

D5500 Rotarians Plan Projects in West Africa (D9100)

D5500 Rotarians Ernie and Sally Montagne (Sierra Vista RC and Sierra Vista Sunrise RC, respectively) recently returned from their second trip to West Africa, traveling under a Rotary Volunteer Service Grant to plan projects in the areas of water, sanitation, health, and education.

During their trip from Dec 5-24, they met with Rotarians from more than eight clubs and with community leaders in many communities and functional areas. They also had an opportunity to visit Rotary projects recently executed in partnership between their clubs and clubs in Togo and Niger. These ongoing projects are providing clean water, sanitation, and other aid to thousands of needy people who formerly lacked access to clean water and other basic necessities. These projects are being supported by hundreds of Rotarians in over 60 clubs in six countries (plus 10 districts and The Rotary Foundation).

They saw first hand the positive effects a water well can have on a community, especially the improved health of the children, increased attendance at school, and overall well-being of the community.

They also learned that much needs to be done, especially in the areas of health, education, and sustainable income generation.

- Health care. Communities lack basic health care, and local mid-wives are untrained, resulting in many complications at births.
- Education. Schools lack almost everything except willing teachers. Many classrooms have up to 100 students. Basic supplies, such as books, papers, pencils, are non-existent. The principal learning aid is the blackboard, and the teacher is lucky to have a small piece of chalk.
- Sustainable income generation. A need exists for sustainable projects to provide a source of income to these people who have so little.

As a result of this visit, multiple new projects are being planned, and funds are being sought. Among the immediate high priority projects are:

- Five water wells in Togo. \$85,000.
- A set of 10 projects being executed in cooperation between Rotary and the US Peace Corps in Niger to provide wells, sanitation, school equipment, a health education manual, and a grain bank. \$46,000.
- Honey production in Togo to provide income to needy people. \$62,000
- Other projects are also available in the areas of health, education, income generation, water, and sanitation.

In addition, plans are being developed for a 3-H grant to be executed over a longer term. One proposal is for gum-arabic agro-forestry in Niger. This project would be a cooperative project between Rotary and the US Peace Corps. The advantage of this arrangement is that the Peace Corps has a presence in the

communities and can provide trained staff who are knowledgeable in the techniques and procedures associated with the process.

The following planning activities were completed:

1. In Togo.

a. Vicinity of Lome. With Rotarians from RC Lome-Zenith:

- Visited School for the Blind in Togoville. Discussed potential projects with school officials and Rotarians from RC Lome-Zenith.
- Visited King Mensah Orphanage. Discussed potential projects with officials and Rotarians.
- Contacted US Embassy regarding Embassy Self-Help Program. Arranged meeting at Embassy for local Rotarians to learn about this program.
- Contacted Director US Peace Corps in Togo. Met with director and Rotarians to discuss potential cooperation on projects.
- Visited schools and medical facilities in Noepe.
- Met with community leaders in community of 10,000 near Kpalime. Discussed water distribution system project and school needs.
- Met with Rotarians to discuss potential 3-H grant, with emphasis on the Community Needs Assessment, schedule for submission of proposal, the need for a comprehensive, self-sustaining project, and other aspects related to 3-H grants.
- Met with representatives of several NGOs to discuss potential projects and/or collaboration.

b. Vicinity of Dapaong. With Rotarians from RC Lome-Zenith, RC Dapaong, and RC Tanjouare-Dapaong:

- Met with Prefect of Tanjouare Prefecture. Learned that the greatest need is for more water wells to provide clean water to communities that lack access to clean water. Visited several communities where wells are needed.
- Met with school officials (superintendent, principal, and teachers). Learned of the great need for books, supplies, materials, etc. Discussed potential projects with Rotarians.
- Visited community library near Tanjouare. Discussed potential book project with officials and Rotarians.
- Met with health care officials and other community leaders in Naki-Est. Discussed potential projects with Rotarians.
- Visited several agricultural training facilities, including one operated by the US Peace Corps. Discussed with Rotarians potential projects to expand agricultural activities to provide income to the local population, which is very poor.
- Visited site of broken earthen dam. Discussed potential project to repair dam.
- Met with Rotarians and US Peace Corps volunteers to discuss potential projects.

- Visited several existing Rotary project sites (water, sanitation, and education) to get feedback from local community members.

c. Summary. Identified numerous potential matching grant projects in the areas of water, sanitation, health, education, and income generation.

Opportunities exist to partner with RC Lome-Zenith, RC Dapaong, and RC Dapaong-Tanjouare. RC Lome-Zenith agreed to pursue 3-H grant, pending further internal review to specify the project.

2. In Niger. Vicinity of Niamey. Because of political unrest in Niger, travel outside of Niamey was limited. Despite this challenge, we accomplished the following:

a. Met with Rotarians from RC Agadez (who traveled to Niamey to meet with us) to discuss potential projects to provide water to tens of thousands of needy people in the Agadez region.

b. Met with Director US Peace Corps in Niger to discuss potential Peace Corps collaboration on a Rotary 3-H grant project.

c. Met with Peace Corps staff members and Rotarians to discuss gum Arabic forestry program as a potential 3-H project (with Peace Corps collaboration) to provide a means of income generation for needy people..

d. Met with about 30 Peace Corps volunteers and Rotarians to conduct training on joint projects and Rotary project requirements and to gather input on potential projects.

e. Met with Rotarians from RC Niamey-Gaweye, RC Niamey Criox-du-Sud, and with Rotaractors to discuss potential projects.

f. Visited several existing Rotary project sites (grain mill and water project) to get feedback from local community members.

g. Met with representatives of several NGOs and with health care officials to discuss needs, projects, and potential collaboration.

g. Summary. Identified several potential matching grant projects to be conducted in cooperation with US Peace Corps. Opportunities exist to partner with RC Niamey Croix-du-Sud and with RC Agadez. RC Niamey Croix-du-Sud agreed to pursue 3-H grant pending further internal discussion.