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## **CRAN Mailing Nr. 38 / September 2004**

Dear CRAN friends,

This summer two of our members visited Ghana. Such accounts of a journey are always topical, presenting a variety of observations, impressions and evaluations. As a critical "business" European you experience a lot: committed members of staff; areas that are very great; perceptible improving changes in the villages; chances for training that are not yet put into practice as desired. But finally: substantial changes in the villages. So I can only recommend the reader of these notes to show interest in the work of CRAN in Ghana.

This visit also revealed: Many members of the staff there only know little about those they are dealing with here in Germany. If you want to do something about it: see last page.

"Among the 48 states south of the Sahara there are eight to ten that give hope. They have developed a democratic culture, a multiparty system - fair, equal, just elections. These are Ghana and Mali in West Africa (...). One problem is that they are islands in a sea of instable other regions." This quotation of an Africa expert in an interview of German TV news may motivate us and lead us in wishes and prayers: In December there are again national elections in Ghana. The country needs good leaders who know well about development.

The problem to do the work in Volta Region without a car has existed for several months. In the meantime there is a new VW bus. In addition (based on the training of two visitors from Ghana who stayed in Greifswald for three months) DAZ shipped a tractor with a lot of equipment, an agricultural truck and two Renault transporters for the work there. Time will show how they can be used practically.

One request for the near future: Shama-Kedzi (about 60 km west of Cape Coast) should get accommodation for the teachers. That village is so remote or rather poor developed that teachers prefer to live in Shama Town and to daily cross over in a rowing boat. For looking after the children and parents it would be more helpful to have teachers in the village who can motivate and help. So CRAN would like to start with suitable housing soon.

Motivation and help for us and from us: This is my wish for our further participation.

Hans Wallhäuser

PS: There is a new "CRAN Newsletter" from Ghana of this summer (four pages, only in English, with pictures). It is highly recommendable (about the school in Abakam, the programme in Hohoe District, graduation in Duakor training centre and other things). If you are interested call or mail and I will like to send it.

## A visit at CRAN Ghana this summer

From the end of July to the midst of August CRAN Ghana had two visitors from among us. The following report deals with their observations.

### 0. Remarks concerning the person and qualification of the reporters:

I (Michael Junk) was in Ghana with Hans 9 years ago and visited some CRAN villages. So my observations often refer to the impressions of almost ten years back. Then I was a student of theology, today I am a pastor.

This time I travelled with my friend Jürgen Flender. First we visited the Volta Region and then we spent five days in Cape Coast.

### Instead of a foreword

“What was only an idea becomes reality now. We are very grateful to God for this.”

This is a quotation from a short talk with the board-member William Amewuga, pastor of the Global Evangelism Church (formerly E.P. Church, Ghana) in Koforidua about the situation of CRAN.

### *1. The first part of the journey brings us to Volta Region*

#### a) The office in Hohoe

First of all it impresses, greater than Cape Coast, designed as a rural bank with integrated bank counters. All the places are shown to us even the storerooms where the computers are already stored (suitable? well) which are to be installed in the second floor that does not yet exist. The staircase is narrow, steep and poorly cast, besides you bump your head on the ceiling. On top the iron reinforcement for another floor is intended and it is said that the construction can even support a third floor (?).

The place in front of the office has recently been awarded to CRAN. As soon as the booths are removed Cosmos (director of the Volta Region section) will sow and make the place look nice.

The new software “Loan Performer” software especially geared to the African micro credit system, is introduced and has to be completely implemented. A computer network is installed, but mailing is not yet possible.

We take part in morning devotion and sense the team spirit of this work. And everywhere we are welcome by bright laughing faces.

#### b) Liati-Wote

The trip by trotro which was adventure 10 years ago is now a 45 minutes trip in a four wheel drive pickup. Without 4WD nothing is possible here.

The place looks clean and tidy. We now can easily reach the mushroom project. The present labourers well informed and vigorously explain the various stages of the production. It is quite complex and all the stages require specialized knowledge.

At the mill project we see women busy at work and we learn that they are now no longer doing anything else. They have completely specialized in processing cassava into okru and garee and the production of palm oil because thus they are making greater profit than the one

they could earn by working in the fields. A remarkable change has taken place in this village.

Visiting the village coordinator for the CRAN work we meet a teacher of the vocational school. She looks very tired, because she has to teach five subjects - one subject for a teacher would be normal.

### c) Evaluation of the work in Volta Region

CRAN Volta Region has reached an amazing degree of fame within shortest time (now 2 ½ years). The reason is that CRAN is the only NGO in the moment that is involved in the Volta Region with an office, whereas the CRAN head office in Cape Coast is one NGO among others.

## *2. The second part of the journey brings us to the Central Region*

### a) Shama Kedzi

Since our last visit 9 years ago there has been no more (considerable) flooding of the village. Therefore only few people are motivated to move inland. The school is located on a hill outside the village. Currently there are 218 children attending primary school but many of them go to school very irregularly. The motivation for learning is poor and the support of the parents as well. Parents who send their children to school hardly can control whether their children obey. This deteriorates the learning conditions for the children and the teaching conditions for the teachers. Because of absence frequent repetitions are necessary. The results of learning are altogether poor. Only in sports the school is good.

The teachers who are working in Shama Kedzi now mainly live in Shama Town and after their work they go back there by boat.

Government has promised to bring electricity to Shama Kedzi until the end of this year. <Note: Then there are elections - a lot is promised and sometimes something is done...> But people will have to wait much longer for fresh water. So far it has not even been possible to find someone to do the first estimation of costs. Salty water will continue to be used for shower as well as for drinking.

The most urgent issue in order to get a substantial change of the situation is the construction of accommodation for the teachers on the school hill, because some of the teachers do not even start their job due to the housing and living condition.

Three years ago a proposal was sent to the European Union - so far no reaction. The project on the school hill including the necessary underground water system (a tank to collect rainwater) is estimated at 68.000 €. The rent of the bungalows will only cover the costs for repair. The logic is as follows:

Only when water and electricity are there teachers will come. Only when the tank <for the school> is controlled by the teachers it will work, otherwise it is misused by the village people. We can see that the existing poly tank is not connected to the gutter and that it is empty. On enquiry we get the explanation that the full tank was broken open and the water taken. Now there is no fastening and since then the tank is just standing there...

### b) CESS (Child Education Support Scheme)

There are a lot of children on the waiting list. CRAN's priority is to help those who have already started school to finish SSS - if results permit.

CESS is on purpose centrally organized, that means money is sent from Cape Coast only on

request. If a child needs money for school fees, books, clothes etc. this is reported and then the money is paid out.

Especially those children who are doing now further education need more money, much more money than what is paid for them. With the central system a pool is available that allows compensation.

### c) Duakor

Here women are trained for three years, age of the students: about 16 - 35, sometimes without school-leaving qualification. Decisive for the admission is not the qualification but the date of application. Last year (2003) ten applicants had to be put off until the following year as there were no more places to train. Every year about 45 students are admitted and after the first year about 40 continue. In the first year all are trained in batik, dressmaking, kente weaving, hairdressing, and sewing. In the second year the specialisation begins as the students like. The present year has only specialized in dressmaking. Reasons: There is no kente teacher at the moment, batik is not so profitable, and most of the students do not have the financial means to open a hairdressing saloon.

A kente teacher is missing; it is very difficult to find one, because with kente you can earn much more money than with teaching. Therefore one teacher left after a very short time.

The batik teacher lives in the hostel where some of the students are also living. The director gives an impression of commitment. She is active in the Global Evangelism Church.

In the new school year two classrooms (roofed, without walls but with school furniture) are needed as well as a fence to prevent animals and children of the village from entering the ground. A storeroom that can be locked would be good, because now everything is stored in the office of the director or things are just standing around. So far robbery is not a problem but it may become one sometime.

New sewing machines with foot pedals (500.000 Cedis = 50€ per item) would also be good. At the moment 20 of the 34 bought several years ago can still be used. During the holidays some of the defect machines will be repaired, but some are beyond repair and are used only for spare parts. Reasons: Wrong use, wearing out, poor quality.

With the support of British Women Organisation CRAN could help 10 of the 23 trainees of the last course to start their own business. More money would also be needed here.

Most of the women who can start their own business work as seamstresses or are repairing dresses in the villages.

### d) Abakam

The first CRAN village has now about 2000 inhabitants, who are living almost exclusively on fishing. We were told that the whole atmosphere of the village has completely changed since the commitment of CRAN: Today there are hardly any idol worshippers in the village, the last idols lie somewhere in the roadside ditch and the children walk over them. Ten years ago it was a great problem to explain to the parents why they should send their children to nursery school and to school. Now there is a real run on nursery school and school and even two year old children are brought to nursery school. The whole village is proud of the school and especially of the first school children who are now going to SSS, and two of them to two of the best schools in Ghana.

The whole school gives a good impression. 43 children go to nursery school and 241 to school at present. 20 to 35 children form a class. Government now also pays the computer teacher.

In the JSS building you can see considerable cracks because of poor foundation. One classroom can only be used with care. The library seems a little neglected. The books are not cleared in the shelves, many have dog-eared pages, part of them lie on the floor. Too few books are available and most of them not in a sufficient number of pieces. The library is too small for a whole class and books are not allowed to be taken out. So the class is divided in two or three groups and each group goes to the library to study there.

The computer school with old computers (only with floppy, without CD drive) and no learning software for children is a hit in the sight of children and teachers. The children learn basics about a computer and how to use word pat.

Needed: Toilets for the schoolchildren (now the village toilets are used that are some hundred meters away). Accommodations for the teachers are requested, so that they could be around for extra help in the evening

Economically the people of Abakam are not as fit as those of the neighbour village Duakor. Therefore CRAN is thinking of bringing a garee unit to Abakam.

#### e) Sanka

Water is there, people like to buy it for small money (200 Cedis per bucket = 2 cents). An old women works as a cashier and sits close to the tap. The water is supplied by Ghana Waters Ltd. This state organisation is to be privatized in the course of the restructuring programme of the World Bank. This will surely cause a considerable increase in costs of water.

The nursery school runs - CRAN does not have to invest much more. The planned afforestation project in cooperation with the fish smokers' association (CEWEFIA) takes place. The association is interested in it, because a lot of wood is used and consumed.

### *3. Summary of the impressions - CRAN is a booming organisation*

- In structure it is a family business with international contacts of its director.
- It enjoys a good reputation with the new government.
- There are smoothly running projects with clear target, sufficient equipment and - and in relation to the working conditions - respectable results.
- Projects help to bring substantial changes in the villages and help people to help themselves - prime examples Abakam and Liati-Wote.
- NEW: There is the first regional office in the Volta region with great expansion because of the potential donor (EED) and its committed director (Cosmos Abiwu).

What is the secret of the success?

- There are good proposals.
- Project management is good.
- The selection of the project partners on the spot is good (concentration on the "striving poor").

The main factor is highly qualified and highly motivated staffs that in spite of relatively low salaries and poor working conditions (e.g. no overtime allowance) are committed and put success of the project above personal interests.

One reason is the awareness that working with CRAN means working in God's vineyard and thus there is a readiness to accept restrictions and low salaries - but there is also the desire for appreciation of these efforts.

### **Pictures from us**

The number of staff members of CRAN Ghana has increased during the years. So it is with “friends’ circle”. We want to help, that we are not seen as “just a sponsor organisation”, but that we have a relationship as individuals. Therefore: If you like, please send a photo (normal paper, not e-mail) of yourself or your family, info (name, place, work ...) and maybe a personal text. Please send it to Heidrun Eibach, Erich-Ziegel-Ring 33, 22309 Hamburg. From there the whole collection will go to the people in Cape Coast.

### **Pictures from Ghana**



At the school of Shama Kedzi