

Instructions for thematic notes

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Introduction

Each month I like to receive one thematic report on one of the below mentioned topics. Each month you are free to choose one of these, so that every month you will write on a different topic. This can be written in about two pages.

You can use your own knowledge as a resident of town or interview people who are experts in the area. It is important to always mention the *name* and *location* (e.g. church, office, school) of your source of information, also if it is based on your own knowledge, or if you are describing your own opinion about a topic.

It is important to always have in mind that my research focuses on migration and its influence on hometowns. Your reports should thus be written in that light. This means that you should always try to think what possible links might exist between the topic and migrants, foreign countries, networks or people's transactions.

The purpose of your notes for me is two-fold:

1. It provides me with basic information on each of the topics specifically for your town so that I will be able to compare between the research towns.
2. It will provide the context for the transactions of the respondents and it therefore explains a lot about the circumstances in which their transactions take place.

I will build upon your notes in gathering further information. It is therefore not necessary that the reports are perfect in grammar, style, spelling, lay out or whatever. It is the content that is most important to me.

If you think that the ten hours will not be enough for the thematic topic that you want to write about in a particular month, then try to think of a way to reduce the amount of information you want to gather by leaving out aspects that have least links with migration etc. You can just direct me to where I can find the additional information.

For each of the topics I have given you a number of questions as examples of the kind of information I am after, these are meant to sharpen your focus while writing. I would like to get answers to all these questions, however, you are free to write the report in whatever style you prefer and to add any other information which is specific for your town.

Agriculture

- Which are the main crops grown by farmers from your town?
- Why are these crops grown?
- Why are other crops absent?
- Which crops were grown in the past?
 - If it has changed: Explain the reasons for the change of crops over time
 - If there is no change: Explain why the crop pattern hasn't changed over time.
- Is there a market, or processing facility for each of the crops? Where, what?
- Which percentage of the crops are for home consumption?
- How important is farming for the livelihoods of the citizens, as compared to other ways of income?
- Are there any natural circumstances that hamper effective farming, or are there favourable circumstances?
- Do many migrants invest in farms in your town?
- Why? Why not?
- How do migrants take care of their farms?
- Has migration brought about any changes in farming in your town?
- Are there any large commercial farms? What type?
- Who and where are the owners?
- Please describe anything else that you deem important in your town regarding agriculture.

Business

- Which significant businesses (i.e. factories) are present in or near town?
- Do any of these have a regional or national importance?
- What impact do these businesses have on the employment situation in town?
- Are there plans for new businesses?
- Are there any foreign owned businesses in or near town?
- Are there any migrant owned businesses in or near town?
- Do migrants from your town prefer to start a business at home, in Kumasi, Accra or elsewhere?
- What are their reasons?
- If there are no significant businesses in your town at all:
 - what is the reason for the absence?
 - what is the impact of this absence on the population of the town?
- What other small scale businesses are present in town?
- Are any of these small scale businesses in your town owned or started by migrants?
- How do they take care of them?
- Is there any tourist site in or near your town?
 - If yes, does it attract mainly Ghanaians or also foreigners?
 - Is it a source of income for town?
 - For what are these monies used?
- Please describe anything else that you deem important in your town regarding business.

Chieftaincy

- What are the names of the most important chiefs, and queen mother, in your town?
- How many chiefs and sub chiefs does your town have?
- Give a *short* history of the royal family.
- From which clan is the royal family?
- Does the royal family have members abroad? How many, in which countries?
- If there are any controversies in the royal families, give a general impression of it.
- What type of support does the town get from chiefs?
- What is the relative traditional importance of your town in the Ashanti Region?
- Give a short description of the assets (land and other property) of the royal family.
- Are there foreign (white or black) chiefs or queens mothers? Who?
- If there are any: why were they enstooled?
- Are there any Ghanaian chiefs residing abroad, or out of town? Who, where?
- How do they keep contact with the town and how do they fulfil their responsibilities?
- Has migration played any role in the selection of chiefs in your town?
- Is there a development chief?
- What has this chief done for the town?
- Please describe anything else that you deem important in your town regarding chieftaincy.

Community projects

- Does your town have any specific needs or local problems?
- Which are the ongoing community projects in your town?
- How are they financed?
- Are citizens asked to do communal labour?
- What type of labour and how often?
- Is there any development levy?
- Why, why not?
- How much levy do people in town pay? How much do those outside pay?
- How and how often is it collected?
- For what has it been used or will it be used?
- Which important community projects have been completed in the past?
- How were they financed?
- Are there any hometown associations outside (in Accra or abroad)?
- Have they been able to assist the town in any way?
- Have any individuals or families abroad supported the your town for its development?
- How does the town keep contact with associations or individuals abroad?
- Please describe anything else that you deem important in your town regarding community projects.

Education

- How many primary, JSS and SSS schools are there in town?
- How different are they from each other (in terms of performance, no. of students, reputation, history, etc)?
- Please give the amounts of school fees for the most important in schools.
- Can you give an estimate of the literacy rate in town?
 - Is it different from other towns in the area or from the district average?
- Do you find many children roaming about during school hours?
- What are reasons for their parents not to send their children to school?
- Are there adult literacy classes?
 - By whom are they organised?
 - How many people attend these?
- Are there any skills training centres or other training centres in or near town?
- Please describe them and mention their importance for town.
- Does the training centre have any local students? Why, why not?
- Does the training centre have any local teachers? Why, why not?
- Has the situation with regard to education in town changed historically?
- Have (groups of) migrants contributed towards any of the schools?
- What is the general attitude of people in your town towards education?
- Please describe anything else that you deem important in your town regarding education.

Religion

- Please give a description of the co-existence of religions in your town.
- How can the integration or separation of different religions be characterised in your town?
- How has this changed historically?
- Which are the largest church(es) and their histories?
- What is the importance of the churches for the town?
- Are there any particular churches from where many members went abroad?
- Which one, and why from that particular church?
- Are churches or church leaders involved or consulted when people want to migrate?
- If yes: how and why?
- Do migrants keep contact with their churches at home?
- Why? Why not?
 - How do they keep contact or what do they contribute to their churches at home?
- Can you say that religiosity in your town has changed over time?
- Do people easily change from one church to another or do most people remain stable in one church in your town?
- What are reasons for people in your town to change church?
- Please describe anything else that you deem important in your town regarding religion.

Festivals

- Does your town have any local festivals? (i.e. festivals which are not celebrated in any other town)
- Please describe them.
- What is the importance of these festivals for your town and its people?
- Do migrants come home to celebrate these?
 - If yes, why?
 - If not, why not?
- Has the importance of local festivals in your town changed since people started migrating? Why?
- Has the way it is celebrated changed under the influence of migration? How?
- Do you see an influence of migration on the way other religious and traditional festivals are celebrated in your town?
 - If yes, how and why?
 - If not, why not?
- If there is no real local festival, what are the most important religious and traditional festivals and how are these celebrated?
- Have any new festivals come up recently?
- Do these festivals normally receive financial input from abroad, from whom?
- Please describe anything else that you deem important in your town regarding festivals.

Funerals

- Are there any local laws in your town regarding the performance of funerals?
- How, and how fast is news about funerals spread in town?
- Do people attend funerals in neighbouring towns? Of whom?
 - If they normally don't do so, why not?
- Do you see many people from other towns coming to attend funerals in your town?
- Do migrants come to their town to attend funerals?
- What is your observation about migrants' contribution to funerals?
- How long are bodies from your town normally kept in a mortuary?
- Which mortuary is normally used by people from your town?
- What is a normal funeral donation, what is the range between the minimum accepted and the maximum that can be given in your town?
- What is the range between the lowest cost and the highest cost of funerals that have been performed in your town?
- Are there differences between religious groups with regard to performance of funerals?
- How has the performance of funerals in your town changed in the past three decades?
- If you observe changes, do you think these have come under the influence of migration, or do they have other causes?
- Please describe anything else that you deem important in your town regarding funerals.

Housing

- Which are the prominent buildings in town?
- When were they built?
- By whom where they built?
- With what kind of money?
- How can the housing situation in your town be characterised? (mainly beautiful, or rundown houses, storey buildings or small houses, old or new houses, empty or overcrowded houses?)
- How does the outlook of town compare with nearby towns?
- What is the price for a plot of land in your town
- What is the percentage of people who live in their private owned house in your town?
- What is the percentage of people who live in a family house in your town?
- What is the percentage of people who rent a house or room in your town?
- Is there a particular part of town where migrants like to build?
 - Why? Why not? Why there?
- Do migrants from your town prefer to build at home, in Kumasi, Accra or elsewhere.
- Are there any local laws with regard to construction in your town?
- Is there shortage of land or houses? Why?
- Are there many empty houses? Why?
- Give a short impression of the growth of your town over the past three decades.
- Please describe anything else that you deem important in your town regarding housing.

Migration

- Which ideas about migration prevail in your town?
- How is migration portrayed by opinion leaders, how is it seen among youth, among elders among family members of migrants?
- How is migration seen among different religions, including Muslims?
- Are the ideas mostly positive and is 'abroad' mainly attractive, or are people also aware of the difficulties and risks of life abroad?
- Do migrants who currently reside abroad frequently visit their hometown?
- How long do they normally stay (hours, days, weeks, months?)
 - What do they do during their visits (visit funerals, only close family members, visit friends and others, engage in construction and business).
 - Do they contribute anything tangible to your town during their visits?
- Are there many migrants who have come back to stay in their hometown?
- Do these people get specific nick names? Give examples of nick names they get.
- How they are these returned migrants treated/respected/looked at by other town members?
- Are returned migrants left in peace, or do town members worry them for money or gifts?
- How do returned migrants talk about life abroad?
- What type of people get the nickname "Burger" in your town?
- In what ways can a migrant gain respect from town members and in what way can a migrant loose respect?

- The above aspects naturally vary from one migrant to the other. Please give an impression of your observations and your conversations with town members about this topic, describe the average situation, and some exceptional occasions if these occurred.
- Please describe anything else that you deem important in your town regarding migration.

Communication and media

- Are newspapers available in town?
 - If yes, how many people actually buy them?
- Are there communication centres or phone booths in town? How many? Do they function well?
- Is there reception for mobile phones?
- How many people use mobiles?
- Can international calls be made from town?
 - If there are no phones, which is the nearest town with phone?
- Is there any post office in town? How many post boxes does it have for the citizens of town?
- What is the percentage of people with TV?
- What is the percentage of people with radio?
- How is local news spread? (is there any official message deliverance system?)
- How are local announcements made? (notice boards, gong-gong, loud speakers, other means?)
- How do people communicate with people in nearby towns?
- How do people generally communicate with people abroad? (making or receiving calls, sending or receiving letters, audio/video tapes, sending messages through others, e-mail)
- How well are local people aware of national news?
- How well are local people aware of international news?
- How long does it normally take for important news about family abroad to reach the family at home?
- How long does it normally take for important news about family at home to reach the family abroad?
- Do you think town members have many secrets for each other, or do they communicate openly about anything?
- Is there a lot of gossip? What are the most common topics of gossip?
- How do people without family abroad talk about families with migrants?
- Please describe anything else that you deem important in your town regarding communication and media.