



Dining for Women

**Food for Thought
May 2010**

Economic Development through Vocational Training

“Regional economic development is probably some of the most fun you can have with your pants on.” - Vicki Buck, mayor of Christchurch, New Zealand

“In the world, there remains a huge untapped labor potential of women, and economic growth and development could be much higher if social and economic readjustments are made so as to provide every women with the opportunity of decent employment.” –International Labour Organization



Economic development is the process that transforms simple, low-income national economies – usually dependent on agriculture or resource extraction – into modern industrial diversified economies.

Vocational training is education meant to prepare people for industrial or commercial occupations. Students may receive instruction formally in trade schools, technical secondary schools, or in on-the-job training programs or, more informally, by picking up the necessary skills on the job.

Vocational Training in Modern Economic Development

- Traditional economic

development projects involved large investments in infrastructure, industry, education, and financial institutions.

However, recent research shows that **capital-intensive industrial sectors provide limited employment and often disrupt the rest of the economy.**

- In hoping to empower economically developing countries, modern theories of economic development support **small-scale development strategies that capitalize specific resources and natural advantages** of developing countries without disrupting their social and economic structures.

A young woman’s potential earnings can increase between 10% and 20% with 1 extra year of schooling beyond the average.

If women’s paid employment rates were raised to the same level as men’s, America’s GDP would be 9% higher; Europe’s would be 13% higher, and Japan’s would be boosted by 16%.

- **A competent and adaptable work force that can learn new skills as economies change** is a prerequisite needed in modern economic development, especially for impoverished nations. Small-scale program operations frequently depend on skills new or unfamiliar to developing areas. These areas often lack higher education programs with instructors qualified and/or resources needed to teach job skills. So in impoverished communities, nongovernment vocational training organizations can provide specified instruction that offers people the skills they need to be qualified for and hired by modern businesses. **Vocational training, therefore, releases a once idle workforce and bolsters economic development in poorer nations.**



Effects on Women

Gender Parity and Vocational Training: In the past two decades, feminization of employment has been one of the most important economic changes, due to the rapid influx of women into the paid labor force. However, even in a feminized workforce, women do not have equal access to training programs that result in job security and fair wages, programs that promote social and economic power. **To ensure gender equality and economic development, countries need increased investment and reform in training programs for women and girls,** according to reports in a 1997 UN Conference by human resource development, vocational training, and life-long learning experts.

The Recession and Economic Development

♀ *“When economies start to crumble, jobs and incomes lost will disproportionately impact women... Girls are the ones who are most likely to be withdrawn from school or become malnourished... As staff set about rebuilding economies in both developed and developing countries, they ignore women empowerment issues at a cost... Women can be the agents of change. **Investing in women and girls**”*

UN’s vision of vocational training for women:

Vocational training should include guidance, counseling, and support services, so women can be confident in training opportunities.

Vocational training programs should be offered in partnership with different sectors of society – including government, private business, employers' and workers' organizations, and non-governmental organizations, so women can have greater access to the job market.

Training for women should include instruction in legal literacy and empowerment and preparation for leadership and decision-making skills.

While diverse training, including experience in non-traditional fields, is necessary, establishing paths for promotion and better wages in sectors of predominantly female employment are equally beneficial.

is not only the right thing to do, but also the smart thing to do.” -- Robert Zeollick, President of the World Bank.

- ♀ “The financial crisis is expected to have serious, widespread impacts on the real economy and particularly on the lives of people already in poverty. Historically, economic recessions have placed a disproportionate burden on women. **Women are more likely than men to be in vulnerable jobs, to be under-employed or without a job, to lack social protection, and to have limited access to and control over economic and financial resources.** Policy responses to the financial crisis must take gender equality perspectives into account to ensure, for example, that women as well as men can benefit from employment creation and investments in social infrastructure.” --*Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs*



Questions for Discussion

What projects, other than vocational training, can promote economic development through women?

In developing nations, why do organizations emphasize vocational training program rather than traditional secondary schools?

In Sub-Sahara Africa

- ♀ Women own 1% of the land but produce 80% of the food.
- ♀ If men and women had equal influence in decision-making, an additional 1.7 million children would be adequately nourished.
- ♀ When women receive the same education, experience, and farm inputs as men, they can increase yields of some crops by 22%.

In Bangladesh

- ♀ Women who have not completed primary education earn 22% less than their male equivalents. This differential narrows to 4% for those with secondary education.
- ♀ Educational reform promotes broad-based economic development, as higher levels of training improve worker productivity and reduced occupational segregation promotes greater equity and efficiency in the labor market.

In India

- ♀ 33% of women age 15+ are economically active, versus more than 83% of men.
- ♀ While women age 15+ comprise only 27% of all employed persons, young girls account for 42% of all employed children.

Voices: Regina

I'm from a family of six, including my parents. The children are four and I am the last born. Am from a poor home. My parents are not working presently. I sell pure water by the roadside to support my family and myself. My daily income from the water that I sell is 2.00 ghana cedis. I completed my Junior High School in the year 2008, but due to financial problems, I stayed home for sometime (six months) and luckily, a friend introduced me to PROFESA.



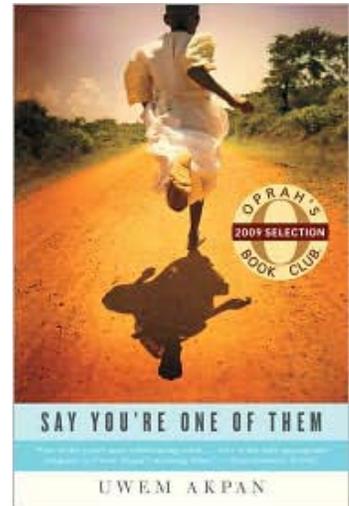
I must say that PROFESA has really helped me, and has offered me a career in secretaryship. My hope is that, after completion, I will get a job to enable me to cater for myself and family. Am really happy to be in PROFESA.
--Regina Neequaye

Meeting Resources

Books

Fiction: *Say You're One of Them* by Uwem Akpan

"...[a] startling debut collection...[Akpan] fuses a knowledge of African poverty and strife with a conspicuously literary approach to storytelling, filtering tales of horror through the wide eyes of the young. In each of the tales in *Say You're One of Them* a protagonist's childlike innocence is ultimately savaged by the facts of African life." — *Janet Maslin, The New York Times*



Nonfiction: *Hustling is Not Stealing: Stories of an African Bar Girl* by John Chernoff

"While studying West African music in the early seventies, Chernoff befriended Hawa, a high-spirited, illiterate Ghanaian woman whose street-smarts and garrulousness inspired him to record a series of autobiographical interviews. From the time she leaves an unhappy arranged marriage at the age of sixteen, her life unfolds as a picaresque series of exploits that illustrate her ability to live by her wits as an *ashawo*—a "semiprofessional" prostitute—supported by the men she meets in the bars and discos of Accra and Lomé." — *The New Yorker*





Onions are my Husbands by Gracia Clark. Clark studies the market women of Kumasi, Ghana, in order to understand the key social forces that generate, maintain, and continually reshape the shifting market dynamics. – *Barnes and Noble*

Fair Trade Shopping

Video: Check out the four-minute, online version of the documentary, about PROFESA, that won the viewer's choice greenlight on CurentTV.
http://www.golongitude.org/www/video_clip_Ghana.html

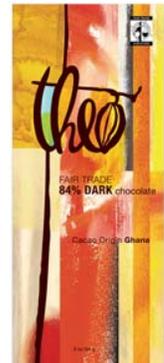
Article: A letter to the President by Shawn Rubin, Longitude's co-founder, featured in the Huffington Post:
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/shawn-rubin/my-letter-to-the-president_b_233542.html

Video: Here is the link for the **long version** of the PROFESA documentary. It is divided into 4 parts.
http://www.golongitude.org/www/video_clip_Ghana_Long_Version.html

Divine Chocolate - that's both its name and how it tastes! Available from Serrv International at <http://www.serrv.org/Gourmet/ChocolateFood/Divine.aspx>.

The Divine chocolate is very good, but if you really want to experience chocolate and are feeling extravagant, try this Ghana single origin chocolate from Theo Chocolate - it doesn't get any better! Note: this MAY be available at Whole Foods.

<https://www.theochocolate.com/store/products/chocolate-bars/single-origin/ghana-84>

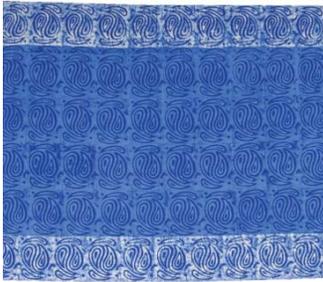


Don't forget about our ongoing basket promotion from Baskets of Africa. Check out these great baskets from Ghana! Buy one and not only do you get 5% off, but our vendor will donate 10% of purchase price back to Dining for Women! The shepherd's purses could make a great vessel for gathering checks at your meetings.

IMPORTANT - enter the code DFW at checkout. Don't forget your discount.
<http://www.basketsfromafrica.com/items/ghana-bolga-baskets/list.htm>

Is there someone in your group who can sew? These gorgeous (truly, they are indescribably beautiful) Ghanaian wax print fabrics would make a lovely tablecloth for your next meeting. In a pinch you could just iron the edges, folded under and no one will know it is just a piece of fabric! These must be seen to be believed! <http://www.anansevillage.com/home/ana/search?keywords=ghana&start=100>





From a wonderful fair trade organization that features bios of each of the women artisans who create the beautiful products on their site, this tablecloth is but one example of their work - lovely!

<http://www.tradeforchange.com/Products/4162-tablecloth-dinner-yin-yang-blue.aspx#>

-- Courtesy of Carolyn Mayers

Ghana Hospitality and Recipes

Please go to <http://www.betumi.com/home/gastro-fulltext.html> for an absolutely delightful (though a bit long) firsthand account of Ghanaian cuisine and cooking.

Meals usually consist of a variety of stews, soups and/or fried foods, and the ubiquitous fu-fu, which is essentially a big ball of whatever starchy vegetable you have on hand and is eloquently described in the above article.

Groundnuts (peanuts), plantains, millet, rice, beans, fish, tomatoes, eggplants, avocados, cassavas, greens, corn, hot peppers and various types of animal protein if you are rich or lucky. Baked yams or sweet potatoes are another common side dish, as are the many varieties of cooked greens.

A word about DESSERT - Tropical fruits are the norm for dessert. Lucky for us, though, one dessert that is VERY popular is *strawberries and whipped cream!* What could be better than strawberries and whipped cream in May? **In Ghana, they call this dessert "strawberry fool" and serve it parfait style, in a tall glass dish, making alternate layers of lightly sweetened whipped cream and sweetened strawberries.** Strawberry shortcake comes to mind though – YUM! And one other note – cocoa is one of the main export crops of Ghana. See the Fair Trade Shopping section for sources. Strawberries and chocolate anyone?

Any questions at all on any of the following recipes, please contact me, Carolyn Mayers, at crmayers@mac.com.



Akara (Fried Bean Fritters)

[Adapted from <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Bean-Fritters-with-Hot-Sauce-103385> and several others]

These are SO good! Rather than making the hot sauce, just puree together some salsa and cholula (or other) hot sauce if you want to save time. The recipe calls for using dried peas and soaking them. Alternately, you could buy frozen fresh black-eyed peas, thaw them, and save the step of soaking. Either way, this is normally served as a snack or appetizer, but could also be a vegetarian main course. Makes 18 – 20 small fritters.



1c fresh frozen, thawed OR 1/2c dried black-eyed peas
1 egg white

2T water
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped, or ½ t red pepper flakes (prettier)
1/4c scallions, green part only, thinly sliced
¼ - ½ t salt
6T vegetable, or red palm or coconut oil

If using dried peas, rinse well and soak for at least 4 hours. Drain. If using fresh frozen beans, set out to thaw. Place peas in food processor, and puree. Add a tablespoon or so of water if needed to help with the pureeing. Add egg white and puree the mixture further until it is fairly smooth, about a minute, scraping down as necessary. Add jalapeno or red pepper flakes, scallions and salt and pulse to distribute evenly. If you have time, let the mixture sit for 15 minutes to let the flavors combine. Heat half of the oil over medium to medium-high heat in a large skillet. Depending on the final texture of your puree, either form small 2 – 3 inch patties, or drop tablespoonfuls into the hot oil and flatten slightly, being very careful not to burn yourself. Fry approximately 3 minutes per side or until golden brown. Turn and fry other side 2 – 3 minutes. Remove patties and place on a plate with a paper towel. Keep warm. Repeat with remaining mixture, adding oil as necessary. Serve warm with either the hot sauce given on the site referenced about, or hot sauce of choice.

Avocado with Groundnut/Peanut Dressing

Adapted from recipe listed at

http://www.modernghana.com/GhanaHome/ghana/people.asp?menu_id=6&sub_menu_id=13&menu_id2=0&s=b

The original recipe called for using chopped peanuts, but using chunky peanut butter makes this delicious, creamy salad extremely easy to make. You won't need much per person – it's very rich. Serve over baby lettuce if you like.

Serves at least 4

2 ripe but still fairly firm, large avocados (or 3 smaller ones)
4T chunky peanut butter, not "all natural", but Jif or Skippy-like
1T or more lemon juice
¼ c hot water
¼ t paprika
¼ t ground cinnamon
up to ¼ t ground cayenne pepper, or to taste
¼ t salt
a little honey to taste
chopped fresh chives for garnish

Make the dressing by whisking together the peanut butter, hot water and lemon juice. Add paprika, cinnamon, cayenne, salt and honey and mix very well, adding a little more water if needed. If it is too thick and you need to add more water, you may need to increase the amounts of spices, to taste. Peel and cut avocado in half. Cut into approximately ¾ inch pieces. Place in a bowl, pour dressing over and toss gently. Sprinkle with minced chives. Serve at room temperature.

Shoko (Ghanaian Beef and Spinach Stew)

Adapted from http://www.iancraddock.com/shoko_ghanaian_beef_and_spinac.html

A popular Ghanaian stew and the first of two stews presented here. Both are loaded with vegetables and are really meals by themselves, served with either fu-fu, if you are feeling adventurous, or baked yams, and/or over rice.

Serves 6

4T peanut or other vegetable oil
1 ½ lb. boneless beef stew meat
2 medium onions, chopped
2 jalapeno peppers, seeded and chopped
1-14oz. can diced tomatoes
¼ c water
½ t salt or to taste
1T minced fresh ginger
¼ t ground cayenne pepper
1-10 oz. box frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained of excess water



Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large heavy pot over medium heat, add the onions and cook, stirring, for 5 minutes. Remove and set aside. Add remaining oil, allow to heat up and add half of the beef, or as much as will fit comfortably. Brown the beef in two or more batches, setting the first ones aside for a moment and leaving the last batch in the pan. Return the rest of the meat to the pan, add the cooked onion, and the tomatoes, water and jalapenos and stir well. Turn heat to high, allow to come to a boil. Reduce heat, partially cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the meat is tender, approximately 45 minutes to an hour. Add ginger, cayenne and spinach, stir well and cook for 5 – 10 minutes longer, uncovered. It should be fairly thick. Serve hot.

Ghanaian Chicken Stew

Adapted from <http://www.recipeisland.com/blog/recipe-island/africa-recipes/africa-chicken-stew-ghana/>

and http://www.africawithin.com/recipes/braised_chicken.htm

We LOVED this recipe – so clean and fresh, and a little spicy. Feel free to adjust quantities of vegetables to your taste and add or subtract as you like. This version calls for boneless, skinless chicken thighs. If you prefer, you may use whole thighs or chicken parts, but you must add at least 20 minutes to the cooking time. Serve over rice with a side of baked yams and the avocado recipe and you are all set.

Serves 6

3T coconut or peanut, or other vegetable oil
1½ lb. boneless skinless chicken thighs (or chicken parts – see above)
1 medium to large onion, chopped
2 jalapenos, seeded and chopped
½ t paprika
1T flour, heaping
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
1c low salt chicken broth, heated (you may need a bit more if using chick. parts)
1-14oz. can diced tomatoes
¼ t ground cayenne pepper
¼ t thyme
1 pinch nutmeg

¼ - ½ t salt, to taste
1c frozen corn, slightly thawed

Heat oil in a heavy large pot over medium high heat. Add about 1/3 of the chicken and brown. Remove and repeat with remaining chicken. Set aside. Reduce heat to medium, add onions, jalapenos and paprika and cook, stirring, for about 5 minutes or until onions begin to soften. Add garlic and flour and cook, stirring for 2 minutes. Increase heat to high, add heated broth, stir well and bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Add chicken, tomatoes, cayenne, thyme, nutmeg and salt, and stir well. Bring back up to a slow boil, reduce heat, and cook at a high simmer, partially covered for 10 minutes (30 minutes is using parts) or until chicken is cooked through and tender. Add corn, increase heat to medium and cook at a low boil for 5 more minutes, stirring once or twice. Remove from heat and allow to sit for 5 minutes before serving hot, over rice.

NOTE: Dessert ideas are described in the introduction.

Sources:

un.org
worldbank.org
ilo.org
britannica.com
images.google.com
Longitude

Special thanks to Carolyn Mayers for Fair Trade and Recipe submissions