

Briefing on the visits to Ghana and Cameroon possible follow up strategies

23 Novembre 2023



Plan

- ▶ 1 -Ghana Country Visit
- ▶ 2-Cameroon Country Visit
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Ghana Country visit

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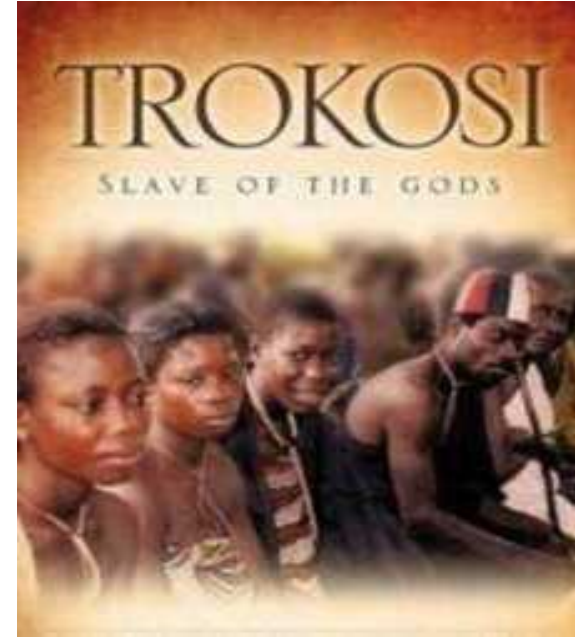
Ada Community

- ▶ In this community women are called by the god of the community to serve him in a shrine for about 5 to 12 years. Within which the young girl during the service period does not go to school or socialize with others.



Trokosi Sexual Slavery System in Ghana, Togo and Benin

- ▶ Trokosi, which is a form of slavery which is a significant issue in Ghana with over 5,000 women and 15,000 children affected,
- ▶ The Trokosi system, predominantly in Ghana, Togo, and Benin, involves the enslavement of women and girls as a form of atonement to the gods for perceived wrongdoings either by them or their families. They are subjected to forced labor and sexual exploitation within shrines
- ▶ The practice calls for young girls, normally aged between 5 and 10 years, to be given to the Shrine as a 'wife to the gods'. The trokos\ becomes a slave to the Shrine, bonded there to attend to Shrine rituals and maintenance



Visiting the Nkyinkyim Museum

- ▶ The Nkyinkyim Museum, a space dedicated to visual archiving of African history and African Heritage located in the farmlands of Nuhalenya-Ada in the Greater Accra region. The museum is creatively built with a curation of unique sculptures that tell the stories of Africa's past and the struggles of Black people. It takes an hour and a half to tour the various sites on the over 100 acres of land set aside for artistic display. Many more works are being commissioned at the museum.



the University of Ghana



-In the University of Ghana, we went to the Blame library and had about 3 hours search in the library commons département. We found good articles about trokosi in thier digital archives,

- caste system in africa
- Religious Freedom and Vestal Virgins - The Trakosi Practice in Ghana
- Trokosi - liberation
- BBC Documentary about trokosi



KAYAYEI Women



- ▶ Kayayei women all came from the Northern , North eastern region and savanah of Ghana but from different ethnic groups such as wah , frafra, Dagomba, Nanumba, Mamprusi, Gonja and Komkombas. Other groups include Chekosis, Bimobas and Vaglas. Tamale, etc.The main reason for thier migration to the south mostly is Kumasi and Accra to carry bags on thier heads is due to poverty related to the fact that the own no Land to cultivate and for few having Land they face the issue of drought.



Expérience sharing meeting with National NGOs and officials in Kumasi

- ▶ Most of the CSOS know about the existence of the trokosi Practice .we have identified about 3 SCO to link with (Safe Child advocacy catholique archiduchesse of Kumasi, headed by Rev. Sister Olivia Omoh ,Global Forum of people with disability headed by hon.prince Debeh and the ported accoustum of Kumasi where aboubakar salifu is the secretary) the other CSOs will join as Solidarity.
- ▶
- ▶ The social Affairs was also represented by Mrs Esther Appraku Nyarko who is the métropolitain director



Meeting with Salifu abdulmujeeb, director of the peoples dialogue settlement



- ▶ The peoples Dialogue settlement acts as the champion organization for the marginalised communities in urban areas. Like the Kayayei who are 60% of the target group
- ▶ They work with association of communities such as the Ghana homeless peoples fédération, the youths at slums and the landlords association.
- ▶ They also serve as the secretariat of SDI set to manage the slums dwellers project

Meeting with scholars at the university of Ghana

- ▶ DIPO practice which is a transition ceremony for virgins in to sexual life thus the girls who gets sexually active before this ceremony are discriminated upon and may find it difficult to get married
- ▶ The field lords : where some ethnic groups had huge lands and those who don't have work for them for little pay or just to be granted a small temporal piece of land .
- ▶ Manual scavenging ; where a particular ethnic group known as the frafra and gurunsi were enslaved by other northerners as they are to be the only ethnic group doing this job. They are identified by the long marks on their faces
- ▶ Pawn : where by parents take loans and their children work to pay for the debt depending on payment period. Most often these are hard and unclean jobs



Cameroon country visit

Meeting the Mobono and sedek bororo communities

- ▶ most of the Mbororo would not have birth certificates which prevents them from having access to essential resources such as education.
- ▶ For getting a birth certificate they have to pay five times as much as others. When they file a case because of stolen cattle, no investigation happens. So, access to justice is lacking, most of them would not even know about their rights.
- ▶ Furthermore, most of them would not have an ID and would, therefore, not have any access to the police station or court. They have no access to land. There are hardly any proper roads which they could use when moving with their cattles.



Meeting with CSO in Maroua and Yaounde

The different organizations share in how far and if they are working with Mbororo or other CDWDs. They state It is difficult to work with them as they are moving. Some say they isolate themselves and do not want any support.

During discussion Aminatu Noah, Association des Femmes et de Développement, mentions another group which is discriminated against: Ngoda. They are a sub group of Mafa. They are supposed to dispose of animal carcasses which they carry on their heads.

They do not have a problem with this job, which their community has been doing for some 100 years, as they profit from the meat of the animal which they can eat.

They would not speak in the presence of the dominant Vaivai.

They cannot freely choose their profession as they are forced into this work. Particularly, the youth hides their identity. Many of them leave the North to find other job possibilities and to marry whomever they like.

One colleague amongst Yaounde CSO's mentions a Mbororo community which lives in harmony with the mainstream people. They are well settled and have small businesses. This example could serve as a good practice.



Meeting with officials: Lamidos, divisional Officer and office of the governor

- ▶ The governor states that indigenous are considered in the Cameroonian laws. He feels that a lot has already been done for them by the state as well as by NGOs.
- ▶ The D.O clares to be open. So far, no Mbororo has approached the prefecture. As soon as this is the case he is open. Imam uses the opportunity to describe some cases of injustice.
- ▶ The lamido states that Mbororo are very conservative and do not claim their rights. Their only interest is to follow their animals - that is their lifestyle. They live in poverty but it is their choice. He also states that it is a demographic problem as there are too many people and too less land.



Meeting with National Human Right Commission in Maroua and Yaounde



Mme Bouba , Commissioner at the CNHRC immediately understood the issue. She states how important it is to support the CDWD in their own spot. She was one of the few counterparts who agreed (and did not contradict) to the fact that the practices CDWD suffer from are rooted in traditional slavery systems.



She also refers to some other communities as for example the Baka as well as to a discrimination practice of exploitation which is known as Casa. In that Baka have to work on plantations and are not paid with money but with alcohol and drugs.

Meeting with UN Agencies : UN Permanent Resident and UN Women



- ▶ The Office of the UN High Commissioner for HR is supporting some projects on Indigenous People in cooperation with the NHRC. They are also in the process of conducting a study on Mbororo and Baka. As soon as it is released they will inform us.
- ▶ They, furthermore, suggest us to contact the Social Welfare Department. They also offer us to make suggestions for their next 4-year-plan.



The UN Women country representative Mme Marie Pierre Raky Chaupin has installed a new full-time position who is only focusing on “left behind”. He may be a good anchor point for us. Particularly as they are just in the process of elaborating a strategy.

Main Observations

- ▶ Some communities which are defined as class of workers (Like Kayayi's, in Ghana) could have indigenous or DWD characteristics. Need more engagement and historical analysis to discern if there are CDWD or Indigenous.
- ▶ There are some communities who have been affected by purity-pollution differentiation - they could be CDWDs - like Fra Fra community in Ghana and Ngoda in Cameroon and many more.
- ▶ narrative of colonial slavery is still strong and not much of an exploration of pre-colonial and indigenous forms of Slavery. ONLY one book we have come across - Indigenous Slavery in Ghana - which talks of communities which are affected by pre-colonial forms of slavery.
- ▶ Some communities which are currently categorised as Indigenous - could have CDWD characteristics - of discrimination and purity and pollution - like Mbororo and Mbaka other communities. This too needs further discussion.
- ▶ There are some individuals like Prof Suleiman in Ghana University of Ghana and Commissioner Bouba who are very open to exploring the CDWD phenomenon in Ghana and Cameroon. We need to explore them more.
- ▶ There are no prominent NGOs or national networks which focus on the most vulnerable in the African or domestic context.

Actions to the way forward

- ▶ Together with Prof. Sulaiman , Head of the department of Sociology at the University of Ghana we could conduct a series of webinars on the phenomenon of CDWD in Ghana and across the region For this we need to:
 - ▶ one or two conversations with the Prof Sulaiman and within GFoD as to who to proceed with this idea.
 - ▶ Draft a concept note for such a webinar and invites papers on CDWD practices/communities in Ghana as well as the region.
 - ▶ Allocate resources or mobilise resources
- ▶ Cooperation with Aminatu Noah, Association des Femmes et de Développement, in the Extreme North region, study on the situation of Ngoda is needed - who would very much like to carry on the intense work on Ngoda.
- ▶ Elaboration of a concept note for a study of CDWD which will be conducted by the NHRC.
- ▶ Elaboration of suggestions to make sure that CDWDs are included into their next plan period of NHRC
- ▶ Linking up with the “left behind” study being done by OHCHR Cameroon to find out whether the CDWD groups are covered in this study.
- ▶ Explore Networks and NGOs who have an interest in this area.



THANK YOU

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