



**CHRISTIAN RURAL AID NETWORK
FREUNDESKREIS e.V.**

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Dear CRAN friends,

About 12 million voters in Ghana were called at the 07.12.2008 to chose a successor for President John Kufuor, who after two periods of the office could not candidate again. Both of the greatest candidates remained slightly below 50 %. So a final ballot is pending at the 28.12. It is a great joy that in this country -contrary to other African areas- everything goes properly and reliably. Our newsletter now comes in between. For CRAN Ghana too, it is desirable that development will be positive. Finally a new orientation for the branch in Hohoe had to be dealt with. You will find some remarks to this.

Though honey is wide spread bee-keeping is a rare trade it could be a profitable business in fighting poverty. So an improvement of the traditional techniques would seem to be the thing to do. From 25.08. - 10.09. a workshop in Liati Wote took place that was initiated and organized by Martin Mueller (Rostock; DAZ connection). We like to take that point up.

“Unreasonable worldwide poverty: ways out from a Christian point of view.” To this an interesting workshop took place at a weekend. Mathias Rusert reports about it. A quotation from a speaker: “If we are not concerned about justice in the world, then our most beautiful songs of praise are a waste of time.” This is definitely not fitting for Christmas. At other times also a drastic challenge? You can formulate it in a different way: If we are concerned about justice (e.g. in Ghana) then it will be worthwhile to thank God for such an opportunity and to live with his help. This is not included in Christmas celebrations. But Jesus is with us. This should be noticeable in everything by us CRAN friends, by all CRAN Ghana staff, and by all people reached out to. Now and in the next year.

Thank you very much for all support and a good New Year.
Hans Wallhaeuser

NEW REGIONAL COORDINATOR FOR HOHOE

Mr. Emmanuel Kwame Asior has on 1st July 2008, joined CRAN as the new Regional Coordinator of the Hohoe Branch. The position which used to be called 'Regional Director' has now been changed to 'Regional Coordinator' by the Board of Directors. Mr. Asior holds a Master of Philosophy degree in Agriculture Administration. He has worked with a number of organisations including Krobodan Foundation, an NGO in the Eastern Region of Ghana which assists women in small scale businesses including agriculture. He therefore has the prerequisite experience to meet the challenge of high performance required of him at Hohoe. Mr. Asior has since assumed his post at Hohoe after a six-week orientation at the Head Office in Cape Coast. The employment of Mr. Asior became urgent following the resignation of the former Director of the Volta Regional Branch, Mr. Cosmos Abiwu.

In which way is Hohoe newly designed?

Microfinance unit managers are to take direct responsibility for the management of their respective units and microfinance operations within their areas of operation and report directly to the Director of Microfinance at the Head office in Cape Coast and also to the Regional Coordinator. The Unit Manger for Hohoe and that for Kpando are swapping work stations for strategic reasons. The regional ICT and Data officer has been moved to Cape Coast to augment the capacity at the Head office. Also four new 'Susu' savings field officers (two each for Hohoe and Kpando) have been engaged to mobilize susu savings as a way to encourage and facilitate loan repayments on the part of clients. Mr. Asior, the new Regional Coordinator has since assumed his post at Hohoe, with things moving quite in the right direction.

CRAN WOMEN RESOURCE CENTRE HOLDS GRADUATION CEREMONY

The CRAN Women Resource and Training Centre at Duakor (near Cape Coast) has had its graduation ceremony. The centre which was established since 1998 has trained many girls in several vocational skills including sewing, making of batik, tie and dye and hairdressing. In recent time, a course in hotel and home management skills has been introduced at the centre to train many young people to meet the high demand of hotel and home assistants in the various hotels and the number of homes that need their services.

The graduation witnessed 15 of the first batch of the students for this programme successfully completing their course and awarded their certificates. The Headmistress of the centre Miss Beatrice Mattah advised the graduants to put their skills into good use and to serve as ambassadors for the centre. She also urged them to make themselves the mouthpiece of the centre by telling others to enrol into the same skills. Some of the graduants had their parents and guardians present to witness the occasion. It is the hopes that many more potential students will enrol into the programme to enable them acquire the skills for future employment. All the graduants expressed satisfaction about the programme.

Bees in Liati Wote

The Resource Training Center of CRAN in Liati Wote was the location of the workshop. Involved in it was a group from Germany (9 persons), 20 from Liati Wote and surrounding area (among them the present chief of Liati Wote) and 2 men as a delegation from IT VILLAGE (Togo). Leaders for the training were: Mister Aidoo, Professor for entomology of the University of Cape Coast, a specialist for non spiny insects (mosquitoes) and a practical man in the production and business of honey; Benedictus Amouzou a CRAN official and biologist from Hohoe; as well as Mister Richard, a carpenter and practical man, a "pioneer" in the production of honey in Liati Wote.

The workshop and the carpenter's workshop were open for theoretical and practical learning of beekeeping. The workshop followed a daily programme run but due to the many rainfalls many interruption occurred. First of all the participants learnt the advantages of bee-keeping compared to other trades, then they were fully informed about the use of honey and possible business concepts. Then the entomologist explained the anatomy and the behaviour of the honey producing bees in a swarm and comparisons were drawn to their behaviour outside the swarm (bees are very well organized in the swarm). For keeping and production of honey bees need water (as do plants and flowers). Bees play an important role for the ecosystem by the pollination of thousands of plants. So not only mankind but also the whole environment is benefitting from the bee-keeping.

Praxis consisted in designing and constructing beehives and boxes for the bees, in finding suitable places for installing the beehives, in finding and catching bee swarms, and in harvesting and processing honey. It has to be mentioned that there are many kinds of bee hives and each variation has its own advantage. Ideal places for beehives are shady, fertile and close to a lake or river. Therefore forests with rivers are ideal (an advantage of Liati Wote).

At the end of the workshop every participant wrote an evaluation of the course. Especially the exchange of experiences and information within the group was positively mentioned. For the nourishment of mankind honey will continue to play an important role, and because of its wide spreading it is an ideal means to fight poverty. Due to the increasing destruction of nature honey will become rarer and therefore will get higher prices. The right use of expensive timber was taught on the spot. Instead of the extremely expensive timber of local markets e.g. branches of the fan palm could be used.

(Misters Songui & Yabo from Togo)

Altogether the whole bee workshop 2008 in Liati Wote was very well organised and many successes were achieved. Martin Mueller guaranteed a good organisation - as well in Germany as on spot. Unfortunately the teacher commissioned by CRA N underrated the possibilities and skills of the participants in some areas. As highlight the speech of Mister Aidoo the guest lecturer from Cape Coast has to be mentioned. He was very competent and was able to give expert answers to all questions. His visual aids like bees and a small beehive with a bee colony and his power point presentation also were very good, though at this part technical improvisations had to be made. Richard the local bee-keeper and carpenter also has to be mentioned: he was a great enrichment for the whole workshop. He could well pass on his practical ability in bee-keeping and also in the field of craftsmanship. The working atmosphere was good, so the parting was difficult and we all found new friends.

(Caroline Falk, German participant)

It generally motivated that Germans participated. So everybody was actively involved. The planning was clear: in the morning lessons, in the afternoon practical implementation. Who lives in or close to Hohoe will notice that mushroom culture has found positive approval. The work with bees however must always be motivated afresh.

At the final discussion the question arose whether something like this would be repeated. That of course needs good reflection and time to think about. But it also shows how it was positively accepted.

(according to Martin Mueller, leader of the event)



Unreasonable poverty: ways out from a Christian point of view

Report about a meeting of academic SMD (student mission of Germany), team of specialists for economy and society in cooperation with the German Protestant Alliance, 14.-16.11.2008 in Bischofsheim

For many years I have been interested in this topic, not only since I worked with CRAN friends' circle. Against the discussion about biopetrol contra food prices and finally the financial crisis the meeting surely got new topicality. Almost 100 participants (more than usual) met. Good speakers were appointed to the meeting, so I expected a set of thoughts to the topic and perhaps some new ideas – and I was not disappointed.

The host Fritz Schroth, leader of Christian guesthouses opened the evening. He also is the “external representative of the Bavarian local church” (i.e. with many international contacts and experiences). I remember his following sentences: “ If the poor have no option any longer, they use violence.” and “There is enough for everybody's need, but not for everybody's greed”.

The first speech was delivered by Herrmann Sautter, Prof. emeritus for economy, field of work development economy, chairman of SMD (German IFES). He gave an introduction in the so-called millennium development targets of the UN and asked how they might be achieved. In 2000 they were decided by the UN. 189 states signed the declaration and committed to put into practice the following targets until 2015:

- fighting extreme poverty and hunger
- primary school education for all
- equality of woman and strengthening of their role
- reduction of infant mortality
- improvement of provision of medical care for mothers
- fighting HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other serious diseases
- ecological sustainability
- establishing a global partnership for development and fair trade conditions.

Sautter mentioned strategies of the UN to reach these targets (immediate measures, investments, rural development, promotion of economic growth, etc.) and also made some critical comments:

The agreement of all the states on a common strategy to achieve the targets would be assumed by the UN; for the achievement certain political systems in the states concerned would be assumed; nothing would be said to the cultural and religious dimension of poverty. With this he lead to his last topic, the Christian point of view: In every Christian action to overcome poverty man with all dimensions of life must be in the centre, not a problem”.

Hartmut Steb, general secretary of the Evangelic Alliance in Germany (EAD) took up this thought and explained the so-called Micha Initiative, that has its motto from Micha 6,8:

“He has showed you, o man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

The Micha Initiative pursues two main targets. It wants....

1. ... to motivate Christians to commitment against poverty and for justice:

- to motivate Christians to prayer and intercession for those responsible in politic, economy

and culture

- to challenge Christians to a moderate lifestyle and worldwide responsibility
- to motivate Christians to openly stand up for justice and against poverty
- to work out biblical basis to the theme
- to spread information about the millennium development targets

2. ... to demand and support the achievement of the millennium targets:

- to remind the federal government and other authorities of their promises
- to initiate discussions with politicians related to development policy
- to demand regular meetings, conferences and platforms to those topics
- to seek cooperation with other NGOs
- to encourage missions and churches to make integral efforts to fight poverty.

“The millennium development targets are good and right, though they are still too little ambitious, because they are satisfied that a tremendous number of poor will remain in their poverty. As Christians we should encourage and support politicians who have planned the right thing”, said Steeb. I liked that in few brief words biblical aspects of this topic were mentioned e.g. every man is God's man; God's people are responsible for each other; we are part of the worldwide church; the material suffering of the brethren does not leave the rich untouched.

On Saturday followed a lengthy biblical evaluation of the topic. Wolfgang Neuser, general secretary of the entire YMCA association emphasized the integral way of viewing man. He called it a wrong Christian track when poverty would be idealized by Christians, as if people only because of their poverty had a special standing with God. In the same way he rejected the idea of a “wealth gospel” according to the motto: “who believes will be rich.”

The chairman of the German Micha Initiative Rolf Zwick first presented an illustrated example:

with e.g. 30.000 € annual income you belong according to “globalrichlist” to the top 4% wage earner in the world... which means “we all” in Germany are winners of the globalisation. He supported an “integral mission”, where evangelizing, education and social deed are to complement each other and not to be used against each other. Mission always should take place in the current context and it would reflect the kind of faith lived in a church. Two quotations from Zwick: “If we are not concerned about justice in the world, then our most beautiful songs of praise are a waste of time” and “There should be a priority of the needs of the poor in the negotiations about reorganisation of world economy.”

At the workshops in the afternoon several good offers were made. I joined the theme “Overcoming poverty by micro credits”, the programme of 'Opportunity International'. They run micro credit projects in many developing countries with partners on spot (CRAN *could* be one of them...). Funnily they showed a documentation that “played” in Ghana.

What can Christians do in terms of social policy:

- intercede – to bring politicians before God

- overcome fear – to open one's mouth
- defeat laziness – to use use keys or writing utensils
- invest leisure time – to engage with common sense
- live freedom – to go ahead with good deeds.

People became thoughtful and very quiet when Samuel Fan spoke about poverty from his own experience. Born in Ivory Coast he now is a project manager in Africa/Asia. He is amazed that German news always only last 15 minutes though there is so much to talk about... In Africa exists the “economy of sharing”, he who has, shares. This has to be considered in all planning of fighting poverty there. One sentence from Fan, that also is true for CRAN or rather my personal experience with CRAN says: “Africa is a continent where much can be done with little!”

You may also look at

<http://www.smd.org/akademiker-smd/fachgruppen/wirtschaft-und-gesellschaft/zumutung-weltarmut/>
(text in German), or about CRAN working with KIVA www.kiva.org/about/aboutPartner?id=91

Mathias Rusert