

Cape Coast 2021 (23.04.-05.06.) „Thank you for having me Ghana!” A report about my two months living in our sister city Cape Coast

In Cape Coast

As a member of the “Partnership Bonn Cape Coast e.V.” association I was able to stay in Cape Coast for about two months between April and June 2021 to fulfil an internship. There I was evaluating prior projects, deepening old contacts as well as getting in touch with new potential project partners.

From day one I felt warmly welcomed and kindly included in Cape Coast. At the beginning of my stay I was able to meet members of the Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA) thanks to the support of Annette (1st chairwoman in Bonn) und Richmond Yeboah, my contact person in Ghana. Some of the CCMA members already have been visiting Bonn due to the partnership. During our social intercourses we were able to discuss developments on the adaption of the already 2016 initiated Biodiversity Centre within the renaturation of the Fosu Lagoon. Furthermore, I was able to meet persons who have been participating in our recent “soap project”. Therefore, I met Mr. Kofi Essumen, the instructor of the “soap teaching”, as well as one of the women who participated in order to get first-hand information on the impact and sustainability of the project.

Thanks to Richmond Yeboah I visited the Technical University (CCTU) various times to discuss potential further information especially including scientific cooperations. Moreover, it was important to improve our contact to media associations. Therefore I visited the local University of Cape Coast’s radio station „Atlantik (ATL) FM“ and the CCTU’s radio station „Eagle FM“. Particularly the intercultural exchange through media and especially the radio is important for future cooperations.

In addition, I met the NGO Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust who is among other things managing the Biodiversity Center. This was relevant to ideally connect further teachings and projects with the centre by hosting them on site. During my stay in Ghana it was important to personally meet all the persons and partners. Furthermore, I was able to visit the Baobab Youth Training Center (Baobab Children Foundation) which is a sustainable educational project supporting young Ghanaians.

Climate crisis in Cape Coast

Overall shocking was the directly notable impact of climate change in Cape Coast. Along the coast from Elmina (a city approx. 10km West from Cape Coast) so called “sea defences” were installed due to the rising sea level in order to protect the local people from flooding. At the beach of Cape Coast sea defences like landing stages were built into the water. Thus, it was possible to enter the ocean by the beach. However, the waves where extremely strong due to the defences. Despite the newly installed sea defences the beach of Cape Coast has lost on its size due to the yet rising ocean.

During my stay (May/June) I was expecting huge rainfalls due to the rainy season which did not take place and negatively affected the local farmers. I was excited to see many rubbish bins set at the beach of Cape Coast in order to counteract the problematic issue of plastic waste and garbage in Ghanaian nature.

Living in Cape Coast

During my time in Cape Coast I stayed at Baobab Guest House, whose revenue supports the previously mentioned Baobab Foundation. The cosy hostel including a delicious vegan/vegetarian restaurant and craft shop with friendly staff was my home for two months. Most of the time and especially in the beginning I was the only guest. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the whole usually highly touristic city of Cape Coast was lacking visitors which affected many businesses.

Most of the time I walked by foot – which caused confused looks by locals – or I took the local transportation, taxis or the so called Pragyas (could be described as a „moped-carriage”) as well as by minibuses, the TroTros. I was impressed by the vivid and vibrant atmosphere of Cape Coast and really enjoyed the loud and bustling life of the city. It was easy to get in touch with people whether this was at the University or in town. Everybody was friendly, helpful and respectful. With some of my friends I also visited – like many locals– worship services and in my free time I discovered new places to spend some time at. For example, I loved watching the indescribable beautiful sunsets and sunrises at the beach. The harrowing tale of Cape Coast can be seen by visiting Cape Coast castle. By visiting those places listening to Ghanaian people we can make sure to never forget the tragic history which took place there. The cityscape is furthermore influenced by many colonial ruins.

My time in Cape Coast passed way too fast and I cannot wait to return to this beautiful and manifold city some time. I hope our planned projects for the future will successively be implemented and I can only wholeheartedly recommend a visit to Ghana and Cape Coast.