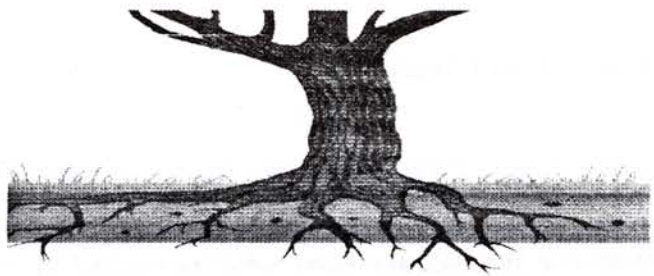


roots



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SEEDS PROGRAM VOLUME 1 NO. 2 SUMMER 1995

Greetings:

I have just returned from an immensely enjoyable and productive six week trip to Ghana. For the second straight year, Abena, my 7 year old daughter, joined me in the work and fun. She not only continues to make many friends and embrace Ghana's culture but she has also become a proficient "staff" photographer for SEEDS. Work on the Start-A-Library Project continues unabatedly. Thank you for your generosity and the quality of your book donations. SEEDS' first micro-economic enterprise effort, a mini-loan to a groundnut (peanut) cooperative involving fifteen Northern Region villages is helping make a real difference. This fall, Gladys Okyere, teacher, dancer and Ghanaian cultural resource person comes to the USA as SEEDS' first cultural exchange guest. I predict that she will be a wonderful ambassador of goodwill.

On the heels of our trip to Ghana, I was privileged to represent SEEDS in China. During my two week stay, I traveled to Shanghai and Beijing and participated in the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women NGO Forum. Shortly after my return from China, I was a panelist at the International Black Women's Congress Annual Conference in New Jersey.

This summer issue of Roots offers coverage of all the foregoing items as well as an announcement about a milestone in SEEDS' development. Read on and enjoy.

Sincerely,
Jacqueline Wright
Co-Editor

LATE BREAKING NEWS: SEEDS IS TAKING ROOTS

We are pleased to announce that our work through the **SEEDS PROGRAMS** is continuing to evolve. Several people committed to helping children and bridging gaps in human understanding and cooperation within our "global village", have come together to formalize the **SEEDS** work. We are in the process of forming a not-for-profit corporation that will eventually also have official international status as a non-governmental organization (NGO). See the next issue of **ROOTS** for details regarding the new organization.

THREE NEW STARTER LIBRARIES & BOOK DONATIONS

The **SEEDS Start-A-Library Project** established three more mini "starter libraries" around Ghana between July and September 1995. Libraries were opened in Aburi, Bole, and Bepong II. In addition to the new libraries, several existing libraries received hundreds of additional volumes. **SEEDS** donated specialized planning guidebooks and copies of *Where There is No Doctor* and *Where There is No Dentist* to the Centre for the Development & Education of People, (CEDEP), a small NGO located in Kumasi, Eastern Region. These volumes will enhance CEDEP's 827 volume community resource library. Additionally, **SEEDS** donated books and supplies to the Ringway Estates Junior Secondary School's mini-library (Accra, Ghana). Special thanks for their generous book and financial assistance go to the Straus Magnet School of Science (P.S 199 Manhattan) and the World and Women's Divisions of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. Swiss Air also provided assistance in transportation of the thirteen boxes of books. Yeoman work was done in collecting, packing, and transshipping the 1,500 pre-school, elementary and secondary school level books along with an assortment of school supplies. To date, **SEEDS** has distributed 7,000 volumes in total.

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Gladys Okyere, SEEDS Ghana Coordinator, was again responsible for "in country" logistics. Christian Aheto, SEEDS Ghana Transport Coordinator and Messrs. Ebo Quagraine and Nicholas Kumi were instrumental in facilitating the widely scattered book distributions. SEEDS has now assisted in starting eleven libraries in Ghana since the work was initiated in the summer of 1993. The libraries are located in seven of Ghana's ten regions. As part of a huge new 1995-96 *Start-A-Library* initiative that is still being finalized, SEEDS will establish libraries in the three remaining regions (i.e., Upper East, Upper West and Western).

SHARING SEEDS: MINI LOAN FOR EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In July, Jacqueline Wright, her daughter, Abena and Gloria Holmes of *Africa Seed* traveled hundreds of miles from Accra to the outskirts of the town of Chereponi, in the Northern Region, where they saw first-hand the successes of the Anufo Women's Literacy and Agricultural Cooperative. When Jacqueline, her daughter, Abena and Gloria arrived, many the Cooperative's five hundred women were in the midst of completing their second harvest of groundnuts (peanuts). It is anticipated that by June 1996, the cooperative will have produced at least two harvests enabling the women to make second purchases of books, school supplies and fabric as well as repaying the \$450.00 mini loan from SEEDS and *Africa Seed*.

Once repaid, the loan funds will be recycled to assist other micro enterprise efforts in the Chereponi area. "Thank you" is extended to Geoffrey Gle of the Ghana Institute of Linguistics Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) for introducing SEEDS to the work of the Anufo women and to GILLBT staffers Mary and Tom Holman and Abraham Boateng-Amokuah for their hospitality and assistance during our visit to Chereponi.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE UNDERSTANDING

All SEEDS initiatives are intended to be "people friendly". Our projects encourage intercultural awareness, understanding and assistance through people-to-people contact. We try to provide opportunities for so-called "average persons" of differing societies to know and learn from one another. The *Ghana-to-U.S. Cultural Exchange* effort is our most literal translation of these ideals as well as our most challenging project to date.

SEEDS' FIRST CULTURAL EXCHANGE GUEST

In October, Gladys Okyere, veteran educator and traditional dance artist will come to the western hemisphere for the first time. She will stay for three months and travel extensively in the eastern US and visit Toronto, Canada. Admittedly, Gladys is a *not-so-average* human being. For much of her life, she has "walked on two paths". She is a traditionalist who celebrates the richness and diversity of Ghanaian culture and secure in her identity, she is also active in the important contemporary work of promoting cooperation among the tribes and peoples (women and men) of Ghana.

For years, Gladys has also hosted visitors to Ghana; affording them easy access to "everyday people" as well as down-to-earth insights about Ghanaian culture and cultural nuance. Since 1992, Gladys has been a tireless volunteer in Ghana's mini-library movement; helping *both Books Across Ghana* and the *SEEDS Start-A-Library Project* to get established. Gladys has sought to work behind the scenes. Much of her year-round labors have therefore gone unsung. However, they have not been unappreciated by those who know her.

Gladys will be available for some speaking and/or cultural engagements. If you are an educator, member of a church group, fraternity/sorority, student association, museum group, arts or cultural center, contact us to arrange an "Exchange with Gladys".

SEEDS IN CONFERENCE

Jacqueline Wright, president of SEEDS left for China and the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women on August 25th two days after her return from six weeks in Ghana. Departing NYC's Kennedy International Airport with a large contingent mobilized by the National Council of Negro Women, Jacqueline expressed excitement and great anticipation for the success of the global gathering of women of action. The Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Forum, held in Huairou (about 50 miles outside of Beijing) from August 30 to September 8 had approximately 30,000 participants. Jacqueline says that her most gratifying experiences, occurred during several extended discussions and conversations with small groupings of conference participants, mainly African, Asian, Native American, Africa American, Latin American and Pacific Island women. In these mainly informal sessions, the women talked about their work and much more. They talked

about their lives, their approaches to change, their struggles and their visions for the future. It seemed that the (historical) memory of colonialism was common to most. Their experiences under neo-colonialism and even their analyses of current global conditions offered many similarities. However, their approaches to improving conditions in their communities (and the world) were as richly varied as the women were diverse. Not only were there plenty of interesting stories swapped; but, more importantly, almost every anecdote provided wisdom, good advice and useful lessons to be learned.

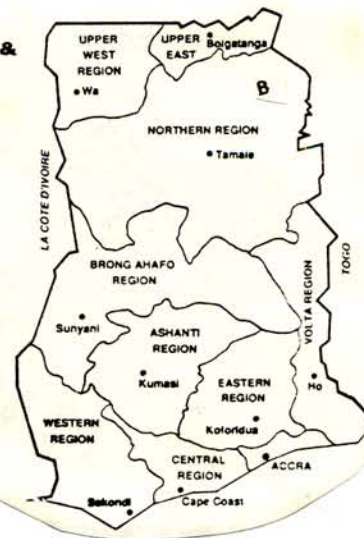
In September, Jacqueline participated in the *11th Annual Conference of the International Black Women's Congress (IBWC)*. She was one of three panelists in the Conference's final session. Sharing the dais with Alice Nkomo, a national business development leader in Zimbabwe and Shakira Ali-Kah, a business development specialist in New Jersey, Jacqueline humbly presented her message. She called for human-scale localized development; more personalized commitments from everyday people to volunteer for community service, and for clearer understanding that in today's world, "community service" must have both "local" and "global" features to it. She offered the works of **SEEDS** as a very modest, but honest manifestation of her ideas. In her closing remarks, Jacqueline cited the *IBWC Conference and the UN Fourth World Women's Conference* as critically important occasions where sister activists not only share information but also replenish their wills to struggle. Her remarks were warmly received by Dr. La Francis Rogers-Rose, *IBWC's* President, and the other conferees. For **SEEDS**, a budding service-oriented NGO with a global agenda, this exposure was invaluable.



Women from Tiesksu Village. These women are members of the Anufo Women's Literacy & Development Cooperative. Tiesksu Village is on the outskirts of the Town of Chereponi.

ROOTS
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**GHANA
REGIONS &
CAPITALS**



"B"- Chereponi, Northern Region