

Katie Wilkinson Scholarship Report

An examination into sustainable development of rural energy sources within the Central Region, Ghana.

by David Kemp

Introduction

My name is David Kemp and I am 20 years old. I really enjoy studying at the university of East Anglia and I take particular interest in Energy, Technology, Forest Resources, Ecology, Social processes and of course Development. Because of these interests I chose to focus my dissertation on the above title and I decided that I would travel to Ghana where studying interactions between these interests could give me first hand data.

In collecting this data my aims were:

- 1) To improve my own knowledge and understanding of the problems and challenges involved with energy usage and consumption
- 2) To collect primary data to be used within my dissertation
- 3) To better myself as a person and impart knowledge to those around me from whom I would also learn from.

I achieved 1) and 3) of these aims with the help of financial support from the scholarship and currently I am analysing the data which I received.

Whilst I was in the Central Region, Ghana my workload was divided between the weekdays, which I spent on volunteering with an organisation called CEJOCEP¹ and the weekends when I spent time on data collection. The rest of this report will be focused on these two parts.

The Dissertation

Over the last few decades forest resources within Ghana have been declining, whilst the demand for energy for basic human needs and rights has increased. Whilst urban development in Ghana appears very rapid rural development tends to have lagged with increasing demands for electricity, gas and other modern fuels having been achieved by those rich enough in urban areas. Meeting these demands in rural areas would allow the individuals and communities concerned to transform their livelihoods and lifestyles. I chose to carry out my investigation within rural areas where I believed that these demands would not have been met due to a lack of knowledge; however now I would expect that the lack of physical and social infrastructure within the region are more important factors to consider. Figures 1 and 2 show the environments within which my research concentrates.



Figure 1 – This is a photo taken first hand by myself showing a snapshot of the natural ecological environment of the area. The photo is taken standing on a bridge built over a small river and marsh land. A lush acacia woodland can be seen on the horizon – A typical view of Central Region Landscape

¹ CEJOCEP – Centre for Job Creation and Environmental Protection <http://www.cejocep.org/> Nick Redmond 2008

To undertake the research, I used funds from the scholarship to visit three villages called Dunkwakrom, Apuweska and Simiw and in each I interviewed 20 respondents (10 male and 10 female in each) so in total I returned to England with 60 interviews. I also left each applicant a diary with which I asked them to fill in the wood fuel that they used over a week and what they used the energy gained for. Respondents were given a small gift of sugar on completion of both the tasks.

The first task was completed with much success, particularly due to the assistance which a local translator gave me, however the second task proved more problematic as I had overestimated the general numeracy levels of inhabitants in dealing with fractions although I did receive very interesting information on the different staples which people were cooking.

I am thankful for the support which I received from Mr Lawrence Ahrin (Executive Director of CEJOCEP) who interpreted and Miss Comfort Arthur (CEJOCEP cook) who administrated my research.



Figure 2 Acacia seedlings growing amongst Bamboo (Pampuri in the local dialect) – both key wood resources for locals within the Central Region, Ghana.

The Voluntary Work

I worked with CEJOCEP centre for job creation and environmental protection for 8 weeks and I have learnt so much personally from this experience - I did not know the meaning of hard work before I worked on the projects in Kakumdo, Cape coast, Central Region. I was involved chiefly with tree planting to ameliorate and reforest the school environment, but I also undertook work on constructing CEJOCEP international school, which I hope will continue to develop into the future. I also had the opportunity to teach some English, French and Geography to the children attending school there, which I relished. I have learnt that; life is about what you make of it, there will always be questions, and that love for our fellow brothers and sisters is invaluable.



Figure 3 – Myself working with local Children from Kakumdo – in the picture we are moving soil to fill in the foundations of a new school building being constructed. The work was very hard but rewarding!

All my love to you Katie's family, thank you for helping me to have this wonderful learning experience and some day I hope that there will be trees everywhere celebrating the wonderful thing about this planet – life – it is invaluable.