

LERNEINSATZ GHANA

-2024-





A WARM WELCOME

The DKA-Studytour in Ghana allowed us to immerse ourselves in a foreign, completely different culture. This travel report aims to arouse interest in the program, people and the country with a few flashes. For us, a group of diverse individuals, this type of intercultural learning was challenging, new and often overwhelming. But we definitely don't want to miss any of it. This trip was so various that it is difficult to write a report about it because you can only pick out a few things. We learned Dagbanli, the language of the Dagombas, we learned social codes, dos and don'ts, history, political system, the role of women, we saw elephants, we made our own fabrics, and slept for four nights in our own compound in a northern Ghanaian village. Overall there were just too many experiences for a travel report. First we would like to introduce the members of our travel group. Then there is an overview of the itinerary. Afterwards there are short reports on various topics that particularly interested or concerned us during the trip. Everything peppered with photos so that you can get a good picture of it.

All that remains to be said is:

Nawuni song!





VALENTINA BERGMAIR

DAGBANI NAME MAGAJIA WUMPINI

NICKNAME IN THE GROUP

I AM FROM KREMSMÜNSTER

AGE 25

ABOUT ME

MY FAVOURITE GHANAIAN FOOD

JOLLOF RICE WITH GRILLED CHICKEN

MY VILLAGE

YAPALSI

MY FAVORITE ACTIVITY IN GHANA

TRYING TO CARRY THE WATERBUCKLE ON THE HEAD
TRYING TO WAVE

MY FAVORITE ANIMAL IN GHANA

PUSHUP LIZARD

MY TIP FOR THE NEXT GROUP
TRAVELING TO GHANA

SANDALS ARE ALSO A GREAT THING TO PACK, SO
YOU HAVE SHOES FOR TRAVELLING, WHICH YOU CAN
EASILY PUT ON AND OFF

GHANA 2024

WHAT I'VE LIKED THE MOST ABOUT
GHANA

THE OPENESS AND FRIENDLINESS OF THE PEOPLE

MY FAVORITE MEMORY OF THE DKA
STUDY TOUR

THE GREAT TIME WITH THE GROUP DURING
DANCING, THE VISITS OR EVEN THE BUS RIDES

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF

HOW MUCH I LOVED MY LOCKS AT THE END OF MY
BRAIDS



HELENA SAWILLA

DAGBANI NAME SUHUYINI (PEACE)

NICKNAME IN THE GROUP LENI

I AM FROM GRAZ

AGE 21

ABOUT ME

MY FAVOURITE GHANAIAN FOOD

GROUND NUT SOUP WITH BANKU FROM NAOMI,
PALAVA SAUCE WITH PLANTAIN, EVERYTHING THAT
MARY COOKED

MY VILLAGE

GUMO

MY FAVORITE ACTIVITY IN GHANA

DANCING, DRUMMING AND EATING

MY FAVORITE ANIMAL IN GHANA

ELEPHANTS AND GOATS

MY TIP FOR THE NEXT GROUP
TRAVELING TO GHANA

BUY A LARGE MOSQUITO NET AND ENOUGH
MEDICATION AGAINST DIARRHEA

GHANA 2024

WHAT I'VE LIKED THE MOST ABOUT
GHANA

GHANAINS ARE SUPER RELAXED AND FRIENDLY.
PEOPLE LOVE TALKING TO YOU, EVEN IF THEY DON'T KNOW YOU.
PEOPLE SMILE A LOT, ESPECIALLY STEPHEN. :)

MY FAVORITE MEMORY OF THE DKA
STUDY TOUR

THERE ARE A LOT OF HIGHLIGHTS, BUT IF I HAD TO CHOOSE, IT
WOULD BE THE VILLAGE IMMERSIONS AND DANCING IN
STEPHEN'S CHURCH, WITH ROMEO AND WITH ONE OF THE
COMMUNITIES IN BOLE.

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF

TO SET BOUNDARIES AND TO RELAXE. NOT EVERYTHING HAS TO
HAPPEN IMMEDIATELY.



LEA STRUCK

DAGBANI NAME WUPPINI

NICKNAME IN THE GROUP

I AM FROM UPPER AUSTRIA,
STUDYING IN VIENNA

AGE 24

ABOUT ME

MY FAVOURITE GHANAIAN FOOD

FRIED PLANTAIN AND ALL THE FRUITS

MY VILLAGE

NWODUA

MY FAVORITE ACTIVITY IN GHANA

DRUMMING AND WALKING THROUGH GHANAIAN
VILLAGES

MY FAVORITE ANIMAL IN GHANA

BABY GOATS AND DIFFERENT BIRDS

MY TIP FOR THE NEXT GROUP
TRAVELING TO GHANA

LOOK FOR SMALL COLORFUL BIRDS IN THE CITY AND
DURING BUS RIDES - THEY ARE JUST CUTE

GHANA 2024

WHAT I'VE LIKED THE MOST ABOUT
GHANA

RANDOMLY TALKING TO AND JOKING WITH PEOPLE
ON THE STREETS

MY FAVORITE MEMORY OF THE DKA
STUDY TOUR

VISITING THE ALUMINIUM POT FACTORY IN TAMALE
AND SEEING THE PRECISION IN THEIR WORK

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF

IF YOU HAVE TIME, WALK SLOWLY - THERE IS NO
NEED IN HURRYING



MAGDALENA TRUCKENTHNER

DAGBANI NAME ZAAPAYIM

NICKNAME IN THE GROUP

MAGDA, WILDER HUND,
DR. MAGDA, MARTA

I AM FROM

VÖCKLABRUCK

AGE

24

ABOUT ME

MY FAVOURITE GHANAIAN FOOD

FRIED PLANTAINS, PINEAPPLES, FRIED RICE

MY VILLAGE

YAPALSI

MY FAVORITE ACTIVITY IN GHANA

DANCING, PLAYING THE UKULELE, SLEEPING, JOKING WITH THE
OTHERS

MY FAVORITE ANIMAL IN GHANA

ALL OF THEM, BUT ESPECIALLY THE PUSH-UP LIZARD

MY TIP FOR THE NEXT GROUP
TRAVELING TO GHANA

DON'T WEAR WHITE CLOTHES, DO NOT OVERESTIMATE YOUR
SPICE TOLERANCE (YOUR TUMMY WILL THANK YOU), PACK AS
LIGHT AS YOU CAN

GHANA 2024

WHAT I'VE LIKED THE MOST ABOUT
GHANA

THE ANIMALS; THAT NO ONE WAS STRESSED;
OUR GROUP AND THE PEOPLE THERE

MY FAVORITE MEMORY OF THE DKA
STUDY TOUR

GOING OUT INTO A BAR; MOLE NATIONAL PARK; ARRIVING AT
TICCLS; BREAKFAST; PUTTING UP THE MOSQUITO NET WITH LEA;
PRETENDING TO BE A DOCTOR, WHEN THOMAS ASKED ME TO
LOOK AT HIS GOAT (THE GOAT WAS FINE)

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF

I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT SO MANY THINGS, BECAUSE
EVERYTHING WILL TURN OUT FINE; | AM MORE OPEN TO
ADVENTURES THAN I THOUGHT



KATHARINA HOLZINGER

DAGBANI NAME NII-NA

NICKNAME IN THE GROUP KATHI

I AM FROM UPPER AUSTRIA

AGE 24

ABOUT ME

MY FAVOURITE GHANAIAN FOOD

BANKU, JOLLOF RICE FROM MARY, MANGO AND ANANAS

MY VILLAGE

YAPALSI

MY FAVORITE ACTIVITY IN GHANA

VISITING THE RAIN FOREST, LEARNING HOW TO CARRY BABIES ON MY BACK

MY FAVORITE ANIMAL IN GHANA

BABY GOATS

MY TIP FOR THE NEXT GROUP TRAVELING TO GHANA

DON'T BRING WHITE CLOTHES, WASHING THEM IS HARD AND THEY WON'T GET CLEAN ANY MORE. (BELIEVE OTHER PEOPLE TELLING THAT)

GHANA 2024

WHAT I'VE LIKED THE MOST ABOUT GHANA

HOW RELAXED PEOPLE ARE

MY FAVORITE MEMORY OF THE DKA STUDY TOUR

DANCING, NO MATTER HOW BAD YOU ARE DOING IT

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF

I AM MAKING STRESS ON MYSELF WAY TOO OFTEN WHEN IN AUSTRIA AND I AM BETTER IN MAKING FRIENDS THAN I THOUGHT :)



ZOÉLIE RUFFIEUX

DAGBANI NAME WUMPINI

NICKNAME IN THE GROUP -

I AM FROM SWITZERLAND

AGE 23

ABOUT ME

MY FAVOURITE GHANAIAN FOOD

GROUND NUT SOUP WITH RICE BALLS FROM NAOMI

MY VILLAGE

GUMO

MY FAVORITE ACTIVITY IN GHANA

BATIC AND TIE AND DYE IN DAMONGO

MY FAVORITE ANIMAL IN GHANA

ELEPHANTS

MY TIP FOR THE NEXT GROUP
TRAVELING TO GHANA

DON'T EAT SALAD, EXCEPT IN MARY'S SAFE AND
DELICIOUS COOKING OF COURSE ;)

GHANA 2024

WHAT I'VE LIKED THE MOST ABOUT
GHANA

MEETING VERY KIND AND WELCOMING PEOPLE

MY FAVORITE MEMORY OF THE DKA
STUDY TOUR

IF THERE WAS ONLY JUST ONE...

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF

TRAVELLING WITH NEW PEOPLE IS AMAZING



ANDREA STYBLO

DAGBANI NAME MBANGBA

NICKNAME IN THE GROUP

I AM FROM MÖDLING

AGE 20

ABOUT ME

MY FAVOURITE GHANAIAN FOOD

GROUND NUT SOUP WITH RICE DUMPLINGS THAT OUR HOST MOTHER IN GUMO PREPARED FOR US, PLANTAIN CHIPS, BANANAS

MY VILLAGE

GUMO

MY FAVORITE ACTIVITY IN GHANA

SAFARI IN MOLE NATIONAL PARK AND BEING TAUGHT HOW TO COOK LOCAL DISHES BY OUR HOST MOTHER NAOMI

MY FAVORITE ANIMAL IN GHANA

NORTHERN RED BISHOP (A BIRD SPECIES) AND "BROWN", OUR HOST FAMILY'S DOG

MY TIP FOR THE NEXT GROUP TRAVELING TO GHANA

BE OPEN AND TRY OUT NEW THINGS – YOU'LL MEET SO MANY NEW PEOPLE AND ALSO NEVER BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR ANY KIND OF HELP :)

GHANA 2024

WHAT I'VE LIKED THE MOST ABOUT GHANA

THE PEOPLE, THE ART (PAINTINGS, FABRICS, ETC.) OUR STAY IN GUMO AND THE NATURE! GHANAIAN CULTURE IS SOOO INTERESTING, THE PEOPLE ARE ABSOLUTELY FRIENDLY AND THE NATURE IS JUST STUNNING, I ESPECIALLY LIKED THE SAVANNAH REGION AND ITS WILDLIFE!

MY FAVORITE MEMORY OF THE DKA STUDY TOUR

SEEING ELEPHANTS UP CLOSE IN THE WILD FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER.

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF

I LEARNED THAT I REALLY ENJOY WRITING! ALMOST EVERYDAY DURING OUR JOURNEY I WROTE ABOUT MY EXPERIENCES INTO A SMALL TRAVEL DIARY.



HERMANN NIKLAS

DAGBANI NAME	SUHIYINI, MALIGU-NA, ASINDO
NICKNAME IN THE GROUP	HERMANN
I AM FROM	WIEN
AGE	47

ABOUT ME

MY FAVOURITE GHANAIAN FOOD

FUFU, FUFU AND FUFU ... AND TILAPIA.

MY VILLAGE

NAPAGYILI

MY FAVORITE ACTIVITY IN GHANA

GETTING OUT OF THE BUS, HAVING MEALS, MEETING OLD FRIENDS

MY FAVORITE ANIMAL IN GHANA

THAT RED BIRD I HAVE SEEN ONLY ONCE ON THE WAY BETWEEN NAPAGYILI AND NWODUA!

MY TIP FOR THE NEXT GROUP TRAVELING TO GHANA

YOU DO NOT NEED TOO MANY CLOTHES. BETTER TO GET NEW AFRICAN ONES!

GHANA 2024

WHAT I'VE LIKED THE MOST ABOUT GHANA

THE PEOPLE, WALKING ON THE RED SOIL, TEACHING ME ABOUT TRAVELLING, TO BE CONNECTED SOMEHOW TO THIS BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY, FOR MAKING THE WORLD SO SMALL AND AT THE SAME TIME SO BIG AND DIFFERENT!

MY FAVORITE MEMORY OF THE DKA STUDY TOUR

THE MALIGU-NAA CEREMONY

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF

I AM THE GUY FOR COMING BACK.



JASMIN WAGNER

DAGBANI NAME TIPAYIYA (MEANING: WE ARE GREATFUL)

NICKNAME IN THE GROUP JASMIN

I AM FROM VIENNA

AGE 22

ABOUT ME

MY FAVOURITE GHANAIAN FOOD

EVERYTHING THAT MARRY HAS COOKED

MY VILLAGE

YAPALSI

MY FAVORITE ACTIVITY IN GHANA

PLAYING WITH THE CHILDREN, TALKING TO THE LOCALS, AND ABSORBING THE NEW ENVIRONMENT

MY FAVORITE ANIMAL IN GHANA

GOATS - THERE WERE A LOT

MY TIP FOR THE NEXT GROUP TRAVELING TO GHANA

TAKE A NOTEBOOK WITH YOU FOR REFLECTION, BECAUSE YOU FORGET THINGS SO QUICKLY. IN GHANA, MANY BEAUTIFUL AND EXCITING THINGS WILL HAPPEN THAT YOU WON'T WANT TO FORGET.

GHANA 2024

WHAT I'VE LIKED THE MOST ABOUT GHANA

DURING MY TRIP TO GHANA, WHAT I LIKED THE MOST WAS THE OPENNESS AND WARMTH OF THE PEOPLE, WHICH MADE ME FEEL WELCOMED FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.

MY FAVORITE MEMORY OF THE DKA STUDY TOUR

PLAYING WITH THE CHILDREN ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD DURING THE VILLAGE IMMERSION

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF

I'VE REALIZED THAT I'M CAPABLE OF MUCH MORE THAN I EVER THOUGHT, AND THAT MAKES ME PROUD OF MYSELF



VALENTINA DOHR

DAGBANI NAME SUGLIOU

NICKNAME IN THE GROUP VALI

I AM FROM GRAZ

AGE 21

ABOUT ME

MY FAVOURITE GHANAIAN FOOD

FRIED PLANTAIN AND ALL THE FRUITS

MY VILLAGE

GUMO

MY FAVORITE ACTIVITY IN GHANA

DANCING, JOURNALING, WALKING THROUGH THE STREETS

MY FAVORITE ANIMAL IN GHANA

ELEPHANT

MY TIP FOR THE NEXT GROUP TRAVELING TO GHANA

LEAVE ENOUGH SPACE IN THE BACKPACK FOR ALL THE THINGS YOU WILL BUY AT THE ART MARKET

GHANA 2024

WHAT I'VE LIKED THE MOST ABOUT GHANA

THE BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE, THE OPEN HEARTED PEOPLE AND THE RELAXED ATMOSPHERE

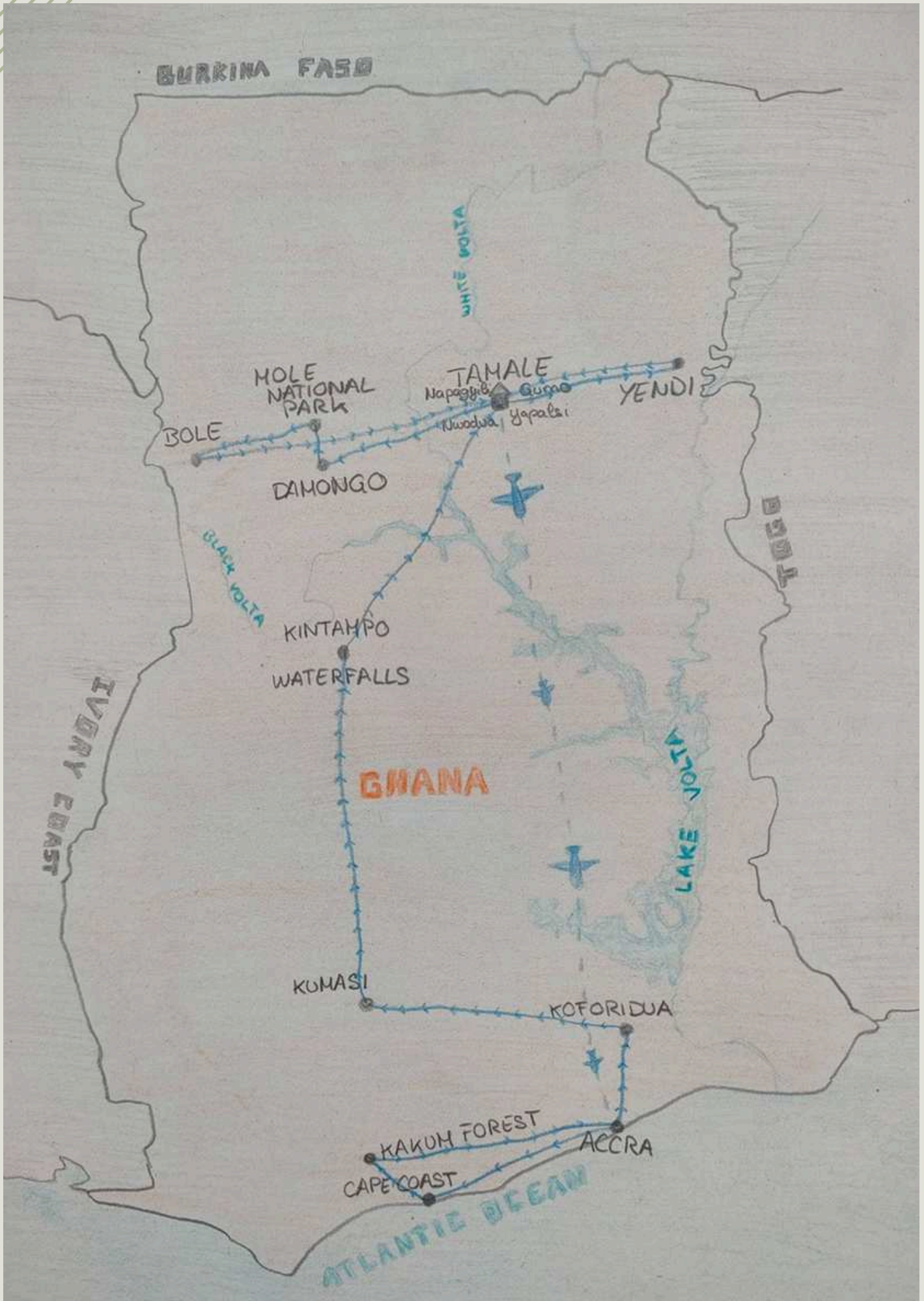
MY FAVORITE MEMORY OF THE DKA STUDY TOUR

THE DAY WE COLOURED FABRICS TOGETHER, I REALLY LIKED THE CREATIVITY AND GROUP DYNAMIC

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF

I NEED MORE RELAX TIME IN MY DAILY LIFE

ITINERARY



ROLE OF WOMEN IN GHANA

A topic that came across us a few times during our *Lerneinsatz* was the role of women in Ghana. Not only did we get a presentation from Judith (a university professor from Tamale), but also it was a topic with which we were confronted in different daily life situations.

Ghana is mostly based on a patriarchal system, which also means that people in Ghana believe men are superior to women. It is hard for women to get higher positions, especially concerning politics. The chief position for example in the northern region in Ghana can only be held by a man. (The southern region is more progressive than the northern as it had earlier contact to Europeans and to matriarchal lines.) Also it is not very usual to vote for a woman in elections and passionate women have to behave like a man to even have the chance to get to those higher positions.

There are strict gender roles that are still very common in Ghana, especially in rural areas and northern Ghana. The man has the role as the head of the household and the woman is the one doing the household work. She also has the role of going to the market and buying and selling for the family's daily life. An example that Judith gave us was the following: if a woman has a farm by herself, she can only farm products for her own kitchen, and is obliged to help her husband on his farm first before she can work on her own. As men generally have a higher position in Ghanaian society and furthermore elderly people are encountered with a lot of respect, elderly women (from the age of 70) are seen as men from their community.

Traditional weddings are another point where gender roles can be clearly seen. In Ghana the man is going to the woman's family to hold for her hand. If her family says yes, she will stop being part of her birth family and start to belong to her new husband. If her husband would die, the wife could go back to her family and be part of them again. But if the couple wants to divorce the woman has (traditionally) no opportunity to go back to her birth family nor to take her children with her, as she must move away from her home.

There are a few things that can help women to emancipate them and have a more stable position in the Ghanaian lifestyle. This concerns especially education and the possibility to go to school. Connected to that is sexual education and the accessibility of contraception (which is unfortunately not as easy to get in Ghana). In the words of Judith: "Women have to fight for themselves, everyone else can just support them." And she also made clear, that especially in cities the classical gender roles slowly are getting opened, even though it is still far away from an equality between men and women.



DATING/MARRIAGE

A marriage is very important in Ghana especially if you live together the family expects you to get married. But before you organize a wedding, the couple has to talk first to their parents and ask for permission. If the parents agree the wedding is being planned . For the ritual the groom has to organize a lot of presents for the bride's family and in some regions he even has to slaughter an animal to represent the sacrifice of the bride's family losing their daughter. From now on she will be part of her spouse's family.

After the church ceremony everyone goes to the celebration location which is usually the house of the groom's family. There the bride has to stamp some fufu or banku in order to prove that she can cook for the family. After that there will be a lot of food, many people coming by and many beautifully colorful clothes. This is at least how our village helpers explained to us their wedding, a wedding in the south could be totally different, as there are also different gender role perceptions. A young woman told us that in Volta region it is perfectly normal that men also cook and clean, whereas in the north a man has to be careful to not be caught washing the dishes, as his reputation could be ruined with that. I also noticed that in Tamale which is in the north couples never showed affection, whereas in the south in Accra I saw more couples kissing or holding hands in public.

Valentina D.



EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

During our trip we were able to visit schools - a private and a public one.

Our first stop was at the public school. Luckily the students had a break during their final exams, so we were able to look into the classrooms.

In Ghana the school year is divided into Trimesters. At the end of each trimester the students have to write an exam in each subject. The grade of the final exams decides if you can get in the higher grade next year. Per day the students have two exams and for each they have about 90 min to complete it. Only for the mathematics and the science exam they have two hours of working time.

After each trimester there would be a break. In summer the holidays are the longest and are about one month.

The grading system is from 1 to 9. If you have gotten a 9, it means that you will fail this subject or test.

If you want to be a teacher in Ghana, you will need at least a diploma. For the diploma you will study 3 years. During your training you will learn everything you need to know. Because you should be able to teach every subject. So you cannot choose your subject and you won't be trained in one either.

Interesting to know is that you will get a higher salary in the public schools. The salary is not depending on the certificates you have, but on your loyalty to your school.

In the countryside it is harder to find teachers, so the classes in the public schools will be bigger. If a lot of students are attending school, it is a possibility that there won't be enough desks. As a consequence students attend the class sitting on the floor.

Interesting to know is that if somebody drops out of school, the person is able to come back and finish their education at any time - at least in the public schools.

During our stay I noticed that education has a high importance to most of the people in Ghana. If a family cannot provide for a child to go to school, they will look if it is possible that their child will live at a family members' place.

Our village helper takes care of his grandchildren, so they are able to go to school.

If a family won't have this possibility, they prefer to send the boys to school and the girls have to help at home to become good wives.



Valentina B.

ONE TO ONE COMPARISON BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS:

private school

public school

subjects junior high

science,
mathematics,
religious and moral education,
computing,
english,
french,
ghanaian language (dagbani),
art and design,
career technology

science,
mathematics,
religious and moral education,
computing,
english,
french,
ghanaian language (dagbani),
social studies,
creative arts,
pre-tech,
home economics,
political studies,
oral history

students per class

33/class (junior high)

should be 35/class can be up to 70/class

people in the visited schools

812 students
42 teachers (more teachers are female)

103 students

teacher per class

1

1

fees

500 - 900 ghanaian cedes per term

non

meals

not provided
students bring it
can purchase in cafeteria warm food

not provided
students bring it
there are places where food is sold

Providers of the school

the school

the government

private school

public school

school day

7:15-15:00 (junior high)
7:30-14:30 (primary)
8:00-13:30 (preschool)

8:00 - 14:30 (primary)
8:00 - 15:00 (junior high)

They have at 10 o'clock a 15 min break and during midday a 40 min lunch break after each lesson will be a 5 min break (junior high)

They have at 10:40 a 30 min break and at 13:40 a 40 min break
no breaks between classes

exams

in 10 subjects

in 8 subjects

Text-books

parents need to buy them a limited amount can be bought directly in school These textbooks will be slightly cheaper.

are provided

uniforms

required

required

special rooms

library
computerroom

assamblies

wednesday:
they will talk about issues which are relevant for the youth and to break up stereotypes e.g. health (ebula, covid, epilepsi), school information, country and government, happenings around the world

friday: worship time
they will hear bible stories even though the students are mixed (islam and christian)

each morning



RELIGIONS IN GHANA

Interreligious Dialogue

In Ghana, most of the population is Christian (71.2 %), followed by Muslims (20%) and Indigenous African Religions (3.2%). These three main religions play a big role in Ghanaian society without causing any serious religious conflicts yet, according to Dr. Emmanuel Dassah, who held a lecture about the Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue in Ghana during our stay at TIICLS.

So, how do Ghanaians manage to accept other beliefs while we Europeans always struggle with this concern? As Dr. Dassah explained, a sense of community is important to most religious traditions. This makes interreligious dialogue easier. As Ghana also gradually loses the community sense because of individualization, we can suggest that Europe has already lost it.

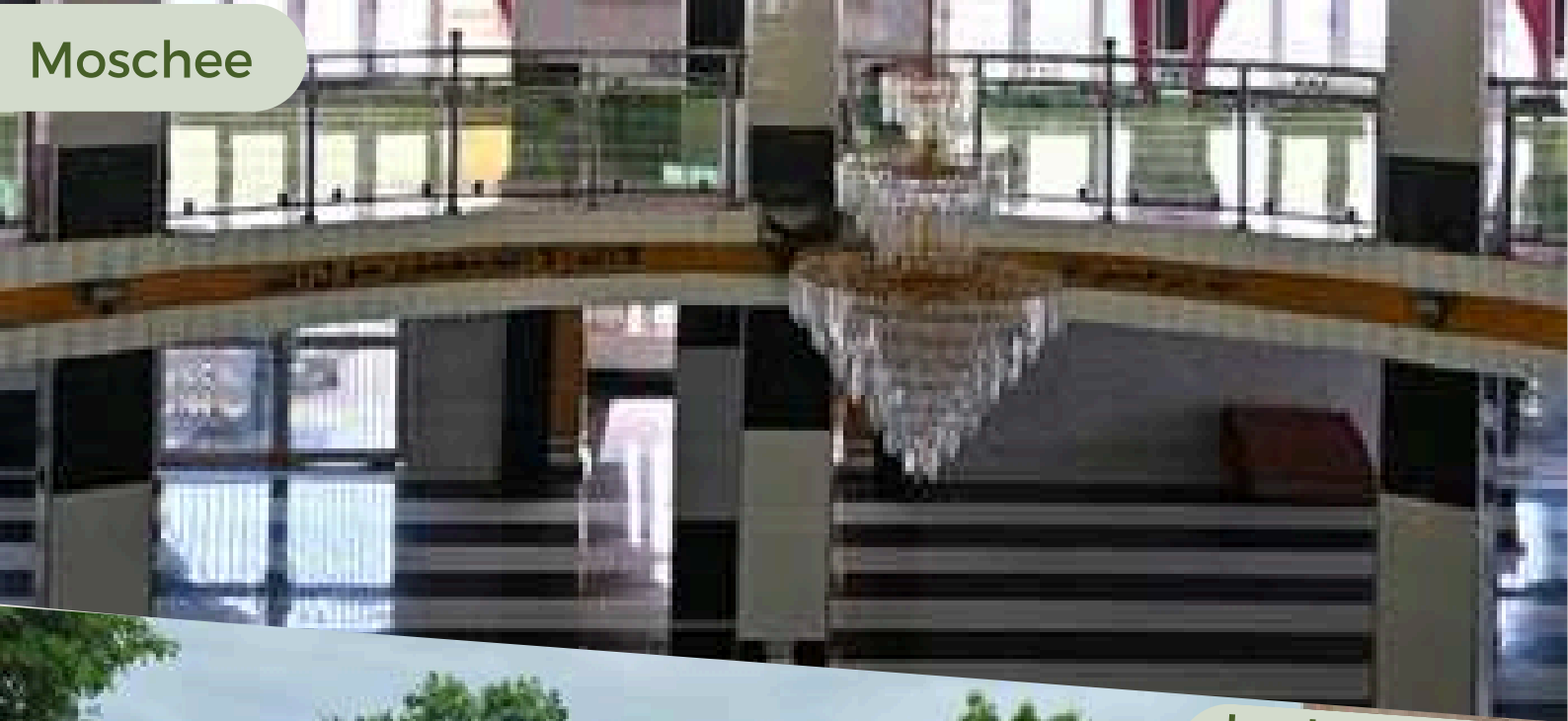
A second point is that Ghanaian Islam and Christianity got their members from the Ghanaian traditional belief, so they kind of emerged with it and still have some similarities because of that. Furthermore, they didn't have to compete because there were more people to get from IAR (Indigenous African Religions) in order to increase followers. Nowadays, as the followers of these religions are low, Islam and Christianity start to compete in order to get members, which affects religious peace.

Even though little conflicts increase, the peaceful coexistence of different religions is important for Ghanaians. That's why interreligious plays a big role, as differences bring members to a table in order to talk about what to accept and what not. In fact, dialogue is not between members of different religions but between people of a country who have to live their lives together, so everybody should just care about that. In the end, it's all about how to live together in peace.

For me, it remains impressive how Ghanaians manage to do that. It is completely normal to go to Christian festivals as a Muslim or to Muslim festivals as a Christian, because the aim is just to celebrate together. In Ghana, it's also no problem to marry someone of another religion; in this case, the ritual is from the religion of the bride.

During our stay, we also had the possibility to visit a big mosque in Tamale. During the Friday prayers, there are up to 3000 Muslims celebrating together. Some of us were visiting a mass of the "Power of Light Ministry" as well, which is a charismatic church. In some villages, our group members also went to a Sunday mass of the Catholic Church. In general, Ghanaians are really religious, so there were lots of Christians telling us that they don't even think about going to church on Sunday; they just do it weekly. All these experiences were enriching.

Moschee



katholischer
Priester



Moschee





DIVINATION

Most of us decided to visit the diviner and let him tell us our future. In a separate room the diviner was sitting on the floor and after you whispered your problem in the money that you are giving, you threw the money in front of the diviner. As he was sitting in front of you while showing his back, you were not able to see what he was doing, but according to the sounds he was drawing something in the sand which was laying around him. After a while he began to talk about your problems in life (like job, family, love,...) and also how you could solve your problems. It was not very easy to understand the solutions, even though Steven translated for us, as they mostly had to do something with Ghanaian cookies, cakes, animals and where to put them or to whom we must give them. But still it was a nice experience to also get to know this part of the culture in Ghana.

Lea



GHANAIAAN CULTURE



Music, dance and festivities play an important role in Ghanaian culture.

Just a few days after our arrival in Tamale, we had the chance to be invited by the chief to the fire festival. It happened the 16.07 in the evening, around 9pm. After dinner, we walked, in the night, to the festivities. Everyone was making their way to a large square, crowned in the middle by a huge tree. And fire was traveling along with the crowd. People were lighting their torches, yelling or singing while rushing towards the meeting point. Fireworks were shot and torches thrown in the air. The closer you would get to the tree, the more intense it would get. There, people were dancing in a circle, chanting, playing with the fire and drummers were there to accompany the whole celebration. Then, together, people made their way towards the chief palace and there, formed another celebrating circle with dancing, drums, fire and the chief.

For the origin of the fire festival, different stories coexist. One of them proclaims that the whole village has gone in search of the chief's lost son. It was in the night, so the villagers were looking for him with torches. They found him under a tree and guided him back to the chief palace where he welcomed them, relieved. Another one narrates that the fire festival stands as a tradition to remember the dead people. The community would bring them food near a water source, usually in two small portions, one for the man and one for the woman. And the next day they would return to see if it was eaten.

Zoélie





A couple of days later, we had the chance to attend a performance of Traditional Ghanaian Dances in TICCLS. The group performed four different dances, from different regions in Ghana. According to the traditions, the costumes would change from one dance to another. From traditional smogs, to skirts, sticks and belt or ankle percussion devices, the show was high in colour and full of life. Some dances were reserved to men, some to women and some were mixed. And behind each of them, a cultural signification was hidden. The musician ensemble was composed of 5 men playing different drums and one playing a flute. They would enter in the performance's space first following each other before forming a group, the dancers would follow. Closely linked together, musicians and dancers evolve together during the performance. Certain typical musical patterns can indicate a change of movement for the dancers. But amongst them, a leader was also there to tell out loud when it was time to make a change in formation or movement. If there is one thing not to forget before assisting to a show like this in Ghana, it is to prepare small cuts of money. Indeed, in the end of a dance or music piece, the performers would come closer to the audience and make their special show in expectation of a little coin or note that you would stick to their forehead. But of course, this was not the only time we had the chance to be immersed in traditional Ghanaian culture and their taste for festivities. In church, there was music, there was dancing. In the village, there was dancing, there was drumming. And in a village named Nakwabe that we visited, we had the chance to witness it firsthand in a community. The village organized a whole welcoming program, where dances, drumming and even poem reading from students took place.





NON - VERBAL SIGN AND LANGUAGE

When you visit Ghana for the first time, you'll quickly notice some cultural differences between Europe and this wonderful West African country. You will notice that there are many different languages in Ghana, and a lot of people speak up to ten languages or even more. However, there are also some non-verbal cues and behaviors that differ from those in Austria.


Greeting is very important to Ghanaians, and you can see this reflected in their local languages. In Dagbani, the language you'll learn when you travel to the northern region (Dagbon), there are many different ways and phrases to greet one another. It's not like in German or English, where you might just say "Hello, how are you?" It's much more than that. Of course, you'll ask "How are you?" but you're also expected to ask about family, work, the farm, and much more. In the countryside, you're expected to greet, even if you don't know the people. Normally you greet the elders first or the person you know if there are more than one person present. The hand you use to greet someone is also important.

In Ghana, the right hand holds significant importance. You greet with the right hand, eat with the right hand, and raise your right hand in school when you want to ask a question. As you might know, in Ghana, people eat with their hands. So, if your right hand is dirty because you're eating and someone asks you to hand them something, you can use your left hand, but you support your left hand with your right and even say: "Sorry for the left." At first, it felt very unfamiliar, and we often used our left hands without thinking. But even now that I'm back home in Austria, I often find myself remembering this and making an effort to use my right hand.

Ghanaians are known for their generosity, and their informal motto reflects this: "Everything that is outside is for everyone." If you don't want to share something, you need to keep it hidden. It is considered impolite to refuse water or food when it is offered to you, unless you have a clear reason for why you can't eat or drink what has been given. It's also very common to receive gifts from others. They won't directly ask for anything in return, but when they give you a gift, they do expect one from you as well. However, it doesn't have to be of the same value; the gesture itself is more important than the material worth.

Helena





Ghana will also slow you down. If there's no urgency, Ghanaians won't walk fast. You shouldn't expect things to happen immediately. Ghanaians are not in a rush, and Ghanaian time is different from Austrian time. Five minutes in Austrian time can easily mean at least 20 minutes in Ghanaian time.

If you're talking to a Ghanaian and they don't look you in the face while speaking, don't worry—it's normal. They are listening, but it's considered impolite to make direct eye contact while talking, especially with a chief. You also shouldn't cross your legs in front of a chief, as this is seen as a sign of power.

Ghanaians aren't very direct when it comes to expressing what they want. Instead, they'll tell you a story that leads to their point, often speaking in metaphors. For example, when a chief passes away, they might say that "a great tree has fallen."

It's also considered impolite to correct someone in public, and even worse to shout at someone in front of others. You can speak to the person privately, but never embarrass someone in front of others.

In the local languages, "it smells" always means something is bad. So if you smell food in Ghana, people will think you don't like it and that you believe it's spoiled. The phrase "it smells good" don't exist in the local languages.

During your time in Ghana, you will receive many proposals, but don't get upset. It's a way of starting some kind of interaction with you. Even if an older man says this to you, it's not meant to be taken seriously. A good response is: "Yes, I will marry you, but you have to see my father first."

Ghana is a colorful country, but for funerals, people typically wear black and red, while grandchildren are allowed to wear white at their grandparents' funeral. Muslims can wear any color for funerals.

Other non-verbal gestures in Ghana include clapping your hands, which is a way to call someone over. Tapping your thumb on your fist is considered an insult, similar to the middle finger gesture in Austria. But don't worry, as a foreigner you are allowed to make mistakes and people will understand.

Helena



FOOD

The food in Ghana is very different to what we eat in Austria. Although the tastes were so different for us, we really enjoyed the Ghanaian cuisine. In the morning we usually had some white bread, omelet and fruits like mango and pineapple. More common for Ghanaian people although would be to have a porridge which can be also spicy. In the village I also observed that they would just eat fufu or banku from the day before as a breakfast. To drink coffee is rather rare in Ghana, it is more common to drink some black tea in the morning.

Lunch and dinner are very big portions which will keep your stomach full for a long time. Ghanaians rarely eat snacks or dessert, they rather have big portions and just eat two or three times a day. Maybe they'll have some fruits like mango, banana or pineapple but that's in the village for example also uncommon if they don't grow these plants by themselves.

For lunch and dinner there are several dishes usually with meat and some carbs. The most popular food would be fufu, banku or kenkey which comes with a spicy soup and meat. Also jollof rice or plain rice with fried vegetables is very common to eat, mostly with a hot sauce to add. The rices were our savior dishes for vegetarians. For meat Ghanaians prefer goat or chicken but they also enjoy eating fish. And they will eat the whole fish... they'll just leave the bones.

Fried plantain is also a delicacy which we personally all enjoyed a lot.



Valentina D.

HOW TO BECOME A CHIEF

The village immersion has been the heart of the DKA-study-tour. For three days and four nights the group was divided into 4 villages, Gumo, Nwodua, Napagyili and Yapalsi. There we should get to know the culture of Northern Ghana intensively and we experienced so many things up close what we were taught the weeks before. Language, family structure, farming, education and especially interaction with the people. For my part I stayed in Napagyili for my second time together with George from Kenia, who took part in our group as well, for he is a partner of DKA organizing a Study tour in Kenia, and he was sent to our group to see how they set this project up in Ghana. We lived there near our helpers place Simon. A compound of 4 little huts surrounded by a wall that protected us as long as the door was closed. But when we opened it, they would come: Children. Many children. The experience in the villages was very different from group to group. And for instance in our village there occurred a very special and remarkable incident. The first thing we did when we arrived in Napagyili was to visit the chief. We got cola nuts and asked the Wulanah, the chief's linguist and spokesman, for an audience. We entered the palace and sat on the floor. I was asked why I was here and told him that I had been to this place 20 years ago, that my daughter has a Dagomba name, Suhuyini, and that parts of my family in Austria have connections to West Africa (two brothers in law have their roots in Gambia). And that it was nice to return. The chief then offered me the honour of being named Maligu-Naa. The title refers to a sub-chief whose job is generally to solve problems. George from Kenya will be my Wulanah, my spokesman. I accepted the honour without knowing what to expect. (Could you say no to such an offer?) The ceremony was supposed to take place in two days and Simon promised to keep the celebration small. But nothing came of it. We had to get 100 cola nuts, buy a smock and a hat for me, pay the drummers and organize drinks. We rode Simons motorbike, tried out different smocks in a private house, bought two large packs of drinks in a shop and balanced them back to Napagyili. Two days later the ceremony took place. At first it consisted of waiting. Everyone else in our group came from the villages to see how one becomes a chief. After a few hours I am fetched, in front of me George, my Wulanah, behind me, Maligu-Naa, both of us in smocks, walking in single file towards the chief's palace to the rhythm of the drummers and armed with 100 cola nuts. We entered the palace, the elders were present, each in their position.

Maligu-Naa Hermann



George sat in front of the chief, I was to the side, too far away from my Wulanah, next to me were my Napaa, my water woman, Helena, whose function was not clear to me. I didn't understand a lot of things either and waited for the ritual to take over me. And then it happened: after lengthy greetings, my sitting position was changed. I was now sitting directly in front of the chief, his spokesman, who asked me if I will come when the chief needed me. I said yes, and another white smock was put over my smock. It was hot, the material was heavy. We ate Cola Nuts, the drummers started playing again, I stuck coins to their sweaty foreheads. We went out with them, my Wulana in front of me, me behind him, we danced to our Compound, our new palace. Next to me were my Napaa, my water woman. At the threshold of the Compound my big toes were washed (and I didn't expect that), the Wulanah poured water three times over my left toe, three times over my right toe, I was led into my hut, Napaa next to me on the bed, the chief's Wulanah gave me something to drink, three times he pushed the calabash of water over my left shoulder, three times over my right shoulder, three times to my lips. My Wulanah, my spokesman, who will soon be back in Kenya and I will be in Austria, was dancing outside in the courtyard with all the other guests. The next day I left and before I left I took a walk around the village and everyone smiled and called out to me: Maligu-Naa and I was not sure whether they are making fun of me or are serious about me, I suspect both.

And now back in Austria I am waiting for the Chief to call me!



THE VEGETATION IN GHANA

Whether it may be rain forests, savannas or delta regions – the vegetation of Ghana is as diverse as it is breathtakingly beautiful. The country is divided into 16 regions in total, of which we crossed at least seven. On our first day, when we landed, we stayed in Accra, which is part of the greater Accra region. Later we also drove through the East region to get to Koforidua, the Central Region in which Cape Coast is located, the Ashanti region where we learned about the Ashanti culture, we crossed the Bono region to later get to Tamale which is part of the northern region. And last but not least, we also drove through the savanna region in order to get to Damongo. As you can probably imagine now, there are many different kinds of vegetation to see and experience in Ghana.

However, before introducing the three major vegetation zones, it's important to know about the climate. Ghana is located within a tropical climate zone near the equator and also the Gulf of Guinea which gives it a warm climate. There are also the rainy season (usually from May until September) and the dry season (usually from November until April) which might differ from region to region or also due to exogenous forces like weather conditions or man-made climate change. All of these factors have an impact on the different vegetation zones in Ghana.

The coastal savanna

Accra is a huge city with around 2.7 million people living and working there. Every now and then, you can see several plants, but in general it could be said that there isn't that much space for nature in Accra. When leaving the bustling city however, our group slowly got to experience the beauty of the coastal savanna. This region extends from Accra to Cape Coast and a bit further. Due to the right climate conditions, the vegetation is very lush and green. The landscapes you can see there are mostly flat and the plants are normally rather small. You can especially find many types of grasses and small bushes that thrive in this region. One of those plants is called "Chufa" better known as the delicious tiger nut that locals often enjoy as a snack. Another thing you can find there are the countless anthills that can reach an impressive height of around 4 meters. However, the ones we came across were usually around 2 meters.



Andrea



The forest zone



When making our way to Kakum forest, we slowly left the coastal savanna. It didn't take long before our group noticed a change in landscape and the bushes of the savanna 'turning into trees' the closer we came up north. Finally, when we arrived at Kakum national park, we were surrounded by really tall trees. The most noticeable characteristic of the forest zone is how dense the forests are. Not a lot of sunlight comes through the leaves, but rain sure does. That's part of the reason why rainforests are so humid. The warmth and humidity create very unique ecosystems within the different layers of rainforests. These ecosystems are essential for all plants and animals inhabiting them. Many insects, birds and small mammals live in the rainforests of Ghana.

The northern savanna zone

Before entering the last of the three major vegetation zones of Ghana, there was a noticeable difference in landscapes, again. We left the forest zone and the forests consisting of tall trees turned into green savannas where mostly grasses, bushes and few trees grew. That might sound very similar to the coastal savanna. However, there is a significant difference. Many (but not all!) parts of the northern region in Ghana are very dry in comparison to the southern parts of the country. On top of that, there is also the dry season which usually occurs from November to April. That's why during the dry season plants don't grow as well as they normally would. As a result of droughts or water shortage in general, life can become very difficult for locals. Despite this, there are exceptions, as well. In Mole national park for example (which is also part of the northern region) there are lush green forests and savannas in which many animal species such as elephants, bushbucks or red-billed hornbills live.



AGRICULTURE



During our trip, the topic of agriculture came up again and again.

In general, agricultural production plays a major role in the Ghanaian population. Many families engage in subsistence farming in order to secure their own food supply. Across the country, almost half of the working population is employed in agriculture and makes a significant contribution to the gross domestic product. Ghana is largely based on small-scale farming.

On our bus rides, we could see the fields passing by, which are mainly used to grow maize and rice. Many types of grain, vegetables and fruit were of course also served on our plates. For example, manioc in the form of fufu, corn in the form of banku and rice in all its different varieties. A favorite for many of us: Jollof rice. Livestock farming mainly involves keeping goats, chickens and cows, which are allowed to graze freely in many places. I personally was very excited about the chicken coops.



Alina





Agriculture plays an essential role for many families, both for their own food security and to generate income. Yields are significantly influenced by the rainy and dry seasons. Depending on the region, there are one or two rainy seasons and therefore one or two harvest periods. In a lecture in our very first week, we learned about the problem of child labor on cocoa plantations. In the same week, we traveled to Koforidua and visited an organic cocoa farm nearby and learned about the production steps of cocoa production from planting to drying.

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Another source of income for many families, especially women, is the shea tree, whose nuts can be used to make the end product shea butter. During a visit to a cooperative based in Tamale, we were able to see all the steps required for successful shea butter production on site. Many of us also had the opportunity to actively support their local families in the production process during our stay in the village.



POLITICAL SYSTEM



Ghana is considered a well-established and stable democracy. A brief look at the surrounding neighboring countries illustrates how special Ghana is in this aspect on the African continent, as they are largely characterized by authoritarian leadership styles. The road from Ghana's independence in 1957 to today's stable democracy was long and full of obstacles. In the second half of the 20th century, the country was destabilized by a series of coups, which led to political unrest for a long time. However, with the adoption of the new constitution in 1992 under the popular President Jerry Rawlings, Ghana found its way to democracy, which it has maintained to this day.

Today, Ghana is classified as a “flawed democracy” - a system of government that safeguards basic democratic principles such as freedom of the press, freedom of speech and the protection of human rights, but still faces challenges. These include corruption, great economic inequality and outbreaks of violence during the electoral process.

The challenges of the political system become particularly clear when talking to local people. Many express extreme disillusionment when it comes to politics. A visit to a cocoa farm made it clear to us just how much the citizens distrust the government. Cocoa production is an exhausting and physically intensive job that demands a lot from the farmers. At the same time, the profit that cocoa farmers make from their product is minimal. It is estimated that less than 5% of the final price of a bar of chocolate goes to the farmers. Most of the profit goes to middlemen, processing companies, chocolate manufacturers and retailers. The farmers therefore hardly benefit from the fruits of their hard work. When asked why the state does not intervene to ensure fair prices for farmers, one cocoa farmer was quite frank: The government relies on money from large corporations, such as chocolate producers from Western countries, to finance its own projects and secure its power. It is therefore deliberately acting against the interests of its own people in order to maintain its political position. The local people are well aware of this fact and it contributes significantly to political frustration.

Whether this frustration will lead to a change of government remains to be seen. The elections in December 2024 will show whether the ruling NPP party will be replaced by the opposition NDC party - a hope shared by many citizens.

WITCH CAMP

On July 20th, we traveled to Yendi to visit the Christian Mothers Association. After that, we continued on to Neni to see a witch camp. Even though we might think witch trials are a thing of the past, they remain a relevant topic in some parts of the world, including Ghana. In Ghana, people believe that nothing happens without a reason. So, if your neighbor gets bitten by a snake and your cousin saw the two of you arguing, it could be interpreted as you being a witch who sent that snake to him.

In Ghana, there are hundreds of witch camps. These camps are places where survivors are forced to flee, either out of fear for their lives following an accusation or because they have been expelled and rejected by their communities. The conditions in these camps are poor. I must admit, I was unprepared for the situation in this village. I expected elderly women and maybe also men, but there were also a lot of children who lived there with their families. They asked us for food, money, and pens, and they were quite insistent, which I can understand. Others in our group were able to handle the situation better, and they managed to distract the children while asking them questions about their favorite subjects, what they like to play, and other things. I felt frozen and overwhelmed with guilt—guilt because the West shares responsibility for this poverty, guilt for being born in Austria, and guilt for feeling powerless to make a difference.

On the way back to our accommodation, I felt sad. Stephan and other members of the group encouraged and comforted me. I realized that I approached the situation with the wrong mindset, feeling bad because I couldn't give anything to the children. But it's not always about how much material support you provide; the others helped me understand that showing interest in the children and listening to them can also make a positive impact. I believe it's important to talk about these places and to empower the people and families who live there.



Helena

ANIMALS

As we all know, Africa is known for the interesting and incredibly diverse wildlife. Of course you can't generalize all of Africa but Ghana is no exception. There are a lot of different species which live in Ghana's mesmerizing nature. But you don't always see wild animals in your day-to-day life. But what you will see are goats. Lots of them. Next up are sheep and guinea fowls. It's not common in Ghana to keep your farm stock in captivity. They are roaming the street all day long until it's time to go home, which they usually do on their own. The farmers just trust their animals to return when it's time. As a result we could enjoy the sight of every farm animal there is, which is good for us. But we were told that, because of the free roaming, it is possible that other people just take someone else's animals and keep them. So as we experienced, you see farm stock everywhere, everyday, all the time. But to my surprise, cats and dogs are pretty rare. Sporadically, you will see them but when you do, you (sadly) can't pet them most of the time due to their shyness. So when we finally saw a cat that liked us, we were having the time of our lives.

The farm stock in Ghana doesn't differ too much from the Austrian one. When it comes to popularity, the goat is number one. Otherwise you will see sheep, chicken, cattle and the guinea fowls. However, even if the animals are similar to the ones we know, they look different in Ghana. Due to the heat, the animals are often a lot smaller and not as muscular as in Austria.

Thomas, our village helper, told us how jealous he is of our cows but they just would not survive the heat. The chicken also are a lot smaller and the sheep don't have the amount of wool as you would see it in other countries. Also their ears are often a lot bigger because of thermo-regulation.



Magdalena



When it comes to the morality of animals, Ghana was a surprise for the most of us. Animals are possessions, which are there for eating. And of course we all knew that, but the treatment is different from what we personally know. In Austria (though not always executed in the right way) you have to follow certain laws and guidelines in the animals favor. In Ghana, those regulations are more loose, so you will often see animals tied up on top of cars. For us it often felt like, empathy regarding animals was slim. But you have to keep in mind that every culture is different and in Ghana, animals are essential for a healthy life.

Still the emotional distance was very new and not always easy for us. Dora (who studies Agriculture) told me that there are university courses, where the students learn how not to get emotionally attached to animals. As difficult as it was for us, the people in Ghana just have a different mentality and of course other priorities. Meat is valuable and important.

Animals are also a valuable present for visitors. Though common in Ghana, we were very surprised when we were given two guinea fowls after we visited a chief. Or a goat and four guinea fowls when we attended a festivity. Though we were grateful for the act and the generosity, we still asked Stephen to give them to someone who actually needs them.

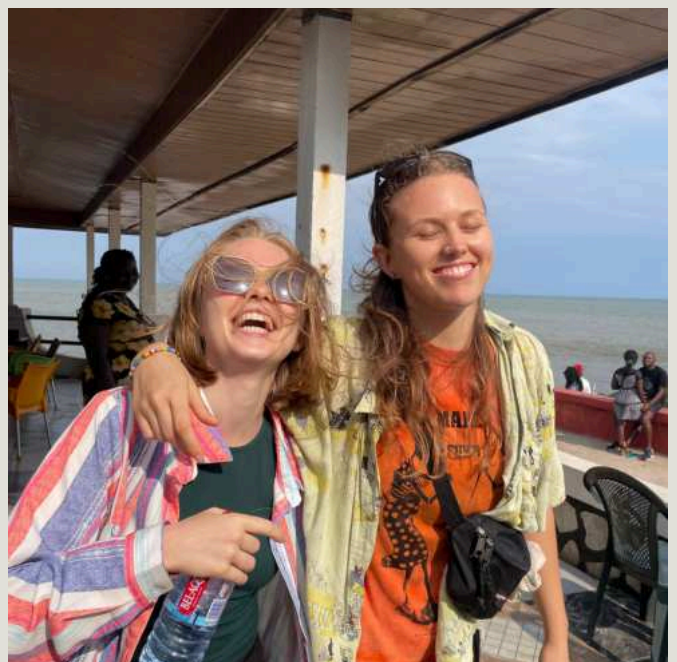
Even though we were very happy with the goats, we were thrilled to go to Mole National Park to see some wild animals and we were lucky. The tour hasn't even started and we already saw elephants. Mole is Ghana's first, largest and most prestigious protected area. It covers an area of 4,577 km² of fairly undisturbed Guinea savannah in the northern part of Ghana.

We were accompanied by two rangers who knew all the elephants' names. Other than elephants, we saw monkeys, antelopes, warthogs and lots of birds.

It was very impressive to see those animals in the wild. It was one of my favorite places in Ghana.









Napagyili



Gumo



Yapalsi



Nwodua



ZITATE / QUOTES

- Alina: „Wenn wer fotografieren möchte könnts euch gern bei Kamera ausborgen....i dua nämlich goa ned so gern fotografieren.“
- Valentina hat was falsch verstanden und wurde korrigiert
- „Tja...i hör halt nur des, wos i hören will.“
- Magda als wir über eine Straße mit SEHR vielen Schlaglöchern fuhren: „Boah do wird ma in den Schlaf geschaukelt" - Vali: „....geschlagen“
- Alina (Vegetarierin): „I iss kan Fisch“ - Lea (Vegetarierin): „Außer er is im vegetarischen Essen.“
- Hermann: „I hob in am Film mitgespielt. Der Film is zwo ganz okay oba nu cooler is die Geschichte wie I dazu kommen bin.“
- Jasmin: „Meine Superkraft ist, dass Ichs lange ohne pinkeln aushalte. Hab ich von mein Papa.“
- Andrea: „Ventilatoren sind geil. Die blasen die Moskitos weg.“
- Helena: „I bin zwo ned witzig oba i bin dafür a Rampensau.“ - Magda: „I find di scho witzig.“ - Helena: „Danke, eigentlich find i mi selber eh a witzig.“
- Zoelie: „Okay Stephen, so when you say we meet at three, we really have time until 5?“
- Magda: „Speed limits here are just a suggestion.“
- Stephen all the time: „Are you okay? Are you running?“
- Mary, after we (in our opinion) bargained well at the Art Market: “Oh no, that's too much. That's not a good price. Next time, you ask me.”

General things we all said often

- „Kannst ma die Bilder schicken?“ "Schickst mas per Quickshare?"
- „I gfrei mi auf Mary ihr Essen“
- „Wann fahren wir WIRKLICH weg?“
- „Hermaaaaaaann?“
- „Stepheeeen?“
- „Can we turn on the AC?“
- „Can we stop? We need to go to the toilet.“
- „Naa“
- „Fried rice, please.“
- „Hat wer Kohletabletten?“
- „Habt's eh alle de Malarone scho genommen?“
- „Steven, please dance“
- „Is there meat in it?“
- „Is it spicy?“
- „Mmmmmmh.....Mangos.“
- „Schauts, die Ziege da!“
- „I vamiss an Al Hassan“