



CHRISTIAN RURAL AID NETWORK
FREUNDESKREIS e.V.

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Dear CRAN - friends,

some friends of CRAN and the related DAZ (Greifswald, North East Germany) have been visiting and assisting in Ghana. It will be very nice to meet them and listen to their reports. Thus we invite to our

CRAN Germany Annual Meeting 2006
Saturday, 16th September 2006, in Aachen

(For details you may contact us.)

As many of you cannot come, this newsletter gives some impressions, this time about Volta Region work.

* More than 10 years back, CRAN has started in Liati Wote village. During the recent years, the region has increased. A thank-you-word nevertheless comes from „the first village”.

* Anno 2004, our member Daniel Mohr has assisted in Hohoe town for some months. So we read from his impressions and contacts that are still alive. .

* Some overview about this regional work is expressed in a practical presentation by DAZ.

* It is still challenging that many refugees from Togo are there. Helping and limiting is CRAN's situation, as we read in a newsletter report from Accra.

„I have come in order that you might have life - life in all its fullness”, so says Jesus in John 10:10.

That is what we also wish, to the people there and friends everywhere.

Hans Wallhaeuser

From the Chief and Elders of Liati-Wote Village on CRAN's Efforts

From very humble beginnings in 1995 CRAN programmes started at Liati-Wote with dressmaking for a small number of girls and periodical workshops on snail farming and bee keeping for some interested individuals at Liati-Wote and the surrounding villages. Today, we can proudly and confidently testify that CRAN's projects at Liati-Wote have made tremendous impact on the life of the people and especially those who have wholeheartedly embraced the viable projects in the village. The projects include:

Women's Mill Project: The cassava-processing mill, the palm-kernel cracking and the corn mills continue to serve our women folk in the community and many others from nearby villages.

The women's palm kernel production shed: Although most of the women still need some education to accept the co-operative concept, there are a few who have come together and are making good use of the facility provided by CRAN.

Mushroom farming: This pilot project continues to draw the attention of many interested parties from as far away as Togo and Benin. The mushroom farming and the dry season vegetable farming give gainful employment to some youth in the community. We hope that, sooner or later, people in the community may acquire the skills and take mushroom farming as a lucrative venture to improve their living standard.

Integrated Rural Development Training and Resource Centre: We appreciate and commend the efforts of CRAN to provide vocational training right here at Wote. The centre offers training in dressmaking, beads making, and batik and tie-dye production. Lately, the institute has gained considerable recognition to the extent that girls and boys from many other towns in the Volta Region are receiving training at the centre.

Hair dressing: This is another vocation that is very dear to the heart of the girls and our women folk; from my own observation the patronage is quite encouraging.

Telecommunications: We really appreciate the telecommunication facility (radio phone) provided through the initiative of CRAN at Wote. We indeed are very grateful to CRAN for making it very easy and convenient for us to communicate with our sons and daughters living elsewhere in Ghana and even in countries overseas.

Library facility: We wish to commend the DAZ team from Germany, working through CRAN, for the programmes put in place to improve teaching and learning in our basic school at Wote. We are grateful that through DAZ Germany, our schools are running a partnership programme with a school in Germany. The provision of library facilities at the E.P. Primary School is a clear testimony of their intentions to raise the standard of teaching and learning in both the primary and junior secondary schools in the village.

Recently we have received firm assurances that besides the two new computers supplied to the Integrated Rural Development Training Centre, one other computer will be placed at the Primary School library. So fine that immediately once the place was adequately renovated., this was done so.

I wish on behalf of the people of Liati-Wote and on my own behalf to express our very sincere appreciation and gratitude to CRAN for various on-going projects and programmes initiated at Liati-Wote, which will definitely better the lot of the youth in the community and beyond.

On the occasion of CRAN's 10th anniversary celebrations, we have already wished the management and the entire staff of the organisation a happy anniversary and God's blessing in the years to come. And that is what we still do!

Togbe Kodadza V (Divisional Chief of Liati-Wote)

CRAN's Interventions in the Volta Region - Impressions from the Outside

In January 2004, I joined the youngest branch of CRAN, its Volta Regional Office in Hohoe, for about half a year to get to know its various activities. In Germany, I had got my degree in Business Administration and was looking for an opportunity to develop academic and practical experiences if

possible, with an organisation in the field of microfinance. Through intense search, the contact with CRAN came about and the consent emerged for a mission to support its efforts in training the CRAN Volta Region staff in the fields of Computerization and Information Technology.

This being my very first stay in the land between Lake Volta and the mountains of Togo, the digital divide to other more prosperous parts of Ghana and of the world became clearly visible right from the beginning while travelling from Accra to Hohoe. The dense urban sprawl of Accra with its commercial infrastructure and academic institutions provide a fertile ground par excellence for new information technologies to be introduced, whereas the remote rural regions already lagging behind in education still are excluded from adopting such new technologies.

At CRAN, the mission is to spread computer literacy through education initiatives in the rural areas. In this effort, computer skills are not seen as an end in itself, but as a way to improve people's living conditions. In a pilot project to tackle computer illiteracy among the youth, the vocational school in Liati-Wote has currently instituted computer classes for its students. These classes are intended to give the students scarce employable skills to find a profession in administration, e.g. as secretary or administrative assistant. If it proves successful, this pilot project will be extended to provide schools in the Hohoe District with computer expertise.

By the beginning of 2004, CRAN has commenced the construction of a third technical vocational training centre at Gbi-Atabu in the Hohoe District. This facility (project) sponsored by the Deutsch-Afrikanische Zusammenarbeit (DAZ) aims to provide technical and vocational training opportunities for young boys and JSS graduates in carpentry and joinery, metal works, welding and computer training etc. The centre is expected to admit at least 25 trainees initially into its programmes. These are to be drawn from the several village communities within the project target areas. I am very proud to have been part in the planning of this project which promises a lot for the several target village communities in the area.

In the work as a member of CRAN, the most appealing aspect is the entrepreneurial spirit to tackle the concomitants of poverty. Through its pragmatic approach, seemingly independent strategies are combined to improve the living situation of people. In theory, financial aid to the rural population through microcredit schemes is described as the remedy to help people out of poverty. In rural Volta Region, CRAN assists farmers and artisans in building supply chains and promotes processing of crops into value-added food and products, such as cassava biscuits or palm oil. This initiative is solely embedded by the microcredit scheme to finance the growth of its client's businesses.

By all means, the assignment with the CRAN's programmes unveils to me gradually its approach in tackling successfully the problem of poverty. Similar to a stone mosaic, various elements are joined to form a coherent piece all on the basis of the Christian believe in charity. The elements used do vary, sometimes even seem to be contradictory, as it is the case for a Christian organisation lending out money. Nevertheless, the initiatives are derived from and adapted to the needs of the rural population and not vice versa.

To CRAN, I only can say Ayeekoo!!

Daniel Mohr (some time volunteer worker, now member of CRAN Germany)

< picture: CRAN team Hohoe >

CRAN Hohoe

is the regional office mainly for the northern district(s) of Volta Region. So it is integrated in the organizational, administrative and financial structure of CRAN and is bound by organisation's policy and committee's decisions. Nevertheless CRAN Hohoe is independent from the head office in Cape Coast in various areas. The daily business is done by the regional director, who is supported by a team of well trained staff.

The branch office has three departments: bookkeeping, microfinance, and consulting in modern agriculture. Micro Credit works currently in Hohoe's two bordering districts Kpando and Kadjebi. In

the beginning of 2006 the number of (full / part time) staff members mounted to 46. They are engaged in:

<u>programme / project</u>	<u>place</u>	<u>remarks</u>
school project	Liati Wote	providing teaching material and equipment
kindergarten	Alavanyo	under construction
vocational school	Liati Wote	high school dropouts/graduates from JSS
technical vocational school	Gbi Atabu	apprenticeship as a mechanic/carpenter for jobless youth
reforesting project	Liati Wote	commercial production of firewood
Micro Finance	Hohoe	“bank”
promotion of rural small business	Hohoe	aim: rural employment in the district (VEDPP)
production of oil	Liati Wote	part of VEDPP/ for women
agricultural processing/production	Gbi Wegbe	part of VEDPP
mushroom production	Liati Wote	part of VEDPP
beekeeping project	Liati Wote	part of VEDPP

VEDPP was designed as an integrated rural developing programme. Targets are an increase in productivity (agricultural and non-agricultural) as well as creation of working places and sources of income. To reach these targets three types of interventions were formulated that support the programme and will lead in the long run to an improvement of life quality.

from the annual report 2005 of DAZ, Greifswald, Germany

< picture: Togolese refugees >

Togolese Refugees 'Invade' Ghana

Political refugees from Togo have been trooping into the Hohoe, Kpando and Jasikan districts in recent months. Scattered all over about 114 communities in the region, the refugees are currently facing acute shortages of food, water and shelter, and have put serious pressure on social facilities in the communities.

The Volta Regional Coordinator of Refugees Programme, a subsidiary of CRAN Ghana, is doing its bit to assist some of them. Interestingly, the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO) officials in the districts were ready to confirm the presence of the refugees, but would not speak any further.

Pearl Esime-Arku, coordinator of the CRAN Refugee Programme, told the paper that the exact number of refugees could be far larger than estimated because some large numbers of them had been sighted in the Kadjebi district. Currently, some of these refugees, living in over-crowded apartments, can be found in several communities in the Hohoe district as well as Jasikan district.

It would be recalled that a large number of Togolese citizens sought refuge in the country in the wake of the political upheaval in that country following the death of President Gnassingbe Eyadema last year. But The Chronicle gathered that no sooner had they returned to their home country, after successful general elections, than the people trooped back into the country, claiming massive torture, murder, and other human rights abuses that border on ethnic cleansing with many bearing gunshot wounds and suffering from malaria and other diseases.

In an interview, Pearl recalled that sometime last year, the Togolese government declared that the country was safe and asked all its citizens to return home. She said many of them returned to Ghana not long after, adding that their second coming saw their numbers increasing because of relatives crossing over with them this time round.

CRAN, she noted, is currently footing their hospital bills and also providing food, clothing and shelter for some of them .

Some of the refugees said somewhere last year, most of them returned to Togo with the assurance from the Togolese government that the country was safe for them to return. However, they alleged that when they arrived in Togo, some of their friends and relations were arrested, beaten and abducted. According to them, their numbers had since continued to swell on a daily basis, because their families and friends, who had been living in fear, traced them to Ghana.

"We still live in fear but the only people currently supporting us are CRAN officials and chiefs in the various communities; they are very hospitable," they said, thanking the chiefs and elders of Likpe, for offering them land for farming.

Describing them as people with adequate training in professions like dressmaking, tailoring, catering and batik making, among others, (though many are into farming and gardening), Pearl lamented that they cannot successfully engage themselves in serious economic ventures here, because they left behind their working tools.

When the district office of NADMO was contacted, they confirmed that they were aware of the presence of the refugees but declined to give their numbers, nor make any further comments. Two of the NADMO staff, who pleaded anonymity, confirmed this in the absence of the District Coordinator and his deputy, and intimated that the lack of funds and basic equipment like typewriters, telephones and computers had been some of the constraints the organisation was facing.

Contributing, the Regional Director of CRAN, Mr. Cosmos Abiwu, said four of the refugees were being sponsored by his organization at a vocational centre for wood and metal works at Gbi-Atabu, while 11 others would be sponsored at the Evangelic Presbyterian Trades Training Center at Alavanyo-Kpeme and the Kpando Technical Institute.

For a long-term measure, he suggested that government impress upon the Togolese government to do something more pragmatic about the observance of the basic democratic principles that would ensure the refugees muster confidence to return home. For now, it is glaring that the Hohoe district NADMO and CRAN, an NGO, cannot handle the large refugee problem alone.

based on an article by Ghanaian Chronicle, Accra, May 11, 2006