

PROFILE OF CHRISTIAN RURAL AID NETWORK (CRAN), GHANA

• About CRAN

The Christian Rural Aid Network (CRAN), Ghana is a rural development organisation established in 1993 with its seat in Cape Coast in the Central Region of Ghana. It is registered as an NGO (under the Companies Code 1963, Act 179) with the Registrar General's Department and also with the Department of Social Welfare (Registration No. DSW/671). CRAN has as its broad aim to promote the socio-economic development of the rural poor and by that working and contributing in a most professional and qualitative manner towards ensuring an improved quality of life for the over 60% of Ghana's population who reside in mainly squalid and economically distressed rural communities. CRAN's work is based on the values of Christian motivation and obligation towards the development of the individual as a whole. In this regard it employs and promotes 'demand-led' or self-help strategies towards community development and rural poverty reduction.

• CRAN's Vision

CRAN's vision is to see a Ghanaian society in which poverty and its concomitants including illiteracy and ignorance, which characterise the lives of majority of the country's rural population are substantially reduced if not completely eradicated. And thus leading to empowerment for the total development and positive transformation of society as well as social justice.

• Our Mission

Our mission therefore is to work towards the improvement in the quality of life of the rural poor, the disadvantaged and the marginalised populations and communities in a holistic fashion (physically, socially, economically and spiritually), with emphasis on the right of children to quality formal education, in addition to the economic and social empowerment of women in a professional and qualitative manner.

• Main Objectives

CRAN's main and broad objectives are to:

- i. Achieve social and economic development and improved quality of life for poor and disadvantaged rural households and communities with emphasis on women and children within CRAN's geographical scope of operation.
- ii. Promote and provide access to quality formal basic education for children within deprived rural communities and by that contributing to bridging the urban-rural, gender and information technology gaps in basic education in Ghana.

• Main Strategies to Achieve Objectives

In striving to achieve the above objectives, CRAN is pursuing a number of strategies, some of which include:

- i. Working in partnership with relevant governmental institutions and agencies, local (decentralised) political and administrative bodies (District Assemblies) and departments to initiate and implement development programmes and projects at the village and grassroots levels.
- ii. Working in close partnership with other NGOs, churches and church organisations to bring development to the rural poor and the needy.
- iii. Promoting the concept of self-help among target communities in order for these to contribute towards their own development and social well-being.

- iv. Seeking innovative ways to raise funds both locally and internationally including partnerships with foreign donors and foreign development organisations in support of CRAN's development programmes and projects.
- v. Providing access to credits for poor rural households and small informal sector operators to set up income-generating activities while at the same time inculcating a savings culture among this same target group.
- vi. Promoting vocational training targeted at rural women towards their acquisition of self-employable skills for income-generating activities.
- vii. Facilitating the establishment of small income-generation activities towards rural poverty reduction and wealth creation
- viii. Incorporating HIV/AIDS issues in all CRAN's development programmes and projects at the community level.
- ix. Developing with care for the ecological environment.
- x. Developing and maintaining CRAN as a professional quality organisation.

- **CRAN's Main Programme Areas**

- a) **Education**

- i. Provision of Basic School Infrastructure and Services for deprived communities,
- ii. Early Childhood Development Programmes (Pre-school and Kindergartens),
- iii. Girl-Child Education Promotion,
- iv. Information Technology for Rural Children,
- v. Child Education Support Scheme (CESS), and generally assisting to develop a community environment that stimulates parents to send their children to school.

- b) **Vocational Training and Income Generation**

- i. Rural Women Vocational Training and Resource Centres
- ii. Business Development Training for Village Enterprises Development
- iii. Non-Traditional Agriculture and Agro-Processing Activities for Value-Adding

- c) **Rural and Informal Sector Microfinance**

- i. Extension of Microcredits to Poor Households as Individuals and Groups
- ii. Rural Savings Mobilisation Schemes based on the Traditional 'Susu' System
- iii. Establishment of Village Banks and Microcredit Village Agencies.

- d) **Community Infrastructure and Services Provision**

- i. Self-Help and Facilitation Towards Provision of Community Water and Sanitation.
- ii. Provision of Health Education (Integrating HIV/AIDS Education in all projects).

- e) **Community Organisation and Mobilisation**

- i. Development Information and Education Extension (HIV/AIDS Education).
- ii. Village Church Growth Promotion for Self-Help and Development.
- iv. Rural Development Capacity Building and Training

- **Organisational Structure of CRAN**

The organisational structure of CRAN is composed of the *Board of Trustees*, the *Executive Management Committee* and *Project Managers and Field Staff*.

- a) **Board of Trustees**

The eight member Board of Trustees of CRAN is the highest decision making and governing body of the organisation. Composed of individuals with varying but rich professional and

academic backgrounds, the Board assists in drawing and approving policies, plans and programmes of CRAN as well as setting the strategic direction for the organisation in order to retain its mission and long term objectives. Among other things, it is responsible for approving the annual budgets of the organisation and in that sense the Board of Trustees exercises the necessary financial controls and checks over the organisation. The Board also advises on a wide range of policy and technical issues while forstering a close relationship between CRAN and government agencies as well between other similar NGOs in Ghana.

b) Executive Management Committee

The Executive Management Committee is the executing body that carries out the day to day management and administration of the organisation. It is responsible for the implementation of policy decisions, programmes and projects approved by the Board of Trustees. The Executive Management Committee is also responsible for programmes and projects planning, budgeting, fundraising and projects partnerships, project implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Headed by an Executive Director, the Executive Management Committee is composed of the Directors and Heads of the three main divisions of CRAN namely Programmes and Projects, Administration and Microcredit. In addition to these are the various Programmes Officers/Co-ordinators and the Head of Finance and Accounts. The Executive Management Committee is assisted in the execution of its functions and duties by a secretarial and technical supporting staff at the organisation's head office in Cape Coast.

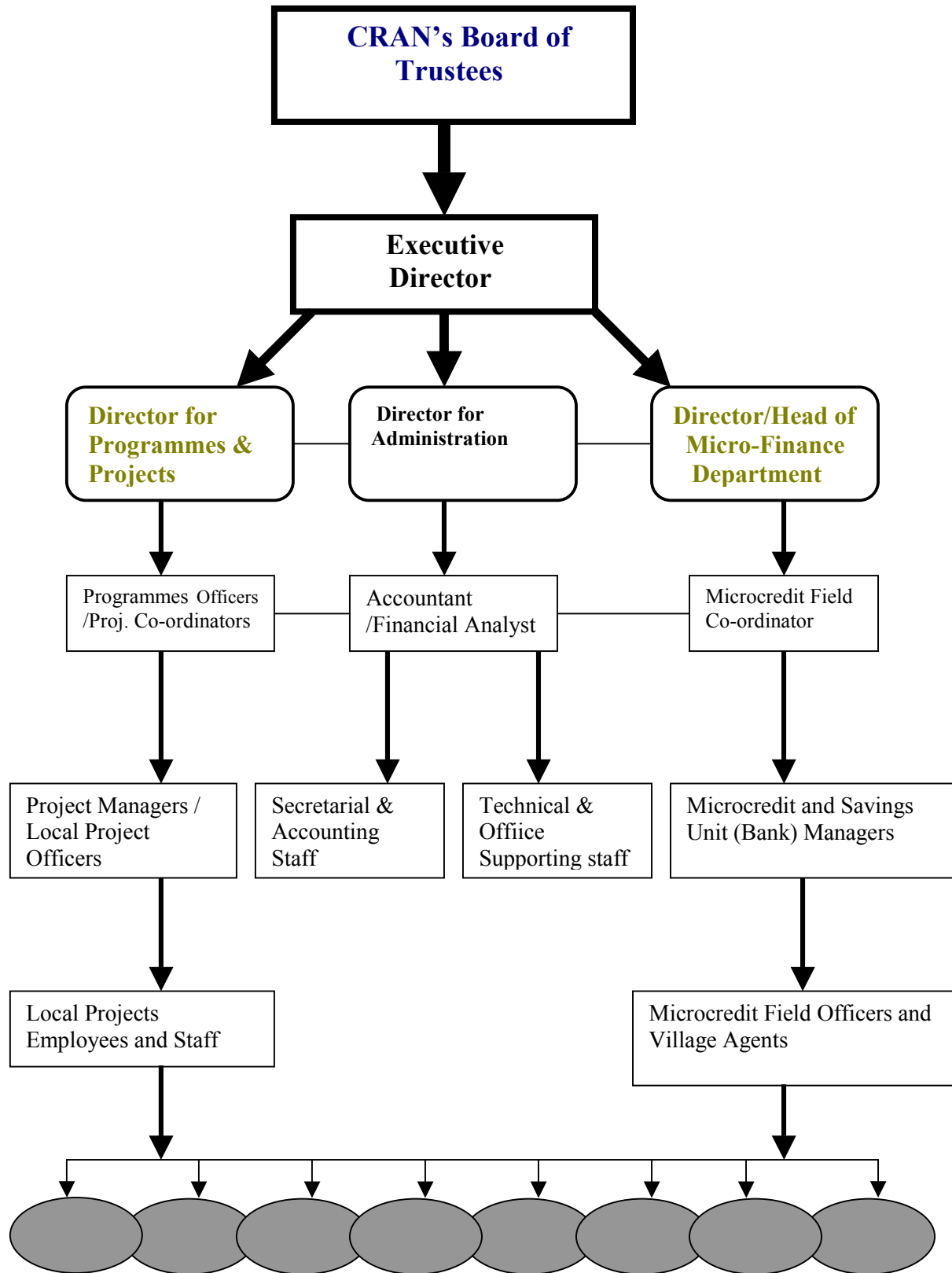
c) Project Managers/Field Staff

Local Project Managers and Field Staff are those stationed locally to supervise and manage projects at the village community level. These include the various Managers of the Village Bank Units of CRAN set up under its Microcredit programme, including also Microcredit Field Officers and Village Agents. Local Project Managers and Project Officers carry out directly the specific and planned activities involved with the various projects, working in close collaboration with the beneficiary communities. They undertake petty purchasing, stocking of project materials, accounting and financial reporting. Local Project Managers and Field Staff are also expected to carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of projects assessing their impacts on the target groups while providing regular feedback link between CRAN office and the project communities. They also assist in mobilising project target communities for communal action as part of project implementation and management.

Grassroots units who are the direct beneficiaries of CRAN's activities do include whole village communities led by their chief and elders and represented by Village (Town) Development Committees, Assemblymen/women or Unit Committee members etc. Other direct beneficiaries include community based organised groups such as women's groups, church groups, youth groups and children. Community project leaders most often elected by the project communities and trained by CRAN liaise between local project managers and the community in order to ensure that project activities remain on track and on schedule. A number of strategies including PRA Methods and Approaches, Baseline Surveys and Rural Household Index, Need Assessment etc. are used to identify project target groups usually the poorest of the poor

CRAN Management Committee also does have very regular direct technical-community interfaces with both prospective and actual project communities at all stages of the project cycle. These include the project conceptualisation, and formulation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages of the project. This is deemed crucial in order to afford target communities their maximum participation in all facets of the project.

CRAN'S ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



Grassroots Units and Rural Clientele

- **Current Programmes and Projects Initiated and Executed by CRAN**

- a. **Promotion of Quality Basic Education for Rural Disadvantaged Children**

This programme initiated in 1994 aims to provide access to quality basic education for several rural children (majority girls) outside school in Ghana. Known also as the "Bridging the Gap Project" The programme currently targets very distressed rural communities especially, migrant and landless village communities along the central and western coastlines of the country. So far, two schools provided by CRAN within two village communities of **Abakam** and **Shama-Kedzi** in this project area provides access to basic education for over 1000 children. The schools are run in partnership with the Ghana Education Service and two Church Education Units. **Source of funding:** Donations have so far been raised from *Hilfe für Brüder, e.V.*, Stuttgart, Germany, *CRAN -Freundeskreis, e.V.*, Germany, The Evangelical Church of Dortmund-Brechten, Germany, The Alliance for Community Action on Girl-Child Education - FAWE / UNICEF as well as contributions from the target project communities.

- b. **Village Pre-School/Kindergarten and Early Childhood Development Projects**

CRAN's village pre-school/kindergarten projects provide facilities and child-care services for disadvantaged children at the village community level. The project aims primarily at easing the burden of rural women as regard child care thereby realising their time which could be invested in micro-economic activities necessary for the survival of their households. Three kindergarten projects located at **Awuna Beach**, **Abakam** and **Sanka** currently cater for a total of more than 200 children. **Source of funding:** Infrastructure for the kindergarten at Sanka was provided under European Union-District Assembly Microprojects Fund. Other donors include the Free Evangelical Church of Aachen, *Hilfe für Brüder, e.V.*, Stuttgart Germany and *CRAN -Freundeskreis, e.V.*, Germany.

- c. **Child Education Support Scheme(CESS)**

A most successful project designed and initiated by CRAN since 1995, aims at indentifying and supporting very deprived and needy children from distressed rural communities (financial assistantships) through nine years of basic education (Primary Class 1 to JSS 3). **Sources of funding:** Selected needy children are linked to individual sponsors/benefactors mostly in Europe (specifically, in Germany) through CRAN's international networking efforts. On the average, 15 children are supported through this network annually.

- d. **Girl-Child Education Promotion Project**

This project aims at bridging the gender gap in education in rural Ghana where the problem is most pronounced. It involves community-based education and gender sensitization programmes and activities aimed primarily at increasing the enrollment and retention rates of girls in school. Affirmative action packages such as educational sponsorship for girls (under CESS above) are also part of the programme. **Sources of funding:** The Alliance for Community Action on Girl-Child Education/ Forum for Africa Women Education (FAWE) /UNICEF.

- e. **Appropriate Technologies for the Enhancement of Income Generation Opportunities for Rural Women**

Under this project, simple agro-processing technologies (mainly in the form of agro-processing mills) are made available to target rural women and women's groups. This is aimed at enabling rural women to add value to their agricultural produce and practices thereby enhancing rural incomes significantly. Under a pilot project located at Liati-Wote village in Ghana's Volta Region, cassava (manioc) and palm kernel processing mills have been provided to benefit over 500 women. Women here also have access to the Kenyan Top-Bar beehives for small-scale environmental friendly bee farming.

Funding Source: Ghana Initiative of the *Katholische Hochschulgemeinde* (KHG), Aachen, Germany, and *CRAN Freundeskreis e.V.*, Germany.

f. Rural Women Non-Formal Vocational Training and Self-Employment Projects:

This project is designed to provide non-formal and self-employable vocational training and skills for rural women and girl school-dropouts at the village level. The aim is to promote rural employment and income-generating opportunities for target rural women. Currently, training is provided in several trades and skills including, dress/apparel making, hairdressing, batik and textile production, manufacture of African beads, production of perfumeries including medicinal balms etc. Training and the acquisition of skill are to be followed up with the establishment of village enterprises to be facilitated by CRAN. Two of such training/resource centres are located at Duakor village in the Central Region and Liati-Wote in the Volta Region train at least 40 women annually in various skills. **Sources of funding:** The *Evangelische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe* (EZE), Bonn, Germany supports the Duakor training centre while the Liati-Wote centre receives support from *CRAN Freundeskreis, e.V.*, Germany.

g. CRAN's Rural and Informal Sector Microcredit and Savings Scheme

This is a rural and informal sector targeted savings and credit (micro-lending) scheme initiated by CRAN to provide micro-credits to rural poor households specifically, women to support their economic activities. The scheme provides small loans ranging from US\$ 20 to US\$ 500 to individuals. This scheme which has so far registered 1000 members and clients within targeted rural communities, aims to provide microcredit facilities to 5000 clients by the year 2005, 80% of whom would be rural women. Under the project, village and community banks are established to also mobilise savings and to cater adequately for the needs of clients by bringing banking to their doorsteps. **Source of funding:** CORDAID, The Netherlands and the *Deutsche Welthungerhilfe*, (German Agro-Action) Germany.

h. Village Enterprise Development Programme (VEDP)

This is a newly initiated programme aimed at assisting individuals and groups at the village level to set up viable income generating ventures based on modern and state-of-the-art approaches and principles of successful enterprise growing and management. Under the programme, CRAN facilitates and provides access to training and skills development, entrepreneurial development, technical assistance including simple and appropriate technologies, and micro-finance towards the establishment and development of village based enterprises which rely on and utilise mainly local resources. In this regard CRAN is working closely with research and resource institutions like the, Food Research Institute of CSIR, ITTU of GRATIS, NBSSI, DAPIT and some Polytechnic institutions. A pilot project is underway in the Volta Region of Ghana. **Source of funding:** *Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst e.V.* (EED) of Germany.

• Geographical Scope of CRAN's Activities

CRAN is currently operating within three Regions in Ghana. These include the Central Region (Cape Coast the capital of the Central Region is where the head office of CRAN is located), Western Region and the Volta Region. Currently CRAN's projects are located and run in seven different districts within these three regions in Ghana.

- **Guide to Information About and Contact to CRAN**

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