

GHANA'S NATIONAL PROFILE FOR 2009/2010.

Welcome to ICYEGHANA

We are very happy to welcome you to Ghana.

The National Profile is a brief introduction about what you can expect during your exchange year. This will give you a basic idea about the Ghanaian society. Obviously this profile will not cover all the issues you may be curious about but if you read it carefully, it will be a step in the right direction.

Living in another culture might not be easy but with an open mind and a deep commitment as well as the effort of the ICYE-GHANA staff and coworkers who are eager to help you, you will surely have a rewarding experience. We are looking forward to meeting you and hope you are all set to experience Ghana.

Once again you are welcome- AKWAABA.

What is ICYE

- A leader in international youth exchange programmes with more than 50 years of experience
- long and short - term exchange programmes for 2.000 participants annually
- an international Federation of National Committees in 34 countries
- an international voluntary service programme promoting young people's active and global citizenship
- an experience based programme to enhance young people's intercultural understanding and commitment to peace and justice
- an international network co-ordinated by national offices and dedicated co-workers, who provide volunteers with the necessary orientation, training and support

The International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE) is an international non-profit youth exchange organisation promoting youth mobility, intercultural learning and international voluntary service. ICYE organises long and short-term exchanges combining home stays with voluntary service in a variety of community service projects in more than 34 countries around the world. >> [read more](#)

How it works

ICYE is a Federation of Full and Associate Member National Committees.

National Committees are autonomous. They develop and run the program according to the needs of the youth of their countries, and following policies and guidelines prepared and adopted by the General Assembly of the Federation.

About Us

ICYE-GHANA joined the ICYE Federation in 1978, the first in Africa.

ICYE-GHANA is registered as a non-profit organization with the country's main body, The National Youth Organising Commission that oversees the running of youth programmes in the country. ICYE-GHANA is also listed with the Ministry of Social Welfare, a member of the Ghana Private Voluntary Organisation in Development (GAPVOD) who serves as the umbrella for NGOs.

Our goals are consistent with that of the ICYE Federation. Participants of ICYE are committed to and will work with others who are committed to:

justice for all persons who suffer from social, political, economic and personal injustice
break through the barriers between cultures and peoples
equality of cultures, nations and sexes etc

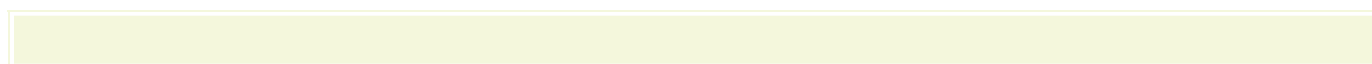
↘ National Committee

The ICYE –GHANA National Committee is responsible for the running of the programme. The National Committee's responsibility include the following: promotion of the programme, screening and selecting candidates, organizing conferences and camps, looking for host families and projects etc. The members also serve as consultants to the exchangees, host families and work projects.

↘ Affiliates

The ICYE Federation is a participating member of the following international organisations:

- United Nations Economic and Social Council - ECOSOC (Consultative Status)
- United Nations Department of Public Information, DPI-NGO Committee
- UNESCO (Official Operational Relations)
- UNESCO NGOs Liaison Committee
- European Commission, Directorate General Education and Culture - Youth Unit
- World Council of Churches (working relations as international ecumenical organisation)
- Co-ordinating Committee of International Voluntary Service (CCIVS)



↘ Ghana and History

In 1471, the first Europeans, the Portuguese, arrived in the gold producing regions of West Africa. They obtained so much gold in the areas between the rivers Ankobra and Volta that they named it 'La Mina', the Mine.

The British later called it the Gold Coast. In 1482, they built the Castle Sao Jorge da Mina at Elmina as a trading post.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the British and the Dutch were actively operating on the Gold Coast with the British controlling about half of the trade. The area became a Crown Colony of the Queen of England in 1874. By 1902, the British had annexed the whole of the Gold Coast.

The first half of the twentieth century saw an increase in the demand for change in the administration of the Gold Coast. After the Second World War, the attack in the colonial system was stepped up and its objective changed to a complete overthrow of the system that is, independence at all cost. The leaders took a firm stand against the continued economic injustice and the social discrimination to which our people were subjected under the colonial system.

Within a decade after the war, the colonial system crumbled. This was primarily the work of two political parties that emerged in the post second world war period in the Gold Coast - The United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) and the Convention People's Party (CPP) in August 1947 and June 1949 respectively.

Finally, on the 6th March, 1957, the Gold Coast became independent under the new name Ghana.

Ghana was the name of an ancient Sudanese Empire, which flourished between the 4th and the 11th centuries, controlling the gold trade between the mining areas of the South and the Saharan trade routes to the north and from where the Gold Coast majority tribes are believed to have migrated. On the 1st July, 1960, Ghana became a Republic with Dr. Kwame Nkrumah as the first President.

After independence, Ghana has had several changes in government. Regimes have been alternating between the military and the civilian population. So far there have been three constitutional governments and five military regimes. Presently, we are in the fourth Republic which was inaugurated on the 7th January, 1993 with Ft. Lt. Jerry Rawlings as President. He stayed in office till 1996 and was hon. Agyekum Kufuor won the elections and he was sworn in as the President on the 7th January, 2001. His party, the New Patriotic Party won the Parliamentary elections as well. President John Agyekum Kufuor was re-elected for the second term in 2004 and he will serve as President till 2008 where there will be fresh elections again.

📌 Flag of Ghana - what it means

The flag of Ghana consists of the colours Red, Gold, and Green in horizontal stripes with a five-pointed Black Star in the centre of the gold stripe. Red represents the blood of those who died in the country's struggle for independence. Gold represents the mineral wealth of the country. Green symbolizes the country's rich forest and natural resources. The Black Star stands for the lode star of African freedom.



Ghana flag

👉 Culture

One's own culture provides the "lens" through which we view the world; the "logic" by which we order it, the "grammar" by which it makes sense.

Culture is central to what we see, how we are sensed of what we see, and how we express ourselves.

SOME CULTURAL PRACTICES OF GHANA AKWAABA - WELCOME

This is the word you will hear at every turn of your stay in Ghana. It is genuinely and honestly meant. You are very welcome to Ghana and you will notice how true this is after a short stay that Ghanaians are among the world's friendliest people, and they value politeness and friendship very highly.

👉 Greetings

Greetings are very important in Ghana. When a person fails to greet, Ghanaians say he/she is not friendly or polite. Handshaking is the traditional way of either saying hello or greeting friends, relatives or strangers. A handshake is always preferred with the right hand.

👉 The use of the left hand

We do not use the left hand to do anything. Anyone to do anything especially before an older person. When we use the left hand people think we do not respect them. Our elders believe that the left hand is not clean. For example, it is not good to use the left hand to point something out to people, make a sign to call people. If we have to use the left hand because the right hand is busy, we have to say I'm sorry to use the left hand.

👉 Language

In Ghana, we have about 46 languages. Nine have been written and are studied in schools. These are studied on the radio and television. The nine are Dagbani, Dagaare/Wale, Kasem, Gonja, Akan (Akuapem, Asante and Fante), Ga- Adangme and Nzema. The official language however is ENGLISH.

👉 Religion

Generally, the Ghanaian believes there is God, but different Ghanaians have different ways in which they understand that there is God. There are three main forms of religion: Traditional, Christian and Islamic.

Ghanaians are very religious and take active part in their religious programmes. Regular worship attendance particularly on Sundays is the normal pattern for most ICYE host families.

↘ The Extended Family

In every home, a father, mother and their children form a family. In Ghana, other relatives are also members of the family e.g. Aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents and grandchildren are included. We call this the extended family and exchangees are likely to see this in some host families.

↘ Basic Cross Cultural Principles

You will be embarking on a typical cross-cultural experience in which you will be exposed to different ways of thinking, speaking and interacting.

There are certain principles that will help you to enjoy a positive experience and avoid some of the possible misunderstandings that can occur in cross-cultural settings.

Ask, listen, observe and learn. Do not assume that what is normal to you will be the normal way of doing things or looking at things.

You are a visitor, therefore the responsibility is on you to accept the role of being a learner and showing the greatest respect for the local way of thinking and approaching whatever situation you are in with an open mind will be helpful to you.

Patience, tolerance and understanding cross-cultural situations are often filled with stress.

This stress comes from being in a setting, different from what you are used to.

The climate, the languages, the living styles and standards, and just about everything you experience will be different. Your obligation is to be patient, tolerating the differences.

Ghanaians will go great lengths to make you comfortable and take care of your needs; however, the responsibility is still yours to adapt to and accept situations in which you find yourself.

↘ Geography of Ghana

Ghana has an area of about 238,537 sq. km (92,099 sq miles). It is bordered on the east by Togo, on the west by La Cote d'Ivoire, on the north by Burkina Faso, and on the South by the Atlantic Ocean.

There are a few mountains but several hills which rise to a maximum height of just under 1,000 m. the highest mountain is the Afadzato, which is 1500 m (5000 ft) above sea level.

Ghana lies in the tropical region with temperature ranging between 20 degrees and 32 degrees in the south along the coast and 24 degrees and 32 degrees in the north. The main rainy season occurs between April and July and the dry season spans October to February.

The Volta River, which has been damned at Akosombo and Kpong for the generation of electricity, is one of several rivers criss-crossing the country. The Volta Lake created as a result of the dam at Akosombo, is also the world's largest man-made lake. It is navigable over a distance of about 400km (250 miles) with motor vessels plying its waters, carrying goods and passengers from the South to the North and back.

Ghana's population is about twenty million. The country is divided into ten administrative regions. They are Upper West, Upper East, Northern, Brong Ahafo, Ashanti, Western, Central, Volta, Eastern and Greater Accra Region where the capital is situated.

Programmes

ICYE Ghana has the following programmes

Long Term	Volunteering in abroad for a year.
Medium Term	Volunteering for six months.
Short Term	Volunteering for three month in abroad.

All exchangees coming to Ghana are required to have a valid passport and a visa. The visa must be applied for in the nearest Ghana Embassy or Consulate and this must be done before 31st May each year in order to avoid delays. Exchangees will have to apply for an ENTRY VISA (not a one year visa). On your arrival to Ghana, you will be given 60 days extension at the airport. ICYE GHANA will collect your passports; you will be given an extension form to be filled at the orientation camp, support letters from the ICYE GHANA office and the work placements. Exchangees are required to provide 8 passport size photographs to be affixed to the forms supplied by the Immigration Service. ICYE -GHANA will then submit the forms on behalf of the exchangees. This may take 3-4 months due to the bureaucratic system it goes through. Exchangees are advised to make photocopies of their passports in order to help them change their traveler's cheques when their passports are with the immigration. Some banks do not accept the photocopies of passports. Exchangees are responsible for the payment of the extension permit. The cost of extension is approximately 20 U.S dollars per month for the extension. ICYE Ghana will facilitate in the acquisition of visa, work placement, host family and contact person and the insurance for the stay of exchangees. All exchangees are insured against accidents and sickness. Please read your insurance manual given to you. Hospitals will be identified for exchangees to visit should they fall sick.

Site scenes in Ghana

GREATER ACCRA

CENTRE FOR NATIONAL CULTURE: HIGH STREET- Preserves and presents Ghanaian arts through exhibits, workshops and galleries. A major shopping centre for arts, crafts and local textiles.

CENTRE FOR NATIONAL CULTURE: HIGH STREET- Preserves and presents Ghanaian arts through exhibits, workshops and galleries. A major shopping centre for arts, crafts and local textiles.

THE NATIONAL MUSUEM: Barnes Road –

Accra from a sky view



Established 1957 to preserve Ghana's historical treasures and that of other ancient African empire.

THE WEB DU BOIS MEMORIAL CENTRE: 1st Circular Road, Cantonments - Dedicated to the late Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, a great pan- Africanist. Incorporates his tomb, library, lecture, workshop and video facilities.

KWAME NKRUMAH MAUSOLEUM & MEMORIAL PARK: High Street – Dedicated to the late Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first President. There is a photo Museum on his life and works.

ASHANTI REGION

The home of Ghanaian tradition.

THE CULTURAL CENTRE: CITY CENTRE, KUMASI – Incorporates Prempeh II Jubilee Museum, Cultural Craft, Anokyekrom, model Ashanti village and catering facilities.

KOMFO ANOKYE SWORD SITE: 10 minutes walk from Kejetia roundabout – sword driven into the ground by Chief Priest Komfo Anokye in the 17th century signifying unity of the Akans. It is said that no person can remove it by his own strength.

BONWIRE -20 km northeast of Kumasi Home of Kente cloth

OWABI BIRD SANCTUARY – 15KM west from Kumasi – Winter home for variety of migratory birds

LAKE BOSOMTWI -40KM southwest of Kumasi – Natural circular lake believed to have been formed by the impact of a meteorite

BRONG AHAFO REGION

BOAMA CLOTH MAKING: 29KM from Takyiman Processing of cloth, the "kyenkyen", from the bark of trees

BOABENG-FIEMA MONKEY SANCTUARY 22km from Nkoranza – Monkeys like the Colobus the Mona and many more are seen

Kumasi from a roof top view



moving about freely in the village as early as 9.00 am

KINTAMPO FALLS: 75KM north of Takyiman. A collection of several waterfalls flowing and disappearing underground and resurfacing 200 metres ahead.

YEJI PORT: VOLTA LAKE – Small but beautiful and scenic town with fishing as the main occupation. The port, 497km north of Akosombo, is also a link between the north and south.

NORTHERN REGION

MOLE NATIONAL PARK: 130km west of Tamale – The only developed national park with accommodation facilities. A wide range of animals including elephants, lions, antelopes, monkeys etc can be found

SALAGA SLAVE MARKET: Salaga, 60km from Tamale south east – market place for the Trans Saharan slave trade

TONGO ROCKS: 10KM south of Bolgatanga ancient rocks with interesting geographical shapes perched on top of each other and making an eerie whistling sound when the cold, dry harmattan wind blows.

PAGA CROCODILE POND: 35KM north of Bolgatanga-Burkina Faso border – At the pond the crocodiles can be enticed out with a live fowl and be stroked by those daring enough



CENTRAL REGION

CAPE COAST CASTLE: Cape Coast Town From

Elmina Castle

Dutch lodge in 1637 to Swedes Fort in 1652 and British Castle as well as seat of colonial administration from 1664-1877. Harbours West African Historical Museum.



ELMINA CASTLE: Elmina Town – Portuguese Fort, built in 1482, was the first European edifice in Africa south of the Sahara. Became Dutch Fort in 1637 and British Castle in 1911.

KAKUM NATIONAL PARK: 30km north of Cape Coast – Patchwork of rain forest of 360km including the Assin Attandaso Resource Reserve with medicinal trees, birds and monkeys. There is a canopy walkway.



BRENU BEACH: 15 minutes drive west of Elmina – 13km stretch of palm fringed virgin beach with cool and clear water. Has peaceful migratory bird sanctuary. The fish industry in Elmina

WESTERN REGION

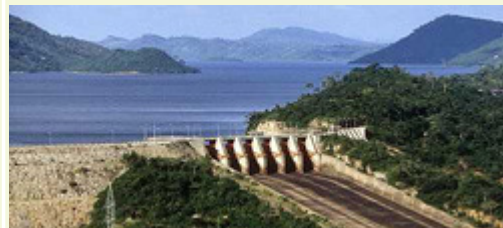
It is always believe that the best comes from the west.

BUSUA PLEASURE BEACH -25km off Takoradi-Tarkwa road – wide golden sand beach ideal for swimming with ultra modern chalets

EASTERN REGION

The home of power .This is the region that supplies electricity for the country.

The Akosombo Dam



THE VOLTA LAKE: 100KM northeast of Accra- Largest man-made lake; incorporates the Akosombo Hydro –electric Dam and an inland port of the Volta River Authority that operates through its subsidiary, the Volta Lake Transport Company a north – south inland passenger/cargo as well as cross-ferry transportation and a cruise boat.

The Volta lake



ABURI BOTANICAL GARDEN: 40KM north of Accra- created in the 1890s as an agricultural research station, sanatorium and leisure resort. Has a wide variety of plants, flowers and trees

from the tropical world.

BOTI FALLS: HUHUNYA near Koforidua – In the reserve of Huhunya is the seasonal Boti Falls with caves, cascades and umbrella rocks surrounding it.

AKONNEDI SHRINE: LARTEH, 56km north of Accra- A local shrine with traditional healing practices, herbal medicine with psychic healing powers

VOLTA REGION

VOLTA LAKE: Borders



Eastern and Volta regions, spans over 400km north-south. Largest man-made lake, with facilities for cruising to Sogakope and Azizanya at the estuary where the Paradise Beach hotel offers facilities for all types of water sport

TAFI MONKEY VILLAGE: 260KM north east from Accra – sacred monkey sanctuaries with hundreds of species of monkeys in a tropical forest

AFADJATO MOUNTAIN: 260km northeast of Accra – Ghana's highest mountain. 2905 feet high, ideal for climbing

TORGBO FALLS: 250KM north –east of Accra. In the midst of caves and water pools

WLI FALLS: 20km south-west of Hohoe in the Volta Region. The most beautiful waterfall in Ghana all year round in the midst of the Agumatsa Forest. Ideal for adventure.

UPPER WEST REGION

GBELLE GAME RESERVE: 17km south of Tumu sanctuary for many endangered species of wild life like hippos, water-buffalos, elephants and birds of spectacular plumage.

