

# Human Rights Journal

June 2014 Edition

GHANA Volume 2 Number 6



Projects**abroad**

Ghana

**HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE**



Human Rights Advocacy, Monitoring and Abuse Resolution

The Projects Abroad Human Rights Office ('PAHO') is an independent, non-political, non-religious NGO. Through primarily grassroots funding, PAHO was founded to promote and protect the human rights of the people of Ghana. We are here to help people understand their rights and empower the population; to speak out and to seek justice against human rights abuses. Through advocacy, monitoring and legal assistance PAHO seeks to improve the awareness and enforcement of basic human rights in Ghana.

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# Monthly Project Updates







Generating publicity and addressing the conflict between cultural beliefs and the law

*Old Fadama is the biggest slum in Ghana, and is situated between Agbogbloshie market and Korle Lagoon. This lagoon has been cited as one of the most polluted bodies of water on the planet, due to the government sanctioned dumping of Western electronic waste within the lagoon. The government also owns the land on which the slums are situated, so the estimated 80,000 people living in the slums have settled there illegally. Thus, the government refuses to give them any services, such as, electricity, water, sewers, roads, or schools. Crime rates are high living conditions are poor; there is abject poverty and appalling literacy rates. The people within the slums are often unaware of their basic human and legal rights or do not know how to seek a resolution if these rights are violated. This is an area of Ghana which is in desperate need of help, so PAHO, in conjunction with WISEEP, has decided to set up a free legal assistance centre there. The goal is to set up a permanent, self-sustained fixture in the Old Fadama slums called the Fadama Legal Assistance Program (FLAP).*

The Fadama Legal Assistance Program (FLAP) is a non-governmental organization based in the Old Fadama Slum in Accra, Ghana. It advocates human rights issues, provides legal support and information to the Slum residents and operates a free mediation service. The FLAP office in Old Fadama deals with many legal issues. Those which arise most consistently are the rights of women and children, domestic violence, child maintenance and custody, matrimonial rights, employment, property, succession, forced eviction and criminal issues.

The Projects Abroad Human Rights Office (PAHO) works with FLAP to administer educational outreaches to the residents on crucial issues affecting their basic human rights. If the weather allowed it, PAHO volunteers attended the Old Fadama Slum every Wednesday to conduct the outreaches, departing from the office at approximately 9 am and arriving at

Old Fadama before 10 am, depending on traffic. Most days, the volunteers waited for the residents to arrive, get settled and reach the audience numbers that were expected that day.

Child maintenance and suspects' rights were the two main topics discussed on weekly outreaches throughout the month of June.

As to the topic of child maintenance, the target groups were women - in some instances young and other times more experienced. Although volunteers never knew the exact composition of the participant group prior to the session, they were always ready for any circumstance and prepared to present accordingly. After conducting a number of sessions, the volunteers learned the importance of raising child maintenance awareness within the community, as the participants reported many issues within their households and between couples. It was therefore crucial for the volunteers to introduce the topic and explain that both parents are morally and legally responsible for the care of their children. The volunteers explained the basic concepts in detail on the assumption that, what may seem obvious to some, may not be so obvious for the residents of Old Fadama, who are not only affected by the economic and environmental hazards but are also obstructed from obtaining access to information and education. The issue of marital disputes was prevalent in the presentations on child maintenance. The volunteers explained the options available to parents if they are not able to coordinate or agree on issues such as payment for child care, education, health care, nurturing, food and housing. The volunteers also explained what the parents may do in a dispute concerning custody where, if for any reason a couple separates, or live apart from each other, the parents disagree on who the child should live with.

As to the second topic, suspects' rights, the volunteers spoke to the residents about their rights during an arrest and detention; the concepts of a warrant and bail and also the basic guidelines that the police force must adhere to as representatives of the Ghanaian authority and justice system. This is a very important subject in Ghana because, although the use of force is prohibited under the Ghanaian Constitution, police corruption and brutality are common. It became apparent, after a number of sessions,

that there were many residents who were unaware that such behaviour is not only unlawful but also represents a serious obstruction of justice. It was for this reason that the volunteers decided to improve the presentation scheme and mention some of the institutions that have been established to tackle issues of police corruption and brutality. The function of the Commission for Human Rights & Administrative Justice, the Police Intelligence Professional Standards Bureau and the Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre was explained. The volunteers emphasized that these institutions function as the "police of the police" and that it is important to remember that, if their rights were infringed, something can be done about it. The volunteers also emphasized the importance of residents making use of FLAP because it is the only legal entity present at the Slum and can answer legal enquiries, solve legal issues and help the residents to connect with the aforementioned institutions. The volunteers considered that it was important to discuss the topic of suspects' rights with a male target group because they tend to be most targeted by the authorities. Nevertheless, volunteers did not present this issue to so-called criminals but to men and young men who could gain from an understanding of their human rights and learn another perspective on the justice system.

The FLAP sessions went well overall however the volunteers experienced a number of challenges. First, the volunteers were often unaware of the exact target audience prior to the presentation, since it was never certain who would be present, missing, or show up late. This may not be initially be perceived as a challenge however presenting on the topic of divorce to an audience of newlyweds might have a very different impact as opposed to presenting it to women who have been married for an extended period of time. Further, the circumstances within the Slum were often difficult: it was not easy to get hold of people, who would often rather use their time to make money, rather than to sit and listen. This leads to the next challenge; reality. It is so easy to judge inequalities in the abstract but the volunteers realized that, what is stated in paper, in human rights charters, in constitutions and in law, does not, unfortunately, always apply to the reality of people, especially in the

Slum. This was apparent to the volunteers when they spoke about topics such as court processes and the options the residents had to bring a dispute to court. It was necessary to tailor the presentations accordingly and discuss more practical means of resolution

## Slum Profiling: Health

**A picture of health: identifying critical issues for the residents of Old Fadama**

*In January 2014, the Projects Abroad Human Rights Office (PAHO) launched a project aimed at developing a community profile of the health and sanitation conditions of the residents of Old Fadama, Ghana's largest slum and home to approximately 80,000 people.*

*The focus of PAHO's investigations is upon sanitation conditions; available health facilities and the general health and wellbeing of members of the Slum community. The project is conducted by way of research and qualitative fieldwork; the findings from which will form the basis for recommendations for new health-based initiatives to be implemented by future PAHO volunteers.*

### The PAHO Slum Profiling Project

The Old Fadama Slum in Ghana is the largest of its kind and has long been a focus of initiatives driven by the Projects Abroad Human Rights Office (PAHO) in Accra. The Slum is home to 80,000 Ghanaian people,<sup>1</sup> all of whom live a precarious existence atop the largest electrical waste dump in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>2</sup>

Housing characteristics, community and neighbourhood environments have been found to correlate with human health. Specifically, substandard housing, such as a slum, has been associated with a diversity of health conditions including asthma,

tuberculosis, lead poisoning, injuries and poor mental health.<sup>3</sup> However, different slums have been shown to exhibit a considerable range of vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, it has been posited that if slum improvement campaigns are to be effective, one must consider the variability of the physical and sociological characteristics that define the slum.<sup>5</sup>

With this in mind, the impetus behind PAHO's Slum Profiling Project was to construct an accurate profile of the Old Fadama Slum, focusing on many facets of life across a demographic cross-section of the community. Since January 2014, the Project has focused on building a profile of the health of the residents in the community. The findings from the study will form the basis for recommendations for new health-based projects to be implemented by future PAHO volunteers.

### Methodology

Throughout May, PAHO volunteers conducted weekly visits to the Old Fadama Slum to collect data from a cross-section of residents from the Slum community.

Each week, the PAHO volunteers identified and targeted a particular 'focus group' of respondents. These focus groups were comprised of persons who shared specific characteristics, such as their means of employment, or other demographic markers, such as age or sex. This enabled more meaningful results to be collated, which identified the health and safety needs shared by particular sub-groups within the community, as well those common to the whole community.

The focus groups during May were:

1. workers at the Old Fadama Slum e-waste site;
2. pregnant women; and
3. traditional birth attendants.
- 4.

Data was collected through in-depth, open-ended interviews conducted in person with the residents by a number of volunteers. The interviews collected information regarding the demographics of the individual respondents (where possible) and focused on issues relating to the health and wellbeing of the respondents; sanitation levels in the community and access to healthcare facilities and health education.

Translators were required to facilitate the discussions. Because of the informality of the settings in which the discussions took place, the volunteers perceived that exact translations were not always given and that the translator would often paraphrase or summarise the content of the discussion for the other party. The use of an intermediary in this manner has the potential to subjectify and weaken the accuracy of the results of the qualitative study. Unfortunately, this seems to be an unavoidable consequence of the language barrier coupled with limited resources which prevent, for example, the recording of interviews and the preparation of an accurate verbatim transcript of the discussion.

### Findings & Analysis



### The burning of E-waste at Old Fadama

*Old Fadama e-waste site: where economic imperatives take a back seat to health and safety*

Ghana's e-waste dump at the Old Fadama Slum is reportedly the biggest in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>6</sup> and has attracted international scrutiny. Despite this, there remains a lack of reliable data on the processes involved in e-waste recycling and on the health and working conditions of the e-waste

<sup>1</sup> Natalia Ojewska, "Ghana's Old Fadama Slum: 'We Want to Live in Dignity'", Think Africa Press, 7 August 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Akormedi, Emmanuel Asampong and Julius Fobil, "Working conditions and environmental exposures among electrical waste workers in Ghana", International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health 19 (2013): 279.

<sup>3</sup> Emilia Asuquo Udofia, Alfred E Yawson, Kwesi Adu Aduful and Francis Mulekya Bwambale, "Residential characteristics as correlates of occupants' health in the greater Accra region, Ghana" BMC Public Health 14 (2014): 1.

<sup>4</sup> Marta M Janowska, John R Weeks and Ryan Engstrom, "Do the most vulnerable people live in the worst slums? A spatial analysis of Accra, Ghana" Annals of GIS 17 (2011): 221.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid: 221.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Akormedi, Emmanuel Asampong and Julius Fobil, Opt. Cit., 279.

workers.<sup>7</sup> This made it a primary target for on-the-ground research by PAHO volunteers.

On 6<sup>th</sup> May 2014, the PAHO volunteers attended the e-waste worksite with the aim of conducting qualitative interviews with the workers and recording observations of the work practices being undertaken and the general conditions of the worksite. On this occasion, the volunteers' ability to collect data was significantly impeded by the reluctance of the workers to participate in the study. Only one worker agreed to be interviewed and was questioned 'on-the-spot' at the e-waste site. Due to the informality of the setting, the breadth of questioning was restricted and the volunteers were not able to record responses contemporaneously.

The interviewed participant reported moving to the Old Fadama Slum from the north of Ghana in order to find work. He had been living in the community for approximately 4 years and lived in very close proximity to the e-waste worksite. The participant earned his living by retrieving and selling the copper from the inside of the electrical cords and other electrical waste. He also sent a portion of the money he earned back to his family, who remained in the northern region. When questioned about his awareness of the health risks associated with his work, the participant remarked that he knew that there were risks but that he considered there to be no alternative job prospects where the pay was comparable to that which he earned at the e-waste site. The participant also reported that, while the workers were aware of safer ways to conduct the retrieval of the copper and other metals, the e-waste was burned because it resulted in more efficient retrieval. The worker reported experiencing regular headaches, coughs and a general lack of wellness. He frequented a local pharmacy for any medical treatment he required but was not covered by the National Health Insurance Scheme.

During the site visit, the volunteers observed a significant amount of electrical waste piled around the worksite; specifically computers, refrigerators and televisions. The workers were also transporting new waste to the site in makeshift

wheelbarrows. The waste was placed in piles and burned until only the copper and underlying metals remained. The burning piles emitted a thick black smoke that was carried back towards the Slum. Once the waste piles had burned, the workers would douse the piles with small packets of water.

Notably, the workers wore no protective clothing and no enclosed shoes and handled the smouldering piles of waste with large sticks. The workers at the site were exclusively male; although there were some females in the immediate vicinity, most of whom were selling food and water to the workers.

The site visit enabled the PAHO volunteers to identify a number of critical health hazards for the workers at the e-waste facility. One disconcerting theme that emerged from the study was that, while the health hazards of the work being conducted were often plainly evident and, in the case of the one participant interviewed, known to the workers, the economic imperatives outweighed any desire to cease the work altogether or to take simple precautions against obvious health risks. Accordingly, it is apparent that any strategies aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of this demographic will need to, at least in the short term, be aimed at mitigation rather than eradication of an industry which seems to be a lynchpin of the Slum economy and source of employment for many. However, before any concrete recommendations can be issued, attempts should be made to supplement the results of the study which, at present, are limited to observations recorded by the volunteers and the responses given by the one interviewed participant.

#### *Pregnancy and childbirth in Old Fadama: a solitary journey*

On the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2014, PAHO volunteers conducted a further outreach to Old Fadama with the purpose of gaining an insight into the health related issues experienced by female residents during pregnancy and childbirth.

There were seven primary participants in the study; although onlookers frequently offered insights into the discussion. These insights were also recorded. Due to the number of participants, the volunteers divided the participants into two separate focus groups in order to more effectively engage in the discussion. The

participants were pregnant females aged between 20 – 30 years and had all moved to the Slum from the North of Ghana. The duration of their current residency in the Slum varied between 4 months and 8 years.

The respondents were evenly split insofar as their preference was for a hospital birth versus a birth with the aid of a traditional birth attendant (with four respondents indicating they would attend the hospital and three respondents preferring the assistance of a birth attendant). The reasons offered in favour of the traditional birth attendant included monetary considerations; an established relationship and community ties. Those who preferred the hospital gave reasons which included previous miscarriages and complications with earlier pregnancies and also cited a belief that the decision to use a traditional birth attendant was 'old-fashioned' and 'out-dated'.

Although some participants preferred the use of traditional birth attendants, all reported using the hospital in the case of an emergency, serious illness, or for post-natal care. Encouragingly, 5 out of 7 participants also reported having health insurance under the National Health Insurance Scheme. It was therefore apparent that the women evidenced a willingness to avail themselves of health facilities where necessary but they reported experiencing consistent logistical barriers to efficient and effective access. For example, a number of the participants described making the journey to the hospital as one of the key challenges involved in childbirth; the hospital being a 30 minute walk from the Slum or, where walking was not possible, a 15 minute ride by whatever means of transport the woman could procure.

The overriding theme that emerged during the discussion was the fact that there was a notable absence of effective and consistent education and informal support offered to the women in relation to what they could expect during pregnancy, childbirth and their child's infancy and a distinct lack of awareness of health issues relating to infant children. The cumulative knowledge of the participants on these issues seemed to have been developed organically; either having been passed down by word of mouth or from learned experience or observation. The limited education that the participants did

<sup>7</sup> Matthew Akormedi, Emmanuel Asampong and Julius Fobil, *Opt. Cit.*, 279.



describe receiving was sporadic and often only came after previous births. For example, some participants described having received minimal education and support from local nurses. Another participant reported having been provided some information and education following her previous miscarriages, but not during her current pregnancy. Many of those questioned emphatically advocated for the establishment of a permanent nurses station in the Slum which they could regularly access for their health concerns and problems. It was quite clear that most of them had no conception of the health risks of living in a slum, as malaria seemed their only concern when questioned about the potential health risks for infant children.

Interestingly, a greater number of participants appeared to have received some form of family planning education and, indeed, were receptive to using family planning methods, despite the strong religiosity of Ghanaian society. However, the implementation of family planning techniques among the participants (including the reported use of contraception) was limited due to complications and a desire by the husband for more children. There was also a degree of scepticism among those participants who had used family planning in relation to the effectiveness of the methods prescribed, with one participant indicating towards her stomach and commenting to the effect that "this was supposed to be family planning".

What is clear from the focus group discussions held with the pregnant women is that future recommendations for this community group need to centre upon improving formal education for women; strengthening informal support mechanisms and developing means to remove logistical barriers to accessing available healthcare.

#### *Traditional Birth Attendants at Old Fadama: the crucial intermediaries*

A further community outreach was conducted at Old Fadama on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2014. The target group for this session was the traditional birth attendants who assist in the delivery of many of the children of Old Fadama. The PAHO volunteers interviewed two of the reportedly five known practising attendants in the Slum and also spoke with a community nurse from the

Ghana Community Health Service who accompanied the group during the discussions. The participants each had significant experience as traditional birth attendants; participant one had been practicing for 28 years and participant two had been practicing for 18 years. Both participants had also been attendants prior to arriving at the Slum and reported a current average delivery rate of 4 babies per month.

The lack of education or formal training of any kind was conspicuous between both participants. Participant one reported having received no training and had simply become an attendant after assisting on a childbirth many years ago. She reported having a "natural talent" for the job and knowledge that was innate, rather than learned; it was "just there; it just exists". Similarly, participant two reported having received a dream many years ago that the gift had been passed to her by her recently deceased Aunt. Both participants expressed a desire to have more training and support. In particular, participant two remarked that, only recently, had she learned about the importance of using disinfectant and other equipment during the birth and that, traditionally, in her culture, the birth was simply facilitated using her bare hands.

The women also reported a crucial lack of resources to assist them to adequately perform their role. Neither woman was paid a consistent or reliable fee for their services. Participant one received "whatever the mother could pay"; which often amounted to very little. Participant two also stated that, as part of her culture, birth attendants were not paid a fee. However, sometimes she requested certain items, such as soap, or received a small gift or token of appreciation.

Clean delivery (including clean hands, clean surfaces and clean cord cutting) is a key intervention for reducing infections in newborns.<sup>8</sup> Comfortingly, the women each reported taking steps to maintain sanitary practices during the childbirths; although these could be described as rudimentary at best.

<sup>8</sup> Cheryl A Moyer, Raymond Akawire Aborigo, Gideon Logonia, Gideon Affah, Sarah Rominski, Philip B Adongo, John Williams, Abraham Hodgson and Cyril Engmann, "Clean delivery practices in rural northern Ghana: a qualitative study of community and provider knowledge, attitudes and beliefs", *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*, 12 (2012): 2.

Participant one seemed more adept at taking these precautions and maintained a facility where women came to give birth. While this was cramped, she reported being able to keep it clean and dry, even when it rained. By contrast, participant two facilitated the births at the mothers' homes and did her best to disinfect the space prior to delivery with provisions she bought with her to the home. Both participants reported wearing gloves during the procedure and using soap and disinfectant to clean before and after birth. Participant one seemed more cognisant of the need for cleanliness and used a new disposable razor and methylated spirits to cut the umbilical cord during each birth; which was discarded after use. Alarming, both women reported having to pay for the resources required to facilitate the birth, such as disinfectants, gloves, medicines and sheets, out of their own pocket. It was apparent, therefore, that the sanitary conduct of each birth was tenuously dependent upon the generosity and financial capacity of the attendants themselves.

The most encouraging theme to emerge from the discussions with the attendants was the fact that they appeared to have a strong relationship with the community nurses and understood the limitations of their service and when it was appropriate to refer the expectant women to a hospital. The attendants recorded the births in a notebook which, at the end of each month, was given to the community nurses, so that they could keep track of all of the children born at Old Fadama. The nurses would then visit the women to assess the health of the babies and encourage the women to attend the hospital to receive adequate post-natal care and vaccinations for the newborns. Each of the attendants also reported encouraging the mothers to attend the hospital post-delivery for these reasons. Similarly, both attendants advised that they would refer the mother to a hospital if they considered that the birth was likely to be complicated, rather than attempt to deliver the child themselves.

Overall, the interviews with the traditional attendants revealed that these women act as crucial intermediaries between the uneducated Slum community and formal healthcare providers; such as the community nurses and the hospitals with whom they connect. There is an ongoing

demand for their services, particularly by those residents who come from traditional backgrounds and who are reluctant to attend the hospital to give birth. However, worryingly, the attendants shared a conspicuous absence of education or training of any kind and often lacked the resources required in order to facilitate safe and sanitary births. Accordingly, initiatives in this area need to be directed towards increasing support for these attendants through the provision of educational programmes which focus on maternal and infant health and basic skills training sessions (such as CPR and first aid courses). In addition, fundraising initiatives should be developed with the aim of procuring financial support for the attendants so that they may purchase the essential resources required to facilitate sanitary births. This will ensure that the continuance of sanitary birthing practices in the Slum is no longer tenuously dependent upon the financial resources of the attendants themselves.

### Looking Forward

The Slum Profiling Project will conclude in early June 2014.

Ideally, before the project is completed and the report issued, the volunteers would like to:

- 1) Supplement, with independent research, the qualitative data collected from the limited enquiries made, and observations recorded, at the Old Fadama e-waste worksite. It is important that a more fulsome study be conducted in relation to this group of residents, given the emergence of e-waste scavenging as a fundamental livelihood strategy and income generator for many residents in the Slum.<sup>9</sup> Ideally, the independent research should focus on exploring the relationship between health and safety at the e-waste site; the economic imperatives of the workers and whether the latter will always take precedence over the former.

- 2) Expand the scope of the qualitative analysis to target and interview additional sub-groups within the Slum community. Specifically, in the coming weeks, the volunteers will aim to engage in discussions with community

leaders and representatives from the National Health Insurance Scheme who work in the Slum community to gather information about the health and safety issues that these groups perceive to be of greatest concern to the Slum dwellers. These more detailed findings will enable future PAHO volunteers to develop projects which are better equipped to address the needs of the Slum residents.

Once these issues are closed out and the study finalised, the findings will be used to compile a detailed report with recommendations for new, targeted, health-based campaigns aimed at remedying the critical health issues revealed by the results of the qualitative study.

## Human Rights Clubs

### Accra High School

*HR-Clubs is an Amnesty International initiative whose intent is to work in cooperation with local partners to develop after school clubs dedicated to human rights education in various schools. The goal is to eventually have a HR Club in every school across the globe. PAHO acts as Amnesty's partner in Accra. Volunteers from all over the developed world come here to give lessons in local schools on human rights. The Human Rights Club is part of the school's extra-curricular programme, so the students attending the Club are there voluntarily and thus have a latent interest in human rights issues.*

In the month of June, the Human Rights Club workshops focused on two topics: witchcraft and international relations. The three PAHO volunteers on the project, Hannah Kelly, Loyola Wills and Gabriel Valdes, worked with students to facilitate discussion and provide a forum in which the students could learn about the human rights implications of the above topics. These discussions also provided the opportunity for the volunteers to gain an insight into prevalent conceptions about human rights in Ghana.

The topic of witchcraft was chosen by the PAHO volunteers because it is a controversial topic among Ghanaians. The objective of the workshop on this topic was to explore what rights the students thought witches have in

Ghana; what rights they considered that witches should have (if any); and whether or not they considered witches should have more rights. There were many conceptions raised by the students throughout the discussion, which proved quite interesting. First, the students believed that witchcraft was present all over the world but that witches in Ghana are predominately 'bad' witches, while those in Europe or Western countries are 'good' witches. These ideas are undoubtedly associated with the development of Ghana and the development of Western nations. Secondly, the students considered that those in Ghana who did not believe in witchcraft would not be affected by practices performed by witches. Finally, the students identified that witches are mostly used as scapegoats for things that may not necessarily be of their doing.

In preparing for the workshop on witchcraft, the volunteers found some interesting cases of reported witchcraft over the last decade. These were presented to the students and the volunteers lead a discussion on the sorts of repercussions these had for individuals and their human rights. There were two cases, in particular, which the students found quite shocking. The first was the story of an 18 year old girl, similar in age to the students in the Club, who was accused of being a witch because she was very bright in Mathematics and Science. Her classmates accused her of stealing away their knowledge and, consequently, she was sent to a witch camp and then killed. The other case study was of an older lady with dementia who walked to a park and slept under a tree, with no knowledge of how she got there. She was later discovered by three men, who burnt her alive for being a witch.

Upon learning of these cases, the students discussed with each other what sorts of rights witches should have and whether or not the government in Ghana should be more involved in the persecution of witches, instead of leaving it up to civilians. The students decided collectively that there was no way a person could know if somebody was a witch, so they should be given the same rights as any other individual. The students also concluded that they did not agree with the imprisonment of witches in camps, as that deprived them of their liberty and exposed them to torture and harm which was not, in most cases, justified.

<sup>9</sup> Martin Oteng-Ababio, "When Necessity Begets Ingenuity: E-Waste Scavenging as a Livelihood Strategy in Accra, Ghana", *African Studies Quarterly* 13 (2012): 15.



**Discussing International Relations with High School students at Accra High**

The students also acknowledged that it was hard for the government to intervene because the belief in witchcraft is so entrenched in some communities in Ghana and these beliefs have been around for centuries.

Upon learning, during this first workshop, that the students wished to attend University to study either law, international relations or politics, the volunteers decided to conduct an information lesson on international relations during the next workshop. This workshop was treated mostly as a teaching lesson during which students were able to ask questions at the end. The session focused on a review of non-government organisations, including those prominent in Ghana; the G20 & G8; the Millennium Development Goals, including Ghana's involvement in crafting goals post 2015; and multinational corporations and regional agreements, such as the Economic Community of Western Africa (ECOWAS).

Many organisations and corporations were also discussed, such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Labour Organisation, the World Trade Organisation and many more. The students were quite interested in the work of these organisations and how they benefited Ghana, as they hadn't previously heard of most of them. The volunteers also looked at Ghanaian organisations in which the students could become

involved for the purposes of work experience and volunteering.

The students were quite interested in the G20 and the current convention this year in Australia. After learning about its purpose, they asked about the sort of topics that would be discussed at the convention and how it would help Ghana. A lot of discussion was generated about 'tax dumping' and the ways in which countries could alleviate this via the use of the G20 convention. The students also knew quite a lot about ECOWAS and its dynamics, which made for quite a lively conversation.

Both the aforementioned sessions were well received and were beneficial in the way that they allowed the students to debate and challenge their own conceptions about Ghana and the world. In future sessions, it is anticipated that a focus on economic and environmental sustainability will be discussed with the students, due to Ghana's alarming pollution rate and the investments of other countries in Ghana.

## Gender Equality Outreach: Dodowa

Focus group discussion on gender equality.

*In May 2014, volunteers from the Projects Abroad Human Rights Office (PAHO) conducted two focus-group discussions with persons from communities within the Dodowa region. The discussions were on the topic of gender equality. Based on the outcome of those discussions, the volunteers prepared an indepth 4-week training programme on gender equality to be delivered to a group of young people, of both sexes, from those same communities. The programme was designed to contemplate empowerment for both women and men (with empowerment in this context meaning the ability of people to direct and control their own lives). The overall objective of the training was to inspire, train and enable interested young people to nominate as Human Rights Defenders for these communities.*

### The beginning of the training

The first session of the 4-week training programme was intended to provide a general overview of the concepts of discrimination and empowerment and to discuss role models and requirements for leading an empowered and successful life. The second session covered the topics of family planning and sexually transmitted diseases; specifically, HIV.

Unfortunately, the first two training sessions did not run according to plan. At the commencement of the first session, the participants appeared to have little prior understanding about the training topic and appeared quite blank when asked to answer questions such as "what does discrimination mean for you?" and "what do you think is meant by the term empowerment?" This made the volunteers question the motivation of the participants to attend a 4-week training course on an unknown topic and with an unknown objective.





### Volunteers begin the Dodowa Gender Equality outreach

At the conclusion of the first session, the volunteers asked the participants to complete a form detailing information about their personal goals, fears, obstacles and achievements and the participants did so enthusiastically. The intention of the volunteers was to collect these forms and redistribute them at each of the subsequent sessions to give the participants the chance to review and potentially revise their entries. However, the second training session was attended by a completely different group of people. Accordingly, this follow-up activity could not be effectively completed.

The group who attended the second session contributed very little to the discussion and appeared very sleepy and disinterested throughout. The volunteers considered that this could be because the discussion topics (family planning and sexually transmitted diseases) were sensitive and the participants felt embarrassed to speak about them. Alternatively, the volunteers considered that a greater degree of interactivity between the presenters and participants could have increased the level of engagement among the participants.

### Change of objectives

The first two sessions created some doubt among the volunteers as to whether the overall objective of the training programme - to nominate participants as Human Rights Defenders for the community - could realistically be achieved.

After some discussion, the PAHO volunteers decided to continue the training sessions but dismiss the original idea regarding the nomination of Human Rights Defenders. It was considered that any training in the area of human rights, gender equality and empowerment would nevertheless be useful and would provoke thought and discussion among the participants and between them and their wider peer group.

The third session focused on the importance of education and the processes and practicalities of applying for a job. In order to promote engagement among the participants, the volunteers commenced the session with a role play to demonstrate instances of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour at a job interview. On this occasion, many of the participants had attended the previous session and they were therefore more confident and willing to engage in the discussion.

At the time of writing, the fourth and final session of the programme is yet to take place. The fourth session will begin with some topics carried over from the third session which could not be completed due to time limitations. Specifically, the volunteers will explain some of the steps that the participants may take in order to open their own business as an alternative to applying for a job. The session will then continue with a discussion on the topics of leadership and goalsetting, both of which are considered important characteristics of empowerment.

### Next Steps

After concluding the training programme on the subject of gender equality, the PAHO volunteers will meet to discuss what other types of training might be useful for the Dodowa communities and/or what other target groups should be approached for training.

## Gender Equality Outreach: Abokobi

*In 2009, PAHO volunteers conducted outreach sessions to a women's action group in Abokobi, where a number of topics were explored such as domestic abuse, sexual health, and access to education. PAHO volunteers decided to revisit Abokobi and the topic of gender equality again in 2014. During a meeting with Ms Felicia of the local NGO for empowerment of rural women, volunteers explored what previously worked and what still needs to be done. Following this discussion, it was decided that the main issue that should be addressed in Abokobi is 'women empowerment' which, in this sense, means educating women on how to have better control of their own lives.*

In 2009, PAHO volunteers conducted outreach sessions to a women's action group in Abokobi, where a number of topics were explored such as domestic abuse, sexual health, and access to education. PAHO volunteers decided to revisit Abokobi and the topic of gender equality again in 2014. During a meeting with Ms Felicia<sup>10</sup> of the local NGO for empowerment of rural women, volunteers explored what previously worked and what still needs to be done. Following this discussion, it was decided that the main issue that should be addressed in Abokobi is 'women empowerment' which, in this sense, means educating women on how to have better control of their own lives.

The subject of gender equality in Ghana has always been extremely important. Ghana is a nation with a fixed concept of family and the traditional gender roles that are attached to it. There is emerging tension between the modernizing country and the conservative society

<sup>10</sup>Volunteers have been working with Ms Felicia since 2009 on differing subjects affecting women in Abokobi.

that can, in many ways, lead to unfulfilled potential and possible abuse between the sexes. Volunteers from the Project Abroad Human Rights Office (PAHO) set out to better understand perceived gender roles in Ghana by holding local group discussions with different communities. This enabled the volunteers to coordinate training, advocacy and, importantly, empowerment projects aimed at addressing the major imbalances. Abokobi is a small town and is the capital of Ga East district, a district in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

The PAHO volunteers visited Abokobi every Wednesday in June for a period of 4 weeks to conduct sessions on women empowerment. About 17-20 women aged between 18 and 35 attended the training (some of whom arrived a little later in the program). Most of the women worked as traders, hair dressers or tailors.

The first session was intended to provide the group with some general information on the topic of empowerment and on the background of women empowerment in Ghana, wider Africa and the rest of the world. The volunteers also provided the participants with practical examples of women empowerment. The session started with a song and some prayers to warm up the women for the training. The women were then asked to talk about their expectations for the training. Most women stated that they want to learn about human rights and empowerment and teach others about what they had learned. They also mentioned that they would like to serve as role models for their own children; in particular for their female children.

The wishes shared by most of the women appeared to be to educate their female children to the highest extent possible and to play as important a role in family, community and society as men do. During the first session, a brief YouTube video was also selected and shown. It presented women in various African countries who stated their view of the challenges and needs for women empowerment. The 2-hour session also included a number of interactive segments where the volunteers asked the women to give examples of discrimination and empowerment and to complete a booklet describing their goals, fears, obstacles and achievements. Session 2 began with a summary of session 1, after which the main topic



**The Gender Equality team with womens group in Abokobi**

areas for the second session were addressed; these being reproductive health, family planning and domestic violence. The aims and objectives of this session were to provide the participants with a general understanding of health and family planning in a Ghanaian context and, furthermore, to provide an impartial environment in which the participants could discuss the issues and stigmas surrounding women's sexual health in Ghana. A presentation was delivered to the participants with information regarding the human reproductive system, family planning, sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV) and female genital mutilation. In preparation for the session, there was a lot of research undertaken by the volunteers into relevant legislation and strategic plans produced by the Ghanaian Government. During the second session, the participants were particularly engrossed in the information relating to contraception and the different methods of use. The participants were able to identify four of the main methods of contraception: the pill, the condom, an injection that prevents pregnancy for three months and the IUD. There was a focus on how the women could convince their husbands to use contraception with suggestions including mediation and talking with doctors or religious leaders. The participants also requested that the volunteers conduct a focus group discussion with men to educate them

on contraception and its importance in Ghana.

During the third session the volunteers focused on the importance of education and provided the women with information regarding the school system, scholarships and how to open a business. The volunteers also tried to engage the women as much as possible, with a number of interactive segments. The volunteers posed a number of questions to the women, the first of which focused upon the reasons why the women considered education to be important. Some of the answers given were (a) to be able to write their own name, (b) to become a responsible person, (c) to be able to care for oneself, (d) to get out of poverty, (e) to know their rights and (f) to become a president. This session was enriched by Miriam, a Ghanaian student interning at PAHO, who could tell about her experiences first hand. This was very welcomed by the participants.

During the third session the volunteers and participants also exchanged recommendations and ideas. One recommendation made by the volunteers was that women who have an own business should plan some time for themselves and their family and have a rest to recover from the hard work. One woman asked, "How can I have a rest, when I am doing the business alone? I close the business to have a rest, then I don't earn money and the competitors take over the



market.” The volunteers stressed that she should still find ways to have at least 1-2 hours rest each day because if she gets sick due to constant hard work, she may have to close the business for weeks. A number of the participants also made recommendations to the group. One of the participants advised that, when establishing a business, it is of the utmost importance to look for a good piece of land which does not turn to a muddy place during rain and to find a place that has water and electricity. Another woman told the group that micro-financing does not always work well, because conditions are often unfavourable. She considered that the better option was to save a little money or ask for a small contribution from the husband. Interestingly, another woman advised the group to keep business matters and family matters separate and not to charge family members less than others, because this could ruin the whole business.

In the fourth and final session the PAHO volunteers presented on the topic of leadership, including identifying the qualities that are required to be a good leader. It was hoped that the women in the group would be able to use their own experiences to relate to the topic. The discussion sparked a lot of conversation and the women had several ideas. Due to time constraints, the volunteers were unable to present on the additional topics of child maintenance and child labor (as was previously planned). Overall, the final session went well however the women did appear to be a little disengaged at the beginning of the session. The volunteers conducted an interactive scenario game during the session in which the women were split into two groups which competed against each other. This seemed to encourage the women to discuss their ideas in more depth and engage more in the session. The contributions on a whole were very good and the participants had several good ideas which they will hopefully be able to apply to their own daily routine. After this 4 week program, the PAHO volunteers will meet to discuss if there needs to be more work done in Abokobi this particular topic.

## Child Marriage Outreach

Unions borne from poverty: workshoping solutions to end child marriage in Ghana

*In March 2014, the Projects Abroad Human Rights Office (PAHO) launched its Child Marriage Project as a new initiative within its established Child Advocacy project portfolio. The purpose of the Project is twofold: first, to raise awareness among community representatives about the practice of child marriage in Ghana and its serious consequences for children and communities and, secondly, to workshop practical measures aimed at bringing an end to this intolerable human rights abuse. The Project is conducted by means of a series of workshops strategically targeted at those community representatives who are considered likely to have the desire, motivation and influence to become agents for change within their communities. Throughout June, the PAHO volunteers assisting on the Child Marriage Project met with representatives from the Christian communities of Greater Accra.*

### Child Marriage in Ghana

Child marriage is typically understood to mean a formal or informal union entered between two persons, one or both of whom enters into the union before they reach the age of 18 years.<sup>11</sup> The majority of those who enter these unions underage are female<sup>12</sup> and, accordingly, the term is most commonly applied to those marriages in which a young (underage) girl is married to an older male. The practice is pervasive throughout Sub-Saharan Africa;<sup>13</sup> including in Ghana. According to statistics published by UNICEF in 2013, approximately 21 percent of Ghanaian women then aged between 20 – 24 years were married before they reached the age of 18 years.<sup>14</sup> The prevalence of child marriage is highest in the Upper Eastern region, the Upper Western region and the Northern region of Ghana, where child marriages account for 50 percent, 39 percent and 36 percent of all marriages,

respectively. While the rate of child marriage in the metropolitan area of Greater Accra is significantly lower, child marriages still account for 11 percent of marriages in this region.<sup>15</sup>

Poverty, ignorance and illiteracy are central drivers perpetuating these child marriages.<sup>16</sup> Early marriage is considered to be a means by which impoverished families can relieve themselves of an economic burden while, at the same time, ensuring their daughter's future financial security.<sup>17</sup> The practice of child marriage is also a tradition deeply entrenched in many cultures and is considered a way to strengthen alliances between tribes and villages, reinforce social ties and social status<sup>18</sup> and protect a young girl's sexuality and virginity.<sup>19</sup>

Child marriage has devastating consequences for both children and communities. It has been shown to expose underage girls entering these marriages to a myriad of health issues including increased risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, cervical cancer, malaria and complications (including the death of the infant or mother) during childbirth due to the trauma placed on the underdeveloped bodies of the young girls.<sup>20</sup> Girls married as children are also prevented from reaching their full educational potential; enjoying optimal work and health opportunities; bonding with their peers and maturing in the ordinary course.<sup>21</sup> All of these factors weaken the girls' social and economic mobility and further entrench their poverty and dependence and that of their children, thereby perpetuating the cycle of child marriage within communities.<sup>22</sup> Girl children who enter these marriages also have a heightened risk of exposure to domestic violence at the hands of their male partner - a symptom of the unique power imbalance created by relationships

<sup>15</sup> UNFPA, "Child Marriage in Ghana," 2012, <http://ghana.unfpa.org/page.php?page=433&section=44&typ=2>.

<sup>16</sup> Friday Okonofua, "Prevention of Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy in Africa: Need for more Research and Innovation," *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 17(2013): 9.

<sup>17</sup> Nawal Nour, "Health Consequences of Child Marriage in Africa," *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 12(2006): 1645.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 1645.

<sup>19</sup> Friday Okonofua, Opt. Cit., 9.

<sup>20</sup> Nawal Nour, Opt. Cit., 1644.

<sup>21</sup> Friday Okonofua, Opt. Cit., 9.

<sup>22</sup> Shiyan Chao (ed), *Ghana: Gender Analysis and Policymaking for Development*, (Washington: The World Bank, 1999) 52.

<sup>11</sup> UNICEF, "Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse", 21 December 2012,

[http://www.unicef.org/protection/57929\\_58008.html](http://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_58008.html).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF, Opt. Cit.

<sup>14</sup> UNICEF, "Child Protection: Statistics by Area", *Childinfo – Monitoring the Situation of Women and Children*, January 2013, [http://www.childinfo.org/marriage\\_countrydata.php](http://www.childinfo.org/marriage_countrydata.php).



where one party is a child and the other an adult.<sup>23</sup>

### National and International Condemnation for Child Marriage

Despite its prevalence in Ghanaian society, the practice of child marriage has been met with national and international condemnation because of the serious consequences it has for the health and wellbeing of the children involved and the systemic socio-economic issues it creates for communities in which the cycle of child marriage – and, in turn, poverty – is passed down between generations.

The practice of child marriage has been criminalized in Ghana. Section 13 of the *Children's Act 1998* (the Act) provides that, “[n]o person shall force a child ... to be betrothed ... to be the subject of a dowry transaction ... or to be married” and that “[t]he minimum age of marriage of whatever kind shall be eighteen years.” The Act further provides that “[n]o person shall subject a child to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment including any cultural practice which dehumanises or is injurious to the physical and mental well-being of the child.”<sup>24</sup> For the purposes of the Act, a child is defined as any person below the age of eighteen years.<sup>25</sup> The penalty for a contravention of these provisions of the Act is a fine not exceeding 5 million cedi (1.6 million USD), or a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year, or both.<sup>26</sup>

The practice of child marriage has also been condemned by the international community and is prohibited under a number of key human rights instruments to which Ghana is a party. The rights to enter marriage “freely”, “with full consent” and at “full age” are enshrined as fundamental human rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>27</sup> Further, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the United

Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child each impose obligations on signatory governments to take measures to stop harmful traditional and cultural practices, such as child marriage, which affect the welfare of children.<sup>28</sup> For the purposes of these instruments, a child is defined as every person below the age of 18 years.<sup>29</sup>

### The PAHO Child Marriage Project

In early 2014, the Projects Abroad Human Rights Office (PAHO) in Accra, Ghana, launched its Child Marriage Project as a new initiative within its established Child Advocacy project portfolio. The Project aspires to effect a reduction in the rate of child marriage in Ghana by:

1. raising awareness among community leaders within the Greater Accra Region as to the pervasive problem of child marriage in the Ghanaian community; the legal position on child marriage; the complex drivers precipitating forced child marriages and the harmful consequences of these forced marriages for the child and the wider community; and
2. exploring, with these community leaders, practical means of addressing the complex and multifaceted child marriage problem in Ghana in the hope that they will implement these practical measures and become agents for change within their own communities.

The Project is conducted by way of a series of workshops run by PAHO volunteers in conjunction with the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE). The NCCE is an independent Ghanaian Commission established pursuant to the *National Commission for Civic Education Act*

1993 whose stated purpose is to, inter alia, “formulate, implement and oversee programs intended to inculcate in the citizens of Ghana awareness of their civic responsibilities and an appreciation of their rights and obligations as free people.”<sup>30</sup>

Each month, the PAHO volunteers, in consultation with the NCCE, identify and target a particular ‘focus group’ of participants for the child marriage workshops. These focus groups are comprised of persons who the volunteers consider are likely to possess the necessary influence, desire and motivation to further disseminate the knowledge they have learned among their communities and become effective agents for change within those communities. Since the inception of the Child Marriage Project, the PAHO volunteers have conducted workshops with three focus groups; these being, representatives from youth groups based in Accra, religious leaders from Muslim communities and, most recently, religious leaders from Christian communities.

### Child Marriage Workshops with Christian Leaders

In June, the PAHO volunteers on the Child Marriage Project commenced a series of weekly workshops with leaders of the Christian communities of Greater Accra, each of which probed into a different aspect of the complex and multi-faceted issue of child marriage in Ghana. There were approximately 10 participants at each of the weekly workshops, all of whom attended voluntarily, at the invitation of the NCCE. The Christian leaders were targeted as participants in these workshops for two reasons: first, because they were considered to be persons of influence within their communities and, secondly, because the volunteers wanted to understand the connection between Christianity and child marriage (if any) in circumstances where the text of the Bible is replete with directives about marriage.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Anita Raj and Ulrike Boehm, “Girl Child Marriage and Its Association with National Rates of HIV, Maternal Health and Infant Mortality across 97 Countries,” *Violence* 19(2013): 537.

<sup>24</sup> *Children's Act 1998* s 14.

<sup>25</sup> *Children's Act 1998* s 1.

<sup>26</sup> *Children's Act 1998* s 15.

<sup>27</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted 10 December 1948) G.A. res. 217A (III), U.N. Doc A/810: Article 16.

<sup>28</sup> African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (adopted 1 July 1990, entered into force 24 January 2013) OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/24.9/49: Article 21. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted 20 November 1989, entered into force 2 September 1990): Article 24.

<sup>29</sup> African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (adopted 1 July 1990, entered into force 24 January 2013) OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/24.9/49: Article 2. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted 20 November 1989, entered into force 2 September 1990): Article 1.

<sup>30</sup> *National Commission for Civic Education Act 1993* s 2(d).

<sup>31</sup> Nathan Iddrisu Samwini, “The Challenge of Child upbringing among Muslims and Christians in Ghana,” *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 3(2012): 880.

### **Session 1: statistics and the law**

The first of the sessions with the Christian leaders took place on Monday, 9 June at the NCCE headquarters. The session began with a discussion aimed at exploring the level of knowledge of the leaders in relation to the topic and gaining an insight into whether they were advocates for, or against, the practice. The volunteers posed several questions for discussion, including:

- What do you understand to be meant by the term 'child marriage'?
- Do you know what the minimum legal age for marriage is in Ghana?
- Do you have any experience of child marriage in your community?
- Is there any support for the practice of child marriage in Christian teachings?
- Do you think child marriage is ever justifiable?

It was readily apparent from the discussion that the leaders were highly educated and, between them, already held a significant knowledge base in relation to the topic. They were also strong advocates against the practice of child marriage, although their direct experience of it in their own communities appeared to be limited to instances in which a teenaged female had fallen pregnant out of wedlock and had been encouraged by her parents to marry her child's partner. They had rarely encountered instances of forced child marriage involving young pre-pubescent girls but were aware that it occurred, particularly outside Greater Accra.

Following the discussion, the volunteers provided the leaders with recent statistics detailing the prevalence of child marriage in Ghana, information that appeared to prove a surprise to many of the participants. This was followed by an analysis of the legal position on child marriage in Ghana and internationally. In this regard, the leaders expressed their obvious exasperation at the fact that the 'black letter law' is often proved meaningless in Ghanaian society, where the institutions and authorities charged with upholding the law do not

do so in a consistent and transparent fashion. This reality seemed to have resulted in a pervasive mentality of hopelessness and futility among the participants in relation to what could be done to stop the practice. Accordingly, the volunteers tried to emphasise that, while there may be limitations to employing legal mechanisms to combat child marriage, more can be done at a community level to leverage social pressure and, ultimately, change attitudes, customs and traditions. In particular, the volunteers attempted to impart a sense of social responsibility to the leaders and urged them to use their positions of influence to change attitudes within their own communities. The volunteers sensed that, once the leaders acknowledged that they needed to play a role in changing the future of their own nation, the mood of the group changed dramatically. The session concluded with a request from the leaders that the volunteers come to the next session with information regarding the practical initiatives that global and non-governmental organisations are implementing to combat the practice in countries whose legal systems are similarly deficient.

### **Session 2: the causes of child marriage**

The second child marriage session with the Christian leaders was conducted at the NCCE headquarters on Monday, 16 June. As requested by the leaders, the session commenced with a discussion regarding the initiatives being undertaken elsewhere around the world in order to bring an end to the practice of child marriage. The volunteers had also prepared leaflets to provide to the leaders which summarised the work of some of the key organisations working in this field. The volunteers emphasised that, common among all of these organisations, was an acknowledgement that improving access to education was paramount in the quest to ending child marriage. Consistent with this theme, the volunteers argued the merits of the leaders imparting the knowledge that they had learned during these workshops to other members of their communities and on outreach to other,



**Christian leaders meet to discuss the issue of child marriage**

more remote communities. This information was well-received by the leaders.

The remainder of the second session was concentrated upon the factors which drive child marriage in Ghana and in other nations around the world.

### **Session 3: consequences and solutions**

On 23 June, the PAHO volunteers conducted the third and final session with the Christian leaders. The volunteers began the session by discussing some of the harmful consequences of the practice of child marriage for the children involved, their families and the wider community. Principally, the volunteers focused upon the proven consequences of forced child marriage on a child's health and emotional well-being and also on the systemic socio-economic issues caused by a practice which subjugates women and limits their access to education and means of social empowerment. When questioned whether they were already aware of these consequences, nearly all of the leaders responded positively. This was unsurprising to the volunteers, given the educational background of the leaders. By contrast, it was the second half of the session, which focused on a discussion of the practical ways in which the leaders could effect change within their own communities, which really spurred their interest and incited their passion.

In speaking to the leaders about ways to end the practice of child marriage, the volunteers began by providing an illustration of the processes involved in breaking a bad habit, such as smoking, and the parallels that can be drawn

with the steps one must take to end the cycle of child marriage. For example, the volunteers emphasised that, just as an increased awareness of the dangers of smoking will generally influence a person's decision to quit the habit, it is education about the harmful consequences of child marriage which will ensure that attitudes towards the practice start to change. The volunteers also explained the parallels between the lifestyle changes that one must make in order to break the habit of smoking and those that will help end the cycle of child marriage. Finally, the volunteers outlined how, when someone quits a practice like smoking, it can generally have a positive reinforcement effect on those around them and can start to influence the behaviours of others. This, the volunteers emphasised, was the most important step to remember in breaking the cycle of child marriage; it is only when we change our own behaviours and start to take an active stance against child marriage that we will begin to influence those around us. The leaders seemed to relate to this example and understand the parallels drawn in relation to the practice of child marriage.

The volunteers then divided the leaders into smaller groups and asked them to workshop ideas for practical measures they could implement within their communities in order to change attitudes towards the practice of child marriage. The leaders were then asked to present the results of their discussions to the larger group. The PAHO volunteers were impressed by the innovative ideas proposed by the leaders during the session. Many of the suggestions focused on leveraging the use of mass media in order to spread the message about the dangers of child marriage. The leaders suggested booking a regular slot on a radio program to discuss the issue or producing a documentary that could be shown to their communities. One of the leaders was a lecturer at a film school and said that she had connections with persons in the media industry who could assist her in that regard. She also commented that she would attempt to work the material into her lectures on civic education. Many of the other suggestions focused upon providing avenues for economic empowerment and access to education for women; thereby addressing the root causes of the practice. For example, the leaders suggested establishing women's groups within their parishes or

working the issue into the Sunday School curriculum. The leaders also devised innovative ways to spread the message to the more remote communities, particularly in northern Ghana, where the practice is more widespread. One suggestion was to leverage contacts within their own parishes in order to appoint regional and divisional ambassadors who would be responsible for championing the issue in other communities.

It was clear from this final session that the leaders certainly evidenced a real passion for exploring practical ways to combat the problem of child marriage in Ghana. The volunteers perceived that the leaders would translate this passion into concrete action and would carry through on their promise to implement their stated 'solutions' in their own communities.

#### **Next steps for the Child Marriage Project**

The PAHO volunteers considered the workshops with the Christian leaders to be an undeniable success and a step towards changing attitudes and dismantling the complex social problem of child marriage. Change will only come when these people of influence begin to impart the message to their own communities and those communities, in turn, influence others. There is no doubt that the road to unravelling the entrenched cultural practice of child marriage will be long. Change will not come overnight. However, every one person turned against child marriage represents a small shift in the national attitude. Over time, this attitudinal shift will provide the impetus for the authorities to take heed and begin to give force and effect to the laws prohibiting child marriage.

Following the success of the workshops with the Christian leaders, the volunteers agreed that the Project should continue in some form. In the coming weeks, the volunteers will meet to discuss the possibility of further outreaches aimed at new focus groups such as, for example, school teachers. The team will also explore the possibility of conducting intensive child marriage workshops in Winneba during the PAHO visit next month.

## **Slum School Book Drive**

### **Everyone Deserves a Book**

*In accordance with the recommendations arising from the Educational Needs Assessment, the PAHO volunteers launched the Slum School Book Drive in early 2014; a project aimed at improving access to education for the children living in Old Fadama by increasing stationary supplies and the number of textbooks in the Slum's schools. A little more than 3500 pounds must be collected via donations in order to achieve the goal of equipping the schools with one textbook for every student.*

Old Fadama is the largest slum in Ghana with a population of approximately 80,000 people, all of whom live in precarious conditions alongside the Korle Lagoon in Accra and who are considered by the government to be illegal squatters. The government refuses to supply any basic services to the residents of Old Fadama such as healthcare, sanitation, electricity and education. Despite this, the community manages to administer some basic facilities on its own. However, because of the lack of government support and the poverty of the residents of Old Fadama, the Slum's schools are hugely lacking in several crucial resources.

The Projects Abroad Human Rights Office (PAHO) is working in Old Fadama in association with the Fadama Legal Assistance Program (FLAP). In December 2013, PAHO conducted an Educational Needs Assessment of eight of the twelve schools within Old Fadama. PAHO formulated a series of questionnaires to be used when interviewing people at each school. Where possible, the team interviewed the headmaster or owner of every school, together with one teacher and two students. The team found that every school lacked supplies in the same areas. There was not one school that was not in desperate need of furniture, textbooks, exercise books, or writing materials. Further research conducted by volunteers at PAHO suggests that up to one hundred school students share one textbook, which is clearly inadequate for these children to get the education that they need. Additionally, the schools suffer from a lack of decent sanitation, teachers,



clean water and, in some schools, health-care checks for the children.

The Slum School Book Drive project team is presently working on launching a campaign for donations by creating a video which depicts life in the slums and spreads the simple campaign message: 'Everyone Deserves a Book'.

In order to create the video, the team went to Old Fadama to film the reality of the schools and the problems that the children face in relation to their education. The team also canvassed responses to one simple question, 'What does a book mean to you?' The team collected answers from children in the Slum, teachers, volunteers and other people from all around the world. The answers collected were different but revealed many common themes: education, knowledge, imagination, escape, and creativity were some of the frequently cited responses which described the importance of a book. The video is presently in the final stages of editing and will be released by the project team in July via social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter, together with a link to the project's Just Giving fundraising page.



**The Slum School Book Drive team. Working with the children in Old Fadama that this project seeks to benefit.**

## PRO Placement: Legal Aid

### Mediation in Ghana

*Volunteers at the Projects Abroad Human Rights Office (PAHO) with professional legal experience are given the opportunity to undertake a 'Pro-Placement' at the Legal Aid Scheme in the Greater Accra Region (Legal Aid). The purpose of this placement is to give these volunteers the opportunity to use their professional skills in an appropriate environment, whilst also furthering their knowledge of the operation of their field in Ghana.*

Commercial and court-connected or court annexed mediations are part of a comprehensive reforms programme of the Judicial Service of Ghana. Under the High Court Civil Procedure Rules, mediation is practiced in the Commercial Division of the High Court of Ghana as a mandatory pre-settlement procedure. Further, sections 72 and 73 of the *Courts Act 1993* encourage the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) to resolve

disputes pending before the courts.<sup>32</sup>

Due to this fact, the Judicial Service of Ghana has devised a national ADR programme that helps in solving disputes before they are brought to court.

In Ghana, mediation is the first option for resolving conflicts between two people or two parties. These mediations are facilitated free of charge by Legal Aid for persons who qualify for the service. To qualify for Legal Aid assistance in Ghana, one must earn below minimum wage (nine Ghana cedis or three US dollars a day) and can be of any age. People meeting these standards will be classed as an 'indigent' because they do not have the financial capacity to engage in advanced legal proceedings or actions. People most commonly seek help from Legal Aid for legal issues relating to the following topics: debt, marital issues, child maintenance, property, insurance, tenancy and labor. Legal Aid offices have been established in each region of Ghana however access to this service is not equal in all areas. In rural regions of Ghana, people might live too far away and cannot afford to travel the distances it takes to reach the legal offices. This means that it is very difficult for some communities to get the legal help they need.

<sup>32</sup> Senyo M. Adjabeng, "Alternative Dispute Resolution in Ghana." Mediate.com, August 2007, <<http://www.mediate.com/articles/adjabengs3.cfm>>.

Every mediation is overseen by a mediator. A mediator is a person who guides two disagreeing parties to a consensus or compromise on a pending issue by offering gestures, comments and options for the involved parties' consideration.

One may ask, "Why should I go to the Legal Aid office for mediation?" Mediation is very different from other forms of dispute resolution, such as med-arb, negotiation and litigation. In a mediation, both parties must agree on the outcome before the mediation can be considered complete. The role of the mediator is to be neutral and not pass judgement either way. People commonly seek mediation over other forms of dispute resolution because mediation involves interaction with a mediator with little to no procedures or formality. This results in greater efficiency of process and promotes ease of expression. Furthermore, other forms of dispute resolution in Ghana are costly. The cost of these other dispute resolution mechanisms automatically denies indigent persons an opportunity to seek justice.

Naturally, situations occur where a mediation is not successful because the two parties cannot come to an agreement. Cases that are unresolved are either moved to a different date for later consideration, sought to be resolved by another form of ADR, or are taken before the High Court for further

judgment. Unlike cases which are brought before the courts, when a case is adjourned from mediation, it is often later resolved in a short period of time by the concerned parties.

A meditation process at Legal Aid Accra tends to take around ninety minutes and can be done in several different languages so that everyone can understand the case clearly. For example, translations are done in Ga, Twi, Ewe, Hausa, and English. However, approximately 60 percent of people who come for meditations in the office are illiterate. Therefore, the details of the case and options concerning the resolution of the case are spoken and communicated directly to these clients before, during, and after the meditation process. When the mediation is concluded and a consensus has been reached, the clients leave and settle the case outside of the office. The outcomes reached upon a consensus can include support of a child, an exchange of money, replacement of goods, acquisition or transfer of land and many other options. If a person does not comply with the agreed upon terms after leaving the mediation, then the person can be re-called for a further mediation or even an appearance in court.

au sein de la population. Par le biais de ses séances, le PAHO souhaite que les jeunes adolescents soient des acteurs du changement en partageant l'information dans la communauté.

L'idée était de d'abord introduire le concept général des droits de l'homme et de familiariser les élèves avec les instruments internationaux et nationaux protégeant et déclarant les droits. Il est ici important de mentionner la *Déclaration universelle*

journée mondiale contre le travail des enfants. En matière de travail des enfants, trois documents ont retenu l'attention des volontaires : la *Convention (n° 182) sur les pires formes de travail des enfants* qui prohibe tout travail dégradant et dangereux pour l'enfant, le *Children's Act de 1998*, loi ghanéenne qui à sa section 87 reprend l'interdiction de travail abusif pour tout enfant, c'est-à-dire tout individu âgé de moins de 18 ans et finalement la *Convention relative*



## Slum School Outreach (French)

Sensibiliser la jeune génération à ses droits, discuter, partager, rechercher des solutions.

*Sensibiliser la jeune génération à ses droits, discuter, partager, rechercher des solutions.*

Ce mois-ci, l'activité de sensibilisation « Slum School » a impliqué la visite de volontaires à raison d'une fois semaine dans l'école au nom de *Bethel ECD* se trouvant au cœur du *slum*<sup>33</sup> d'Old Fadama. Le travail des volontaires se fait auprès de jeunes âgés de 12 ans et plus. Le principal objectif de ces séances est de discuter avec les élèves d'importantes questions relatives aux droits de l'homme dans l'idée d'accroître leurs connaissances générales quant à leurs droits. Le programme se veut également promouvoir l'importance de l'éducation

des droits de l'homme et la *Charte africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples*. Dès leur première visite, le 12 juin dernier, les volontaires ont pu constater une impressionnante connaissance de ces éléments par les élèves. Lorsque l'un des volontaires a demandé ce que signifiait l'expression « droits de l'homme », seulement quelques secondes se sont écoulées avant qu'une jeune élève se lève et mentionne les termes « fondamental », « inaliénable », « dignité » et « égalité ».

Considérant que la première session avait dû être annulée en raison de conditions météorologiques précaires, plutôt que de consacrer une visite entière aux droits de l'homme de manière générale, l'introduction a été réduite à l'essentiel et ce fut le sujet du travail forcé des enfants qui a occupé la majeure partie de la séance. Le sujet semblait de circonstances puisque le 12 juin était en fait la

aux droits de l'enfant, un document international.

Malgré une préparation non négligeable, les trois stagiaires du PAHO ont dû s'adapter à des conditions auxquelles ils ne s'attendaient pas, ils ont été séparés à leur première arrivée dans l'établissement et ont dû manœuvrer la discussion dans deux groupes différents. Certes distincts des institutions de leur pays d'origine, l'établissement les a d'abord surpris, et ils ont été contraints de travailler dans un endroit exigu et bruyant. Le tout a amené les trois jeunes gens à reconsidérer le plan préétabli pour leur première séance. En effet, vifs d'esprit, désireux de participer, les élèves ont en quelque sorte obligé les volontaires à mener une discussion essentiellement interactive. Plus un échange qu'une leçon, la session s'est déroulée sans entrave. Après avoir résumé à l'essentiel les divers

<sup>33</sup> Quartiers très pauvres ou misérables, équivalent au terme bidonville en français.



documents législatifs, c'est à l'aide d'un jeu que les volontaires ont testé l'application des connaissances préalablement communiquées. Les élèves ont fait preuve d'une participation exemplaire, il a toutefois été difficile de diviser le groupe en deux et de conserver une certaine discipline vu l'architecture des lieux. Des cartes comportant des images ont été distribuées aux enfants, il leur a été demandé de faire la distinction entre les besoins et les désirs ainsi illustrés. Ils devaient alors éliminer deux cartes qui selon eux ne reflétaient pas un besoin, mais plutôt un désir. L'objectif était ainsi de démontrer ce à quoi ils avaient droit en tant qu'enfant, mais aussi de distinguer le superflu du nécessaire. Les volontaires ont ensuite repris les réponses des différents groupes et en ont discuté avec les jeunes, parfois il y avait consensus, d'autres fois les avis étaient mitigés. Tous s'entendaient pour le droit à une eau propre et à de la nourriture de qualité<sup>34</sup>, le droit à des soins de santé adéquats<sup>35</sup>, le droit à l'éducation<sup>36</sup>, le droit à une habitation décente<sup>37</sup>, mais les avis divergeaient en ce qui avait trait à l'accès au *fast food*, à des vêtements à la dernière mode ou bien à de l'argent de poche.

La session s'est conclue sur une courte discussions concernant les pistes de solutions pour faire cesser les violations des droits des enfants surtout en ce qui concerne le travail de ces derniers. Les volontaires ont discuté du fait que bien que le travail de l'enfant soit socialement accepté au Ghana et qu'il soit coutume que l'enfant aide aux travaux domestiques, il faut faire la distinction entre une simple aide et un réel acte de travail. Ils ont rappelé qu'au pays 34% des enfants âgés de 5 à 14 ans sont engagés dans un quelconque travail<sup>38</sup>. L'exemple le plus probant est celui des porteurs, activité que de nombreux enfants en bas âge exécutent alors que le *Children's act* interdit tout travail hasardeux pour l'individu de moins de 18 ans<sup>39</sup>. Les volontaires ont été surpris par un désir probant de

recherche de solutions par les enfants. Certains élèves se sont avancés à demander pourquoi la loi était présente mais non appliquée. Une question à la réponse difficile qui a nécessité une part de nuance : peut-être que l'exécutif fait preuve de quelques lacunes quant à l'application de la loi et de sanctions, toutefois, le secret du changement ne réside pas uniquement entre les mains de la police, eux, les élèves en sachant, et en partageant leur savoir avec leur famille, leurs amis, ont le réel pouvoir de changer les choses, une personne à la fois, un jour à la fois. L'éducation est la clé de l'évolution. Voilà le message sur lequel s'est conclue la première session.

C'est le 19 juin que la seconde session s'est tenue, toujours dans l'idée d'attiser la conscience des élèves au sujet de droits et sujets les touchant, le sujet fut cette fois la violence domestique. La pertinence du sujet est non contestable considérant qu'au Ghana 1 femme sur 3 sera victime de violence par son partenaire intime.<sup>40</sup> Les enfants de ces ménages sont également à risque en raison de leur exposition à la violence au quotidien. Selon le code criminel ghanéen, la violence domestique est un type de violence qui se produit dans le cadre d'une relation familiale. Elle comprend une ou plusieurs des infractions suivantes dans le cadre d'une relation domestique présente ou ayant eu court dans le passé:

1. Tout acte qui, en vertu du Code criminel de 1960 constitue une menace ou un préjudice à une personne;
2. Des actes spécifiques, ou la menace de les commettre, ou des actes susceptibles d'entraîner ;
  - a. *Un abus physique;*
  - b. *Un abus sexuel;*
  - c. *Un abus économique;*
  - d. *Un abus psychologique;*

1. De l'intimidation et du harcèlement; ou

<sup>40</sup> Essel Patricia Isabella, "Ghana: The Role of Religious Leaders in Preventing and Ending Domestic Violence", All Africa, 30 July 2013, Consulté le 19 juin 2014, <<http://allafrica.com/stories/201307301582.html>>.

2. De la torture ou tout autre châtiment ou traitement cruel, inhumain ou dégradant.

Avant d'introduire le sujet, les volontaires ont cherché à savoir l'idée que ce faisaient les élèves d'une relation saine. Des termes tel amour, famille, amitié ont rapidement été mentionnés. Ils ont également su définir la violence domestique avec brillance. C'est ensuite par l'élaboration de scénarios présentés à la classe que les volontaires ont tâché d'illustrer les droits et les réalités de la violence domestique. Certaines raisons traditionnelles expliquent le haut pourcentage de victimes de violence domestique, notamment le fait que la femme demeure à la maison, le manque d'éducation et le fait que la femme ghanéenne considère l'abus dont elle est victime telle de la discipline à laquelle son mari a culturellement le droit de l'assujettir. La femme rapporte rarement l'abus car les choses ne sont habituellement pas faites ainsi et qu'elle craint les répercussions que le tout pourrait avoir sur ses enfants. La structure familiale amène l'homme à avoir plus de pouvoirs, sur le plan économique par exemple, ce qui peut parfois donner l'impression à la femme d'être restreinte dans son action. Les enfants étaient conscients de cette réalité et il a semblé aux volontaires qu'ils ne leur apprenaient pas tant.

Évidemment des actes de violence domestique ont des conséquences importantes, notamment sur la santé des victimes : ils peuvent mener ultimement à des maux de tête ou des blessures chez la victime, à la mort de la victime ou bien à son suicide. Le tout a également d'importantes répercussions sur le développement économique du pays considérant qu'on empêche la femme d'exercer son plein potentiel. L'objectif de la rencontre était d'expliquer que tous les types de violence sont reliés entre eux et que l'agresseur va souvent utiliser l'intimidation, la coercition et la manipulation auprès de la femme et des enfants dans l'idée de renforcer son pouvoir et son contrôle. En lien avec le sujet de la semaine précédente, il a été réitérer que les enfants sont protégés contre toute forme de violence sous la Constitution du pays.

Afin de conclure leur seconde session, ayant appris de la semaine précédente, les jeunes stagiaires ont tâché de

<sup>34</sup> *Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant*, 1989, AG NU, résolution 44/25, art. 24

<sup>35</sup> *Id.*, art.24.

<sup>36</sup> *Id.*, 1989, art. 28-29.

<sup>37</sup> *Id.*, art.27.

<sup>38</sup> Crowe Portia, «Comprendre les origines du travail des enfants», IPS, consulté le 12 juin 2014 <[http://www.ipsinternational.org/fr/\\_note.asp?idnews=7138](http://www.ipsinternational.org/fr/_note.asp?idnews=7138)>

<sup>39</sup> *The Children's Act*, 1998, section 91.



mettre un accent tout particulier sur les solutions. Ils ont notamment insisté sur l'importance de reporter à la police, plus les gens vont porter plainte, plus les forces de l'ordre seront forcées d'agir. Une fraction a été créée tout particulièrement pour supporter les victimes de pareille violence : le Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU). Également, il ne faut pas minimiser l'impact de la discussion : parler, à un ami, à un membre de la famille ou quiconque et discuter ouvertement du sujet et du fait que la loi n'est pas toujours traduite dans les faits. La meilleure façon de veiller à ce que la violence domestique cesse est en éduquant le public sur leurs droits et en changeant la façon dont la population pense. Déjà, en amenant les jeunes de *Bethel ECD* à penser que la maltraitance tant de l'enfant que de quiconque est mal, et en amenant ces enfants à partager leur pensée, et ainsi de suite, on peut transformer la pensée générale et éventuellement traduire de façon plus efficiente les agresseurs en justice.

Finalement, les sessions à l'école *Bethel ECD* de l'Old Fadama sont un bel exemple d'activités effectives de sensibilisation de la population. L'audience est ouverte et intéressée ce qui amène des échanges enrichissants entre les volontaires du PAHO et les jeunes élèves. La connaissance des enfants quant au cadre du droit devrait amener les volontaires dans le futur à ne pas hésiter à approfondir leur séance. Il est évident que la structure des salles de classe rend difficile le partage de connaissances et il est absolument nécessaire aux stagiaires de laisser de côté l'exercice essentiellement magistral et de plutôt construire leur plan en y incluant des activités et des échanges avec les élèves. Déjà au fait du problème, les jeunes se sont montrés désireux de connaître les solutions afin de faire cesser le travail forcé des enfants et la violence domestique. Il a parfois été difficile pour les volontaire de combler l'attente de leurs nombreuses questions légitimes, mais il est certes encourageant de voir l'intérêt démontré, signe d'un éveil porteur de changement.

# Human Rights in Focus





## African Unity

By Anna Kopec

By Anna Kopec

*"No one knows when the hour of Africa's redemption cometh. It is in the wind, it is coming. One day like a storm it will be here. When that day comes, all Africans will stand together."*

-Marcus Garvey

The above quote can be found on a bare wall at the museum inside the Cape Coast Castle in Ghana. Surrounded by remnants and artifacts of the slave trade, the quote symbolizes the wounds of slavery in West Africa but also predicts a union of the African states. Garvey was not mistaken in comparing the unity of Africa to a storm, with the resources and vast variety of nations within the continent, a proper union is not only a possibility but has the potential to be profoundly resilient and sustainable. There are obstacles, however, that restrict this unity. The continent has been plagued by civil wars, famine, poverty, disease and exploitation by Western nations for resources. Although the African Union (AU) exists and has aspirations of becoming a supranational organization, its capacity and competence has often been very limited. The continent does have immense potential but unity has often been constrained; Garvey's day of African redemption has yet to come.

The several civil wars that plague African nations, the rates of illiteracy, lack of education, HIV/AIDS and the prevalence of other diseases, poverty, child labor, human trafficking and other social ailments have all led to the continent being placed far behind those in the West. This does not come as a direct translation of the resources and possibilities of the continent. The African continent is known for its abundant resources of oil and gas, timber, diamonds and other minerals. There is, however, an inequity in the benefits of resource wealth in Africa compared to Western nations. "Oil revenue or oil production has never brought an enormous abject poverty to

Western nations,"<sup>41</sup> with most of the oil rich nations in the West reaping the benefits of their resource. The case has been very different in Africa where resources such as oil do not mean wealth but are often a paradoxical curse. From nationalist and ethnic clashes, to Western exploitation, resource wealth has left a bloody trail in countries such as Nigeria, Congo, Brazzaville, Chad, and many others. "Only five of the continent's 55 countries are neither producing nor exploring for oil,"<sup>42</sup> with new discoveries in the continent being frequent occurrences. Africa has 9.5% of the world oil reserves, a number which will continue to rise with reserves and deep water production gaining ground in new oil producing countries such as Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania and with oil production in Africa predicted to grow at a faster rate than elsewhere.<sup>43</sup> Although the raw resource is present in high abundance in many African nations, there is a lack of refineries. The benefits of refining are being found hundreds of miles away and ownership of the resource taken from the country of origin. Resource wealth is often distributed to the few within a nation or altogether removed from the nation and taken to countries in the West. "Few African countries process their own raw materials – rather, the value is added elsewhere, to the benefit of others. Foreign-owned resource extraction companies are often criticized for providing little in the way of local employment and contribution to local economies."<sup>44</sup>

Many African nations have the right to ownership of their resources enshrined in their constitutions; a meager attempt to rid them of colonial influence. For example, section 257(6) of the Ghanaian Constitution states,

<sup>41</sup> Yaofiagbeto. "Ghana's Oil vs African and Western Oil Producing Nations". Ghana Web.

<<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=201185>>.

<sup>42</sup> The Economist. "Show us the Money." September 1, 2012.

<<http://www.economist.com/node/2156188>>.

<sup>43</sup> Raj Verma. "Is Africa the New Persian Gulf? Not Yet." London School of Economics and Political Science.

<<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/ideas/2012/12/is-africa-the-new-persian-gulf-not-yet/>>.

<sup>44</sup> BBC News. "Africa Debate: Will Africa ever benefit from its natural resources?" October 15, 2012.

<<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-19926886>>.

"Every mineral in its natural state in, under or upon any land in Ghana, rivers, streams, water courses throughout Ghana, the exclusive economic zone and any area covered by the territorial sea or continental shelf is the property of the Republic of Ghana and shall be vested in the President on behalf of, and in trust for the people of Ghana."<sup>45</sup> However, a closer examination of the actual ownership of resources shows that these attempts have not been transformed into action. The government of Ghana licensed a number of international companies in 2004 such as Kosmos Energy from the USA, Anadarko Petroleum Company, also from the USA and Tullow Oil from Ireland<sup>46</sup> the rights of exploration, development and production. In essence, Ghana does not own its own oil; the ghosts of the imperialist past still haunt the nation. A look at the ownership of the various oil fields exhibits the prevalence of western companies, with Tullow, Kosmos and Anadarko owning the majority. The Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC), which is owned by the Ghanaian state, owns around 10% of the various offshore blocks.<sup>47</sup> Although the company runs the Tema Oil Refinery, it is, to date, the only refinery in Ghana. Although refineries require investment, the economic benefits, such as the creation of job opportunities,<sup>48</sup> would provide the government and, by extension, the people, with the true benefits of their resources. The scramble for Africa (the imperialist history fighting for colonies in the continent) has become the scramble for oil in the continent; the citizens of Africa once more forgotten.

Although oil has historically and presently been the resource of global contention, Africa also has the curse of mineral wealth. Africa produces more

<sup>45</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1992.

<[http://www.judicial.gov.gh/constitution/chapter/chap\\_21.htm](http://www.judicial.gov.gh/constitution/chapter/chap_21.htm)>.

<sup>46</sup> Freidrich Ebert Stiftung. "Who owns the oil?" Ghana Office.

<<http://www.fesghana.org/index.php?page=who-owns-the-oil>>.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Kastning. Basic Overview of Ghana's Emerging Oil Industry. FES Ghana. <<http://www.fesghana.org/uploads/PDF/BasicOverviewOilEconomyGhana2011.pdf>>.

<sup>48</sup> Sverre Brydoy and Phnom Penh. Costs/Benefits of Oil Refineries and other Downstream Industries. International Petroleum Associates Norway AS. March 27, 2008.

<[http://www.un.org.kh/undp/media/files/undpconf\\_present080327\\_byrdoy.pdf](http://www.un.org.kh/undp/media/files/undpconf_present080327_byrdoy.pdf)>.



than 60 metal and mineral products and is a major producer of the world's most important minerals and metals. Current mining explorations of diamonds and gold have been on the rise, with many countries having high mineral deposits, such as Mozambique, Madagascar and Nigeria.<sup>49</sup> Although oil has been the mainstay of many nations, other commodities such as cocoa and timber are also dominant exports and have also had histories of conflict (for example, timber in Liberia).<sup>50</sup> This analysis has depicted the wealth of the African land, a wealth that many nations in the West would dream of and yet the benefits of the land are not being converted into benefits in the hands of the citizens. There is a gaping hole between the wealth of the land and the wealth of the people.

There is a similar story to be found among the tangled web of conflicts within the continent, with various missions in Sudan, the Congo, Somalia, Darfur, Rwanda and numerous others being conducted by outside nations. Although many of these missions can be considered 'failures' in the eyes of international relations scholars, they serve the purpose of depicting the strong Western prevalence in the continent. The various peacekeeping missions are, at times, supported by African nations or regional organizations such as the African Union but are mainly run by the Western powers (without whom such missions would not be possible). For example, AMISOM – the AU mission in Somalia – exhibited the shortfalls of the AU in terms of capacity and efficacy. Somalia has historically been, and continues to be, overwhelmed with convoluted conflicts which involve a variety of actors, insurgent groups and clans. The AU committed to the mission before truly evaluating its boundaries and limitations, which led to various difficulties associated with the mission. In essence, the lack of financial capacity of the organization limited its effectiveness. The AU relied on financial assistance from Western states, such as those in the EU and later the United Nations (UN).

Originally, the AU was meant to secure the conflict in order for an eventual UN take over, which has not been enthusiastic due to the lack of success of AMISOM. What has become evident is that, without the support of a larger, more capable and legitimate organization, the operation will not be fulfilled to the full extent of its mandate. Even a UN mission requires the support of many Western nations, which does not seem in Somalia's immediate future. AMISOM can also be critically analyzed to depict the lack of unity of the African continent, with many African nations scantily sending peacekeepers, others without the capacity to contribute, and others having conflicts within their own nations.<sup>51</sup> The organization therefore lacks the power of enforcement, not being able to hold its members accountable to its founding principles and mandates. A critical analysis of the AU can, however, further unveil these limits and has the ability to spark conversation for improvement.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU), a voluntary organization that came into existence in 1964, preceded the African Union. The goal of the organization was to help nations move forward after horrific colonial pasts, as well as promote solidarity, in order to assist the continent as a whole with development. Sovereignty and territorial integrity were greatly valued within the OAU. For this reason, the principles of non-interference and the holding of borders were sacrosanct. However, these principles were often undermined because of the organization's weak intergovernmental forum. The AU, with revitalized and broader principles, followed the rather weak OAU in 2002. Although the AU's supranationalist and unity aspirations may not be completely realized in the present day, they did play an extensive role in the origin of the organization, in its attempt to be a true participant in contemporary global politics. It did reform the principles of its predecessor and added others. One of the main principles of the AU is the principle that allows members to intervene in the affairs of other states. Although this can be argued as an encroachment on state sovereignty, it is only to be used

in grave circumstances and as a measure of last resort to avoid bloodshed and civil war (as has plagued many nations within the continent for decades). These grave circumstances include "namely, war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity."<sup>52</sup> The aforementioned example of AMISOM and other missions, such as AMIS in Sudan and AMID in Darfur, show the limits of the AU in ensuring this principle and others are exercised. Other broader principles and added organs of the AU provide the union with more "teeth". Although still far from the model of the European Union (EU), the African Union had similar aspirations at its inception. The AU can still aspire to the EU's unity but, given the recent economic struggles of the EU, can also learn from its failures and adopt policies that will be specifically suited for Africa. Liberal ideals, such as a call for the support of democratization, good governance, and popular participation, have been engrained within the AU. More democratic organs, based on consensus and collective security, have also been added to the Union.<sup>53</sup> There are, however, variances between the theory and said directives of the AU and how the organization then attempts to put its principles into practice. For this reason, although the continent has the land wealth and the capacity to be a powerful storm, as Garvey stated, the nations have yet to truly come together to produce a unified and strong Africa.

The African Union does not stand alone as a regional organization within Africa but it is the overarching organization in the continent and is therefore the area where African unity should become reality. Its mission, however, of "[a]n integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in [the] global arena"<sup>54</sup> has yet to become a reality. In order for the continent to be truly independent from outside/Western influence and for its nations to truly begin to benefit from their own resources and wealth, there must be a call for unity, a call for the nations to rid themselves of their colonial past

<sup>49</sup> Mbendi Information Services. Mining in Africa.

<<http://www.mbendi.com/indy/ming/af/p0005.htm>>.

<sup>50</sup> Economy Watch. Africa Trade, Exports and Imports. March 30, 2010. <[http://www.economywatch.com/world\\_economy/africa/export-import.html](http://www.economywatch.com/world_economy/africa/export-import.html)>.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid 205.

<sup>53</sup> Margaret Karns, and Karen Mingst. International Organizations the Politics and Processes of Global Governance. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2010. 35-40, 204-6.

<sup>54</sup> The African Union. "Vision of the African Union." <<http://www.au.int/en/about/vision>>.

and move on to a more prosperous future.

## E-Waste, dall'Italia ad Agbogbloshie

By Marco Bistolfi

Se ci si allontana di 5 Km dal centro di Accra ci si imbatte nella più grande baraccopoli del Ghana. Si chiama Old Fadama e vi abitano circa 80 mila persone. Sorge sulla più grande discarica di materiali elettronici del mondo, che paesi come l'Italia alimentano da anni spedendovi illegalmente i propri rifiuti e violando le normative internazionali.

Il governo considera gli abitanti di Old Fadama come occupanti abusivi, di conseguenza non riconosce loro alcun diritto. L'accesso a servizi primari quali educazione, sanità, energia, servizi igienici e acqua potabile è lusso di pochi. Molti adulti e bambini si guadagnano da vivere bruciando materiali elettronici, recuperando i metalli da rivendere al mercato lungo la strada principale. Questa quotidiana operazione di smantellamento e combustione rilascia nell'aria sostanze altamente tossiche, che fanno di Old Fadama uno dei luoghi più inquinati del pianeta Terra.

Con il nome e-waste si intende qualsiasi prodotto elettronico ormai non funzionante, o semplicemente non più utilizzato in quanto obsoleto. L'e-waste può essere ad esempio un vecchio computer, elettronica di intrattenimento, un telefono cellulare, un elettrodomestico, una batteria, etc.

Considerando la recente nascita della tecnologia informatica e la sua espansione mondiale negli anni 90, l'e-waste si può considerare una questione nuova in ambito di salvaguardia ambientale. Le aziende hanno da sempre prodotto, trasportato e venduto beni di tipo elettronico, ma solo raramente hanno mostrato un acceso interesse per il loro corretto smaltimento. E' molto probabile che un ruolo chiave sia stato giocato, oltre che dalle recenti normative nazionali e internazionali, anche dalle nuove tendenze come la Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) che ha messo sotto pressione molte grandi aziende, alcune delle quali si sono viste

praticamente costrette a migliorare gli sforzi relativi allo smaltimento dei propri prodotti elettronici.

Nonostante sforzi congiunti di privati e istituzioni nazionali e sovranazionali, l'e-waste resta ancora non adeguatamente smaltito in molti luoghi in tutto il mondo; soprattutto dove prevalgono la povertà e la mancanza di normative ambientali, vedi Old Fadama.

Purtroppo, se l'e-waste non era un grave problema negli scorsi decenni, è diventato un problema molto più grave oggi, in quanto l'uso della tecnologia è aumentato a dismisura, i prezzi si sono abbassati, le domande aumentano quotidianamente e le esportazioni illegali sono drasticamente aumentate.

Lo smaltimento improprio di rifiuti elettronici ad Agbogbloshie in Old Fadama, come da qualsiasi altra parte del mondo, risulta altamente pericoloso. La loro combustione rilascia fumi tossici che danneggiano non solo i bambini e i giovani che lavorano nelle discariche, ma anche le popolazioni che vivono in prossimità dei siti di smaltimento.

La tossicità è dovuta in parte al piombo, al mercurio, al cadmio e ad una serie di altre sostanze che se respirate possono provocare gravi danni alla salute. L'aumento dei casi di cancro, problemi durante le gravidanze, il deterioramento intellettuale nei bambini, vari danni al sistema riproduttivo maschile e al sistema nervoso, al sangue, ai reni e alle ossa, sono solo alcuni dei problemi più gravi registrati tra le popolazioni che vivono in prossimità di queste zone.

L'e-waste è un problema a causa di tre motivi principali: il profitto, l'ignoranza e l'indifferenza. La donazione di apparecchiature vecchie dai paesi più sviluppati verso quelli meno sviluppati potrebbe passare per un comune gesto di solidarietà o cooperazione, ma spesso la verità è che i vecchi prodotti elettronici sono di fatto proprio questo: vecchi, obsoleti e malfunzionanti.

Queste apparecchiature possono essere gettate via dal ricevitore e finire in una discarica illegale come quella di Agbogbloshie, in quanto l'accesso ai siti corretti di smaltimento, in alcune regioni del mondo, è più complesso e richiede ingenti somme di trasporto e maggiore impegno logistico.

Spesso, inoltre, la gente getta le proprie attrezzature inutilizzate senza

alcuna preoccupazione di dove esse possano finire, questo è quel tipo di indifferenza che può portare a veri e propri disastri ambientali e sociali, oltre a favorire la organizzazioni criminali.

Per quanto riguarda il profitto, molte persone ad Agbogbloshie non hanno altre fonti realistiche di reddito se non quelle derivanti dalla combustione e dalla vendita di materiali metallici degli e-waste.

Le società che non sono costrette a rispettare le norme di riciclaggio preferiscono risparmiare e inquinare. La malavita internazionale dribbla le normative internazionali e guadagna ingenti somme attraverso il traffico abusivo di rifiuti elettronici.

Intervenire ad Agbogbloshie non è cosa semplice, pensare di bonificare l'area, per quanto possa sembrare la mossa più corretta in termini ambientali, etici e sociali, potrebbe in realtà non esserlo, come non lo sarebbe un intervento diretto ad interrompere il flusso in entrata di rifiuti elettronici illegali, in quanto la discarica in sé rappresenta una fonte fondamentale di sostentamento per molte famiglie.

L'impegno deve essere quindi coordinato e comune. Istituzioni nazionali ghanesi, organizzazioni internazionali, rappresentanze locali e aziende private, devono incontrarsi e metter giù le idee e le proposte che possano offrire un'adeguata opportunità e fonte di reddito alle famiglie di Old Fadama che vivono grazie alla discarica.

Per quel che concerne l'Italia, le proporzioni del traffico di rifiuti elettronici RAEE vanno ben oltre i confini nazionali. È anzi con il traffico internazionale che le organizzazioni criminali, perché di questo si tratta, ottengono i maggiori profitti. Secondo il dossier 2014 curato dal Centro di Coordinamento RAEE in collaborazione con Legambiente<sup>55</sup>, l'area geografica più interessata dal traffico di rifiuti illegale è l'Africa. Nigeria e soprattutto Ghana sono i due maggiori 'Paesi discarica' utilizzati dai trafficanti dei Paesi europei, italiani compresi. In Asia finiscono invece soprattutto i

<sup>55</sup> I pirati dei Raee, Centro di Coordinamento RAEE e Legambiente, Giugno 2014.  
Dossier disponibile all'indirizzo:  
[http://www.legambiente.it/sites/default/files/docs/raee\\_dossier\\_i\\_pirati\\_dei\\_raee\\_02.pdf](http://www.legambiente.it/sites/default/files/docs/raee_dossier_i_pirati_dei_raee_02.pdf)

rifiuti elettronici provenienti dagli Stati Uniti.

Secondo la convenzione di Basilea del 1992<sup>56</sup>, firmata da molti, ratificata da pochi (vedi gli Stati Uniti) i rifiuti elettronici RAEE non possono uscire dai paesi Ocse. Questo significa che in Africa e in Asia possono essere spediti soltanto apparecchi usati, ma ancora funzionanti. Le direttive delle Nazioni Unite incoraggiano l'importazione e il commercio di elettronica di seconda mano nei Paesi in via di sviluppo, a patto che appunto si tratti di dispositivi funzionanti. Questo dovrebbe bastare per mettere fuori gioco il traffico di rifiuti RAEE, ma purtroppo non è così.

Legambiente ha documentato che nei porti delle città dell'Africa occidentale si ammassano ogni giorno container pieni di apparecchi ormai fuori uso destinati non certo al commercio, ma ad essere ammassati come rifiuti in discariche a cielo aperto<sup>57</sup>. Questi container, veicolo del traffico di rifiuti RAEE, arrivano soprattutto da UK, Belgio, Paesi Bassi, Danimarca, Spagna e Italia. Per quanto riguarda i punti di partenza italiani, Legambiente ha ricostruito in una mappa delle inchieste sul traffico illecito di rifiuti elettronici che il porto marittimo con il maggior numero di inchieste in corso è quello di Ancona, seguito da Bari, Civitavecchia e Venezia<sup>58</sup>.

Come detto, i Raee non potrebbero essere spediti verso i Paesi non Ocse, proprio quelli, invece, dove finiscono regolarmente, spesso spacciati come prodotti usati. Tra le 7.400 tonnellate di pattume sequestrate nel 2011 nei porti italiani dalle Dogane, quasi 150mila erano Raee, tutti diretti in Africa Occidentale.

Si tratta di traffici illeciti che hanno un

impatto negativo sia sull'ambiente sia sulla green economy e per contrastarli serve un'azione di sinergia tra i soggetti che operano sul campo. Il ministero dell'Ambiente intende creare un quadro di riferimento chiaro perché è nelle zone grigie che si sviluppa il malaffare. Tra le priorità, c'è quella di definire chiaramente cosa si intende per rifiuto. Anche a livello Europeo ci si sta muovendo in questa direzione nuove direttive Raee che prevedono un rafforzamento dei controlli e un'imposizione di condizioni minime da rispettare quando si esportano apparecchiature elettriche ed elettroniche usate, per le quali sarà necessario dimostrare, ad esempio, che si tratta di oggetti funzionanti oltre a fornirli di un adeguato imballaggio.

La mancata presenza di queste condizioni significa che ci si trova di fronte al traffico illecito di un rifiuto.

È compito del ministero dell'Ambiente cogliere questa opportunità e non lasciarla cadere perché più le norme sono chiare più è difficile violarle.

## Les pires formes de travail for des Enfants.

Cynthia Lake

*Le Ghana a ratifié la Convention (n° 182) sur les pires formes de travail des enfants en juin 2000, mais malgré tout de nombreux enfants continuent de participer à des travaux qui, par leur nature ou les conditions dans lesquelles ils s'exercent, sont susceptibles de nuire à leur santé, à leur sécurité ou à leur moralité.*

### AVANT-PROPOS

Au Ghana, de nombreux textes législatifs, nationaux, et internationaux, protègent les droits des enfants dont le *Ghana's Children's Act* et la *Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant* pour n'en mentionner que deux. Cet article se veut d'abord s'intéresser à l'état du droit ghanéen quant aux droits des enfants, plus particulièrement en ce qui concerne les pires formes de travail forcé de ces derniers, et ensuite à l'efficacité du cadre législatif sur le plan pratique.

Il importe à prime abord, à toutes fins pratiques, de définir le

terme « enfant », ce dernier est bien simplement décrit dans les deux conventions précédemment mentionnées et réfère à toute personne âgée de moins de 18 ans. C'est donc ce groupe d'âge qui fera l'objet de la présente étude.

Au plan national, l'article 12 du *Children's Act* de 1998 stipule qu'il est interdit pour toute personne de soumettre un enfant à un travail abusif tel que prévu à la section 87 de cet acte. La section 87 décrit un travail abusif tel un travail où l'enfant serait privé de sa santé, d'un développement adéquat et d'éducation. Cette définition est similaire à celle du paragraphe 3(d) de la Convention 182 de l'OIT visant l'élimination de pires formes de travail forcé des enfants :

Aux fins de la présente convention, l'expression **les pires formes de travail des enfants** comprend :

(d) les travaux qui, par leur nature ou les conditions dans lesquelles ils s'exercent, sont susceptibles de nuire à la santé, à la sécurité ou à la moralité de l'enfant.

La *Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant* exprime essentiellement les mêmes conditions à son article 32.

Toujours selon la loi ghanéenne, le travail de nuit est interdit pour tout enfant, par contre, l'âge minimum légal d'emploi est fixé à 15 ans et non 18 ans<sup>59</sup>. Par ailleurs, un enfant est admissible à travailler dès l'âge de 13 ans s'il s'agit d'un travail léger, c'est-à-dire d'un travail qui ne risque pas de porter préjudice à la santé de l'enfant, à son développement et qui ne nuira pas à son éducation<sup>60</sup>. Le travail hasardeux ou risqué quant à lui ne peut être pratiqué avant l'âge de 18 ans. Le travail hasardeux comprend le travail en mer, celui dans les mines, le portage, le transport de marchandises lourdes, le travail dans le milieu industriel où on peut notamment retrouver des produits chimiques et dangereux, la manutention de machineries et finalement les emplois dans des endroits tels des bars et des restaurants. Dans les faits, des enfants de tous âges travaillent dans de nombreux secteurs, et ce, sur tout le territoire ghanéen. Souvent, il s'agit de milieux dangereux et peu adaptés à leur âge et à leur développement tel

<sup>56</sup> LA convention est disponible en italien all'indirizzo [http://www.minambiente.it/sites/default/files/Convenzione\\_di\\_Basilea\\_sul\\_controllo\\_dei\\_movimenti\\_oltre\\_frontiera\\_di\\_rifiuti\\_pericolo\\_si\\_e\\_sulla\\_loro\\_eliminazione.pdf](http://www.minambiente.it/sites/default/files/Convenzione_di_Basilea_sul_controllo_dei_movimenti_oltre_frontiera_di_rifiuti_pericolo_si_e_sulla_loro_eliminazione.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Legambiente, con il Centro di coordinamento Raee, presenta il dossier i Pirati dei Raee, articolo disponibile all'indirizzo <http://www.legambiente.it/contenuti/comunicati/legambiente-con-il-centro-di-coordinamento-raee-presenta-il-dossier-i-pirati-de>

<sup>58</sup> I pirati dei Raee, Centro di Coordinamento RAEE e Legambiente, Giugno 2014.

Dossier disponibile all'indirizzo: [http://www.legambiente.it/sites/default/files/docs/raee\\_dossier\\_i\\_pirati\\_dei\\_raee\\_02.pdf](http://www.legambiente.it/sites/default/files/docs/raee_dossier_i_pirati_dei_raee_02.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> *The Children's Act*, 1998, section 89.

<sup>60</sup> *The Children's Act*, 1998, section 90.



l'agriculture, la pêche ou le domaine des services<sup>61</sup>.

### CONCRÈTEMENT, DANS LES FAITS...

Il ressort de ce très bref exposé que l'État ghanéen possède un cadre législatif ayant pour objectif de protéger les droits des enfants, toutefois, l'application et le respect dans les faits de la loi se heurtent à plusieurs difficultés économiques, sociales et culturelles. Le cadre législatif est certes nécessaire, mais lorsque le problème est culturel, profondément ancré dans les traditions, la mobilisation doit d'abord provenir de la société. Il est pourtant légitime de se demander comment il est possible de procéder considérant l'efficacité modérée des institutions légales et coercitives du pays. Voyons le contexte du travail des enfants au pays avant de s'attarder aux raisons de ce dernier.

Dans la région de la capitale, *Accra Greater region*, de nombreux enfants sont enrôlés dans les services domestiques ce qui implique des journées de travail de nombreuses heures, des problèmes de santé et des risques d'exploitation physique et sexuelle. Les enfants travaillent également en tant que porteurs ce qui les expose non seulement à d'importants risques de blessures et d'accidents causés par la circulation routière, mais également, encore une fois, à des possibilités d'exploitation sexuelle et commerciale<sup>62</sup>. À Ada, dans l'Est du Ghana, les parents offrent leurs enfants à des trafiquants en échange d'une certaine somme d'argent et la promesse que leurs enfants occuperont un emploi. Dans la région de Volta, des enfants se retrouvent impliqués dans une forme de servitude religieuse appelé *Trokosi* dont la durée peut s'étendre de quelques mois à une année, la pratique veut que les enfants expient les péchés de leur famille en assistant le prêtre et en veillant au maintien des lieux de cultes. Pourtant, ce type de servitude est complètement illégal si on s'en tient à l'article 38 du *Code Criminel* ghanéen.

L'une des particularités et probablement le principal enjeu de la protection des droits de l'enfant au Ghana relève du fait que l'articulation entre les coutumes et le droit moderne écrit peut s'avérer difficile<sup>63</sup>. Dans son rapport de 2012, l'UNICEF a constaté que le travail des enfants au Ghana est en hausse, surtout dans les régions urbaines. En fait, les statistiques révèlent que 34% des enfants âgés de 5 à 14 ans sont engagés dans un quelconque travail, ce qui confère une hausse de 11% par rapport à 2003.<sup>64</sup> Le travail de l'enfant est socialement accepté au Ghana, il est coutume que l'enfant aide aux travaux domestiques, mais une limite est à être tracée entre simples travaux ménagers et réel travail de l'enfant. Tous s'accordent pour souligner la présence de la loi, mais l'application lacunaire de cette dernière, notamment en raison du manque d'efficacité de l'exécutif. Jacob Achulu, le directeur régional pour Ashanti au ministère de l'Emploi et du Bien-être social, avançait, en 2012, l'idée que le tout est essentiellement lié à l'insécurité financière.

Le fait est que bien que le travail forcé des enfants soit un problème devant être considéré par la communauté internationale tout entière comme étant sien, et non uniquement tel un problème n'ayant cours qu'à l'étranger, l'exécution dans les faits des droits doit être adaptée au pays. La contextualisation est primordiale, il est essentiel de mettre en place des processus directement reliés aux conditions du pays, adaptés à son éducation, à ses traditions et à la compréhension de l'intérêt supérieur de l'enfant par la nation visée<sup>65</sup>.

Le gouvernement a piloté plusieurs projets au cours des dernières

années, dont le Ghana Labor Monitoring System (GCLMS) et le Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP). Le dernier programme en est un de subventions aux ménages afin de permettre aux enfants de fréquenter l'école plutôt que de travailler. Le pays a également adopté le Plan d'action régional D'ECOWAS pour l'élimination du travail des enfants dans l'Afrique de l'ouest et s'est engagé par le biais de plusieurs programmes à réduire les pires formes de travail des enfants notamment dans les plantations de cacao et dans le secteur de la pêche. Pourtant, de profonds vices demeurent en raison du manque de financement des agences luttant contre les pires formes de travail forcé des enfants.

### LE MOT DE LA FIN

Finalement, le Ghana est nanti d'un réel cadre législatif en matière de protection des droits de l'enfant, il a d'ailleurs ratifié de nombreuses conventions à l'international dont la *Convention 182 de l'OIT*. L'application de la loi reste une problématique majeure au sein du pays. Il s'avère que la solution pour l'élimination des pires formes de travail des enfants au Ghana n'en est pas une que l'on peut formuler en une simple phrase. Le secret réside probablement à la fois dans l'éducation, dans la mobilisation et dans l'instauration de programmes exécutifs adaptés aux conditions sociales et culturelles de la nation ghanéenne. Il est certain que la scolarisation a un rôle important à jouer dans l'élimination du travail forcé des enfants, l'éducation informelle, c'est-à-dire hors des établissements scolaires, apparaît elle aussi d'une certaine importance : renseigner les populations sur leurs droits, les inviter à discuter de leur expérience, voilà peut-être bien la clé vers un changement progressif.

<sup>61</sup> United States department of labor's, bureau of international labor affairs, "Ghana, 2012 finding on the Worst Forms of Child Labor", United States department of Labor, consulté le 7 juin 2014, <<http://www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/child-labor/ghana.htm>>.

<sup>62</sup> *Id.*

<sup>63</sup> Boukongou Jean-Didier, « Le système africain de protection des droits de l'enfant. Exigences universelles et prétentions africaines », in: Journée d'études du 15 juin 2006 sur L'enfant, Cahiers de la recherche sur les droits fondamentaux (Caen), n° 5, 2006, pp. 97-108.

<sup>64</sup> Crowe Portia, « Comprendre les origines du travail des enfants », IPS, consulté le 12 juin 2014 <[http://www.ipsinternational.org/fr/\\_note.asp?idnews=7138](http://www.ipsinternational.org/fr/_note.asp?idnews=7138)>.

<sup>65</sup> Secrétariat du Club du Sahel et de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, OCDE, « Les bonnes pratiques émergentes de la lutte contre les pires formes de travail des enfants dans les communautés de producteurs de cacao d'Afrique de l'Ouest », OCDE, 2011, p.5-10.

# From the HRJ Coordinator

## Slum School Book Drive

*June 2014*

The volunteers on the slum book drive team have been working hard this month on the creation of something that will inspire people to take action.

Since our Slum Profiling report in December, PAHO has sought to portray its commitment to projects in Old Fadama and make a significant contribution to the children who school there.

With the start of busy season, and the addition of a skilled filmmaker, they were able to take a crucial step towards making this dream a reality.

This week we will launch the campaign with accompanying video, JustGiving page and even it's own hashtag. The video, which was designed, written, filmed and edited entirely by our own volunteers asks on simple question 'what does a book mean to you?', and features volunteers, staff, students and people from across the world discussing just how much difference a book makes to everyones lives.

With this volunteers hope to direct traffic to the cause- the children of Old Fadama. They are seeking to raise just over £3,500 to help the 12 schools in the slum give each and ever student access to much needed textbooks.

As a co-ordinator it's important to acknowledge the amazing work of the volunteers on this. The creativity, passion, organisation and skills of everyone who has been involved in this idea since its inception have all played a vital role in its creation.

Details of the campaign will be launched shortly through facebook and Projects Abroad Youtube, I entreat all of you who watch to offer your support, to share the video, hear the story and contribute however you can.

**Matt Andrew**

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