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GHANA



A JOURNEY FOR KNOWLEDGE

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Member of Parliament



January 2011

GHANA – A JOURNEY FOR KNOWLEDGE

By Peter Goldring

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INDEX

- Executive Summary
- Forward
- Background
- Canadian High Commission
- Governance
- Village Visit
- Crop Storage
- Village Tobacco Grower Entrepreneur Style
- Northern Ghana – Tamale City Hall
- Bilchinsi
- Tamale Livestock Distribution Centre
- Tamale Handicap Centre
- Manufacturing – Tamale Factory
- Helping Farmers Masara Style
- Foreign Land Acquisition in Africa
- The Animal Health and Production College – Pong Tamale
- Community Wells
- Water Closet – Sanitary Toilets
- Helping Villagers – Good Intentions, Poor Results
- Helping Road Infrastructure – China in Ghana
- Housing Aid – Korea in Ghana
- Food Aid – Japan in Ghana
- Western Aid Agencies – CIDA, DFAIT, USAID
- Engineers Without Borders – James Haga
- Business Opportunities
- Military Base - Accra
- Failure Report
- Transparency
- Recommendations
- Conclusion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Members of Parliament Peter Goldring and Dave Van Kesteren travelled to Ghana for eight days with Engineers Without Borders (EWB) to learn foreign aid best practices.
- Met with Canadian government officials in the capital, Accra, to discuss Canadian history in Ghana and the present state of CIDA projects compared to how Britain's DFID and USAID conduct affairs.
- Met with Ghanaian government officials to discuss the country's progress and concerns.
- Traveled to Tamale region of Northern Ghana to examine EWB and CIDA projects. Met with local public and private officials.
- Visited small villages and saw difference between small subsistence farming and advantages of large-scale land collectivization.
- Examples of waste: improper storage leading to 40% crop loss; an expensive "handicapped centre" when the need is for clean water and sanitation; drinking water tanks standing empty as people cannot afford the cost of the tanker trucks to fill them.
- Examples of success: Collectivized large-scale farming increasing crop yields and sustaining families; community wells; small tobacco farms.
- Concerns: Aid provided by China, Korea, Japan and others.
- Opportunities: Veterinary college poultry production; small manufacturing plants; textiles

FORWARD:

From January 22-29, 2011 I had the opportunity to travel to Ghana, West Africa, on a fact-finding mission with Engineers Without Borders (EWB) Canada. The trip was to provide insight into the opportunities for Canada in Ghana, which is already our largest bilateral partner in Africa. During that time I met with both Canadian and Ghanaian government officials, entrepreneurs, development experts, representatives of non-governmental organizations and EWB staff.

BACKGROUND:

As Edmonton East Member of Parliament and a member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, I was invited to take part in a trip to Ghana with James Haga of Engineers Without Borders. The intention was to examine a wide variety of aid and development projects and learn some best practices which could then be utilized in the projected study and visit by the Committee to Haiti that I have called for by way of a motion accepted by the Foreign Affairs Committee. Also accompanying me on the trip was Dave Van Kesteren, Member of Parliament for Chatham-Kent-Essex.

I led a Parliamentary delegation to Haiti and reported on the situation there in 2006. On that visit I was disturbed by the apparent lack of progress in improving the conditions for the people of Haiti despite large amounts of foreign aid over a considerable period of time – more than 10 years. I wrote an extensive report to our Minister of Foreign Affairs and entered a motion to the Foreign Affairs Committee calling for a study of conditions in Haiti at that time. This was done and the Committee report on Haiti was presented in Parliament in December 2006. I requested this repeat upcoming study by way of a motion that I presented to the Foreign Affairs Committee as a necessary follow-up. With the January 2010 disastrous earthquake in Haiti, the urgency to review Canada's aid progress is much greater.

An eight day visit cannot provide a complete analysis of current foreign aid situations in Ghana. However I was able to visit projects and efforts in various locations: in the capital, Accra, the northern region's main civic centre of Tamale but mostly in the rural areas around Tamale. This report is my impressions.

CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSION:

We began our visit in the capital city, Accra, where we met with Her Excellency Trudy Kernighan, High Commissioner of Canada to Ghana and Togo. She and her staff gave a warm welcome and provided a briefing on relations between Canada and Ghana with a

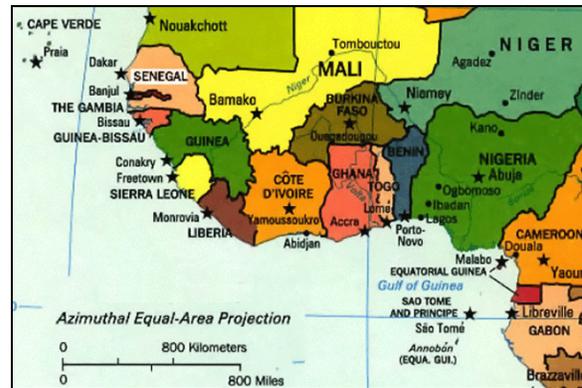


focus on the work being done by CIDA, both the challenges and the triumphs as well as discussing opportunities for investment.

We were told of the more than 50-year relationship between Canada and Ghana, which are both Commonwealth countries. Ghana was the first African country to receive Canadian aid and currently our fourth-largest development partner. CIDA's bilateral program spending in Ghana has more than doubled since 2004, from \$41 million to \$98 million and is expected to remain around the \$100 million mark.

All Canadian development assistance is grant aid, with projects including \$3 million to support transparent elections in 2008, to \$36 million over three years to the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative.

Canadian businesses have invested more than \$1 billion in Ghana to date, primarily in the mining sector. Ghana is Canada's third-largest market in sub-Saharan Africa.



GOVERNANCE:

In order for any aid to be truly effective there must be stable government that expresses the will of and has the trust of the population. As a former British colony, which became independent in 1957, Ghana has an embraced parliamentary tradition. Past governance problems appear to have been mostly resolved and after a period of military rule the country returned to parliamentary democracy in 1992.

While the Ghanaian government is recognized for its effective conduct of affairs, I was given the impression that Members of the Ghanaian Parliament, particularly from the northern regions, are not sufficiently engaged in the all-important earliest stages of government policy development for issues pertaining to their constituent regions, which can lead to somewhat less support for their region by newly elected central government administrations as they initiate new government policy.

While the electoral representation is of a good order, the feeling was that policy development could be improved by community consultation with the Member of Parliament or candidate for Parliament to then take to his party for future government initiation policy his constituents deemed desirable, as opposed to a top-down legislated policy after the election approach.

The Canadian Parliamentary Centre has worked in Ghana to improve central governance issues such as public accountability; however the people I spoke with were not aware of this Canadian group's work on modeling of consultation between Members of Parliament and the community for their advancing in needs to be carried forward by

candidates or elected members to hopefully become party policy and government policy if elected by majority. It is essential that party policy be reflective of community needs and wishes in balance with all other regions.

VILLAGE VISIT:

Our group had the opportunity to visit a typical Ghanaian farming village, which in many ways is unchanged from the rural life of centuries past. I was struck by the pride and community respect that the villagers and elders exhibited. The village compound area was spotless and they had ample storage of crops and admirably exhibited what I believed to be a completed social society benefiting and existing on broad range of rural farm activities.



When given the opportunity to address the village elders, I told them that I wanted their help, to learn from them, from their community elders assembled, knowledge of their agricultural successes and their obvious societal success, to determine how they could in turn could help us in our work to help the people of Haiti to build their society and communities so that they too are better able to feed their people.

The 15 village elders assembled immediately buzzed and excitedly talked together and then through the headman to the interpreter in a serious tone. I thought I must have made a faux pas somehow. The interpreter said no! The headman and the elders had never before been asked for their help and were extremely appreciative of the gesture. They wanted me to know that of course they would help in any way possible to help us to help the people of Haiti. The villagers then, over the next three hours, showed us into every corner and faction of the village and crop areas with great pride of their accomplishments.



We were shown a variety of crops, including melons, maize and yams. The storage facility for yams was covered by branches intended to protect it from animals and somewhat from the elements. It seemed to me that two empty, unused, 500 gallon plus poly water tanks located nearby could be converted to provide better wet weather crop

protection and storage than the method they presently use. More on the water tanks later under “Good Intentions, Poor Results.”

Upon departure from this village, Mr. Van Kesteren, Mr. Haga, the driver/interpreter and I were each presented with a large yam as a gift. When I thanked them profusely for their heartfelt gesture, I explained we could not take agricultural products on the plane home. They asked us then instead to pass the yams on to others. They insisted that we take with us this gesture of their hospitality and friendship. We gave the 20-30 pound of yams to our driver/interpreter.

CROP STORAGE:

One of the frustrations indicated by some of past efforts has been the inflexibility of some well-intended aid groups. Proper storage is essential to maximizing crop delivery to markets and for domestic use. The rainy season in particular, can destroy up to 40% of crops such as yams, reportedly because of poor storage conditions.

For example, it was reported that one group, USAID, offered to provide \$50,000 to build small, uncovered storage platforms - but would not help build a proper covered warehouse that was double the square footage of the platform but had a \$240,000 cost. Because of the climate, proper, covered, dry warehouses are essential and money spent on uncovered platforms susceptible to weather (even if covered with a tarpaulin) does not meet the need, and is reported as the most significant reason for the wasteful crop storage losses reported. For example, 40% of the yam crop is lost through spoilage. Also because of lack of proper dry storage, maize and other dry crops cannot be collected and kept to maximize market price fluctuations.



VILLAGE TOBACCO GROWER ENTEPRENEUR STYLE:

While the elders were showing us their village I went over to a small crop that I did not immediately recognize, asked, and was told it was tobacco. Then I recognized the crop as most plant leaves were stripped but the flowers for seed production for future crops remained. Asking more, I was shown by the owner/farmer his crop and processing facilities, including a smaller nursery area for starting plants and a processing area where leaves were soaked and allowed to begin to cure. The leaves then were beaten into a heavy paste and formed into bricks approximately 30 cm by 15 cm by 15 cm, which were then left to finish curing in the shade for months.



Absolutely nowhere was this activity previously mentioned as an important farming community process, perhaps because of our culture's negative connotation of all things tobacco. I noted that no-one in the village smoked tobacco and did not even have the impression that the village people chewed tobacco. While to some tobacco may be considered a questionable product, there remains a market for it.



This small farmer had on hand 16 bricks of tobacco, with a market value of approximately \$100 each. Assuming that to be one year's crop production, although it may be less, that would be the equivalent of \$1600 sitting in a corner of a small village. Given that in Ghana the minimum wage is equivalent to \$2 per day, this \$1,600 processed crop is an amazingly profitable effort from a plot of land less than 1/20th of an acre. It effectively pays double minimum wage, a family sustaining wage for 800 working days, or enough to sustain three families adequately for a year.

This farmer proudly demonstrated all aspects of his enterprise. Somehow this substantial income-generating effort has not hit the information books of statisticians in their overall economic assessment of rural village communities, perhaps because of political correctness concerns about tobacco as a crop.

NORTHERN GHANA - TAMALE CITY HALL:

On January 28, 2011 our group met with the Metropolitan Chief Executive (Mayor), the Honourable Harruna Friday, who is a federal government political appointee and with his directors. Discussing other development needs, he said that his area, 10% of northern Ghana, suffers from the legacy of colonialism, which left it with poor infrastructure and the need for more roads to allow rural farms access for marketing crops and livestock.

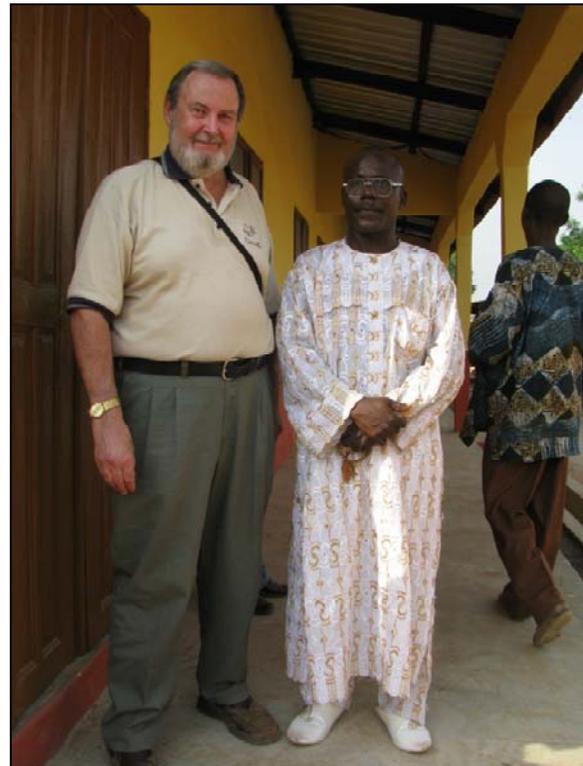


Once again, the reception and conduct of affairs was more than cordial. On completion of meetings the Metropolitan Chief Executive and all his directors presented David, James and me with a very impressive, colourful and detailed Ghanaian smock. I intend to wear mine for some future meeting with the African-Canadian community in Edmonton

When I returned to Canada I received an email message from Al-Hassan Ibrahim, Metropolitan Planning Officer of the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly. "I enjoyed your brief stay and the movement we did together to inspect development projects being executed by the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly," he wrote. "I hope that you will find some time again to visit Ghana and particularly Tamale."

BILCHINSI:

Bilchinsi is a Dagbani word (the language spoken by the Dagomba people of the region) which the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly believes can be used to promote peace and security. The word literally means a situation where a person upholds high virtues. Far from being corruptible he is self-respecting and upright in all dealings with society.



The Metropolitan Chief Executive (Mayor), the Honourable Harruna Friday has admirably committed his administration to this belief. He launched the concept of "Bilchinsi" in 2009 with an advisory council and task force. It has met with considerable favourable reception throughout the region.

This sentiment was certainly evident when our group visited remote villages, and talked with people on all levels of society. The people of Ghana have a special unique character. Of the many countries I have visited they stand out, exuding friendship and a sense of comfort in my own personal security.

The majority culture (90%) of the Tamale metropolis is ethnically the Dagombas people, who still practice their deeply enshrined customs and beliefs, with numerous traditions and festivals.

They are also predominantly Muslim, although the metropolis also has a fairly large following of the various Christian denominations.

Large family size is also a major characteristic feature of a typical Dagomba home. In Dagomba culture having several wives and many children is viewed as placing a person in a higher social class.

TAMALE LIVESTOCK DISTRIBUTION CENTRE:

Our group was told earlier of this project and then had a chance to visit the livestock distribution centre which is designed to collect livestock animals for the region. As with many projects in Ghana, some drag on for years. While the pens, fences and structures are now complete, the facility still is not in use because the road to it is not completed. Without basic, all-weather roads commerce stagnates.

TAMALE HANDICAP CENTRE:

One other project visited was the meeting and resource art centre under construction on the city's edge with \$235,000 funding. The question is how severely physically handicapped persons, many, who were very visible with terrible handicaps begging on the streets in the inner city, would ever be able to access this facility - unless specialized, expensive transportation is also arranged. That would mean that the poorest, the most desperately needy of the handicapped population are unlikely to be able to access this facility.

In the order of priorities, it was mentioned that perhaps food, basic sanitation and clean water might just rank higher than a social welfare handicap art and resource centre!

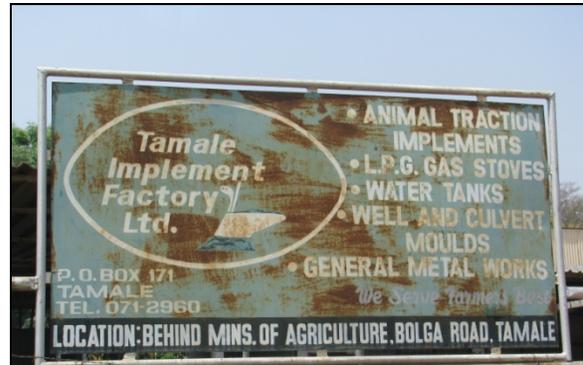
MANUFACTURING – TAMALE FACTORY:

A visit was made to a Tamale factory that manufactures animal-drawn and engine powered equipment affordable to associations of farmers. Crop fields, such as for maize, are cultivated by animal-drawn plows then harvested and threshed by hand if there is no farmers' collective. Individual farmers with small plots simply cannot afford to rent machinery, nor can they afford the fertilizer to increase crop yield.

The Tamale Implement Factory Ltd. manufactures animal-drawn traction implements, LPG gas stoves, water tanks, well and culvert moulds and also provides general metal work.

Their equipment and machinery was mostly basic manual machines, brakes, shears, punch press welding and cutting apparatus, but they put this all together to manufacture machinery, employ people and make a profit.

Their most successful machine is an animal-drawn small engine powered sheller harvester that separates the maize seed from the corn cob cores, making it clean and ready for bagging. They have produced some 100 units for domestic use and export, but are seeking assistance to expand nationally and for export. While the machine they have designed is very effective functionally and cost-wise, they wish to access the technology to improve the appearance and refinement of the finish of their products to attract greater foreign sales. While at the present time they have a positive cash flow and are employing 30 people in their factory. They have a great product and the capacity to expand.



HELPING FARMERS MASARA STYLE:

One very successful private sector project in particular we observed could seemingly be used as a model and transferred anywhere on earth.

Farmers with small plots of land of one or two acres do not have the ability to be able to afford fertilizers to increase crop yield, or rent machines to harvest crops. That results in low, bare subsistence yields and possibly abject hunger in some regions of the country when the proceeds from this lower yield run out before the next primary crop is harvested, exacerbated further by crop losses due to inadequate storage.

The poor farmers have three choices: Remain in abject poverty, barely sustaining lives, collectivize to share resources and make tremendous income gains or leave for the main city with nothing.

Collectivizing land into much larger parcels of 20-50 acres (or more) allows more efficient production. Basic mechanization for fertilization and harvesting becomes affordable and yields grow dramatically. Collectivizing further, to hundreds and thousands of acres, then allows for affordability of proper all-weather storage facilities, When previously a bare subsistence farmer had trouble feeding his family for the year on the crop yield of less than 1 metric ton (MT) per hectare, the yield, through coordinated efforts, jumps to 2.5-3 MT per hectare and can further rise to 4-5 MT per hectare by use of high yield seed.

One of the most disturbing situations in some areas of Ghana is that there is a shortage of food. This is surprising, because Ghana has huge tracts of arable land suitable to grow more crops than the country could possibly use. Despite years of international aid (possibly a billion dollars from Canada alone) large-scale farm and all-weather road infrastructure development reportedly has been virtually zero, while hunger persists - causing food to be imported.

One private sector company is leading the way where all others would not.



Emmanuel Muange, Managing Director of Masara N'Arziki, explained in detail his company's work effort and great success. With modest start-up funding assistance they created an organization to partner with farmers to give quantity of scale of land management and crop production to their farms collectively and providing quantity of scale, appropriate storage for crops to properly manage and maximize returns from marketplace fluctuations of supply and demand.

In three short years their approach has been so popular that they have 3,100 farms contracting with them. The understanding is that they can partner with the farmers with small acreages, combine acreages for efficiency; provide fertilizer, crop management, harvesting technology and support to markets. With land jointly managed, farmers collectively are able to afford proper fertilizer and mechanical harvesting methodology. This method has successfully increased their yield from an unsustainable, bare family subsistence level of one metric ton per hectare of maize to a remarkable level of 2.5 to 3 metric tons per hectare. They project this to rise to between four and five metric tons using higher yielding hybrid seed in the near future! They have 15,000 acres under partnership from the 3,100 farms (producing 20,000 plus metric tons annually), and plan to have 100,000 or more acres in five years.

They have built several substantial all-weather warehouses for proper storage and are in the process of building more at a site in Tamale that we visited.

Masara is substantiation that, to be truly effective in developing Ghana, cooperation is needed from both the non-profit aid sector and the private sector in a balance of efforts. This is also true throughout the world and even here in Canada. The social non-profit sector cannot do it alone, it takes partnering with the private sector to achieve real results.

In five years the projected 30,000 farmer families will move from bare subsistence farming in dire poverty to become farm businesses creating good family-sustaining incomes. These 30,000 farmer families would also feed 60,000 additional families, approximately 300,000 people other than their own farm families! That is the type of long-term sustainable development initiative that truly will break the cycle of poverty in Ghana. All that is needed to begin is modest development and infrastructure assistance.

While there is great concern for foreign ownership of land for large-scale farming, a collective ownership of the land by the farmers themselves contracted to the private sector business collective management seems to be working. Start-up P3 type modest seed money for collective management groups would greatly enhance development.

On return to Canada I received an email message from Emmanuel Muange saying he was "very grateful and honoured for the visit of very important persons of your calibre. I want to use this opportunity to say that Masara and myself is once again privileged and grateful through James effort and your personal efforts and the Government of Canada and the whole of the Canadian people. Please, just as I said, we are very open for any discussion or opportunities both in Ghana and in Canada. We would gladly welcome

some participation from other institutions that would be very prepared to partner or participate both in cash or in kind in Masara or where Masara can also support some activities of those organizations.

FOREIGN LAND ACQUISITION IN AFRICA:

While China's land acquisitions in Africa have received much attention others such as South Africa, South Korea, India, and several countries from Middle East are currently leasing land in several regions of the continent for food and biofuel export. Some African states are facilitating these acquisitions by offering favourable opportunities to foreign investors.

Foreign land acquisitions can be opportunities for the Canadian private sector in the field of biofuel production. However, Canada must ensure that Canadian companies will support corporate social responsibility efforts in those countries. If economic benefits for local population are not meeting desired outcomes, Canada might be called upon to increase its food assistance programs in Africa and share the humanitarian burden with other international donors.

Foreign land acquisition is a major concern in Ghana. Subsistence agriculture accounts for 36 percent of agricultural GDP and employs 60 percent of the total workforce. National and foreign investors have leased 71.89% of Ghana's 13.6 million hectares of arable land, primarily for the export of biofuel crops. Key investors in the country include Norway and Israel.

It is reported that, in 2009, dozens of farmers were forced to leave their lands when a Norwegian company acquired land through dubious means to cultivate jatropha for export. According to the company, it offered two options to local farmers: stay and cultivate alongside the jatropha crops or take other lands that were offered to them. Officially, there are two types of land ownership in Ghana: customary or traditional land and public land. Land leases are possible and involve permission by the titleholder and the land must return to the community once the deal is complete.

Ghana has national development plans that promote export-based agriculture as an efficient strategic tool to fight poverty and enhance development, especially by modernizing agriculture and expanding farm size.

Foreign land acquisition offers potential investment opportunities for the Canadian private sector, particularly in biofuel crops production. Canada may also have to consider supporting corporate social responsibility efforts to raise awareness of Canadian companies leasing land in less restrictive environments.

Foreign land acquisition could also potentially contribute to high GDP growth for Ghana. This growth may stimulate the development of the country, making its markets attractive to Canadian commercial interests and changing Canadian aid distribution.

Alternatively, if few benefits of foreign land acquisition are transferred to populations, and there are no alternative livelihoods for traditionally agrarian populations, Canada might be expected to share more of the international humanitarian burden. In 2008-2009, Canada provided \$9 million in food aid to Ghana.

THE ANIMAL HEALTH AND PRODUCTION COLLEGE – PONG TAMALE:

Our group visited an agricultural and veterinary training college at Pong-Tamale, some 100 plus kilometres north of Tamale. Dr. E. O. Bempong hosted the group, explaining the work the college is doing, training 177 students to become veterinary technologists. It is a three-year course on a 13.91 square mile campus and has over the years turned out more than 1,500 graduates. The goal is to train middle-level personnel in animal health best practices for the private and public sector, to help increase accessibility of animal health services, and to provide primary veterinary services to livestock keepers.

Dr. Bempong believes that it is desirable to introduce an entrepreneurial program at his college to encourage students to learn about and enter the private sector agribusiness and to augment college income with an income-producing enterprise to augment limited ongoing support from government. He has developed a poultry project outline that requires start-up funds of about \$10,000 Canadian, with projected return of \$90,000 Canadian.

The college has three egg hatching units that would be fully operational, if the sensory controls were repaired. The parts needed to repair these expensive units are relatively miniscule. These units have a 20,000 egg capacity. What is needed is a technician, a tool chest with relays, and money to buy the first eggs from local farmers to start the project, which would yield 20,000 chicks



hatching at \$1 Canadian each many times a year.

It would make sense that on an agricultural veterinary training campus there would be a working poultry production mechanism for teaching that in turn could supply farms in the region with starter chicks. The college would earn badly needed income for self-sufficiency from government grants and students would learn the intricacies of the poultry hatching industry.



Ghana needs to upgrade its farm technology, including livestock rearing practices, coupled with improvements to herd stock by genetics and embryonic research and implementation. A veterinary technologist college, strategically placed in the northern savannah region with its primary livestock production, would be a valued key to the future success of the area livestock industry. A one-time public/private investment would greatly assist the development of this all-important resource to provide sustainability for the college.

Upon my return to Canada, Dr. Eric Obeng Bempong sent this in an email: "I really enjoyed the discussions and hope you will communicate to other Canadian Parliamentarians and philanthropists to come to our aid to support our quest to establish a poultry farm....hope to see you one day back in Ghana to witness the outcome of our dream through your assistance."



COMMUNITY WELLS:

We visited several community wells which were shallow concrete enclosed with the remnants of mechanisms for lifting water that failed years ago. Some villages are located great distances from wells, necessitating the carrying of water one hour or more return to the village.

The community well in Tamale was very modern with electric pumping of water to elevated storage tank that gravity fed taps for citizens to fill containers.



WATER CLOSET – SANITARY TOILETS:

A very important issue and concern, particularly in major cities such as Tamale, is hygiene.

In remote villages the cultural means of bodily relief is away from the compound and community centre, in the bush so to speak. This appears to work well, as the villages are spotless and clean. However in cities and large towns this method is obviously not possible.



In Tamale we visited a privy project that was unfinished because of incompleting financial arrangements with the contractor. The old privy, located beside the new construction, was a basic structure of multiple toilet units that simply dropped defecation into storage tanks for removal, supposedly by vacuum. The odour was quite intense, even from a distance. Proper hygiene and sanitation under such circumstances is very difficult. The new project was intended to simply provide water for washing and to flush sewage into sealed tanks for periodic removal – a great advance in community hygiene.



This project is stalled due to a failure to provide money to complete, while many other less essential projects proceed with substantial funding! Basic sanitation is essential to community health. Why sanitary toilets would not be one of the highest of priorities for aid to a community is a question that should be asked.

HELPING VILLAGERS – GOOD INTENTIONS, POOR RESULTS:

While visiting villages and travelling back highways I noticed that there were many locations that had large black poly 500 gallon plus water tanks with the name of the charitable donor organization printed in white (almost all villages had at least one). Most, mounted on cement foundations, must have cost some \$5,000 each to provide and install. With donor turnover and onsite photo ops, the intention obviously was to save women and children the drudgery of carrying 5-gallon containers on their heads or on

their bicycles for some distances to bring potable water to the village, their school or their home.

I stopped at several, and all were empty, not being used at all. As with many well-meaning aid efforts an important aspect was missed. The villages could not afford to pay for a water truck to fill the tanks. They all stood empty as rude testimonials to poor aid planning. If they could be relocated in order to collect building rain run-off from nearby metal roofs then at least the villages would have water for part of the dry season, but they cannot. These tanks are an example of costly, wasteful planning (or lack of planning) and simply are a blight on the community.

(The attached photography shows a village water tank mounted on a poured concrete base at great cost. It is installed too high to even connect to the rain runoff from a building 20 feet away. James Haga, standing in front of the tank shows a perspective of the size and futility of extremely wasteful, well meaning, efforts. He specifically wanted us to know that these tanks were not supplied by Engineers Without Borders.)



HELPING ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE – CHINA IN GHANA:

One of the most important needs, for Ghana's farmers in particular but for mining and commerce as well, is for a new south-north road to Tamale and up into the northern region.

The new Accra to Tamale road is expected to cut the 400-500 kilometre trip in half, from well over 12 hours to six hours. The roads from Tamale to the Upper West region and into the Upper East region are also essential to the farmers of the regions to transport their products to market. China is very active in Ghana, bringing in their own construction crews to build the roadway infrastructure. These roads, built by China with Chinese labour, the cost of which are a loan to be paid by Ghana from future oil revenues. With road infrastructure being such a critical component of economic development and societal improvement, and no other assistance available, Ghana is compelled to mortgage its future to China as they have no alternate prospects.

HOUSING AID – KOREA IN GHANA:

While we were in Ghana plans were announced to build 30,000 houses for military and police security forces, at a cost of \$1.5 billion US dollars. Also proposed are a further 60,000 houses for future public sector use at a cost of \$3 billion US dollars and an additional 110,000 houses for future private sector use at a cost of \$6 billion US dollars – a total of 10.5 billion US dollars.

This building announcement was made with extensive media coverage. In attendance was the President, affiliated ministers, the Ambassador of Korea and the Korean contractor's principals. As with the China experience, the work is to be done by Korean crews, with materials also from Korea. The Ghanaian government is once again compelled to mortgage its future to Korea and will pay for the construction from future oil revenues as they have no alternate prospects.

FOOD AID – JAPAN IN GHANA:

Despite its large arable land area which should allow Ghana to feed itself, and indeed several other countries, food aid is still required for some areas. It was reported that Japan supplied \$6 million of its excess rice harvest as their contribution of foreign aid to Ghana. Japanese rice farmers are highly subsidized and Japan's very high import tariffs keep out rice from other world competitors.

If that is so, to call Japan's greatly subsidized rice "food aid" as a responsible country's contribution to foreign aid is questionable. If the true cost of Japan's government subsidized rice "gift" was to be sent in dollars instead of as a credit to Japan's foreign aid account, it might well more than pay the development and infrastructure costs for Ghana to become self-sufficient on rice production on its own.

By sending only their rice, the Japanese are not helping Ghana's need for infrastructure to increase crop production which would allow the country to become self-sustainable in rice crops. It helps only Japan's government in questionable foreign aid dollar accountability and also helps Japan's farmers to continue to produce rice crops greatly subsidized and protected from foreign competition.

At least the Japanese are not asking Ghana to mortgage its future to pay for the rice from future expected oil revenue. Ghana already has a lot of other promissory notes payable from that source.

WESTERN AID AGENCIES - CIDA, DFAIT, USAID:

During the trip there was discussion of the overall effectiveness of CIDA, DFAIT and USAID. It was suggested that England's Department for International Development (DFID) has better political support for their aid endeavours so that successes of programs can be measured more comprehensively for long-term effectiveness.

USAID was said to be administratively driven, their policies varying with each new American administration, which causes some ineffectiveness.

Comments were made that CIDA's website was sparse and generalist, not having the openness and detailing expected for basic scrutiny. The feeling was that the philosophy of Canadian foreign aid was more on liberal, social welfare areas and neglecting private sector encouragement to help with infrastructure, etc. that would provide economic growth through food production increases.

CIDA was given credit for a tremendously successful project to eradicate the Guinea worm which took 15 years to accomplish, ending years of disease and misery.

Today in Ghana 11 of the 31 operational CIDA-funded projects are euphemistically labelled "poverty reduction" and 10 are geared towards food and food security. However the most important needs are still for sanitation, clean water and health care issues as well as for basic infrastructure, including roads and sewers. Are these issues being addressed by CIDA?

ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS – JAMES HAGA:

Engineers Without Borders and James Haga are to be congratulated for the conduct of this mission.

Traditionally Ghana has been one of Canada's primary aid recipients. However it was noted that for many years the only official visit was by a Parliamentary Secretary, Andrew Saxton, who represented Canada at the inauguration of President John Atta Mills, and by then Governor General Michaëlle Jean.

While the Chinese, Koreans, Dutch, Germans have a considerable presence, our very minor non-official government visit was very well received by Members of Parliament and area businesses. However they would like to see a higher ranking ministerial visit.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES:

Connecting Canadian businesses to opportunities in foreign countries can have great benefit. Some businesses in Canada are struggling and have shut down or are on the verge of shutting down simply because they cannot compete with the low-cost labour of China. Many textile companies have simply folded and shut down in bankruptcy.

Gildan, a Quebec-based company, decided differently. They kept their high-tech knitting mills, design technology and management in Quebec, but located factories in Honduras and Haiti for the all-important manufacturing salaries of \$2-4 per day (\$100-120 monthly) in order to compete with China's manufacturing rate of \$120 per month.

Tamale's development officer and the Mayor expressed great interest in Canadian manufacturers that work internationally, such as Gildan. He particularly is seeking a textile manufacturer willing to locate in Tamale for the jobs it will create.

Does CIDA, when speaking to governments, attempt to determine these commercial needs and make that information available to Canadian corporations? When I visited Haiti it took considerable prodding to arrange even a visit to the textile manufacturing facilities there at that time, which employed some 3,000 workers with family-sustaining wages and allowed Gildan to compete world-wide with China.

The wages paid by Gildan in Haiti are comparable and competitive with those paid by China there, are family-sustaining wages, comparable to double a Canadian minimum wage, or the equivalent of approximately \$20 an hour!

One of the most elementary aspects of foreign aid should be to develop business, to encourage family-sustaining jobs capacity, as well as governance capacity. Without jobs for the majority of citizens you have a continuing dependence on foreign aid, and without good governance society will also not develop to self-sufficiency. There needs to be a better balance of aid involving both the non-profit sector and the private sector.

MILITARY BASE – ACCRA:

We met with Colonel David Adoteye-Asare, (who is also a pastor and the brother-in-law of Emmanuel Muange of Masara) in his home on a Ghanaian military base in Accra. His wife made beaded necklaces for us to take home to our wives.

She was very hospitable and friendly, allowing us to leave all our luggage in her home (as we had a seven hour wait for our flight home)



while Emmanuel drove us to a market area. When we returned we met with the Colonel and his wife, daughter and a visiting officer friend of his. I of course was in the Canadian military and we conversed militarily. Wonderful people.

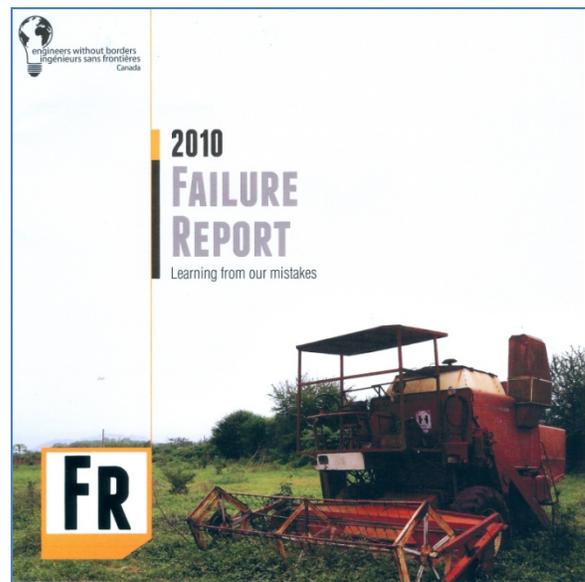


FAILURE REPORT:

Accountability is a sometimes forgotten word when it comes to international aid projects. Projects can at times fail; without follow-up and accountability failures are frequently repeated.

It is commendable therefore that an organization such as Engineers Without Borders publishes an annual “Failure Report.” The intention is to show accountability, but even more so to allow the organization to learn from its mistakes so that they will not be repeated.

For example, the 2010 report includes the story of a failure in a “rent to own” equipment program in Zambia. The failure is outlined, but the steps taken to fix the situation and lessons learned are also included.



TRANSPARENCY:

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) was launched in September 2008 at an international meeting on Aid Effectiveness in Accra. The Initiative is a response to the claim that there is too much paperwork and overlap in aid. IATI aims to produce common standards on reporting and to make more information about aid available more quickly, and ensure that aid information from a variety of different sources is easier for a wide variety of people and organisations to find, use and compare.

Twelve countries have signed the agreement, including Australia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. While the United States is not a signatory, it has announced that it intends to publish its aid information in a format consistent with the

IATI standard. While Canada attended the founding meeting, it has not yet signed the document.

Donor agencies that have become IATI signatories include: The World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Commission, and the United Nations Development Programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Some recommendations to particularly review in the upcoming visit to Haiti will be:

- Governance – Rights & Democracy Group's work to date
- Manufacturing – Gildan perspective
- Infrastructure – Roads – What has been done
- Farming business – Crop varieties – Collective agency participation
- CIDA projects – Variety
- Housing aid projects
- Food aid projects
- Crop storage
- Sanitation and water infrastructure
- Land ownership – Getting beyond to rebuild
- Security of Population - Concerns
- Transparency

CONCLUSION:

While there were signs of some effective programs that I certainly did not see in my 2006 visit to Haiti, I learned much about how aid should and should not be done. Hopefully our experiences will lead to a more greatly balanced approach to foreign assistance - helping those in desperate need, but also leading them forward, providing the economic wherewithal to allow them to support their families with good health and education without assistance.

The goal is achievable, as demonstrated by some successful projects visited in Ghana, but must be a partnership of non-profit organizations, the private sector, community and governments to truly be successful.

What was so very evident at all levels of discussion is that Canadian social-centric aid endeavours are being left behind in the dusty entrails of the more capitalist large-scale aid efforts of Korea, China, The Netherlands and Germany.

Canada should consider positioning itself in international aid somewhere more in the middle of international aid efforts with a combined and balanced role. Partnering with

Canadian businesses, and businesses of the countries of concern, as the South Koreans have partnered with South Korean businesses and in-country businesses in their aid efforts for example, could be beneficial to all concerned.

Aid efforts should be balanced between the many hard-working and committed non-profit NGOs and the engagement of the interested private sector organizations.

Hopefully our experiences in Ghana will prove to be beneficially helpful in our study and report on Haiti.

My thanks again to James Haga and Engineers Without Borders for providing and organizing this trip and to my colleague Dave Van Kesteren, Member of Parliament, for his participation and adding much to the question and answers from the people we interviewed that form the base of this report.