



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Ghana - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 11 April 2011

Lack of access to education in Ghana and the consequences of this.

The June 2010 *Freedom House* Freedom in the World report for Ghana, under the heading 'Political Rights and Civil Liberties' notes:

"Academic freedom is legally guaranteed and upheld in practice. In 2005, the government removed all fees for access to primary and secondary education, and in 2009 it was reported that primary school enrollment was as high as 85 percent for boys and 78 percent for girls. At the same time, many teachers have complained of neglect by Atta Mills, citing low salaries and recent reductions in some of their allowances."
(Freedom House (24 June 2010) *Freedom in the World - Ghana (2010)*)

This same report continues, stating:

"Despite their equal rights under the law, women suffer societal discrimination, especially in rural areas where opportunities for education and wage employment are limited." (ibid)

Page 15 of the April 2010 *Freedom House* Countries at the Crossroads report, under the heading 'Anticorruption and Transparency', notes:

"There is considerable corruption in the secondary school and college education process, with regular reports of leaked examination papers ahead of the annual national exams taken by secondary school students. A highly popular pilot school feeding program has been dogged by allegations of corruption." (Freedom House (7 April 2010) *Countries at the Crossroads 2010 – Ghana*, p.15)

A report by Akwasi Fredua for *Public Agenda (Accra)* under the heading 'Ghana: Local Women Still Marginalized' states:

"Accra — Miss Kyerewaa Asamoah, Programme Officer, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) /Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), Ghana Chapter, has stressed that Ghanaian women are still marginalized in terms of educational, economic and political opportunities.

According to her, the lack of access to potable water and decent sanitation facilities has a major impact on women and girls especially when they are forced to spend greater parts of their time fetching water.

Children, especially girls, she added often do not attend school because their schools lack private and decent sanitation facilities." (Public Agenda (Accra) (15 March 2010) *Ghana: Local Women Still Marginalized - Akwasi Fredua*)

This report also notes:

“According to her there are four main benchmarks that indicate a nation's preparedness in meeting the MDGs by 2015. These are ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary; the ratio of literate women to men, the share of women in wage employment in the non-agric agricultural sector and the proportion of seats held by women in parliament and their active participation at the local government level as well.” (ibid)

Section 6 of the March 2011 *United States Department of State Country Report on Human rights Practices for Ghana*, under the heading ‘Children’ states:

“Not all births were registered with the government. Citizenship is derived by birth within the country or parentage. Although a birth certificate was not a legal precondition to attend school, in practice some children were reportedly denied education because their births were not registered.

Education is compulsory from preprimary through junior secondary school. Despite the constitutional provision for "free compulsory and universal basic education," parents were required to purchase uniforms and writing materials. Uniforms are mandatory in all government-supported schools. Students may be asked to leave school if they do not wear their uniform. The government provided textbooks.

According to the Ministry of Education, the enrollment rate during the 2008-09 school year was 94.9 percent at the primary level; 48.6 percent of those students are girls and 51.4 percent are boys. At the junior secondary school (JSS) level, 80.6 percent of eligible children were enrolled; 46.7 percent of the total enrollment was girls and 53.3 percent were boys. Some children did not attend school because they worked to supplement their family's income or lived far from the closest school. Many schools, particularly in rural areas, had insufficient teachers and were inadequately resourced. The indirect economic cost associated with enrollment, including lost wages from children not in the labor force, was a significant obstacle for many children's families. In addition, authorities did not regularly enforce attendance, and parents were rarely sanctioned for keeping their children out of school.” (United States Department of State (11 March 2010) *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Ghana*)

The same report continues adding:

“The government continued its Capitation Grant program, paying schools approximately three cedis (\$2.08) per school year per child to cover cultural, sports, and other school fees. The National School Feeding Programme also helped alleviate the incidental costs associated with school attendance. During the year 645,000 children were enrolled in the program nationwide with a target of one million by 2010. The number of children in Accra participating in the school lunch program doubled during the year to an estimated 6,000.

The government strongly supported the UN's Education for All goals. During the year the Ghana Education Service (GES) actively campaigned to expand education for girls by providing scholarships at the JSS and Senior Secondary School levels and by offering financial incentives and free housing to female teachers to work in some rural areas. The

GES placed girls' education officers at regional and district levels, and there were community participation coordinators in every district office to mobilize communities to increase school enrollments for girls." (ibid)

A report by the *UN Human Rights Council* under the heading 'Education' notes:

"Ghana still has a considerable way to go to fulfil the second and third Millennium Development Goals, which call for the achievement of universal primary education and gender equality, including at all levels of education. In 2005, the net enrolment in primary education stood at only 65 per cent for boys and girls alike. A wide gender gap emerges from the early stages of the schooling cycle, because far more girls than boys drop out of primary school. In 2005, only 69 per cent of girls who enrolled completed the full course of primary education (compared to 75 per cent of boys). The trend continues in secondary school, where the 2005 net enrolment rate was 37 per cent for boys and 30 per cent for girls." (UN Human Rights Council (21 February 2008) *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Yakin Ertürk Addendum Mission To Ghana* – pg. 10)

This same report continues stating:

"High levels of extreme poverty continue to be a major obstacle to achieving universal education for all children, but particularly for girls. It is not surprising that the country's poorest districts in northern Ghana tend to have the lowest school enrolment and retention rates. The Government has invested considerable funds into a capitation grant programme. This programme aims at freeing families from the burden of school levies imposed at the district level, while providing schools with a much-needed inflow of funds" (ibid) (pg.11)

References:

Freedom House (24 June 2010) *Freedom in the World - Ghana (2010)*

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2010&country=7829>

(Accessed 7 April 2011)

Freedom House (7 April 2010) *Countries at the Crossroads 2010 – Ghana*

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/ccr/country-7829-9.pdf>

(Accessed 7 April 2011)

Public Agenda (Accra) (15 March 2010) *Ghana: Local Women Still Marginalized*

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/201003151344.html>

(Accessed 7 April 2011)

UN Human Rights Council (21 February 2008) *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Yakin Ertürk Addendum Mission To Ghana*

http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1227_1225662595_ghana.pdf

(Accessed 7 April 2011)

United States Department of State (11 March 2010) *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Ghana*

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/af/135956.htm>

(Accessed 7 April 2011)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources consulted:

Amnesty International
BBC News
European Country of Origin Information Network
Freedom House
Human Rights Watch
International Crisis Group
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
IRIN News
Lexis Nexis
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
United Kingdom: Home Office
UNHCR Refworld
UN Human Rights Council
UN News Service
United States Department of State