

LGBT PERSONS IN GHANA AND POVERTY

Like many countries in Africa, LGBT persons in Ghana are confronted with many challenges on daily basis. While the LGBT rights movement has gained traction around the world, the LGBT persons in Ghana remain under-protected. For example, same-sex sexual acts are criminalized, no anti-discrimination treatment exists, and several LGBT people are subjected to abuses and degrading treatment.

As LGBT Ghanaians face socio-economic challenges as other Ghanaians, they also face unique obstacles because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. These include a higher risk of being kicked out of home when they are young, harassment and discrimination at school and workplace. Some land lords eject their tenants because of their sexuality thus making it difficult for some LGBT community members to have a stable place to stay.

There is a clear connection between economic insecurity and anti-LGBT laws and that has a real, tangible economic impact. There are instances where gays or lesbians are outed to their employers and they get fired from work.

It is a known fact that the root cause of poverty is lack of education however; most Ghanaian educational environment is hostile towards LGBTs thus not encouraging most feminine looking/effeminate gay youth to have a better education. Those who get the chance to go to school sometimes are dismissed based on mere suspicion of being homosexuals. Some parents also refuse to take care of their wards education because of their sexual orientation.

Ghana is known for its political stability, good governance and relatively well-developed institutional capacities that support the gradual achievement of human rights. Having experienced steadily increasing economic growth of over 7% per year on average since 2005, Ghana attained lower-middle income status in 2010. Income from offshore oil reserves discovered in 2007 began to flow in 2011, creating double-digit growth for the year. Accompanying income growth has been a rapid reduction in monetary poverty from 51.7% in 1992 to 24.2% of the population by 2013, meaning that Ghana has achieved the MDG 1 target.

[https://www.unicef.org/ghana/Ghana_Poverty_and_Inequality_Analysis_FINAL_Matc_h_2016\(1\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/ghana/Ghana_Poverty_and_Inequality_Analysis_FINAL_Matc_h_2016(1).pdf)

However, there are still individuals especially the Ghanaian LGBT youth who are homeless and seeking refuge with friends who are also struggling to make a living. Most of these individuals are not able to pay for their medical bills when the need arises.

The Ghanaian LGBT community needs an emergency shelter, income generation and skills building training. Such initiatives can help; however, skills building training will not change the homophobic nature of some employers and customers.

There is therefore the need for measures to ensure that LGBT youth stay in school to finish their education so as to pursue their future dream rather dismissing them on the basis of their suspected sexual orientation.

The struggle for justice and human rights protection must continue, sexual rights activist must be supported to acquire knowledge in economic literacy and participatory budgeting skills to enable them analyze economic policies and budgets as well as identify and challenge economic injustices.

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