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

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

Old Fadama is the biggest slum in Ghana, and is situated between Agbogbloshie market and Korle Lagoon. This lagoon has been cited as one of the most polluted bodies of water on the planet, due to the government sanctioned dumping of Western electronic waste within the lagoon. The government also owns the land on which the slums are situated, so the estimated 100,000 people living in the slums have settled there illegally. Thus, the government refuses to give them any services, such as, electricity, water, sewers, roads, or schools. Crime rates are high living conditions are poor; there is abject poverty and appalling literacy rates. The people within the slums are often unaware of their basic human and legal rights or do not know how to seek a resolution if these rights are violated. This is an area of Ghana which is in desperate need of help, so PAHO, in conjunction with WISEEP, has decided to set up a free legal assistance centre there. The goal is to set up a permanent, self-sustained fixture in the Old Fadama slums called the Fadama Legal Assistance Program (FLAP).

The FLAP team began the new year with a new group of volunteers and a renewed enthusiasm for the project. With the FLAP office only opening at the end of September 2013, this year will be FLAP's first full year in operation and where the work of FLAP can really begin in earnest.

In order for the new team to familiarize themselves with the work and objectives of FLAP, it was necessary to review the past cases of FLAP. Since the office opened, around seventy clients have visited FLAP for assistance, with twenty-five of the client's matters materializing into cases. The team closely examined a number of the closed cases, ranging from issues of child maintenance and succession, to financial and property disputes, as well as reports of domestic violence.

In all these cases, FLAP staff employed a number of methods to resolve the disputes, including mediation overseen

by FLAP's trained mediators. Further, for cases too complex for the newly trained FLAP staff, the clients were referred to legal aid. For any criminal matters, FLAP referred the matter to the police. Incidentally, the FLAP team have noted that many people have little confidence or trust in the police and that if residents of Old Fadama approach the police themselves to report a crime, often the case will fail to progress, whereas if the residents engage FLAP's services, the speed at which the police deal with the case increases. Pleasingly for the team, in all of the closed cases examined, the FLAP staff worked efficiently to resolve the matter in a way that satisfied the clients.

This review of all the previous cases had a dual purpose. Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, to track the work of FLAP in assisting its clients and resolving their disputes so as to ensure that the work of FLAP is, and will continue to be, of benefit to the residents of Old Fadama. Secondly, the team wanted to look through the records of FLAP to ascertain what types of cases came through the office in the past few months in order to get an overview of the most common types of

cases being brought to FLAP. In this way, the findings can be used to determine the focus of the outreaches this year, which would ensure that the team is addressing the most pressing issues throughout the different communities of Old Fadama. For this reason, the team will regularly keep abreast of the client intake at FLAP and direct its attention accordingly in the coming months.

For the month of January, as in previous months, the outreaches were focused on domestic and sexual violence, which is a particularly challenging and prevalent problem in Old Fadama. The first outreach of the month was delivered in the Old Fadama Development Association (OFADA) office to nine people, two of them being women. The presentation covered the four types of domestic violence, which are physical, sexual, emotional and economic, as well as how to report domestic violence, and what FLAP can do to help in these situations. Following that, sexual violence was covered in more detail, with it being explained that sexual violence includes anything from touching someone inappropriately to rape and defilement, and that sexual



FLAP Community outreach- January.

violence can still occur within marriages.

The value of FLAP's outreaches was once again illustrated during the question and answer session after the presentation, when one member of OFADA, who had been present for the outreach, thanked the team for presenting and educating the community on such a widespread problem as domestic and sexual violence. He highlighted how everyone listening today will then go on to inform others about these issues. This is precisely one of the reasons for the FLAP community outreach project, not only to increase awareness around the services of FLAP, but also to advocate for human rights, as one of the core objectives of PAHO.

Additionally, the outreaches this month have served an additional purpose for the FLAP team. Currently, most of the FLAP mediators are young men and while they all have the necessary training and skills to mediate disputes effectively, it is sometimes quite difficult for them to act like an authority figure to older clients, especially when Ghanaian culture is considered. Thus, after a discussion with Frederick Opoku, it was decided that one major goal for the FLAP team this year, through the outreaches, is to identify suitable older residents who could be trained to become mediators for FLAP.

Mr. Opoku was particularly impressed with an older gentleman who attended the first outreach of the month as he participated thoughtfully in the discussion and seemed to generate much respect from the other attendees whenever he spoke. The gentleman was asked if he would like to become a mediator for FLAP and his contact details were taken. FLAP will be in touch with him when the next mediator training takes place.

FLAP's second outreach took place in the Kayayei Youth Association office, located within Old Fadama. The Kayayei Youth Association provides support to the kayayei living and working around Old Fadama and Abgobloshie, and helps to protect them from some of the abuses they experience on a day-to-day basis. The association has progressed over the years and has now established a mutual fund to provide emergency financial assistance to its members who are in desperate need of help, as

well as offering loans to the members seeking to set up a small business or to build a home. Further, the association helps to teach its members certain key life skills to prepare them for life back in their hometowns and is also financing a school for the children of the kayayei so that they can gain an education instead of accompanying their mothers to work.¹

The kayayei, or female head porters, are a particularly vulnerable group in Accra, and are often subject to verbal, physical and sexual abuse whilst they are working. These women live in abject poverty, and the ones that live in Old Fadama usually reside in dormitory style living quarters, sharing with up to twenty other women. Consequently, the kayayei have little choice but to go out to work on the street every day to try and earn enough money to survive. Given the unrelenting position they find themselves in, they can do little to protect themselves from any abuses. Thus, the team thought it pertinent to educate them on these issues, how they can report instances of violence, and the assistance that FLAP can provide.

Additionally, during this visit, the President of the Kayayei Youth Association, Mohammed Salifu, explained some of the issues that his members face on a daily basis and why Frederick Opoku and himself want to set up a partnership between FLAP and the association. Opoku went on to explain that he wanted the association's office to act as a link between these women and FLAP, so that if they have been subjected to physical or sexual violence, or have any other legal problems, they can visit the association's office whereby a FLAP client intake form will be filled out and passed on to FLAP to pursue the matter further. It is also the intention of FLAP, with the endorsement of Salifu, to, sometime in the future, begin women's empowerment sessions at the office for the members willing to participate.

On balance, January saw a continuation of FLAP's outreaches throughout Old Fadama advocating FLAP's work and promoting the awareness for human rights. The

presentations delivered by the volunteers were well received, and helped to familiarize the residents with the steps they can take if they are a victim or know a victim of domestic or sexual violence. Moreover, a close examination of past cases served to familiarize new team members with the work of FLAP and will help ensure that FLAP's outreaches continue to be as relevant as possible to the people who attend them.

Human Rights Focal Persons Training: Teaching

Discussion and training on the rights of the child in the classroom.

Focal Persons Training is dedicated to engaging with important members of the community and providing them with different perspectives, and further insight into various human rights issues. It aims to discuss current practices, beliefs and thinking within Ghanaian institutions and looks at how these can be adapted, improved and generally better informed of their human rights responsibilities.

In one of those rare instances of international consensus, nearly everyone agrees: education, especially in a developing country like Ghana, is of paramount importance to its future. Instructors of youths today assume responsibility for shaping the character of the community members of tomorrow, and are charged with ensuring the quality of human capital from which the Ghanaian economy will draw from in the not-so-distant future. However, the best educative method remains subject to intense debate.

The Human Rights office for Project Abroad in Ghana recognized the importance of this issue, and in response created the Focal Persons Training (hereinafter referred to as FPT) group. In January 2014, a group of volunteers travelled to different schools, and presented teachers with alternative methods of education. The contour of this outreach is unique from other projects due to its interactive nature. Rather than lecturing an audience on different subjects, FPT provides a forum for open and amicable debate between two parties who are united in their concern for the development of children, but differ on

¹ "Saving Away From the Slum", *Still Life Projects*, 5th January 2013, <<http://stilllifeprojects.com/blog/saving-away-from-the-slum/>>, [accessed: 24/01/2014]

the methods to achieve the best outcomes.

In fact, the stakes of this debate have never been higher. With low wages, rising inflation, and a dysfunctional political economy, parents have less and less time to spend with their children. Teachers in Ghana are exerting an increasing amount of influence over the lives of children, as they often spend more time with them than their own parents. In this environment, the effect of the teacher on a child's development is magnified, as they are often forced to assume the role of parent, in addition to their responsibilities as an instructor and mentor.

The FPT group made two trips in January. On January 10 of 2014, they travelled to Newtown, where approximately twenty teachers met with them to discuss educative reform and childhood development. The second trip was to a school in Tema, and occurred two weeks later, on January 24, 2014 with a similar amount of attendees. In both visits, the discussions were generally parallel in both direction and content. While the effects of bullying and student-on-student violence were discussed and generally acknowledged as toxic, the two parties differed on children's rights within the confines of the student-teacher relationship.

Ghanaian culture is infused with strong religious overtones, so biblical methods of instruction are therefore common practice. The Old Testament adage, "spare the rod, spoil the child," is invariably echoed by every teacher who endorses physical punishment. Having been subjected to this method themselves, teachers ardently defended the administration of the rod, arguing that the "African child" needs discipline if they hope to establish an environment conducive to learning.

FPT presented its case by dividing children's basic rights within the classroom into two categories: psychological rights and physical rights. Different case studies were prepared that demonstrated the immediate, as well as the long-term, socioeconomic and psychological effects of these forms of abuses later in life. For example, in the instance of physical abuse within the classroom, statistics were cited which demonstrated that those who had undergone consistent physical abuse

during their personal or educative lives were less likely to maintain a healthy social life, had difficulty maintaining steady employment, and even had a shorter average lifespan.

It was stressed that human rights is not a stagnant concept; it has evolved over time based on our improved understanding of the human condition, as well as our capacity to implement these changes on a broad and meaningful scale. The Bible itself is becoming a "living" text, as demonstrated by the new Catholic pope who is increasingly moderate in his various positions, to the delight of many of his followers. FPT explained that alternative disciplinary approaches had not only been implemented in other countries, but had seen great success. Those countries whose students consistently tested the best in the world were environments in which the child's physical and psychological integrity was maintained and respected.

While discipline and respect are prerequisites for a successful learning environment, FPT group members asserted that there were far better ways than the fear of physical harm. While fear may instill discipline, this is often only when the disciplinarian is present. Respect, on the other hand, ensures that rules are respected even when the enforcers are not nearby. Alternative approaches, like school detention (students who misbehave are not allowed to go out and play with their friends for recess) or the star system (positive behavior within the classroom gets rewarded by public commendation), were proposed, and teachers from both visits eventually agreed to test them on their students.

In Tema, a teacher pointed out that the rod was not just used for behavioral discipline, but to extract financial payments as well. For example, if a student's family does not provide payment for their textbooks in a timely manner, the rod is administered on that individual until he or she makes the payments. The teacher and FPT group agreed this was not a particularly fair solution, as the student had little to do with the financial liquidity of his or her family. A solution was proposed through the suggestion of a textbook buyback system, where the school would buy the students textbooks (which would otherwise go home with the student who no longer had any need for it) at the conclusion of the

year, and then rent them out to low-income families for a more affordable price. This would make textbooks more accessible, with the additional effect of providing the school with a possible source of income after a few years of the programs implementation.

Ultimately, while the introduction of the west's perceptions of human rights within the classroom was initially met with cackles, the end of both trips saw meaningful dialogue and promises to attempt the implementation of some of the proposed methods. FPT looks forward to continuing to build upon their established relationships with teachers from the two schools visited in the month of January, as well as to cultivate new relationships with more groups of teachers.

Human Rights Research: Child Prostitution.

Case study: Nungua

The issue of child prostitution is a major challenge facing all of West Africa. In response to increased reports in the media and a growing concern in Ghana of a problem that still fails to be resolved, the Human Rights Fact Finding Team set about investigating the prevalence of child prostitution, its causes and potential solutions. The team conducted background research as well as its own field investigations in the area of Nungua. This project has resulted in the development recommendations for future projects to be created which can best assist the local communities tackle this challenge

The international sex industry is expanding. Forming a large part of the industry is child prostitution, which is also increasing from its estimated net US\$5 billion annually.² The African nation of Ghana is no exception to the trend, with the incidence of child prostitution on the rise.³ This is a

² L, Lim. *The Sex Sector: The Economic and Social Bases of Prostitution in Southeast Asia* (International Labour Office, 2008) 175.

³ S Simpson. *Ghana: Response to 'thriving' child sex industry too weak*. (2008). IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis Office of

serious issue facing individuals, the community and the government as it has a significant impact on the mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing of children as well as their general social development.⁴ Child prostitution is also connected to other serious issues including child sexual abuse, sex tourism, trafficking and the organization of sexual exploitation internationally.⁵

Context

Defining the Problem

The United Nations defines child prostitution as 'the use of a child, [an individual under the age of eighteen], in sexual activities for remuneration or any other form of consideration'.⁶ Consideration might include food, water and shelter.⁷ Although specific statistics of the number of children engaged in prostitution in Ghana are lacking, the general view is that child prostitution has been a practice for many years in the region.⁸ A large percentage of those engaged in child prostitution live on the streets, and with over 20,000 children out of a home, the number of child prostitutes is likely to be comparatively as large.⁹

Importantly, in 2008, the Ghanaian government undertook a strict regime in an attempt to eradicate the practice

in Accra's city centre.¹⁰ This involved shutting down and demolishing the structures housing the child prostitutes, as well as arresting the child prostitutes themselves. Whilst this reduced the incidence of the phenomena in Accra's central business district, it did not entirely eradicate the phenomena. Both child prostitutes and customers alike, gravitated towards the outskirts of Accra, neighbourhoods which do not fall subject to strict law enforcement. This has continued to be the state of the issue into 2014, whereby prostitutes have either permanently migrated, or travel nightly, to the outskirts of Accra in the evenings to provide their services.



Meeting with the schools in Nungua

'poverty, debt, homelessness and running away'.¹² The trade is used as a 'survival strategy'.¹³ This was consistent with the findings of Project Abroad's fact-finding mission.

The volunteers at Projects Abroad completed two fact-finding missions located in Nungua (on the outskirts of Accra). The fact-finding research provided insight into the phenomena of child prostitution including the types of children participating in the acts, the reasons for doing so, and the views of the wider community. In the first venture, a number of interviews were conducted with the general community and passers-by. The second mission was a discussion with school girls aged between 12-16.

The findings of the interviews showed that those participating in child prostitution are aged from 10 years onwards. Indeed, it has been noted that the younger the child the more susceptible or vulnerable they are to use or accept child prostitution as a survival mechanism. According to the community and young schoolgirls, the child prostitutes are easily identified because they wear suggestive, provocative clothing.

Involvement of Projects Abroad

As a response to this, Projects Abroad has commenced an initiative aimed at tackling the problem. The preliminary fact-finding stage involved interviewing young people and the community, in an attempt to understand the phenomena from its core. By investigating the roots of the issue, more meaningful responses in terms of policy and programs to be implemented by traditional leaders and government can be developed.¹¹

Field Research: Nungua

The consensus among scholars is that those engaging in child prostitution are driven to the occupation because of

the High Commissioner for human rights <<http://www.irinnews.org/report/77389/ghana-response-to-thriving-child-sex-industry-too-weak>>

⁴ *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*. Opened for signature 25 May 2000 (entered into force 18 January 2002).

⁵ I Shaw & I Butler. 'Understanding young people and prostitution: a foundation for practice' (1998) 28(2) *British Journal of Social Work*: 177-196; T Sanders, M O'Neill & J Pitcher. Sanders, T. O'Neill, M. Pitcher, J. *Prostitution. Children, Young People and Commercial Sexual Exploitation* (Sage Publishers, 2009) 52-74.

⁶ *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*. Opened for signature 25 May 2000 (entered into force 18 January 2002), Art 2.

⁷ T Sanders, M O'Neill & J Pitcher. Sanders, T. O'Neill, M. Pitcher, J. *Prostitution. Children, Young People and Commercial Sexual Exploitation* (Sage Publishers, 2009) 52-74.

⁸ Queen Mothers Interview, 20 January 2014, Nungua.

⁹ Susan Mapp. *Global Child Welfare and Wellbeing* (Oxford University Press, 2011) 34.

¹⁰ Michael Brodsky. *Child Protection in Ghana*. 2012. *Clinical Psychiatry News* <<http://www.clinicalpsychiatrynews.com/view/the-long-view/blogview/child-protection-in-ghana/eb5251d17c.html>>

¹¹ T Sanders, M O'Neill & J Pitcher. Sanders, T. O'Neill, M. Pitcher, J. *Prostitution. Children, Young People and Commercial Sexual Exploitation* (Sage Publishers, 2009) 52-74.

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¹³ T Sanders, M O'Neill & J Pitcher. Sanders, T. O'Neill, M. Pitcher, J. *Prostitution. Children, Young People and Commercial Sexual Exploitation* (Sage Publishers, 2009) 52-74.

The trend over both sessions was that the children entering the practice were 'forced' due to the low socio-economic status of their family and general poverty. According to one school-aged girl:

'you have no choice but to enter prostitution if you want to get money for yourself and your family... if you want to go to school and your family has no money, you must earn money to pay for your education'.

There were also other reasons offered by the students including that the children want to spend more money on themselves and when choosing between the job opportunities available, child prostitution received the greatest return in the shortest amount of time. Lastly, some community members and students explained that some child prostitutes may be possessed by demons or be subject to the spirits of a family curse.

After both missions were complete, the findings were presented to a panel of Traditional Clan Leaders, known as the Queen Mothers. The volunteers asked questions, which confirmed the results of the interviews conducted. The Queen Mothers and other local representatives emphasised the long-standing and ingrained nature of child prostitution in Ghanaian society.

Existing Protections: legal Framework

The international sector provides the basic foundation for the law relating to child prostitution. Introduced in 1990, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) enumerates a number of international rights for children including those relating to the prohibition of child labour and the involvement of children in the sex trade.¹⁴ Ghana is a signatory to the CRC, however it has not yet been ratified comprehensively into domestic law. Additionally, Ghana has not signed up to the more detailed Optional Protocols, which further outlaw the practice of child prostitution and sex

trafficking.¹⁵ This does not mean that Child rights are left unprotected however. A number of other pieces of Ghanaian legislation enumerate various rights and duties relating to children. These include the Ghanaian Constitution, which enforces a positive duty on individuals to ensure that 'every child has care'.¹⁶ The Children's Act also protects children from exploitative labour by stipulating a 'duty to protect', encompassing situations where children are residing in houses used for prostitution.¹⁷ Significantly, the Ghanaian Criminal Code makes carnal knowledge of any person under 16 years, defilement, an offence, including situations where the child has given consent.¹⁸ Individuals are also committing a crime under the Ghanaian Criminal code if they permit defilement on their premises or procure or encourage child prostitution.¹⁹

A Way Forward

Whilst the sheer difficulty of tackling the phenomena of child prostitution is noted, the following discussion outlines recommendations, which may assist in curbing the problem. The first recommendation is for Projects Abroad to facilitate a holistic problem solving approach. This would entail developing cooperation and unification between public and community bodies, including the Church, the Police and Traditional Leaders in Ghana (specifically Nungua and surrounding areas). The second recommendation is to develop an education scheme through which children are taught the realities and consequences of engaging in child prostitution. They would be provided with information regarding alternative occupation options with strategies detailing how they may succeed in their chosen occupation. It is also important to educate the older generation, including teachers and parents. Ultimately, whether the incidence of child prostitution may be mitigated is an issue that requires the participation of a number of individuals, communities and

leadership bodies. In addition to this, the phenomena must be stopped using proactive strategies as well as reactive strategies.

SOFAID: Slum School Outreach

Schools of Old Fadama Adequacy Improvement Drive

In a yearlong project, PAHO is profiling Old Fadama, Ghana's largest slum with a population of approximately 80,000 people.

In December 2013 PAHO began profiling the schools of Old Fadama, and conducting an Educational Needs Assessment of eight of the twelve schools within the boundaries of the Old Fadama Slum. All of the new PAHO projects that will derive from this Educational Needs Assessment will fall under the umbrella of the Schools of Old Fadama Adequacy Improvement Drive (SOFAID).

In accordance with the recommendations of that report we began running the Slum School Outreach with the aim of broadening children's understanding of Human Rights through an interactive form of education amongst the students that attend one of the schools in the slums

The Slum School Outreach is an educational session run by the Projects Abroad Human Rights Office. It is run with the purpose of broadening children's understanding of Human Rights through an interactive form of education amongst the students that attend a school in the slums. Education is widely regarded as the key to eradicating poverty. Hence, PAHO hopes to aid the poorest children via teaching them valuable information about their rights, both as a human, and as a child.

The program, this month, consisted of three different interactive sessions that focused on enabling the children to gain knowledge and skills about human rights.

Hopefully, when the students age and expand their involvement in the wider community, they can be equipped with knowledge about human rights and can spread their knowledge and skills to the next generation, who will then further apply it to themselves and their communities.

¹⁴ International Labour Organization. Ghana Legislation. 2013 International Labour Organisation
<http://www.ilo.org/ipecc/Regionsandcountries/Africa/Ghana/WCMS_202269/lang-en/index.htm>

¹⁵ International Labour Organization. Ghana Legislation. 2013 International Labour Organisation
<http://www.ilo.org/ipecc/Regionsandcountries/Africa/Ghana/WCMS_202269/lang-en/index.htm>

¹⁶ *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana* 1992, Ch 3, Art 6.

¹⁷ *The Children's Act* 1998.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ *Ghana Criminal Code* 1960s 101.

This month a team of four Projects Abroad Human Rights volunteers began speaking in Accra at Polina's Queensland School in Old Fadama. The project spanned over three sessions and the audience was made up of boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 16. The intended goal was to educate them on the general importance of human rights and provide for them the understanding that everyone has those basic rights.

The first session consisted of a presentation about domestic violence. During this session the volunteers performed interactive skits where they demonstrated the four types of domestic violence; emotional, physical, sexual and economic.

After each demonstration the volunteers stopped and asked the students to identify the type of domestic violence which they had demonstrated. This enabled the students to process on their own what the team had demonstrated to them, further allowing them to retain the information taught. The students attained information and discussed these different issues and learned what to do if these situations occurred and what their options were in those situations. It was found that the students, as young as they were, had a broad understanding about these issues already and had a general idea of what and who they could talk to in the case of this situation happening to them.

After the session they had a better understanding of where they should go in the case of any of these situations occurring to them or someone close to them. Strikingly, one of the younger looking students asked "if your boyfriend wants to have sex with you and you start but then say no, is it still rape?" The volunteers were then able to explain how if at any point when two people are sexually active and one person says no the other person has to stop or it is a crime. Overall, the students asked very mature and thoughtful questions that added a great deal to the lesson.

The second session consisted of a lesson on the importance of education. To start off the presentation the volunteers asked the students a number of questions about the previous week's presentation to see if they retained any of the information about

domestic violence. It was good to see that they answered all of the questions asked correctly. After the recap the volunteers opened the presentation about the importance of education with the question, "what do you want to be when you grow up?" Several journalists, doctors, pro soccer players and even pilots were named. Right off the start it was explained that for all of these jobs basic education and beyond is needed, even for being a soccer player. The volunteers made sure that every student knew that they all held right to having an education. This was due to education being a basic human right that is declared in the Children's Act of 1998.

Further explored were the immediate benefits and long term benefits of education. This was explained by showing the students how the basic skills which can be obtained during school can also be implemented in everyday life. The importance of education for both males and females was also spoken about, touching briefly on gender equality. Examples were given of powerful women who gained power and respect through education. For instance, Betty Mould Iddrisu attended school and then university and by having a good education she became world renowned in the field of intellectual property law. Currently she is the minister of Justice and the Attorney General. To further convey the importance of education, along with making the session more interactive and interesting, examples were given through skits and role plays. This demonstrated how education can help not only children but their friends, family and community. The importance of access to quality schooling was stressed, along with the many benefits it reaps. Education lays the foundation for growth, transformation, innovation, opportunity and equality. After the presentation the students did not have any questions. However, when asked to recap what they had learned they were able to give a complete recap on the presentation.

For the third and final session of the month the volunteers went back to the same school and students and gave a presentation regarding Children's Rights and Responsibilities. This



The Slum School Team at the first outreach of 2014

presentation was given with the intention of stressing the fact that rights and responsibilities are linked. For every right, there's a corresponding responsibility. Three skits were given, each representing a certain type of responsibility that must be maintained in association with upholding the right. Case in point, every child has a right to education. However, with this right comes the responsibility to fulfil the commitments that are required in gaining a quality education, such as completing homework. If a student doesn't do their homework, it then undermines their right to education.

The main responsibilities of children focused on were at home, school, socially and in the community. The students were given study cases of different scenarios and asked to identify the right and the responsibility the child had in each case. The children still struggled with this activity in identifying their responsibilities. Whilst from the start of the session it was understood that the children held thorough comprehension of their rights, their understanding of responsibility was not as in depth. Thus, successfully, the entire presentation left the children with greater knowledge than they originally started with.

At the end of the third session the volunteers put together a quiz. The quiz consisted of review questions from the past sessions. The students got all of the questions right, sharing further insight. Their answers were surprising, as they revealed the depth of their knowledge relating to their age. One particular question added great insight into their knowledge. The question was “what can I do if I go to the police to report a crime but the person I accuse bribes the police officer to arrest me?” The students already knew about issue of corruption and were seeking help to discern ways to defeat the corruption that abuses their rights.

Ultimately, over the course of the month three presentations were given to Polina's Queensland School about domestic violence, the importance of education and the responsibilities and rights of a child. As the month progressed the students gained more confidence sharing their thoughts and the discussions continued to grow and expand.

The volunteers hope that this project will continue, as after each session the students opened up more and more, with their awareness of the subjects growing.

Slum Profiling: Health

Assessing the needs of the residents of Old Fadama.

In a yearlong project, PAHO is profiling Old Fadama, Ghana's largest slum with a population of approximately 80,000 people.

In January 2014 PAHO began investigating the health and sanitary conditions within the slum.

This included an assessment of its sanitary conditions, its available health facilities as well as the prevalence of illness and disease. The findings and recommendations of this research will form a new health based project for future volunteers to work on to appropriately combat the issues faced.

Background on Health

Old Fadama is the largest slum in Ghana with an estimated population of 80,000 people inhabiting only 31.3 hectares of land, resulting in a



Slum Profiling team in Old Fadama beginning their research.

population density roughly ten times that of Manhattan.²⁰ Old Fadama has been the ire of Accra's leading politician's for well over a decade, with the continuous threat of eviction to make way for an ecological redevelopment of Korle-Goonor Lagoon looming large over the slum's many residents. As a result of this, Old Fadama is considered an illegal settlement and its resident's squatters. Consequently, the Government refuses to provide Old Fadama with any basic amenities such as healthcare, waste collection and education. Additionally, Old Fadama sits on top of one of the world's largest dumps of e-waste, with approximately 215,000 tons of second hand consumer items landing in Old Fadama every year.²¹ Therefore, it is hardly surprising that Old Fadama is ranked as one of the top ten most polluted places in the world.²²

²⁰ Sharon Benzoni, “How a Savings Bank Became One Slum's Line in the Sand”, *Next City.Org*,

<<http://nextcity.org/informalcities/entry/how-one-slums-savings-bank-became-a-line-in-the-sand>>, [accessed: 31/01/2014]

²¹ Helena Selby, “Old Fadama: Threat to Ghana achieving MDGs”, *The Chronicle*, 15 June 2011, <<http://thechronicle.com.gh/old-fadama-threat-to-ghana-achieving-mdgs/>>, [accessed: 31/01/2014]

²² David Biello, “E-Waste Dump among Top 10 Most Polluted Sites”, *The Scientific American*, 17 December 2013, <<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/e-waste-dump-among-top-10-most-polluted-sites/>>. [accessed: 31/01/2014]

In particular, it is the abysmal sanitary conditions and the burning of e-waste by many of the scrap-dealers plying their trade in Old Fadama that poses a significant risk to the health of residents. Salvaging, repairing and selling the metals from the e-waste is one of the more profitable ventures in Old Fadama and attracts a significant number of residents. The process of extracting the desired metals requires burning the covering plastic thereby releasing toxic elements such as mercury, lead and brominates into the airspace directly above Old Fadama.²³ Additionally, due to the absence of waste collection and adequate sewerage systems, Old Fadama has now become a settlement on top a giant pile of human waste and rubbish. It is not uncommon to see unclothed children frolicking through the build-up of waste and residents relieving themselves in the main thoroughfares. Access to clean drinking water is also significantly limited which increases the risk of infections of water-borne diseases.

Despite the population size of Old Fadama and the abysmal living conditions, access to healthcare for residents is significantly limited. Most significantly, the Plange Clinic, the only private medical facility in Old Fadama, has closed, thereby leaving

²³ Helena Selby, “Old Fadama: Threat to Ghana achieving MDGs”, *The Chronicle*, 15 June 2011, <<http://thechronicle.com.gh/old-fadama-threat-to-ghana-achieving-mdgs/>>, [accessed: 31/01/2014]

chemical stores as the only medical facilitators situated in Old Fadama. Due to financial and social reasons, access to the nearby hospitals is difficult.

Methodology

In order to collect the appropriate data, weekly visits were made to Old Fadama where interviews were conducted with residents, business owners and members of community associations. Due to health being such a broad issue, it was integral that those interviewed were representative of Old Fadama. Therefore ten groups were identified to be interviewed, these included:

- Chemical stores
- Community leaders;
- Community nurses;
- Food sellers;
- General people;
- Mosque and Church leaders;
- Non-Government Organisations (NGOs);
- Scrap dealers;
- Sex workers; and
- Traditional birth attendants.

Findings

Since the commencement of this project, the team of volunteers have visited Old Fadama three times to conduct interviews. Those interviewed include:

- One owner and four employees of separate chemical stores trading in Old Fadama;
- Pro-Link Centre;
- Three community nurses;
- Three food vendors; and
- One sex worker.

As a result, a number of important issues have been identified.

National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)

The NHIS is a universal health insurance scheme intended to drastically improve the access to healthcare for Ghanaian citizens by providing health insurance to citizens as an alternative to the 'cash and carry' method of healthcare that was prevalent in Ghana. However, the scheme has been less than successful



Interviews with food sellers of Old Fadama

with only 29% of poor Ghanaians registered.²⁴

This statistic is consistent with the findings gathered in Old Fadama. None of the chemical stores interviewed in Old Fadama were NHIS accredited and a vast majority of their customers were not registered with NHIS.

Even though the residents of Old Fadama are considered illegal settlers, as citizens of Ghana they are eligible to be registered with NHIS. Financial limitations are a factor as to why residents fail to register; however, the NHIS is geared to be affordable to those considered indigent. What was found through all of the interviews was that residents of Old Fadama are still being forced to pay for medical treatment in hospitals in cases where such treatment should be free for those registered with NHIS. Therefore, this scheme is not considered effective.

Access to Healthcare

Due to the fact that ambulances do not enter Old Fadama and that a majority of residents are not NHIS registered, it was not surprising that the inaccessibility to healthcare in Old Fadama was a consistent response in all interviews.

It is apparent that chemical stores are the first point of call for residents who are ill and seeking medication. It is still not known at exactly what stage of the illness the customer will come to the store, however, one statistic provided by a chemical store owner was that 70% of customers will come to the store when they are beginning to feel ill rather than when they are seriously ill. All of the chemical stores interviewed said that they advise customers to go to a hospital rather than just taking medication, however, just how many follow their advice is unknown as many customers do not report back. In regards to night time emergencies, chemical store owners are contactable by phone and will provide assistance, such as first-aid. Where appropriate, they advise the resident to go to hospital.

Why residents do not go to the hospital was continually pressed in interviews. Financial limitations were a significant factor, as residents, even if NHIS registered, are forced to pay money before any medical assistance is provided. However, non-attendance was not limited to financial restrictions, as residents who could afford hospital treatment also refused to go. There is a perception that hospital staff will not take proper care of them and, thus, they would rather visit a chemical store or go to a herbalist for a traditional remedy. The chemical stores interviewed stressed that it was this

²⁴ Patrick Apoya and Anna Marriott, *Achieving a Shared Goal: Free Universal Health Care in Ghana*, Oxfam International, 2011.

lack of awareness on the purpose of hospitals that severely restricted resident's access to medical treatment. Further suggesting that education was needed to inform residents over the important role that hospitals play in society and to deter them from visiting herbalists.

Another barrier to healthcare for residents is their inability to afford the required medication. Of the chemical stores interviewed, three said that they would take into consideration the person who could not afford the medication and either provide it to them for free or on credit. However, most of the chemical stores now stock substitute brands which are much more affordable, albeit sometimes less effective.

Despite the lack of any health facilities in Old Fadama, there are ventures currently operating that allow residents access to healthcare in the slum itself. One such example are the community nurses that visit Old Fadama every day of the working week and carry out basic health services such as immunisations. The nurses target a particular group every day; for example on Monday's the nurses provide immunisations to small children whilst on Tuesday's the nurse's travel to the different schools in Old Fadama. There are currently fourteen nurses that come from the Ussher Clinic to Old Fadama. Although working in a population of 80,000 people, the nurses claim to be assessable to most of the residents and will conduct random house visits to reach those people who cannot reach them.

Additionally, the Pro-Link centre is a drop-in centre that provides free medical support and counselling for sexual health issues that is open to both men and women residing in Old Fadama.

One constant complaint throughout all interviews was the absence of a dedicated medical clinic in Old Fadama. A community of approximately 80,000 people to not have a medical clinic is an obviously major issue and a significant detriment to the accessibility to healthcare for residents. This was also a complaint from the community nurses who complained that for a large amount of their work, there is not adequate space for them to fully perform their services effectively and that such a clinic would provide them with a central location

which would make them significantly more accessible to residents.

Sexual Health

The majority of the information gathered on sexual health in Old Fadama was from the interview with two employees of the Pro-Link Clinic. As previously mentioned the clinic is a drop-in centre that provides free HIV checks, counselling services, family planning consultations and provides medication to treat sexual health issues free of charge. HIV was not considered by the Clinic as a prevalent issue in Old Fadama and did not pose a significant health risk. It is obvious that the clinic is having a positive impact on sexual health in Old Fadama. For example, as a result of their educational campaigns and consultations, women are now much more informed on how to negotiate with their partner over condom use. This is especially beneficial in regards to contracting STI's and for family planning. However like most community organizations in Old Fadama, the clinic receives no government funding and relies on funds from partner NGO's. As a result, the clinic is significantly underfunded. STI's were consistently regarded by the chemical stores as a major health issue in Old Fadama. All of the chemical stores sold condoms and demand has generally remained strong.

Condom use among sex workers was considered high by the Pro-Link clinic, which also travels to brothels within Old Fadama to conduct HIV tests. However, it was condom use among the general population which remains an issue of concern. Reasons for this include a general lack of education on the importance of safe sex and because of religious reasons, especially among the large male Muslim community residing in Old Fadama.

Illness and Disease

Malaria and cholera were consistently considered the most common illnesses affecting residents in Old Fadama. The risk of malaria was particularly strong to the residents residing near Korle-Goonor Lagoon. The use of mosquito nets in the community was not known. However, due to the fact that most residents slept on the floor in crowded rooms, the use of mosquito nets is often ineffective. Nevertheless, anti-malaria pills have now become much

more accessible in the chemical stores interviewed which will be highly beneficial in reducing the threat of malaria, especially among infant children.

The poor sanitary conditions prevalent in Old Fadama were touted by the Pro-Link Centre as being the biggest health risk to the slum's many children.

Skin infections were also a concern for the chemical stores, as more and more customer's sought treatment for rashes and irritations. Although they cannot be certain of the exact cause, their suspicions laid strongly with the toxic smoke billowing from the burning of e-waste.

Maternal Health

Maternal health poses a significant risk to pregnant woman and new born infants. Many pregnant women do not routinely visit doctors for check-ups and, as a result, new born infants are more at risk to suffer complications at birth. The community nurses attributed this to the woman's husbands refusing to pay for medical check-ups during pregnancy. Additionally, a high proportion of woman do not give birth in a hospital but rather give birth in Old Fadama with the assistance of a traditional birth attendant. This was of concern to the community nurses as traditional birth attendants are not medically trained and, therefore, are not properly equipped to deal with complications during birth. This increases the risk of serious complications during birth which can be fatal for mother and child.

Difficulties

During the interviewing process, a number of difficulties were encountered. Firstly, a translator was required to assist in a majority of the interviews. Although by using a translator we were able to interview a far greater amount of people than if we were restricted to English speaking residents, this had the effect of reducing the reliability of some responses. Additionally, another problem encountered during the interview process was that where the interviewee was unsure of how to respond to a particular question, the interviewee would just agree with whatever was being asked. Only further questioning

by the interviewer would uncover that the opposite was correct.

civil cases, or for those who the Legal Aid board believe to require legal representation.

requested in order to compel the respondent to attend mediation. Mediation sessions take place at the Legal Aid Scheme's Office and will typically last 30 minutes, and with all mediation sessions conducted by a trained mediator.

I. II. *Next Steps*

With five of the target groups already interviewed, the goal for the remainder of the interviewing process is to interview all of the target groups. Additionally, it is clear that the absence of a dedicated medical clinic in Old Fadama remains a major concern for residents and this is something that can be further explored in future interviews, especially with the community associations. Once enough data has been recorded, a report will be tabled which will offer an in-depth analysis on the issue of health in Old Fadama.

Legal Aid

Experiencing Access to Justice in Ghana.

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

In Ghana, there is no guaranteed legal representation for the majority of Ghanaians due to dire economic need, and many suspects remain neglected in cells, some as long as ten years for lack of legal representation.

The cost of going to court results in many members of society feeling powerless and unable to participate in the justice system. This leads to many citizens inability to present their cases in court and attempts by some to independently resolve disputes through adverse means.

Chapter 26 of the Constitution for the Republic of Ghana is responsible for the establishment of Legal Aid, authorised by the Legal Aid Scheme in 1997. The Legal Aid Scheme assures that all citizens have access to justice, and have the ability to participate in the legal system. Pursuant to section 2 of the Legal Aid Scheme Act (Act542), legal services are available free of charge for citizens who make the minimum wage or less in criminal and

Legal Aid has been an invaluable source of legal assistance since it was first established in 1997. Nonetheless, the Minister of Justice, Mr Martin Amidu, states that 79% of Ghanaians are unaware of the Legal Aid Scheme and the services it provides. Hence, 79% of Ghanaians cannot take advantage of the Legal Aid Scheme and, therefore, have access to free mandated legal representation and services. The Scheme provides services which include free legal advice to parties on request, mediation and case settlement with parties in dispute and representation in court. Nonetheless, in order for Ghanaian citizens to be eligible to receive such services from the Scheme, clients must first meet a means test in order to ensure eligibility.

The means test indicator takes into account a client's income and assets, to serve as a guide to help Legal Aid assess whether potential clients may be financially eligible for the Legal Aid Scheme. A means test will take place during a client's intake interview at the Legal Aid office.

When a client first arrives at Legal Aid, they will be greeted and sent to room eleven, whereby an interview will take place in order to determine the validity of their legal dispute. Careful attention needs to be given to the applicant during client intake in order to properly assess the legality of the claim. The best course of action will then be discussed, comprehensive of mediation, legal advice, or legal representation. It is during the initial client intake that the issue of a language barrier will first arise for non-Ghanaian speaking volunteers.

The Legal Aid Scheme tends to persuade most parties to opt for the remedy of mediation, as it is more economical and proficient as opposed to going to court. It is highly important to solicit specific facts from the applicant as not all cases are suitable for mediation. If mediation is elected, an appointment will be made and a letter will be issued to the applicant inviting the responding party to appear for mediation. If the applicant is unable to issue the mediation letter, a police assistance form will be

In January, the majority of cases at the Legal Aid Scheme Office were of a civil nature and concerned applications for divorce, child maintenance and property disputes. Opportunity emerges to write child maintenance orders, stamp court orders, prepare writ of summons for clients and draft affidavits. This provides volunteers with the opportunity to gain practical experience and further develop their theoretical knowledge. Working at the Legal Aid Scheme Office also teaches volunteers how to adapt to a multilingual professional working environment and apply a different set of legal principles to given cases appropriately.

In the circumstance of being able to attend court proceedings, the majority of cases heard at the High Court were of a civil nature, which concerned divorce applications and property and tenant disputes. An exceptional amount of the family law disputes, involved situations of physical violence and adultery. Volunteers can take advantage of courtroom observations to maximise their experience and help increase their understanding of the court process, the roles of court personnel and legal jargon. When a trial is not in session, volunteers get the opportunity to sit in chambers and hear motions before a judge or hearings or a sensitive matter. This experience allows volunteers to get acquainted with a judge's courtroom expectations, demeanour, mannerisms and interactions with others.

The Legal Aid Scheme assures that all members of society can gain access to justice, mediation services, legal advice and legal representation, free of charge. Therefore the Legal Aid Scheme is fundamentally important in supporting all Ghanaians with their right to legal representation. In conclusion, volunteers who work at the Legal Aid Scheme Office are provided with an invaluable and highly practical experience.

Human Rights in Focus



Human Rights in the Media

Bethany Butchers

The beginning of the year has seen many human rights related matters being addressed in the national media. However, a dominant human rights issue being focused on this month has been the right to education. Expressing the utter importance of education and every child's right to it, the media in January has highlighted both the government's failure to provide a quality education to every child within Ghana and the efforts exerted by NGOs and the government to assist in helping rectify this issue.

Education as a fundamental human right reaps many benefits, not only to the individuals but the wider community and, indeed, to the country as a whole. Education instils in individuals valuable knowledge and teaches the ability of learning, which is incredibly useful for everyday life. Moreover, education enables social growth by increasing a child's self-confidence and encourages children to develop their own, unique personalities. As stated in October's issue of the PAHO Human Right's Journal, education "is widely regarded as both an end in itself and a means for society to grow and develop."²⁵ In fact, education is crucial to overcoming issues of poverty and exploitation. Accordingly, the desperate need for a quality education for every child has been reflected in abundance in the media this month, with each Ghanaian Newspaper addressing the issue with at least one article on a daily basis.

Whilst the majority of Ghanaian children have access to an education, regrettably, this education does not always meet acceptable standards. The abuse of this fundamental human right to a quality education, which is unfortunately quite common within Ghana, was addressed on the 13th of January with reference to the educational situation in the stilt village of Nzulezo. The *Daily Graphic*

published an article entitled "*Counting the cost*" which outlined how a quality education within Nzulezo was very rare, with the article stating that many children could not hold a five-minute conversation in English. The article explained that the poor quality of education in Nzulezo is due to a number of contributing factors, all of which, however, could be linked to a severe lack of finances. For instance, there is only one trained teacher at the school, who also acts as the headmaster, and four pupil teachers, all of who are paid for by the community.²⁶

Moreover, the location and circumstances of the school has, unfortunately, prevented the students from receiving a quality education. Indeed, given the fact that Nzulezo is a stilt village positioned on top of water, the village's school requires significant government funding to overcome a number of obstacles, one of which is education. Indeed, the transport to the school can be described as unreliable at best, as the teachers do not have their own canoes, often resulting in their late arrival to the school. In fact, due to the precarious nature of the village, it is actually very difficult to entice teachers to work at the school at all, with many teachers refusing to go there.²⁷

Furthermore, there are no offices for the teachers, forcing them to use the library, described by the article as little more than a storeroom, which consequently restricts the children's use of the library as a space to sit and learn.²⁸ Additionally, there are no working toilets at the school, which means both the student and teachers are required to make a thirty minute canoe journey if they need to relieve themselves, making them miss valuable lesson time. Consequently, the school, through the *Daily Graphic*, has made an appeal to the government to provide the school with offices, toilet facilities and canoes for the staff. Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to argue that the government of Ghana is, essentially, undermining the children's vital human rights, as they have not provided

adequate funding for the school.²⁹ Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident and the government's failure to provide sufficient financial support to public schools can be seen nationwide.

The *Daily Guide* published further evidence of the government undermining Ghanaian children's right to education through its funding shortfall. In an article published on 14th January, entitled "No Feeding Grants for SHS" the *Daily Guide* wrote how the government, by failing to release funding grants on time, have forced several schools in the Northern region to postpone the start of their school year, thus resulting in students being unable to complete their syllabus for the year. The article expressed concern over the delayed grant, suggesting that it could disrupt the calendar year, much like in 2011 and 2012. The Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools further suggested that "The development was negatively affecting the smooth running of the SHSs"³⁰.

This overwhelming lack of resources and funding has not only affected the children, but the staff as well. On the 21st January the *Daily Graphic* released an article named "Colleges of Education teachers embark on a sit-down strike – but ministry says it's illegal". This article explained that whilst four years ago the colleges' status was changed to tertiary, the teacher's conditions had not been reviewed. Thus, the Colleges of Education Teachers Association of Ghana (CETAG) began a sit-down strike on the 20th January in protest against their 'poor conditions of service'³¹. Mr Paul Kofi Krampa, the Public Relations Officer of the Ministry, said CETAG's members demanded to be paid an extra seventy percent of their salary whilst changes were being made. Subsequently, as this strike illustrated, the government's lack of financial support for the teachers can also have a detrimental effect on Ghanaian children's education.

²⁹ Bokpe, "Education in Nzulezo - Counting the cost"

³⁰ Stephen T. Zoure, "No Feeding Grants for SHS", 14th January 2014, *Daily Guide*, p21

³¹ Severious Kale-Dery, "Colleges of Education teachers embark on sit-down strike - but ministry says it's illegal", 21st January 2014, *Daily Graphic*, p10,

²⁵ Pippa Mulvey, "Human Rights in the Media", *PAHRJ*, October 2013, (Vol. 1.), pp. 15-16

²⁶ Seth J. Bokpe, "Education in Nzulezo – Counting the Cost", *Daily Graphic*, 13th January 2014, p34

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

However, whilst the media have presented ample examples of the government's failings this month, they have also sought to positively highlight the various attempts made to rectify this worrying situation. The attempts by NGO's to assist in efforts to give every child access to an education was particularly focused on in January. For example, the *Daily Graphic* revealed how in 2015, the Obaapa Development Foundation will be sending one thousand teenage mothers back to school by providing them with a minimum of GH 1500 cedi to each girl for every academic year in order to minimise the burden these girls were placing on their families and society. Moreover the NGO has called on the teenager's own mothers to help cater for their grandchildren to enable the girls to have enough study time. The assembly's support has been pledged for this project.³²

The focus on efforts being exerted to aid educational access continued right until the end of the month. On 24th January the government's good work was highlighted, with the *Daily Graphic* explaining how a new three-unit classroom block has been installed at the cost of GH 86 000 cedi at Bedum Methodist Basic School. The District assembly also presented the district directorate of education with five hundred dual desks for the distribution to all basic schools within the district. Moreover, Mrs Nkrumah Aboah, an MP for the region, presented fifty dual desks to the Odoben and Brakwa SH technical schools, funded from her share of the common fund.³³ This month, the national media have also placed heavy emphasis on advocating for universal access to education. On 9th January, the *Daily Graphic* exposed plans for Cape Coast University to be upgraded by explaining that the university would be assuming the status of a college from the 2014/2015 academic year. This would then allow a graduate program to be introduced by distance education, enabling students not able to travel to still partake in a further education.³⁴

The media also suggested the incorporation of technology into the education system as a means to increasing the access to education. Professor Clement Dzidonu, through the *Daily Graphic*, stated that there is a need for public universities to move away from on campus learning and embrace technology and open-learning universities.³⁵ Clearly, E-learning should be implemented as it can offer quality education and increase student population, removing the barriers of time and distance.³⁶

Additionally, from August 2014 the University of Ghana will begin a Master's programme in distance education, which will be run by the Institute of Continuing Distance Education (ICDE) of the university.³⁷ Hence the transition into the technological age has been seen to improve access to education and, thus, contributed to fulfilling every child's basic human right to have an education.

In conclusion, the fundamental human right of a quality education was predominantly addressed within the newspapers this month. Not only were the unfortunate breaches of this human right discussed, but the media also made great efforts to reward with recognition the NGO's, individuals and government agencies that have attempted to make this essential human right available to everyone. The PAHO office certainly understands the importance of this human right, which it already addresses through multiple projects. However, the office and the volunteers will continue to monitor the issue of education, along with any other human rights issues reported in the national media, and will act on these accordingly.

Thursday 9th January 2014, *Daily Graphic*, p28

³⁵ Nana Konadu Agyeman, "Maximise e-learning to increase admission – Prof. Dzidonu, Monday 13th January 2014, *Daily Graphic*, p60

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Doreen Andoh, "University of Ghana begins MA in Distance Education", Monday 13th January 2014, *Daily Graphic*, p60

Immigration and violation of human rights: Italy and Ghana

Silvia Valente

Immigration is the the action of coming to live permanently in a foreign country.

Migration is an enduring theme of human history and is considered one of the defining global issues of the twenty-first century. It is a phenomena of epochal dimensions with which the world has faced in the past and that is likely to increase in the coming decades. Studies have demonstrated that the reasons behind the growth of this phenomenon are to be found in globalization and in the increase in disputes between different countries causing a massive migration of people in search of a better living.³⁸

In order to have a complete reconstruction of the regulations regarding immigration and the relating rights provided by the international law, it seems necessary to provide an overview of the definitions of *refugee*, *displaced persons*, and *internally displaced persons*.

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, is the key legal document in defining who a refugee is, their rights and obligations. The only amendments which have been made to this convention are the geographical and temporal limitations, meaning that a person can be qualified as a refugee even if the events have occurred before the 1st January 1951.³⁹ The 1951 Geneva Convention shall thus apply to any person who has a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to

³² Kwadwo Baffoe Donkor, "Foundation Assists Teenage Mothers", Wednesday 8th January 2014, *Daily Graphic*

³³ Gilbert Mawuli Agbey, "Classroom block for Bedum Methodist Basic School", Friday 24th January 2014, *Daily Graphic*, p44

³⁴ Shirley Asiedu Addo, "UCC Centre for Continuing Education to be upgraded",

³⁸ GRAZIANI, *Antichi e nuovi rifugiati nel diritto internazionale europeo*, (Editoriale Scientifica, 2006), p. 55

³⁹ 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees

such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country"⁴⁰

During the 1800's, another phenomenon different from the refugees was outlined: the *displaced persons*. This term defines people who are forced to leave their country but for reasons that differ from persecution, therefore those who are unable to benefit from the rights provided by the 1951 Convention.

Ghana and Italy are two countries which every day are forced to deal with problems deriving from massive migration of people coming both from other States and the same one.

Immigration has always been one of Italy's biggest issues, but this has become more prevalent in recent times. Italy has been forced to receive large amounts of migrants, in particular coming from Tunisia and Libya, resulting in serious problems, especially with regards to human rights.

As a matter of fact, in 2009 Italy was convicted (Case of *Hirsi v. Italy*)⁴¹ by the European Court of Human Rights for having violated the migrants' fundamental rights.

The case concerned a group of about two hundred individuals who left Libya aboard three vessels with the aim of reaching the Italian coast. When the vessels reached 35 miles south of

Lampedusa (Agrigento), that is, within the Maltese Search and Rescue Region of Responsibility, they were intercepted by three ships from the Italian Revenue Police and the Coastguard. The occupants of the Libyan vessels were then transferred onto the Italian military ship and were not informed of their destination and the authorities took no steps to identify them. When at their destination, they thought they had reached Lampedusa but instead they landed in Tripoli and were handed over to the Libyan authorities. Of the two hundred migrants, eleven Somali nationals and thirteen Eritrean nationals were tracked down and assisted by the Italian Council for Refugees which then brought an action to the European Court of Human Rights.

Italy has, thus, been condemned for having violated the principle of "*non-refoulement*",⁴² for having sent the migrants in a territory where they could have been subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; for not giving them the possibility to benefit of the rights provided by the international conventions; for having violated their fundamental human rights. Hence, this country had to compensate the 24 applicants with 15,000 euro each.

Unfortunately, this was not the only case that saw Italy at the centre of disputes. In fact, recently, a video started circulating on how immigrants were treated in a refugee shelter in Lampedusa. These people had to wait outside in the cold Winter weather, while they were being disinfected in case they had scabies, a disease which none of them had. The images make you think of concentration camps while they are described as emergency and help centres. The employees of the "*Cooperativa Lampedusa Accoglienza*" treated them like animals and in a very arrogant way, as if they acted like that on a daily basis.⁴³

⁴² Article 33 (1) of the 1951 Convention: "*no Contracting State shall expel or return ("refouler") a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.*"

⁴³ Alfio Sciacca, "Lampedusa: in fila, nudi e al freddo La disinfezione choc dei migranti", *Corriere della Sera Cronache*, 18/12/2013

It is as if the limit of the inhuman treatment has been exceeded a long time ago and no one has ever noticed.

On the other hand, there is a long history of migration (both internal and international) in Ghana.

In the beginning of the 1960's, most of the migration was within the borders of the country and involved groups and individuals of different ethnic groups moving into others in search of security during the civil wars. These people are called *internally displaced persons*, meaning that even though they flee from their hometown for reasons that can be similar to those of the refugees, they haven't crossed the international borders, thus remaining under the protection of their own government- even though that government can be the cause of their flight.

The DRC Migration stated that 50% of the Ghanaian population is formed by immigrants which means that half of the people in Ghana live in a country that isn't theirs.

Approximately 4.8 million people live in slums in Ghana, 45% of the country's total urban population. In Accra, with an estimated population of 4.5 million people, almost one third of the city's residents live in the slum.

Slum communities, where residents live, work and raise their children, are characterized by grossly inadequate housing and living conditions, lack of basic services, overcrowding and insecurity of tenure. Insecurity of tenure leaves people vulnerable to forced eviction.

Old Fadama is Ghana's biggest informal settlement situated in the middle of Accra. In 2009 it has been estimated that circa 80,000 people live in 31.3 hectares of land.⁴⁴ The community was formed with the relocation of immigrants from the Osu area for the construction of the Non-Aligned Movements (NAM) conference in Ghana around 1990, after settlers in the area had been relocated to a different location which was named New Fadama. This territory saw an increase of population when people fled the *Kokomba-Nanumba* war in North Africa. Furthermore, due to rural

⁴⁰ Art. 1, A (2) 1951 Geneva Convention: "*As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.*"

In the case of a person who has more than one nationality, the term "the country of his nationality" shall mean each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of his nationality if, without any valid reason based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of one of the countries of which he is a national"

⁴¹ Case of *Hirsi Jamaa And Others V. Italy*, Application No. 27765/09, 23 February 2012, European Court of Human Rights

⁴⁴ Amnesty International, "When we sleep we don't sleep. Living under threat of forced eviction in Ghana", April 2011, www.amnesty.org

urban drift and housing affordability, more people have moved in the community and continue to move. Old Fadama has thus become an attraction, especially young adults who come to Accra in search for better living conditions.

Although this community is part of Accra, thus under its “control and protection”, the government has not provided the basic needs to the residents: water, electricity, sanitation. There are no public schools in Old Fadama, hence most of the children are not educated and the few of them who go to school have to go outside the community. There are no clinics meaning that in case of emergencies they have to pay a taxi to reach the nearest hospital and most of the residents don't even know the existence of medical insurance. These are and should be considered by all to be a violation of their human rights. No one should be treated like animals. Each person, resident or citizen, should be treated with the same respect and dignity.

The government has not taken measures to enable the people living in Old Fadama to acquire legal title to the land they live on. The authorities say that the residents live there “illegally” which means that this leaves residents without security and permanently vulnerable to forced eviction.

As a matter of fact, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) has repeatedly announced plans to demolish Old Fadama. In 2002, it issued eviction notices but, fortunately, these were not carried out. Same in 2009, where the AMA announced that the settlement would be demolished and that the residents would not be relocated nor compensated.

A forced eviction is the removal of people against their will from the homes or land they occupy without legal protection. Under international law a forced eviction can be carried out only as a last resort, once all the other alternatives have been explored. Most importantly, after having found an alternative and adequate housing or compensation. No one should live under the threat of forced eviction.

Ghana, as a subscriber of most human rights international treaties, is obliged to respect, protect and provide adequate housing to their residents and prevent forced eviction. However,

Ghana doesn't have and is not eager to establish laws or measures that will enable Old Fadama's residents to live a decent and human life.

From the point of view of two very different countries it has been observed how the phenomenon of forced migrations represents a common issue, especially regarding the protection of human rights. Unfortunately it is not always possible to find a balance between the needs of a nation and those of its inhabitants. These people are forced to leave their country of origin and abandon their homes to move to a new country that very often does not accept them. It seems appropriate to conclude with the first article of the Declaration of Human Rights which states that “*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.*”⁴⁵

Human Rights Court Report

Anthony Cau

On Monday 13 January 2014, a group of three volunteers had their first visit to the Law Courts Complex and were able to sit in on a session of the Human Rights Court.

The Court was at full attendance with many people standing at the back of the courtroom, which, due to the absence of an air-conditioner, made for a very warm morning. The cases being heard were mostly small procedural hearings and, therefore, there was a steady stream of traffic going both in and out of the courtroom.

One case of interest concerned a dispute between a market near Cape Coast and the local authority over demolition work on the land next to the market. The market applied for an injunction against the local authority to stop the demolition. A stay of execution was granted against the local authority preventing it from conducting any demolition work until the case is heard and decided. However, the market

reapplied to the Court over a breach of the stay of execution in that the local authority continued demolition work. The standard of proof over contempt issues is ‘beyond reasonable doubt’ and the Court found that such a standard was not met. Justice Kofi Essel Mensah, the presiding Judge, recommended that the two parties settle outside of the Court rather than go to trial as this would be cheaper and much quicker.



Our volunteers meeting with the court judge.

In another case, a female barrister complained over the delay in her client's trial, which began in 2011 and was still ongoing mostly due to the other side's failure to attend court. According to Justice Mensah, such delays in judicial proceedings are unfortunately common, however, one of the main reasons of the Human Rights Court being established as a specialized court was for cases to be heard more expeditiously and without a significant delay between hearings. There were a number of differences in the general functioning of the court compared to those the volunteers were familiar with in their home countries. 7 For example Justice Mensah, during proceedings, directly addressed and asked questions to two local Chiefs who were seated in the public gallery. Additionally, the general atmosphere of the courtroom was fairly relaxed and some of the barristers seemed at times unprepared and disorganised.

A positive observation was that a significant number of the barristers appearing in court were women. Justice Mensah commented on the fact that a greater number of women in Ghana are entering the workforce and becoming

⁴⁵ 1948 Declaration of Human Rights

the major income earner for some families.

Once the Court was adjourned for the morning, the volunteers were fortunate to have the opportunity to meet and ask questions with Justice Mensah in his chambers. The first question concerned the sources of human rights law in Ghana and Justice Mensah, in reply, said that as human rights is a global issue it thus has one global language. Therefore in determining matters, he will give due regard to all international and regional Human Rights Conventions and case law from other common law jurisdictions. Also discussed was the duration of the typical trial in the Human Rights Court. Justice Mensah commented that due to the importance of upholding human rights for the individual, the Court is much more accessible to residents compared to the other private law courts in Ghana.

The final topics of discussion were the main types of human rights cases dealt with by the Court. Justice Mensah detailed that a majority of cases were against the police force over arbitrary detention. He provided one case as an example where an accused male was held on remand for fourteen years until his case was thrown out. He is now appearing before the Human Rights Court seeking compensation. Overall, the visit to the Human Rights Court was a very interesting and enriching morning and was a great introduction to the Ghanaian Judicial System for the volunteers.

Italia: Immigrazione e violazione dei diritti umani: Ghana e Italia

Silvia Valente

L'immigrazione ed il diritto di asilo evocano un fenomeno di dimensioni epocali con il quale il mondo si è confrontato in passato ed è destinato a confrontarsi ancora di più nei prossimi decenni: ciò a causa della globalizzazione e del crescente squilibrio esistente tra i Paesi che

porta un afflusso massiccio di persone a spostarsi alla ricerca di migliori condizioni di vita.

Al fine di procedere ad una ricostruzione completa della disciplina in materia, nonché delle tutele previste a livello internazionale, è necessario fornire una panoramica delle definizioni di rifugiato, profugo e sfollato.

La Convenzione di Ginevra del 28 luglio 1951, adottata dalla Conferenza dei Plenipotenziari delle Nazioni Unite sullo *status* dei Rifugiati e degli Apolidi il 28 luglio 1951, statuisce per la prima volta nel diritto internazionale, una definizione di rifugiato universalmente applicabile. Tale definizione, modificata dal Protocollo addizionale di New York del 1967, stabilisce che il rifugiato è *"chiunque temendo, a ragione, di essere perseguitato per motivi di razza, religione, nazionalità, appartenenza ad un dato gruppo sociale o per le sue opinioni politiche, si trova fuori dello Stato di cui è cittadino e non può, o non vuole, a causa di questo timore, avvalersi della protezione di questo Stato [...]".*

Accanto alla figura di "rifugiato tradizionale" si delinea, alla fine degli anni Ottanta, una nuova categoria di individui bisognosi di protezione internazionale: le *displaced persons*, o meglio noti come profughi. Con il suddetto termine, si intende rappresentare quei soggetti che sono costretti a fuggire dal loro Paese d'origine ma a causa di ragioni diverse dalla persecuzione e per questo esclusi dall'ambito di applicazione della Convenzione del 1951.

Ghana e Italia sono due Paesi che, anche se in maniera diversa, sono costretti ad affrontare ogni giorno i problemi derivanti dall'afflusso massiccio di persone provenienti sia da Stati terzi che dallo Stato stesso.

In Italia l'immigrazione è un fenomeno che specialmente di recente ha cominciato a raggiungere dimensioni significative, specialmente a seguito di afflussi massicci di persone provenienti dalla Libia e dalla Tunisia, comportando gravi problemi specialmente per quanto riguarda i diritti umani.

Nel 2009, infatti l'Italia è stata condannata (nel caso *Hirsi*) dalla Corte europea dei diritti dell'Uomo per aver violato i diritti fondamentali di migranti raccolti in mare aperto e rispediti indietro a loro insaputa, senza aver prima verificato se avessero i

requisiti giuridici per chiedere asilo politico o protezione internazionale. La Marina Italiana ha intercettato in acque internazionali un'imbarcazione con duecento immigrati proveniente dalla Libia e diretta in Italia. La Marina ha fatto quindi salire a bordo i soggetti i quali, credendo di essere diretti a Lampedusa, sono stati riportati in Libia. Dei duecento migranti, ventiquattro persone – undici somali e tredici eritrei – furono rintracciate ed assistite in loco dal Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati, il quale, venuto a conoscenza dei fatti, ha presentato una denuncia alla Corte Europea dei Diritti dell'Uomo.

L'Italia è stata quindi condannata per aver rispedito i migranti verso un Paese dove rischiavano di essere sottoposti a tortura e a trattamenti inumani e degradanti; di non aver permesso loro di accedere a diritti garantiti da convenzioni internazionali; di aver insomma grossolanamente violato i diritti umani fondamentali. Per tali motivi, l'Italia ha dovuto risarcire i ventiquattro ricorrenti somali ed eritrei con quindicimila euro ciascuno.

La sentenza *Hirsi* del 2009 è solo uno dei casi riguardanti la violazione dei diritti dell'immigrato nell'ambito dell'Unione europea. Purtroppo, anche se ci stiamo avviando verso l'armonizzazione dell'Ue i Paesi continuano ancora a cercare di eludere alcune leggi che obbligano li stessi a riconoscere a cittadini terzi i suddetti diritti.

In Italia, anche recentemente abbiamo assistito all'ennesima violazione dei diritti umani nei confronti di immigrati provenienti da Lampedusa. Un video è stato fatto circolare su come venivano trattati gli immigrati in un centro di accoglienza: come animali. Queste persone venivano fatte stare al freddo senza vestiti per poi essere disinfettate nel caso in cui avessero avuto la Scabbia, malattia peraltro che nessuno aveva quando è arrivato a Lampedusa. Immagini che ricordano i campi di concentramento e invece si tratta del centro di soccorso e di prima accoglienza. Gli operatori della *Cooperativa Lampedusa Accoglienza* che gestisce il centro governano la fila con la disinvoltura di chi fa da sempre questo tipo di lavoro. È come se il limite del trattamento disumano fosse stato superato da tempo e nessuno se ne fosse accorto.

In Ghana, il fenomeno dell'immigrazione è molto comune. Secondo il DRC Migration il 50% della

popolazione Ghaniana è composta da immigrati. Ciò significa che la metà della popolazione del Ghana vive in un Paese che non è il suo.

A seguito delle opportunità economiche che il sud stava offrendo, sempre più persone, durante il periodo coloniale, ha iniziato a lasciare il nord per raggiungere le piantagioni di cacao del sud.

L'immigrazione nel suddetto Paese è diversa da quella riguardante il nostro Paese in quanto la maggior parte degli immigrati sono *internally displaced people*, ovvero gruppi di persone che sono state costrette a lasciare le loro case o le loro residenze abituali a causa di conflitti armati, violenze generalizzate, violazioni dei diritti umani e che non hanno attraversato il confine.

Nel caso degli immigrati ghaniani, il motivo principale della migrazione è trovare migliori condizioni di vita. Tra il 2005 e il 2006, è stato stimato un migrante in più rispetto al 43% degli abitanti⁴⁶.

Con il passare degli anni, sempre più persone in difficoltà, quindi non solo persone in fuga dalla guerra ma anche coloro che magari si trovavano in situazioni economiche disagiate, hanno iniziato a trasferirsi in questo quartiere.

Nel 2009 è stato stimato che lungo le rive del fiume Odawa e la laguna Kore (31.3 ettari di terra) vivono all'incirca 80,000 persone. Questo quartiere è quindi diventato uno dei più grandi quartieri periferici in Ghana ed è considerato tra i dieci posti più inquinati al mondo.

Statistiche hanno inoltre stabilito che la maggior parte delle persone che vivono in Old Fadama sono migrati economici e solo in pochi sono scappati da guerre o violenze generalizzate.

Il suddetto quartiere periferico essendo parte di Accra è quindi di proprietà del governo il quale vuole cercare di mandare via gli individui che ormai da tempo vivono a Old Fadama.

Le leggi ghaniane non forniscono un'adeguata protezione a persone soggette a rischio di espulsione e le autorità non sono riuscite a mettere in moto garanzie sufficienti ad impedire l'espulsione forzata in violazione dei loro diritti umani. La maggior parte degli ufficiali di polizia nega di avere alcun tipo di responsabilità nei confronti di queste persone in quanto

queste vivono "illegalmente" nel suddetto quartiere.

Il Ghana è obbligato, in quanto firmatario di molti trattati internazionali sui diritti umani, a rispettare, proteggere e garantire una abitazione adeguata ai propri cittadini e a prevenire ed astenersi dal compiere rimozioni forzate. Tuttavia, il Governo non ha elaborato leggi o adottato misure a far sì che ad Old Fadama vengano rispettati i diritti ad una abitazione decorosa.

La rimozione forzata dei cittadini può essere possibile solo nel caso in cui non vi sono alternative e solo se le autorità prevedono una rilocalizzazione per i soggetti espulsi dalle loro terre.

Nel 2002, l'Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) ha disposto la demolizione di Old Fadama con la conseguente espulsione dei residenti ma la suddetta rimozione non è mai stata portata a termine. Nell'agosto del 2009, la stessa AMA ha annunciato che il quartiere sarebbe stato distrutto e che ai residenti non sarebbe stata trovata né una sistemazione né sarebbero stati in qualche modo compensati per lo sfratto subito. Nel Novembre dello stesso anno il Governo ha invece comunicato ai residenti che sarebbero stati trasferiti in un municipio adiacente, Adjen Kotoku, ma oltre quello non li fu comunicato più niente.

La minaccia di sfratto ed espulsione senza prima aver garantito delle soluzioni alternative per evitare che i soggetti rimangono senza una casa costituisce violazione dei diritti umani.

I residenti di Old Fadama hanno il diritto di essere consultati dall'Accra Metropolitan Assembly prima che vengano sfrattati ed inoltre l'AMA ha l'obbligo di trovare nuove abitazioni per gli individui che sono stati costretti ad abbandonare la propria terra e le loro case.

Purtroppo la minaccia di espulsione è solo uno delle tante violazioni dei diritti umani che i residenti di questo quartiere sono costretti a subire.

Ad Old Fadama non scorre acqua potabile, non vi sono scuole pubbliche, non vi sono ospedali, le ambulanze non possono entrare in caso di emergenze e la maggior parte dei residenti non ha idea di cosa sia un'assicurazione sanitaria. I bambini non hanno la possibilità di andare a scuola in quanto l'unica esistente nel quartiere è privata e quindi sono costretti a pagare e la maggior parte dei residenti non se lo può permettere. Non vi è una clinica né un ospedale quindi in caso di

emergenza sono costretti a prendere un taxi che li porti all'ospedale, ma anche in questo caso non tutti se lo possono permettere e molti sono stati educati a non dare fiducia ai medici.

Tutto ciò costituisce violazione dei diritti umani.

Il Governo dovrebbe avere l'obbligo di assistere tali individui in quanto vivono ormai da tempo ad Accra e ormai considerati cittadini ghaniani ma ciò non accade, anzi lo stesso sta cercando soluzioni per "liberarsi" di loro.

Abbiamo visto come il fenomeno delle migrazioni forzate costituisce, dal punto di vista di due Paesi tra loro molto diversi, un problema comune specialmente per quanto riguarda la protezione dei diritti umani. Purtroppo non sempre si riesce a trovare un equilibrio tra la volontà di uno Stato e il benessere dei residenti dello stesso. Queste persone sono costrette ad abbandonare le loro case, la loro terra e la loro quotidianità per arrivare in un Paese a loro straniero che non vuole accettarli. Purtroppo come abbiamo visto prendendo a confronti l'Italia e il Ghana si tratta di questioni molto delicate che purtroppo non sempre è facile trovare soluzioni che soddisfano sia il Paese in questione che gli stranieri che ne diventano residenti. Penso sia giusto concludere con il primo articolo della Dichiarazione dei Diritti Umani del 1948: *"Tutti gli esseri umani nascono liberi ed eguali in dignità e diritti. Essi sono dotati di ragione e di coscienza e devono agire gli uni verso gli altri in spirito di fratellanza."*

Kinderprostitution und Trafficking in Ghana

Lucas Marx

Kinderprostitution ist ein Milliarden-geschäft. Weltweit werden nach Schätzungen von NGO's jedes Jahr mindestens eine Million Mädchen und viele Jungen in die Prostitution gelockt oder gezwungen. Obwohl in den 90er Jahren das Bewusstsein über die sexuelle Ausbeutung von Kindern geweckt wurde, nehmen

⁴⁶ Ackah & Medvedev, 2010

Kinderprostitution, Kinderhandel und Kinderpornographie immer mehr zu. Ausgebeutet werden vor allem Mädchen zwischen 14 und 18 Jahren, aber auch Jungen und jüngere Kinder.

Ghana ist hierbei keine Ausnahme und kämpft zunehmend gegen den schnell wachsenden Sextourismus. Armut und extreme soziale Gegensätze sind die Hauptgründe, die sexuelle Ausbeutung von Kindern erst möglich machen. Viele Familien glauben den Versprechungen der Kinderhändler, ihre Tochter oder ihr Sohn werde in der Stadt eine gut bezahlte Arbeit bekommen oder könne eine Ausbildung machen. Oder die Eltern bekommen direkt bares Geld, das die Kinder dann als Schuld abarbeiten müssen.

Durch Unwissenheit lässt sich die ländliche Bevölkerung in armen Ländern von Kinderhändlern täuschen. Oftmals werden die Kinder dann in Umliegende Länder oder ins Ausland gebracht, wo sie unter entsetzlichen Umständen zur Prostitution gezwungen werden. Leider werden Frauen und Mädchen oft diskriminiert und gelten als weniger. Die Ansicht, dass ein Mädchen ruhig etwas zum Unterhalt der Familie beitragen könne – egal wie – ist weit verbreitet.

Kinderrechtsorganisationen in den großen Metropolen berichten immer wieder, dass Lokale Bordellen Mädchen mit Zigaretten foltern. Sie werden eingesperrt, angekettet, geschlagen, Kinder in, vergewaltigt, mit Vemirbrannt oder verstümmelt. Die Kinder leben unter erbärmlichen Umständen, sind ihren Verklern wehrlos ausgeliefert, bekommen oft nicht genug zu essen und keine medizinische Versorgung. Viele werden von ihren Ausbeutern drogenabhängig gemacht, damit sie gefügiger werden. Da Ghana ein beliebtes Reiseziel in Afrika ist, wächst auch die Rate derer, die Sex Tourismus antreiben. Die Regierung hat die Situation nicht im Griff und tut sich schwer, das Problem zu bekämpfen.

Einige gute Initiativen haben sich aber schon als bewährt erwiesen. Eine davon ist die Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU), die bereits 117 Fälle in 10 verschiedenen Regionen aufgedeckt und somit 409 Kinder vor der Ausbeutung bewahrt haben. Dank Ghanas 2005 Human Trafficking Act gehen Verbrecher zwischen 5 und 20 Jahren ins Gefängnis. Weitere Fälle sind bekannt in denen gegen Prostitution und Trafficking vorgegangen wurde. Im Mai 2011

arbeiteten 232 ghanaischen Strafverfolgungsbehörden mit Agenten von Interpol auf, eine dreiteilige Operation gegen Kinderhandel. Trotz Berichten über rund 125 Bordellen, die in Accra, INTERPOL und ghanaischen Strafverfolgung überfielen nur fünf. Während dieser Überfälle, entfernt Behörden 55 Frauen und 65 minderjährige Frauen, die Opfer, obwohl Menschenhändler nicht festgenommen wurden. In einer zweiten Operation Mai 2011 verhaftet Beamten 30 mutmaßliche Menschenhändler in Lake Volta Fischerei, die zur Verfolgung und Verurteilung von 28 von diesen Menschenhandel Täter unter einer Ausbeutung von Kindern Recht, jede verurteilte Menschenhändler erhielt eine 16-monatige Gefängnisstrafe. In der dritten Aktion, auch im Mai 2011 entfernt Polizeibeamte drei Kinder – eines aus Ghana und zwei aus Burkina Faso – von einer Kakaopflanzung in Tarkwa und verhaftete einen Mann für Burkina Faso angeblichen Kinderhandel, seinen Fall vor Gericht anhängig. Im Januar 2012 hat ein Gericht für schuldig befunden und für den Handel mit 11 ghanaische Mädchen nach Nigeria zur Zwangsarbeit und Prostitution verurteilt eine ghanaische Frau zu fünf Jahren Gefängnis verurteilt.

Ghana muss sich jetzt bemühen die Umstände zu verbessern, sodass das Problem nicht weiter aus dem Ruder läuft. Verstärkte Bemühungen um die Untersuchung, Verfolgung und Verurteilung der Straftäter und sicher stellen, dass die AHTU auf die notwendigen Ressourcen Zugriff hat, um entsprechende Verurteilungen zu erreichen; Ausbildung der Strafverfolgungsbehörden zu identifizieren proaktiv Opfer von Menschenhandel – wie Frauen die der Prostitution ausgesetzt sind und Kinder, die arbeiten anstatt in die Schule zu gehen – oder von Notrufen an die Ghana Police Service (GPS) gemacht, und verweisen sie an Schutzdienstleistungen; Erhöhung staatliche Förderung für Schutzdienstleistungen für die Opfer und Erstellung Informationen über die Mittelzuweisungen für die Öffentlichkeit, Verbesserung der Datenerhebung und Berichterstattung über die Opfer identifiziert und unterstützt, und Harmonisierung der Strafverfolgung Daten über die drei Einheiten – der Wirtschafts- und Organisierte Kriminalität Amt (EOCO), der AHTU und der Ghana Immigration

Service (GIS) – für die Untersuchung von Fällen von Menschenhandel verantwortlich; Umsetzung des nationalen Aktionsplans gegen Menschenhandel, einschließlich einer klaren Aufgabenteilung und Zuweisung von Ressourcen zwischen der EOCO, GIS, GPS und der AHTU.

Ich glaube, dass nur, indem Sie auf die Ursache der Prostitution und Menschenhandel, die die Faktoren, die die Nachfrage, werden wir am Ende die sexuelle Ausbeutung und den Missbrauch von Frauen und Kindern durch Prostitution und trafficking stoppen. Wir müssen alle Regierungen drängen, NGOs und Religionsgemeinschaften auf die Verringerung der Nachfrage für die Opfer von Menschenhandel und Prostitution zu konzentrieren.

Alle Komponenten der Nachfrage müssen bestraft werden – die Männer, die sexuelle Handlungen, die Ausbeuter zu kaufen – die Menschenhändler und Zuhälter, der Gewinn aus dem Verkauf von Frauen und Kindern nach Sex, den Staaten, die trügerisch Nachrichten und handeln zu finanzieren, wie Zuhälter, und der Kultur, die über das Wesen der Prostitution liegt.

Wir könnten erheblich reduzieren die Zahl der Opfer, wenn die Nachfrage nach ihnen bestraft wurde. Wenn es keine Männer, die zu sexuellen Handlungen zu kaufen, würden keine Frauen und Kinder gekauft und verkauft werden. Wenn es keine Bordelle warten auf Opfer, würde keine Opfer rekrutiert werden. Wenn es keine Staaten, die von der Sex-Handel profitiert, gäbe es keine Vorschriften, die den Fluss der Frauen aus armen in reichere Städte Sex-Industrie-Zentren erleichtert werden. Wenn es keine Falschmeldungen über Prostitution, würde keine Frauen oder Mädchen zu denken, Prostitution ist eine glamouröse oder berechnete Job getäuscht werden.

From the HRJ Coordinator

Settling in

January 2014

January has been a month of transition and new beginnings, with my arrival coinciding with that of 10 fresh volunteers to PAHO. On both parts it's been a process of learning quickly on the job, adapting to new challenges and attempting to pick up from the great work done in previous years.

On that note I owe my thanks to Oliver and the other staff here at PAHO who have made my start just that bit easier with their regular support and guidance.

Looking back at the month it's inspiring to see the amount that can be achieved by such a newly formed group that are still finding their feet. It's thanks to the enthusiasm and hard work of the volunteers that we were able to get projects up and running again after the office closed for Christmas, and January saw the introduction new projects with a greater focus on our work in Old Fadama around health and education.

We start 2014 with a positive outlook and a new hope. The work done last year to assist in the creation of the FLAP offices provides an opportunity make a real impact. We hope that after this brief period of change and settling in, February now allows us the time to focus and put in place many of the ideas and plans that have come forward from both SOFAID and the slum profiling work.

The change will not come overnight, but by the acts of many, over many weeks, months and years. As volunteers the importance of persisting and working towards that change, cannot be overlooked.

Matt Andrew

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Special Thanks



While we get used to saying goodbye to volunteers here at PAHO, it is important to acknowledge a volunteer who has been instrumental in helping us all settle in in the New Year.

Thanks from everyone at PAHO to Pippa Mulvey for all your hard work throughout your 6 months with us. You will forever be remembered as our Lead Volunteer. We wish you the best and hope to see you back in Ghana soon.