

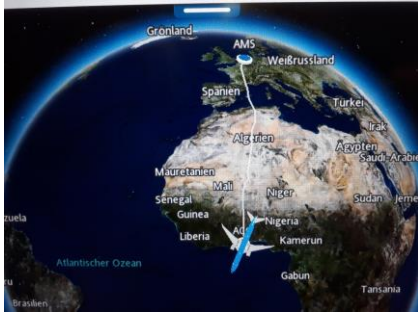


# LernEinsatz Ghana 2018

GEFÖRDERT DURCH DIE  
 ÖSTERREICHISCHE  
ENTWICKLUNGS  
ZUSAMMENARBEIT

 **Dreikönigsaktion**  
Hilfswerk der Katholischen Jungschar

## 9<sup>th</sup> July- We made it!



After quite a long one day- journey from Vienna with a pit-stop in Amsterdam, we finally arrived late night on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2018 in Accra. Directly upon arrival, we were picked up at the airport by our lovely hosts from TICCLS- Salifu, Mary, Luisa, Stephen and Al Hassan. They immediately made us feel welcome and at ease. From the airport we went straight to the guesthouse of Christian sisters called "Mary Immaculate", where we stayed for the first days in Accra. Already this first bus-ride showed us how different Ghana looked. Overwhelmed and exhausted, covered in mosquito repellent and with the fan turned on, we all had a good night-sleep that night.



## 10<sup>th</sup> July- It's all about the gold!

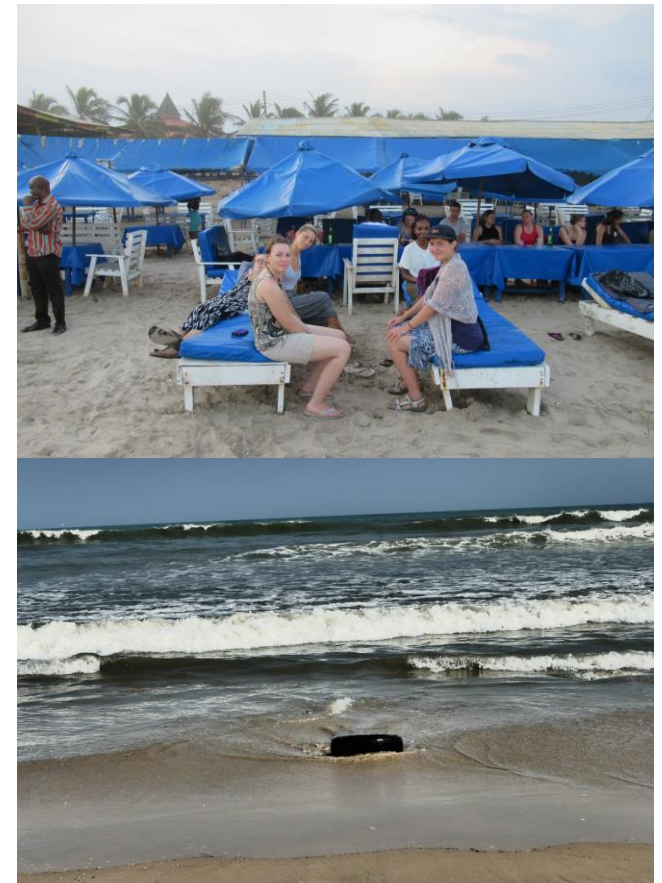
The first full day in Ghana already started quite intensely. At 9 o'clock a talk was scheduled with Mrs. Hannah from the NGO WACAM, which let us jump directly into one of the most dire subjects of a DKA supported project. WACAM is working in and with rural communities, which are affected by the mining processes. Mining has a long history in Ghana, due to the country's great amount of natural resources. (This is also the reason why Ghana was called Gold Coast in the time of Colonialism.) Today they are still mining gold, but also bauxite, diamonds, salt, iron and much more. While mining itself is not a problem, if done responsibly, it





## A group of people, including men and women, are standing in a dirt area. In the background, there is a tall building under construction with a green facade. A bicycle is visible on the left side of the image.

enjoying the view and some brave "sea-lovers" even dared to jump into the waves. Unfortunately, you could not ignore the immense amount of waste and plastic floating in the sea, which was the cause of the first of many vivid discussions about waste (management) in our group.



On our second day, we had the chance to get to know Accra's touristic side. During a guided tour through the downtown we saw Accra with all its different face: the poor and the rich ones, the business district and the slums, as well as modern and historical buildings. One of the most important museums in Accra is the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum with its memorial park.







The Mausoleum is a magnificent Marble Monument and the last resting place of the first President of Ghana and his wife, Fathia Nkrumah. A fitting tribute to a person who fought for independence and fulfilled the dreams of many, despite the challenges he faced.

Most interesting is the story behind the statue of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. His head was decapitated from the statue during the military coup that resulted in his exile. The head was recovered years later and is now placed next to the body.

In the small museum next to the Mausoleum, there are personal effects and photos of Nkrumah's life and career

displayed. We saw a lot of pictures of him with fellow heads of state and his family, as well as a lot of copies of his writings, manuscripts and books that he wrote.



### **Shopping @ Makola Market!**

If you walk around Makola Market, you'll be treated to a variety of different sights, sounds and smells. We felt impressed and overwhelmed at the same time: so many strolled through the streets to do their daily shopping here. So it isn't very touristic, but a definite must see in Accra. A lot of (female) traders sell fresh products, manufactured and imported foods, fabrics or pots and pans. Jewellery made of locally handcrafted beads can also be found there.



Much more touristic, but just as overwhelming and impressive is the Art Centre of Accra. Typical Ghanaian handmade souvenirs such as paintings, wood carvings, baskets, drums, bags, fabrics, clothes, sandals, sculptures, jewellery and so much more can be purchased there. We made our first attempts to shop the Ghanaian way and were immensely proud, when we were able to haggle down the prices as we were told to do. We learned that shopping in Ghana requires a lot of patience and endurance. So if you don't want to get cheated, you have to carefully inspect the stuff you want to buy and negotiate a good price. For us it took a lot of group effort to be successful – yet the joy when making a good deal was all the more. And if in doubt, Mary – our master buyer- was always there to help us out. By the way, good advice for futures shopping endeavours in Ghana: If you greet the sellers in the local language and engage in small-talk you will get cheated 50% less. ☺

## 12<sup>th</sup> July- High up in the trees!

Our first stop on this warm day was Kakum National Forest. We started bright and early in the morning and rode to the national park, where we had breakfast with a visit from a cute little baby monkey. After eating, a guide joined us and gave a short introduction about the forest, the historical background and the animals, which live there.





Then we took a hike through the forest. It was amazing to see the different plants that are growing there. The hike culminated at the canopy walkway, which is 350 meters long. Six platforms in treetops are connected by six plank bridges. There, we were able to enjoy the impressive beauty of the nature, high above the forest. It was thrilling, but an adventure worthwhile, walking above the trees.



### Exploring the dark side of Ghana's history!



courtyard of the well-preserved building.

Elmina is a town situated at Ghana's south coast (Gold Coast) in the Central Region of Ghana. It holds the famous Elmina Castle, which is recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The name Elmina derives from all the mining that took place in the area.

The first thing we saw when entering the city was the big fish market and so many people, doing their business here. It was immensely crowded, and our bus could barely go through the masses. And then, directly at the shore, on a hill there it was: our destination, the famous Elmina castle. We entered the castle through a narrow access and found ourselves immediately in the





The slave castle is now empty and the former chapel in the middle of the yard has been converted into a museum that tells the story of Elmina Castle. During the visit of the castle our guide told us that Elmina Castle was erected by the Portuguese in 1482 as "São Jorge da Mina" Castle (St. George of the Mine). It was the first trading post built on the gulf of Ghana, and so it is the oldest European building in existence southern to the Sahara. First established as a trade settlement for gold, spices and Asian trading goods, the castle later

became one of the most important stops on the route of the Atlantic slave trade. The Dutch seized the fort from the Portuguese in 1637, and took over the entire Portuguese Gold Coast in 1642. The slave trade continued under the Dutch, until, 1872, the Dutch Gold Coast became a possession of the British Empire. Finally, Britain granted the Gold Coast its independence in 1957.

One of the most shocking rooms for us was one with a skull painted over the door – the room of no return. The guide told us that this room was used for slaves, who tried to break out. The punishment was to starve in this little dark room, with no fresh air, no food, water or toilette. Only four walls and one door, which was always closed, unless when the occupiers came to clean up the corpses.

Elmina Castle is an important venue in the history of Ghana and, after all these years, still tells very impressively the suffering of the slave trade.





### 13<sup>th</sup> July- Cocoa: the brown gold!

Today, we went to Koforidua to visit an organic cocoa farm. As we arrived at the Cocoa Ware House, we were given a short talk by the owner of the farm about growing and producing cocoa, the difficulties and challenges of it and how and to whom the cocoa is sold.

Everything started in 2002, when an American company decided to start a program of organic cocoa farming. Francis and Michael, those are the names of



the owners of this farm, were interested in this program. To start an organic cocoa farm, there have to be 3-4 communities working together. This is because a large area around the future organic cocoa fields have to be cleared from any chemicals, as chemical insecticides from neighbouring farms are could still be traced on the supposedly organic fruits. After 10 years of hard work and advocating for the benefits of organic cocoa and the production of natural products, the area we visited is now completely organically tended to. They were the first community in whole West-Africa who started with the organic cocoa production.



## 14<sup>th</sup> July - Visiting a gold-community!



Four days after the theoretical talk on mining, on the morning of 14<sup>th</sup> July, we continued our travel to visit a community which is affected from gold mining. After some hours in the bus and travelling through bushes and woods, we finally arrived at the rural community Saamang. Directly upon the arrival, we were invited to take a seat in the community hall, where we waited for the youth group of the village to arrive. Many young people joined us and told us all about their personal experiences with mining and how it affected their families and the area, where they live.

In 2008 the first mining company came to their village. Back then, the community didn't have any knowledge about the process of mining or the intentions of the companies. In this period, land was taken from farmers with little to no compensation. Today, due to the education of people, they are speaking up about land-grabbing and the violations of the human rights inflicted by the mining companies. WACAM has been a big help in the process of empowerment, because they have been organising workshops and events, where they inform the people about mining in their own local languages. They are empowering the people, forming groups and together they have started to fight against the violations and discrimination. Although WACAM and the whole village is putting a lot of pressure on the company, mining hasn't been put to a stop till today.

A lot of the mining companies' actions have been illegal and therefore WACAM has carried some of the cases to court, but the trial has been going on for 8 years now, without any changes.





What was really shocking to us, was when the youth explained that people of the village are being taken to prison for protecting their own land and that others got shot by military men or employees of the mining community. There are even some bullet holes still visible on the outside of some buildings in the village. Saamang is one of many villages where injustices like this happen every day. One reason for this is that often the chiefs of the village are either not heard by other politicians or they themselves are profiting from the mining activities. Therefore, the community people are not getting any support from their formal leaders. A member of the youth group also explained to us, that the mining communities are the poorest communities looking on infrastructure in whole Ghana, because the big machines are destroying the streets and for example in Saamang no one, not even the government, is financially supporting the village's school.

Our entire group was really touched by the stories of the village people and shocked by the actions of the mining companies. It was shocking to hear about and see the destruction the mining has caused. All of their stories got even more real, when they showed us the mining activities in the forests just some hundred meters away. We were able to see the big mining machines and the destruction of the environment so close to the centre of the village.







On our way to Tamale we stayed one night in Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti region, located in South Ghana. Here we learned once again, how in Ghana, the concept of time is handled differently, when we were waiting for over two and a half hours for the food in the restaurant. But with our group, this was no problem at all. We enjoyed each other's comp

We then enjoyed the rest of the evening on our hostel's terrace, overlooking the dense, overcrowded but fascinating neighbourhood. The next morning we continued our journey with a pit-stop at the "Ashanti Museum - The Kingdom of Gold". We learned, how the Ashanti people are described as a peace loving nation, yet always ready to defend themselves. The king plays a very important and powerful role in the Ashanti Kingdom. His main task is to unite his people, as a spiritual and political leader. A symbol of his very power is the secret golden stool. This royal throne is not allowed to ever touch the ground, it is believed to house all souls, including the dead, living and yet to be born. Currently the 16th king Osei Tutu II is ruling at the age of 70 years. Although the king is allowed to have as many wives as he wants, Osei Tutu II is (officially) only married to one. Another very important role in the ashanti power structure plays the Queen Mother. She is chosen by the elders and always related to the king. Most of the times it is his mother or a sister of him. Her duty is to nominate the eligible males in the royal family for the position of king.



We continued our journey to Tamale, where we arrived safe and sound in the evening. After a big welcome in TICCLS, we settled in and spent the evening reflecting upon the last weeks and playing games.

### 16<sup>th</sup> July- Visiting a traditional chief's palace!

Our first entire day in Tamale started with a great breakfast by Mary and then a lecture about the country Ghana in general and also politics in Ghana by Salifu. For instance, we learned that in the North of Ghana the vegetation period is longer, also, there are more commodities (cocoa, timber, minerals) in the South and the seat of the government is in the south. All of this results in the fact, that the area's development is more difficult in the North than the South. We furthermore learned about the role of the contemporary traditional rulers in Ghana. Nearly every village has a Chief or a leader (non-chiefly group) with a council of elders around to support him. A Chief has a lot of power, but also a lot of challenges to deal with, as he is the leader of the whole community, which means, of Christians, Moslems and Traditional Believers, who often expect different things from him.



In the afternoon, we then had the chance to visit a traditional chief. He welcomed us in his chief palace together with some of his elders. Right after entering the building we squatted down and started with the greeting phrases in Dagbani which we had learned in our Dagbani language course before. After he invited us to take a seat, we presented him with cola nuts and then got invited to share eat some of the cola nuts with him. This is part of the traditional procedure when meeting a chief.

Afterwards, we were allowed to ask him questions. As it is prescribed by tradition, we didn't speak directly to the chief, but to his linguist who is responsible for conveying messages. What we were able to find out is that he has got three women and about 32 children (He wasn't too sure about that). He also said, that one of the biggest challenges in his community is the behaviour of the younger generation. He meant that they often do not behave the way they are expected to. Furthermore one of his worries is the backward development of northern Ghana. Before we left, we received a living guinea fowl and some yam roots as a welcoming present to the area.

### 17<sup>th</sup> July – Female Power!

This morning, when we woke up, we all had a “wonderful surprise” in the looks of red burning eyes and skin rashes. The mosquito nets that we had hung up the day before were saturated with mosquito repellent and we all had allergic reactions to it. Also, the entire night there had been unexpected heavy rainfall, so the clothes that we had hung up to dry got a good second rinsing.

The rain didn't stop for the next couple of hours and we got to experience for the very first time, why the months of July and August are also called the raining season in the North of Ghana.







But this did nothing to spoil our mood. It was all the more comfortable sitting in the lecture with a hot cup of tea and listening to today's topic of urban and rural poverty and also cross-cultural differences.

Around noon, we visited an NGO called "NORSAAC". They are engaged in woman empowerment and they run many projects in the Northern region. There are 4 main topics: Health and sexual issues (such as to reduce teenage pregnancies), gender and governance, education and also agriculture and livelihoods. They especially go out to the rural areas and try to support women to establish a good livelihood for themselves. One of their main concepts is to always work within the structures and situations that are given in the area, as they don't want to impose, but empower women to help themselves. She told us a lot about different projects but was also very interested in the position of women in Austria and how we manage similar issues that they have.

### Shekhina Clinic!

In the afternoon we were shown around in the free Shekhinah Clinic for the Poor and Destitute founded by Dr. Abdulai. He was born into a very poor family, but later became a medical doctor and one of Africa's greatest humanitarians. He founded the hospital where poor people are treated for free irrespective of their religion or family background. The Shekhinah Clinic volunteers cater to approximately 60-75 patients each day and many international doctors come throughout the year to perform surgeries for free. Additionally, they also care for mentally handicapped people living at the compound.



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Today's focus was on gender roles in Ghana and the socio economic change throughout the last years.

A group of people are gathered in a room, sitting on the floor and eating from bowls. Several men are wearing traditional white headwraps. A woman in a blue patterned headscarf is also present. In the foreground, a man in a dark jacket with 'ST' on the back is visible. The room has a simple, somewhat dilapidated appearance with a concrete floor and walls.

In the late afternoon, we went out to a nearby village, where we were invited to have a traditional meal with the villagers. It was a lovely experience and round up an intense and interesting day perfectly.



## 19<sup>th</sup> July - Divine Pito!



On this very hot day we went to a special Pito bar in Tamale. Two very friendly women expected us already and showed us around, explaining to us what Pito is and how it's made.

Pito is a local alcoholic Ghanaian drink, made of either fermented or unfermented millet or sorghum. It can be served either warm or cold. Similar to our "Most", it is especially popular in northern Ghana.

Traditionally you use a "calabash" (similar to a dried pumpkin) in order to drink Pito. You fill the calabash with Pito. Before drinking it, you spill a sip of the drink on the ground, so that your ancestors can join you in drinking. And as, we had learned in our cross-cultural course, you always have to use your right hand for drinking, never the left.

After the Pito Bar, we visited two traditional diviners. Diviners are considered really powerful people in Ghana. As we had learned in our lecture about Religion in the morning, many people go to diviners every time they seek council or want to learn about their future.

Now, we had the chance to learn about our futures as well. We entered the diviner's house one by one. It was a dark, hot and sticky place. With a translator next to us, we were told to silently whisper a question we wanted answered to the money we were holding in our hands. After handing the money to the diviner, he started to shake his pot, filled with mussels, stones, wood, bones and other







small things, and pour them out in front of you. He held a stick in his hands and waved it over the fallen utensils. After a while the diviner started telling us about our future. It was an interesting experience, but in the end we were still a bit sceptical about our told predictions.

### **20<sup>th</sup> July – Education, Education, Education!**

Our day started by visiting first a public school and later on a private one. The public school was called Kpalsi Zion Primary School, which was established in 1982 and which is one of the oldest and unfortunately also one of the poorest ones in the area of Tamale. The school is attended by around 600 students and about 20 teachers. The average class size is 60 students, yet the classrooms are extremely small and many of the students don't even have a table to write on. Also, there is not enough money to afford the necessary school materials for each student.

The students often have to walk up to 5 km to get from their homes to the school. Many of our group were really touched by the school's situation and couldn't believe under what conditions the students and teachers have to work.

The abysmal conditions of the school were highlighted, when we next visited the Evangelic School of Ghana Tamale, which was established 2007 by a Chinese. Private schools, such as this one normally don't hold more than 40 students per class; in this school are 876 students and 40 teachers. As a little "thank you" for showing us around we performed the Song "Peters Brünlele" and the kids were really into it were quick to learn the clapping movements with us.





In the afternoon we had a traditional dance workshop. The entire group was really impressed by the dancing skills of the Ghanaian people and even though a lot of us felt the dancing spirit we just couldn't keep up with the Ghanaians, but still we had a lot of fun trying and also watching them. The entire neighborhood came around to join us.

For dinner the best cook of Ghana, our Ghanaian-Mama Mary, prepared a huge traditional buffet with tons of typical Ghanaian food. She had been preparing it for over 2 days and we were all really impressed! From Fufu to Banku, over Jollof Rice and guineafowl, there was just everything there. It was great to try out all of the different and foreign flavours. It was super delicious and even though we ate a lot, there was still so much food left in the end, which was later shared with the community.



### **21<sup>th</sup> July – Meeting Christian Mothers!**

Today, we rose bright and early to go to Yendi. There we visited the Christian Mothers' Association. CMA is a women's group of the Catholic Diocese of Yendi and includes women from within and outside the church – also including Muslim women. The CMA has an estimated membership size of about 1.500 and operates in all the fourteen parishes of the diocese. The main objective of the CMA is to bring women together for their spiritual development, economic and social empowerment, and to advocate gender equality in a traditionally patriarchal society. The CMA's income generating activities include petty

trading, pito brewing , farming (cereals and root crops), and the production of shea butter and groundnut oil. The participating women acquire a handy skillset to found their own business and improve their family income. But foremost they also gain self-confidence, which is a crucial step towards their empowerment.

At the beginning of our meeting with the women, they were a little distant. But the discussion quickly developed to a joyous exchange of ideas and their curiosity towards our culture became more and more apparent. They had prepared lunch for us and it was incredibly fun and fascinating to sit with them and talk about their and our lives. We are glad for the opportunity to talk to the Mothers and were very impressed by their everyday work, their motivation, as well as their level of commitment to their cause and strong will to change social structures.

### **A visit to a witch village!**

As we had learned and witnessed already , Ghana is characterized by a colorful mixture of religious diversity. Yet something, that is believed in by “everybody”, especially in the rural areas is witchcraft. Many people suspect black magic behind misfortunes, such as sudden deaths, diseases or even alcoholism or mental illness, also bad crop or loss of livestock is sometimes traced back to witchcraft.

If someone is accused of being a witch- mainly women, but in some cases also children or men – they are often expelled from their village. Left with nothing they then come to so called “witch villages” or “witch camps”, where they are usually are allowed to stay,







yet often under horrible conditions.

This afternoon, we visited a “witch camp” in Gnani, one of the six existing ones in Ghana. (Witch camps are solely found in the Northern Region.)

As we arrived, we were immediately spotted by a group of curious children, who escorted us to the chief’s house. During our

talk with the head of the village, we were allowed to ask many questions. So we learned about why and by whom people get accused, the ritual determining whether a person is a witch/ wizard or not.

Our group was deeply moved by the horrifying and somehow hopeless conditions the people were living in in the village and we had a lot to think about on our way back home.

## 22<sup>th</sup> + 23<sup>rd</sup> July – From giggling with Young Christian Workers...!

We started our day by visiting a project from the Young Christian Workers. The project targets young women, who dropped out of school with no perspective, often coming from rural villages far away. In the project, they get the opportunity to learn sewing as well as they are getting taught in writing, reading, English and maths. The training lasts about three years. During that period they are not getting paid, but there is food provided for them.





Afterwards most of the young woman work independently as dressmakers.

After we got all this information we had time to interact with the young women. They told us about their life's stories and asked a lot of questions about Austria, especially about the cold weather.

### **...to dancing with the CDC- Community!**

In the afternoon we had a talk with the CDC (Care of deprived Communities)- director John. He told us about his project, in which he supports rural villages that we were going to visit the following day. A couple of years ago, the communities had been almost completely cut off from the rest of the world. Although HIV was first diagnosed in the district in the year 1986, they received no help or attention from any NGO. The roads from the village to the next town were poorly built and so health care was not provided. That's when John decided that something had to be done for these people. So the CDC - organization entered into the district and started to teach about sexual education. HIV was not the only serious issue in the community. They established a program to fight child trafficking and child labour. With the help of DKA, they were able to build a school and bring in teachers from others regions to teach the children. The helpers are now called CST- (Community Surveillance Team) and they are supporting about 200 children.

Another aspect of the plan was to make school more attractive for the parents to send their children to attend it. The idea was to start farming and to grow food in order to





be able to provide a meal once a day for the children. They organization also ensures health insurance for the schoolchildren and hold „ girl clubs“ were they get taught about hygiene practices to keep them healthy. Another project is called IGA- (Income generating activities), in which mothers get monetary support to feed their children.



Visiting this community the next day was a very special moment for all of us. When we got off the bus we already heard children chorusing "you are welcome" from afar. A crowd of people -students, parents, teachers and villagers as well as local politicians- had assembled to welcome and celebrate with us. We were led to our seats right in the middle. They performed local traditional music and dances for us. Also, a lot of speeches were given. Something rather odd and uncomfortable for us was, when they called us "white gods" and they said "they have to worship". Yet the speaker probably just wanted to express, how thankful he is that the DKA supports their community. After dancing with the children and the women for a long time, we were also shown their schoolbuildings and some of their agricultural fields.

## 24<sup>th</sup> July - We get our Batik on!

On this day we had the possibility to try out the traditional batik technique dying cloths with Anthony in his DKA supported project "Damongo Youth Development Initiative". So what is batik? Batik originally comes from Indonesia and was imported by the Dutch to Africa. The paste for stamping is made from starch or mud, or, like in our case, wax.







First we chose the stamps for our own personal pattern. Then we held the stamp into hot liquid wax and pressed it down onto the cotton cloth. After choosing the colour pigments we liked, we mixed them with hot water and let our cloths soak for about 15 minutes. Then we let them dry in the sun, before washing out the wax in boiling water.

We enjoyed our day getting creative and relaxing. We also took the chance to learn more about Anthony and his project. His project aims

at giving young people the chance to learn different professions for free, before they return to their homes, start working independently in their own shops and then take in new students themselves in return.

## 26<sup>th</sup> July - Thank you ELEPHANTILY!

This was the day, that our group had been looking forward to a long time. A visit to Mole, a national park in the north of Ghana was on the program. On trucks we made our way through the national park looking for all kinds of different animals. Although we were warned that during the raining season a lot of the animals were difficult to locate, we were in incredible luck. After driving around for a long while, we saw big footprints on the ground. And after disembarking





the trucks and a footwalk through high grasses and bushes, we finally got to see them: elephants. Huge and majestic, they were hidden behind green plants and trees and eating peacefully. We were just around five metres away from them. It was incredibly impressive and beautiful.



After spotting many other animals on the tour through the park, we also had the chance to watch a small family of elephants bathe in the lake. Our group agreed, this had to be one of the most memorable days in Ghana.



### 28<sup>th</sup> July – About Universities and Mosques... !

The original plan for this day was to visit a Crocodile pond somewhere near to the border to Burkina Faso. But as we all were not that enthusiastic to drive one way for around 6hours and come back the same day in our “beloved” Minibus, we decided to stay in Tamale for the day and instead visit the local University and a mosque. Stephen took us to visit his old Campus, the Nyankpala Campus which was established 1992 and is seen as the “Mothercampus” . The system itself is quite similar to our University system in Austria, the only difference is that university isn’t free in Ghana, you pay around 1.000 cedi per





For the afternoon Salifu organized a tour through the biggest Mosque in Tamale, which was really great as many of us had never seen one from the inside before. The Imam was a really inspiring man and he encouraged us to ask any question we had about Islam or the Mosque. To one of our questions concerning the separation of women and men in the Mosque, he explained that they "need" to have their own place, so that the male worshippers don't get distracted while praying, because for some praying parts you have to be on your knees and take on certain positions. Even though it's really a different experience to meet the Imam and to listen to his values and beliefs about Islam.



A group of graduates in maroon and white regalia stand behind a long wooden table in a church. A woman in a blue patterned dress is speaking at a podium in the foreground. The church interior features arched doorways and a high ceiling with lights.

Sunday morning, 10 o'clock the bells sounded at Salifu's parish. We joined him and his family for the Sunday service. Immediately when we entered and saw all the people in their bright and colourful dresses, we felt welcomed and at home. The rhythmic music sung by two gospel choirs filled the church with life. While the structure of the mass was similar to our masses in Austria, there still were a lot of differences. For the presentation of gifts, colorfully dressed women and men in suits lay down special gifts like water, food, batteries,







toilet paper, pet food and much more in front of the altar. Very funny ☺ And while in Austria everyone is sitting in place and waiting for the offertory bag, in Ghana the offertory is done with a lot of movement and joy. Two big collection bowls are placed in front of the first rows. Then, row by row the people went there singing and dancing, putting some money inside and then returned- still dancing- to their seats. At the end of the mass our group and all the other people, who were there in the parish for the very first time were invited to come out in front of everybody and present themselves. We all were heartily welcomed by the community.

### **30<sup>th</sup> July to 3<sup>rd</sup> August – We immerse into the village!**

Our last week in Ghana was devoted to our village immersion. Two by two, we moved to different villages around Tamale, where we were able to live with the village community for a couple of days. They showed us their way of living, taking us to their farms, making Shea-Butter with us or in case of the kids, playing with us all day long. As we all stayed in different villages, our experiences were vastly different. But we can agree on something after the time spent there: The village immersion definitely was the highlight of our trip. Getting to know a completely different lifestyle, learning so much from the people and having the most interesting discussions with them was worth everything.



After the village immersion, we spent the remaining days travelling back to Accra, making a lot of pit-stops on the way and visiting different sights on the road.

All in all, we can honestly say that this one month in Ghana was an intense, memorable, impressive, amazing, thought-provoking and fun experience. We would like to say thank you to our wonderful hosts in Ghana: Salifu and Mary, Evelyn, Louisa and Titi, as well as Stephan. They were a key element in making our journey that awesome.

Also, we would like to thank the team of DKA for the great preparation and for always being there when needed.

Naawuni pahim' ti gom!

