

WORLD FEDERATION OF METHODIST AND UNITING CHURCH WOMEN

WEST AFRICA AREA SEMINAR

GHANA UNIT REPORT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL FOUR (4)

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INTRODUCTION:

The Sustainable Development Goal four (SDG 4), that involves Quality Education.

The paper talks about the role of the Government of Ghana and the Methodist Church. Ghana, on Education generally and Specifically on Girls Education, its impact, projections and recommendations.

Obtaining quality education is the foundation to improving people's lives and sustainable development. Major progress has been made towards increasing enrollment rates in schools, particularly for women and girls. Basic literacy skills have improved tremendously, yet bold efforts are needed to make even greater strides for achieving universal education. For example, the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys but few countries have achieved that target at all levels of education.

GOVERNMENT'S CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION IN GHANA

Education in Ghana was mainly informal and based on apprenticeship before the arrival of European settlers who built a formal education system, addressed to the elites. With the independence of Ghana in 1957, universal Education became an important political objective. The magnitude of the task, as well as economic difficulties and political instabilities have slowed down attempted reforms. There was an Education Reform Act in 1987, followed by the Constitution of 1992, which gave a new impetus to educational policies in the country. By 2011, the primary school net enrollment rate was 84% described by UNICEF as "far ahead" of the Sub-Saharan average. In its 2013/14 report, the World Economic Forum ranked Ghana 46th out of 148 countries for quality education system.

In 2010, Ghana Literacy rate was 71.5% with a notable gap between men (78.3%) and women (65.3%). The Guardian newspaper in Ghana disclosed in April 2015 that, 90% of children in Ghana were enrolled in school, ahead of countries like Pakistan and Nigeria with 72% and 64% respectively.

Education indicators in Ghana reflect a greater gap and disparities between southern and northern parts of the country. Those disparities drive public action against illiteracy and inequities in access to Education. Elimination of illiteracy has been a constant objective of Ghana education policies for the last 40 years. The difficulties are around ensuring equitable access to education which is acknowledged by the authorities. Public action in both domains has yielded results which are judged significant but not sufficient by national experts and international organizations.

Increasing the place of Vocational Education and (ICT) Information and Communication Technology within the education system are other clear objectives of Ghanaian policies in Education. The impact of public action remains hard to access in these fields due to recent implementation or lack of data.

In Ghana, education is divided into three phases: Basic Education (Kindergarten, Primary and Junior High School), Secondary Education (Senior High School, Technical and Vocational Education) and Tertiary Education (Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities) Education is compulsory between the ages of 4 and 15 (Basic Education) The language of instruction is mainly English.

ACHIEVEMENT FOR EDUCATION IN GHANA

- 1) Free SHS education.
- 2) President's Annual Award to best 27 students performed students at the Basic Examination.
- 3) Ghana's agenda is to focus on Technical and Vocational education to meet the one district, one factory agenda.
- 4) Encouraged students to work hard and go as far as they want in education, Honesty and integrity should be their watch.
- 5) The country will continue to invest in education to make children reach their maximum potential.

GIRLS EDUCATION IN GHANA

The Federation of Methodist Women pays particular attention to Girls Education. It is a lifeline to development and one of the most critical areas of empowerment for women as both the Cairo and Beijing Conference affirmed. It is also an area that offers some of the clearest examples of discrimination women suffer in Ghana. Among children not attending school there are twice as many girls as boys, and among illiterate adults, there are twice as many women as men.

Offering girls basic education is one sure way of giving them much greater power of enabling them to make genuine choice over the kinds of lives they wish to lead. This is not a luxury. The Convention on the Right of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, establish it as a basic human right.

That women might have the chance to a healthier and happier life should be reason enough for promoting girls education. However, there are also important benefits for society as a whole. An educated woman has the skills, information and self-confidence that she needs to be a better parent, worker and citizen.

Cross - country studies show that an extra year of schooling for girls reduces fertility rate by 5 to 10 percent. And the children of educated mothers are more likely to survive. Mortality rate of babies whose mothers have received primary education is half that of children whose mothers are illiterate. An educated woman will also be more productive at work and better paid. Indeed, the dividend for educational investment is higher for women than men. Studies from a number of

countries suggest that an extra year of school will increase women's future earnings by about 15 percent compared with 11 percent for a man.

The Ghana Education Service in order to encourage the girl education made sure every district has a desk for the girls' education coordinator at the district office.

The girls' education unit performs the following functions:

- ❖ Training workshop for girls.
- ❖ Training workshop for school girls' education coordinators.
- ❖ Community sensitization in girl education using role models and PLA (Participatory Learning and Action) approach.
- ❖ Needy people assistance i.e provision of school kits for girls.
- ❖ Organizes and conducts STMIE Clinics (Science, Technology, Maths and Innovative Education) for girls and boys.

WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO IMPROVE GIRLS ACCESS TO EDUCATION?

- Parental and Community Involvement: Families and communities must be important partners with schools in developing curriculum and managing children's education.
- Low-cost and flexible timetables: Basic education should be free or cost very little where possible. There should be stipends and scholarships to compensate families for the loss of girls' household labour. Also school hours should be flexible so that children can help at home and still attend classes.
- Schools close to home with women teachers: Many parents worry about girls travelling long distance on their own. Many parents also prefer to have their daughters taught by women.
- Relevant curriculum: Learning materials should be relevant to the girls' background and be in the local language. They should also avoid reproducing gender stereo-types.
The government of Ghana over the years has put in place some interventions to mitigate cost of education of the Ghanaian child of school going age.
- School feeding programmes: Provide launch for children in the public basic schools starting from K.G to Primary 6.
- Capitation Grants to all public basic schools: The purpose is to absorb sports, culture and P.T.A levies by government to reduce the burden of parents and guardians of paying school fees.
- Free Busing for basic school children: The rational is to allow basic school children enjoy free busing to school at long distance in the metropolis to relieve parents of transport cost.
- Elimination of School under trees.
- Abolition of shift system in the Metropolis.
- Free uniform to Basic school pupils in deprived area.
- Free public Senior High School for the 2017 – 2018 academic had just taken place.

THE FEDERATION VIEW AND WORKING IN CONSONANCE WITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

The Federation work in line with the SDGS, to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. We are looking at new areas such as climate change economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice among other priorities.

The goals are interconnected – often the key to success on one will involve tackling issues more commonly associated with the other.

We work in the spirit of partnership and pragmatism to make the right choice now to improve life in a sustainable way for future generations in line with the clear guidelines and targets for all countries to adopt in accordance with their own priorities and the environmental challenges of the world at large.

“Supporting the 2030 Agenda is a top priority for UNDP” said UNDP Administrator Helen Clark. The SDGS provide us with a common plan and challenges facing our world such as poverty, climate change and conflict. UNDP was the experienced and expertise to drive progress and help support countries on the path to sustainable development.

Our focus is also on education, obtaining a quality education is the foundation to improving people’s lives and sustainable development.

Major progress has been made towards increasing access to Education by the Methodist Church Ghana at all levels and increasing enrollment rate in schools particularly for women and girls.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH GHANA TO EDUCATION IN GHANA

In Ghana, the church was established through the collaboration of Wesleyan Methodist Missionary society and local Christians dedicated to the study of the Bible. The first missionary arrived at Cape Coast in 1835.

Available literature on the evolution of Methodism in Ghana indicates that the church in Ghana used to be under the British conference until in 1961, when it became autonomous.

The Methodist approach to evangelism has always included formal education and other social services including medical care and agriculture.

The Methodist Church Ghana among other things seeks to see a nation Ghana, in which every child receives primary education to the highest level possible.

Education received will be based on academic excellence and the development of productive skills, which will lead to the development of individuals involved with honesty, integrity, Christian values, professional and work ethics. That in a nutshell is the education policy of the church.

According to available conservative estimates the church had established 719 kindergartens, 1,017 primary and 43 Junior high schools. The Methodist Church Ghana also boasts of 209 second cycle institutions and 4 colleges of education and a university institution.

The Methodist Church has established some notable institution in Ghana such as Mfanstipim School which happened to be the first secondary school in Ghana established in 1876.

Wesley Girls High School at Cape Coast, Wesley College of Education at Kumasi, joined ownership of Prempeh College with the Presbyterian Church to mention but a few.

It is natural that institutions of that magnitude would nurture many distinguished personalities. Almost every aspect of life in Ghana has been touched by the end products of the institution aforementioned.

Personalities like the former Chief Justice Her ladyship Mrs. Georgina Theodora Wood, Her ladyship Sophia Akuffo the current Chief Justice, Mrs. Mary Chinery Hesse, former Deputy, Director of the International Labor Organization, Mrs. Elizabeth Mills-Robertson, the only woman in the country to have served as the Inspector General of Police, Lady Julia Osei-Tutu, wife of the Asantehene, Professor Florence AbenaDolphyne, the first female Pro-Vice Chancellor of the university of Ghana, Mensah Sarbah, KobinaSekyi, George EkemFerguson, Mr. Kofi Annan, Former Secretary- General of the United Nations and many more.

In conclusion I will like to quote, the immediate past presiding Bishop Most Rev. Emmanuel Kwaku Asante the Methodist Church Ghana, believes “development has everything to do with the well-being of the society! While pragmatic approaches to meaningful enhancement to material well-being informed by the application of science and technology must play a central role in development initiative, tapping the spiritual roots of human motivation provides the essential impulse that ensures social advancement. So there is a spiritual perspective on development. The spiritual perspective defined by the recognition of the vital link between the practical and spiritual aspects of human life which leads inevitably, to a refraining of what constitutes well-being and of the mechanism for attaining such well-being”.

Thank you and May the good Lord lift up His countenance upon us all.

By: Georgina NsiahDonkor
Ghana Unit President.

MDG OBJECTIVE 2: “Achieve Universal Elementary Education.”

- Acquire basic skills in reading and writing.
- Crucial to improve learning
- Poverty, Gender and place of residence are key factors that keep children out of school.

What is Working in Ghana?

Advocacy on send your Girl child to school is achieving results. More girls in schools – Basic, Secondary, at Tertiary level girls are receiving higher grades – 1st Class, 2nd Class upper.

Advocacy Initiative – “Opportunities for children aiming at getting 100% of children in our Church Communities are in school. Free primary education is a fundamental right which the government is committed at the signing of the convention of the Rights of the child in 1989.

Strategy:

- I. Advocacy among the congregations.
- II. Within Organizations – Speaking to members to do it and teach others to send their children to school.

Scholarship for children from poor homes.

- I. Lack of school education makes illiterate persons trapped in the vicious circle of poverty and ignorance face tough situations throughout their lives.
- II. Receiving education is a basic right of every human being. Education ensures that the poor overcome their plight and have the power to create a brighter future for themselves and their families.
- III. Educated people are less likely to get ill of preventable diseases, because they read and learn how to lead healthy lives. Hygiene is learnt from school and that the basic for being healthy.
- IV. We need to unify the help that comes from every sector of the society to make this mission successful ensuring that every girl and boy complete elementary education.
- V. If parents understand the importance of education in their lives and that of their children, their attitude towards education and priorities in life will change.

Goals for 2017

- To make sure that all children complete a full course of primary schooling.
- Elimination gender disparities in Primary and Secondary education.
- Education of all children will ensure the attainment of all the development goals. It will then be possible to eradicate poverty and hunger, eliminate diseases and ensure environmental sustainability.

Vocational & Technical Skills is at the heart of the President of the Republic of Ghana.

The acquisition of workplace skills in the vocational training is seen universally as a key driver to economic and technological development.

Several recent studies have highlighted the constraints and challenges of the vocational training system. The key challenges are:

Limited access and focus on middle – level skills training. Current capacity in terms staffing workshop facilities and equipments need to expand to train students seeking vocational training services.

Vocational training courses should reflect industry needs and provide opportunity for middle level skills.

Structured on the job training will link occupational outcomes or skills required by employers. This will lead to diversified economic activities increased income and self-employment Beneficiaries could then extend their businesses to the rural communities and build local businesses as being highlighted by the government in the area of one district, one factory policy.