



CHRISTIAN RURAL AID NETWORK
FREUNDESKREIS e.V.

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Dear CRAN - friends,

„The new year will bring changes. But those may let us Christians not lose our hope.” This is a quotation of a pastor in his new year speech, to be found in the Internet under the title „The Ghanaians start into 2004 with prayer”. Also for us. Also for us as CRAN? Let us trust in God giving good things to that.

Since the beginning of this year Daniel Mohr is in Hohoe - with the greater entrance into Volta Region the first German volunteer who will be working in the area of computer / technical training for some months. After his arrival he has written to us: „Not only the current weather here in Volta Region demands a lot, also colleagues here in CRAN Hohoe office made a very warm and pleasant welcome for me (...). Though the distance is only about 300 km, we needed close to seven hours for the travel from Accra to here. But the hilly tropical landscape remunerates a lot. (...) By now work has to be done especially for micro credit and for CESS programme.” It is so fine when contacts to there and impulse for development grow with this visit.

The other way round, two staff workers from Volta Region will come to Germany, probably from mid of March on, for about three months with DAZ (www.daz-eu.de) organisation with that we are in friendly relationship, to be intensively trained in technical handling for agricultural programmes. They will also come as guests to our annual meeting in May.

In September 2003 another friends organisation africa-action (www.africa-action.de) became 20, what had started under the name of Ghana Action as an initiative by Christians with installations of optical training and education for eye clinics. They also have other programmes in agricultural and technical training, and for a certain part in practical terms we are working together in Volta Region. Cosmos Abiwu's team receives direct support by them.

In this newsletter you find

- a word of greetings by Doris Agbesinyale „10 years of CRAN”
- an addition to our „10 years of CRAN” report by the people of Abakam
- parts of the research about CRAN's children programme that two Canadian students made in autumn 2002 when Dagmar Marbach and me were visiting Cape Coast. I thank all those who by their gifts help the children in need there and wish them to better understand how school and village there are for children.

I wish an extending look at Ghana to all of you CRAN friends

Hans Wallhäuser, co-ordinator CRAN friends circle Germany

Hans Wallhäuser



Word of greetings by CRAN Ghana, written to the 10 years existence in fall 2003

Dear friends,

We greet you all with warm greetings from Ghana. We want to say that your efforts for 10 years have not been in vain. To CRAN-D, our major backbone in this fight to develop rural communities in Ghana, we say Ayekoo. Your labour in the Lord has not been in vain.

When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them". The Lord has done great things for us and we are filled with joy.

We sing this song with the Psalmist as our hearts rejoice with great joy when we see what the Lord has done in the life of CRAN these past 10 years. The first thing that readily comes to mind is the Abakam CRAN/Presbyterian school. Looking back to tell how resistant the community was, they would not allow CRAN to establish a school in their pagan entrenched community because they envisaged that, the idol worshipping stronghold would be broken when a school is established in their community. Thank God for some few vocal individuals who spoke for CRAN and this paved way for the school to be established in the community. Today, everybody in the Abakam community rejoices and celebrates the excellent performance of the first batch of 13 kids who started from the kindergarten in 1993 and passed out from the Junior Secondary School. Their grades vary from aggregate 09 to 33. We praise God for this success we have chalked. Further more, all of them have continued to further their education. Much more, one of them is in the best school in Cape Coast – Mfamtipim.

True to the word of the traditional leaders of Abakam, the stronghold of paganism is broken, and two churches are well established in the village. Though not all the community have turned Christians, at least the light of the word of God has penetrated into the community and the work of the Holy Spirit still continues in the hearts of men.

With Shama School, the first batch of kids are now in Junior Secondary three and will graduate next year. We pray that the good Lord sees them through as well.

The Liati Wote community can now boast of bee – farmers who produce honey and sell to CRAN. CRAN is most delighted that the training given to these communities some years back is yielding great results. Individuals are empowered economically.

Five communities can now walk to the CRAN village banks to save money and take loans at our microcredit and savings units. Many of such clients testify that the savings and loan system is of a great benefit to them. CRAN is in the process of liasing with the Agriculture Development Bank (ADB) of Ghana so that clients who have passed the state of taking small loans can graduate from CRAN microcredit to the traditional banking for bigger amounts.

Sanka community which existed for well over 80 years without portable drinking water can now drink clean water from the pipe, fetched from Sanka first time in the history of the community. Thank God for the generous grant of the British High Commission through CRAN.

In 1993, CRAN had two permanent project staff – Comfort Tsaku and Magaret Akaba. In 2003, CRAN has 50 permanent staff, 12 casuals, 11 volunteers and a nine member committed Board of Directors. Praise God! Ebenezer, this is how far the Lord has brought us!

Doris Agbesinyale, Director for Administration CRAN Ghana



In 2003, CRAN became 10 years old. Also the school of Abakam started in the year 1993, with a first kindergarten class. Since then it has steadily grown, outside and how it is advocated in the village and by the teachers. Due to this jubilee we received the following word of greetings, a look back and a thank you by the village itself:

ABAKAM CESS REPORTS

You have been the first "CRAN village" what has changed in your area during this period? Which effect does that mean especially for your children?

As the first CRAN village there have been dramatic changes. The changes are lined up bellow:

(1) Religion: There is a vast change in the worship. Most pagans have turned to be Christians, and this has actually changed most of the people's lives. Drinking which was the habit of almost all the people have actually ceased. Most of the people are now no more drinking. This happened through the change of religion. Those who become Christians had a change of life and their fellow friends who are not Christians also realised that drinking is not good.

(2) Active in business: with seminars being organised for the people and with the introduction of the micro credit scheme each and every one is involved in some sort of business i.e. buying fish to sell, smoking of fish and tomatoes selling, previously people were sitting unconcerned. Those who don't have capitals were given through the micro credit system. At seminars participants are taught that without business or job man cannot survive in life.

(3) Education: With the introduction of the kindergarten, primary and JSS schools, majority of the children who are of school going age are in school. This shows that only few children whose parents are adamant or develop deaf ears to the noise being made about schooling are still in the house or the few who cannot cater for their children. Previously you will see children over ten (10) years in the house, because of long distance that they have to walk to the near by schools. The existence of the school in the community has let many children between the ages of three to six (3-6) years to attend school. The community has actually understood what is education especially the women. The response to the PTA meetings and SMC meetings show clearly the commitment that they now have for education.

(4) Business management: work that people do and incur losses are now being done with managerial experiences. With CRAN in the community, many have been trained how to care and manage their businesses, by attending workshops on business management which has been beneficial to the community. We now know what is capital, and how to use money to generate more income efficiently. People now know how to keep book i.e. accounting systems are used. This helps the people to account for profit and loss.

(5) Non formal education: Those who did not go to school were taught how to read and write. This has actually led to the people taking record of what they buy and sell. At certain stages, some even forgot what they sold and this sometimes made people loss heavily. Most of the people can now take record of what they have. They have access to bible reading.

(6) Communal Labour: People in the community did not know the importance of sacrificial work to develop the area in which they were. But as time went on when the school buildings were being built people had to sacrifice for the work and many through this have understood that in every society there must be a communal type of work to enhance the rapid development of the community or the area.



With all these points you can see clearly that CRAN has actually brought some sort of changes in the community. For my children it is clear that most of them are now in school. Formally, some went to school at the age of ten (10). My children had to finish school at the age of twenty but as at now at the age of fifteen and sixteen years those who have started school will complete their basic education, because of the school in the community.

We the parents and the entire community of Abakam therefore salute and commend CRAN for the efforts and structures put in place for the betterment of our children and the community as a whole.

Parents of Abakam

Children in CRAN School

CESS Programme

Basic education is a fundamental human right that must not be denied to any child. Currently in Ghana, 20 to 25 per cent of school-aged children do not attend school.

The Christian Rural Aid Network's Child Education Sponsorship Scheme aims to assist children denied by circumstance and poverty access to basic education through a sponsorship scheme.

The Child Education Support Scheme (CESS) has been supporting underprivileged children since 1993. In 1995 there were 5 CESS students; by 2002 the programme grew to 85 CESS students.

Seven of the 9 schools with CESS students are located within Cape Coast and the Central Region with the exceptions of 1 school in the Western Region and 1 school in the Volta Region.

Seven of the 9 schools are in rural settings, 2 urban.

CESS assists children denied by circumstance and poverty access to basic education through a sponsorship scheme. Sponsors can be individuals or organisations. CRAN Freundeskreis e.V., in Germany, matches the identified children with a sponsor for the student's basic schooling period (9 years) or for a shorter duration.

Sponsorship provides:

- 1) School fees
- 2) Exam fees / school levies
- 3) Basic texts and writing materials
- 4) School lunch subsidy
- 5) School uniform

CESS Model

The targets of CRAN's CESS programme "are mainly orphans, abandoned children, children of impoverished parents or 'street children'" Teachers and/or community members identify eligible students, approach CRAN, and submit a hand-written student profile with a passport photo. CRAN types the profile on the *CESS Child Profile Sheet – Appendix A – and attaches the applicant's photo. When a number of forms have been collected, the sheets are forwarded to the CESS coordinator at CRAN Freundeskreis e.V. who seeks sponsorship. Once sponsorship has been established, the committed funds are transferred to CRAN Ghana.*



CRAN Ghana pays for the student's school fees, the exam fees/school levies, and the school lunch subsidy. There is one co-ordinating teacher in each school with CESS sponsored students, selected by the headmistress/master. This individual determines the student's school needs and is responsible for coming to the CRAN office and requesting, on behalf of the student, the remainder of CESS obligations – texts and writing materials and school uniforms. CRAN is responsible for buying the requested items and delivering them to the school.

ABAKAM

Abakam is the first village where CRAN started work 10 years ago. It is a migrant fishing village located 9 kilometres west of Cape Coast with a population of approximately 1000. It is geographically central to a number of other migrant fishing communities, which make up a total area population of approximately 10,000. Over 80 per cent of the settlers have migrated from the extreme south-eastern coastal portion of Ghana – areas where destructive sea erosion and flooding have rendered inhabitants homeless and landless.

From a cursory view, the village appears as small clusters of huts made of mud or woven coconut fronds with thatched roofs. The main occupation of the village is fishing, with some off-season crop farming. Fishing is constrained by declining fish stocks, low technology, and the high costs of inputs. Farming is constrained by landlessness and rapid population growth. Together, these constraints have significantly diminished incomes and livelihoods.

The schools are located in the centre of the village

Twenty CESS students attend the Primary school – 11 boys and 9 girls.

Ten CESS students attend JSS– 5 boys and 5 girls.

Primary employment and family size of some CESS students:

Mother is a fishmonger; father is dead; 6 siblings

Mother sells maize and fish; father is a fisherman; 7 siblings

Mother is a fishmonger; father petty trades; 11 siblings

Mother petty trades; father is a fisherman; 6 siblings – 4 brothers attend school but the 2 sisters, 12 and 13, petty trade

Student interviews

Boy, JSS 2

Without school, he wouldn't be able to get certain work, things that required you to write your name.

Boy, JSS 2

When you go to school you can get your food calculated so you can provide for your needs.

He wants to go to JSS and university to become a teacher.

Boy, JSS 2

If he doesn't get sponsored he would be absent a lot because there is no money. His brothers and sisters had to stop school early because there was no money.



Girl, JSS 2

Without school, she would not be neat. She would have a baby on her back and be looking for work.

When she grows up she wants to go to SS and university and then study in America to become a doctor.

Girl, JSS 2

Sometimes she doesn't have enough money for shoes to go to school.

If she didn't go to school she wouldn't have any work to do in the village, and she would be doing nothing.

When she grows up she wants to go to SS and university to become a nurse.

Boy, Age 17

This is his second year of schooling. His mother supports his schooling by telling him to go to school everyday.

School is good because he can write a letter or anything he needs to write. He likes learning the most but he doesn't like school labour i.e. cleaning the school compound.

If he weren't in school his life would be a mess – idle or stealing. School is important for his future, enabling him to get a good job.

He wants to study to be a doctor.

The importance of education to students and parents was articulated in the teacher reports. Teachers were asked, "How do the parents/guardians demonstrate an interest in their children's schooling?"

Teacher reports indicated that parents showed support through:

- attendance at parent teacher meetings
- encouraging their children to go to school
- eliciting suggestions from teachers for assistance at home
- bringing them food during break time
- bringing the child when they refuse to attend school
- reporting the child's conduct to the teacher for counselling
- encouraging teachers
- ensuring their children are punctual
- checking progress of their child's academic work

Nine per cent of CESS students had perfect attendance records.

The number of days missed due to ill health ranged from 1 to 52.

The "other" category included absences due to:

- lack of parental care
- financial problems
- no responsible person to take care of him in the house. Mother has deserted and gone somewhere



fishing and farming responsibilities

While student narratives indicated that students and their families had a profound understanding of the implications of education on their quality of life, attendance records show the harmful outcomes poverty – namely, a higher incidence of ill health and family financial dependence on the contribution of income from the whole household.

The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy acknowledges that systemic changes are needed to empower and strengthen the capacity of the poor to feed and educate their children as well as improve access to education to reduce the vulnerability of marginalized groups.

Education is a fundamental human right that must not be denied to any child. CRAN's work is instrumental in ensuring that society's obligation to children is met. The hand that CESS lends does not go unnoticed.