CESS) has been instituted with its primary focus, the poor rural child.

Aims and objectives of CESS

The basic aim of the CESS project is to provide both, financial and material support for very disadvantaged and needy children living within distressed rural communities, to enable such children obtain a minimum level of formal education.

In more specific terms, CESS aims among other things:

- To solicit for and provide support and sponsorship for target children in order to carry such through at least nine years of basic education in Ghana.
- To provide access to formal education for needy children in the rural areas who otherwise would not have had any such opportunity.
- To help stem the upsurge in the phenomenon of "street children" in our cities and large towns.
- To reduce the problems of child neglect and abuse, child labor and exploitation and child delinquency in Ghana.
- To reverse the high incidence of illiteracy most prevalent in the rural areas and to encourage child-to-mother education among target rural communities.
- To raise funds both, locally and internationally in support of the scheme.

Who can be a beneficiary of CESS?

The specific category of needy children who constitutes the target of CESS are principally orphans, abandoned children, children suffering neglect and abuse, children of overburdened single parents and children with very poor and impoverished parents, mainly from the rural areas, as well as "street children".

CRAN collaborates with local and traditional community organizations, village development committees, churches, women's groups, local leaders, social workers and other NGOs in identifying such very needy children eligible for support under the scheme. CRAN intends also to collaborate with the Department of Social Welfare and the Ghana National Commission on Children in this direction.

The selection of beneficiary-children is done through well structured interviews administered by CRAN's field workers. This is to ensure that only children in genuine need receive the assistance.

How is CESS administered?

The CESS project is administered by CRAN-Ghana. After selecting eligible children, short written profiles of these needy children accompanied with their recent passport size photographs are 'advertised'. This is done with the aim to solicit for financial and material aid from public-spirited individuals, philanthropists, Christian brethren and families, churches and charitable organizations both, from within and outside Ghana.

Individuals or groups / organizations may offer to "adopt" a needy child / children by making regular financial and material contributions towards such a child's or children's education until the child / children obtains nine years of basic schooling (Class One to JSS Three) in Ghana. One can also offer to sponsor a child for a short term period say one or two year duration only.

In specific terms, the scheme provides for the needy child's school fees, school apparels, minimum textbooks and stationery, a daily school lunch subsidy and other incidental costs. Normally, local teachers, heads of schools, local religions leaders, community leaders and parents / guardians cooperate as partners with CRAN in the day to day implementation of the scheme at the village / grassroot level.

How can I support a needy child?

Upon request, a brief profile of a needy rural child with the child's passport size photograph attached, together with a Benefactor Identification Form are sent to you. After completing the identification form, mail it back to CRAN-Ghana (see address overleaf) having indicated how long you intend to provide such a support and how much you intend to make available to the child either monthly, quarterly or yearly.

Please cut this and return to CRAN - Ghana

Name:

Address:

- I want to sponsor a needy child, please send me a child's profile
- I wish to know more about the CESS project
- I wish to know more about the work of CRAN in general

How do I send my financial contributions?

All financial contributions / donations in support of a needy child can be sent directly to:

CRAN - Ghana, Account No. 1097996,
Barclays Bank Ghana Limited, Cape Coast, Ghana.

In Europe and outside Africa, cash donations and grants can be sent to:

CRAN, Account Number: 110 15 468
Bank: Sparkasse Aachen, Germany
Bank code (BLZ): 390 500 00

For further information contact:

The Director,
Christian Rural Aid Network (CRAN),
Takoradi Road (SIC Building)
P. O. Box 097, UCC
Cape Coast, Ghana.
Tel. +233 42 33572

In Europe contact:

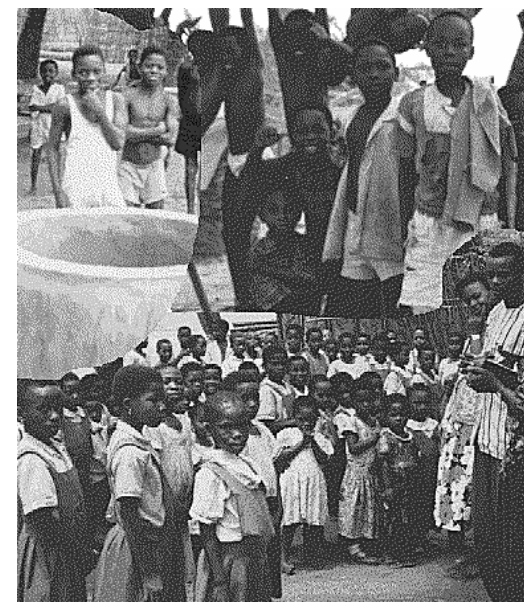
CRAN - Freundeskreis e.V.,
c/o Hans Wallhäuser (Coordinator)
Purweider Winkel 82
52070 Aachen, Germany
Tel. +49 241 910 77 64

Internet::

<http://www.cran.org>
E-Mail: info@cran.org

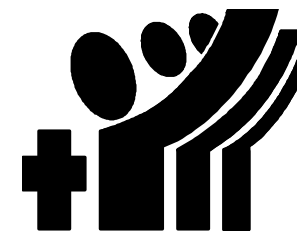
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CRAN



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"Bringing hope to the poor and needy child"



CHRISTIAN RURAL AID NETWORK