

Annual Report 1999

**Christian Rural Aid Network
CRAN Freundeskreis e.V.**

(February 2000)

Good to have each other,
good to see each other,
sharing trouble, joy, strength
going the same way.



November 1999: German school, Ghanaian Food, cooking together



Dear Friends of CRAN!

This Annual Report is in the making just on the 20th anniversary of the "Brandt-Report". At that time, a group of politicians and experts published their

analysis and recommendations within a world that is growing together in terms of global interdependence, but which is still and increasingly divided into the ones who "have" and those who "have not". The report also was written to define the position reached after two decades of development polics, and it plead for new concrete preferences of improving humanity within the global process of co-operation, in political, economic and social respects. Today, the German President Johannes Rau sees the development of living conditions in the countries of the South to be a question of equally "charity, solidarity and reason". With these words, he addresses people with very different views of life. But: they do not express anything new. The same words could have been used to introduce the Brandt-Report. Does that mean that the last two decades have not brought any progress, or changes, and that we should be pessimistic with regard to the future? Mankind has changed. The young of that time are adults today, who can participate in creating ideas and decisions.

What defines our measuring values and motives?

"In Africa, unlike the saturation in Germany, I have forgotten some of the discontent", writes a journalist of the Frankfurter Rundschau after his comeback to office. "The very exponents of the modern world are carping like spoilt teens" at uncomfortable aeroplanes, at slow and expensive railways, at too much traffic jams. Are we actually still able to distinguish between what we really need and what is just a bit more or less quality of life?

In Ghana, the current generation of numerous young adults has virtually no scope to shape and decide on the development of their country.

Why are we requested to help? Just like we will perhaps have to get accustomed to pensions no longer being guaranteed by the state, we have been accustomed for a long time to the fact that the official development aid is not enough at all even to meet those obligations the state has fixed in the past. Therefore aid, which definitely remains necessary, is increasingly referred back to private responsibility. Even if this is only partly appropriate - who really benefits how much from unjust rules of the business jungle?! - let us take our chance, and let us give our African friends the opportunity, to shape their living conditions in a way which is not only addressing superficial quality standards, but which gives first priority to the basic rights of human beings.

For us as a Christian group, this is the realisation of the commandment of charity: "Go and do as I have done", Jesus demands us. This we do in solidarity with those who do not have the money, the standing and the education to promote their interests. To meet this demand together as the CRAN family, we need all our intellect and reason to overcome the traps of activity without sustainability and of knowledge without the power of realisation. From the efforts CRAN has achieved in the past, we derive our legitimate hopes for further considerable improvements in the villages.



Therefore we are thanking you for supporting our work, with your contributions and your prayers, with your knowledge and your interest. And for CRAN as a whole, also in the new decade, we are praying for the grace and aid of God.

1. Economic conditions

In Ghana, compared to the last years, the economic conditions have not improved in 1999. Unlike its general stability within the previous month, the recent exchange rate of the Cedi has devaluated vis-à-vis the D-Mark (from 1.500 Cedis up to more than 2.000 Cedis per D-Mark). This indicates the unstability of the economic situation as a whole. The CRAN projects, which are calculated in hard currency, but paid in domestic currency, are always affected by these developments. For the citizens of Ghana, the recent development concretely means that import goods, which are paid in hard currency, are becoming more expensive. Since oil, too, is an import good, the transport costs are rising accordingly. Repeated increases of petrol prices consequently burden the budgets.

Furthermore, the recent measures of debt relieve paradoxically gave rise to concerns that the general economic situation in Ghana could suffer from subsequent fluctuations of the gold price. Generally, it is appreciable that the idea of debt relieve is not only gaining prestige on the international stage, but that first concrete implementing steps have already been launched (notwithstanding insufficiencies and vagueness of the measures hitherto decided). Yet, if the losses are covered by tantamount sales of gold, of the value of billions of dollars, this causes considerable fluctuations on the gold market, from which Ghana as a main gold exporting country is immediately affected. Even the announcement of the plan caused a drastic decrease, and its repeal effected an overcompensating increase of the gold price. Producers from Ghana have considerably suffered from these fluctuations.

This clearly shows how much aspects must be considered given the global interdependent economic processes, which might be counterproductive to the original aim - the improvement of the budget situation in indebted countries.

Not only development politics, but also economic politics need more far-sighted planning of such actions instead of doing a rush job.

2. CRAN in general

The whole year, Patrick Agbesinyale, the head of CRAN Ghana, has been staying in Germany to promote his studies. We are glad to have him here among us, with his competence and his commitment. Specifically, contacts to people from Ghana living in Germany can be established very much easier, with a compatriot personally addressing them. At our working meetings and discussions too, Patrick is most welcome. His wife Doris and the other members of the CRAN-team keep leading and co-ordinating the work in Ghana. With the help of modern communication technology - just as much en vogue under the equator sun - Patrick is able to contribute case reports, project applications and management works from Germany. Though this cannot replace personal contacts, it is a well functioning temporary solution, with a team at site one can rely on.



Per 31 December, 1999, 23 people belong to the CRAN staff:

- 4 staff members: management (directorate, finances, project co-ordination)
- 1 staff member: secretariat/book-keeping
- 1 staff member: project leading Liati-Wote
- 4 staff members: instructors in training facilities (Duakor and Liati-Wote)
- 6 staff members: micro credit programme
- 3 staff members: kindergarten teachers (Abakam and Sanka)
- 4 staff members: honorary or part-time workers (as teachers, secretaries, computer experts or collectors)

The teachers at the schools of Abakam and Shama-Kedzi are paid by the current holders (via state-church-charging), consequently they do not appear on the CRAN list. Nevertheless, their assignments have not changed, neither has CRAN's influence on the schools' development (specifically with regard to further construction works).

In the same degree as CRAN can save these salaries, the remaining resources can be allocated to the training projects, which have not been able to refinance themselves from the beginning, unlike the micro credit programme.

In general, the last years have experienced a considerable enlargement of the staff, which has made necessary changes concerning the organisation of the management and the delegation of responsibilities.

3. Projects

a) Parishes

With the existing communities in Abakam, Bantuma, Duakor and Sharma-Kedzi, a good co-operative relationship has been continued. They are the basis for many of CRAN's approaches: Workers and honorary assistants are coming from the parishes, and the parishes support the development projects, contribute to the guardianship for the schools and promote active organisation networks in their respective villages. Therefore, it is regrettable that for Sanka, notwithstanding our efforts and talks, no church partner could be found to promote a further parish development. In contrast, a new group of presently 20 Christians has been built up in Moree-Ahwiando in the west of Cape Coast.

b) Abakam School

There are two kindergarten groups and school classes 1-6, the latter held by the Presbyterian Church. The co-operation is successful. Yet, there is further need of help: the equipment of educational material is not yet satisfactory. In addition, the first pupils will leave elementary school in autumn 2000, and to follow up, CRAN is going to establish a secondary school for classes 7-9. Naturally, this is a large scale project.



c) Shama-Kedzi School

In Sharma-Kedzi, there are also two kindergarten groups and school classes 1-5. Formally, the Methodist Church took over the holding. A major difficulty is to attract teaching personnel: The village is remote, compared to Abakam. Long ways to the next city (after Shama) and insufficient infrastructure and accommodation facilities make it difficult to find qualified, committed teachers. This example shows graduating difficulties related to different dimensions of aid: It is easier to construct a building than convincing people of accepting local disadvantages to contribute to the development process. On the other hand we received a positive sign from UNDP Ghana, that provided funding for the school's equipment. This is the first time CRAN received a larger amount from non-German sources. The Freundeskreis welcomes this diversification, which reduces CRAN Ghana's dependence on foreign donors and therefore promotes its autonomy also in this respect.

d) Liati-Wote

Meanwhile, 14 participants successfully finished the tailoring course. The running of the mill, too, recommenced in summer 1999. The village community willingly takes up this opportunity of processing cassava and palm kernels.

e) Sanka - kindergarten and farm

The kindergarten of Sanka still covers two classes. The farm with cassia trees is also operating like before. In 2000, it is planned to plant further ground with cashew. The insufficient supply of clean water for the village still gives rise to concerns.

f) Duakor

In record time, the training centre for women was established and put into function, financed by grants of the EZE. The classes cover the branch tailoring (including batik and kente), further branches have been taken into consideration. A main approach is to integrate complement courses, since none of the 28 participants has a complete school education. Basic knowledge related to calculation and establishing a trade

are necessary to ensure a successful future application of the skills. What remains is CRAN's task to work out a marketing strategy for the products produced during the training course.

(Please see separate leaflet)

g) School education - godchild sponsorship

As long as the overall situation in the villages does not improve substantially, it will be necessary to sponsor numerous children in order to enable them to complete their primary school education. Until the end of 1999, the Freundeskreis had been able to arrange 50 such sponsorships. The respective beneficiaries are not only children from



schools initiated by CRAN, but include all children from the villages in which CRAN is currently working.

h) Micro credit programme

After a successful start in 1998, the pursuit of the micro credit programme in 1999 continued to be promising. At present, the programme covers about 350 clients in total, belonging to six clusters defined by villages or village groups. Due to the great number of participants, the credit demand is accordingly high - especially during the fishing season, when many clients need capital for their business. Therefore it is regrettable that so far no sufficient capital stock could be built up. However, the topic increasingly attracts the attention of relevant public and political actors, and CRAN has established some promising contacts. This gives rise to the hope that the problem will be solved in the near future. In the meantime, the CRAN Freundeskreis was able to arrange some private credits to cover the urgent and short-term demand in autumn 1999.

4. Activities in Germany

A decisive event for the CRAN Freundeskreis was the visit of six delegates to Ghana in summer 1999. Originally, this was planned as a workcamp also for externals, but in the end only association members took part, all of them visiting Ghana for the first time. They participated in the Ghana youth workcamp (carry on construction works to built up the Sharma-Kedzi school) and had the opportunity to talk personally with CRAN members and to get to know all projects at site. A useful contribution was the installation of the new computer equipment, completed by training courses for the office staff members. The deepest impressions, though, were derived from the personal experience of Ghana's people and their culture. "You must learn to cope with the inner conflicts, to cope with the poverty. You get accustomed to things that seem to be messy, chaotic, impossible in the beginning - after a while you recognise the structures and respect the ways how the people organise their lives, e. g. as far as their neatness and clothing is concerned. Further, you have to cope with their expectation that the white man has much more knowledge and abilities, which of course is not true, for example with regard to manufacturing skills."

Vice versa, we had the pleasure to welcome Doris Agbesinyale in October. The current managing director of CRAN Ghana stayed in Germany for two weeks. Therefore, many members and friends of the CRAN Freundeskreis had the chance to get to know her for the first time. Visits to many supporting groups and (also potential) partners could be arranged. Such direct contacts specifically promote the mutual understanding necessary for consultations and questions with regard to the functioning of the projects and their funding.



Particular highlights are Patrick's visits to schools on the occasion of special events or during the regular lessons (see front photo). In the course of such visits, we are happy to built up new contacts and more understanding for the circumstances of life in Ghana.

The distinctively growing extent of the godchild sponsorship programme - from 31 to 50 children in 1999 - indicates that it is easier to support a concrete person or a concrete project than to support the general work of a developmental organisation. CRAN Ghana needs the latter, too, e. g. in order to co-ordinate projects or to take part in conferences. We will continue our efforts to keep a good balance between ear-marked and general contributions.

In autumn 1999, the German Nicole Visser went to Ghana to stay there for several month as a new intern. She is assistant at the Abakam school.

5. CRAN Freundeskreis by numbers

In 1999, the CRAN Freundeskreis received 62.000 DM (1998: 64.000 DM). Donations remain to be the main source of receipts, whereas sales of material (chains, eukalyptus ointment, recently single pieces of clothing from Duakor) are negligible (The co-operation with developmental institutions - in this case: EZE - is directly conducted by CRAN Ghana, therefore the respective funds are not included in this record.)

From these resources, we supported CRAN Ghana in its general work through regular transfers, in order to ensure the normal running and to cover the fix costs - especially the salaries. For this purpose, we transferred 28.000 DM. For the godchild sponsorship programme (CESS), further 10.000 DM were transferred. Ear-marked donations to the amount of 7.000 DM were dedicated to Sanka (kindergarten), Liati-Wote (installation of the diesel engine for the mill project) and Abakam (school). Special material procurement covered an industrial sewing-machine (with more functions and higher efficiency than usual machines) as well as computer equipment (capable of internet function and suitable for tropical conditions). These costs amounted to 9.000 DM in total. Further costs covered purchases of information material and office equipment for CRAN Ghana, as well as CRAN-related activities of the head of CRAN Ghana during his stay in Germany (e. g., writing and mailing of project applications, communication with Ghana) to avoid detour charging via Ghana. In total, transfers of money and goods to CRAN Ghana amounted to 61.000 DM (1998: 62.000 DM). Not included is the value of eight used sewing-machines for the tailoring projects. The costs for information material, administration etc. in Germany amounted to 3.000 DM, similar to 1998. As usual, this money was paid by ear-marked contributions from association members, to ensure that the entire sum of your donations can be applied to support CRAN Ghana's work directly.

On this occasion we wish to thank you for helping us with your donations and activities, and with your trust.



Information on the work and the rationale of the CRAN Freundeskreis is circulated regularly (at least quarterly) in our CRAN newsletter (recipients in December: about 115). Further information, specifically on single projects or working fields, can be found on separate leaflets, in the annual reports of CRAN Ghana or directly on our homepage.

Closing remark

What has changed, perhaps even improved, in this new millenium, compared to the one beginning with the "19"? There are no indications that give rise to hopes for great steps of improvements. Legitimate, however, is a preview on continuous work. It is sometimes stony and hard, sometimes lengthy, until people develop their abilities. But our work is founded on a good basis:

CRAN Ghana has the know-how and the access to the people in the villages, and the love for these people, and the help of God.

CRAN Freundeskreis has the facilities to support them and takes care.

Both are complementary to each other. Therefore the motto is justified: It is good to have each other. We want to share the concerns that aid comes in time, share the joy derived from the relationships and structures we already built up, and share the power to realise our aims. May God give his blessing to our work.

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