

Editorial

The first quarter of 2012 has gone by so quickly. One may ask whether it is because we have been so busy to notice the passing of the time? Or a lot has gone on within the short period of three months?

Whatever the reasons our heartfelt thanks go to the Lord in whose hands are our times.

Individually, we can appreciate Him for each experience we have gone through. As an organization, in spite of the challenges, we can still look back at some of the Divine surprises and interventions in situations that might have caused us to give up.

The incidents highlighted in this report are indications of some good developments in the organization, despite the inability of the CRAN Board to schedule a meeting since last September to look at the organizations performance.

Have a wonderful reading!

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CRAN

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A Rural Development Advocate Since 1993

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Christian Rural Aid Network

Issue No. 4

1st Quarter, 2012

CRAN wins USAID-funded MSI/LOGODEP Project

Management Systems International (MSI) has awarded a six-month project to the Christian Rural Aid Network (CRAN) under Ghana's Local Governance and Decentralisation Program (LOGODEP).

The Project was sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to be executed in the Shama District of the Western Region of Ghana.

CRAN is to build the capacity of local communities in the Shama district in Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) concept.

A total of 15 beneficiary communities made up of 10 catchment area communities (Abuesi, Dwomo, Shama-Kumasi, Komfuaku, Bosomdo, Krobo, Bronikrom, Asemasa, Essumankrom and Anapasu) and the five CHPS compound communities (Inchaban, Grabodo, Anlo Beach, Fawomanye, Abotareye) are targeted in the Shama district.

The project dubbed, "Strengthening the Capacity of "Local communities" for Effective Participation in and Management of the Community-Based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) Program in the Shama District" started in February 2012 and would

be completed by July 2012.

Activities such as community entry, community sensitization, training for Community health committees, community health volunteers and gender sensitization workshops as well as radio programmes would be carried out to enable community members embrace the CHPS concept.

The introduction of the Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) Initiative in Ghana was as a result of a 1998 study on the Navrongo Health Research Centre (NHRC) performed by the Ministry of Health (MoH) /Ghana Health Services (GHS). MoH/GHS designed the CHPS initiative to improve access, equity, quality, and efficiency of primary health care in support of the objectives of health sector reforms at the community level.

The CHPS initiative seeks to develop community-based service delivery points and improve partnerships with community leaders and social groups in all of Ghana's districts. CHPS has been seen as a mechanism for achieving health reforms at the periphery based on the fact that more than 70% of Ghanaians

live over eight kilometers from the nearest healthcare provider; a problem that is exacerbated by inadequate infrastructure.

The CHPS initiative is part of a policy to bridge the rural-urban health equity gap by bringing basic and essential health services to the door steps of the rural poor. The concept aims to establish small health points or units (known as 'CHPS Compounds') in selected accessible villages that can provide adjoining villages and catchment areas with basic health services – a concept similar to the "barefoot doctor" model of Sri Lanka.

In the Shama District, management/steering committees that are to oversee the implementation and management of the CHPS are often not in place and, so lack the capacity to effectively manage the projects in a sustainable manner, hence this project to ensure their existence and effectiveness.

In collaboration with the Shama District Health Management Team, CRAN is hopeful to complete the project on schedule.

CRAN Rolls out Brochure on CESS

Efforts at rebranding the Child Education Support Scheme (CESS) to raise the image of CRAN in support of a number of needy children are on course.

After 18 years of operation and services to assist needy children in deprived areas to bring them up to a higher level in education, the CESS programme has been given a new image.

A 32-page brochure titled: LITTLE HELPS MAKE A DIFFERENCE with success stories of some beneficiaries, has been published.

The compilation is made up of comments from the Board, the Administration, short life-threatening stories of some 10 beneficiaries of the scheme and that of some donors.

The idea is to present these success stories to the public and prospective sponsors.

The brochure together with sponsorship proposal will be presented to the wider public, philanthropists, and organizations, local and international to solicit funds in cash or kind as a show of their social responsibility. This is to cover the increasing number of children who urgently

need support for good education. Another goal is, through this colourful brochure compiled by CRAN's Communication and Public Relations Department, to give the world first hand insight into the workings of CRAN CESS programme.

The Public Relations Department of CRAN hopes to compile stories of more children to be published for the benefit of both donors and the public as well as to seek more support for the beneficiaries.

Quote on Rural Development

"Rural development must be considered a strategic national objective, one supporting a global objective of economic prosperity. The challenges facing rural communities require, from all of us here today, a level of innovative thinking, risk taking and leadership that is no less important or potentially worthwhile than those in earlier times."

Joe Taylor

1st Quarter RSSP Report Submitted to MoFA

The Christian Rural Aid Network (CRAN) has submitted the 1st Quarter report on the Rice Sector Support Project (RSSP) to the Crop Services Division of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

The rice sector support project (RSSP) was initiated by the government of Ghana through the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) with major support from the French Development Agency/AFD (Agence Francais de Development) and being implemented in four regions namely Upper East, Upper West, Northern and northern part of Volta across 19 districts in the selected regions.

The project which seeks to increase the volume of rice production and to reduce poverty is targeting the rice value chain actors (RVCAs) including: farmers, processors, marketers and input dealers whose capacity are to be built and strengthened for sustainability through service provision by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Ghana Rice Inter-profession Body (GRIB) research institutions, Non Formal Education Division (NFED) among other stakeholders.

The Christian Rural Aid Network (CRAN) is the NGO providing capacity building service to RVCAs on RSSP in the Volta Region. This current report covers the period January-March (first quarter), 2012, and it highlights CRAN's activities carried out and the outcomes during the period.

The project seeks to increase food security, reduce poverty and strengthen rice value chain in targeted regions/districts.

It further seeks to support the rice value chain through – land reclamation; facilitate access to credit for stakeholders; build the capacity of stakeholders; employ adapted research experiments on rice production, processing technologies and farming systems and also enhance the national organization of the rice sector (support for GRIB) etc.

A number of farmer based organisations as well as processors, marketers are expected to be identified, organized and

equipped to operate effectively in value chain in all targeted areas.

As part of the project implementation, CRAN is also expected to liaise with & support other stakeholders (NFED, MoFA etc) to provide functional literacy & numeracy training for targeted beneficiaries.

So far about 300 beneficiaries (comprising 161 females and 132 males) were trained in Conflict Management; Group Dynamics; Entrepreneurship; Business Planning; Record Keeping; Safe use of agro-chemicals; Cultural practices of rice farming. Therefore, coherency in groups boosted; skills/knowledge of BOs enriched for better performance.

CRAN is collaborating with MoFA, AFRICARE and some Rural Banks in Hohoe to educate the RSSP project communities on MoFA's development plans for the Hohoe district.

Liberian-American Volunteer Commends CRAN Microfinance

Community volunteering by all standards serves as bedrock of NGO work and is proven to be an effective way through which non-profit organizations could leverage their gains and provide effectively to beneficiary communities. CRAN and CRAN Microfinance as rural development NGOs also find the work of volunteers as important to their daily performance in the communities.

Over the years, CRAN Microfinance had engaged volunteers at all levels of our community engagements. These volunteers bring their experiences on board in their performance. They also learn lots of new things from CRAN as well as from the various communities. The Ghanaian culture and other aspects of community development practice are acquired as part of their life and academic experiences. Chantal Bright has been the latest volunteer who had just enrolled on CRAN Microfinance's volunteer platform. Her link with CRAN Microfinance was aided by Proworld, an international non-governmental volunteering organisation that aims to empower communities, promote social and economic development, conserve the environment, and cultivate educated compassionate global citizens.



Mr. Bruce Aubyn, MIS Manager, makes a presentation to Chantal Bright on behalf of CRAN, with other staff looking on.

Chantal Victoria Bright is Liberian-American and graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania USA) studying Environmental Management. Prior to her graduate studies, she worked as a Program Associate at the World Justice Project/ American Bar Association where she researched rule of law issues. She has traveled extensively throughout sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and the Americas. She has experience in research, writing, program management, environmental studies, and rule of law. Upon completing her graduate studies this May, she will return to her home country of Liberia to work in the environmental sector. She holds a Bachelors of Arts in English and Political Science from Seton Hall University (Catholic institution in South Orange, New Jersey, USA).

While at CRAN Microfi-

nance, Chantal served as a data collector with the "Kiva Desk" assisting in collecting interviews from women borrowers in various villages across the Western and Central regions of Ghana. The work has influenced her graduate thesis, "How Microfinance can be used to advance Environmental Sustainability and Women Empowerment in Ghana". The internship at CRAN Microfinance and thesis are compulsory parts of her Capstone/Thesis project. Her thesis does not advocate microfinance as the silver bullet to end all of Africa's problems but instead recommends its potential as an agent and tool in advancing gender equality and environmental sustainability.

She greatly appreciates the opportunity which CRAN Microfinance has provided that allowed her to experience microfinance in practice.

Ben Eyifah Resigns Post as Internal Auditor

In the last quarter of 2011 report was the news of the appointment of Mr Benjamin Eyifah as the new CRAN Internal Auditor. This was a big relief in the internal financial controls of CRAN. It is however sad to report that Mr Eyifah's stay with us ended on when he resigned from CRAN.

In an exit interview with him, Mr Ben Eyifah revealed that though working with the organization was short it was a good eye-opening experience for him in his career, but his new life direction necessitated his departure. He advised that CRAN should strengthen the Internal Audit department to help with stronger financial controls of this highly prospective organization.



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 Christian Rural Aid Network
 P.O. Box UC 97
 Cape Coast, Ghana
 Tel: 03321-33572
 Email: pa@cran.org
 Web: www.ghana.cran.org

New Solar Products on the Market

The promotion and sale of Barefoot Power Solar lamps by CRAN has gathered momentum especially during the recent power outages in Ghana. Also a number of people from the University community, who have become house owners but not yet linked to electricity, have opted for the solar option to meet their basic need: Light in the house.

A new consignment of these lamps, with new features and accessories were received in March 2012. However the challenge is that clients are asking for higher capacity solar lamps that can power TV, Fans, and Refrigerators etc.

Publicity and other marketing activities on the facility are ongoing at the University of Cape Coast and Cape Coast Polytechnic through handbills, posters and personal contacts. Other institutions will be reached soon.

CRAN Energy Project is a partnership between CRAN and Impact Energies, USA, with the objective of bringing affordable solar home lighting systems to the doorstep of rural communities as well as off-grid communities in Ghana.

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Trinity United Reformed Church donates towards stocking Musunkwa Community School Library

The pledge by the Trinity Reformed Church, Wimbeldon, UK, to donate funds towards the purchase of books to stock the Musunkwa Community School Library has been redeemed with the donation of an amount of £1,5404 for the purpose last December.

Lists of books and computers, with accessories have been purchased to be presented to the school later. Three desktop computers would be donated to the school for the teaching and learning of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the school.

The government of Ghana, under the Ghana Education Service and the West African Examination Council (WAEC) has introduced the teaching and learning of ICT in basic schools but most of the schools in the rural communities do not have computers for their practical lessons in the subject. The computers would also help the teachers to



Items to be presented to the Musunkwa Community School

take proper stock of the library books.

The Musunkwa Community School library project was initiated by CRAN and sponsored by the TUR church and commissioned in May 2011 for use by the students in the Musunkwa community and other surrounding communities.

News Highlights

Renovation of New Office Building Underway

Reconstruction work on the new premises started in December 2011. Recent visit to the site showed steady work on the re-demarcation of the internal and external structures to create new offices for the various departments of CRAN. It is also to give the premises an attractive and appealing look.

It is expected that the works will be completed some time in July 2012.

Staff Undergo training on use of Electronic Performance Management Tool

Management of CRAN and CRAN Microfinance have embarked on measures to improve on the performance of staff of two organisations.

During staff training programme held at the University of Cape Coast, staff have been trained on the use of the Electronic Performance Management System (EPMS) to help both staff and management to effectively assess the performance of staff for value.

External Auditors carry out 2011 Audit

As required by business law in Ghana, organizations need to have their accounts audited yearly. In fulfillment of this practice, CRAN's appointed external auditors, Ernst and Young, visited CRAN for the purpose.

The five-member team stayed for two weeks to interact with staff at the Headquarters and at Hohoe offices.