

CATHOLIC GRADUATES FOR ACTION

ANNUAL REPORT 2006

1.0 Introduction

Catholic Graduates for Action (CAGA) is a non – profit organization providing community and institutional development services through education and cultural exchanges and serving as the local counterpart of foreign organizations that desire to assist the less privileged people to make the most out of their situation. For the year 2006, the activities that were carried out in collaboration with our partner, the SamenWerk Foundation in the Netherlands, can be grouped under micro-projects and support for the Kumasi- Almere Sister-Cities Relationship.

2.0 Micro-projects

Five projects were undertaken. These are the MERC (Micro-Enterprise Refuse Collection) scheme at Sawaba – Adukrom, Asase Aban Women Project, Atonsu School Block, Improving the living conditions of the street girls in Kumasi and the Day Care Centre for the Kumasi Children’s Home.

2.1 *MERC Scheme*

The scheme is a house-to-house refuse collection system and practiced in low-income deprived areas of a city in developing countries due to woefully inadequate urban infrastructure - poor road network and lack of space for location of transfer stations within reasonable walking distances to households - for effective and efficient waste management operations. It makes use of appropriate technology. For example with the pilot project in Kumasi, the initial technology employed was donkey carts which later gave way for the use Tractor-Trailer, and later the use of Compactor Trucks due to the significant improvement in the road network within the area.

Launched in May 1998, under auspices of the Kumasi-Almere Sister – Cities Programme with a pilot project at Atonsu – Dampoase area, the scheme has the following objectives.

1. To improve the health status of Communities involved through an appropriate refuse management strategy
2. To promote a sustainable community based refuse management scheme through user fee payment
3. To generate local employment by involving indigenous residents of Communities involved in the delivery of the service.

The two most significant impacts of the scheme are the acceptance of the beneficiaries to pay the user fees which is an indicator for sustainability, and its integration into the city-wide waste management programme. Therefore, to sustain the tradition of the Kumasi – Almere Sister-Cities programme’s contribution towards the improvement of waste management situation in the Kumasi Metropolis, an extension of the MERC scheme to cover two communities (Adukrom and Sawaba) was decided during the Almere delegation in October 2004. The formulation and design of the scheme at Adukrom and Sawaba were carried out in 2005.

The focus of the project in 2006 was to constitute stakeholder groups in both communities and facilitate discussions at meetings. Six meetings were organized throughout the year, and at the end of it, the stakeholders committee was formed with its functions and responsibilities defined and explained to the members.



A Stakeholders’ Committee Meeting

2.2 *Asase Aban Women Group, Moshie Zongo*

This is a group of about 35 women who hail from the deprived areas in the three northern regions of Ghana, and live in the urban slum of Moshie Zongo in Kumasi. In 1996, the women came together to form an association for their welfare and also engage in the production of beads by recycling plastic wastes such as cassettes cases, pen cartridges and cosmetics cream containers.

During the year under review, CAGA continued to facilitate and promote the activities of this group. We facilitated the sale of their products in Almere, the Netherlands, supervised the completion of the construction work on their working shed / shelter. In addition, two fume cabinets were constructed to extract smoke and minimize its effect on the women during beads making process.



Working shed



Beads making in a fume cabinet

2.3 *Completing the two – storey classroom block for Atonsu MA School*

This is a two storey 6-classrooms block with 2 offices and 2 store rooms. The project was initiated by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) of the school in 1997, with the aim to eliminate the shift-system for the upper primary section of the school. The ground floor (3 classrooms cum office and store) got completed in 2002.

But, as at the beginning of the 2002/2003 academic year the school needed 3 additional classrooms before the objective set in 1997 could be achieved. Therefore, there was the need to complete the remaining 3 classrooms or the second floor of the two-storey classroom block. Construction work on the second floor began in 2004 was to be completed by the end of 2005. But as at December 2005, the work was about 95% complete. The remaining 5% consisting of mainly painting and other finishes was carried out in the January 2006.



The Completed School Block

2.4 *Improving the living conditions of the street Girls at Erstwhile Ink and Chalk Factory*

The issue of street children is a critical development problem for cities in developing countries. Young people (mostly between ages 6 and 20, and without skills and basic education) migrate from the rural and deprived communities to these big cities in search for the non-existing jobs, and so end up living in wretched conditions. They struggle to survive, live in ignorance, engage in strenuous jobs in relation to their age, and sleep mostly at lorry parks - in the open air, on the ground, on a thin mat or on cardboard, in front of stores, in pavements and in kiosks. They live and work on the street without regular support from family or relatives but try to take care of themselves, and do not know the joys of childhood and youth. In Ghana, the number of street children keeps on growing in the two big cities of Accra and Kumasi.

The strategic location of Kumasi, as the hub of transportation network in Ghana, facilitates informal commercial activities, and makes it very attractive to young people to migrate mostly from the three Northern Regions. Most of these children are located in the central business district especially at the Kajetia & racecourse lorry parks. They are the porters ((kaya kaya or kayayee), truck pushers, chop bar attendants and hawkers. The Neglect Foundation, a Kumasi- based NGO, provides shelter for about 750 porters who are mainly girls (between the ages 10 and 18) at the erstwhile Ink & Chalk Factory or Old Kumasi Slaughter House. This facility, though not very conducive for human habitation, gives them some form of protection.

Since 2004, the CAGA and SamenWerk Foundation in Almere have been keenly interested in the plight of street children in Kumasi. For the year 2006, we supported the Neglect Foundation to improve the living conditions of these girls. The interventions include; promoting saving (susu) scheme, improving ventilation and environmental sanitation of the place, and sensitization workshops on reproductive health and HIV-AIDS.



A workshop on reproductive health

2.5 Day Care Centre for Kumasi Children's Home

The Kumasi Children's Home provides care and protection to orphans, abandoned children, motherless children and other children who are taken from their parents or guardians, by officers of the Department of Social Welfare or the Police, for maltreatment and children who get missing or whose relatives cannot be traced. It also takes care of a few physically and mentally disabled children, who developed these disabilities as they grew and have no one to adopt them. Currently, the Home has a capacity of about 100 children ranging from 0 to 25 years of age. For children between 3 to 5 years the home runs a nursery or day care centre and prepares them for formal school. The nursery is also used by children from the neighbourhood. Due to lack of facility for the day care, the children were crowded in a small dining room of the Home. CAGA and the SamenWerk Foundation have been assisting the Home to construct suitable day care centre on piece meal basis.

The facilities of the centre include classrooms, computer room, sick bay, recreational area, toilets, offices and multipurpose hall. The construction work has been divided into 2 phases. Phase I comprises the construction of classrooms, computer room, sick bay and toilets. And this phase was completed in the year under review. It is important to add that the Home also embarked on local fund raising efforts which amounted to 30% of the total cost of the work done.



The Home Supervisor at a door of the completed day care Centre

3.0 Support for the Kumasi- Almere Sister-Cities Relationship

Under this, CAGA assisted logistically two sets of delegation from the Almere Municipality and the SamenWerk Foundation on their missions to Kumasi. The first mission came off in March 2006 and it was an eight – member delegation. Its purpose was to complete the project proposal on Data Collection and Revenue Mobilization. On the part of the SamenWerk, the visit was to evaluate its on-going projects in Kumasi. The October 2006 mission also had eight members, and it was aimed to monitor the implementation of the projects in Kumasi. CAGA also facilitated the participation of one planning officer from the Kumasi Metropolitan Town and Country Planning Department at a Geodata Management Course organized by the Geomatic Engineering Department of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi.

4.0 Conclusion

The focus of the year 2006 was to complete all the on-going projects so as to enable us begin new ones in the 2007. And this has been achieved successfully. We, therefore, take this opportunity to thank the SamenWerk Foundation our foreign partner and all CAGA members whose support and commitment have bought us this far. It is our firm believe that the support and commitment will continue enable us to another fruitful and challenging year in 2007.

Francis Cornah
(Executive Coordinator)
January 31, 2007.