

The Association for supporting Tamale Youth Home Cultural

NEWSLETTER LUNGA 8



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Visit from Ghana i Maj/Juni 2015



ABRAMAN, SIISU, ABU OG
ASSIS

Following the vision meeting of the Board in the summer of 2014, the idea came to invite members of Tamale Youth Home Cultural Group (TYHCG) to Denmark in the summer of 2015. The Board worked with various applications and plans during the autumn, and ended up receiving 30,000 kr. In funding from CISU to cover two peoples travel expenses and accommodation. Beside that we were fortunate enough to receive a grant of 12,000 kr. from Egedal Municipality. We had hoped for more; however it enabled us to invite four from group to Denmark, two musicians and two dancers.

The purpose of the trip was to show their culture to different target groups, to share their work with musical theater, to make contact with travel agencies and develop their network in Denmark. The Board members worked hard to set up a budget and to prepare a good program. The program was quickly filled, but unfortunately did not manage to get some meetings with a travel agent, although an attempt was made.

Thursday May 21st the big day came where 4 happy guys, Abramam, Abu, Siisu and Aziz arrived early in the morning at Copenhagen Airport. They did not have long to collect themselves. Already in the afternoon they were to perform in Roskilde for unaccompanied refugee boys from the organization Bak-Up.

Their tour of Denmark started the next day with Lise and Annemarie as companions.

They visited Sejerø, which was performance at the port, workshop at the school and the final performance at the inn. Some glorious days along with several Board members with Lise's cottage as a starting point.

After Pentecost the tour of Denmark went on to Jutland, where they lived two days on the West Jutland High School outside Ringkøbing. Here they did a great workshop, and the excellent result was later shown to the students and teachers who themselves had participated. They also appeared with their own stunning show.

The visit was indeed successful and many of the students had a really strong desire to visit them in Tamale. No sooner the visit was over and the trip continued to Ranum. Ranum School has been to visit Ghana on a number of occasions with a group of students, and TYHCG have visited the school every time they have been in Denmark. During their stay at the boarding school, they went on small trips to Aalborg, did workshops and of course made an impressive performance at the end. Again they managed to engage a larger group of students, who performed for the others.

Back on Zealand the Multi Ethnic Festival in Elsinore was on the program. Unfortunately the weather was cold, rainy and windy, but the guys did their best in the cold sports center that had been organized for them at the last minute.

Wednesday June the 3rd Lise went with Abraham, Abu Aziz and Sisuu to Vordingborg. It was a great performance at Kulsbjerg School the day after which ended with many hugs and 'Hi Five' to our friends. In the evening there was again performances, now at Algade in the beautiful weather on the occasion of the city's Late Night Event.



There was not much time to recuperate. Already on Saturday the 6 of June there were performances at Egedal Centre and later a performance and workshop at the Culture center. Not even Sunday was set aside time to relax as the Board's Vision meeting was held together with our friends in some rooms at Vesterbro, which belongs to Trille's housing cooperative.

Monday there was also a visit to see the Mayor Willy R. Eliassen of Egedal and a session with the music school teachers. It was in gratitude for the project 'Put Your Hands Together' from 2013 and for the contribution to this trip by Egedal municipality. On top of that there was school performance at Veksø School and Stenløse Private School.

The stay on Bornholm also had the character of a little vacation with sight-seeing, breakfast at the harbor and lots of impressions and talk with other participants from the "Folkemødet". Great!

On Saturday night they performed a set at the end of the various events in the Global tent, and afterwards Abu did a presentation on their work with musical theater. Both went as expected really well. Much to the delight of the boys they enjoyed a couple of hours at the disco before heading back to Gudhjem at midnight.

The last school performance took place at Lyngby Private School Friday, June 19th. Like at the other schools the children were thrilled and loved to be part of the game "tje, tje kule" guided by Abraman. And just as the other schools, the kids were prepared by a presentation on Ghana from either Annemarie or Jeannett.

Then there was a small street performance at Galgebakken in Albertslund.

The group's last day in Denmark TYHCG performed twice. They performed in the morning at the market day in Birkerød and later at Trille's birthday party. Tired and full of experiences the boys went home to Lise to pack before leaving the next morning. And that packing is not just something you do. There was sorting, selecting to and fro and specifically weighing for several hours.

During their visit, we printed a leaflet about the group in English and printed business cards that they could take home.

Sunday 21st of June Abraham, Abu Aziz and Sisu went back to Ghana.

A glorious month for them and all those who had been in contact with them was over. Everything had gone as expected. They had in every way met our ex-

pectations, and the board had tried to make their stay as comfortable as possible. We even celebrated Sisu's 30th birthday along the way.

When we had to write a report to CISU we could announce that they during their trip had been performing for about 1,000 people of all ages and all over Denmark.



PHOTO DURING THE STAY AT THE WEST JUTLAND SCHOOL



VISITING VORDINGBORG



Vision Meeting between the four members of YHCG visiting Denmark and the board of the Danish support association.



During the Ghanaians visit to Denmark we used the opportunity to hold a one-day meeting Sunday, 7 June 2015. We had the opportunity to mutually inform each other about activities in Ghana and Denmark. The idea of the meeting was also to discuss our cooperation, both now and in the future. We began our meeting by developing a shared vision, respectively. Tamale Youth Home Cultural Group and the Danish support association.

They worked with the following vision:

1) Tamale Youth Home Cultural Group as host of a cultural center for music and dance in Northern Ghana. This is a great desire for YHCG. Such a center can include a variety of activities. Some of them are already there, e.g. drumming, dancing, workshops, etc. However, it can be developed and expanded on

It may also include a tourist center, several shops, more sales of high quality products, a museum, etc. Further work with ideas about a culture / tourism office. This would mean to make contact with the Ghana Tourist Association and develop plans for tourism / culture tours in Northern Ghana with YHCG as guides. In addition, the center accommodates festival activities for music and dance.

2) The future for members of Tamale Youth Home Cultural Group. It is the desire to promote all activities that can generate some income to members. It can be through performances, workshops, etc.

Those who will be teaching must have proof of their skills, a form of actual certification. It must be on the agenda in Ghana, and at the same time learning and teacher training should be maintained. The goal is to make sure that YHCG is sustainable and able to remunerate some of the members and management for specific tasks.

3) The future of the Danish Support Association. We need to maintain contact between Ghana and Denmark. We must work to ensure more members in Denmark and more members of the board. We must link up to international contacts, who also work with YHCG.

4) Knowledge dissemination, marketing and projects. There is the hope that all we have to do YHCG more known to the outside world, for example via the website, via leaflets and through contacts. We must seek more donors to activities in Ghana. Moreover, the desire that we should seek more professional assistance in the writing of applications etc. in the future.

Conclusion: We mounted a number of wishes up to our mutual activities and our future cooperation. We did not develop a proper plan of action, but it set a good foundation for our future joint work and our common understandings for cooperation.



Dale Mendoza in Denmark — American friend of YHCG

YHCG have a couple of years had a solid contact to the worldwide organization 'Playing for Change' emanating from the US. Through this contact has American, Dale Mendoza, which designs, linked to the Youth Home and especially the sewing girls on site.

Dale has worked for several years for Playing for Change. She has been to Tamale three times and stayed a month at a time. Every time she has worked on projects to develop and provide opportunities partly at the sewing workshop at Youth Home and partly Margaret operating the batik workshop. Dale has also managed to get money for new electric sewing machines for both workshops. Her knowledge of the situation down there is great and she has a close relationship to both the tailors in the sewing workshop and Margaret.

During our stay in Tamale in March 2014 Lise and Annemarie were very lucky to meet Dale. We spoke about meeting up again, and an opportunity arose which meant that Lise in December 2014 visited Dale in North Carolina. In August 2015 Dale came to Denmark.

Tuesday, September 1st Dale met with the board. An exchange of experiences and ideas were shared for our future work regarding the sewing workshop. Dale's position was that the sewing

workshop not presently is able to produce goods for sale abroad or online.

She has tried via the Playing for Change. The skills of the girls just isn't up to standard. Quality is simply not good enough for our requirements. Dale has designed clothes for children out of batik, which is produced by Margaret, but sewing is sadly having to take place in the United States.

However, a new opportunity has emerged at the sewing workshop in Tamale, the manufacture of Ghanaian School Uniforms. At present, the sewing workshop is producing uniforms for three schools, but it could become a major production. Dale has taught them to use patterns, and now it is about preparing standard sizes such as small, medium and large, so that each child does not need to have individual measures taken. It sounds like a good idea, as it will provide steady work throughout the year and marketing locally. What role do we as an organization have in the future in relation to the above. We still need to discuss this matter further. Trille, who has a lot of experience in this regard, spoke to Dale about new initiatives related to the upgrading of the dressmakers skills. It was a great evening, which was inspiring for all parties



LISE, FIRDAUS, DALE OG ANNEMARIE



About the project 'Singing and Dancing for Health: Traditional music and dance for health education and promotion in rural northern Ghana'

Tamale Youth Home Cultural Group is a partner in a very interesting project with the aim to promote health in villages in northern Ghana.

The project was initiated by Michael Frischkopf (Professor of Music, University of Alberta) and David Zakus (Professor of Distinction in Global Health, Ryerson University). It was developed in close cooperation with TYHCG. The Ghanaian Ministry of Health is also a partner in the project.

The method is a so-called 'dance drama' that puts together music, song, dance, poetry and comedy) from selected themes. In December 2014 dance dramas were performed based on two themes: hygiene / cholera and malaria. The performances involving local people in the villages and they were implemented as pilot projects in three villages in the region. The performances are recorded on video and is now used in further educational work in the region. The project team is now working to obtain funding for further initiatives in the region. The whole project idea can be seen on www.artsrn.ualberta.ca

We have in the Danish support association close contact with Michael Frischkopf, and we have given our full support to the project and its ideas, but we have currently no funds to give.

Under Ghanaian visit in May in Denmark we were showed parts of the videos recorded of the dance-drama. It is a unique documentation of how drama and dance can promote knowledge, necessary changes of habits and everyday actions.

We look forward to hearing more about the project and its results with additional funding.





Firdaus Alhassan at the International School in Elsinore

Firdaus Alhassan from Tamale Youth Home Cultural Group has received a 4 ½-month scholarship at the International School in Elsinore (IPC). He arrived in Denmark on August 23rd and returned to Ghana on December 30th 2015. We received the message of his arrival the day before. He had trouble finding a cheap flight, when his visa was given very late from the Danish Embassy in Accra. Suddenly he found a cheap flight through Morocco to Europe. Therefore we were notified late.

We met him at the airport and made sure he was equipped with necessities such as clothes, toilet-

ries, pocket money and a sim card. In addition, we gave him a ride to Elsinore, where he received a fine welcome a week later than the other students. He says it is a great and overwhelming experience for him to have this opportunity. In the next newsletter, he will speak about his experiences.

Thanks to the IPC for giving him the opportunity. We support him and some of the board members provide private support to him in the form of pocket money etc. A scholarship includes neither expenses nor pocket money, but only the stay.



Firdaus performs at the International School in Elsinore (IPC)



FIRDAUS AT FREDERIKSBORG CASTLE

School Sponsorships

The school year in Ghana starts in September. It is also at this time that money is sent for school sponsorships. We have managed to get more sponsors, so now we have 15 children being sent to school by the Danish association. The last addition is 3 1/2 year old Rufkatu, daughter of Assau. See picture.

There are more children waiting to receive sponsorships, so there is room for more sponsors. Please notify friends and acquaintances.



RUFKATU