INTRODUCTION

We extend warm welcome to all our partners, collaborators and patrons and to all who read this newsletter for useful news about the Catholic Church in Ghana and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference. This is the fifth edition of C2Agenda4Change newsletter and we are happy to welcome you to this present edition.

We are grateful to God that we have the opportunity once again to share news about the happenings at the National Catholic Secretariat from February 2014 till date. We appreciate the efforts of the Department of Human Development (DHUD) through which we have this platform to communicate once more with all our cherished readers.

ACTIVITIES OF THE GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE (GCBC)

In the last four months, GCBC has carried out the following events, among others:

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As a Catholic Development Organization, we are quite familiar with the story of the 'Multiplication of Loaves' also sometimes called the 'Feeding of the Multitude' by Jesus as recorded in all the New Testament Gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. In this story, Jesus makes use of the very limited and inadequate resources available, some loaves and fish, to feed multitudes of people while ensuring the active cooperation and participation of all the beneficiaries. Even the unintended outcomes (the left-over food) were also gathered so that nothing is wasted!

Our recollection of the story in this context is very apt as it exemplifies our experience of Star-Ghana capacity building support to the Department of Human Development (DHD) of the National Catholic Secretariat in many respects. We want to focus on the capacity building support that facilitated our organizational self-assessment (OSA) in 2012, as part of the Education Grant Partners’ sustainability initiative. Star-Ghana provided us the OSA tool and follow up mentoring support to apply it by ourselves at the national level structure. It created an opportunity for our management team to have internal reflection of our organizational model, purpose, strengths and weaknesses. The Department of Human Development (DHD) is a recent creation of the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference (GCBC) from a major organizational restructuring exercise in 2010 that brought together hitherto independent sectors like Health, Education, Socio-economic and Governance under one management structure. It was thus the first time OSA was applied to the Department-wide structure. The immediate outcome of the OSA exercise was the development of a step-change plan to address the critical gaps identified. There is so much to share on the incremental shifts that occurred from implementing the plan with Star-Ghana's sustainability window grant. In this article, we want to instead share the multiplier effect of this capacity building support.

First, the Department of Human Development used the knowledge gained from the OSA tool to apply it to all our 20 Diocesan Development Offices (DDOs) which are decentralized units. It was a useful learning experience for the Diocesan Development Coordinators. It also revealed the capacity gaps and strengths of the DDOs to implement the Medium Term Programme Critical Pathways: 2012 – 2016 of the Department of Human Development. We used the results to make a compelling case for support to Misereor – a Catholic Funding Agency in Germany. By 2013, Misereor had granted Euro55, 600 to address the capacity gaps of the DDOs. With this support, 18 out of the 20 DDOs have developed their respective step-change plans by April, 2014 to be implemented over a two-year period. The Department of Human Development has contracted an external Mentor and Quality Assurer to accompany the DDOs in their organizational change agenda.
Second, the DUID had the opportunity to share our approach and experience at the Regional meeting of Catholic Development Organizations which is called CARITAS AFRICA in Nairobi last year. This was subsequently published in the Regional Newsletter and internet learning portal (Baobab) as best practice.

Third, our global parent organization CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS has invited our Executive Secretary this year to serve on their Institutional Development and Capacity Support (IDCS) Technical Working Group. This is meant to further share our experience with other CARITAS Member organizations.

Fourth, the Department is now collaborating with the Catholic Relief Service (CRS) Ghana Office to address one of the key areas of weakness identified from the first OSA exercise. This relates to Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) policy and programme development. The Department-wide gender audit exercise has been completed by the CRS Technical Support Team and the report is expected soon. The Gender and Social Inclusion audit is expected to increase the impact ranification from what can now be described as a strategic Capacity Building Support initiative from Star-Ghana.
a. May 2014 Budget Session

In May each year, the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference meets in a Plenary Session in Accra to receive reports from the various Departments of the Secretariat and also from Commissions and Chaplaincies (Universities, Armed Forces, Police) as well as individuals and groups who may be invited to meet the Conference. This year’s Budget Session took place from May 5 to 9, 2014, and was attended by all 18 active bishops, and the Emeritus Archbishop Thomas Mensah of Kumasi Archdiocese.

One of the highlights of the Budget Session was a day’s working session with the Heads of Member-Churches of the Christian Council of Ghana. The meeting, which took place in St. James Catholic Church, Osu, discussed important national issues such as Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHIAG) Constitution, National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), Education Partnership Agreement with Government, Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), among others. The Committee of Cooperation of the Joint Meeting will discuss the issues further and implement the decisions that were agreed upon at the meeting.

b. Education Partnership Agreement Meeting

On June 24, 2014, the Secretariat paid host to a meeting of representatives of the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference, the Christian Council of Ghana, the Anglican Communion, the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, the Office of the National Chief Imam as well as heads of the Police and Armed Forces Education Units. The meeting discussed a newly-drafted Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Education Partnership Agreement between Faith Based Organisations and Government and approved the draft to be submitted to the owners of public mission schools for approval and submission to the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ghana Education Service (GES) for signing.

When finally signed, the document will govern the relationship between Government and Faith-Based Organisations in the management of public schools established by the latter and enhance quality education service delivery in Ghana.

c. GCBC Meeting with Catholic MPs

A six-member delegation of the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference met 13 Catholic MPs in Parliament House on July 23, 2014. The meeting, which was preceded by the celebration of the Mass, was also attended by some staff of the National Catholic Secretariat and Catholic Parliamentary staff. It discussed issues such as the Constitution Review process, NHIS, the threat posed by Ebola disease, Corruption in Ghana, Retreat and Masses for MPs, the Plant Breeders Bill (PBB) and GMOs, among others. The next meeting between the Bishops’ Conference and the Catholic MPs is scheduled for November, 2014.

d. First Country Forum of Catholic Development Organisations

The first-ever Country Forum of all Catholic Development organizations took place at the Secretariat from June 26 to 27, 2014. It brought together representatives of Caritas-Africa, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Mission, Misereor, Marshallian Relief and Development Services (MAREDES), Diocesan Development Officers (DDOs) and staff of NCS-DHID, to discuss issues of development. The Forum,
under the theme, "Enhancing Catholic Organisations Effectiveness - Focus on Ethics and Minimum Standards", discussed topics such as Migration, Climate Change and Food Security, Financial Management, among others. At the end of the two-day Forum, participants commended the co-organisers, namely, NCS, CRS and MAREDES, for a good job done, pledging to support the Forum to become an annual event.

2. Ordination of Bishop-elect for Sekondi-Takoradi Diocese

Very Rev. Msgr. John Bonaventure Kwofie, CSSp will be ordained on 13th September 2014, at the Star of the Sea Cathedral in Takoradi.

3. Ad Limina Visit to Rome

All the Bishops of Ghana will pay an Ad Limina visit to the Holy See, from September 21 to 25, this year. The visit will afford the bishops the opportunity to renew their allegiance to the Pope (and the Church), to present reports on the state of their dioceses (Quinquennial Report) and visit the various dicasteries. The last Ad Limina of the bishops was in 2006.

4. Synod on the Family, Rome 2014

In October this year, there will be Synod in Rome on "The Pastoral Challenges of the Family." The African version took place in Cotonou, Benin, from 14 to 17 June, 2014. It was attended by over 50 participants, including six bishops.

UPCOMING EVENTS

In the next four months, the following events have been planned:

1. 2014 Second National Pastoral Congress, Sunyani

The Congress will take place in Sunyani, from August 5 to 11, 2014, under the theme, "The New Evangelisation for the Transmission of the Christian Faith in Ghana in the Light of Africae Minus". It will be attended by 250 delegates made up of bishops, priests, religious and laity as well as experts. The outcomes of the Congress will be put together as ACTS of the Congress and implemented in all dioceses and archdioceses.

All Catholics are encouraged to pray for the success of the Congress, and contribute to the Congress fund.

By Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Abbey-Quaye
Assistant Secretary General - NCS
Since the beginning of 2014, the Department of Human Development of the National Catholic Secretariat with funding from Misericord have been supporting the Development Offices of twenty (20) Dioceses of Ghana on Change Management and developing Diocesan Step Change Plans.

Given the enormity of Change Management issues, the services of an experienced Management Consultant was engaged from Gh Consulting Ltd in the person of Sir Knight Eddie Prah to facilitate and accompany the Diocesan Development Officers through this challenging yet exciting journey.

The Diocesan Development Officers have had quite a number of training programmes over the past several years. But, perhaps, this is the first time that there is such a participatory training and an organized follow up to the training to ensure that the goal of the step change plans which were conceived from the training is achieved. Accordingly, the end of the training on Change Management for DDOs at Wa was not to be the end; rather, it was the foundational step of the march towards the goal of enhancing the human development apostolate of dioceses in line with the Department of Human Development's medium term programme Critical Pathways 2012 to 2015.

The Change Management training in Wa ended with the Diocesan Development Officers coming up with three key objectives for their respective dioceses. They were also expected to share the objectives and strategies with key actors in their Dioceses to promote a buy-in of the objectives and strategies. These plans have become the basis of a follow-up mentoring support for each Diocesan Development Office by the Department of Human Development for the period 2014-2015.

In line with the follow-up mentoring, all the Diocesan Development Offices of the Tamale Province (except Navrongo-Bolgatanga who was unavoidably absent) met in an interactive meeting facilitated by the Consultant with support from Mr. Samuel Zan Akologo, Mr. David Issaka, and Msgr. Peter Huletey – as Internal Peer Mentors.

A reporting template was used to facilitate the follow up mentoring process based on the following key issues, namely: Ownership of Objectives set from the Wa training, Crocodiles; that is Obstacles/Challenges envisaged or encountered, Strategies for achieving the set objectives and monitoring as well as tracking progress of the step-change objectives. Using this template designed by the Consultant as a guide, all the DDOs shared what they have done so far in connection with the objectives and strategies set out from the Wa training.

The follow up mentoring used round-table discussions approach and brainstormed frankly and meticulously on the presentation of each diocese on their step change plan. There was a lot to share, learn and fine tune. The cross fertilization of ideas was insightful, refreshing
and reassuring. What is refreshing and worth sharing is that virtually all the dioceses have taken ownership of the objectives that have been set for themselves. Together the Dioceses are supporting one another in managing the change for a sustainable Dioecesan development agenda. The template also uses a 'maturity model' to track progress being made towards realizing the step-change plans. The first application of this model provides baseline data as reference point to monitor any incremental changes occurring with implementation. We look forward to a more productive and engaging follow up mentoring for the outstanding Dioceses as they seek to consolidate the foundations laid at Wa.

By: Mgr. Peter Huletey.
D.D.O, Keta - Akatsi Dioecese
The Catholic Church in Ghana in collaboration with her development partners is set to organise the Annual Country Forum (ACF) of Catholic Development Organisations in the country to implement a common operational standards to enhance development.

The first ACF, slated for Thursday June 26, 2014 in Accra and subsequent ones in future will be organised around specific themes annually to create platforms for coordinated effort for the promotion of the common good in the country and in Africa at large.

The forum is co-organised by the Department of Human Development at the National Catholic Secretariat (NCS), the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Ghana and the Marshallian Relief and Development Services (MAREDES), a Catholic Knights and Ladies national non-governmental organisation.

According to organisers the forum will also leverage other opportunities for knowledge sharing, resource mobilisation, common strategy development and general networking among local and external Catholic Development Agencies for effective development cooperation. Organisers are hopeful that the meeting would facilitate learning and sharing which is anticipated to help reduce duplication of work and development intervention efforts by the various Catholic development organisations in the country and help make more effective moves in serving the common good.

Expectations are that the ACF should help manifest local ownership of development efforts in the country, which experts say is the way to encourage a long-term sustainable growth and development that would help reduce poverty in among Ghanaians.

The themes for 2014 event is ‘Enhancing Catholic Organizations’ Effectiveness for Public Policy Engagement – Focus on Ethics and Minimum Standards’, while that for the 2015 forum is ‘Responding to Challenges and Opportunities for the new post-2015 Development Agenda – Role of Catholic Organizations’.
The Catholic Church in Ghana has over the years promoted human development as part of its pastoral and evangelisation mission. At the national level, the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference (GCBC) has championed development efforts while the Local Ordinaries’ efforts in the Arch/Diocesan were felt at the local level, mostly in the areas of education, health, governance and socio-cultural and economic lives of the people.

With the restructuring of the National Catholic Secretariat by the Bishops’ Conference, a new Department of Human Development (DHD) has been established to coordinate all human development sectors: including Health, Education, Socio-economic development and Governance, Justice and Peace at the national level.

The DHD is practically and effectively the CARITAS-Ghana office with the Diocesan Development Offices (DDOs) as the decentralized units of the Department. This is to enable the Church effectively coordinate development interventions at the national and local level undertaken in partnership with other overseas partners— including the CARITAS ORGANISATIONS from Western Europe and the USA.

Other notable organisations are CRS, Cordaid, Misercor, CAFOD, Trocaire and Mano Unidas.

DEPSOCOM PRESS FEATURE
By: Kwesi Yirenkyi Boateng and Robert Dela Mawuenyegah
The Diocesan Development Office of the Catholic Diocese of Damongo has embarked on a pilot monitoring on the implementation of the Public Health Act (Act 851, 2012) in three Districts (Bole, Sawla-Tuna-Kalba and West Gonja) in the Damongo Diocese under the “Agenda for the Right to Health Campaign”. This is a project which is being implemented by the Department of Human Development in partnership with Five Dioceses in the three Regions of Northern Ghana with funding support from STAR Ghana. The pilot project is geared towards educating citizens on the Public Health Act (Act 851, 2012) and monitors the implementation of the Act at the District level. The Public Health Monitoring Teams (PIIMT) which is composed of various citizens groups comprising of: women groups, youth groups, persons with disabilities, traditional authorities, etc, has held meetings with District Chief Executives, District Coordinating Directors, and some officials of the Assemblies to assess the level of implementation of the Act and develop a road map for the complete implementation of the Act at the District level.

The Public Health Monitoring Team sensitized all Assemblies during the General Meeting of the Bole District Assembly. Some Assemblies extended an invitation to the Diocesan Monitoring Team to visit their localities to speak to the people on the Act. The sensitization meeting made it possible for the Assembly men to come to the realization that a “Healthy People” means a “Healthy District” and concluded that Public Health is as important as the Clinical services since it cuts down on health budgets and promotes development. The Public education on the Public Health Act is embraced by all citizens in the pilot districts and therefore there is the need for joint efforts of all stakeholders to expand the work of the monitoring teams to cover all districts within the jurisdiction of the Diocese. The various Districts Assemblies under the pilot project have pledged to help propagate information on the Public Health Act.

Fr. Martin Kuusangnayir addressing the Assemblymen in Bole

The District Monitoring Teams is working keenly to disseminate Public Health information. In one instance the public health monitoring team who were on a sensitization mission seized the opportunity to sensitise the public on the Rhola Virus.
HOW COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS IS USED IN DISSEMINATING PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION.

The Monitoring of the Implementation of the Public Health Act is driven by public education on community radio stations by the monitoring teams. So far, radio discussions on Peace and Development Radio (PAD 95.1 FM) in Damongo and Yagbon Radio (98.8 FM) in Bole all in the Damongo Diocese have been held. On both stations panel discussions were held to educate the public on the provisions of the Public Health Act after which the phone lines are activated to solicit feedback and comments from listeners. In the Damongo District, the discussions were held in 8 major local languages. The languages included Gonja, Dagaare, Grunne, Tamplema, Hanga, Brifor, Vagla and Moo.

KEY OUTCOMES OF OUR WORK

- There is a closer bond between the District Assemblies and the Diocesan Public Health Monitoring Teams. This is a positive development as it can lead to the sharing of ideas for development purposes.

- The work of the Public Health Monitoring Teams has reawakened various public health professionals on their duties. The Patients Charter is drawing lots of interest by patients and citizens in general.

By Rev. Fr. Martin Kuusangnayir
Development Coordinator, Damongo Diocese
UPCOMING EVENTS

June

1. Gender Audit of National Catholic Secretariat – 23rd
3. Regional Peer learning for Managers of Education in Brong Ahafo Region, Goaso – 26th

July

1. Regional Peer Learning for Managers of Education
   - Upper East Region, Bolgatanga - 3rd
   - Upper West Region, Wa - 16th
   - Brong Ahafo, Techiman – 22nd
   - Volta Region, Jasikan - 23rd

August

1. Second National Pastoral Congress in Sunyani – 5th to 11th
2. GMF Forum on using M&E to fight corruption – 12th
3. Dialogue Forum “Global common Good” in Cape Town, South Africa – 11th to 14th
4. Sustainability Core Team meeting – 20th
5. Dialogue meeting on Constitution Review Process - 21st

September

1. National Catholic Secretariat Budget Review meeting – 9th
2. Department of Human Development Senior Management Team (SMT) meeting – 10th
3. Workshop to review Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference solidarity fund guidelines and policy – 11th
4. Follow up mentoring support for Diocesan Development Officers in the Kumasi province – 2nd and 3rd
Every State has the primary duty to protect its own population from grave and sustained violations of human rights, as well as from the consequences of humanitarian crises, whether natural or man-made.

Pope Benedict XVI

I would say it simply: No one can give that which he doesn't personally possess, which means we cannot transmit the Holy Spirit in an effective way, render the Spirit perceptible, if we ourselves aren't close to the Spirit.

Pope Benedict XVI

Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought.

Pope John Paul II

I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars. You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else.

Pope Francis
Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies.

*Mother Teresa*

Peace begins with a smile.

*Mother Teresa*

Father, We beg you, touch our lives and the lives of our leaders and people so that we may all realize the evil of bribery and corruption, and work hard to eliminate it. Make us cherish, fearless, honesty and integrity, transparency, probity and accountability in our dealings with each other.

*Extract from GCBC prayer for strength against bribery and corruption*

On corruption to Members of Parliament

As the Church’s ‘Ambassadors’ in the political sphere, we expect you to make the unique difference by not allowing yourselves to be compromised in this growing canker that is spurred on by the sin of greed and graft.

*Most Rev Joseph Osei-Bonsu (President GCBC and Bishop of Konongo-Mampong Diocese) – In his exultation to Catholic Members of Parliament*
READER'S FEEDBACK

We welcome your feedback on this issue of C2 AGENDA4CHANGE NEWSLETTER

Please send your ideas, suggestions and criticisms to:
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