

THE EXODUS

The Growing Migration of Children
From Ghana's Rural Areas
To the Urban Centres



Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS)
&
UNICEF

December 1998 – March 1999

Note

The children whose pictures and stories are featured in this report agreed to talk to increase awareness about their plight. The names of all the children have been altered to protect their identity. All but one of the interviews was conducted through interpreters. The pictures were taken by the author.

Accra, March 25, 1999

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Contents

- Prefacei
- Street Child’s Story ii
- Introduction1
- Map of Ghana2
- Methodology3
- Economy
 - a) Farming 4
 - b) Fishing 7
 - c) Industry 7
- Family and Traditions
 - a) Abuse 9
 - b) Western Region10
 - c) Northern Region11
- Education System
 - a) “Compulsory education”13
 - b) “Free education”14
 - c) School materials, facilities and staffing15
 - d) Vast age disparities16
 - e) What do pupils think?17
 - f) JSS – The end of formal education?18
 - g) Girl-boy ratio19
 - h) Teacher-parent relations20
- Pull Factors
 - a) Urbanisation21
 - b) Parents.....22
 - c) Electricity23
 - d) Relatives23
 - e) Peer pressure24
 - f) Marriage.....25

...And Triggers	
a) Ethnic violence	26
b) Rural underdevelopment	26
c) Adventure	27
d) Chance.....	27
The Exodus	
a) The Departure.....	28
b) The Return	29
Street Children	31
Slavery	35
Migration Flows of Children	38
Questionnaires	
a) Parents.....	39
b) Pupils	41
c) Children out of school	43
Stemming the Exodus	
a) National Government	45
b) Other government initiatives	47
c) District Assemblies	48
d) Non-governmental organisations.....	54
Recommendations	
a) Schools.....	63
b) The Family	68
c) Poverty alleviation.....	70
d) Related issues	72
Final Remarks	
75	
Appendix	
a) Localities visited.....	77

b) Questionnaire for parents	80
c) Questionnaire for pupils	84
d) Questionnaire for children out of school	87

Preface

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, estimates that there are over 300 million children living on the streets around the world. Most are found in developing countries. They live in wretched conditions, work long hours, and often do difficult or dangerous work for little pay. They eat poorly and sleep in unsanitary, overcrowded conditions. Whenever they fall ill, they have to spend their meagre earnings on self-medicated drugs. They are subject to harassment by the authorities, adults and fellow street children. Many, particularly girls, resort to commercial sex work, and because of their vulnerability and ignorance, they are at great risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

Street children lack love and compassion. They are being denied their childhood and have matured far beyond their years.

Despite the misery of life on the streets, Ghana's street children are "fortunate". There is no organised

campaign to eliminate them, as in Brazil. Street children have not become caught up in the spiral of violence which exists in all too many cities in the developing world. Glue sniffing, which destroys the body and ultimately the brain, is non-existent. And drug abuse, though on the increase, is not widespread.

The phenomenon of street children is frequently ascribed to poverty. Indeed, many of the factors that push children onto the streets are linked to poverty and under-development. But poverty is not the only factor, and it should not be used as an excuse to justify ignoring the problem until Ghana becomes a middle-income nation in 2020¹.

Some of the root causes of the increasing numbers of street children can be addressed at little cost. Others will require substantial investments... in Ghana's children...in Ghana's future. ■

¹ The objective of the government's Vision 2020 programme

Street Child's Story



15-year-old Issah has been working as a porter in central Kumasi for the past year. He's a Fra-Fra² and comes from Bolgatanga in the Upper East Region.

"I dropped out of Primary 3 because my father said I had to take the cows out to graze. I couldn't combine school with looking after cattle. One day, I told my father I had to go to Bolgatanga to get some clothes altered. I took my father's bicycle because we lived on the outskirts of town. One of my little brothers came with me. When I got there, I bought a bus ticket and told my brother to take the bike back home. I knew that by the time he got there, it would be too late for my father to do anything. I'd be gone.

"I wasn't afraid when I left. I mean anything can happen, but God is there, and I just hoped everything would be OK. I had ₵30,000³ and the bus ticket cost me ₵10,000. I arrived in Kumasi around 6 a.m. I didn't know anyone here. I just came with God. When you leave home, you have to believe you'll succeed.

"There's a place in Kumasi called Bola, where they sell yam and plantain. I went there and saw one of my "brothers"⁴. He brought me to this place, and I started

working. I struggled for several months. In the beginning, it was really hard because people cheat you. Sometimes people only give you ₵50 or ₵100 to carry something, even though they should be paying ₵1000 or ₵2000. But you have to accept it, because if you don't, they'll never hire you again. The next time, though, the person will pay you ₵1000 or maybe more. That's how you get regular customers.

"Sometimes I earn ₵10,000 a day. But sometimes it's only ₵5000 or ₵6000, and sometimes I don't get anything at all. So you have to save. I put my money in a susu⁵, and when I don't earn anything for five or six days, I can go to the susu to get some small money. A lot of my friends spend everything they earn, so when they don't get work for two or three days, they're in trouble. I've managed to save ₵200,000. I'd have a lot more but I've been robbed often. Like yesterday, I had ₵14,000 in my back pocket. I was unloading some cassava and somebody stole it...all ₵14,000.

"I sleep in a kiosk down there, at Kadjetia. It's the main bus station. I don't have to pay a pesewa⁶ because I clean the kiosk every Sunday.

"I want to go back to Bolgatanga after the Ramadan because if you stay here too long, you get used to the lifestyle. You buy Combat shoes, jeans and things like that, and you spend all your money. When I get back home, I'll sell tomatoes and earn some more money. I also want to help my father out for a while. But I'll come back to Kumasi. I've already started a small business here. I sell batteries, biscuits and other essential goods. If things go well, I'll stop working as a porter and just sell. My dream is to set up a television and video repair shop here in Kumasi.

"I can't complain about my situation. Even though the money is small, what else can I do? I could leave, but some place else, I might not even be able to get the ₵5000 to ₵10,000 I earn here. I mean, I have no choice. As long as I can get enough money to eat and take care of myself, it's OK."

² One of the ethnic groups in northern Ghana

³ \$1 = ₵2400 in March 1999. ₵ is the symbol for the Ghanaian currency, the *cedi*.

⁴ A generic term which includes relatives and people from the same village or ethnic group

⁵ Informal bank usually in and around the main markets

⁶ ₵1 = 100 pesewas. Because of inflation, pesewas are no longer used. In this context, he means "I don't have to pay a cent".

Introduction

For decades, children have been migrating from the rural regions to the cities to further their education or in search of vocational training or jobs. In the early 90s, the trickle became a flow, and as Ghana enters the 21st century, it is likely to become a flood. Already, Accra alone is home to over 15,000 street children⁷.

Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) was founded seven years ago⁸. It has since become Ghana's leading non-governmental organisation on the issue and has built up a considerable data bank on Accra's street child population. But CAS has had to rely on children's testimonies, second or third-hand evidence and conjecture to determine the factors behind the growing exodus.

Together with UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, CAS embarked on a four-month study to discover the reasons that are leading

more and more rural children to go to the towns and cities.

The results are profoundly disturbing. They reflect the need for a thorough rethink of Ghana's policies on a wide variety of issues, including education, youth policy, the banking system and development priorities.

It is often said that "children are the nation's future". But this slogan has been repeated so often that it has become meaningless, particularly in the absence of concrete policies to address the needs, concerns and aspirations of children and adolescents. The draft Policy Framework on Street Children⁹ is a step in the right direction, but it still needs to be approved and implemented.

A nation that neglects tens of thousands of its children and allows them to fend for themselves on the streets without any parental or social support is mortgaging its future. ■

⁷ According to current CAS estimates

⁸ A detailed description of CAS's work can be found on page 60.

⁹ Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare (February 1997)

Methodology

The research was conducted from December 1998 to March 1999 in five of the ten regions in Ghana: Upper East, Northern, Ashanti, Western and Eastern. We selected these regions because most of the street children visiting the CAS refuge in Accra come from these areas.

In each region¹⁰, we conducted research in four to six districts, and in almost every district we visited two villages or towns. We selected the villages randomly but tried to get a representative sample: some of the villages were on or near the main thoroughfares, others were more remote; some villages had electricity, while others were not hooked up to the national grid. (A list of the villages visited as well as a copy of the questionnaires is included in the appendix.)

In the Northern and Ashanti Regions, we were able to target a number of villages which have high child migration rates because of the detailed information provided by CAS-registered children. Children in other regions often say that they come from

the regional or a district capital, even though their home village is actually dozens of kilometres away.

We visited over 50 cities, towns and villages and spoke to as wide a range of people as possible. They included District and Municipal Assembly officials, regional Departments of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Youth Council, non-governmental organisations dealing with (street) children, headmasters, teachers, religious leaders, chiefs, village elders, assemblymen and unit committee members.

In addition, we administered questionnaires to 805 pupils, mostly in junior secondary schools (JSS). We interviewed 282 parents between the ages of 35 and 50, and therefore likely to have children between 12 and 18 years of age¹¹, as well as 174 children in the same age bracket who had never attended school, had dropped out or had completed JSS3. We also spoke to 53 children living on the streets of cities other than Accra¹².

¹⁰ In the Northern and Upper East Regions, our research was limited to a total of four districts.

¹¹ 89% of the street children registered by CAS fall into this category. Source: "Facts and Findings of 3000 Registered Street Children Period 1993 – 1998"

¹² The full results are available at UNICEF and the CAS library.

Economy

Farming

Farming is the main occupation of the vast majority in the rural areas. But almost no rural children aspire to follow in their parents' footsteps. Children can only inherit land when their parents die, so many young people do not see the value of farming, at least in the short term. Children know that even if they work hard, they will never become rich. At best, they will survive hand to mouth like their parents.

The introduction of the free market system in the early 1980s has led to extreme price instability. In the Ashanti Region,

a farmer told us that the price of maize plummeted from ₵50,000 to ₵20,000 per bag in just six months. These huge price fluctuations make it impossible for farmers to plan ahead. Some seasons, they do well because they choose the "right" crop, while others, they don't.

It comes as no surprise that many children regard farming as a last re-

sort. In the village of Apataim in the Western Region, it is only after young people have failed to make a new life for themselves in the cities that they return to the village and "resign" themselves to farming. Everywhere we went, adolescents who



Children coming back from the fields, Northern Region

were not attending school were trying desperately to escape their village. They knew that if they stayed, they would be “condemned” to become farmers.

Akos is 16 years old and lives in the village of Himakrom (Western Region, W/R). Her parents are both illiterate farmers.

“My five brothers and sisters have never been to school. I dropped out of Primary 2 because my parents couldn’t afford the school fees. I’m not doing anything at the moment, but I want to become a seamstress. I’d like to do my apprenticeship in Takoradi because it’s not too far away. I’m hoping that my parents will give me money to go. I don’t know how much I need, but ₵20,000 should be enough. It doesn’t matter if I have to sleep on the streets. Anything is better than staying here. There’s no future here.”

Many subsistence farmers face land problems. 34% of the farmers we interviewed lease their plots. The problem is particularly acute in the Western and Eastern Regions, where 46% of the farmers do not own the land they cultivate.

In the Ashanti Region, many farmers complained that their plots were too small to provide for their large families. In Aduasa, a village in the Eastern Region, the government has annexed and reserved most of the land for forests. In the Ahanta West District (W/R), half the land has been given to big rubber and palm oil producers, and not enough land

remains to sustain the district’s farming population, let alone the new generation.

In the Western Region, coconut plantations have been severely hit by Saint Paul’s Disease¹³. The devastation is all too visible on the main road linking Takoradi to the border town of Elubo: all that remains of thousands upon thousands of palm trees is the trunk, and the leaves on many other trees are yellow and withering away. Communities that relied on coconuts and their derivatives have been impoverished by Saint Paul’s Disease.

Many farmers speak wistfully of the days when the government subsidised fertilisers and insecticides and gave them free seeds. None of the farmers we interviewed could get credits. As a result, they no longer use fertilisers and insecticides¹⁴, which has led to a fall in crop yields. They cannot hire labourers either, and they cannot even consider planting short-term cash crops such as tomatoes and cassava. In many rural communities, subsistence farmers are unable to improve their marginal existence because there are not enough storage or agro-processing facilities.

¹³ The disease, which destroys coconut trees, first emerged in the Volta Region in the 1930s.

¹⁴ Even those who can afford fertilisers do not know how to use them properly. Many farmers complained that they had never seen a Ministry of Agriculture extension officer.



Village in the Northern Region

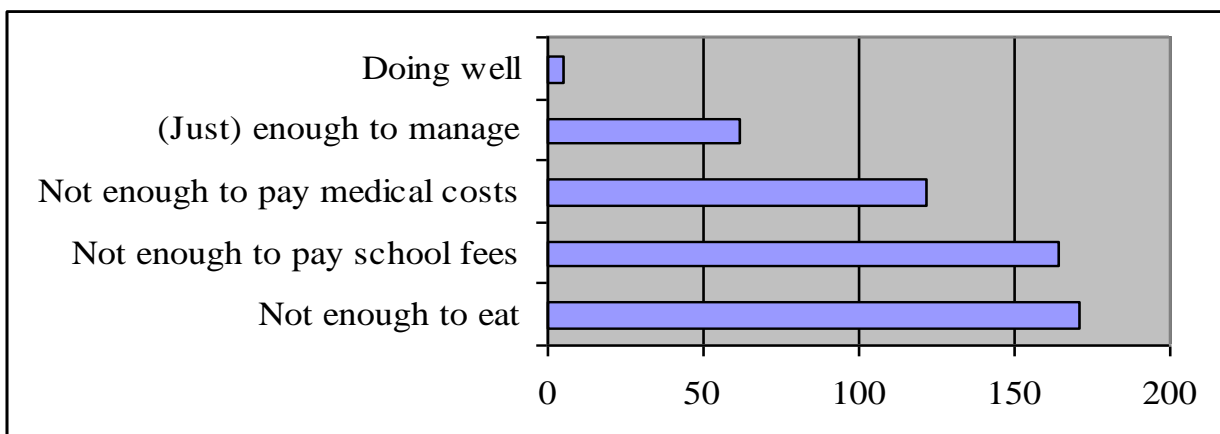
The Northern Region faces problems of its own. Peasants told us that agricultural output has decreased dramatically over the past two decades. They cite two reasons:

- ◆ Erratic rainfall: the farming season in the North is short – only three to four months, from April to July. Because of the lack of rainfall and irrigation, only one harvest is possible annually. Farmers say that since the 1970s, the rains have become much more erratic, and crops frequently fail.
- ◆ Decreasing land fertility: most subsistence farmers say the soil no longer produces enough to feed them and cover their basic needs. Fertilisers and herbicides, which are needed for all crops except the

indigenous guinea corn, are now too expensive for most farmers. Even peasants who can afford them do not know how to use them properly. The overuse or misuse of pesticides in the past could also have contributed to decreasing land fertility.

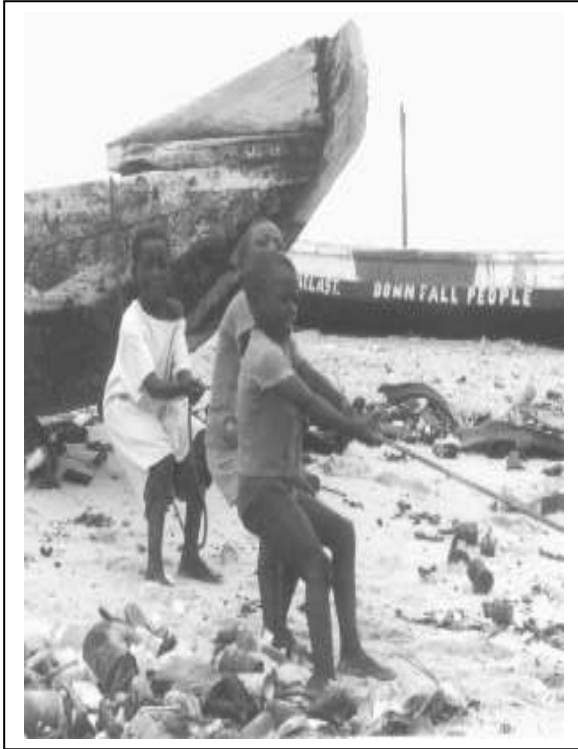
The population growth rate in the North (4% annually) is the highest in Ghana. The increasing population is causing ever-greater strains on the region's poor environment.

The regional Ministry of Food and Agriculture was unable to confirm or deny the farmers' observations.



Parents' assessment of their income (more than one answer possible)

Fishing



Boys fishing on a beach in Accra

The seasonal nature of fishing and the desire of fishermen for their children to follow in their footsteps have devastating consequences on children's schooling and enrolment figures in coastal villages throughout the Western Region.

In the village of Asanta, three-quarters of the inhabitants depend on the sea for their livelihood. During the rainy season, between May and July, there is no fishing. Traditionally during this period, fishermen would work in the coconut plantations, but St. Paul's Disease has virtually wiped out this activity. For Asanta's young, the impact has been dramatic. 15 to 20

years ago, adolescents started travelling to urban centres during the rainy season in search of money, but now most are forced to migrate. According to a unit committee member, teenagers who leave nowadays only return to encourage other young people to join them in the cities.

In the village of Ahobre, most fishermen come from the Central Region. They leave the village when the fishing is poor, sometimes for long periods, and they generally take their children along with them. As a result, says the Ahobre/Egbazo D/C JSS headmaster, annual dropout rates exceed 25%.

In Axim, the district capital of Nzema East, numerous children drop out of primary and JSS to sell fish in the port. The District Assembly fears that many of these children will go on to become petty criminals. It is so concerned about the issue that it has established a committee to look into the problem and devise measures to reduce the dropout rates.

Industry

Poor roads and the absence of power, potable water, communications and skilled labour in most rural areas would discourage even the brashest investor. Entrepreneurs are also inhibited by the remoteness of most rural communities and their minuscule markets.

There is an economic base for trades such as tailoring, hairdressing, welding, carpentry, etc., but it is very small. Rural communities do not have the resources to absorb the large numbers of adolescents who would like to learn these and other professions.

The Ashanti Region faces an additional problem. The five districts we visited are all within one hour's drive from Kumasi, and most investors prefer to establish their businesses and industry in and around the regional capital. Kumasi offers a much bigger market and has better distribution possibilities.

“Kumasi has everything. Why would anyone want to invest here? It costs only ₵600 to travel to Kumasi. Even our religious leaders and assemblymen live there.”

Many industries in rural areas employ outsiders. Low education rates may be one of the reasons. Most regions do not have a quota system to encourage companies to hire locals.

Grass-roots initiatives to establish small businesses would help break the vicious circle in which rural communities find themselves, but there is no capital base. Banks are unwilling to provide small loans (₵100,000-₵500,000) without a collateral. As many people said, “if you have collateral security for such a small amount of money, why do you need to go to the bank?”

Villagers also complain that banks are very bureaucratic, requiring an excessive number of forms. Interest rates of 30-35% are another discouraging factor. ■



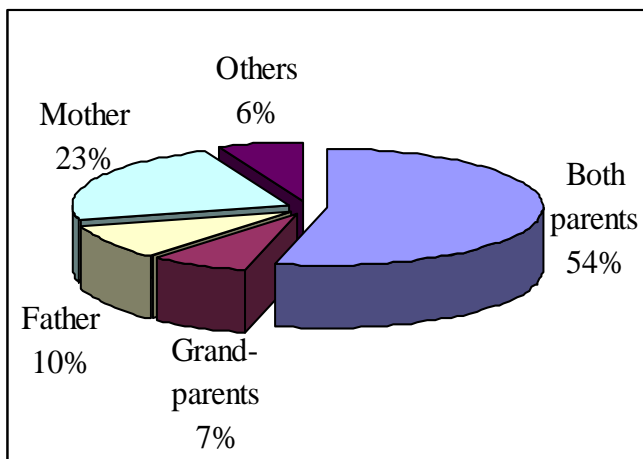
Boy washing a car mat to earn money to pay for school fees

Family & Traditions

Many officials believe the growing exodus of children from the rural areas to the urban centres is linked to the breakdown of the nuclear family. Both in the Ashanti and Western Regions, less than half the pupils we interviewed were living with both parents, and the figure was only slightly higher in the Eastern Region. In the Northern and Upper East Regions, two-thirds of the pupils live with their parents.

When parents divorce or separate, only in a third of the cases do both parents remain in the same locality as their children. Generally, mothers take over full responsibility for the upbringing of their children.

Perhaps just as serious is the problem of parental neglect, irrespon-

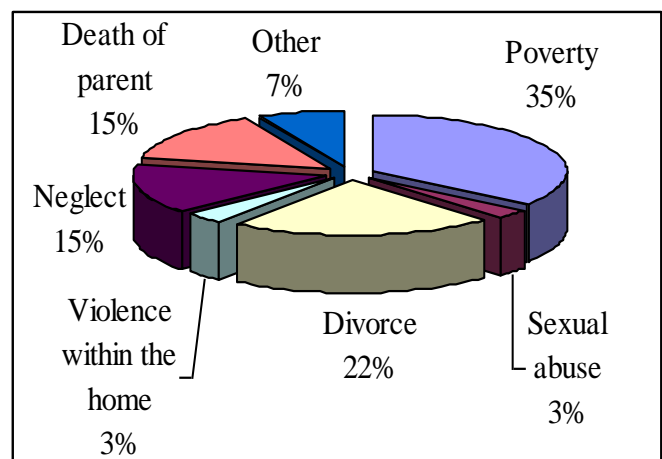


Who do rural pupils live with?

sibility and indifference. Many parents do not feel obliged to take care of their children because, they believe, “God will feed them”. All too many parents we spoke to threw up their hands in despair and said that someone had to assist them because they could not help themselves or their children.

Abuse

Many children flee their homes and go to the streets because of sexual abuse or other forms of violence. According to CAS research, 3% of Accra’s street children cite sexual abuse as the main reason for being on the street, while another 3% say they left home because of regular beatings



Reasons cited by CAS-registered street children for leaving home

16-year-old Papa comes from the Central Region.

“Two years ago, I left my father because my stepmother was constantly beating me. I came to Kumasi to stay with my mother, but my stepfather wants to have nothing to do with me, and they don’t have any money anyway. So, I’m working as a shoeshine boy and living on my own on the streets. I’ve saved ₵100,000. I want to work for another four months and then go back to school. My dream is to become a lawyer.”

or other violence in the home.¹⁵ The figure may appear small or even insignificant, but in real terms, it means that about 900 of the estimated 15,000 children on the streets of Accra alone fled home because of these two reasons.

There is such a taboo on these issues in Ghana that few children are willing to discuss them and even fewer to acknowledge that they were the victims of domestic or sexual abuse.

Ama is 17 and comes from the Eastern Region. After her parents divorced, her father disappeared and her mother remarried. Her mother and her new husband went to Nigeria to settle and work, leaving Ama in the care of her grandmother.

The grandmother couldn’t afford the school fees, and Ama had to drop out. It was then decided to send Ama to her mother in Nigeria so she could earn some money and start trading. But Ama’s stepfather continually pestered her and made sexual advances.

She returned to her grandmother, but within a year, she left for Accra to live on the streets. – CAS case study

Western Region

“License to kill”

According to the District Chief Executive (DCE) of Ahanta West, the lack of cohesiveness of the nuclear family is due to a number of regional traditions. Land is inherited maternally, so fathers don’t feel particularly responsible for their children. After all, if a child prospers, the wealth will go to the mother’s side of the family.

Under the “free note” system, a man can write a letter to a woman’s parents to say that he has lost interest in her. Women don’t feel they need to seek redress or appeal the man’s decision, and the woman’s parents generally refuse to take action because they don’t want to embarrass the man. This tradition, says the DCE, gives men a “license to kill”. They can have children with as many women as they choose without having to bear the consequences. One of the men we interviewed boasted that he had fathered over 40 children – he could not remember how many women he had impregnated.

¹⁵ Source: “Facts and Findings of 3000 Registered Street Children Period 1993 – 1998”

Women

Women too will “shop around” and have children with several men until they find Mr. Right. 40% of the parents we interviewed had children from two or more partners or spouses. One woman had married and divorced five times. When we met her, she was still looking for the ideal man.

Traditions

Traditions also discourage family planning and lead to high population growth. In the past, a lot of men were needed to go to war. Adults who produce a lot of children are still revered.

Akan¹⁶ tradition dictates that when a woman has her tenth child, she is given a sheep, called *badudwan*¹⁷. She wears white clothing for an entire week and is treated like a queen. Villagers and relatives are expected to congratulate her by depositing money in a brass bowl.

Northern Region

Traditions remain very strong in the Northern Region. Polygamy is widely practised, and many Moslem men in the rural areas have more than one wife.

¹⁶ Ghana's largest ethnic group

¹⁷ Literally, “tenth born sheep”

Family size

Number of Children	Number of Interviewees
2 – 4:	11
5 – 7:	20
> 8 :	8

Results of parents' questionnaire in Northern Region

Families in the North tend to be very large. The more children a man fathers, the greater his status in the village, and the more likely he is to become a chief. There is also competition between a man's wives to have children: the more children a wife has, the greater her prestige in the family. Traditionally, large numbers of children were also needed to farm the land.

Girls

There are various traditions which explain why far more girls leave the North than boys. Girls are regarded as less important and are often kept at home to do chores and assist the women in running the household. In Tolon-Kumbungu District, less than a quarter of girls attends primary school, while the rate for boys is slightly over 50%¹⁸. ■

¹⁸ Source: Co-ordinating Director of the Tolon-Kumbungu District



Young girl selling sugar kenkey, a corn-based food, at the market in Tamale, Northern Region

According to local tradition, men are expected to give the first girl child to one of their sisters as a “gift”. At that point, the father’s responsibility for the child ends. The girl will work in the home and is unlikely to ever go to school. The “aunties” are later responsible for finding the girl a husband. But this tradition is breaking down. Increasingly, aunties are simply not looking for a husband or they are delegating the task. These girls are very likely to head south because of the lack of adult support.

Islam

In the Northern Region, Islamic values and beliefs are considered more important than those of the secular world. Almost all Moslem children are sent to Islamic schools for two to three years to study the Koran. As a result, they can be as old as 14 when they enter the public education system. Not only are they much older than their

non-Moslem classmates, they receive less support from their parents.

Extended family

Growing poverty and Western influences are undermining the extended family system. Traditionally, when a father died, an uncle would take in the children. But this rarely happens nowadays. A number of children we interviewed cited the loss of a parent – and the resulting financial difficulties – as the main reason for dropping out of school.

According to tradition, when a father dies, the children inherit his cattle. But increasingly, relatives are coming to take the livestock. If the children refuse, the relatives use *juju*¹⁹ against the children. The children, fearing that they will be killed by the black magic, prefer to leave everything behind and head south. ■

¹⁹ Black magic or supernatural powers

Education System



Mother taking her son home from school

The educational reform introduced a decade ago has led to significant increases in school enrolment rates, the construction of many new schools and greater numbers of children achieving ever higher levels of education²⁰. The introduction of Free Com-

pulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), in theory, requires all children under the age of 16 to attend school at no cost. But these achievements, while laudable, do not reflect the reality perceived by headmasters, teachers and parents in rural areas.

“Compulsory Education”

It is difficult to determine school enrolment rates in most regions because the majority of Ghana Education Service (GES) offices only have

²⁰ According to the government, primary school enrolment rates have risen from 1.6 million in 1987 to 2.3 million in 1997, a 43% increase. The school-going age population increased from 69% to 77% in the same period. 59% of pupils who complete primary school now go on to junior secondary school (JSS). 35% to 40% of JSS graduates qualify to enter senior secondary schools (SSS), twice as many as a decade ago. Source: *Daily Graphic*, January 15, 1999

school enrolment figures²¹. The two districts that were able to provide this data had significantly lower rates than the national average of 76.5%. In Atwima District (A/R), the Ministry of Education reports that a third of all school-aged children are not attending school. In Tolon-Kumbungu District (N/R), the figures are even more alarming. Less than 54% of boys and a scant 23% of girls attend basic school, which works out to a district average of 38%²².

Savelugu JSS, N/R

Last year, there were 449 pupils. 45 of them, between the ages of 14-19, dropped out. Some went to Tamale to work, but most left for Accra or Kumasi. Every year, two to four girls drop out because they become pregnant.

147 pupils were eligible to take the Basic Education Certification Examination (BECE) last year, but only 116 registered. Some parents said they couldn't afford the fees, but most of them didn't pay, says the headmaster, because they don't consider school important.

During the harvest season, which lasts two to four weeks, many parents keep their children at home to help them with the harvest. Some come back to school afterwards, but many do not. The children's absence has a serious impact on their education. The school organises extra (free) classes to help pupils make up for their absence, but few students attend.

School Enrolment Figures

	Kwaebibirem District (E/R)			Ahanta West District (W/R)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Primary	13,103	11,676	24,779	6050	4970	11,020
JSS	3724	2899	6623	2000	1141	3141
SSS	196	749	945	690	43	773

In some areas, dropout rates are just as disturbing. In the town of Bonwire (A/R), the headmaster estimated that 10% of JSS students drop out every term! In Savelugu District (N/R), 50% of girls and 20-30% of boys drop out annually²³. In Mpohor Wassa East District (W/R), only 1% of children who enter primary school go on to SSS²⁴.

"Free education"

All 26 junior secondary schools we visited charge fees in one form or another, ranging from ₵2000 to ₵22,000 a year. At Tikrom L/A JSS (A/R), for instance, parents have to pay a ₵1000 sports fee, ₵500 for the Parent-Teacher Association, and ₵500 for an endowment fund established by the District Assembly to help purchase furniture and provide a few scholarships. At Anyinasu (A/R) JSS, the fees were considerably higher:

²¹ The absolute number of children attending school

²² Tolon-Kumbungu District Co-ordinating Director

²³ Savelugu District Co-ordinating Director

²⁴ Ghana Education Service, figures for 1998-99 school year for public schools

¢3000 for sports, ¢6000 to pay a watchman and an annual registration fee of ¢13,000. At Suhyen JSS (E/R), the fees for JSS3 pupils are ¢33,000!

In addition, on average, each child needs another ¢5000 for pens, notebooks and other school materials, and ¢15,000 for school uniforms. Most parents would be able to pay these fees if they had only one or two children, but families in the rural areas tend to be quite large.

Many children (are expected to) help pay for their education or supplement the family income. 41% of the students we interviewed in the Western and Eastern Regions work before or after school²⁵.

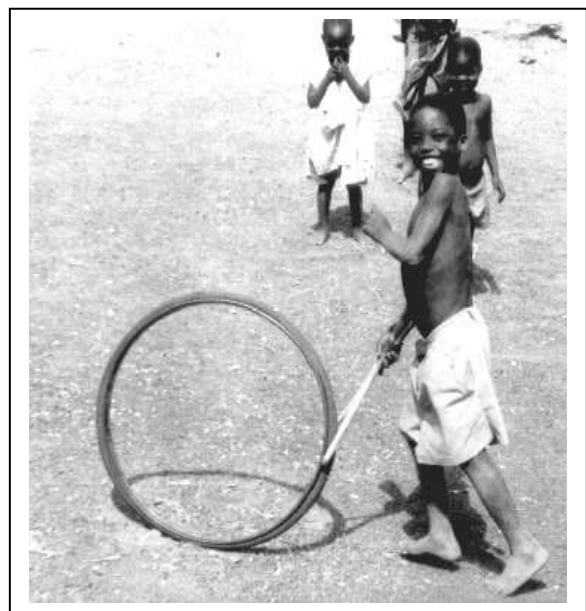
Aside from the sheer cost, two other factors make parents balk at paying school-related fees. Firstly, the government and local politicians have repeatedly assured them that education is free and compulsory, so they don't understand why they should have to pay a single cedi. Secondly, many parents do not understand the value of education. There are few white-collar jobs or industries in rural areas, so why should they waste money on education? Many parents believe that it is sufficient for their children to learn basic literacy skills and be able to count. Many regard

²⁵ We did not ask this question in the other three regions.

“higher education” – even to the secondary level – as an extravagant luxury.

School materials, facilities & staffing

The government is responsible for providing textbooks to schools, but supplies are erratic and inadequate. In Atwima District, for instance, Ministry of Education officials complained that they had not received any textbooks since 1995. The shortages are particularly critical in essential subjects such as English, mathematics and science. 50 students have to share 5 textbooks, and in some cases, 20 students have a single textbook at their disposal. This would be a challenge for any teacher – all the more so in a district in which a quarter of the teachers is untrained.



Boy playing with a wheel rim in the absence of sports equipment

The supply of furniture is a serious problem at many schools. The Akim Manso Zion JSS (E/R) was provided with a total of 6 benches for its 137 pupils. The Savelugu JSS (N/R) headmaster has to use a child's chair. Blackboards in many schools have been used so intensely that pupils cannot read what is written. In many more schools, teachers have to buy chalk themselves.

Many of the schools we visited in the rural areas have no electricity, running water or toilets. Libraries are virtually non-existent in rural junior secondary schools, and the few JSSs which have a library often have very few books.

Nerebehi JSS, A/R

School population: 195 students

- ◆ JSS1: 86 pupils, 2 classes
- ◆ JSS2: 53 pupils, 2 classes
- ◆ JSS3: 56 pupils, 2 classes

There are 7 English textbooks for the 86 JSS1 students. There are no vocational training teachers and no science teacher. Despite very good BECE results, only 10% of the pupils go on to SSS – the parents of most other pupils cannot afford the SSS fees. At least 50 students drop out every year to go to the cities.

Many schools, particularly in the Northern Region, suffer from serious overcrowding. At the Savelugu JSS (N/R), the average class size is 75 pupils, whereas in Tolon (N/R), 130 students are crammed into the JSS1 classroom.

In numerous schools, headmasters and headmistresses complained of staffing shortages. Qualified teachers are often unwilling to accept postings to

rural areas that have no electricity and clean water, very limited means of transport and poor or non-existent communications. At Akim Manso Zion JSS (E/R), there were only 3 teachers instead of the 5 needed. The headmaster, who also teaches a full load, and the school's two other teachers have hired a man from town to teach some of the classes. They are paying him from their own meagre salaries.

Vast age disparities

In the Western Region, three-quarters of the JSS3 students were between 14 and 16 years of age. The youngest pupil was 13, the oldest 21. Serious questions should be asked

*“We have only
one teacher for
an entire primary
school.”
- GES Birim
South District*

about the relevance of the syllabus for such a wide age bracket and the impact of having such a disparate group of adolescents and young people together in a confined environment²⁶.

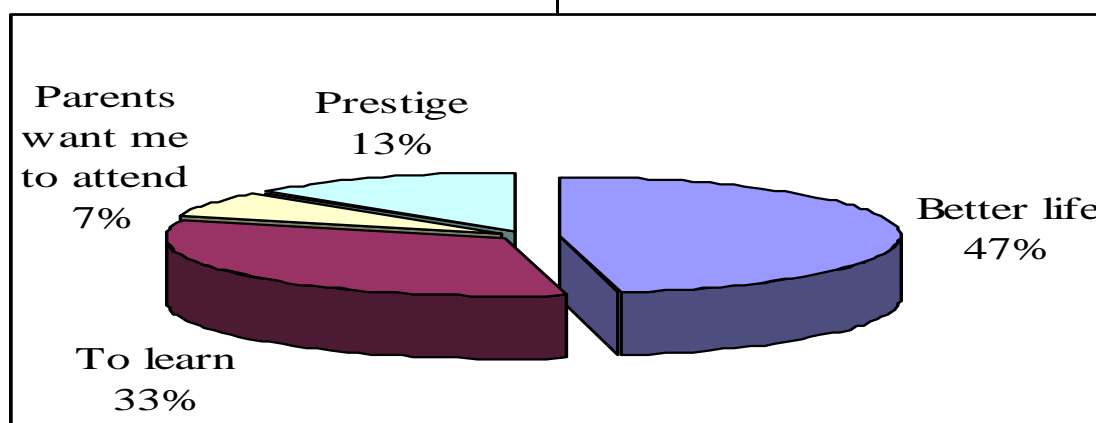
A similar situation exists in many schools in the Northern Region. Most Moslem children are sent to Islamic schools for two to three years to study the Koran before entering the public education system. As a result, they can be as old as 14 when they start primary school.

These age disparities may explain, in part, why so many pupils complain about bullying.

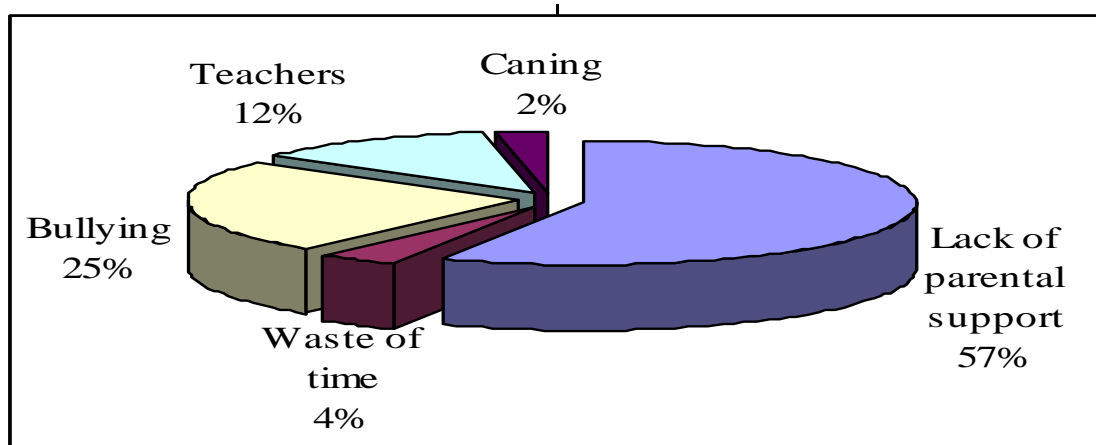
What do pupils think?

Despite the poor educational standards in rural areas and the constant struggle for many to pay school-related fees, most pupils are convinced that education is their ticket to a better life, away from the village.

90% of the pupils interviewed said they plan to finish JSS and SSS, and

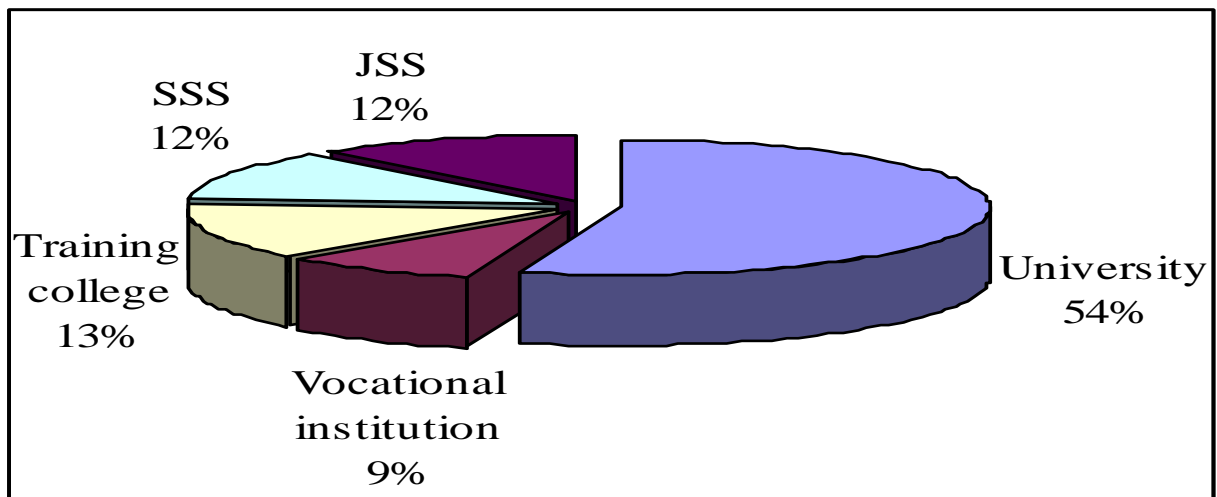


Reasons given by pupils for attending school



What do pupils dislike about school?

²⁶ Most of the junior secondary schools we visited in the Western Region had between 150 and 200 pupils.



What level of education would you like to achieve?

the majority is planning to go on to university. Most (81%) were remarkably optimistic about the possibility of achieving their educational goal.

The two main reasons which would prevent pupils from completing JSS and SSS were their parents' inability to pay fees and other school-related costs and lack of support from their parents.

JSS-The end of formal education?

The educational reform of 1987 is regarded in most rural schools as a failure. The JSS was designed to provide children with a basic education *and* vocational skills. But we did not come across a single rural JSS that offers any type of practical vocational training. Most rural junior secondary schools even find it difficult to provide theoretical vocational skills because of the dearth of qualified technical teachers.

The government is supposed to provide schools with the staffing and tools required for vocational training. But most schools we visited had almost no tools. At Tikrom JSS (A/R), for example, there were 4 saws for 50 students. The lack of power would



also make it impossible to use the

Suhyen (E/R) JSS pupils crowded around the few tools in their workshop

machinery needed to teach certain vocational skills, such as carpentry.

Headmasters and headmistresses were extremely critical of the certificate granted at the end of junior secondary school. In educational terms, the certificate is virtually meaningless because of the poor standards in many rural areas. In addition, most adolescents who complete JSS are still too young to enter the job market. Besides, they have no vocational skills.

Secondary school fees, even for middle-class rural Ghanaians, are excessive – usually more than ₵200,000, and in some areas they are about ₵500,000²⁷ annually. Even teachers, who understand all too well the value of education, find it difficult to send their children to SSS. Another problem is that most communities do not have their own SSS. Students have to travel long distances on a daily basis or board at the nearest SSS.

It comes as no surprise that very few adolescents in rural areas enter secondary schools. At Akoasi Methodist JSS (E/R), 46 of the 56 JSS3 students sat last year for the BECE

²⁷ ₵250,000 in Nerebehi (A/R); ₵500,000 in Tamale

exam. 34 came within range to go on to SSS, but only a tenth are now attending SSS. The figures were similar in Boadua (E/R): of the 34 pupils who took the BECE last year, only 4 went on to SSS. In Nerebehi (A/R), 10% of JSS graduates go on to SSS, whereas in Asaam (A/R), the figure is only 3%.

Girl-boy ratio

There were striking disparities in the number of boys and girls attending school in many parts of the country. In the Northern Region, only 23% of the pupils we interviewed were girls.

In the Ashanti Region, the figure was 43%, while in the Western Region, girls represented 46% of the student population.

In the Eastern Region, 43% of pupils were girls. But this figure does not

present the full picture. In several schools we visited in the Eastern Region²⁸, 60% of the student population is female. Headmasters said that girls are over-represented because parents believe boys are more useful

“Parents just want girls to be able to read and write enough to trade at the market.”

²⁸ Boadua Catholic, Subi Presbyterian, Akoasi Methodist and Akim-Manso Zion junior secondary schools

on the farm. In the village of Boadua, 10 to 15% of the pupils, mainly boys, drop out because of *galamsey*²⁹. In Kwaebibirem District, also in the Eastern Region, the imbalance in the girl-boy ratio is even greater at the SSS level: girls make up 80% of the SSS students!

In the Ashanti Region, there is an equal distribution of boys and girls when children begin the JSS cycle. But we were told that by the end of JSS3, 70% of the students are boys and only 30% girls.

Akoasi Methodist JSS, E/R

129 students: 60% girls – 40% boys

- ◆ JSS1:53 pupils
- ◆ JSS2:40 pupils
- ◆ JSS3: 36 pupils

Last year, 3 of the JSS3 pupils went on to SSS. The JSS has no workshop, library or science laboratory. Two to three pupils have to share one textbook. Many of the pupils cannot afford to have breakfast before going to school.

In the other regions we visited, girls also tended to drop out of school more frequently and earlier than boys. There are a number of factors which lead to this high dropout rate among girls. Parents regard education as a low priority for girls, since they will not be the main breadwinners. Mothers often overburden their daughters with household chores,

making it difficult, if not impossible, for girls to study and do their homework.

Teenage pregnancy also takes a toll. In many schools, up to 5% of female students drop out annually because of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies.

Teacher-parent relations

In a number of communities we visited, teacher-parent relations were strained. Many villagers do not understand the value of education, and the problem is exacerbated by the fact that many teachers come from other regions and do not speak the local language. As a result, teachers are often viewed as outsiders who are forcibly introducing foreign notions onto their communities.

None of the teachers at Anyinasu JSS comes from the Ashanti Region. The teachers are all quite young and exert little or no authority in the village or even over their students. They have frequent conflicts with parents, and they complain about the lack of respect they receive from the villagers and their students. “We are seen as rich government officials”, said one teacher.

Parent-Teacher Associations and School Management Committees could help defuse these conflicts and create greater understanding, but they often exist only on paper. ■

²⁹ Traditional gold and diamond prospecting and mining, generally unlicensed

Pull factors



Shop front in the Ashanti Region

Ghana's rural youths face a stark choice: either they become a farmer – a profession hardly any young person aspires to – or they have to try to leave. The poor education level and the lack of employment possibilities in rural areas³⁰ undoubtedly contribute to the exodus of children to the urban centres, but they do not explain why more children are migrating than a decade or two ago.

³⁰ Pupils often do not even consider farming a profession. When filling in the questionnaire, many pupils said that their parents did not work, though in actual fact, they were farmers.

Indeed, if these were the only reasons, 90% of rural children would leave for Ghana's cities and towns.

Urbanisation

The exodus of children from the rural areas appears to be inextricably linked to urbanisation and the advent of consumerism. Throughout the developing world, people are migrating to the urban areas because they see little future for themselves in the rural areas.

Growth of Ghana's two main cities

Year	Kumasi ³¹	Greater Accra Metropolitan Area ³²
1901	3,000	
1948	81,870	
1960	218,172	449,430
1970	345,117	805,434
1984	489,586	1,292,898
1992		1,700,000
1995	660,875	2,500,000
2000*	745,000	2,700,000
2010*	881,000	4,100,000
2025*	1,013,000	

*Estimates or projections³³

There doesn't seem to be any specific trigger that causes large numbers of *children* to leave Ghana's rural areas for the cities and towns. Rather, the exodus is sparked off by a number of different factors.

Parents

Parental neglect not only causes children to drop out of school, but it also makes them realise early on that they have to fend for themselves. Many children we interviewed hoped that their parents would support them in their educational and career decisions, but all too many realised at a very young age that they would be virtually on their own.

Most parents are loathe to admit it, but during our conversations with officials, local representatives and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), it became clear that many parents are directly or indirectly putting pressure on their children to leave their homes and villages. In some cases, it is because parents are genuinely unable to care for their children; in other cases because the strain of providing for their numerous offspring is too great; in yet others because parents believe that a better future awaits their children in the city.

As mentioned earlier, 6% of the children on the streets of Accra left

³¹ Director of the Town and Country Planning Department, Kumasi

³² Greater Accra encompasses the capital and its suburbs, including Tema.

³³ Source: Ghana Population Census 1984

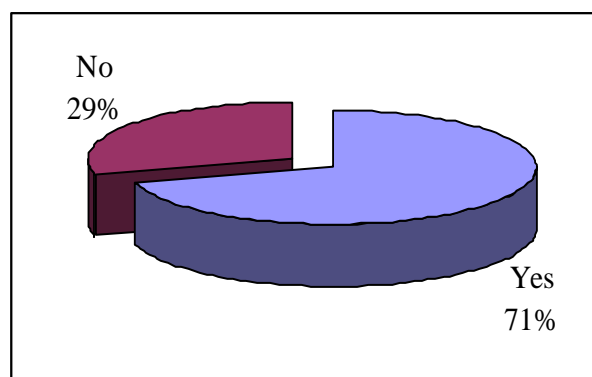
home because of domestic and sexual abuse.

Electricity

The arrival of electricity has a profound impact on rural communities, and particularly on young people. In the village of Dunkwa (W/R), for instance, a unit committee member told us that since the arrival of electricity two years ago, growing numbers of children had been leaving the village. Television opens people's eyes to the "modern" world, and they believe the city has much more to offer. One villager put it succinctly: "Even we adults want to go to Accra."

Local officials believe one of the reasons that children are drawn to the big cities is that most of Ghanaian Television's coverage originates from and focuses on developments in Accra or Kumasi. This is partly the result of GTV's limited resources, but also because most national events – such as the annual children's festival at the National Theatre in Accra – are staged in these two cities. Just as Ghanaians want to travel to Europe to see for themselves what life is like there, say local officials, children in the rural areas want to have a first-hand taste of life in the big city. Rural youths are also drawn by the developed world's opulence, as reflected in foreign televi-

sion programmes, including CNN and soap operas.



Do pupils have relatives in a big town or city?

Relatives

Children and adolescents who have relatives in the city are far more likely to dream of leaving and actually depart than those who know no one. As one out of school youth said, "I can't go to the city to try to earn money because I don't have any place to live".

Many youths and their parents pin all their hopes on (distant) relatives in the city. A 12-year-old girl we met in the Eastern Region said she would go to Accra at the end of the month to live with her uncle and become a seamstress. It was unclear whether he was actually expecting her.

Far more common are the stories of teenagers planning to leave for Accra or Kumasi, but having only a

vague idea of where their relative lives (or lived). A 14-year-old boy told us, for instance, that he wanted to go to Accra to become a sprayer. He plans to stay with his stepmother who lives at the Kokomba Market. Others told us that they have a relative somewhere in Accra or Kumasi, not realising that trying to locate someone in these cities is not exactly the same as finding a person in a village of two or three thousand inhabitants...

Christian is 12 and comes from the Volta Region. He dropped out of P2 because his parents couldn't afford the school fees. He stayed at home for some time – he doesn't know whether it was months or years. He wasn't doing anything in the village, so his grandmother in Accra asked his parents to send him to the capital to help her out. For the past several months, he has been doing most of the household chores. Christian has only one desire: to return to school. But his grandmother is destitute and cannot afford the school fees.

Children and their rural parents do not realise that their urban brethren are themselves often struggling. They are convinced that their relatives in the city will be able to help their children get a better education or vocational training. Sometimes, the urban aunts, uncles and cousins are simply seen as a ticket to escape the poverty and hopelessness of rural life. In the best of cases, the relatives in

the urban areas are able to provide accommodation to the children, but the children have to fend entirely for themselves. In the worst of cases, the children are turned out after a few weeks or months, and unwilling to return to the village, they wind up on the streets, trying to eke out an existence.

Peer Pressure

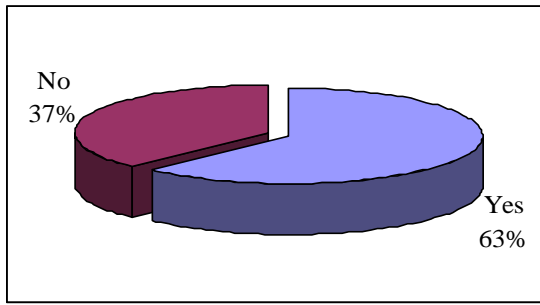
The departure of an enterprising, adventurous young person from a rural community to the city frequently leads many other youths to leave, particularly when the adolescent returns to his or her village for a brief visit.

Boys will come back, wearing the latest and most coveted consumer items, such as Combat or Nike sports shoes, Pepe or Karl-Kani jeans, Ameri-

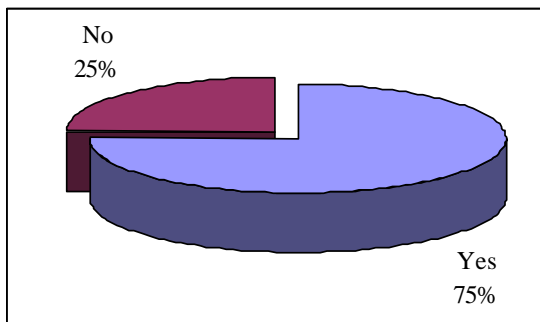
can baseball or basketball caps and a watch. They are only too willing to demonstrate the “sophisticated” manners they have learned in the city. Girls return to their villages wearing high-heeled shoes, mini-skirts and make-up. The teenagers rarely, if ever, speak about the

*“There are
no role
models for
children.”*

hardships they experience on the streets.



Do pupils have relatives, friends or acquaintances under the age of 20 who have gone to the city?



Have pupils heard from them since they left?

In the absence of role models for young people in most villages, these adolescents are respected, and many rural teenagers want to emulate them. In the village of Namong in

Ashanti Region, dozens of teenagers had returned from Accra, Kumasi, Cotonou and Abidjan for the Christmas holidays. The assemblyman told us that after the New Year, they would go back to the urban centres, taking friends or other young relatives with them, as they do every year.

“The children come back and tell their friends they can get easy money in the big city.”

Marriage

In the Northern Region, migration to the cities, particularly Accra and Kumasi, has gradually become a tradition for girls. When they marry – between the ages of 15 and 17 – brides are expected to have certain items, such as pots, pans, aluminium bowls, cooking utensils, traditional cloth and money. A girl who has nothing is considered a disgrace and will be the laughing stock of the village. Formerly, girls could work on the farm during the harvest season to earn the money they needed to buy these items, but far fewer hands are required nowadays. Since there are few employment possibilities in the

North, girls feel obliged to go south to work. Many of the girls earn so little that they have to spend long periods in the cities to acquire the objects they

need to marry.

After marrying, some young women also leave the Northern Region because they have conflicts or feel uncomfortable with their husband’s co-wives. Others run away because, they say, they do not want to be “enslaved” by their rivals or husbands. ■

...And Triggers

While one or more of these factors are likely to draw children to the cities, the migration of young people from the rural regions to the urban centres is linked to a number of other factors too.

Ethnic Violence

In 1994, long-standing tensions between the two main ethnic groups in the Northern Region – the Dagombas and the Kokombas – boiled over and led to several months of civil strife. The conflict was about land and supremacy.

The Kokombas, some of whom migrated from northern Togo, have lived in the region for over a century, but they are still regarded as tenants by the original inhabitants, the Dagombas, and their allied tribes. This mutual mistrust and antipathy has led to violent conflict in the past, but never as bloody as in 1994.

The Dagombas had been preparing themselves for armed conflict for many months, so when violence broke out, large numbers of Kokombas fled Dagomba areas, such as Tamale. Hundreds of young people who were not “courageous” or believed they did not have *juju* (or supernatural powers) to survive the fighting also fled to the

south, and some of them wound up on the streets³⁴.

The violence left over 2000 people dead and thousands more injured. Troops and police are still stationed throughout the Northern Region to keep the two ethnic groups apart.

Rural Underdevelopment

Rural areas not only offer few employment opportunities, they also have low educational standards and poor facilities. Many students say they



Mother and child in the Northern Region

³⁴ According to CAS research, however, an insignificant number of the Northern *women* living at the Kokomba Market say they left their villages because of civil strife.

want to go to Accra, Kumasi or a regional capital, either to further their education or acquire vocational skills. None of the rural villages we visited had secondary schools. The few parents who can afford secondary school fees have to send their children to nearby towns, often as boarding students, which entails even greater costs.

Most children would like to get vocational training or become an apprentice, but neither option is available in most villages, and the local economies cannot absorb the large number of children who aspire to learn a trade.

Adventure

Children are children, and their desire for adventure, new experiences, new surroundings and a different life is common and normal. Rural children have only one way to escape the rigid views and rules imposed on them by their parents: to get as far away as possible. Cities are the best place to “disappear”.

Chance

Ghanaians often say “*me huɛ deɛ onyame beɣe*”³⁵ when they speak of the vagaries of life or marvel at where

life takes them. But chance plays an even bigger role in the lives of children. They aspire to achieve unattainable heights and dream impossible dreams.

Kwame is 16 years old and lives in the village of Ntomem (E/R). He has been living with his mother since his parents divorced.

“I had to drop out of P3 because of school fees. A few days ago, I decided that I’d like to become a doctor because people look up to them.

“I want to study in Accra and stay with an aunt there, but I don’t know where she lives. I’m going to ask somebody to try to find her for me. I think I’ll need about ₵100,000. I want to raise half the money myself, and I hope someone will lend me the rest. I’m planning to sell small objects in Accra to repay the loan.

“If I can’t become a doctor, maybe I’ll become a driver. I have an uncle who has a car. If I give him about ₵40,000, he’ll teach me. But, I don’t know how I’ll get the money because my mom doesn’t pay me for helping her out on the farm.”

One or any combination of these factors draws children to the streets. Some children are fortunate. Their urban relatives provide them with the minimum a child can expect: accommodation, food and affection. But others are left to fend for themselves or are made to feel that it is better to leave, just as it was better to leave the family home. They have only one place to go: the street. And yet others, once they decide to leave, have no other place to go but the street. ■

³⁵ Literally “I am looking up to God”, i.e., “My destiny is in God’s hands”.

The Exodus

It is impossible to say when rural children started migrating to the urban centres. One 70-year-old we met in Accra said the phenomenon began over half a century ago: he himself had gone to live on the streets as a child because his father was abusing him. And, he said, he was not the only child living on the streets then. Others say children began going to the urban centres two decades ago. Yet others told us the migration began in earnest five to seven years ago.

What is incontrovertible is that the trickle has become a flow, and every year, the number of children leaving for the urban centres is increasing. In the North, parents and officials described the exodus as a “catastrophe” and a “cancer”, and many parents and officials are clearly overwhelmed by the situation. We encountered similar sentiments elsewhere, but we also saw a great deal of complacency and resignation.

The Departure

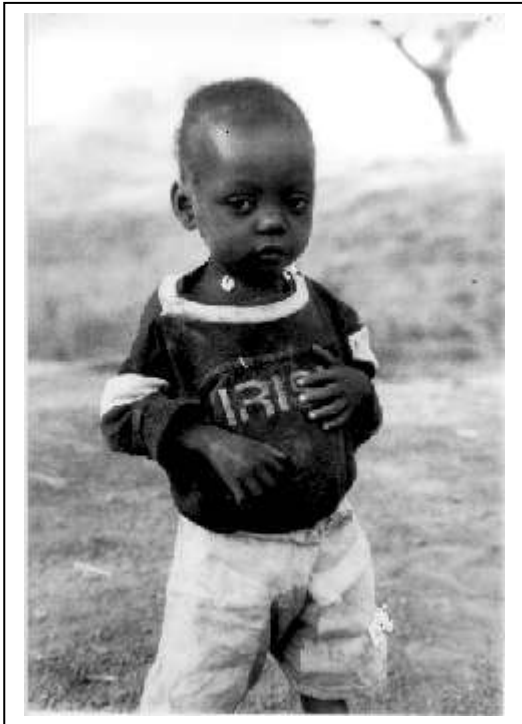
Children rarely ask permission or inform their parents about their decision to leave. In the Northern Region, several parents recounted that their children had simply disappeared when they went to the mosque for prayers.

Others had hidden their belongings in a bucket when they went to bathe in the morning.

In some rural areas, such as Tongo (U.E.R.) and Tolon

(N/R), the migration is seasonal. Since there is no economic activity aside from farming, children leave at the end of the harvest season and spend several months in the South. In Tolon, the JSS headmaster told us dozens of children head south for up to five months to earn money to continue their education. A similar situation exists in fishing villages in the Western Region. In Asanta, children leave for a few months during the off-season to earn money in the cities. Some return; many do not.

“Everybody is leaving. It’s the talk of the town.”



Child left behind by a kayayoo with her grandmother in the Northern Region

The Return

In the Northern Region, many of the children and teenagers eventually come back home. Some return with goods and money, but as one man in Savelugu put it, others only bring back sexually transmitted diseases, chronic headaches, asthma and debts.

Some of the parents we interviewed had daughters who had come back briefly to drop off babies they had had in the south. Almost all parents knew of similar cases.

All the parents spoke of the impact the returnees are having on village life and traditions. Many of the

returnees no longer show respect for village elders, and they disregard local customs and traditions. In Savelugu, we heard of the case of a girl who had worked as a prostitute in Accra. When she returned, she continued practising her trade. When the villagers discovered this, they tried to lynch her.

Some of the returnees find themselves caught between two cultures. They left at an early age and did not learn the traditions and customs of the North. In the South, they were not in an environment that enabled them to get to know the local traditions and customs.

The implications are disturbing, but the exodus is too recent a phenomenon to assess the long-term impact on rural communities and their traditional way of life.

Gbullung

Gbullung is a village of 4600 people, one hour's drive from Tamale (N/R). It's a typical example of what is happening in the villages of the North. Every year, 40 – 50 children, most of them girls, leave Gbullung for Accra.

“The children who return to Gbullung are heavily influenced by city life. They no longer bow to the village elders as tradition dictates.

“They dress and wear their hair differently than other villagers. They have fair skin. They are fat and look as if life has treated them well.

“Their presence encourages other children to leave. Some of us pray that our children never return because of all the bad influences they bring.”



Gbullung, Northern Region

In other regions, when children don't succeed in the cities, they go back to their village to take up farming. The adolescents, their parents and the rest of the village perceive their return as a failure and a shame: no matter how great the hardships and sufferings, most children believe it is preferable to remain on the streets of the city.

Very few of the street children registered by CAS ever return home. They become accustomed to city life and are unwilling to return to the grinding poverty and lack of opportunities in the rural areas.

Adolescents from the Northern Region are often unwilling to return because they are expected to give money to all their relatives. If they do not, they fear that *juju* – or black magic – will be used against them.

Many of the girls and young women from the Northern Region cannot return home because they have had illegitimate children in the big city. The taboo on having children out of wedlock is so great that they prefer to stay in the city. But others return briefly to their villages to drop off their baby, and then they go back to the city. ■

“The only time you see them is when they come for burial or they get HIV.”

Street Children

The huge numbers of street children in Accra³⁶ make it all too easy to overlook or ignore what is happening elsewhere in the country. In all the regional capitals and many smaller towns and cities, there are many, many children living on the streets.

We spoke to 53 street children in Tamale, Bolgatanga, Kumasi and Takoradi, though we also saw children living on the streets of much smaller towns, such as Axim (Western Region) or Nkawkaw and Suhum (both in the Eastern Region). Because of the time needed to develop the trust of street

children, we did not attempt to conduct a representative survey of street children in these cities. Instead, we got a random sample.

Most were children between the ages of 10 and 18. They had lived on the streets for several months or years. Some left for the city in search of money to marry or to go back to school, others to escape the hopelessness of life in the rural areas, and yet others to try to build a future for

themselves.

Figures and dry facts, however, do not do justice to the rich diversity of street children's backgrounds, nor to the poignancy of some of their stories.

“I’m seeing the third generation of street children. The grandmother came to the streets when she was young. Her children were born on the streets of Accra. One of her daughters met a boy who was also born on the streets, and they recently had a child...on the streets.” – Social worker

³⁶ According to CAS estimates, there are currently about 15,000 children living on the streets of Accra.

Shortly after noon, on a hot, sunny day in central Kumasi, we met a group of 16 *kayayei*³⁷ who all came from the North. None had been to school. Their parents could not afford the school fees, and their mothers forced them to work at home. They complained that their parents did not understand the value of education.

They had all been in Kumasi for the past 3 to 12 months. They went there because they saw girls coming back to the village with nice clothes and other things. According to the *kayayei*, these girls were respected in the village. To go to Kumasi, they had saved their chop³⁸ money and had hidden their belongings in a water bucket. Most had run away; only two asked their parents for permission to go.

They earn ₵2000 – ₵7000 a day. They spend ₵500 on food and ₵100 on accommodation. They all sleep together in one big room.

Each girl contributes ₵500 daily to a common fund, a type of credit union. At the end of the month, they give all the money to one of the girls to buy an item she needs, such as cooking utensils, aluminium bowls, pans, a sewing machine or a trunk to store her belongings.

The *kayayei* say men do not harass them. In fact, the police arrest anyone who bothers them.

When they are older and have children, they say, they will discourage their offspring from doing this type of work. They intend to do everything they can to send their children to school.



10-year-old Kwame comes from a village near Navrongo in the Upper East Region. He has been in Takoradi for the past 6 weeks. He has numerous skin rashes.

“My father brought me to Takoradi. He lives here in a room with one of my brothers and two sisters. My three other brothers and sisters are living back in the village with my mother.

“Not long after I came, my father went back to the village. He’s been gone for more than three weeks now and he didn’t leave us anything.

“I’m working as a porter to feed myself and my brothers and sisters. I’m tired at times. I work from 7 in the morning till 6 in the evening, and on weekends I wash clothes. I hope my father comes back soon because I want to save money to go back to school. I only completed P1 because my parents couldn’t afford the school fees, and they were constantly sending me to look after the cattle.

“My parents haven’t been taking care of me the way they should. A child of my age shouldn’t have to work.”

³⁷ Girls and women who earn a living by carrying goods for shoppers in the market areas

³⁸ Food

14-year-old Abena comes from the Central Region. Her parents are both uneducated farmers. They are divorced.

“I came to Kumasi to live with my older brother. He’s been living here for a long time. He just gives me a place to sleep. I have to work to get food and everything else I need. I sell plastic bags and earn ₵2000 a day. I’m able to save ₵1000 a day. So far, I’ve managed to save ₵50,000. I think I’ll need about ₵400,000 to learn how to become a seamstress.”



Porter at the market

Kwesi is 18 years old. Two years ago, when he completed JSS, he left his village in rural Ashanti to go to work as a shoe-shine boy in Accra.

“I left because my father say he can’t send me to SSS. So I was fighting to get some money. That’s why I went to Accra. I told my parents I was going to Accra. They didn’t say anything. They say I can go. They think it good, because my parents not having money to give to me. So that’s why I’m fighting for my own. They be happy.

“Life is difficult in Accra. The work is hard. If you don’t do hard, if you don’t fight, you can’t get money to buy things or to do anything. That’s why I say it’s difficult.

“I earn ₵3000 to ₵5000 a day. I spend ₵1000 to chop³⁹. If you go to take a bath, just for bath, you will pay ₵200. If you go to sleep, you will pay ₵200. If you go to toilet, you will pay ₵50. That’s why I tell you that Accra be difficult. Everything is expensive.

“Every day, I save ₵3000. I give it to somebody, a woman, to keep for me. She’s my friend.

“I want to stay one more year. I’ve saved ₵200,000 and want ₵100,000 more. When I get ₵300,000, I will buy some clothes and trade. Then I want to get some proper occupation. I want television repair shop.

“I won’t go back to my village because when I’m staying there, I can’t get anything. But when I in Accra, I get some money to do anything. That’s why I say I don’t want to stay in my village. I’m happy in Accra. I fight to get some money to get a better life.”

³⁹ To eat



15-year-old Mohammed lives in Tamale with his mother who is a tomato seller. His father died several years ago.

“I’m in Primary 5. I’m a good student. When I’m older, I’d like to be an English and Dagbani⁴⁰ teacher. My mother pays small for my school fees, and I look for money to pay the rest. I work as a shoeshine every day. When school finishes at 1:30, I go home and pray, and then I go out to work until 5 p.m. I earn between ₵1000 and ₵2000 a day. I spend about ₵200 for food and save the rest.

“Two of my brothers and a sister left for Accra in December 1997. They tell me that Accra is not good. People are constantly bullying them. But I want to go to Accra to join my brothers. I don’t know what they do there, and I don’t know where they live. I’m waiting for them to come and get me. I want to go and work and then come back and help my mother.”

⁴⁰ One of the Northern languages

We also travelled to Obuasi (A/R), the centre of Ghana’s gold mining industry, to verify reports that girls under the age of 18 are working in the commercial sex industry.

We were unable to confirm or deny these reports. Our contact, the Youth Development Foundation, YDF, which has been providing information on reproductive health to commercial sex workers since 1985, has limited itself to “home-based” and “hotel-based” sex workers who are 30 years of age on average.⁴¹

The YDF has not attempted to reach what it describes as “street-based” commercial sex workers, even though they are likely to be the most vulnerable, the youngest, and at the greatest risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

However, according to the YDF’s brochure, “following the evaluation of the organisation’s activities for the past 10 years, supported by the World Bank and International Youth Foundation, YDF has been adjudged a successful, workable and replicable initiative, home grown and adaptable to other African countries and the Third World. For this reason, the World Bank has supported an initiative to replicate YDF in other African countries starting with Cameroon”, in addition to the YDF’s six other offices in Ghana. ■

⁴¹ The YDF’s target group is youth between 10 and 24 years of age.

Slavery



Enyonam (right) and fellow bag seller

Enyonam is 12 years old. She comes from the Volta Region and sells black plastic bags, used by shoppers to carry small goods.

“I came to Kumasi four years ago. My mother sent me with a carpenter from our village. He took me to my stepmother, and she put me to work right away, first selling gari⁴². But I didn’t earn much, so she told me to sell these bags.

“I earn about ₵3000 a day. I have to give everything to my stepmother. She gives me ₵500 a day to eat: ₵300 for breakfast and ₵200 for dinner.

“I can’t save anything. My stepmother often comes to the market to talk to the other girls who are selling bags to find out how much they’re making. She tells me she’ll beat me if I ever cheat her.

“My stepmother doesn’t take care of me at all. When I get sick, I have to go to the market to buy medicine myself.

“I’ve never been to school. I want to be a nurse when I get older because there are no nurses or doctors in my village. But I don’t know how long I will have to sell these bags.”

⁴² Pounded cassava

Three days ago, 15-year-old Adzovi was fired.

“My auntie brought me from the Volta Region to Accra when I was 4 years old. She took me to a woman who gave my auntie ₵60,000.

“I started working for the woman as soon as I got up in the morning. First I’d clean the house, and then I’d go out and sell ice water. I’d come back at noon, and the woman would give me ₵500 for lunch. Then I’d go back out to sell till the evening. The woman gave me ₵300 for dinner.

“I had to give the woman all the money I earned. Some days, I’d earn ₵4000, other days ₵8000. I had to work every single day, including Sundays.

“The woman beat me a lot, especially if I didn’t come home on time.

“Three days ago, I had a headache. I told the woman I couldn’t work, but she forced me to go sell ice water anyway. I took ₵500 from my earnings and bought some medicine. When I came back home, the woman asked me why I had spent some of my earnings. She said I should get the money back. But I couldn’t sell any more ice water. My head was hurting too much. So, the woman said I should leave the place and go find my auntie or my parents.

“I had been trying to run away from the woman for a long time, but I didn’t know where to go. I met another girl who told me I could come to town and sell. When this happened three days ago, my friend brought me here to the Accra Railway Station.

“I want to sell cotton swabs, but I don’t have any money to start trading. So, I’ve just been waiting here.

“I want to go back to my village to find my parents, but I can’t go alone. I don’t understand Ewe⁴³ any more.”

⁴³ Ewe is the main language spoken in the Volta Region

Slavery is a loaded term, particularly in Africa. But, today, in Ghana, there are children who are not only being exploited, they are also being enslaved.

It is difficult to get information about this contemporary form of slavery. But interviews with social workers and some former child slaves, as well as media reports, suggest that in most cases, parents in rural areas give their children to urban market women. The “madams” convince parents who cannot put their offspring through school that they can offer their children a better future. They promise to employ the children for a certain period – generally two years – and then provide them a sewing machine and vocational training or send them to school. But they rarely keep this promise: before the end of the two years, most children run away. They realise that their madam has been cheating them, or they can no longer bear the punishments and beatings the madam inflicts on them.

“There is this woman at the Yam Market in Accra who has dozens of young girls on offer to those who need house-helpers. One has to contact her, take a look at the girls, select, just as is done at the cattle or sheep market, and pay a price in order to take possession of one of them. The cost is dependent on the age, build, looks and what have you. Certainly, you pay more for a fat, healthy cow! The same principle applies here.”

– *Daily Graphic*, December 31, 1998

Some children remain. They are terrified of what their madams or minders might do if they don’t obey blindly.

Most are so young and vulnerable that escape simply does not occur to them. When they reach adolescence and the madam can no longer exert total control over them, she turns them out to avoid having to keep her promises. Yet other children realise that there is more to life, and they run away.

“I knew a woman at Katamanto Market. She had about 12 girls between the ages of 9 and 13. All the girls had to go out every day to sell ice water. They got a gallon of water, and the woman knew how many cups they could sell. When the girls came back, they were supposed to bring ₵350. If they brought back less, they were beaten.”

“The girls lived with her in an enclosed structure. Her son sat at the entrance all the time. He was supposed to make sure the girls brought back the right amount of money every time they came for more water. In the evening, the girls had to stay indoors. The woman had a TV there, so she said the girls didn’t need to go out.”

“The woman promised the girls that if they stayed with her for two years, she would buy them a sewing machine. And if they stayed for longer than that, she would get them training. But I never saw the woman buying a machine for the girls. Something always happened before the two years were up, and the woman would sack the girl. I constantly saw new girls coming to stay with this woman.”

– Testimony of a social worker who works with street children

Most of these former slaves – they are almost always girls – wind up trading for themselves and living on the streets. Street boys are only too willing to give them the solace and attention they yearn for, and many of them soon become pregnant.

A madam brought this girl from the village when she was 9. She promised to buy her a sewing machine after two years. But one day, when the girl had been with her for a little over a year, she accused her of concealing some of her earnings. The woman beat her and told her to leave. The girl couldn't go back to the village. She couldn't go anywhere, except the streets, and that's where she went. Now she has a boyfriend, and she's selling and living on the streets.

– Street Girls Aid⁴⁴ case study

Social workers say that of late, there are increasing numbers of young boys in the same situation. Like the girls, they are engaged in the most menial of trades: selling ice water or black plastic bags.

The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, CHRAJ, says it has never received a complaint about child servitude or other contemporary forms of slavery. This should come as little surprise since most of these children are illiterate and have no knowledge of the rights guaranteed them under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child or Ghana's Children's Act.

⁴⁴ P.O.Box CT5508 Cant. Accra.Tel:(021) 226089, Fax:(021) 233132, Email:cas@btinternet.com

A 15-year-old had to drop out of P6 because her father died and her mother couldn't afford the school fees. A woman came to the village looking for girls. Her mother told the woman to take her to Accra because she couldn't take care of the girl.

When she got to Taifa⁴⁵, the girl began working as a house-help for the woman. She also has to sell ice water every day, from Monday to Sunday. The woman expects ₵2500 a day. She's told the girl that she's saving ₵1000 a day for her in a *susu*. And the madam has promised to buy her dresses, shoes and other essential things. But the woman never buys her anything. She just gives her ₵500 a day to eat: ₵250 in the afternoon and ₵250 in the evening.

The woman has other children, but the girl is not allowed to play with them. She's not permitted to watch television either. When she feels tired, she goes into the corridor. That's where she sleeps.

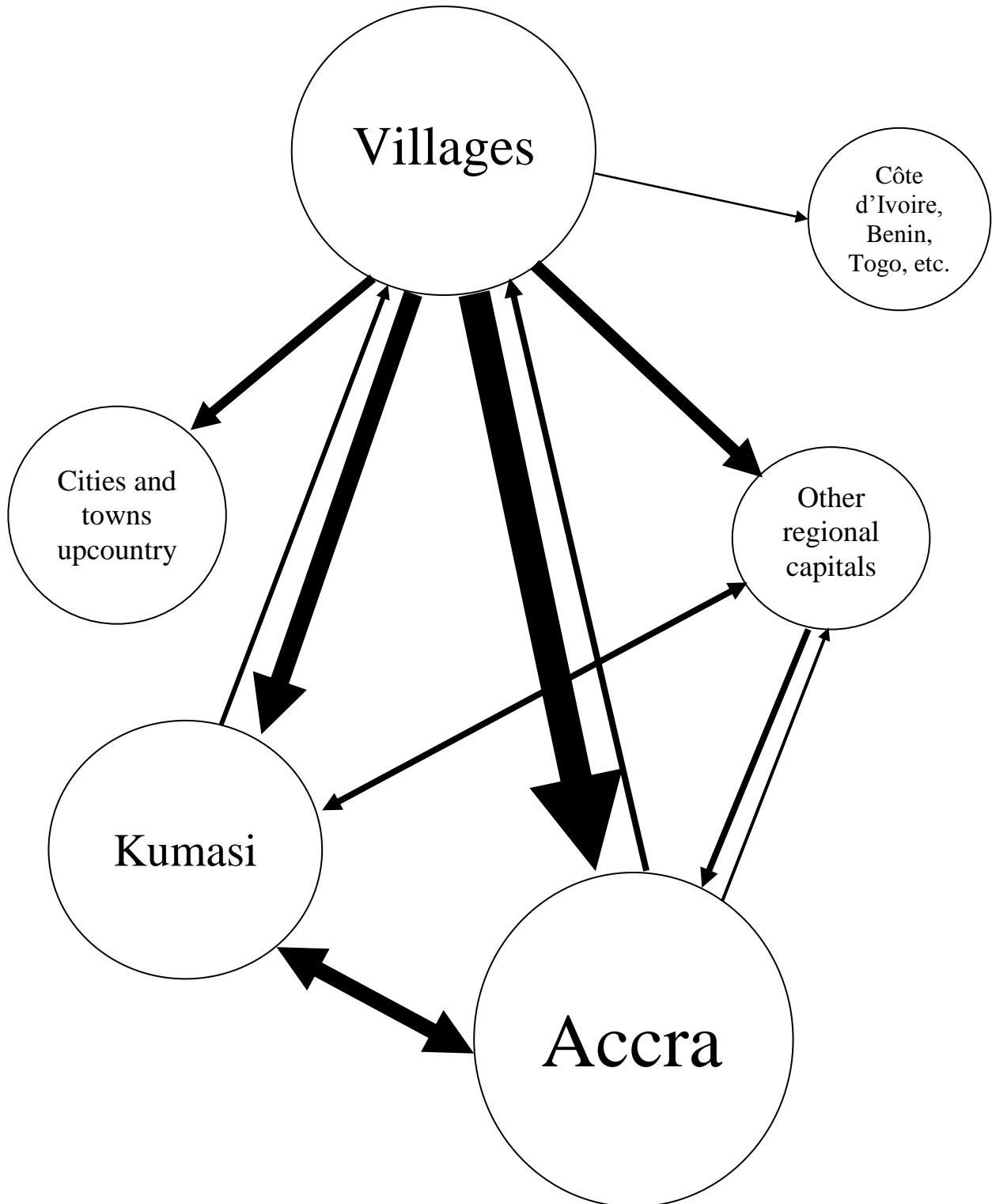
– Street Girls Aid case study

It is even more difficult to get information about child exploitation by relatives. Across the country, we met parents who could not provide for their children. Dozens of them had sent children, usually girls between the age of 4 and 8 years, to relatives or guardians in the cities. At that point, there is rarely any more contact between the parents and the child.

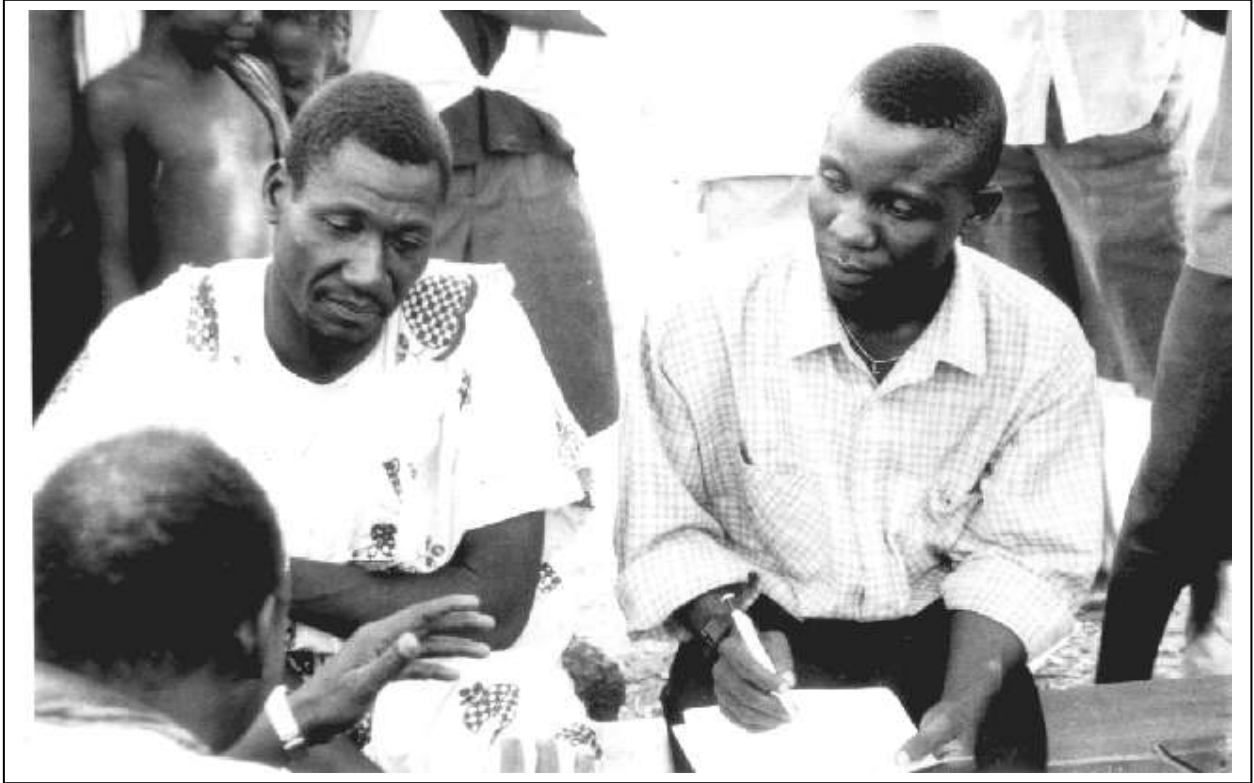
Some of these children are put to work by their relatives. These children are particularly difficult to reach: they are shielded from outsiders because the relatives are only too well aware that they are exploiting them. ■

⁴⁵ A suburb of Accra

Migration Flows Of Children



Questionnaires



Researcher (right) listening to translation of parent's reply in Northern Region

The 1314 questionnaires we administered to parents, pupils and children out of school yielded a wealth of information. The three questionnaires also included a number of questions directly related to the migration of children – or children's *intent* to migrate – from rural areas to the urban centres.

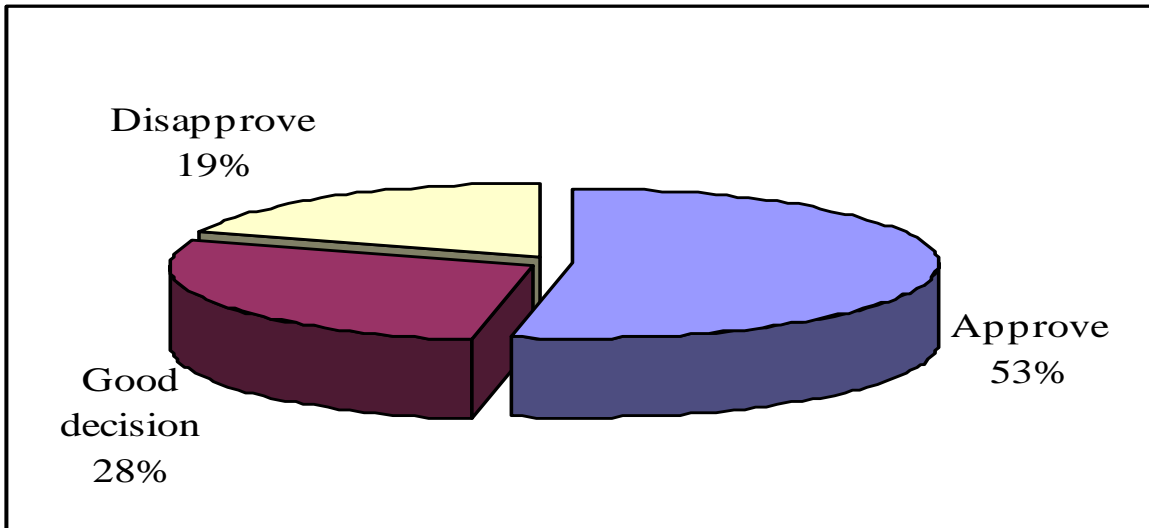
Parents

Nearly half the randomly selected parents had children who had left for the city. There were significant regional differences. In the Northern

Region, for instance, 65% of the parents had children who had left. In the Eastern Region, the figure was slightly over half, in Ashanti 40%, and in the Western Region, “only” a third of parents said one or more children had left.

14% of the children were under the age of 10 when they left (or were sent to urban relatives). 64% were between 12 and 18 years of age.

Most parents approved of their children's decision to leave or said it was a “good decision under the circumstances”.



What do you think of your child's decision to leave?

A quarter of the parents had two children who had left, and a quarter had three or more children who had migrated to the city. Nearly a third had gone to Accra, slightly over a quarter to Kumasi.

Almost all parents know where their children have gone. But the children only contact their parents once or twice a year. 8% of the parents have completely lost touch with their children.

More than two-thirds of the parents know other children from the village who migrated to the city before turning 18.

47-year-old Mallam Issaku Abdurahamani-Imam is an anxious, desolate man. Four of his children have left for Accra and Ghana's other urban centres to escape the growing poverty in Savelugu, a town 30 kilometres from Tamale, the capital of the Northern Region.

"I can afford to put my children through primary school, but afterwards the fees are higher, and so most of them have to drop out. For example, one of my daughters recently came home after school and told me that the school fees for senior secondary school are ₵200,000. I just can't afford it. As it is, this past year, I spent almost ₵500,000 on school fees alone, and I know that my four wives are also contributing to pay for our children's education.

"The farming season last year was very bad. I only got 30 bags of rice, 24 bags of beans, and 3 bags of maize. It just wasn't enough to provide for my family, and everyone relies on me. So, as usual, I've had to buy food for my wives and children.



Mallam Issaku Abdurahamani-Imam

"I'm fortunate because my father is the chief imam here, so I'm a village elder. People come and ask me to pray for them. Each time, they give me about ₺2000. I often have to use the money to feed my family and send my children to school. That's how I survive until the following farming season.

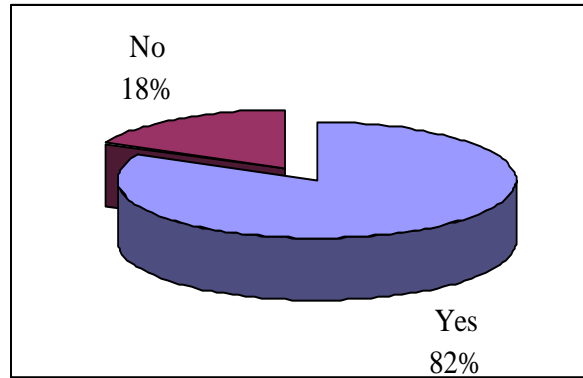
"My children who left come back from time to time and give me some money. They tell me that since they weren't able to complete their education, I should use the money to put their other brothers and sisters through school.

"One of my daughters who left came home with a baby. I don't know who the father is. She came here, dropped the baby off and ran back to Accra. I cursed her. I even prayed that she'd get run over by a car when she got back to Accra. I finally sent someone to bring her back here. I talked to her a lot and calmed her down, but three months later, she left again for Accra. Now I'm taking care of her baby, even though it's a burden for me.

"People didn't use to leave this village, especially not girls and young women. People didn't know anything about Accra. But now, so many girls are leaving..."

"One of my sons was supposed to marry a girl from this village. When I went to ask for her the other day, I was told that she had just left for Accra to work as a kayayoo⁴⁶"

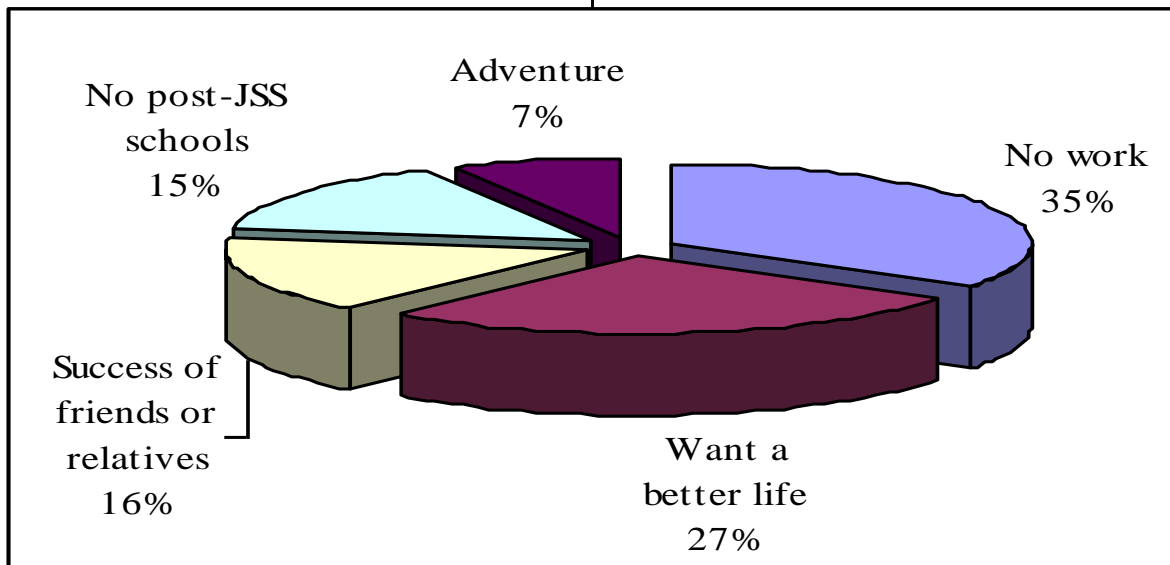
Pupils



Would you like to leave your locality?

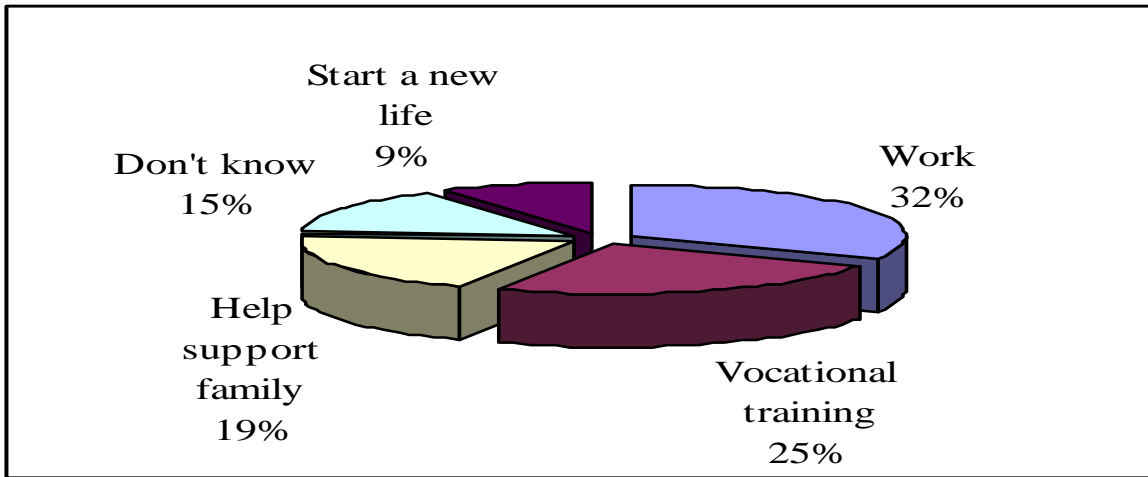
In the Western and Eastern Regions, there is an even greater desire among pupils to go to the city. 86% said they would like to leave.

In all the regions, except the North, more than half the pupils said the lack of jobs was the main reason they wanted to go to the city. In the Northern Region, 40% of the pupils cited the desire for a better life as their main motivating factor.



Reasons given by pupils for wanting to leave their village

⁴⁶ Female porter

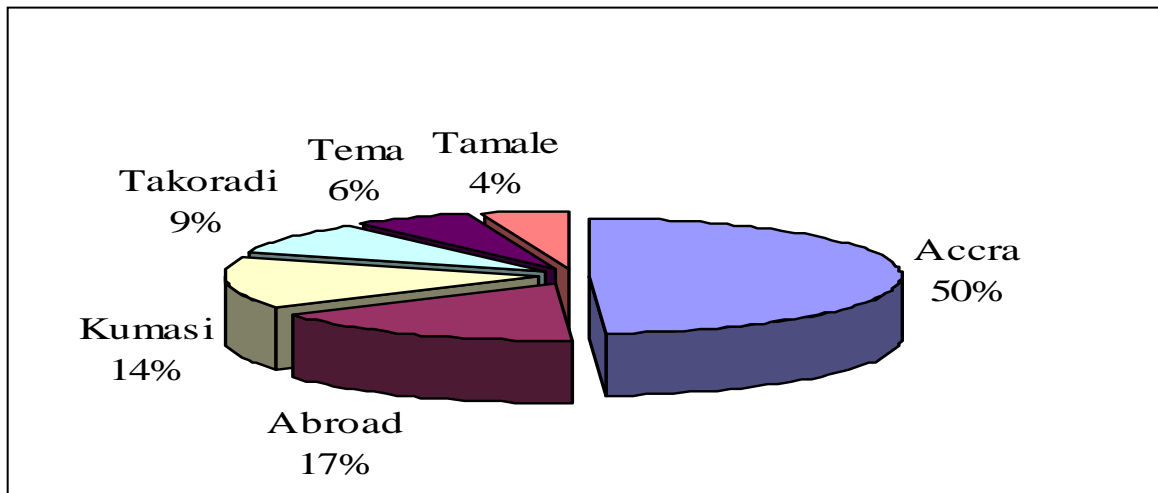


If you (have to) drop out of school, what will you do?



Only 8% of the pupils did not intend to finish secondary school (SSS). But far more thought they would not be able to finish SSS because of school fees and lack of parental support.

Researcher assisting pupil to complete questionnaire



Where would you like to go? – Question only asked in E/R and W/R

Children Out of School

"I'd like to go to school, but my parents say they can't afford the school fees. So, I want to learn to become a welder here in the village. If I can't, I'll go to Accra and become a driver."

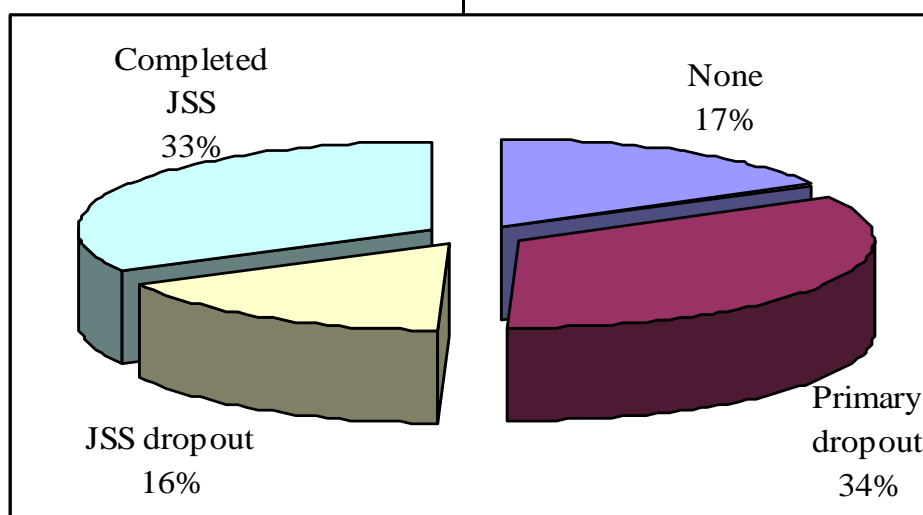
– 10-year-old boy from the Eastern Region

Over a third of the children were between 12 and 15 years of age. 60% were between 16 and 18.

The vast majority of children who were not in school did not want to

completely unrealistic assessment of how much money they needed to leave. They mentioned amounts between ₵400,000 and ₵2,000,000... But in a village, it would take them years to earn this.

In the Eastern and Western Regions, in particular, children were waiting for their parents to raise the money they needed to go to a city to get vocational training or start an apprenticeship.



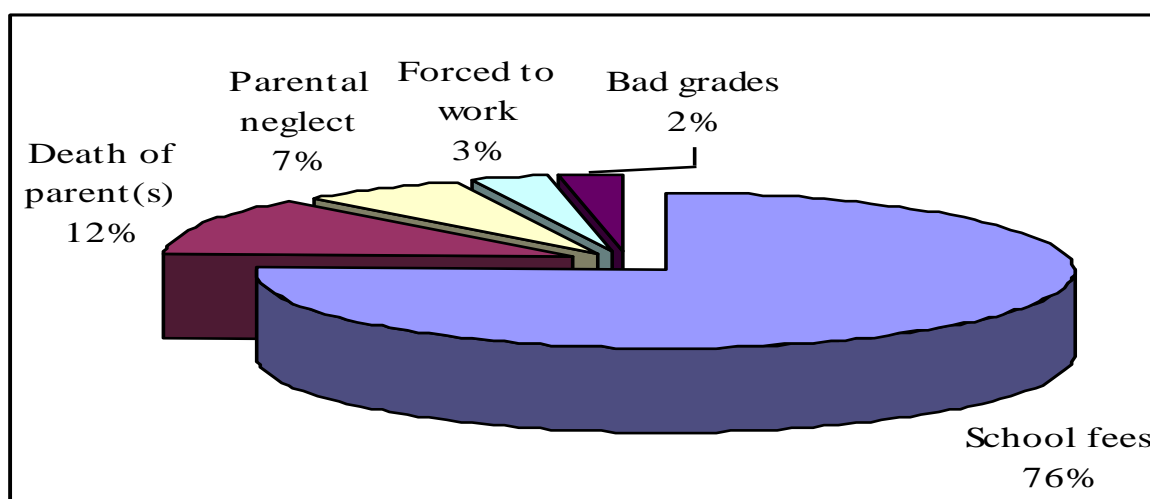
What is your level of education?

stay in their village. The one constant in their stories was the desire to escape – what they view as – the hopelessness of rural life and farming.

But upon further questioning, it became clear that, for many, the desire to leave was born of desperation. They had no concrete plans and a

"I want to follow an apprenticeship in Takoradi to become a seamstress. My uncle lives there. I need about ₵150,000. My mother is trying to save the money, but I don't know how long it will take."

– 15-year-old girl from the Western Region



Why did you quit school?

“I want to go to Takoradi to become a sprayer. I need ₵200,000, but I haven’t saved anything. If I don’t get the money, I’ll stay here and become a farmer.”
 – 17-year-old boy from the Western Region

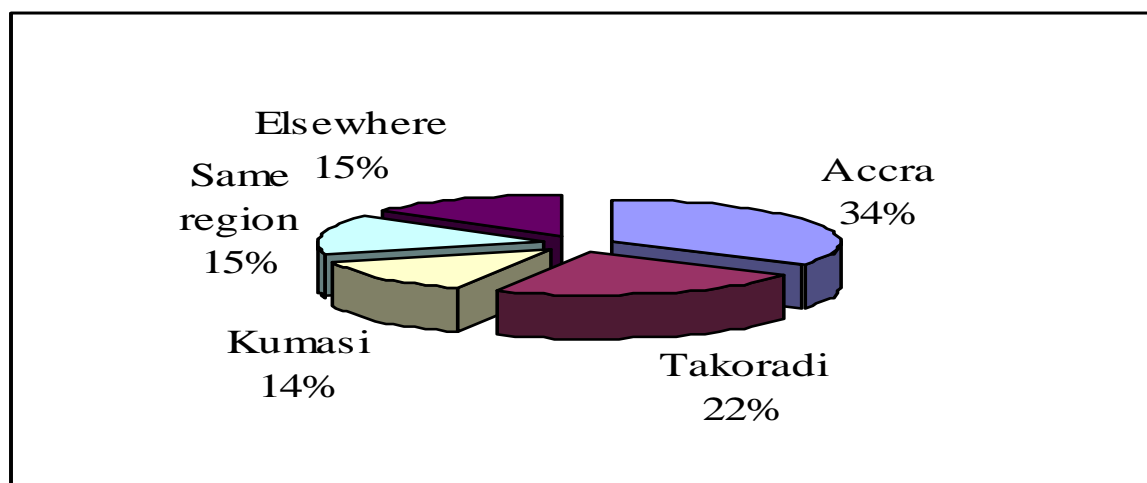
Some of the children said they would stay with relatives in the city, but often, they did not know where they lived. Most children knew how much it costs to travel to Accra, Kumasi or another regional capital. In the Western Region, the preferred destination of most children was Côte d’Ivoire because of its proximity. The children who mentioned Côte d’Ivoire also had relatives or knew young people who had gone to work there. ■

NOTE:

It was difficult to judge to what extent the interviewees were providing truthful answers. In the Eastern and Western Regions, in particular, we noted that parents and the older children out of school tended to exaggerate the seriousness of their economic situation in the hope that we would provide them with financial assistance.

This did not happen in schools: the results of the questionnaires coincided with what teachers told us.

In most rural areas, the research team caused a sensation. One pupil wrote in his concluding remarks, “I want to walk with white men to do work so that I will be a gentleman in future.”



Where do you plan to go?

Stemming the Exodus

Besides interviewing parents, pupils and children out of school, we also tried to find out more about the policies and measures being implemented at local, district, regional and national levels to stem the exodus of children from the rural areas to the urban centres. In addition, we contacted a wide variety of non-governmental organisations which deal with street children or related issues.

This list is not exhaustive.

National Government

Children's Act

Earlier this year, Ghana introduced the Children's Act, designed to protect the rights of the child. It deals with a wide variety of issues, such as maintenance and adoption, child labour, foster parents, apprenticeships in the informal sector and day-care centres.

The Children's Act requires the State to assume the role of parent for children in need of care. Children who are being abused or harmed can be removed from their parents' custody and put up for adoption if guardians

or relatives are unwilling to care for them.

The Act also prohibits children from engaging in "exploitative labour" which deprives them of health, education or development. Children under the age of 15 are forbidden to work.

Courts can order the State to finance the education of mothers under the age of 18 to ensure that the victims of teenage pregnancy are not deprived of a basic education.

One of the Act's key provisions is that it introduces the concept of parental duties and responsibilities. Parents have the obligation to:

- ◆ "protect the child from neglect, discrimination, violence, abuse, exposure to physical and moral hazards and oppression;"
- ◆ "provide good guidance, care, assistance and maintenance for the child and assurance of the child's survival and development."

The Act also states that "no person shall deprive a child access to education, immunisation, adequate diet, clothing, shelter, medical attention or any other thing required for its development".



Ice water seller

According to the deputy director of the Department of Social Welfare, responsible for child protection and care, the Act finally gives the government the legal instruments to prosecute parents who neglect, abuse or abandon their children. "We are going to go all out", she says, "to ensure that the Act is enforced." By the time the millennium closes, the Department of Social Welfare plans to inform traditional rulers, district assemblies, churches, women's groups and the media about the Act.

The new Children's Act is being violated on such a wide scale that it

would be impossible to prosecute all the offenders. However, the Department plans to prosecute certain parents and publicise the cases to show its determination to enforce the Act.

Department of Social Welfare (National)

The Department offers a wide range of services, including counselling to couples whose marriage is on the rocks. The aim is to try to keep families together, when possible. Department social workers also provide information at the grass-roots level about child-care and nutrition.

The Department is urging district assemblies to create an educational fund for needy children.

It also runs three children's homes for abandoned or neglected children and orphans.

- ◆ Accra: 79 children
- ◆ Kumasi: 56 children
- ◆ Tamale: 25 children

However, the needs far outstrip the Department's resources, and a great deal still needs to be done.

Department of Social Welfare (Eastern Region)

In September 1997, the Department conducted research on street children in the Koforidua Municipality. The research consists of a hand-

written list of the names of 30 children, together with their age, educational level, reasons for leaving school, usual place of abode, source of livelihood, parents' names, and whether the children are using drugs (most were not)⁴⁷.

The local Boys' Vocational School, which is run by the Department of Social Welfare, is providing training and schooling to 10 underprivileged children. During the one to three-year programme, children are given clothing, equipment and one free meal a day, but the children are expected to go home in the evening. The Department says it would like to assist street children, but it doesn't have the funds.

Other Government Initiatives

Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)

CHRAJ was created earlier this decade. One of its main activities is organising seminars and workshops on women's and children's rights.

CHRAJ operates under severe constraints. Salaries are low and employees have fewer perks, such as staff vehicles, than other government agencies. As a result, there is a very

high staff turnover rate, and the Commission cannot build up the experience needed to tackle serious and systematic human rights violations, such as child servitude. CHRAJ relies on victims submitting complaints about human rights violations, but the Commission lacks the resources to carry out full and proper investigations.

CHRAJ officials favour "reconciliation" and "arbitration" in conflicts between children and parents, for example, in cases of child maintenance.

We were told that if a case of child servitude were ever presented to the Commission, it would favour trying to reconcile the parents, the madam and the children. However, it is painfully obvious that when such grave and systematic violations of children's human rights occur, there can be no reconciliation. The perpetrators must be prosecuted and imprisoned. CHRAJ has a legal and moral obligation to enforce Ghanaian law and the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, to which Ghana is signatory.

ICCES - Integrated Community Centre for Employment Skills (Ashanti Region)

In the town of Nerebehi (A/R), an ICCES was established in 1993. Each

⁴⁷ A copy is available at CAS.

year, the ICCES takes in about 80 students. 160 students are currently enrolled. On average, 20 – 25 students drop out during the three years of training.

Since its inception, the ICCES has trained 350 young people in carpentry, masonry, agriculture, dress-making and hairdressing. Most of the students have completed JSS or are JSS dropouts.

Some of the ICCES staff is supposed to be National Service personnel, but many of them do not report, so the Centre must hire local artisans. As a result, the ICCES charges students ₦35,000 for each 15-week term. The ICCES funds approximately 30% of its activities through outside contract work done by the students.

It faces a number of problems, including:

- ◆ Lack of classrooms
- ◆ Lack of accommodation for boarding students
- ◆ Lack of teachers: the ICCES used to get 9 National Service personnel a year. Last year, only one took up post.

National Youth Council (Koforidua Municipality, E/R)

The National Youth Council is supposed to co-ordinate the activities of organisations such as the Red Cross, Boy Scouts, Catholic Youth Organisation and other local groups. It

also gives talks at schools (both SSS and JSS) on sexual reproductive health, youth issues and unemployment.

The National Youth Council is stymied by a severe lack of funds. It has no means of transport and receives almost no support from the Municipal Assembly. It is never involved in consultations about youth issues. The Council has been asked on numerous occasions to draw up proposals for programmes to assist and educate young people. These well-documented plans invariably are welcomed and then disappear, never to be heard of again.

“Politicians constantly say that the youth of today are tomorrow’s future leaders,” says the local National Youth Council, “but this is an empty slogan. The government has no youth policy.”

District Assemblies

Common Fund

District assemblies are earmarking 20% of their Common Fund⁴⁸ moneys for poverty alleviation, generally in the form of micro-credits. In most districts, a committee and local bank consider the applications. The final decision rests with the district

⁴⁸ Government poverty alleviation scheme introduced in August 1997

assembly. The bank is responsible for recovering the loan. District assembly (D.A.) officials have associated banks to the scheme because they have more experience in extending loans. D.A. officials also believe that people are more prepared to repay banks than district assemblies.

The micro-credits range from a few hundred thousand to several million cedis and are generally granted to a group of entrepreneurs. The group serves as collateral and is in a better position to put pressure on members who are unwilling or “unable” to reimburse the loans. Some districts in the Northern Region are giving priority to applications by women. In Tolon-Kumbungu District, Common Fund moneys are also being used to purchase tractors, fertilisers, seeds and hire labour.

In all the districts we visited, demand far outstripped the available funding.

Some districts, such as Ahanta West (W/R) are setting aside more than the required 20% of their Common Fund allocations for micro-credits. Another district in the Western Region, Nzema East, initially earmarked ₵200 million for the micro-credit scheme. The D.A. will add new moneys every year, and since the loans are revolving, the District ex-

In the fishing village of Asanta (W/R), two groups of five to six people were among the first Common Fund recipients in early January 1999. Another 25 people in the village have submitted applications to expand their activities in coconut oil extraction, *atcheke* (a local food made of corn), rice selling, etc. The recipients have a two-month grace period and are then expected to repay the loan within 10 months. The interest rate is 25%, which is 5% lower than the bank rate. At the end of the year, the recipients are entitled to apply again. The recipients in Asanta said that if they received loans for three years in a row, they would have enough capital to stand on their own two feet.

pects the fund to grow to ₵1 thousand million within a few years.

The Birim South District (E/R) allocated ₵60 million for micro-credits in 1997, while last year, the District reduced the amount to ₵50 million because it fears the recipients will not repay the loans. The first loans, which were extended in 1998, should be fully reimbursed by the spring of 1999. District officials have now asked the bank administering the micro-credits for a report.

Education

In some districts, there is a genuine desire to raise educational standards. A number of district assemblies grant scholarships, mostly to SSS students, but they are not sufficient in number or in quantity to help the

many good and few brilliant, but needy, students who come from the rural areas.

In most cases, the scholarships are granted based on recommendations from assemblymen and school officials, in consultation with the D.A. In Ahanta West (W/R), the D.A. provides 20 scholarships annually based on the results of the Basic Education Certification Examination (BECE). The Rural Bank grants an additional 30 scholarships. The scholarships are limited to children from the district. The recipients' parents must commit themselves to supporting their children's academic career.

Atwima District (A/R) has opted for a slightly different approach: scholarships, financed through the Welfare Development Fund, are granted based on the results of an annual examination. All parents and pupils are aware of the examination and the scholarship opportunities. There is intense competition throughout the district to perform well in the examination, and it is a source of great pride to be selected as a beneficiary⁴⁹.

A few districts have also introduced innovative educational schemes:

⁴⁹ Last year, 30 students received a scholarship, 23 of them in JSS. The District Assembly also provided scholarships to four other students.

Mpohor Wassa East District (Western Region)

- ◆ Following a study a few years ago that showed that educational levels in the district were low, the D.A. launched a pilot project to create 11 model junior secondary schools. All the schools are being provided with a well-equipped library, teaching aids and other instructional material. Teachers in the model schools are being given a financial allowance⁵⁰, as well as free accommodation and utilities. The District hopes that the model schools will be able to compete with private schools. The fees at model schools are higher than at normal public schools⁵¹ but lower than private schools.

In the neighbouring Wassa West District, a community-based school has been established in the capital, Tarkwa. The JSS parents are now responsible for the school. The teachers teach an additional hour a day, and they receive between ₵30,000 and ₵45,000 compensation every month. They are not expected to teach additional subjects, but rather to provide greater depth to the existing syllabus. The teachers have welcomed the scheme and say it enables them to get to know their students better. Parents are also taking a more active role in their children's education.

⁵⁰ 60% of a teacher's normal salary

⁵¹ ₵25,000 annually

- ◆ The D.A. is sponsoring students who want to become nurses and teachers to cover the district's staffing needs, particularly in the remote areas. At present, for instance, two of the district's health centres are closed because there are no nurses available.
- ◆ The D.A. is providing assistance to train pupil teachers.
- ◆ The D.A. recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Dutch non-governmental organisation, SNV⁵², to build a library and playground in the district capital, Daboasi. The SNV will shoulder the lion's share of the starting costs, and the D.A. will be responsible for future operational costs. The District has also asked local chiefs in other towns and villages for land to build libraries, playgrounds and other facilities for children and adolescents.
- ◆ Two years ago, the Ghana National Commission on Children held a meeting on measures that could be taken to keep children in school. This year, the District has earmarked money and will consult with chiefs to decide on projects and schemes.

- ◆ The District has set aside an additional ₵10 million to purchase furniture and equipment for schools.

Nzema East District (Western Region)

In Axim, the capital of Nzema East, a readers club has been established to bring together children who want to learn. The D.A. provides refreshments from time to time to encourage children to attend. About 60 children are currently enrolled in the club, and more are applying.

The District is also planning to organise public meetings to educate parents, and fishermen in particular, about the value of education.

Savelugu/Nanton District (Northern Region)

Together with a foreign-funded local NGO, the district assembly is starting a programme this year to encourage parents to keep girls in school. Parents will be given a package of materials, including books, for their daughters. To avoid resentment, boys will also receive footballs.

The district is trying to stimulate parent-teacher associations to inform parents about the benefits of educating their children, particularly girls.

⁵² Page 64

Other schemes

Tolon/Kumbungu District (Northern Region)

The district has begun to implement a pilot, community-based development project with funding from UNICEF. The project is designed to provide credits to women, as well as improve the diet and health of disadvantaged women and children. The project is being implemented in four communities, and later, it will be expanded to many more communities.

Ahanta West (Western Region)

- ◆ Creation of a “Best Teacher Award” to motivate educators.
- ◆ A Handicrafts Village has been established in the capital, Agona. Six craftsmen produce tie & dye,



ceramics and canes, and the products are sold to tourists. Young people are encouraged to visit the village to gain exposure to traditional crafts and to consider becoming craftsmen themselves. The District Assembly and the European Union are co-financing the scheme.

- ◆ Instead of granting district contracts to outsiders, the assembly wants to use skilled local labour as much as possible. This will encourage young people to acquire vocational skills. Even if they do leave the district, they will be trained and won't wind up living on the streets.
- ◆ Some of the Common Fund monies will be used to provide micro-credits to young farmers to encourage them to follow in their parents' footsteps.
- ◆ Agricultural officers, who have not been very effective in the past, will be stimulated to play a more active role in the development of the district's farming activities.
- ◆ The district has a variety of tourist attractions and a beautiful, modern hotel and conference centre⁵³,

⁵³ Busua Beach Resort

but it will take time to fully develop the region's tourist potential because of substandard roads and lack of publicity. In the longer term, the D.A. hopes the tourist industry will generate income and provide jobs.

- ◆ The D.A. has succeeded in getting numerous non-governmental organisations – including World Vision International, the Italian Ricerca e Cooperazione (R.C.) and the environmental group NCRC – as well as the Peace Corps and the European Union to concentrate their efforts there.

New Juaben Municipal Assembly (Eastern Region)

The municipal authorities recognise that street children are becoming an ever-increasing problem in Koforidua⁵⁴. According to the Municipal Chief Executive, there are over 1000 children eking out an existence on Koforidua's streets; growing numbers of them are also sleeping on the street. Rather simplistically, the authorities attribute the increasing street children population entirely to children's "get-rich-quick" attitude.

They have been trying to interest street children in either the local Boys' Vocational Institute or an Intermediate Technology Unit, where adolescents can learn trades such as carpentry, tie & dye or batik-making. But the scheme has been a complete failure. Teenagers are not making use of the existing facilities because, say the municipal authorities, "all they want to do is sell and make money".

The Municipal Assembly is also considering allocating some Common Fund moneys to hire adolescents to work on farms. But teenagers have shown little or no interest, and the Assembly does not have the funds needed to sustain the scheme.

The local authorities would now like to construct a handicrafts village to teach young people basket-weaving, bead-making and other local crafts. They estimate that they need a starting capital of \$300,000, but it was unclear to us why this scheme would be more successful than the existing vocational training projects.

The Municipal Assembly authorities also believe that recreational fa-

⁵⁴ Capital of the Eastern Region and of the New Juaben Municipal Assembly

cilities need to be created for children and adolescents. They talk of establishing recreational grounds – there are none at present in the municipality – where young people could play games and practice sports such as volleyball. They say computer centres should also be established and the local library expanded. While all these ideas would undoubtedly be welcomed by the assembly's youth, they seemed to be nothing more than a shopping list of wishes. The authorities do not have plans to introduce any of them.

Non-governmental organisations

Northern and Upper East Regions

Ghanaian-Danish Community Programme (GDCP)

With funding from Danida, the GDCP is carrying out a wide variety of projects to reduce poverty and stimulate community development. The GDCP recently launched a pilot vocational training programme for girl re-

turnees⁵⁵. During the first phase, 28

CAS – Catholic Action for Street Children

CAS was officially registered in 1993. Its mission is to improve the lives of street children and to help protect their rights. The CAS approach is to contact and educate as many street children as possible. CAS runs a refuge in the old heart of Accra. CAS does not provide food or accommodation to street children, but children come to the refuge to relax, wash themselves and their clothes, play games and keep their money and belongings. In conjunction with the Salvation Army, CAS operates a clinic which provides free treatment to all registered street children.

At the refuge, children can also learn English, basic literacy, mathematics and music. Every week, there are special classes about health issues, such as personal hygiene, sexually transmitted diseases, drug abuse and family planning. CAS also organises demonstration classes in weaving, woodcarving, sewing, ceramics, candle making and other trades.

Every day, CAS field workers go out onto the streets to spend time with street children. Two mini-refuges have been established in the downtown area.

CAS offers sponsorships to street children who express a desire to learn a trade or further their education. CAS covers all the children's basic needs – including accommodation and food – and pays school, vocational training or apprenticeship fees for a three-year period. So far, CAS has sponsored 180 children. Many more children would like to be sponsored. Funding is the only problem.

CAS also runs a farm near Accra, known as the Hopeland Training Centre. Children can live there and learn about farming. They are also taught the basics about raising poultry, rabbits and bee keeping, and they can learn a number of trades.

CAS started a day care centre at Kokomba, one of the main markets in Accra. The project is now being run by Street Girls Aid. Nearly 300 *kayayoo* babies and small children are cared for every day.

CAS, P.O. Box 709, Madina, Accra
Tel. (027) 552 739
E-mail: ficcas@ighmail.com

*kayaye*⁵⁶ who returned to the area followed a four-week course, which included vocational training. The girls were then given a ₵100,000 loan to start up a business. The results have been encouraging, and only one girl dropped out of the programme. A second group of 45 girls is now being trained. The GDCP has proposed increasing the loans to ₵150,000, and it hopes to expand the programme to include vulnerable boys. We discussed ways of pooling the knowledge and experience acquired by CAS and the GDCP.

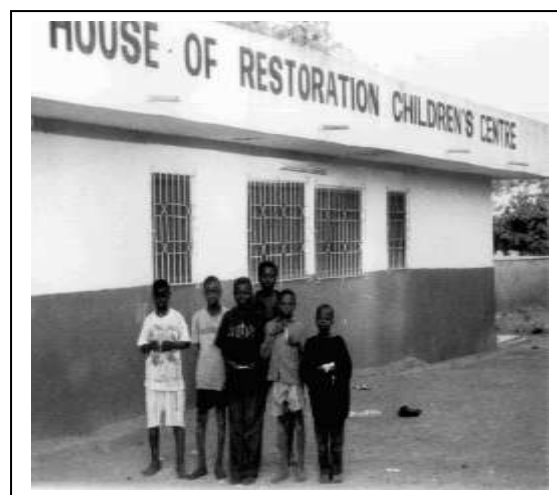
Action Aid

Action Aid, with foreign funding, runs a home for street children in Tamale. *Tizza* or “Our Home” is providing vocational training to over 80 street children. The NGO’s activities are similar to those of CAS.

Street Children’s Home

The Catholic Church’s Charismatic Renewal movement is running a small home for street children in Bolgatanga (U.E.R.). The home provides accommodation and food to 8 street children. The aim is to give a basic

⁵⁶ Girls who earn a living by carrying goods for shoppers in the market areas



Street children’s home in Bolgatanga (U.E.R.)

education to the children. Later, the home hopes to find sponsors for the children – all boys – to enable them to continue their education. Alternatively, the home hopes the children could find work as house-boys. There are many other street children in Bolgatanga who could benefit from the home, but it is too small to take in more children.

Three of the five children we interviewed had been planning to go to Accra or Kumasi before they were taken in by the home. Local initiatives like this one could help slightly reduce the exodus of children.

Community Action for Development (CAD)⁵⁷

CAD is a small local NGO, based in Tamale, hoping to find funding for two projects:

⁵⁷ P.O. Box 1617, Tamale, N/R

- ◆ A weaving centre to provide vocational training and generate income for poor villagers. Initially, CAD would like to train a group of 25 young women and men, both those who are in the district and those who have returned from the south. Total projected cost: \$8000 over a three-year period.
- ◆ A micro-credit programme and savings & loan scheme to help women expand their businesses. CAD would like to provide credits ranging from ₵100,000 - ₵400,000. Total projected budget: ₵540 million over a five-year period.

Ashanti Region



The YDF⁵⁸ was established in 1985 and employs 14 people in Kumasi. The YDF has five other offices in the country, and it also operates a branch in Cameroon. Its target group is children and young adults between 10 and 24 years of age.

⁵⁸ P.O. Box 4941, Kumasi. Telephone: (051) 29185/6/7, Fax: (051) 23622, E-mail: YPIC@IGHMAIL.COM or YPIC@ust.gn.ac.org

It works in a number of areas:

- ◆ Adolescent reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancies. A counsellor trains peer educators who pass on the information. The YDF would also like to set up a clinic, but it lacks the funding. It refers about 5 girls a month for hospital treatment.
- ◆ Skills development: street children who are interested in learning a vocation receive a daily stipend of ₵1000 a day. The YDF provides money for uniforms and tools and pays a fee to the trainer. Since 1985, 2 girls have completed a *kente* weaving course. Another 13 children are being trained.
- ◆ Literacy skills: groups of street children get basic literacy skills twice a week for a minimum of one hour. 30 children have been trained, and 27 more are currently in training.
- ◆ Life planning: street children are taught skills to develop their potential, self-esteem and self-confidence. The one-week sessions are organised once a quarter for at least 15 children.
- ◆ Micro-credits for young people: the YDF provides loans ranging from ₵100,000 – ₵250,000, with support from Junior Achievement,

an Accra-based NGO. The young people repay via a *susu* or informal bank. A total of 21 young people have benefited from the programme.

Centre for the Dissemination of Appropriate Technology (CEDAT)⁵⁹

The Kumasi-based CEDAT is planning to launch educational campaigns on the issue of street children. It is seeking funding from UN agencies and foreign NGOs to provide vocational training to a group of 10 to 30 street children in areas such as tie & dye, soap-making and carpentry. CEDAT would also like to provide low-cost housing for the street children enrolled in the programme. In addition, it has plans to provide non-formal education in English and mathematics to street children. Up until now, it has funded its activities through donations from some of its wealthier members.

Rural Youth Development Association

Some of the efforts to try to prevent children from dropping out of

⁵⁹ c/o Owusu-Achaw DaCosta, Department of Social Welfare, P.O. Box 66, Kumasi. Telephone: (051) 24577, 24607, 29422

school and heading towards the urban centres are not directly related to the issue of street children, but undoubtedly help reduce the number of children leaving. For instance, in Atwima District, the Rural Youth Development Association, a Ghanaian NGO, with foreign funding, organises workshops and seminars on adolescent health. The main objective is to provide sex education to girls to prevent teenage pregnancy. The Association uses peer-group teaching in schools. It has managed to significantly reduce the number of teenage pregnancies in the district.

Western Region

World Vision International (WVI)

For the next 15 years, WVI plans to concentrate its operations in the Ahanta West District. WVI believes the main reasons that children are drifting to the cities are linked to poverty and broken homes. It has identified 103 adolescents⁶⁰ in 23 communities who will be given 1½ to 3 years of vocational training. In the coming months, WVI will complete three vocational training centres in the Ahanta West District. Each centre

⁶⁰ JSS and SSS dropouts and graduates, between the ages of 15 and 25

will provide training to young people. They will be encouraged to learn trades that will be of direct benefit to the district, such as carpentry, masonry, fashion-designing and dress-making. The training will be carried out by the Integrated Community Centre for Employment Skills (ICCES). The WVI also wants to send some students to Takoradi to become technicians and automobile mechanics. Relatives there will provide them accommodation. The scheme is being implemented hand in hand with the District Assembly, which plans to give preference to these young artisans to execute local contracts.

The vocational training programme began in February, and initially, WVI expects to train 75 students annually. The scheme will be partly financed by selling the trainees' work. In another district, WVI has been able to finance the entire training programme and pay teachers' salaries through the sale of the trainees' products. The various ICCESs in Ahanta West District will employ Peace Corps volunteers, National Service personnel, Education Service sponsors and university graduates.

WVI is also providing a special package to encourage girls to remain in school. It has contacted community leaders and headmasters to identify

200 girls from primary to JSS. In addition, it is rehabilitating dilapidated school structures and organising campaigns to keep children in school. It is also giving financial assistance to a local group, trying to help young hard drug addicts go through a detoxification programme.

For the past six or seven years, WVI has been providing loans to adults to help them increase their families' income. To ensure repayment, the money is generally given to a group of people who establish their own constitution and bank account. Credit management training is also provided. The groups include fish-mongers and oil processors. One community received a ₵3 million loan six years ago and now has a capital of ₵9 million.

SNV, Netherlands Development Organisation⁶¹

The SNV's long-term objective is to achieve a sustainable improvement in the lives of the urban poor. The Dutch NGO targets women, unemployed youth and children, in particular.

The SNV has found that unlike fathers, mothers are willing to invest in their children's future. So it has established a credit system for women

⁶¹ P.O. Box KA 30284, Accra. Telephone: (031) 21552

and is integrating the *susu*⁶² into the formal banking system. The SNV provides a *susu* with a guaranteed amount so it can open a bank account. The bank guarantees are also available to youths: shoeshine boys, for instance, save up to ₦40,000 a month in a *susu* and are therefore credit-worthy.

The SNV is the main NGO working with street children in Takoradi. Its involvement is the result of a pilot research project on Takoradi's street children conducted in 1995⁶³. Based on the results, the SNV decided to act before the situation became unmanageable.

The SNV is trying to work with both boys and girls living on the streets, but it is finding it particularly difficult to reach street girls. They are often sent by their parents (as a type of coping mechanism because of poverty in rural areas) to relatives in the city. The girls are "protected" from outsiders because they are a source of cheap labour. The SNV tried to reach the girls through the street boys, but it failed. It is now organising awareness campaigns among market women to try to identify and assist the girls.

The SNV has issued ID cards to over 200 street children in Takoradi. It

provides the children with free medical care, games and benches, as well as



Preparing for sleep on the streets

general information about health and hygiene. It also supplies movable shelters, and it is negotiating with the authorities to allow children to sleep in the city centre. It has established a soccer team for the street children⁶⁴, and it is mobilising donors to build toilets and other facilities for Takoradi's street children.

The SNV has also tried to create alternative work for street children. For example, it established a waste collection team. The children were given training, wheelbarrows, brooms and other tools. Unfortunately, the experiment was unsuccessful because

⁶² Informal bank run by people usually in and around the main markets

⁶³ The SNV's report is available in the CAS library.

the local authorities often take months to pay their workers. The SNV is now looking for funding to sponsor street children and give them an alternative education through the Opportunity Industrial Centre (OIC), which is designing a programme adapted to street children's particular needs.

The SNV regularly holds meetings with the authorities, police and street children to increase communication and understanding. This has led to a decrease in tension. In addition, the SNV is fighting for the enforcement of laws that require fathers to take financial responsibility for their children. The SNV would also like to take Takoradi street children to schools in nearby districts to talk to their peers about the reality of life on the streets.

Since the SNV is not a funding organisation, it is trying to interest donors – such as the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNICEF, the World Bank and Plan International – in its innovative ideas.

CARE

⁶⁴ CAS and the SNV are contemplating organising a football match between street children from Accra and Takoradi.

CARE has four main areas of operation:

- ◆ Improving school-community relations
- ◆ Assisting the GES to supervise schools
- ◆ Removing the economic and social barriers to girls' education
- ◆ Improving the quality of education

CARE is building classrooms and libraries in a number of rural communities and providing books. It is also organising 5-day training workshops for teachers to help them make the syllabus more attractive and interesting to pupils in rural communities.

CARE is training peer counsellors to reduce teenage pregnancies. It is sensitising communities about the value of education and trying to encourage parental involvement in Parent-Teacher Associations and School Management Councils. CARE has also provided funding for a girl child officer at the Ghana Education Service in the Wasswa West District.

Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG)

The PPAG provides information about sexual reproductive health to approximately 4000 pupils and adolescents out of school in Takoradi and the surrounding area every year. Because of the squeamishness of parents and teachers, the PPAG often has to engage in protracted negotiations, only to be allowed to inform students

about the virtues of abstinence. The PPAG's research shows that the more young people know about contraceptives, the more likely they are to make informed decisions. Pre- and post-test counselling have shown the effectiveness of the PPAG's work, but the reluctance of parents and opinion leaders to teach children about sexual reproductive health remains a major obstacle. The PPAG is now planning to provide training to teachers in both public and private schools about reproductive health.

200 or so young people visit the PPAG office in Takoradi every month. Young people who visit the office can request condoms, which the PPAG provides at a small cost.⁶⁵

Eastern Region

Bible Baptist Ministries

The Ministries run three orphanages in the region which reportedly also cater for some former street children. However, we were unable to obtain any information from them.

Though the Bible Baptist Ministries are registered, the Department of Social Welfare and the New Juaben Municipal Assembly could not provide

⁶⁵ The community-based price is ₵12, while for the general public it is ₵20. In stores, a pack of 4 condoms sells for ₵500.

us any information about their work either.

Estrak Foundation⁶⁶

Inaugurated in December 1998, the Estrak Foundation is providing vocational training to 50 needy youths and street children between the ages of 12 and 20, half of them girls. The Foundation was established by Ernest Akrofi who himself was roaming the streets as a child. A benefactor assisted him and taught him a trade. He is now returning the "favour" by providing a future to some of Suhum's needy youths and street children.

The Foundation teaches trades such as dressmaking, tailoring, auto mechanics and welding. All the children are also taught farming techniques at the Foundation's farm, two kilometres away from Suhum. The food is used to feed the children, though the Foundation also expects to sell some of the crops to generate income. In addition, the children are given literacy skills.

The Foundation has two rooms which can accommodate six children, and the children are given a free lunch. Most children go home at night to sleep. The District Social Welfare Office interviews the children to decide which ones should be admitted.

⁶⁶ P.O. Box 331, Suhum, E/R

Most of the Foundation's funding (currently ₵800,000 monthly) comes from the director's brother who lives in Europe. Some funds are also generated from the goods produced by the children. They are sold at the Foundation's store in the centre of Suhum. The District Assembly is considering providing financial assistance through its poverty alleviation fund.

Since the Foundation is new, it does not receive any outside funding. To expand to its full capacity of 100 children, the Foundation would need:

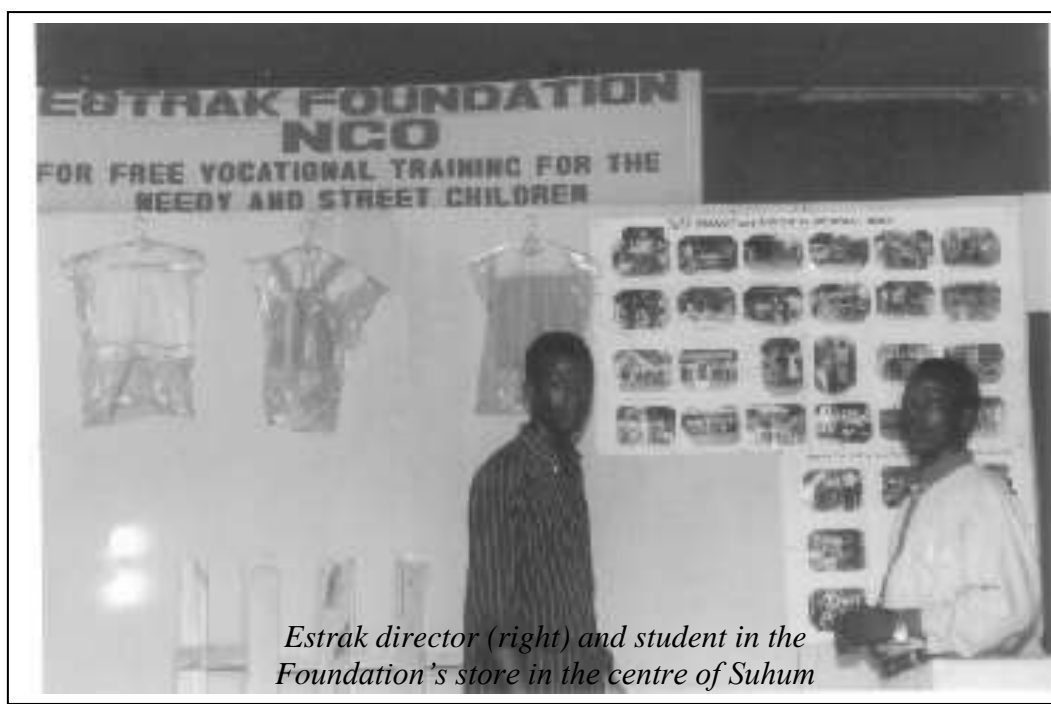
- ◆ More accommodation: some of the children commute 9 kilometres every day.
- ◆ Expansion of the workshops. Estimated cost: ₵6 million
- ◆ More tools. Estimated cost: ₵12 million
- ◆ The Foundation would also like to provide three meals a day to the trainees. Estimated cost: ₵12 million annually
- ◆ Recreational facilities, such as sports. Estimated cost: ₵2 million

In the long term, the Foundation believes it can be self-sustaining. The sale of carpentry work, dresses

and handicrafts already generates ₵600,000 a month. Local people purchase most of the goods. Building contractors also buy frames and other objects.

The Foundation is planning to teach the children management skills. A facilitator from the non-formal education department of the GES, who is paid by the International Federation of Electoral Systems (IFES), is providing management skills training to the Foundation's staff. They will then pass the knowledge on to the children.

We interviewed some of the children and discovered that – as was the case at the home for street children in Bolgatanga in the Upper East Region – several of them had been planning to move on to Accra. They now say they want to stay in Suhum.■



Estrak director (right) and student in the Foundation's store in the centre of Suhum

Recommendations

Schools

“Free-compulsory education”

The admirable goal is a slogan that does not reflect reality. Many rural parents might be able to afford to pay the ₵15,000 to ₵50,000 required annually per child attending JSS⁶⁷, but their large families often make the cumulative cost prohibitive. Headmasters, headmistresses and teachers – who already face an uphill battle educating rural children – are confronted with the challenge of explaining – and defending – the gap between the official rhetoric and reality to parents who do not understand the value of education. Parents who are illiterate or with little education argue, with some justification, that there are few to no white-collar jobs or industry in rural areas, so why should they waste money on education? After all, their children will become farmers, and they don’t need “higher learning”.

Either FCUBE should be truly free and compulsory, or the government should make it clear to parents that it does not have the resources to provide free, compulsory education to Ghana’s children.

Overhaul the 1987 educational reform

Most rural schools view the educational reform of 1987 as a failure. Educational standards in many rural schools are appalling low: many JSS3

pupils have great difficulty understanding basic English. And in no JSS that we visited were children acquiring vocational skills, one of the tenets of the JSS concept.

So, at the age of 14 – 16, rural adolescents exit the

JSS with a certificate, which is virtually worthless in educational terms, no skills, and in theory at least,

“It’s serious. If nothing is done, there will be an explosion.”
- National Youth Council member

⁶⁷ Including school, sports and culture, PTA and, in some cases, watchman’s fees and building costs, as well as stationary and uniforms

many of them are too young to enter the job market.

Educators and other officials advocate eliminating the JSS certificate. They call for mandatory post-JSS education. Students should go on to vocational training schools or to SSS, if they wish to pursue their education. The SSS fees of more than ₦200,000 must be reduced considerably for the majority of rural parents to even consider sending their children to senior secondary school.

Scholarships

The scholarship schemes introduced in many districts need to be expanded to more than just 20 – 60 recipients annually.

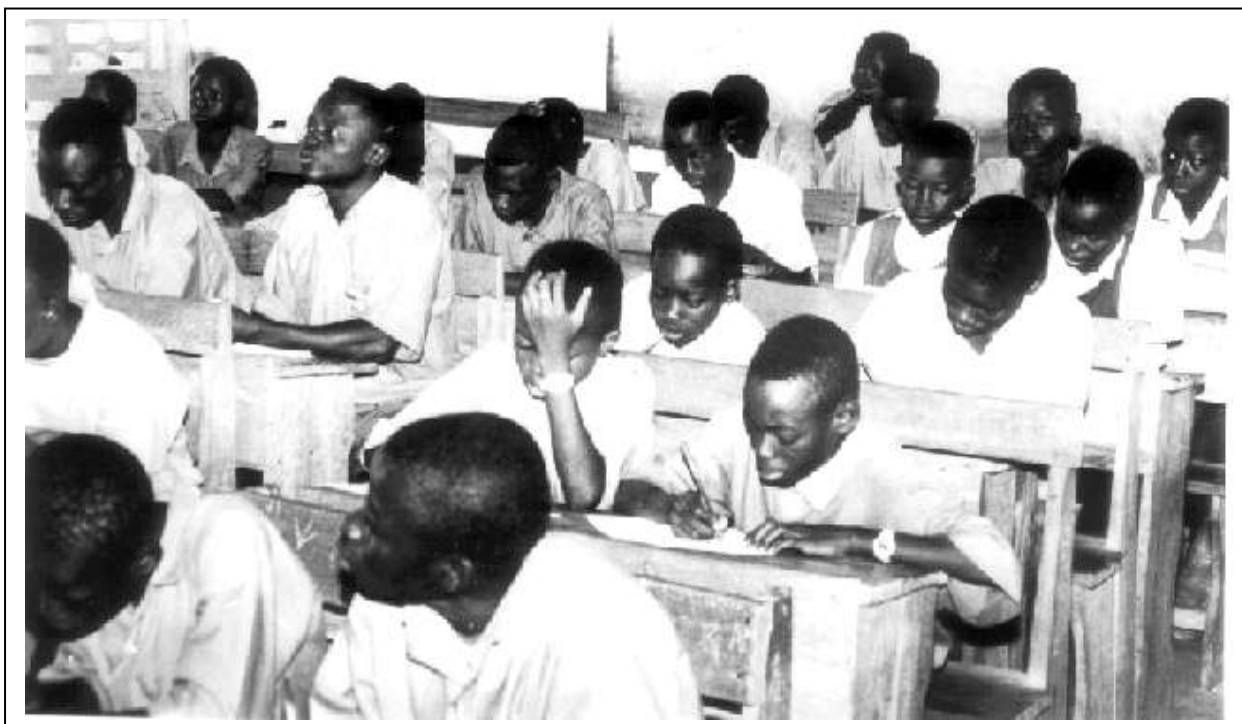
The current practice in most district assemblies of making assemblymen and school officials responsible for informing parents about the existence of D.A. scholarships and involving them in the decision-making process is not sufficiently transparent. The scheme introduced in Atwima District⁶⁸ is far more open, providing opportunities to children who are determined to excel. It also encourages parents to stimulate their children to learn.

Decentralisation

In the Northern Region, in particular, there is a need for greater decentralisation of the educational system. Attendance rates plummet on Fridays because of Moslems' religious obligations. If the region's political or education authorities had more of a say, they could – in consultation with religious leaders and parents – find a *modus vivendi*, acceptable to Moslem and non-Moslem parents and children on issues such as school attendance on Fridays and during the Ramadan period.

Decentralisation would also enable them to address the issue of Koranic schools. In Savelugu (N/R), we discussed – with the headmaster, Moslem leaders and village elders – the possibility of offering courses on Islam and the Koran to Moslem students before or after “normal” school. The school would put a classroom at the disposal of an imam who could teach the children. They all cautiously welcomed the idea, though they emphasised that local consultation and involvement would be essential. The scheme would ensure that children begin their secular education at an earlier age.

⁶⁸ Page 56



Students filling in the questionnaire

Sexual reproductive health

Despite Ghanaian society's reluctance to discuss sex, there is a crying need to do so. In many schools, teenage pregnancy causes up to 5% of the girls to drop out every year because of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies.

Nowhere did we meet teachers who are trained or prepared to inform pupils about sexual reproductive health and sexuality, despite research showing that 50% of young Ghanaian women between the ages of 14 and 19 has had a sexual partner⁶⁹. The figure among teenage men is likely to be even higher. There is an even greater

taboo on other forms of sexuality, such as homosexuality. Clearly, there are moral, ethical and religious issues that Ghanaian society needs to debate. The consequences of the current policy for the country's youth, especially in light of the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic, make the discussion urgent.

NGOs have been playing a key role in some districts. They could be encouraged to expand their activities. Teachers, however, must also be trained about sexuality, reproductive health and issues such as gender, since girls and women bear the brunt of the consequences of unwanted pregnancies.

⁶⁹ According to a study carried out by Advocates for Youth, based in Washington, DC, and reprinted

by the Ghana Social Marketing Foundation (GSMF). Source: *Daily Graphic*, January 28, 1999

Vocational training

Three factors in particular are creating a desperate need for more vocational training facilities in rural areas:

- ◆ Practical vocational training in rural junior secondary schools is virtually non-existent, and even when it does exist, it does not give adolescents sufficient skills to enter the job market.
- ◆ The majority of rural children do not want to follow in their parents' footsteps and become farmers.
- ◆ There is a huge demand for vocational training programmes because so few children are able to pursue their studies.

There is a limit to the number of carpenters, mechanics, masons, electricians, hairdressers and seamstresses a country requires, but as Ghana's economic base increases, there will be a need for more skilled labour.

An expansion of ICCESs⁷⁰ or other similar vocational institutions would help fill the present void.

Rural postings

Qualified teachers are often unwilling to accept postings to rural areas which have no electricity and clean water, very limited means of transport, and poor or non-existent communications. This is causing

severe staff shortages in many rural districts.

All too many schools have over 40 children per class. The situation is particularly dire in the Northern Region: several schools we visited had over 70 children per class. This is obviously not conducive to learning or teaching.

Under the free market system being actively promoted by the Ghanaian government, it is reasonable to expect that teachers who accept postings to remote rural areas receive some form of allowance or hardship pay, either from the government or the district assembly. Ideally, communities themselves would provide the extra funding, but school fees are already deemed excessive by parents in rural areas.

Textbooks, school materials and facilities

There must be a more equitable distribution of resources. Supplies of textbooks and other school materials from Accra to the rural regions are erratic or non-existent. A child who has to share a textbook with 20 classmates cannot be expected to learn properly or to perform well during exams. In addition, the textbooks are often of such poor quality that they fall apart after only a year or

⁷⁰ Page 53

two. The problem is aggravated by the fact that they are used so intensively.

Some rural schools have received little or no furniture. Parents must build or purchase desks and chairs, creating yet another obstacle to sending children to school.

Libraries

Most rural junior secondary schools have no library, and when they do, it has few or no books. Dictionaries, thesauruses, encyclopaedias, and literature not only broaden children's horizons, they could also help improve their very limited knowledge of the English language.

The initiative undertaken by the Mpohor Wassa East District Assembly (W/R) together with the SNV⁷¹ is one that could be copied elsewhere. In towns which do have libraries, district assemblies could stimulate readers clubs, such as in Axim (W/R)⁷².

"Enticements"

In particularly deprived areas, teachers and district officials believe children need to be "lured" to school. It was suggested that children in those areas be given a free meal daily. This would also encourage parents to send their children to school.

⁷¹ Page 57

⁷² Page 57

Many children are very keen on sports, but rural schools often lack the most basic sporting equipment, such as footballs. If the equipment were purchased in bulk, it could be provided to needy schools at a relatively low cost.

If children show a greater desire to attend school, they might also be able to persuade their parents to make greater sacrifices to pay their school and other related fees.

Parental involvement

Several districts are considering ways to increase parents' awareness about the value of education as well as encourage parents to become more involved in their children's schooling. Some are organising public forums and public awareness campaigns. Others are trying to reach out individually to parents. And in Nzemah East District (W/R), they are even considering having brass bands,



Mother and child

composed of local pupils, march through towns and villages to present a positive image of school, particularly to drop-outs and children who have never attended school.

Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) and School Management Committees (SMC) also need to be revitalised. In many schools, they exist only on paper, even though they are a vital communication channel between schools and parents.

The Family

Slavery

Every urban Ghanaian buys ice water and black plastic bags from young children. For all too many, it seems normal that these children are out on the streets selling. However, people need to be made aware of the inhuman conditions in which these children live and work. This is not a practice happening in some remote, rural corner of Africa, but it is occurring today, in Ghana's cities, on the eve of the new millennium.

Parents must be made aware that the madams who recruit rural children do not have noble goals. They are not coming to provide deprived and needy children a future; they are coming to exploit children mercilessly. Parents who knowingly give or sell

their children to these women must be prosecuted. Women who keep girls in these inhumane conditions must also be vigorously prosecuted.

Citizens in and around the markets – where the worst abuses occur – need to be made aware of what is happening and encouraged to denounce these abuses. And children, particularly street children, need to be made aware of their rights and what steps they can take when their rights are violated, for it is they who are most likely to know of fellow street children who are enslaved.

The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice must take a pro-active stance on the issue of child servitude, even if that requires a change to its statutes⁷³, instead of trying to justify these grave human rights violations because of Ghana's "socio-cultural context". If CHRAJ does not have the resources or staffing to do so, it must reach out to other government bodies and non-governmental organisations which deal with (street) children to uncover cases of child servitude and prosecute the perpetrators and parents who knowingly sell their children.

Government agencies which deal with child welfare, such as the

⁷³ At present, CHRAJ can only act when it receives a complaint from a person whose rights have been violated or from someone representing that person.

National Commission on Children and the Department of Social Welfare, must also get involved in fighting these grave violations of children's rights. District Assemblies, which are the "first line of defence", should also play a far more active role in dealing with these and other violations of children's rights.

Ghanaian society must say that child servitude or any contemporary form of slavery is unacceptable.

Child Abuse and Sexual Abuse

Child abuse and sexual abuse account for 6% of the children living on the streets of Accra, according to CAS research.

Social workers and teachers need to be trained to identify signs of the sexual abuse of children and domestic violence. Teachers must have clear guidelines about what to do when they suspect that their pupils are being abused.

The Ministry of Social Welfare and the government should seriously consider opening a free 24-hour hotline for children who are being abused or who experience domestic violence or other violations of their rights. Children's hotlines have been established

in many developed and developing nations and have proved to be highly successful. Children speak more readily when they can do so anonymously. Hotline staff can refer the children to social workers before more serious violations occur.

Children need to be given a voice and a medium to discuss these and other issues. In other countries, radio programmes for youth by youth are broadcast daily. They have increased awareness among children and young people about a variety of issues, ranging from domestic violence to sexuality. Children often find it difficult to discuss these matters with their parents, teachers or other adults. Adults too are uncomfortable talking about these issues with young people. Live telephone interviews give children the feeling that they are being listened to and taken seriously, often for the first time.

There also needs to be greater awareness in society about sexual abuse of children and domestic violence. The press covers the most extreme cases, but both issues are likely to be far more widespread than the general public is led to or wants to believe.

Extended Family

Ghanaians, like other Africans, show great pride in the extended family. It has been one of the cornerstones of African culture and traditions, and it has served as Africa's social net for the young, elderly, disabled and disadvantaged.

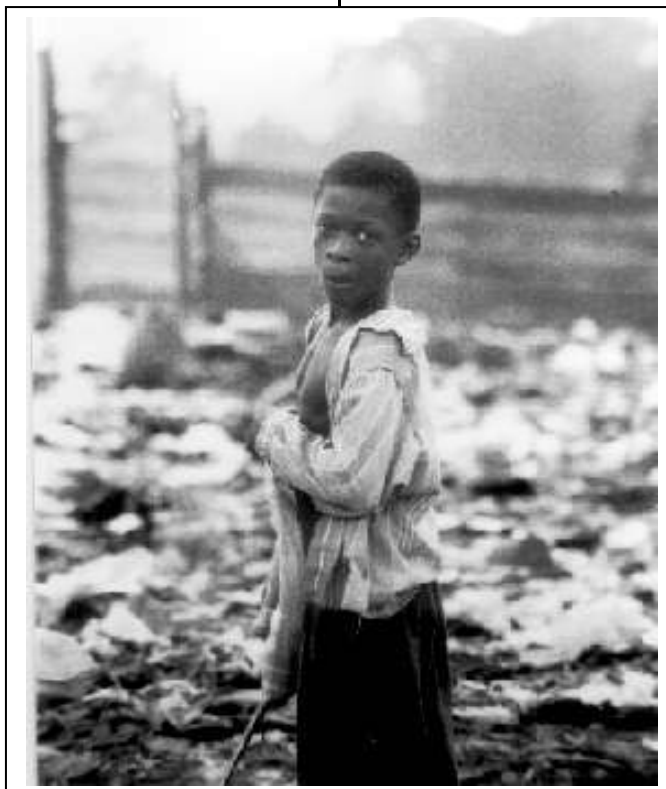
People have had large families for a variety of reasons, but they knew they could always rely on parents, siblings, grandparents, uncles, aunts and

cousins once or twice-removed when needed.

But like many other traditions, the extended family is being eroded by urbanisation, individualism, Western influences and growing socio-economic distress. Rather than try to wage an all-out war to preserve traditional Ghanaian life – a war all too many countries have tacitly or explicitly admitted that they have lost – Ghanaian society would be far better off accepting this evolution and dealing with the consequences.

The traditional extended family no longer exists in many communities, and Ghanaian society needs to start thinking of coping mechanisms to deal with this reality.

Ideally, the State should take over these responsibilities, but it doesn't have the resources to provide its citizens the social net they deserve. There are no easy solutions, but it is an issue society needs to recognise and discuss.



Child scavenging at a Kumasi dump site

Poverty Alleviation

Micro-credits

In almost all the villages we visited, parents were crying out for micro-credits. The Common Fund is helping to respond to the need, but the demand is too great and the funds too limited to make a significant impact. District assemblies must be

encouraged to increase the capital available to extend loans.

The banking system also needs to be stimulated to provide small and medium-sized loans to help people realise their economic potential and to develop cottage industries in rural areas.

Ministry of Agriculture

The Ministry's extension officers are failing to provide farmers with the knowledge and expertise they need. In the Northern Region, desertification is making traditional farming techniques and practices obsolete. Farmers see their yields dwindling, but they are at a loss as to what they should do. The Ministry of Agriculture's extension programme needs to be revitalised and officers given means of transport to reach remote rural areas.

In other areas, land productivity could be substantially increased, but again, farmers are at a loss as to what they could and should be doing. In the Western Region, where land is at a premium, there are a number of activities farmers could undertake. An example is bee keeping, according to Carina Dijkhuis, a Dutch agricultural expert, who has spent the past six months in the coastal village of Akwi-daa. An initial investment of between

¢100,000 and ¢150,000⁷⁴ can yield ¢250,000 within six months.

Other examples of activities that require very little space include raising mushrooms, snails and grass-cutters. Farmers could also increase their output by raising animals in their palm oil plantations. Once the palm trees are big enough, animals can eat the weeds and other vegetation without affecting the trees. The manure they produce can also be used to increase land fertility and output. Because of the novelty of many of these activities, says Ms Dijkhuis, information campaigns and workshops would have to be organised to get farmers interested. Micro-credits, training and follow-up would also be needed.

Local input

In some villages, people were only too well aware of their plight and were more than willing to contribute both financially and in manpower to improve their situation. But they feel that decisions are often made in district or regional capitals or in Accra, without consulting them. These decisions often run contrary to their own wishes and needs.

In a village in the Northern Region, for instance, people told us

⁷⁴ If farmers in the community share the protective clothing, but if they have to purchase the clothing themselves, they would need ¢250,000.

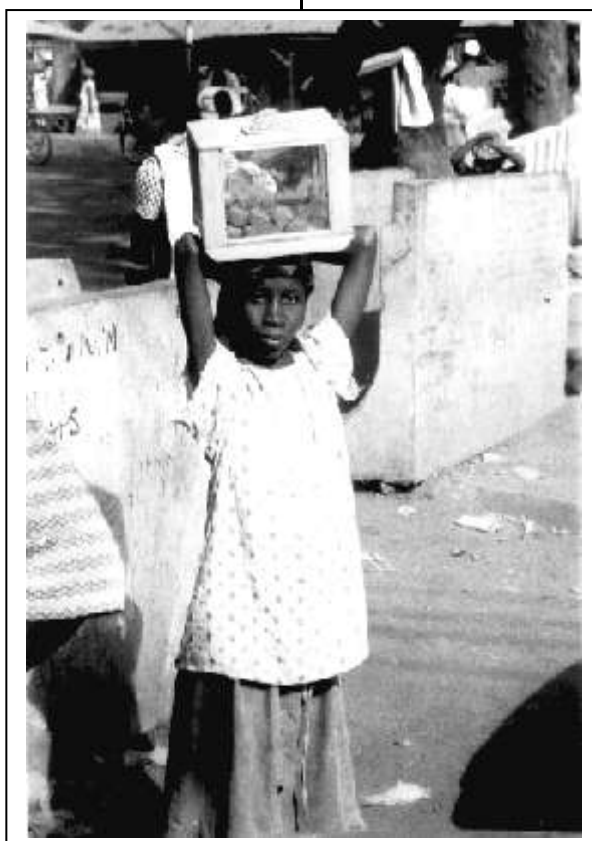
that they had pooled their resources to rehabilitate a dam. The authorities were also supposed to provide a financial contribution. But instead, the authorities took the villagers' money and used it to build a hospital in a nearby town.

There is great human potential in the rural areas, but it can only be realised if local people play an integral role in the decision-making process.

Related issues

Child Labour

There is an obvious need for strict enforcement of the new Children's Act. There are far too many children under the age of 15 working in both urban and rural areas. Under the law, all children under 16 years of age should be in school.



Girl selling local food at the market

Census

The Ahanta West District Chief Executive believes a new national

census is needed. It would have to include specific questions about the rural-urban drift of adults and children to get a clearer picture of migration flows. It would also provide concrete data to the government, NGOs and foreign donors.

Keeping children close to home

One of the keys to stemming the flow of children to Accra is to keep children as close to their place of origin as possible. Two of the NGOs we

visited – in Bolgatana and Suhum – have succeeded, on a small scale, to “dam” the exodus to Accra. The majority of the former street children we interviewed in both towns told us that they had been planning to move to Accra, but they now want to stay where they are because of the NGOs' work. Local initiatives of this nature

need to be stimulated.

Recreational facilities

In most rural communities, and even in towns and cities, there are no recreational facilities for children. Parents, overburdened with the responsibility of providing for their large families, are unable to give children the care and attention they need. Children are left to their own devices and have no role models. The creation of recreational facilities, even on a small scale, as well as youth clubs, would help channel children's energies and provide them positive images.

TV

Because of GTV's limited resources, it is impossible to expect the channel to cover developments in rural areas on a regular basis. But GTV, commercial TV and radio stations can make more of an effort to reflect the reality of life in the rural regions to villagers and to the rest of the nation. It would create greater self-confidence among rural inhabitants as well as more knowledge,

awareness and solidarity between rural and urban areas.

Video centres

In Nzemah East, district officials advocate a crackdown on video centres. We visited one centre in downtown Axim at lunchtime on a weekday, and the operator told us that school-aged children only came on the weekends. But when we went back to the centre an hour later, we saw several school-aged children watching a film.

Networking

There is a multitude of non-governmental organisations throughout the country that are working with street children or to improve the lives of needy children (and their parents). It is crucial that these NGOs exchange experiences, ideas and information about pilot projects. This would enable NGOs and the government to share information about programmes to

“If you want monuments and parks, go to the pyramids in Egypt.”
– Response from regional authorities to a plea for more recreational facilities for children

keep children in school as long as possible and provide more effective assistance to those who have left or who are already on the streets. A network of street children's organisations would also have more impact in dealing with donor agencies and the authorities.

The national, regional and local authorities have to collaborate with NGOs to deal with the issue of street children, for they too have a role to play. According to the SNV, it's not that the authorities are unwilling.

They often simply don't know what to do.

Non-governmental organisations often have different priorities and target groups, so it is up to NGOs, which deal directly or indirectly with street children, to determine how best to work together. Where their activities overlap – and they often do – networking could lead to a more effective and comprehensive approach to help curb the growing numbers of street children. ■



Truck pushers

Final remarks

In Ghana and elsewhere, the authorities and society view street children as a “problem”. But while the consequences of the growing numbers of street children are a problem, these children are not responsible for their predicament. They are turning to the streets because of the failures of the education system, parental negligence and abuse, excessively large families, growing poverty and Ghanaian society’s inability to provide a future to its children. Street children are simply a manifestation of these failures. If there were no need for their services, the exodus would not be taking on such dramatic proportions.

The street children phenomenon is becoming so widespread that NGOs in Accra and elsewhere are staggering under the sheer numbers. And yet more children are coming. The present generation of street children is luring more children, and these children, trying to find a future for themselves on the streets, are begetting more street children. Already, social workers are seeing a third generation of street children.

NGOs are providing assistance and training to some of today’s street children. But the majority are being left to fend for themselves. Some will find their way; others will live a formative period of their lives on the margins of society; yet others will fall outside those margins, for shorter or longer periods...with untold social repercussions.

Some of the recommendations in this report require little or no money. Others need significant investments by the Ghanaian government and the donor community. But if we fail to act now, the long-term costs will be even greater.

Vision 2020 – designed to make Ghana a middle-income country by the year 2020 – is an admirable goal, but it is meaningless to the street children of today...and tomorrow.

The future of any nation is its children. Ghana cannot afford to allow another generation of children to grow up on the streets. The social costs are too high, the wasted human potential too great. Can Ghana rise up to the challenge? ■

APPENDIX

Localities Visited

Districts	Locality	Distance from main road in kms. (\pm)	Electricity	Number of interviewees		
				Pupils	Parents	Children out of school
NORTHERN REGION						
Tolon Kum-bungu	Tolon	30	Yes	41		
	Gbullung	40	No		25	
West Da-gomba	Tamale	0	Yes	50		15
Save-lugu Nanton	Savelugu	0	Yes	46	16	
UPPER EAST REGION						
Bolgatanga	Bolgatanga	0	Yes	23	11	4
	Tongo	5	No		15	10
ASHANTI REGION						
Atwi-ma	Nerebehi	5	Yes	35		
	Bedabour	15	No	11	10	
Bosomtwe Antwima Kwawuma	Nweneso-Number 1	15	Yes	13	11	7
Ejisu-Juaben	Bonwire	5	Yes	29		
	Tikrom	3	Yes	36		
Sekyere West	Anyinasu	20	No	20	11	
	Asaam	10	No	39		

Districts	Locality	Distance from main road in kms. (\pm)	Electricity	Number of Interviewees		
				Pupils	Parents	Children out of school
Kumasi	Kumasi	0	Yes			22
Offinso	Namong	0	Yes	12	10	
	Apagya	10	No	5		6
WESTERN REGION						
Jomoro	Ahobre	0	Yes	57		
Ahanta West	Agona	0	Yes	42		
	Akwidaa	25	No		16	10
	Himakrom	10	No		17	20
Nzema East	Apataim	5	No		14	12
	Asanta	0	Yes		14	9
	Axim	0	Yes	20		
Mpohor Wassa East	Sekyere-Krobo	20	No	18		
Wassa West	Dompin-Pepesa	0	No	32		
	Tarkwa	0	Yes	35		
Takoradi	Takoradi	0	Yes			12
Shama-Ahanta East	Dunkwa	0	Yes		15	13
	Komfueku	5	No		14	13

District	Locality	Distance from main road in kms. (\pm)	Electricity	Number of Interviewees		
				Pupils	Parents	Children out of school
EASTERN REGION						
Kwahu South	Ntomem	30	No		13	4
	Danteng	0	No	26		
Kwaebibirem	Boadua	0	Yes	31		
	Subi	0	No	19		
New Juaben	Koforidua	0	Yes	72		
	Suhyen	3	No	36		
	Jumapo	3	Yes		11	15
Birim South	Aduasa	5	No		22	17
	Akim-Manso	10	Yes	31		
West Akim	Bunso	15	No		24	8
	Asuokaw	0	No		13	11
Birim North	Akoasi	0	No	26		
TOTALS				805	282	227*

* Includes 53 street children in Bolgatanga, Tamale, Kumasi and Takoradi

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

A: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Name _____
2. Sex _____ 3. Age _____
4. Village/Region _____
5. Hometown/Region _____
6. Marital status:
 - a) Single
 - b) Married
 - c) Living with partner but unmarried
 - d) Divorced
 - e) Separated
 - f) Widowed
 - g) Remarried
7. If you are divorced or separated, why?
 - _____ Adultery
 - _____ Another partner
 - _____ Money
 - _____ Alcohol
 - _____ Disagreements
 - _____ Other, namely _____
8. Are you living with your spouse/partner? Yes / No
9. If not, why? _____
10. Education:
 - a) No education
 - b) Primary dropout
 - c) Primary completed
 - d) Middle/JSS Dropout
 - e) Middle/JSS Completed
 - f) Post Secondary Dropout
 - g) Post Secondary Graduate
11. Profession: _____
12. If you are a farmer, do you own your land? Yes / No

B: SPOUSE'S/PARTNER'S DETAILS

13. Home town/Region: _____

14. Profession: _____

15. Education

- a) No education
- b) Primary dropout
- c) Primary completed
- d) Middle/JSS Dropout
- e) Middle/JSS Completed
- f) Vocational institute
- g) Post Secondary Dropout
- h) Post Secondary Graduate

16. If you have more than one wife, how many wives do you have? _____

C: FAMILY DETAILS

17. Do you have relatives living in your village?

- a) Parents
- b) Brothers/sisters
- c) Cousins
- d) Others

18. Income

- a) Not enough to eat
- b) Not enough to send children to school
- c) Not enough to pay medical costs
- d) Enough to manage
- e) Doing well

19. How many children do you have? _____

20. Are they from the same partner? Yes / No

21. If you have more than one spouse at present, list number of children from each spouse:

Spouse 1: _____

Spouse 2: _____

Spouse 3: _____

Spouse 4: _____

Spouse 5: _____

Spouse 6: _____

Additional spouses: _____

22. Are you raising/responsible for any other children? Yes / No How many? _____

D: CHILDREN

Age	Boy / Girl	Attending school? Yes / No	Present or highest level completed	Intends to continue studies? Yes/No

E: CHILDREN WHO ARE IN SCHOOL

23. Will you be able to continue financing your children's education? Yes / No / Uncertain

24. If you cannot afford to keep your children in school, what would you like them to do?

- a) Work in the home
- b) Work outside the home, but live at home
- c) Work outside the home and live on their own
- d) Leave the village/neighbourhood to seek a better life
- e) Get vocational training
- f) Other, namely _____

25. How many of your children would like to leave the village/town? _____

26. If one or more of your children want to leave the village, what are the main reasons?

_____ Lack of job opportunities

_____ Seeking better life

_____ Adventure

_____ Siblings or friends have left village

_____ Poverty

_____ Problems with parents

_____ Problems with stepparent

_____ Other, namely _____

F: CHILDREN WHO ARE NO LONGER IN SCHOOL

27. Why are (some of) your children no longer in school? Please write number of children for each category.

- _____ Graduated
 _____ Unable to afford school fees
 _____ Needed children to work to supplement family income
 _____ Had trouble learning
 _____ Didn't like school
 _____ Peer pressure
 _____ Pregnancy
 _____ Other, namely _____

28. Have one or more of your children left home? Yes / No How many? _____

29. How old were the children when they left? _____

30. Do you know where the child(ren) are now? Yes / No Where? _____

31. How often have you had contact with your children since they left?

- a) once a week
- b) once a month
- c) twice a year
- d) once a year
- e) less frequently
- f) never

32. What do you think of their decision to leave?

- a) Approve
- b) Good decision under the circumstances
- c) Disapprove

33. Would you encourage your other children to do the same? Yes/No Why? _____

34. How many other children do you know who have left the village/neighbourhood on their own?

- a) 1 – 5
- b) 6 – 10
- c) 11 – 15
- d) more

Additional remarks/observations: _____

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHILDREN ATTENDING SCHOOL

A: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Name _____
2. Sex _____ 3. Age _____
4. Village/Region _____
5. Hometown/Region _____
6. Who are you living with?
_____ Both parents
_____ Father
_____ Mother
_____ Grandparents
_____ Aunt
_____ Uncle
_____ Guardian
_____ Siblings
_____ Alone

B: PARENTAL BACKGROUND

7. What is your father's level of education?
 - a) None
 - b) Primary
 - c) Middle
 - d) Secondary
 - e) Training college
 - f) Vocational institution
 - g) Polytechnic
 - h) University
8. What is your mother's level of education?
 - a) None
 - b) Primary
 - c) Middle
 - d) Secondary
 - e) Training college
 - f) Vocational institution
 - g) Polytechnic
 - h) University
9. Does your father work? Yes / No / Dead
10. What work does he do? _____
11. Does your mother work? Yes / No / Dead

12. What work does she do? _____
13. Are your parents still married? Yes / No / Dead
14. If yes, are they still living together? Yes / No
15. If not, does your father live in:
1. Another place, same locality
 2. Another place, different locality, same region
 3. Another place in another region, namely _____ (region name)
16. If not, does your mother live in:
1. Another place, same locality
 2. Another place, different locality, same region
 3. Another place in another region, namely _____ (region name)
17. How many brothers and sisters do you have? _____

C: SCHOOL

18. What do you like about school? (More than one answer possible)
- _____ I like to learn
- _____ My parents want me to go to school
- _____ My parents force me to go to school
- _____ School will help me get a better life
- _____ I like to be with my friends
- _____ Prestige
- _____ Sports
- _____ Other, namely _____
19. What do you dislike about school? (More than one answer possible)
- _____ Teachers
- _____ I'm wasting my time
- _____ Lack of support from parents
- _____ Bullying
- _____ Other, namely _____
20. *Do you work to pay for school-related costs or to supplement the family income? Yes / No
21. *What do you do?
- _____
22. Are you planning to finish JSS and SSS? Yes / No
23. What level of education would you like to achieve?
- a) JSS
 - b) SSS
 - c) Training college
 - d) Vocational institution
 - e) University

24. Do you think you will be able to attain your educational goal? Yes / No
25. If you do not plan to finish JSS or SSS, what are the main reasons? (More than one answer possible)
- _____ My parents can't afford school fees / uniforms
- _____ I don't do well at school
- _____ My teachers treat me badly
- _____ I'm wasting my time
- _____ Lack of support from my parents
- _____ Other, namely _____
26. If you drop out of school, what do you plan to do?
- _____ Go to work
- _____ Help support my family
- _____ Go to a town or city to try to start a new life
- _____ Get vocational training
- _____ Don't know
- _____ Other, namely _____
27. Do you have relatives who have gone to a big town or city? Yes / No
28. Do you have relatives, friends or acquaintances under 20 years of age who have gone to a big town or city? Yes / No
29. Have you heard from them since they left? Yes / No
30. Would you like to leave your locality to go to a bigger town or city? Yes / No
31. Why? (More than one answer possible)
- _____ I want a better life than my parents
- _____ Friends or family member have succeeded
- _____ There is no work here
- _____ No SSS or vocational training facilities here
- _____ Adventure
- _____ Other, namely _____
32. *Where would you like to go? _____
33. *What do you plan to do there? _____

* Questions only asked in Eastern and Western Regions.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL

A: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Name _____
2. Sex _____ 3. Age _____
4. Village/Region _____
5. Hometown/Region _____
6. Who are you living with?
____ Both parents
____ Father
____ Mother
____ Grandparents
____ Guardian
____ Siblings
____ Alone

B: PARENTAL BACKGROUND

7. What is your father's level of education?
 - a) None
 - b) Primary
 - c) Middle
 - d) Secondary
 - e) Training college
 - f) Vocational institution
 - g) Polytechnic
 - h) University
8. What is your mother's level of education?
 - a) None
 - b) Primary
 - c) Middle
 - d) Secondary
 - e) Training college
 - f) Vocational institution
 - g) Polytechnic
 - h) University
9. Does your father work? Yes / No / Dead
10. What work does he do? _____

11. Does your mother work? Yes / No / Dead
12. What work does she do? _____
13. Are your parents still married? Yes / No / Dead
14. If yes, are they still living together? Yes / No
15. If not, do your parents live in
1. Another place, some locality
 2. Another place, different locality, same region
 3. Another place in another region, namely _____ (region name)
16. How many brothers and sisters do you have? _____

C: SCHOOL

17. What is your level of education?
- a) None
 - b) Primary
 - c) Completed primary
 - d) JSS
 - e) Completed JSS
 - f) Secondary
18. Why did you quit school?
- I wasn't doing well
- My parents couldn't afford school fees and/or uniform
- My parents told me I had to work
- Boredom
- Peer pressure
- I was looking for adventure
- Parent(s) died
- I want to learn a trade
- Other, namely _____
19. What are you doing now? Working / Nothing / Vocational training
20. If you are working, what type of work are you doing? _____
21. What would you like to do? _____

D: CHILDREN PLANNING TO LEAVE LOCALITY

22. Are you planning to leave the place where you are living? Yes / No

23. If you are, where do you plan to go?

- a) Another place, same locality
- b) Another place, different locality, same region
- c) Another place in another region, namely _____

24. Why?

- Lack of job opportunities
- Seeking better life
- Adventure
- Siblings or friends have left locality
- Problems with parents
- Problems with step-parent
- Problems with guardian
- Other, namely _____

25. What do you hope to find?

- A better future
- Friends or siblings
- Adventure
- Other, namely _____

26. When do you plan to leave?

- 1 month
- 6 months
- 1 year
- Longer

27. What are you waiting for?

- Money
- Information
- Other, namely _____

Additional remarks/observations: _____
