



SECTION OF DELEGATES TO OUR NATIONAL COUNCIL



SOME DRESS-MAKERS IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

PRESENTATION OF THE COUNTRY



Ghana, a country on the West Coast of Africa, is one of the most thriving democracies on the continent. It has often been referred to as an "island of peace" in one of the most chaotic regions on earth. It shares boundaries with Togo to the east, la Cote d'Ivoire to the west, Burkina Faso to the north and the Gulf of Guinea, to the south. A recent discovery of oil in the Gulf of Guinea could make Ghana an important oil producer and exporter in the next few years.

The country's economy is dominated by agriculture, which employs about 40 percent of the working population. Ghana is one of the leading

exporters of cocoa in the world. It is also a significant exporter of commodities such as gold and lumber. A country covering an area of 238,500 square kilometres, Ghana has an estimated population of 22 million, drawn from more than one hundred ethnic groups - each with its own unique language. English, however, is the official language, a legacy of British colonial rule.

In 1957, Ghana (formerly known as the Gold Coast) became the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence. After leading the country for nine years, the nation's founding president, Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown in a coup d'etat in 1966. After Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana was ruled by a series of military despots with intermittent experiments with democratic rule, most of which were curtailed by military takeovers. The latest and most enduring democratic experiment started in 1992 and it is what has gained recognition for Ghana as a leading democracy in Africa.

Ghana has several tourist attractions such as the castles. Most of the major international airlines fly into and from the international airport in Accra. Domestic air travel is thriving and the country has a vibrant telecommunications sector, with five cellular phone operators and several internet service providers.

Presentation of the country	
Name of the country	GHANA
President	John Evans Atta Mills
Surface area	238,537.460
Population	22,409,575
Density	87.82 persons/sq.km
Growth rate	4.10 (in 2010 est)
Working population	82%
Capital	Accra
Languages	English, Akan, Moshi-Dagbani, Ewe, Ga, Guan, Fanti
Official working languages	English
Religions	Christian, Islam & Indigenous Beliefs

Political regime	Democratic
Frequency and regularity of presidential elections.	Every four Year. The last one has been held the 7 th December 2008 and John Evans Atta Mills has been elected.
GNP	54,450,000,000 GHC
HDI and ranking	0.532 and 136 th (Human Development Report 2006)
Principal sectors of the economy and proportions of absorption (occupation) of manpower.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agriculture: 36% - Industry: 25% - Services: 39%
Main import and export products	<p>Export: Gold, Cocoa, Timbers, Tuna, bauxite, ore, Diamond, petroleum, Crude Oil, Aluminum and Bauxite.</p> <p>Imports. foodstuffs and Capital Equipment</p>
Currency	Cedis (GHC)
Approved Minimum Wage	4.20 (GHC) per day
Rate of illiteracy elimination	Adult literacy rate (% age 15 and above), 71,5% (in 2000)
Children school enrolment rate	Combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio (%): 42% (in 2000)
Other information considered to be useful	Ghana is home to about 16,000 refugees from countries all over the region, but according to the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition, the majority of these (9,000) come from Liberia.

BACKGROUND

SOCIAL CONTEXT

All the good economic indicators notwithstanding there are still poverty in the country. Vast majority of the Ghanaian populace wallow in poverty. Unemployment rate continues to rise. Several working people of this country do not have employable skills. This unfortunate situation has turned several Ghanaians into petty traders (informal sector). The turnover rate in this (informal sector) petty trading is quite low and unable to improve the socio-economic life of the good people of Ghana.

Despite the universal declaration of human rights, Article 23, paragraph 1: Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and

favourable conditions of work and protection against unemployment, information on the impact of problem of employment in Ghana is inadequate .Problem of unemployment is widespread globally but the situation is on the increase in Ghana as young women workers are no longer employ on merit.

People are employed on tribal, political, and religious affiliation and sexual harassment of girls by some employers before given them jobs. Young women workers are the bedrock and the future leaders of our homes and society at large, but these young women workers are the most deprive in our present society today in areas of social right, decent work , recognition and protection at work most especially casual young women workers etc.

Ghana is noted for its Extended family system where distance relatives depend on a single individual for their livelihood. This situation usually put a lot of stress on the workers who have

to extend a hand of support to others beyond his immediate nuclear family. This situation would take some time to correct when there is enough decent job opportunities for as many as possible young women workers as they are the managers of our homes for a better upbringing good future leaders.

Even though the National Minimum Wage level has crossed over \$2 daily, it is still not enough to meet the high cost of living in this country. Currently the minimum wage is \$2.67 daily and \$80.1 monthly. It is not very easy for organized labour to pursue and achieve a Living Wage (LW) for Ghanaian Workers.

Despite their equal rights under the law, Ghanaian women suffer societal discrimination that is particularly serious in rural areas, where opportunities for education and wage employment are limited. Women's enrolment in universities is decreasing. Domestic violence against women is said to be common but often goes unreported.

Female genital mutilation was made illegal in Ghana in 1994, and those who perform the operation face a prison sentence of at least three years. In October 2006, parliament began debating an amendment to the 1994 law that would extend its reach to relatives or guardians who give their consent for the procedure to be performed.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Economic indicators point to the fact that there are sound policies and measures to maintain Economic stability and growth, at the time of writing this proposal, inflationary rate has further reduced from 12.2% (at planning stage) to 10.1% (after implementation stage) Bank interest rate on borrowing has dropped from 42% to 18%. Treasury bill rate has gone down to 16%. There is growing stability on the foreign exchange rate in recent times.

Government's vigorous attempt at achieving economic growth is on-going and yielding good results. Inflation continues to go down due to the strict control of monetary policies by the Central Bank. Inflation currently is at 10.1% level. Government's projection of hitting single digit inflation could not be achieved due to the rising crude oil prices on the world market.

Foreign Exchange transactions experienced stability during last year. Economic and Monetary Expect lauds the government for the growth in the Macro Economic policies of the country. These good indicators are yet to reflect in the lives of the ordinary people of the country. There is a growing confidence in investment projects in the country in recent times. It is hoped that such confidence would translate into more job creation as an opportunity to curb the high incidence of unemployment in the country.

Well-endowed with natural resources, Ghana has twice the per capita output of the poorer countries in West Africa. Even so, Ghana remains heavily dependent on international financial and technical assistance. Gold, timber, cocoa and recently crude oil production are major sources of foreign exchange. The domestic economy continues to revolve around subsistence agriculture, which accounts for 40% of GDP and employs 60%-70% of the work force, mainly small landholders. In 1995-97, Ghana made mixed progress under a three-year structural adjustment program in cooperation with the IMF. On the minus side, public sector wage increases and regional peacekeeping commitments have led to continued inflationary deficit financing, depreciation of the cedi, and rising public discontent with Ghana's austerity measures.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Ghana as a sovereign nation attained independence from the British Colonial rule on 6th March 1957 and turned Republican on 1st July 1960. Soon after independence military adventurism intermittently interrupted Constitutional Governance thus making the economy suffer.

The political stability of Ghana is in the 4th Republic and the 5th parliament since 1992 till now Ghana's democratic dispensation has stabilized and seeing steady growth. The current president, John Evans Atta Mills, the tenth leader of the country since independence, was elected in December 2008 and was sworn into office in January 2009. Politics in Ghana though rough at times is going through transformation. Military adventurism seems to be the event of the past.

Ghana is advancing steadily in its democratic dispensation. All the arms of government namely, the Executive, Judiciary, Legislature and Media

continue to pursue their independent roles with a lot of real. Political parties are always on the heels of one another, fishing out for flaws to use against each other. Government is under intense pressure to pursue and ensure good governance practice – an action meaningful for true democracy and good governance.

The Parliament of Ghana is unicameral and dominated by two main parties, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC).



Weather and Climate

Since Ghana is only a few degrees north of the equator, the only seasonal changes are distinct wet and dry seasons. The best time to visit is during the December-February dry season, when day temperatures are in the 80s-90s F/27-36 C and nights in the 70s F/18-26 C. (Another dry season occurs in July and August, but it's hotter.) The worst time to visit is April-June, when it's the rainiest. A dry northeast wind known as the harmattan blows almost continuously in January and February. The eastern coastal belt is warm and comparatively dry, the southwest corner has the highest humidity and rainfall, while the north is frequently hot and dry. Don't forget to take along an umbrella during the rainy season.

Temperature by: Fahrenheit

CULTURAL SITUATION

On the basis of language and culture, historical geographers and cultural anthropologists classify the indigenous people of Ghana into five major groups. These are the Akan, the Ewe, Mole-Dagbon, the Guan, and the Ga-Adangbe. However, Akan language is predominantly widely spoken in Ghana and its home of origin is the Ashanti and the Fanti people.

The Ashanti people and Fante people of the Akan, from the Ashanti whom nearly half of the Ghanaian population is descended, comprise the largest ethnolinguistic group in Ghana, and one of the few matrilineal societies in West Africa. The matrilineal system of the Akan continues to be economically and politically important. Each

lineage controlled the land farmed by its members, functioned as a religious unit in the veneration of its ancestors, supervised marriages, and settled internal disputes among its members.^[1]

Ashanti kings, once renowned for their splendour and wealth, retained dignitary status after colonization. Celebration of the Ashanti kings lives on in the tradition of the Golden Stool. The Ashanti are noted for their expertise in several forms of craftwork, particularly their weaving, wood carving, ceramics, fertility dolls, metallurgy and kente cloth (see Arts and crafts, below). Traditional kente cloth is woven in complex patterns of bright, narrow strips. It is woven outdoors, exclusively by men. In fact, the manufacture of many Ashanti crafts is restricted to male specialists. Pottery-making is the only craft that is primarily a female activity; but even then, only men are allowed to fashion pots or pipes depicting anthropomorphic or zoomorphic figures.

The various Akan groups speak various dialects of Twi, a language rich in proverbs, and the use of proverbs is considered to be a sign of wisdom. Euphemisms are also very common, especially concerning events connected with death. The Ashanti village is the primary social and financial unit, and the entire village typically participates in major ceremonies.

The coastal Akan (Fanti) were the first to have relations with Europeans during the "Scramble for Africa". As a result of this long association, these groups absorbed aspects of British culture and language. For example, it became customary among these peoples to adopt British surnames. The Fanti people live predominantly in the Central Region, though a large number also live in the Western Region of Ghana. The language is Fanti.



A young Ghanaian standing on a partially submerged tree branch near the Wli Lower Falls, located in the Volta Region.



 **Ghana Cultural Dance Group performing**

PRESENTATION OF DEVELOPMENTS, CHALLENGES AND IMPACT OF YOUNG CHRISTIAN WORKERS' (Y.C.W) MOVEMENT IN GHANA.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this presentation, audience should:

Become aware of the nature of Y.C.W. in Ghana.

Identify the Informal Sector Groups that Y.C.W. work currently in Ghana.

The role of Y.C.W. in human resource development in Ghana and its positive impact on the Country's Economy.

Identify the challenges faced by the informal sector workers as well as Y.C.W. in Ghana.

The impact it has on Individual Development, Movement Enhancement and the National Economy.

BACKGROUND

The informal sector forms the basis of labour in the history Ghana during the olden days when our fore fathers and grand mothers engaged in activities such as farming, fishing, hunting, pottery, bead making etc. to earn a living for the family.

However, Ghana has seen a tremendous change in receiving formal education through the interference of Colonial Masters, which has since been very

significant in the development of the nation. The nation can boast of great leaders such as Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (the first President of Ghana), Mr. Ako Adjei, Mr. Obetsebi Lampitey, Mr. Edward Akuffo-Addo, Dr. J.B. Danquah and Mr. William Ofori Attah who were all very instrumental in Ghana's Independence on 6th March, 1957 (Ghana proudly calls them the BIG SIX)

We can also not afford to miss personalities such as Mr. Kofi Annan (the seventh U.N. Secretary General from 1997 to 2006) and his numerous contributions to World Peace, Mr. Jerry John Rawlings (the former President of Ghana) who also transformed government from Military Rule into Democratic Rule in Ghana and subsequent leaders like Mr. John Agyekum Kuffour (immediate Past President) and Professor John Atta Mills (current President) and other great men and women who continue to contribute their quota to the Nation's Development.

Unfortunately, only a few ordinary Ghanaians, especially those who are not directly identified with political group, are able to go through the ranks to gain full employment with the formal sector. It simply means that, people pass through formal education but hardly acquire jobs for their livelihood.

A larger number of the population however does not have access to this formal education. Past Governments and even the Current Government are making all efforts to provide almost a free basic education but many people could still not afford due to poverty and lack of a helping hand.

It is upon this background that the Y.C.W. as a Movement in Ghana has taken a keen interest in developing the Human Resource within the Informal Sector, which is also one great priority in the plans of International Young Christian Workers (I. Y.C.W.) Movement.

Currently, Ghana Y.C.W. can boast of three major Informal Sector Groups.

They are: a) Dressmakers' Group

b) Hairdressers' Group

c) Manual Workers' Group (Carpenters, Masons and Mechanics)

Composition of Informal Sector Groups in Ghana Y.C.W.

Members of the Base Groups who could not have access to any form of Formal Education.

Members who dropped out of school and those who could not continue Formal Education due to financial constraints.

Young girls who migrated from the Northern part to the Southern part of Ghana in search of greener pastures and currently serving as head potters known as 'Kayayes' in the local parlance.

Members who have the zeal to bring a positive change in the lives of others.

What led to the effort of Y.C.W. to better the lives of these people? (The Purpose of Y.C.W. Intervention)

Y.C.W. stands tall in the issues of morality. We found out that, many of the above groups of people were not able to access formal education due to poverty, negative peer influence and lack of proper parental guidance, political pressures and selfishness of the well-to-do in society.

Governments tried to lessen the cost of basic education but individuals who in one way or the other could help this vision achieve great impact on the ordinary Ghanaian are less concerned. They would rather engage young people in money making activities for selfish gains. Political parties also engage these young people whom they call "FOOT SOLDIERS" to achieve their aims.

We in the Y.C.W. could not condone with such abuses of Human Rights hence the effort to transform the less privileged in our Base Groups.

WHAT DOES GHANA Y.C.W. DO IN THE LIVES OF THE ABOVE GROUPS OF PEOPLE?

Job Skills Training

The Movement initially approached individual members who have set up their shops to assist in training others who are interested in the same form of trade. We later moved to people outside the

movement who are willing to help the young people acquire gainful skills for livelihood.

This was done with the intention of continuity that, members who graduate would be helped to establish themselves as well as train others who need the same form of training. It is also done to reduce Unemployment and in the long term create an atmosphere for Gender Equality especially within the Movement which will transcend to the larger society.

Literacy Programmes

The Movement realized that these young people could hardly read or write. The question however was that; *how can such apprentices read inscriptions on the materials that they use for work?* A typical example may be inscriptions on hair cream containers. This also means that they would always rely on orthodox methods of working which may not be good enough to attract clients for their business. Y.C.W. therefore introduced week-end tuitions to help develop reading and writing skill/capacity of the young apprentices.



COORDINATOR AT A LITERACY CLASS IN KUMASI

Sensitization against Inferiority Complex

It became obvious that many people in the informal sector lack confidence in demanding for their rights. These are mainly young people who have acquired the skills but do not have the means to set up their own shops hence they work for other set ups in the same trade for income which is normally

called “WORK AND PAY”. However, there are issues of Human Rights Abuse when the following areas are concerned:

Spending longer working hours than usual in their contract.

Low amounts of money paid as wages and salaries to employees.

Delay/Difficulty in receiving their wages and salaries.

Sexual harassment especially from male employers towards female employees.

Cases where apprentices are tasked by their Masters and Madams to do household chores for longer hours than skill training.

Young people who suffer some of these abuses have the feeling that no one cares for them. They would rather continue to suffer than lose their jobs for their actions. On the other hand, Masters and Madams receive the consequences of the grievances of employees in the following ways:

Employees going home with material items that belong to the business.

Uncaring attitude of employees towards the work they do.

Fake excuses for not being present at work sometimes.

Lack of cordial worker-employee relationships and may more.

It was in this light that Ghana Y.C.W. put in place programmes to invite Officials of the SNNIT Informal Sector and National Labour Commission from time to time to educate members on their rights as protected by Law. It is also to help the vulnerable to raise their self-esteem.

Provision of working tools for apprentices

The Movement in its small capacity has provided sewing machines, hair driers, and a few tools for carpentry, masonry, and mechanical work for the various Informal Groups under its jurisdiction.

Members of these groups are constantly increasing in number such that it has become a major challenge to support a good course.

Accommodation Challenges

The burden is becoming greater in the urban centers due to the migration of young people from rural areas in search of non existing jobs. Some of these people are either school drop-outs who have no job related skills or others who have finished learning a trade but have no support to establish them to work. It is a very pathetic situation to see teenage mothers at market places carrying loads that are seemingly heavier than they could normally carry with their babies on their backs.

In the night, these same people are found sleeping in the open at lorry parks, under wooden structures in the market at the mercy of all dangers. Some suffer rape while others are robbed of the income of the day. They stand and cover themselves with pans and bigger polythene bags during rainfall with their babies.

Y.C.W. currently has no control over the issue of migration since people may decide to move as and when they desired. However Madina Base Group where I come from is in the process of preparing a proposal on providing shelter for such people. The Base Group is presently undertaking a research within the two major urban cities in Ghana (Accra and Kumasi) where the above situation is prevalent. Some findings so far are that young people who are working potters. The motive behind the project is to support the agenda for Social Protection for all.

6. Health Care Challenges

Another pathetic situation facing Y.C.W. members working in the informal sector is inability to access proper health care. At present, Ghana has a National Health Insurance Scheme which is suppose to provide easy access to health care by Citizens. The problem however is that, while the formal sector workers enjoy the facility through their SNNIT contributions, the informal sector workers have to pay cash in order to be registered for the scheme. For instance, it may be difficult for

an apprentice who does not earn any income to pay the lump sum of money to be registered under the scheme.

The Movement in its bid to protect the welfare of its members in the informal sector, invited the SNNIT Informal Sector during one of its programmes to explain issues concerning the scheme. The response was that the informal sector contributions are not regular as compared to that of the formal sector, hence the decision to allow individuals pay by cash.



SOME YOUNG GIRLS UNDER APPRENTICESHIP

GENERAL BENEFITS OF Y.C.W. CONTRIBUTIONS

Individuals within the informal sector groups are able to learn income generating skills, which eventually leads to an increase in the family's income and lessens the burden of dependency on the bread winner.

Through the literacy training programmes of Y.C.W., beneficiaries are able to read inscriptions for directions especially in relation to their work. Some are able to write and keep record on their businesses and clients, and do simple arithmetic. Once they become aware of the importance of education, it would also boost their interest to enroll children in school for a brighter future. The ability to perform these skills increases their confidence level and knowledge of protecting their rights as individuals and informal sector workers.

Planning and executing programmes has increased the capacity of group leaders as they collaborate with stakeholders in decision making and programme delivery.

Occupational skills training is seen to reduce the over dependence on Government for employment. Examples may include hairdressers and dressmakers establishing themselves after acquiring the necessary skills.

THE WAY FORWARD

The Movement would like to embark seriously on the accommodation and health issues affecting members and improve upon the on going action plans for the informal sector groups.

We will also like to seek for technical and financial support from collaborators in order to pursue the agenda of **SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR ALL**.



PANAF COORDINATOR'S VISIT TO SOME OF OUR INFORMAL SECTOR GROUPS IN THE NORTH OF GHANA