

# National Profile

## ICYE GHANA



## History of Ghana

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 on the colonial system was stepped up and its objective changed to a complete overthrow of the system. The leaders took a firm stand against the continued economic injustice and the social discrimination to which our people were subjected to 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 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 of 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 of July 1960, Ghana became a Republic with Dr. 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 Ghana has had four constitutional republics since gaining independence in 1957, with the current fourth republic being the longest standing.

**Presidents of the Republic of Ghana (under the Fourth Republic: since 7<sup>th</sup> January 1993)**

- **Flt. Lt. Jerry Rawlings (7<sup>th</sup> January 1993 – 6<sup>th</sup> January 2001)**



- **John Agyekum Kufuor (7<sup>th</sup> January 2001 - 6<sup>th</sup> January 2009)**



- **Professor John Evans Atta Mills (7<sup>th</sup> January 2009 - 24<sup>th</sup> July 2012)**



Unfortunately, He couldn't complete his first term as president because he passed away after an illness and his vice was sworn in as president to continue his term.

- **John Dramani Mahama (24<sup>th</sup> July 2012 - 6<sup>th</sup> January 2017)**



He was sworn in as President on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2012 after his boss the President, Passed away. He was re-elected into power on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2012 and was sworn into office on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

- **Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo Addo (7<sup>th</sup> January 2017 - 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025)**



- **John Dramani Mahama (Current president Of the Republic of Ghana)**



He has been elected again as the President of Ghana and was sworn into office on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

## Geography and Climate

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 Lake created because of the dam at Akosombo, is also the world's largest man-made lake. It is navigable over 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 33.79 million (2023). The country is divided into sixteen administrative regions.

## Culture and Identity

Ghana is home to over 50 ethnic groups, each with its own unique traditions, language and customs. Ghanaians are known for their warm and welcoming nature with hospitality being a hallmark of their culture.

### **Some cultural practices of Ghana:**

- Greeting

Greeting is 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 righthand.

- The use of the left hand

Traditionally, the left hand is used for personal hygiene, especially after using the restroom hence it is considered inappropriate to use. For example, we do not use our left hand to eat, point something at people, make a sign to call people etc. If you must use your left hand, then it's only because your right hand is busy, and you must apologize for doing so.

- Religion

Ghana is a secular state and the Country's constitution guarantees freedom of religion and worship. There are 3 main religions in Ghana Christianity, Islamic and the Traditional.




Christianity is the largest religion with about 70% of the population belonging to various Christian denominations, Islam is next with about 20% followed by the traditionalist with about 10% of the population. Ghanaians are very religious and take active part in their religious activities.

**About US**

ICYE Ghana joined the ICYE Federation in 1978, the first in Africa. It is registered as a non-profit organization with the country’s main body, The National Youth Organizing Commission, that oversees the running of youth programs in the country.

ICYE Ghana is also listed with the Ministry of Social Welfare, a member of the Ghana Private Voluntary Organization in Development (GAPVOD) who serves as umbrella for NGOs.

**Who is Who**

 <p><b>ICYE</b></p>	<p>2 Strawberry Street CG -1574-0154 Kasoa Millenium City Estate.</p>
	
	

## What you need to know before arriving

### Medical system

Before your trip to Ghana, consult your doctor or a travel clinic to determine the necessary vaccinations for travel to Ghana. You should also pack a first-aid kit with essentials.

There are good hospitals and clinics in Ghana. Therefore, there is no need to worry of not getting good healthcare whiles you are here.

### Transportation

Transportation in Ghana primarily relies on road networks, with buses, taxis, hailing rides and shared minibuses (Trotro) being the common modes of public transport. Where you are going will determine the type of public transport to use. For Instance,

- For long journeys it is advisable to go with the buses. There are different types of these buses run by different transport companies in Ghana.



- Minibuses (Trotro) - shared minibuses/ Trotro are a common sight, connecting cities with rural areas and small towns. They are safe and very affordable but not too comfortable for long journeys.



- Taxis and Hailing ride (uber, bolt, yango, Shaxi etc)  
 Shared taxis are a common and affordable way to travel within and between cities and towns. You can travel alone in a taxi (dropping) but they are a bit expensive.  
 The ride-hailing services are also available in the major cities and towns in the country, they are also affordable.



### Monetary system

The Cedi is the unit of currency of Ghana and only current legal tender in the Republic of Ghana. One Cedi is divided into 100 pesewas.



The exchange rate as of 27th March 2025 is as follows:

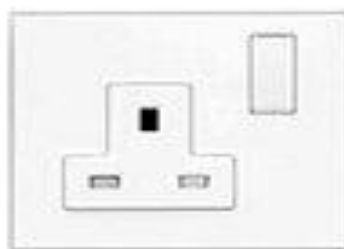
- 1 USD =15.54
- 1 EUR =16.73
- 1 GBP =20.05

## Plug type and electricity

In Ghana there are two associated plug types, D and G. Plug type D is the plug which has three round pins in a triangular pattern and type G is the plug which has three rectangular pins in a triangular pattern. Ghana operates on a 230V supply voltage and 50Hz.



D



G

## What to bring

Suggestion List for a “1 year Bag” to come to Ghana.

- A pair of sandals/shoe
- Toiletries.
- Swimsuit
- Camera
- Sun cream
- Lightweight cotton and linen clothes, and one/a couple of sweaters for cooler days • People dress quite formally in Ghana, especially for school and work, shirts, skirts and trousers will serve you well.
- Mosquito repellents {spray, cream, etc.}
- First Aid Kit

## Visa requirements

All Volunteers coming to Ghana are required to have a valid passport and a visa. The visa must be applied in the nearest Ghana Embassy or Consulate. This must be done by 30<sup>th</sup> June to avoid delays.

Volunteers will have to apply for an ENTRY VISA for NOT more than TWO months (**not a one-year visa**).

When you arrive in Ghana, the Immigration Officer at the Airport will stamp and write 60 days in your Passport.



At the Orientation Camp, those staying for six months will be given a Visa extension form and those staying for more than 6months will be given a residence and work permit forms to fill, supporting letters from the ICYE GHANA office and Volunteers Passports will be attached and submitted on behalf of the Volunteer at Immigration Office.

The Visa extension and the residence/work permit may take 2months to be ready due to the bureaucratic system it goes through. Volunteers are responsible for the payment of the Visa extension and the residence/work permit.

## **VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT**

ICYE Ghana would like to have a safe and rewarding experience. Below we have summarized some safety guidelines along with a recommended code of conduct to ensure that your trip is enjoyable and trouble-free. We ask you to review these points carefully and complete the form at the bottom.

### **General**

We are continually working to raise safety standards, and we will do our best to ensure that your stay is a testimony for others. However, we do ask that you adhere to the following guidelines while you are in Ghana.

### **SAFETY IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

#### **o Walking around the area.**

You should be accompanied by a local person (a member of your host family, contact or from your project) when walking around the local area. We do not recommend that you walk alone, especially at night. If you feel comfortable walking around on your own, you do that at your own risk. When walking around, do not carry valuables or large sums of money. Refrain from carrying bags, cameras and jewelry as this can draw unnecessary attention and can make you a target for theft.

#### **o commuting to and from local area**

Public transport is the easiest, cheapest, and safest way of travelling around in the country. There are three types of transport to and from the city center. Namely, Trotro, Shared Taxi and exclusive charter.

Most Ghanaian commute to and from their locality with the Trotro. It is not advisable to take the chartered taxi if you don't know where you are going.

However, this Trotro does not have a specific time of departing or arriving. It moves when the bus is full and arrives earlier when there isn't much traffic. It is not always on time, and you should be alert and responsible when making use of the service. It is also a nice place or environment to make friends.

## CONDUCT OF VOLUNTEER

### **Within the local community, you should:**

- Be respectfully or decently clothed.
- Behave respectfully and responsibly {Refrain from drinking in public areas or portray inappropriate behaviors.

### **At the project the volunteers should:**

- Report on duty on time and complete the necessary hours of volunteering for the duration of the placement.
- Inform the project leaders in advance of any valid reason that will require you to be absent from the project on any day.
- Refrain from forming intimate relationships with the project staff or host family members. This is strongly discouraged and in certain cases may warrant dismissal from the programme.

### **At the host family/project, volunteer should:**

- It is important that you have an open and honest conversation with your host family/project on the first day that you arrive about your likes and dislikes. This will eliminate any unnecessary discomfort or misunderstanding which may arise in the future.
- No smoking in the house. If you are a smoker, it's important to discuss this with the host and find out where it would be appropriate for you to smoke.
- The consumption of alcoholic beverages is not allowed in the house/project unless you are given permission to do so.
- Laundry service is upon discussion with the host or project.
- Curfew at host family /project. As per special arrangement with the host or the appropriate authority.



### CONFERENCES & SEMINARS.

Volunteers are obliged to attend all camps and seminar that are organized by ICYE GHANA. Should there be any reason that will prevent a volunteer from attending any of the seminars or conferences, the volunteer must inform the office of ICYE GHANA of the problem that prevents him/her from attending the conference and seminars.

NB: The only reason that will be accepted by ICYE GHANA to prevent a volunteer from attending the conferences and seminars is ILL HEALTH.

### CHANGING PROJECTS

The Volunteer who abandons or refuses the social project, because of the geographical location of the project or any unjustified reason, will be sent back to his/her home country. Should you experience any problem with your host or project, please inform your contact after which the contact will inform the office. We will then assess the situation and assist you in any way possible. Should any alternative project or host be the solution, please allow the office at least a month to arrange the move. Moving volunteers is subject to availability and cannot be guaranteed.

FULL NAME}

SIGNATURE

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I have read and understood the ICYE Ghana hosting information booklet and agree to abide by the above-mentioned programme rules and regulation laid down by ICYE GHANA for the full duration of my placement.