



Ghanaian Girls: Breaking Barriers to Education (Informal Sector of Work)

Major: Political Science; Minor: Theater

Policy Tracks: Law & Government, Advocacy

By Chantel Amissah

RUTGERS

Institute for Women's Leadership

The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

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Impetus

- My childhood in Ghana
- Merging my Ghanaian and American Identities with respect to women's leadership and my academic interests
- Bring awareness to young girls in the informal sector of work in Ghana (Street vendors & market women)



Goal Statement & Method

- Research on working conditions market women and street vendors in Ghana
- Educational disparities between young girls/ women and young boys/men
- Barriers to education for young girls including cultural norms, financial burden, transportation, governmental support
- Disseminating & Awareness-Raising :

Hosted a talk via zoom to Rutgers faculty & students in Global Village & DRC cohort,

Provided a resource sheet of reputable organizations that aim to alleviate educational disparities and help create a world where girls and women can thrive





The Issue: Lack of Access

- In Accra, as in many other African cities, urban authorities aim to make Ghana's capital a competitive world-class city . To reach that goal, they have instituted neoliberal principles of entrepreneurial urbanism (Harvey 1989). These major urban transformations attempting to making the city conform to international standards take the form of large urban and infrastructure projects, the construction of high-standing residential spaces aimed at elites, the privatization of land and urban production, and the cleansing operations of street vendors.
- In the past few years, street vendors have been forced to leave spaces they irregularly occupied. Some of them were relocated to specific areas conforming to the socio-spatial order promoted by the local authorities following a formalization process (Pieterse 2008, Le Blanc et al. 2014, Watson 2014, Myers 2015).

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The Issue: Lack of Access

- "A child in Ghana, West Africa is more likely to work alongside his or her parents in the fields or in the market than to be enrolled in school. "This grim fact reminds us of the intertwined nature of poverty and education in relation to a child's life chances" (Bardley, Melaniece Nicole, 2000)
- Additionally, children in sub-Saharan Africa also work at higher rates than children in any other continent (Sakurai, 2013). ~~High rates of child labor can keep children from attending school even if they are already enrolled (Ainsworth et al., 2005).~~ It has been estimated that nearly 40% of Ghanaian children aged seven to 14 engaged in work that may be considered harmful to their well-being. Twenty percent of children engaged in work while also attending school, and another 18% worked and did not attend school (UNICEF, 2013).
- Sociocultural and economic factors can impede access to basic education for girls, as traditional perceptions on the expected roles of girls to be at home and do household chores persist (Adadevoh, 1999; Amoah-Bentil and Kebede, 2010; Tansel, 1997; Tanye, 2008). A great deal of discussion and literature has outlined the challenges that schoolchildren, and girls in particular, face in attending school, which include costs, distance, safety, cultural constraints, and labor.

The background of the slide features the national coat of arms of Ghana. It consists of a central shield with a green top section containing a gold star and a white castle on a blue base. The shield is flanked by two golden eagles with their wings spread. Below the shield is a golden banner with the words 'FREEDOM AND JUSTICE' in red capital letters. The entire emblem is set against a dark background.

Governmental Involvement & Support

- There are also leaders in the Ghanaian community that have voiced concern and pushed to alleviate the issues:

- Yet, an estimated 23 million girls were not in school in the year 2000, and there has been an overall widening of the gap in the region (Ohene-Konadu, 2001). Ghana's former first lady Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings stated at the 1998 International Conference on Girls' education in Washington, D.C., that the male literacy rate in Ghana was 71 percent and the female literacy 46 percent, with male illiteracy increasing by 6 million while female illiteracy increased by 14 million
- Kofi Anan: No development strategy is better than one that involves women as central players. It has immediate benefits for nutrition, health, savings, and reinvestment at the family, community, and ultimately, country level. In other words, educating girls is a social development policy that works. It is a long-term investment that yields exceptionally high returns. We need those with power to change things to come together in an alliance for girls' education: governments, voluntary progressive groups, and above all, local communities, schools and families.
- Nana Akufo Addo- Current, president mandating that primary and secondary school be mandatory and free has made it more accessible.



Where's the line between cultural relativism & western exceptionalism in advocacy?

Intellectual Foundations

- Intersectional feminism
- Patriarchy
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Nationalism
- Cultural Relativism
- Modernity



TIMELINE:

SAP Planning: Title, Overarching Theme & Goals

Speech Review & Project Implementation

Sep.-Oct.

July-Aug.

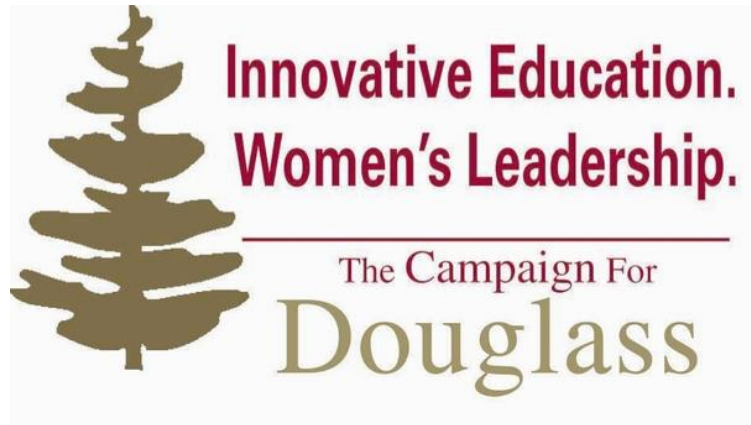
Nov.-Dec.

Collating Research, Audience, Dissemination Plan



Impact

- Hope to implement this into a curriculum as a supplementary resource for Rutgers programs such as IWL, DRC, Global Village, & Eagleton. A lot of these programs I've mentioned cover International Politics, Women and Gender Studies, Humanitarian Work, etc. I think it would be a great addition to classes like Knowledge and Power run by DRC or other classes such as Women and Leadership here at IWL.



Classical Literatures
Africa, the Middle East
and South Asia

Partnerships



Feminist Leadership & Lessons Learned

Awareness
building

Open-mindedness

Adaptability

Interdependence

Organizations

- [Girls Education Initiative Ghana](#)

The Girls Education Initiative of Ghana provides academic and financial support for girls and applicants with special needs so that they can access higher education and professional opportunities.

- [CAMFED](#)

CAMFED Ghana was launched in 1998 to tackle girls' exclusion from education.

- [Girls 4 Girls Ghana](#)

G4G Ghana Takes a holistic approach to girl empowerment. G4G provides help and hope for underprivileged young girls in Ghana who have limited resources or limited access to resources that can meet their basic sanitary needs. By providing important sanitary supplies, it equips young Ghanaian girls with necessary self education to help them stay protected and help them make informed decisions as they enter into puberty.

- [Aid For Girls and Children Foundation](#)

Aid For Girls and Children Foundation (AFGACF), founded in 2016, is a non-governmental and nonprofit organization headquartered in Accra, Ghana. AFGACF is working towards a world where all humans are able to realize their full potential, develop their skills and participate fully in society with special focus on assisting marginalized girls and children in rural communities.





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