

“CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME E-WASTE MANAGEMENT PROJECT IN GHANA”

A LAUDATO SI IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVE IN GHANA

Background:

Following the call of Pope Francis in his Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si* and by the commissioning of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, **Caritas Ghana** in 2017, launched the "**Care of our Common Home**" e-waste management campaign in collaboration with the **Marshallan Relief and Development Services (MAREDES)**, an NGO of the **Knights of Marshall**, and other Faith Based Organizations. The aim of the campaign is to strengthen environmental awareness among the population with particular reference to e-waste, to collect, dismantle and recycle them in an orderly and safe manner, to re-train the people currently engaged in the hazardous work in the professional handling of e-waste and open up future employment prospects for others.

The problem

Thousands of sea freight containers arrive at the seaport of Ghana everyday full of used electrical appliances such as computers, mobile phones, television sets, air conditioners, and refrigerators. Some of these get repaired and brought back to life, but a considerable amount end up as e-waste that are dumped in the many scrap yards spread around the country. Some people have found themselves jobs by dismantling and recycling the e-waste. Unfortunately they use methods that are not only injurious to their health but also to that of nearby residents through the heavy pollution the cause to air in the environment .

Progress, Facts & Figures

- 7 Collection Centers so far established in the Archdiocese of Accra in collaboration with MAREDES with funding from the German Development Cooperation (GIZ).
- 3 Collection Centers in the Archdiocese of Tamale have been opened with the support of the French Embassy.
- So far a total of 4,780 kg of e-waste has been collected in Accra since the project was launched. This includes 1,800 kg collected in 2020 (Jan and Feb alone) but now temporarily halted with the outbreak of the Corona Pandemic.
- Workshop on e-waste management organized for members of the interfaith network – Forum for Actions on Inclusion, Transparency and Harmony (FAITH) in Ghana with the aim of mobilizing broad civic awareness and action.
- Facilitated a national dialogue meeting between government stakeholders and Religious Leaders on how to enforce laws and regulations on electronic waste management.
- 2019 Caritas Week in November focused on Sanitation, Pollution and Electronic waste and a day's public forum was devoted to E-waste management, in collaboration with the national Environmental Protection Agency.
- A Social Impact Business model on Electronic Waste has been developed and currently being negotiated for investments by partners.

- Currently, a credible and internationally recognized Recycling Company, “City Waste Recycling Company Ltd”, picks up the collected waste and recycles everything.

Future Plans on Research and Financial Value Development of E-Waste

- As the collection of e-waste from private households and businesses is very slow, a study to understand the actual method of e-waste collection is being conducted in Accra (Spintex and Kwashieman) by Caritas Ghana in partnership with GIZ and MAREDES.
- This study aims to gather information on e-waste on its way from households and small and mid-size enterprises (SME) to final destinations where the disassembly takes place. At the same time, the value chain of e-waste will be examined. The background for this question is the consideration of how to transform the informal collection and transport of e-waste into a formalized collection structure without ignoring the socio-economic concerns of informal collectors.

Further development of the "CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME" Campaign

- A feasibility study on how the e-waste campaign could be supplemented by the waste fractions "plastic". This pilot is being explored in Tamale.
- Based on the study a project concept for plastic collection and pre-processing has been developed.

Results:

- The enlargement makes sense from an environmental point of view. Avoiding / reduction of littering of the environment. Complements the environmental objective of the campaign CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME.
- The pre-treatment of plastic waste makes good business sense. The added value is technically easy to implement.
- Pre-treatment of plastics is labor-intensive (employment effect).
- Investment is manageable (approx. GHS 60,000 about \$12,000)
- With a capacity utilization of only 50% (500 kg plastic/day), the employment of approx. 25 people can be secured in the long term.
- A pilot plant can be built and operated in Tamale. The results are to be evaluated after a consolidation phase.

Conclusion

The “Care for Our Common Home E-waste Management Project” has become a flagship project for Caritas Ghana and its partners for the Laudato Si Year. Other initiatives on developing tree plantations with partners on Church Lands across all 20 Dioceses in Ghana, using a social impact investment model, are being also being discussed.