

# Beach School Project: Baseline study of out-of-school youth along the Winneba beach

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## Abstract

The study sought to describe and assess the status of out-of-school youth along the Winneba beach in the Effutu Municipality of the Central Region of Ghana. The study employed the descriptive survey design to generate the data. A total sample of 138 participants made up of boys and girls were involved in the study. The sampling techniques adopted were the incidental and snowballing. The study used semi-structured questionnaire for data collection. Data analysis were done using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis from Word Cloud respectively. The results revealed that the major factors for youth dropout of school were economic, school environment, and socio-cultural issues. Also, the results indicated that the key aspirations of the out-of-school youth were to become security service personnel, drivers, health workers and artisans such as welders, masons, carpenters, hairdressers and seamstress. The study recommends that these youths should be equipped with employable skills relating to their areas of aspirations through alternative schooling such as the National Vocational Training Institute, tradesmen/ apprenticeship and for others who are within the school going age who can fit into formal education should be supported through social support programmes like the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) and civil society organizations.

**Key words:** out-of-school youth, job aspiration, parental occupation, apprenticeship

## Background and Problem Statement

“Children are entitled to free and quality basic education” (Arye, & Jenkner, 2004, p. 1). This recognition is borne out of the fact that leaders all over the world are making efforts towards the achievement of universal primary education. They argue that when a child “fails to acquire the basic skills” necessary to enable them “function as a productive and responsible member of society, not only the child but, also society as a whole loses” (Arye, & Jenkner, 2004, p. 2). In view of the immense benefits of education to society, stakeholders such as UNESCO and framers of the 1992

Constitution of Ghana argued that the State should bear the cost of education, especially for poor children. Klein (2015) acknowledged that every child needs to acquire the right education to contribute to socio-economic growth of society. UNESCO (2015) has also noted that the inclusion of all children in school settings has the potential of advancing future economics and industrial fortunes of countries. For example, the 1992 Constitution of Ghana stipulates that:

the government shall within two years after Parliament first meets after coming

into force of this constitution, draw up a programme for implementation within the following ten years for the provision of free compulsory and universal basic education (Republic of Ghana 1992 Constitution 38 (2)).

In view of this, there have been several local and international policy initiatives aimed at ensuring that no child is left behind when it comes to access to quality basic education (Ghana Education Strategic Plan 2010-2020; Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy, (2015); Education for All, 2015; Millennium Development Goal 3). These initiatives often fail to materialize in most sub-Saharan African countries due to inherent demographic, economic and socio-cultural factors (UNESCO, 2015). Additionally, there has been a conscious effort globally to provide quality education to all children of school-going-age the world over, through the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and now Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly, the goal 4, which touches on quality education.

It is observed that, since the year 2000, there has been phenomenal improvement in achieving the target of primary education globally. Available literature reveal that in the Developing World, enrolment rates have reached 91% in 2015, and that children who dropped out of school have reduced by almost half globally (UNESCO, 2015).

The realization that the education systems were failing to provide education for all necessitated calls for alternatives to the traditional education systems provided (UNESCO, 1997). The alternative education that seems to have solution to the existing educational systems was non-formal education. Non-formal education is any educational activity organized outside the formally established education system, which is designed to serve a particular group of people and to achieve identifiable instructional objectives (UNESCO, 1997). It is heartwarming to note that within the last thirty years, non-formal education has witnessed many non-traditional teaching experiences (UNESCO, 1997), which aimed at educating the excluded young people in all parts of the world. The various arrangements of non-formal education, whether within schools or extra-curricular activities, have a common goal of assisting young people to be included in the school system.

The fundamental problem with education today is that it has failed to "retain many adolescents who leave school before acquiring the essential skills they would need throughout their adult life, and before obtaining recognized qualifications" (UNESCO, 1997, p. 4). A possible reason could be that the formal education systems have a "rigid organization", in areas such as time schedules, and their "individualized teaching rhythms and methods" which do not suit "situation of the young people for whom they are designed" UNESCO, 2015, 4).

It is further observed that the type of instruction provided by formal education systems is also often found to be insufficient since it does not allow young people to enter the mainstream, whether professionally or socially (UNESCO, 1997). This type of education is frequently of poor quality and unsuitable for preparing out-of-school adolescents for life in the real world. The learning of social

skills,' which are essential by every individual to enhance his or her relational talents, which will enable individuals to better position themselves in a complicated environment, is frequently overlooked by educational systems. Another educational difficulty revolves with school attendance and integration, which "impact specific groups of the community" (UNESCO, 1997, p. 6). Those who bear the brunt of these systems are mostly "the poor, street children, children who work; populations of rural or remote areas, ethnic, racial and linguistic minorities, refugees, persons displaced by war, populations under occupying regimes" (UNESCO, 1997, p. 6). These observations are true to some extent as they relate to the case of Effutu Municipality. It is in the light of these challenges that the private sector has been given a free hand to operate, even in countries where the State used to have an education sector monopoly such as former USSR. It is interesting to observe that, in many societies in recent times, it is the "para-public and private sectors", which are made up of NGOs, families, communities and associations that provide the education needs (UNESCO, 1997, p. 8) of out of school children through the non-formal mode in order to provide them with the skills they need.

Economic inequality within countries is rising which implicitly leads to educational inequality. The current trend of inequalities is unacceptable as it is increasing the risk of social disintegration (Milanovic, 2013; UNESCO, 1997, p.1). More importantly, exclusion of the youth who are an integral part of the population from productive activities such as education and training system constitutes an economic loss to their communities' human capital and this inhibits economic and social progress. For individual countries such as Ghana, policy makers are perplexed about the extent to which productive youth are out of school and engaging in low and less profitable ventures particularly along the Winneba Beach.

A study conducted by Ananga (2011) in the Mfantseman Municipality of the Central Region of Ghana which has similar characteristics as the Winneba beach, found that the main cause of drop out among children hinges mainly on household poverty, the need for economic survival and lack of children's school supplies which arise from families' inability to buy school materials. One of the child respondent in that study said: "You have to go to school without breakfast and [then] staying in school till home time becomes difficult...(Ananga, 2011, p.11). Specifically in Winneba, more than three quarters (80.7%) of the population, aged 11 years and older in the Municipality, are literate and these are mostly in the urban areas as compared to the coastal (beach) areas where the bulk of the 20% illiterates are found (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). The literature (Ananga, 2011; UNESCO, 1997) seems to suggest that regarding non participation of the youth in a particular locality of specific occupational status such as the fishing community in Effutu, and which has ramification for wider regions (long stretch of coastal areas) a baseline study which is a starting point for a wider study is needed. This study therefore investigates the status of out-of-school youth along the Winneba beach.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess and describe the status of Out-of-School-Youth in the Effutu Municipality of Ghana, the findings of which can be used for a wider research for Coastal and other areas in Ghana.

### Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to;

1. describe the profile of the Out-of-School-Youth along the Winneba beach in the Effutu Municipality
2. determine the factors accounting for dropping out of school among the Out of School Youth along the Winneba beach in the Effutu Municipality
3. examine the occupations of the parents of the out of school youth along the Winneba beach in the Effutu Municipality
4. ascertain the job aspirations of the out-of-school-youth along the Winneba beach in the Effutu Municipality.

### Research Questions

The following questions were formulated to direct the study

1. What is the profile of the Out-of-School-Youth along the Winneba beach in the Effutu Municipality?
2. What are the factors accounting for dropping out of school among the Out of School Youth along the Winneba beach in the Effutu Municipality?
3. Which occupations do the parents of the out of school youth along the Winneba beach engage in?
4. What jobs do the out-of-school-youth along the Winneba beach aspire to do?

### Research Design

This study employed the descriptive survey design to enable collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This design was adopted in order to describe and assess the status of out-of-school-youth along the Winneba beach in the Effutu Municipality.

The study population included out-of-school youth who were within the ages of six to 23 years along the Winneba beach, who are engaged in fishing, petty trading, pulling of fishing nets, washing and mending fishing nets and running routine errands. The school going age in Ghana is from four to 17 years on average from Kingdergarten to senior high school. The school structure is made up of 2 years kindergarten, 6 years primary, 3 years junior high school and 3 years senior high school (Anamoah-Mensah, 2004). However, there are often overaged pupils participating in the school system, especially in rural, fishing and farming communities. The age disparity among the rural communities is responsible for the over aged out-of-school youth in this study. The study employed incidental and snowball sampling

techniques by which researchers engaged with participants. The sample size was 138 youth who were made up of boys and girls within the ages of six and 23 years. This sample was considered adequate based on the fact that this category of individuals represents shades of dropouts along the Winneba beach who were not documented. According to Alshibly (2018), researchers regard 100 participants as the minimum sample when the population is large and unknown.

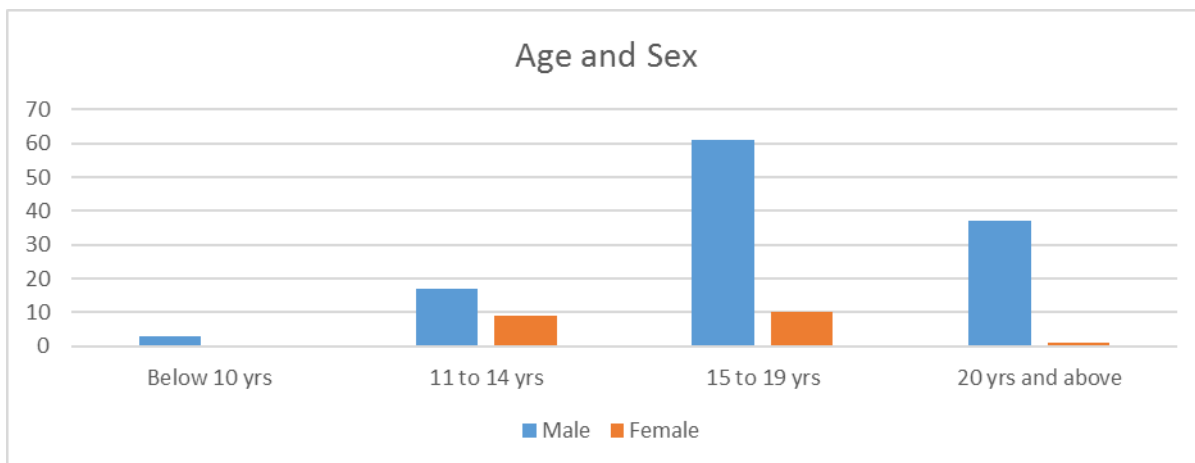
A set of questionnaire comprising both close and open-ended items was employed to collect data for the study. The questionnaire items centred on demographics, reasons for dropping out of school, job aspirations of out-of school youth and parental occupations. For the fact that they were out of school and could not read and understand the questions, the researchers had to guide them in providing responses for the questionnaire items. The data collection was done on a week day in the afternoon between the hours of 10:00 am to 2:00 pm when school were in session. The data collection covered a period of three days.

This study was delimited to out-of-school youth along the Winneba beach. The out-of-school youth included boys and girls within the age range of six to 23 years who were involved in fishing activities, and running errands for fisher folks and traders.

### Results and Discussions

#### *Profile of out-of-school youth*

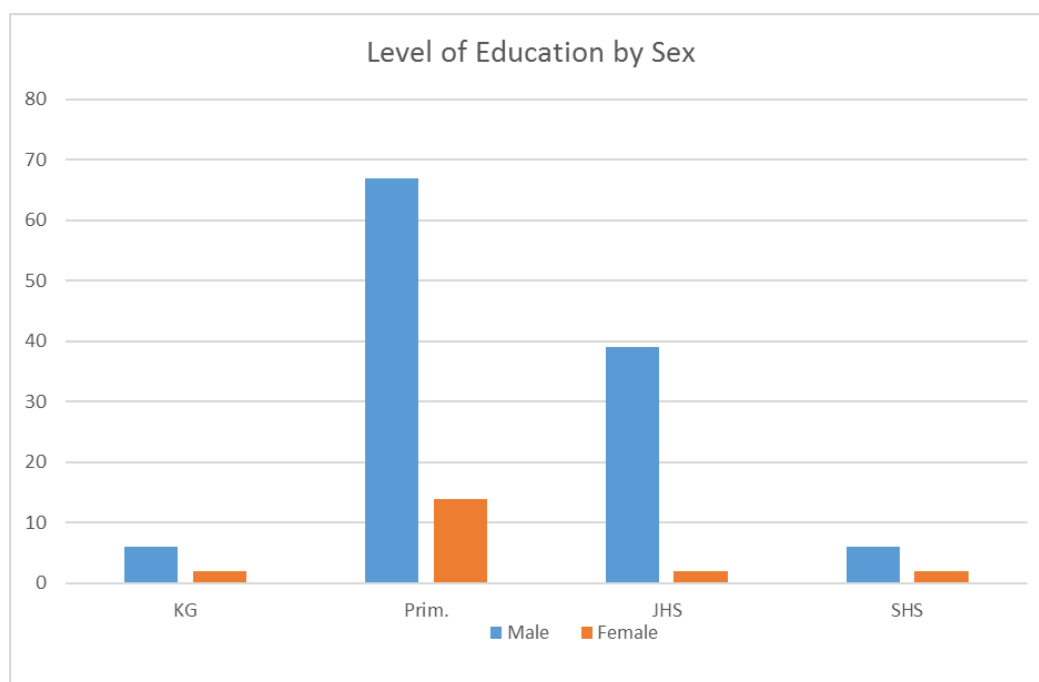
The data revealed that out-of school youth along the Winneba beach varied by gender and age. Figure 1 presents the data.



**Figure 1:** Profile of out-of-school youth in Winneba.  
Source: Field Data, 2021

Out of the 138 youth sampled, the boys were 118 (85.5%) and the girls were 20 (14.5%). The sample was dominated by boys. Figure 1 further shows that the age range 15-19 years was the dominant group accounting for 61 (44.2%) boys and 10 (7.2%) girls. The youth below 15 years were 29 (21%). The age distribution of participants suggests that they should have been in senior high school or junior high school as per the Ghanaian educational system. Meanwhile, these categories of citizens form the potential workforce of Ghana and need urgent attention. The urgency finds expression in the fact that in Ghana according to the MOE this age range of children should be completing senior high school (MOE, 2015). The case of Ghana according to the MOE, is similar to educational

developments in the Caribbean, which underscore that there are some serious consequences for not investing in education for the youth (a) unmet development goals such as education for all, (b) underdeveloped and underutilized human, and social capital, (c) loss of economic productivity, (d) increased unemployment and underemployment, (e) increased violence, crime, and risky behaviours, (f) exploitation and marginalization of youth, especially girls and young women, (g) reduced social cohesion and disruption in civil society, and (h) increased spending on remedial social welfare services and crime prevention. (ECLAC. (2003). *Current conditions and outlook: Economic survey of Latin America and the Caribbean*. Chile: United Nations).



**Figure 2:** Level of education attained by sex

Figure 2 shows the levels of education attained by out-of-school youth and reported according to the sex categories. From Fig 2 it is evident that 81 (58.7%) of the youth got out of school at the primary school level. Further eight percent dropped out at kindergarten or never enrolled in

school at all. However, eight (5.8%) got out of school at the SHS level, giving indication that only 5.8% of the participants had completed JHS. The data show that incidence of dropout was higher among boys compared to girls. The low representation of females in the study could



## Factors accounting for dropping out of school.

**Table 1:** Factors Accounting for School Drop Out

Reason	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Ill Health	10 (7.2)	5 (3.6)	15 (10.9)
Socio Cultural	20 (14.5)	4 (2.9)	24 (17.4)
Economic	50 (36.2)	7 (5.1)	57 (41.3)
School Environment	38 (27.5)	4 (2.9)	42 (30.4)

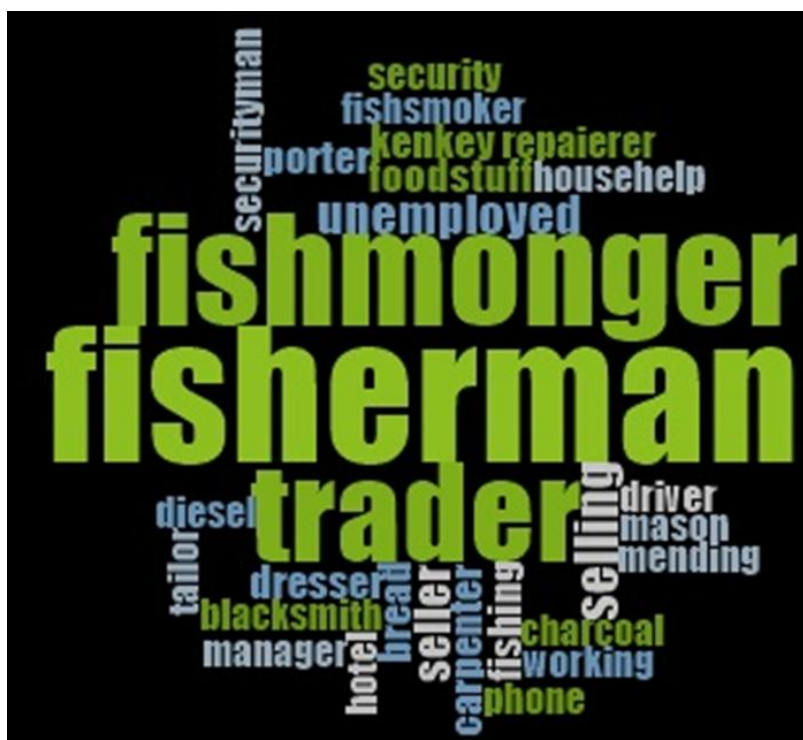
Table 1 shows that the dominant factor accounting for school dropout was economic, 57 (41.3%) and the least dominant factor was ill-health 15(10.9%). It could be inferred that the economic factor was the dominant because parents of these youth could not afford financial resources to acquire school uniform, stationery, school fees/levies, daily pocket-money and transportation fares for their wards. It could also be deduced that some of the youth were involved in petty trading and running errands during school hours as a result of economic hardship. Although it is true as the data revealed above, however, there are indication in the literature (Adam, Adom and Bediako, 2016) that some families of these disadvantaged youths spent rather lavishly on funerals, expensive clothing and other social events at the expense of the education of their children. Therefore, the attention of education stakeholders, particularly those in charge of youth education should be drawn to this menace.

The data further indicate that the school environment (42; 30.4%) was another major factor, pushing youth from school. For example, participants gave accounts of school factors such as attitude of teachers, poor academic performance bullying and peer pressure as factors that discouraged them to be out of school. One of the striking (unexpected) and perhaps very important features of the

finding is the role of schools in pushing children out of school. For example, other studies found that there are several factors responsible for school children dropping out of school which may be as a result of direct or indirect relation with school environment. Some of the school-related factors include low academic performance, distance to school and sometimes school environment, punishment by teachers, children's dislike of school and dilapidated school blocks that put children off (Adam, Adom & Bediako, 2016; Abotsi, Yaganumah & Obeng, 2018). Another factor that accounted for youth dropping out of school was socio-cultural (24; 17.4%). These include involvement in family trade, negative perceptions about schooling and teenage pregnancy.

### Parental occupation and School drop out

The occupation of parents could be related in various ways to the youth being in school or otherwise. Apart from it determining the income levels of parents, it could also be seen as a trade/profession that could easily be transferred to their offspring. Figure 4 gives a picture of the various occupations of parents of the out- of-school youth.



**Figure 4:** Parental occupations

From Figure 4 it is evident that fishing and fish mongering were the dominant occupations of the parents of the out-of-school youth. Apart from those fish-related occupations, other parents were engaged in petty trading, carpentry, masonry, blacksmithing, hairdressing and phone repairs. These categories of occupations mostly fall within the lower income bracket of the economy. These buttress the participants' views that most of their parents were not able to provide them support to go to school. The data show the persistence of many problems in spite of the various policy formulation and responses, point to the need for a more focused, responsive, functional, and qualitative educational system.

## Conclusions

The main factors accounting for school dropout as revealed in the findings were poverty, school environment and socio-cultural issues. This does not inure to the benefit of the youth and the nation as a whole, especially when one reflects on the proposition of the human capital theory as espoused by Babalola (2003). According to him, full alignment of the human capital theory to the development of the youth and other significant segment of society should reflect the following:

The new generation (the youth) must be given the appropriate parts of the knowledge which has already been accumulated by previous generations.

The new generation should be taught how existing knowledge should be used to develop new products, to introduce new processes and production methods, and social services. The youth must be encouraged to develop entirely new ideas, products, processes, and methods through creative approaches.

As acknowledged in the Human Capital Theory, children's formal education should be regarded by nations all over the world as the cornerstone for national development. Hence, the inhibiting factors should attract the attention of the government of Ghana and other stakeholders so that every child acquire the right education to contribute to socio-economic growth of society. This will have the potential of advancing future economics and industrial fortunes of coastal communities and the countries in which they are found.

The study further revealed various aspirations of the youth which centred on occupation in the security service, apprenticeship with local artisans in trade areas such as sewing, hairdressing, auto mechanics, welders, masonry, tillers, and carpenters. These are all nation-building trades that will aid the efforts of the government and investors in the rapid economic growth of the coastal communities and the nation as a whole.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. The findings revealed that about 85% of the youth who were between the ages 15 to 19 years dropped out of school as a result of poverty and

school environment. It is therefore recommended that the National Youth Authority, (YEA) in collaboration with the Effutu Municipal Assembly, should initiate funding for these out-of-school-youth to orient them for alternative forms of education and training with the National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) and apprenticeship with local artisans in trade areas such as sewing, hairdressing, auto mechanics, welding, masonry, tillers, and carpentry, to give them livelihoods.

2. The Effutu Traditional Council with support from the Effutu Municipal Assembly and the Fishermen Association, should streamline the activities of fishermen towards formal engagements of out-of-school youth who wish to take fishing as an occupation and sensitize parents that the education of their children will inure to the fishing industry.
3. It was also revealed that most of the out-of-school youth blamed the low income level of their parents whose main occupations were Fishing, fish mongering and petty trading. It is therefore recommended that government, through the Effutu Municipal Assembly and the Coastal Development Authority (CODA) should ensure that parents of these out-of-school-youth be supported through credit schemes and employable skills to enable them to engage in economic activities that will help them to earn a living and support their children.
4. The study revealed that 58.7% pupils dropped out of school at the primary level and engaged in family trade and became teenage mothers. The Effutu Traditional Council should source funding from NGO and CSOs to provide school supplies such as bags, shoes, educational toys, books and attractive play ground with modern facilities for out-of-school youth who are under aged (6 to 15) to motivate them to return to school
5. It is recommended that workshops and seminars are organised by the Effutu Municipal Assembly in collaboration with the GES, University of Education, winneba and Teacher Unions to reorient teachers on the FCUBE, Inclusion Policy and the 2018-2030 Education Strategic Plan to adopt measures and strategies that can retain pupils in school till completion

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