

Our Journey to Ghana - A Report

November 3rd -17th, 2015

At Schiphol, Amsterdam Airport we met again: Lothar from Frankfurt and myself, Karl from Steinfurt, Germany.

In August we had planned our trip and had bought the tickets together.

We were heading for the Peniel Project in Akyem Maase, Ghana, about 60 miles north of Accra.

We wanted to see the project and give support with our professional skills and knowledge in an active and practical way.



This is the place where the project started 13 years ago.

Philip Asamoah, born in Maase and now living in London as a pastor, since years he has the vision to help the people in his home country.

He could buy a large piece of land near his little town. There are 100 acres, real jungle.

Carol Schavet left her home in Wisconsin, USA, to build a new home in Maase and live there.

During the last years several other buildings have been erected, two assembly halls with 1600 and 800 square feet, some outbuildings and two years ago a school house with four classrooms.

About 2 % of the whole area is a cultivated land and looks like a planted Garden, with 10 different houses.

Six years ago a German NGO was founded, with a developing program, by some friends of Philip Asamoah. The whole work and the Project get financial support only by donations and practical helps. A sponsorship program for the kids has been started.

Until today there are no administrative expenses and the people who travel from Europe to Maase pay their tickets themselves.

Since three years we have a nursery, a kindergarten and a primary school, now with class 1 and class 2.

Nine teachers and helpers educate and look after 170 Children.

On Sundays the local church uses the buildings for their services.

In summer 2016 a new building will be needed for class 3



So Lothar and I planned to measure and survey the land and the buildings to draw a layout plan to develop the increase of the project and the next buildings.

In this task Lothar as surveyor and myself as an interior designer we hoped to become a good team.

Philip gave us a lot of support from London in organizing everything very carefully for us: like his brother Acheampong collecting us from the airport and taking us to the hotel for the first night.

We felt a very warm welcome and Philip called from London hear if everything was going well.



The next day Harrison, Eddie and Prince arrived in the Mercedes Sprinter to take us to Maase.

Acheampong organized change of money and telephone cards for us, then we headed for our destination in Maase.

Till Koforidua the main road was ok, but then it became more and more difficult with a lot of holes in the asphalt.

Through New and Old Tafo we came to Maase and there we felt like in a small paradise; cut grass, colored houses, and the most important: the people who welcomed us warmly with broad smiles; Carol, Pastor David, Pastor Francis and many others.

We stayed in Carol's house and enjoyed luxury in an almost European way: shower, WC, single rooms with ceiling ventilators, breakfast with scrambled eggs, fresh fruits, toast and coffee.



The next few days were filled with activities. We walked around to get to know everything and surrounded the whole property to get a feeling for how large it is and the thickness of the rainforest

Some days earlier four men who are working for the project had cut a path for us with their cutlass, the big machetes. Only because of

that we were able to find the boarder stones.

The next days we surveyed and measured the buildings and put the results into a CAD system to make sure that nothing was measured wrongly.



Apart from those practical works we took care of the scholarship foster program. This program is a great help to get the needed finances and makes it possible for children to attend our school.

We took photos of pupils, classes, teachers and co-worker.

And then we put up great toys in the playground. Manufactured by a metalworker of the region this equipment was waiting to get fixed in the ground:

A slide, some swings, a merry-go-round and a see-saw.

Together with the project team we planned where to install the toys, digged the holes and fixed the formwork for the concrete foundations.

After weekend, when the concrete had set hard, the joy of the children was incredible. With 30 other kids they stand in a queue waiting to use the slide. It was a great pleasure for them, and it was a great pleasure for us to see their joy.

Apart from our work the Peniel Project team had planned two days for us to relax. We visited the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) and learned a lot of the processes of the cocoa. Another day we went to Koforidua with its great market.



These two weeks were a very intensive time, so that we didn't want to visit the Accra Market on our way of departure. But we greeted the joiner who had manufactured the high quality furniture for our school.

In Ghana we met people who get up before sunrise, work hard during the day and often carry heavy loads at long distances on their heads.

We travelled back with pictures in our heads, impressed by the warmth of the people, even strangers but especially shown to us by those friends who work in the Peniel Project and as friends of Philip Asamoah, too.

We came back with pictures of thankful people, adults and kids of any age.



There is a deep thankfulness within us, that we may be part of this project to help children to get school education.

We still feel the warmth of the sun during daytime and remember the not really cooler nights, the humid air and a prosperity that doesn't consist of money and property, but of the green and fruitful land, where its habitants can collect their food from the woods, a prosperity in relationships and friendships, even offered to strangers.

These people are thankful even for small things, but we got the impression that more help will definitely will be needed.

We remember the mosquitos in the evening and that the electricity was only available half of the time.

We know it will be a Friendship over a far distance and we can't meet each other often, but we definitely will come back.

Schedule

3/11 Tuesday

Flight from Amsterdam to Accra

4/11 Wednesday

Journey to Maase

5/11 Thursday

Walk around in the project, meeting the co-workers,
Seeing the buildings,
Photo documentation of the houses and the area



6/11 Friday

Walk through the jungle, around the whole
property, finding the boarder stones
Photo documentation of the houses from the
highest place, the water tower

7/11 Saturday

Start of the survey/measurement

8/11 Sunday

Sunday Service (3 hours),
With worship and dance
Visit to the restaurant Linda Dor



9/11 Monday

Survey / measurement

10/11 Tuesday

Photos of the school classes

11/11 Wednesday

Survey / measurement
Portraits of pupils for the foster parents
Visit of the cocoa institute for cocoa and shea products
Stop in Tafo



12/11 Thursday

Making plans for the playground toys
Visit to the market of Koforidua

13/11 Friday

Installation of the playground equipment,
Making of the concrete foundations, so that during the
weekend the concrete set hard and the kids can use them in
the beginning of the next week



14/11 Saturday

Visit to Maase, see the infrastructure,

Visit to "Children we care foundation" (German project of Judith Scholz from Koblenz, now Maase)



15/11 Sunday

Sunday Service

In the evening Judith Scholz and three of her children visited us back

16/11 Monday

Finishing the documentation and the computer work

Making preparations for our departure

17/11 Tuesday

Road to Accra, Visit at the joiner's in Accra

Flight back in the night



18/11 Wednesday

Arrival in Amsterdam

Train to Frankfurt and to Steinfurt

Lothar and myself had to go different ways, but we have been a very good team and our friendship had become stronger. Thank you, dear Lothar!