



CHRISTIAN RURAL AID NETWORK
FREUNDKREIS e.V.

CRAN Freundeskreis, H. Wallhäuser, Roermonder Str. 110, 52072 Aachen

CRAN Newsletter No. 25 / May 2000

Dear Friends of Cran,

At present, there are more reports about Africa in the newscasts than long before. Ethiopia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Congo stand for country-specific catastrophes, be it of a natural cause or human-made.

From this bulk of news, one obvious question emerges: Where can African states bring in their initiatives? Now the time has come, that speeches, useful as they may be for clearing the facts, are followed by action. The one who pleads for African solutions has to give concrete descriptions of them. Even with limited technical and financial means, African people are ready to contribute their know-how, and especially their creativity and their knowledge about the meaning of dialogue and community. How can those strengths of African societies be transposed into solutions? Will they prove to be stronger than a too early exit out of the hierarchical references to family, clan, ethnic group, nation, continent? Be ready at any time to respond to everyone who asks for the hope you live on.? This request from 1st Petrus 3:15 is the saying for the month of May 2000 chosen by the „Hernhuter Losungen“. It does not call for ready solutions or reports of successful programmes. But it asks for our motivation, expressed through action. I wish to us, as CRAN, that we will go on being filled by Christ as a motivator and that our work will give hope to others.



„You may stop - I've just send a fax ...!“

Warm regards,

Hans Wallhäuser



A look back at the spring meeting

In the first part of our spring meeting in March we discussed the topic of slave-trade and its implications for the present time?. Since the Jewish claims for reparation payments for the crimes before and within the Second World War have entered into a phase of concrete implementation, claims for reparation payments to Africans, respectively their descendants, for the crimes of slavery were also raised. As the castles and forts in Ghana bear omnipresent witness of this history, the topic suggested itself. Africans as well as Europeans and Americans have not shown much interest in the topic up to now. The blacks are left with their sorrow and anger. School education, which had been dominated by colonial curricula for a long time, hid information about this part of African history. In the west, it is rather the eurocentric view on the past which leads to the same effect. Therefore we entered into the discussion with an overview on the historical facts. However, the approach of gathering information cannot give an adequate idea of the sorrow behind it, and it does not give means to understand the motives of the powerful decision-makers of that time. At present, even within the scope of the reparation claims being raised, an emotionally active way to deal with the hurt and the crimes committed in the mass deportations does not seem to be possible. After all, the claims are not raised by Africans themselves or even governmental representatives. Many uncertainties, but especially the current distribution of capital and power, obstruct initiatives similar to the Jewish ones. Also for Africans it is true: The value of lives of human beings is not quantifiable. But what would really help: to recognise Africa as a partner and to have special regard in respect of its weaknesses, particularly of those not caused by African people themselves. I also want to consider this in an adequate way within the relationship between CRAN-Germany and CRAN-Ghana. This requires further learning. (A more detailed report of 8 pages will gladly be sent if requested).

In the course of addressing the current concerns in Ghana at the spring meeting we realised that the establishment of a secondary school in Abakam needs to be our “project of the year”. The demand will come inevitably, when the oldest primary school class would have to restart learning in September after the summer pause. Nearby there are no schools that could take these children, apart from individual cases. It is now our goal at least to finish the foundation for the school (with three class rooms) and a further room, appointments included. This option is also preferred by the Presbyterian Church that rules the school. Only the workshop for practical lessons - though legally obligatory - can hardly be financed. Therefore, Abakam JSS bears the same fate as many other village schools, too: there are more restrictions within reality than within the well-meant law. The secondary school in Shama-Kedzi has similar demands. As long as the old village school can be used, the acute demand will only emerge next year. Yet it cannot be said already which damage might be caused in the short run by floods. But fortunately, we have already been able to give 10.000 DM to CRAN-Ghana for the new school levels by now, so that we hope for a soon and timely beginning of the construction works.

As a guest, Richard Opoku was present, a physician from Tamale who studied in Aachen. He reported about his project of offering a correspondence course for the higher secondary class. This is an interesting approach to overcome impediments in school education.

For those who could not participate in the spring meeting, an updated list of CRAN's projects and activities is enclosed.



News from CRAN Ghana

Meanwhile, the old automobile in Cape Coast does not function anymore. Therefore, the mobility of the CRAN team is considerably restricted at the moment. All the more we are glad to having found a substitute. By the end of April a used VW van was shipped in a container, along with spare parts to repair the old car and make it usable - and sellable - again.

Furthermore, we sent about 15 bicycles that will make it easier for teachers and other project staff members to reach their work, and some equipment for the training centres. We thank all the donors for giving their old treasures (very spontaneously in part), and who helped in gathering, transporting and packing the goods.

Patrick Agbesinyale will fly back to Ghana in May. There he will meet his family and CRAN again after 19 long months, conduct studies and interviews for his dissertation and then come back to Dortmund at the beginning of October. We wish him a blessed time at home in every respect.

For the micro-credit programme, several activities could finally be done. In the first week of April, George Tokpo and Doris Agbesinyale lead a journey to Mali with representatives of three other organisations which are also active in the micro-credit sector. There they visited a domestic group working successfully within this field, too. We will see which ideas and follow-up activities can be drawn from this visit. Along with that, intensive contacts with a Dutch NGO have been kept up. This partner NGO has on principle agreed to support the micro-credit programme with a credit to favourable conditions, and has already worked out a draft contract. Details will be clarified in further talks. Thus, CRAN has almost reached this year's aim to provide a solid financial foundation to the micro-credit sector.

Actually George Tokpo, who manages CRAN's finances and simultaneously is the manager of the micro-credit programme, apart from his main profession, is very much loaded with the work. This is true especially with regard to the reports and data analysis he carries out, which are needed for the negotiations with professional organisations. Therefore we hope that this stretched situation can be eased soon.

Through an expansion of the programme it is hoped to generate surpluses that could pay staff for these works by itself. Co-operation and competence within the micro-finance field are built up continuously. For example, Mr Asamoah, a member of the advisory board of CRAN Ghana, will take part in an special national conference in June.

At the end of the last year, CRAN-Ghana has started a public relations campaign. At a press conference, the rationale and the aims of CRAN were introduced in an concentrated way to representatives of the press and broadcast. Some publications followed. Yet in total, the feedback to the efforts from Ghana was rather weak. No contacts resulted from the presentation at the PANAFEST festival, and the Millennium's Eve campaign has only brought some small domestic donations. But nevertheless, CRAN-Ghana keeps up its efforts to create awareness within Ghana's society for its own opportunities to support the helpful projects.

The sector of Public Relations is stimulated by Natalie Perkins, a voluntary helper from Canada who supports the team in Cape Coast for a considerable time. Together with Fafa Addo, a domestic voluntary helper, she has written a first newsletter from Ghana.

This and That

Also this year, a German delegation will visit Ghana. The two members of the board Wolfgang Brüßler and Hans Wallhäuser will prospectively fly to Ghana in mid-August.



The provision of the village Sanka with clean drinkable water is still an assignment on the working list of CRAN. As there are no technical means nearby, this is going to be a major undertaking. Ms Perkins has worked out a financial planning approach for the 60.000 DM project. We have (non-binding) agreements for almost half of the sum. Thus the expectation of an immediate solution would be premature.

The children of the children's church service within the Free Evangelic Community of Aachen, which support the Kindergarten in Sanka, have organised a special event: they baked cakes and wafers, made little Easter baskets and sold them to the visitors after the church service. Many thanks to all children and helpers that contributed to this visible and tasteful sort of help.

hw