

THE BOYS' BRIGADE IN GHANA

The BB in Ghana was first introduced to Ghana in 1911 but had ceased to function by the thirties. It was restarted in 1952 and has grown to over 7,300 members in 163 Companies.

The Brigade Secretary is Rev Jacob French. He is assisted by Edward Berko in training and development and, such is the growth and demand, that BB Ghana is looking to the appointment of more field staff to satisfy local needs.



The Boys' Brigade in Ghana continues to grow and brings life, hope and Christian love into young lives.

Under their National President, Rev Twum-Baah, BB Ghana have undergone major restructuring. This has included the appointment of Rev Jacob French as national secretary and Edward Berko as organiser. The help afforded through World Conference, not only helps support these posts but make possible training, development and other activities that are needed to ensure progress in the years ahead. Year by year growth continues and churches have adopted the Brigade as their method of outreach to young people. New districts are being opened up within the country in response to demand and work is starting to grow steadily in the North of the country, an area much poorer than the South and also more influenced by Islam.

Communications throughout Ghana are not always easy and work is divided into 5 Regions. (the North, Upper, Brong Ahafo and Ashanti regions on the opposite map are combined for BB purposes as are Volta and Accra Regions) Training programmes are organised at regional level for boys and officers as well as na-



tional leadership and personnel development programmes.

Ghana's average per capita income has been estimated to be only £240 per annum. A student nurse may earn only £15 a month and teaching staff, after 30 years experience, £80.

Breakfast for many people will consist of porridge (no milk), with a little sugar. Bread (no margarine) may be afforded twice a week but there will be no tea. Lunch might comprise bean stew with boiled rice. In the evening Kenkey (cooked corn dough) is the main dish, served with hot pepper sauce and a very little fried fish. Eggs may be eaten occasionally (one per person per week) and meat only once per week.



Activities in Companies include bible study and drill as well as harvest programmes, first aid, games, soccer, singing and music. Band work is popular and, in particular, the art of drumming. Picnics are arranged as well as camps and games festivals.

The Brigade in Ghana is a strong supporter of the Head of State Award (equivalent of DEA) and hundreds of boys have benefited from this programme.

A modified achievement scheme is being promoted among Junior Sections and a simplified pamphlet has been produced to guide officers.

COUNTRY PROFILE

- GHANA, formerly known as the Gold Coast, has a population of over 18 million. Its climate is hot and humid.
- GHANA's official language is English although there are over 70 ethnic groups and languages.
- GHANA gained independence in 1957. Since 1966, there has been a succession of military Governments. The ban on partisan politics was lifted in 1991 and a democratic government inaugurated in 1992.
- GHANA has the world's largest man-made lake, Lake Volta, which lies behind the Akosombo Dam. This is the main source of electricity.
- GHANA led the world as a producer of cocoa but a fall in prices, drought and migration to the cities has reduced the output. The exportation of cocoa is responsible for two thirds of Ghana's foreign earnings.
- GHANA also produces cassava and maize. Pineapples, bananas, coffee, palm kernels, cotton, tobacco and timber are exported.
- GHANA's religious beliefs are mixed with 24% following traditional African religions. 60% are Christians and 16% are Moslems.
- GHANA's unit of currency is called the Cedi. To sustain foreign loans Ghanaians have suffered high unemployment, fuel prices and taxes.
- GHANA has many miles of sandy beaches and tourism is on the increase. Most coastal people are fishermen who work from long narrow canoes made from a single tree trunk.
- GHANA has traditional rural communities where people live in houses built from mud with thatched or bamboo roofs. Houses are built in a circle, surrounded by a low wall to make a corral type enclosure for livestock.



Economic conditions have led to the migration of staff and continually place a strain on resources. Throughout this, there are efforts to produce more and more equipment locally, thus ensuring that material is available and at prices affordable to all.

The Brigade in Ghana works closely with Government youth departments and adopts a theme every year that regularly includes and promotes community service. It is recognised as an important building block for young people.

The Brigade also works closely with many different churches and denominations, participating in various denomination committees and boards.

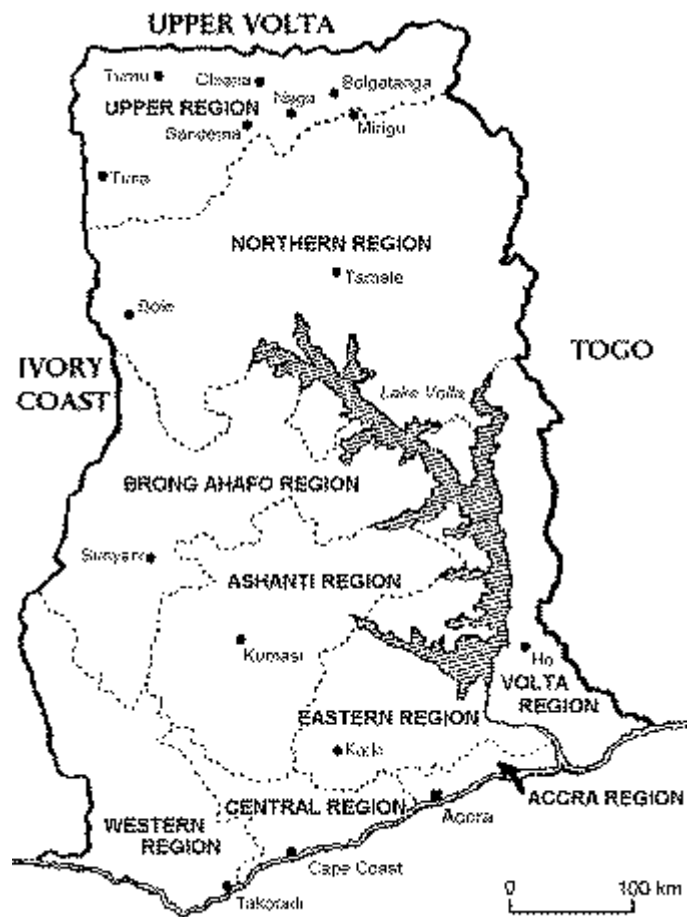
Youth unemployment is a huge problem in Ghana leading to many young people rushing to the cities (particularly Accra) in search of jobs. Thousands eke out an existence by selling chewing gum or whatever they can to motorists at traffic junctions.

There is a strong focus on programmes that can help young people create or find jobs and more and more Companies are becoming involved in small projects. These include, vegetable production, snail farming, bee keeping, mushroom production and many other bright ideas.

BB Ghana is embarking on a tailoring project that will help young people develop accredited skills and also help satisfy the growing need for uniform supply items.

All these projects are combined with training in basic book-keeping skills that provide a solid base for the creation of jobs.

Ghana, like most countries in Africa, is burdened by debt and spends almost 50% of its foreign earnings in interest payments. Yet Ghana has much to teach on how progress can be made in face of hardship.



This fact sheet was updated in 2000. During the past few years there have been efforts to see the tailoring project brought into full operation - something that will again have the potential of creating skills and local employment. There have been recent changes to full-time staff and details are awaited. In the meantime, the BB in Ghana continue to show progress as part of church youth work and outreach.