

Annual Report 1995
Christian Rural Aid Network
CRAN Friends Circle e.V.

(July 1996)

Trust in the Lord forever for he is the eternal rock.



August 1995: Liati - Wote: Group of participants at the first bee-keeping workshop



The general situation in Ghana and Germany

The year 1995 is considered as a time of economic hardship for their country by our Ghanaian partners. The Structural Adjustment Programme, laid upon Ghana as a duty by IMF and World Bank, is praised as a model of success throughout the world. But in the work of CRAN impoverishment remains a characteristic of its target groups probably for long years to come. Realistic estimations are awaiting a period of several years until living standards of the early 60es will be reached again, even under favourable assumptions. Reaching relatively stable industrializing countries is to be expected not before another four decades. That means for a long time CRAN's programmes will be needed, while a lot of love to the rural people and a long breath are necessary. By now most of the people in the villages where CRAN is present are excluded from basic needs like an ecologically healthy environment, basic education, and access to safe water, not even thinking about entering a modern economic process. That means there is a lot to do, and the more known CRAN will be in its home country the more applications are coming up for assistance in development projects, and mainly because of limited finance and - going with that - limited staff by far not all of them can be responded positive. Thus a certain uneasiness cannot be denied, once the social responsibility is recognized which cannot be taken by the Government alone. Still more important it is to invest into human resources, that is, to integrate people in the target villages into the projects in such a way that not only their working together is a basic prerequisite but that they will be taught the ability to develop their own ideas, to take initiative, to implement their plans as far as possible and only then will ask for external aid when their own potentiality has come to an end. In the long term this is the only sustainable method, and thus CRAN is gladly willing to modify its strategy after first impulse has shown that, and for a start, what is possible. This is the direction in which the work in 95 already has been brought on.

As German friends circle we regret the economically sad situation, however still the more appreciate CRAN's activities and ensure our full support. Especially the enforced participation of the villagers already when sketching the projects shows good success. This in spite of the difficulties to understand for those minds who by the attitude of „The Government



shall bring us ...” have developed also a lack of personal or communal activity, which has to be overcome. A close co-operation with the local Christian communities is a significant attribute of that success, as by their faith and ethics a sense of responsibility is strengthened, and also by courses to overcome illiteracy and by leadership training for example the skills of several people in the villages are improved. We declare our complete solidarity with that, and this is the approach that can well be explained to friends and interested people, leading to their readiness for support. Especially by personal contact and by addressing church groups our work has become a bit better known. In the same way our financial growth is satisfactory in so far as a reasonable growth is wanted by us, not overcharging in means of personnel and substance the work in Ghana and in Germany.

The development of the projects in Ghana

In the year under review, there were efforts to stabilize the already running projects and at the same time to carefully build up other ones. So it makes sense to have a look at the various parts of CRAN work separately.

In *Abakam* especially church work has wonderfully been developed. By several evangelistic approaches and still more by the lives of the Christians in the village giving an example the local church has been growing by maturity and by number. The church is engaged for the village, e.g. in organizing courses to overcome illiteracy, running the kindergarten - school, and in developing some understanding in how far the village itself can change things to the positive, and all this has contributed not only taking the church serious but also by appointing their representatives into the town development committee. Thus Abakam is on its way to be a „CRAN prototype village”. Concerning basic education, kindergarten and school have further been built up. For class one a permanent room was built. Class two is taught under a provisional shed. In summer 95, however, construction of permanent rooms has been started, right including one for class three that will be starting in 96. In that construction work the villagers are involved by communal labour. During the visit of friends circle members (see below) we could commonly work, which of course did not bring any substantial result on this work’s progress but was meant as an act of solidarity and was understood as such. By the end of the



year four teachers are employed for kindergarten and school, educating about 90 children.

In Bantuma the situation did not change in any respect. The local church had to remove from the originally „occupied” house (which now again is empty and not used ...) and now meets under a simple shed. Because of the land rights and sharing of power still unsettled, CRAN cannot implement any relevant development action. Future meetings and workshops could be planned regionally so that by participation of some Bantuma people at least some impulse can be given that way.

A new village for CRAN work is Duakor. On Easter 96, a series of church programmes took place there. Because of the small distance - Duakor is situated right behind University of Cape Coast fences - there are good chances for further activities. Only the usual difficulties have to be overcome that arise when Christians are entering a strictly traditional village. As soon a small but lively church has come together, we hope to see it fully accepted after a certain starting period. Then some other suitable development actions will be considered.

Not so far from Cape Coast, Frami is a Fanti settlement where the villagers took initiative to build a simple clinic that is already working. After difficulties about some church support they have asked CRAN to assist in the supply of medicine. The German visitors during their stay had the chance to watch in a constituent assembly how prudently CRAN leadership brings in aspects of participation of all the social groups, of management and consulting to place such a project on a solid ground. For all this caution we like to thank them here. As we see it, the Frami engagement is a welcome sign that CRAN work is not restricted to Ewe people - which is at hand by language reasons - but is dedicated to all needy rural areas.

Liati - Wote has seen some progress though not as big as hoped for in '94. The effort to get the no longer used former Border Guard buildings for CRAN use did not yet gain positive result. For that all the thing has been brought before the chief of the traditional area, that means one level up. But as the population of course now is in need and not only after having been able to settle that question, workshops have started as about three days' short - time courses in a provisional way. By this CRAN meets what the village chief has applied for. Workshops themes are related to



agriculture (agroforestry, bee - keeping) and thus are locally easy to implement. For the workshops CRAN could win trainers who not only are competent specialists but also competent in that kind of pedagogic to adapt themselves to the poor villagers level, starting with the ideas and actions which they will be likely to understand and follow. The success will be measured by the implementation of what people have heard. Besides, a small family planning clinic was opened which is run by Mary Amewuga, local project co-ordinator and a trained nurse, as far as she is in Liati. By governmental support she could take part in a course about family planning. By this a domain of significant importance and explosive discussion has been moved into CRAN's programmes.

Shama - Kedzi school and kindergarten are still operating under makeshift conditions. Payment of the teachers is jointly granted by the local Evangelical Presbyterian Church and CRAN. By the end of the year there are three teachers educating nearly 100 children in kindergarten and class one. A step by step expansion like in Abakam is planned. Shama - Kedzi has got a fundamental improvement of infrastructure by building a road from the Cape Coast - Takoradi highway up to the village, which means it is now to be reached by land and no longer only by waterway. Concerning impulse by the people, the village seems to be the most progressive one among the communities CRAN has worked with until now (though it is surely the biggest of these villages).

CRAN's Child Education Sponsorship Scheme (*CESS*) meant to support needy children, that is those who as orphans or because of sickness within their families probably will not be able to pay school fees and so on, to bring them through basic education, has started with four children, all from Abakam school. The programme shall carefully be expanded to avoid easy aid that could have been got in local peoples' own responsibility. For the years to come we expect CESS will go on as it is.

Giving loans to build up micro business of women in fish processing by the *Small Scale Credit Scheme*, it has shown that generally a more intense consulting of the women is needed, so that more than in singular cases the expected success will be achieved. Therefore CRAN is working on the way how to give out the loans, maybe by integrating groups of women into the scheme so that there will be kind of care and control within their group.

For the Cape Coast office a post for National Service people was



successfully applied for. Since autumn '95 the office is manned by a secretary then, which eases the day to day work for the volunteers and part-time workers. It is to be expected there will be annually new employment in advantageous conditions for CRAN.

Aspects of the work in Germany

Contact between Ghana and Germany is obtained by at least monthly letters. Fax connection to Ghana became more reliable, so that agreements and appointments will be faster. In August two members, Michael Junk and Hans Wallhaeuser, visited CRAN. Their main aims were to come to know the CRAN people involved in the local work, to watch what they are doing, to visit and encourage the Christian communities and discuss the arrangements for next year's co-operation. By such visits it is most easy to experience the country's culture and to bring personal observations into the presentation of CRAN here in Germany as well as in supporting CRAN work here by stating the personal impressions. Such friends circle visits as a form of regular contact are declared as both sides' wish for the future.

German members are mainly informed by newsletters (5 issues in '95). They contain reports about CRAN's activities and related objectives (e.g. the PANAFEST festival in December '94 at which CRAN presented an information and sales exhibition. The annual meeting, including a report about the summer's visit, took place in October. Other meetings are more difficult to organize as members are regionally distributed all over Germany. Information of the public was mostly given by slide shows in smaller church groups.



Financial and material support of CRAN Ghana

An essential part of support was given to CRAN by the Protestant Church of Dortmund - Brechten. From their Christmas bazaar 1994 they have donated 5 TDM. By that we could increase our regular quarterly support to 4,500 DM. As to the other donations, we had a slight increase from 20 TDM up to 22 TDM. In total, we could transfer an amount of 19 TDM to CRAN Ghana. Expenses for PR material and administration run up to 1.2 TDM and thus reaches a reasonable percentage, as everything here is done on voluntary base.

Some members mounted a computer for the Ghanaian office and sent it there, charging only the cost of the material. One main aspect was to supply CRAN Ghana with a presentable office equipment which was needed for further recognition and integration into the national NGO umbrella organization, which is very important for co-operation and to be acknowledged as a serious organization. In our point of view such an investment is acceptable in times of expanding structures, though CRAN sees its tasks only in simple rural areas.

To render possible working on a broader foundation it is necessary to gain institutional support. On that behalf CRAN has written proposals to some projects (Abakam, Liati - Wote, Shama - Kedzi) to be sent out to bigger organizations. This was done to about ten North American NGOs, up to now without any success. We agreed to have the proposals translated to German to apply for support here.

The newsletter is distributed to 55 recipients at the end of 95. New friends have been won nearly exclusively by personal contact, with members and sympathizers spreading information about CRAN among their friends and churches. In spite of our small size a lot has been moved. We want to thank everybody who is engaged with so much enthusiasm.



The legal base

In January 95 CRAN friends circle was recognized as a non-profit organization by Aachen City financial administration. This is provisionally valid for 18 months. As we do not have the right to issue certificates of donation, the city administration of Aachen has established a trust account. The co-operation shows to be very good. Furthermore CRAN friends circle registered with the Aachen district court in June 95. Now we are officially recognized as an organization with full legal rights and duties, giving us a more „respectable” reputation in our public presentation, which was necessary and intended, having grown up from a purely private initiative because of such great success, to go on growing to benefit the people of Ghana as well as positively dealing with development aspects from our German point of view.

In Ghana, CRAN has moved on another step in so far as after equipping the Cape Coast office and after an official delegation’s visit there followed the recognition as an NGO, accompanied by becoming a member of the national NGO umbrella organization (GAPVOD). For the future CRAN hopes to be able to take part in forming their regional network within Central Region. Such the political programme of decentralization and strengthening of local structures will be transposed, giving a chance to regional co-operation. As to finance, a certified accountant was commissioned to write the official balances and income and expenditure accounts. This was also done retroactively for 1994 and will be executed regularly and currently in future.

Conclusion

The beginning of CRAN has been very small. Within a few years a well working and fruitful NGO has been growing. This should not have been possible without trusting God as expressed in the verse at page one, and it would not have been possible without the help of God that is constantly encouraging to see and spread hope even in the oppressing life situation of Ghanaian villages and by this to escape the oppression. By that trust we walk on with our work.

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