

# UNICEF in Ghana

Policy Advocacy,  
Partnerships &  
Participation



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“The most constant strand of UNICEF advocacy over the years has been that the vital, vulnerable years of childhood should be given a first call on societies’ concerns and capacities...”

James P Grant, visionary and  
Former UNICEF Executive Director  
(1980–1995)

## Essential Statistics

People living below the national  
poverty line

**28.5%**  
(2005/6)

Per capita income

**US\$661**  
(2007)

Economic growth rate

**5.2%**  
(2005–2008)

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# Issue

Ghana was the first country to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Today the country's economic growth and progressive policies have led to notable achievements in meeting many Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Social protection strategies provide safety nets and increase access to basic social services for poor and vulnerable families. Recent discoveries of oil promise significant wealth for the country. There is also progress in government efforts to achieve middle-income country status by 2015.

Yet there are gaps in terms of advocating for and protecting children's rights. Close to five million people

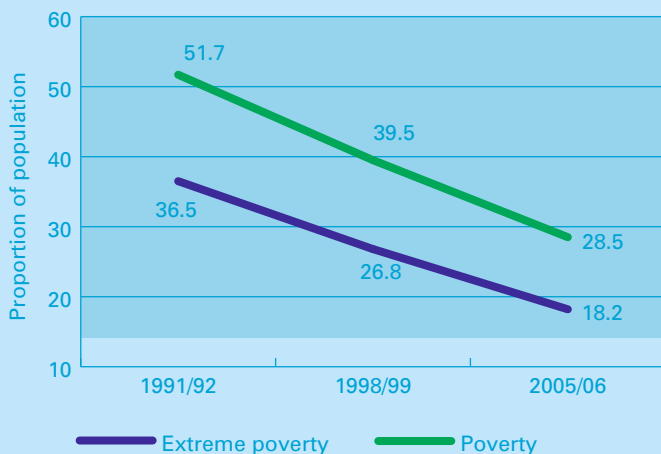
have been lifted out of poverty since 1991/92. But poverty reduction has not reached everyone. Those left behind are people living in the marginalised northern regions, the urban poor and people living in rural areas. The tragedy is that when poverty excludes children from enjoying their rights to education, health and protection, it locks them into a cycle of poverty and disease that is inherited by the next generation.

Addressing inequitable distribution of resources will require stronger government commitments, improved evidence-based advocacy by UNICEF and the active participation of civil society.



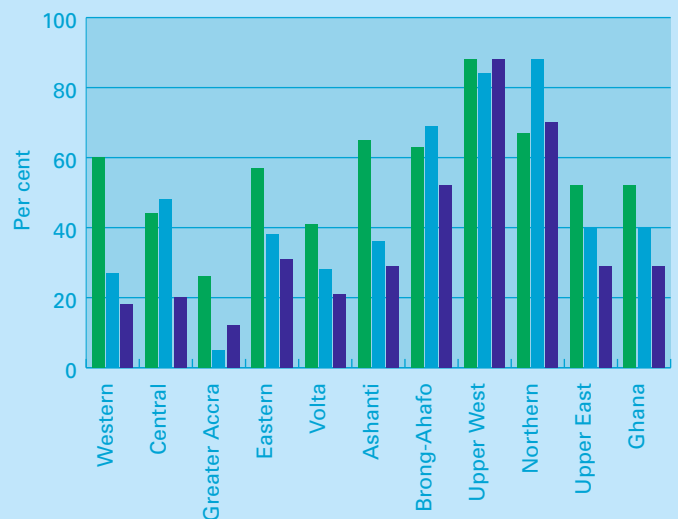
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**Trends in poverty and extreme poverty in Ghana, 1991/2–2005/6**



Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2007) *Patterns and Trends of Poverty in Ghana 1991–2006*

**Poverty incidence by administrative region**



# UNICEF in action

## Policy Advocacy, Partnerships & Participation

The fifth focus area of the UNICEF Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) for 2006–11 deals with policy advocacy, partnerships and participation. It is UNICEF's response to MDG 8 on global partnerships and MDG 1 on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. Between 2006 and 2009, UNICEF support led to a number of advances in these areas:

**Comprehensive statistics now available.** The UNICEF-supported Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2006 and the High Impact Rapid Delivery Supplementary Survey 2007 provide important data to help regional authorities make decisions with limited resources for the most deprived districts.

**Enhanced social protection.** UNICEF was instrumental in helping the government develop and implement the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) cash transfer scheme, which is a cornerstone of the National Social Protection Strategy. In 2008, LEAP provided a monthly cash grant to 26,200 extremely poor households, some of which were caring for orphaned and vulnerable children. In 2009/2010 an evaluation will determine the extent to which the scheme has had an impact on the lives of children.

**GhanaInfo revitalised.** The government has installed GhanaInfo as a tool for national and global monitoring of human development and is also developing a web-access version. Ministries are now able to map data on children by district and to create charts and graphs that will help target social services at the neediest districts.

**Stronger advocacy.** Four analytical studies were supported to help

UNICEF strengthen its advocacy on social budgeting, social protection and child poverty. One of the recommendations is to improve government coordination of the National Social Protection Strategy and implement a monitoring and evaluation system for LEAP. In 2009, UNICEF strengthened collaboration with Parliament and the Ministry of Finance.

**Children's rights promoted.** UNICEF developed a media and communication strategy on child rights to raise the profile of children's issues in Ghana. A network of journalists dedicated to reporting on children and women's issues was established and a campaign to promote children's right to quality education was supported during the 2008 Cup of African Nations.

**Increased child participation.** Children were provided with several platforms to express their views. This included the 2008 Cup of African Nations and events such as the Midterm Review, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 20th Anniversary and the Day of the African Child. UNICEF's support to the NGO Curious Minds in increasing child participation through radio broadcasting contributed to winning the International Children's Day of Broadcasting (ICDB) award in 2008.

Ghana's ability to develop frameworks, policies and legislation to protect children's rights shows the level of commitment to meeting the 2015 MDGs. But simply creating these frameworks is not enough – monitoring and evaluation, creating follow-up systems and ensuring implementation are critical to achieving success. It is the generous help of UNICEF Ghana's partners and donors that make this possible.



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UNICEF Ghana identifies five behaviours for Communication for Development (C4D):

- Hand washing with soap to prevent diseases and improve sanitation
- Proper and consistent use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets to prevent malaria among young children
- Exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding up to a child's first birthday for sound nutrition
- Using oral rehydration salts to manage diarrhoea
- Safe delivery of babies to reduce Ghana's high levels of neonatal and maternal mortality



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## Planned impact for children

Over the period 2009–11, UNICEF intends to build on the successes of the past three years to contribute to achieving results for children.

**GhanaInfo will be fully web-accessible and will include all key data**

from various studies such as the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, the Ghana Demographic Health Survey, the Ghana Living Standards Survey, the census, etc. Maps and other products will be produced and disseminated to assist policy-makers to make evidence-based decisions.

**MICS 2011 will be completed at national level**, thereby providing policy-makers and citizens with data on the progress of regions toward achieving the MDGs. Where desired, the district MICS may be repeated as well. In addition, an urban poverty survey will provide data on the situation of children and families in urban areas.

**Forty districts in the three northern regions will have improved their planning, budgeting and implementation of services for children.** Integrated District Medium Term Development Plans (2010 and 2013) covering health, education, social welfare, water and sanitation and other sectors will exist to guide budgeting and implementation in each district.

**Ministries will prioritise investments in children and the poor** by undertaking detailed financial and impact analysis of programmes and approaches.

**Key legislation will be amended to protect children's rights.** This relates in particular to the revision of the Children's Act and changes to the National Health Insurance Act. As a result, a national child protection system will be in place and children will receive free national health insurance. In addition, Parliament will have the background required

to analyse budgets to determine if the most important investments for children are protected.

**115,000 vulnerable households will receive the LEAP cash grant** and an impact evaluation will demonstrate the difference the grant makes in children's lives. UNICEF's technical assistance will be key to the completion of the evaluation and setting up a targeting system that ensures that poor families receive a package of poverty-reduction services.

**A comprehensive Communication for Development (C4D) strategy will be developed and implemented** to influence behaviour and social change initially in four regions together with the Ministry of Health. Baseline data will be available, against which the strategy's success in contributing to impact on reducing child mortality and preventing life-threatening diseases can be measured.