



Dining for Women

Program Fact Sheet May 2010

Program: Longitude

Website: www.golongitude.org

Mission: Longitude is a 501 (c)3 non-profit organization that gives resources, volunteers, and support services to leaders of grassroots educational and human rights organizations in developing nations. Longitude aims to recruit volunteers who will work with their international partners, raise funds for project growth and improvement, and provide material and programmatic support.

Ghana Fast Facts

Population:
22,019,000

Life Expectancy: 57

Literacy Rate: 75%

**Living below
internat. poverty
line:** 28%

Economic Aid:
\$1,150,930,000
(2007)

External Debt:
\$4,479,212,000
(2007)

Where they work: Currently, Longitude helps organizations in Ghana and India. Longitude will use Dining for Women's gift to help The Professional Secretarial Academy of Ghana (PROFESSA).

As a burgeoning West African republic, Ghana's economic and governmental reforms have earned the nation respect in the global market in recent decades.

Though its economy depends largely on both exported goods, especially cocoa and gold, and international assistance, mainly from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, **Ghana has twice the per-capita output of most West African nations, and it hopes to become a middle-income country by 2020.**

Ghana's economic goals and progress are largely attributed to its **Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP)**, which are guidelines that the World Bank and IMF require a country produce before they provide economic assistance to that country. Ghana's PRSP emphasize greater access to sex education, family planning services, and secondary education for girls.



Still, some economic experts claim that countries like Ghana will never become internationally competitive without significant assistance from global economic powers. Ghana struggles with rampant HIV/Aids and Malaria infections and inadequate infrastructure. Global recessions counteract Ghana's economic and humanitarian strides and deter developed nation's economic investment.

History of the Area: Until 1957, the world knew Ghana as, simply, the Gold Coast, and man's lust for gold determined much of Ghana's narrative. Little is known about the region prior to the arrival of European merchants in the late 15th century. Portuguese merchants looking for gold became the first Europeans in the region, and Ghana became a source of gold, salt, ivory, and, eventually, slaves for the West. By the mid 17th century, major European countries followed Portugal's font of resources and established trading posts, forts, and castles to control the region.

Named the Gold Cost by British merchants, it became a British colony in 1896. The Gold Coast remained a part of the British common wealth until it was granted independence in 1957. **The first independent sub-Saharan nation, the Gold Coast was renamed after a northern medieval kingdom, Ghana, that became part of the Mali empire, which dominated the gold market of the old world and ruled most of West Africa from 1200-1600. After 35 years of political unrest, Ghana revised its constitution, allowed for a multiparty system, and became a democracy. Today, it's seen as a model for successful political reform in West Africa.**



History of Longitude/PROFESA:



Meshach Bondzie began PROFESA in 2000 with six typewriters and his father's church building. Inspired by Meshach's work while traveling and volunteering with NGOs in 2003, American teachers **Shawn Ruban and Laura Westburg**, his wife, founded Longitude as a means to assist grassroots programs like PROFESA. **Since 2000, PROFESA has trained more than 250 students, 177 of whom now have government certifications that qualify them for jobs within Ghana's growing economy.**

Note: Just last week, Ghana Education Service (GES) approved PROFESA as an officially licensed and accredited institution in Ghana!

The Project: Longitude's enterprise in Abeka, Ghana supports PROFESA, a nonprofit vocational training center whose services subsidize vocational education for women who cannot afford school. By offering low cost, high quality job training and placement, PROFESA provides women with the education and direction needed to secure a job, even in the developing world's challenging economy. In seeking out the poorest women in communities surrounding the capital of Accra and encouraging them to return to school, PROFESA helps young women who otherwise, almost certainly, would sell goods in the streets or be unemployed.

Why Needed: With recent economic and humanitarian development, Ghana has increased investment in primary education enrollment. Unfortunately, as a result, Ghana has neglected its secondary education system, and the gap between those who attend primary schools and those who receive tertiary education has increased, especially for females who constitute only 33 % of upper level enrollment.

Mounting fees in the public school lead to Ghana's enrolment disparity. The high cost makes school unfeasible for impoverished, young females, thus limiting their futures in Ghana's competitive job market and trapping them and their families in a cycle of poverty.

Despite Ghana's commitment to reducing gender parity in education through educational reforms, constitutional changes, school improvement initiatives, and world donor assistance, **Ghana's educational system remains imbalanced: 54.3% of females over the age of 15 have never been to school.** The lack of female enrollment not only stymies Ghana's labor force but also hinders gender equality.

The PROFESA School hopes to offset this imbalance and give women equal footing with men in Ghana's restricted job market. But the status of young women in Ghana is further compromised by high HIV/Aids rates and prevalent cases of preventable diseases. Therefore, to improve the quality of health for young women, **Longitude provides the PROFESA School with UN approved materials that educate students about HIV prevention as well as Malaria, Dysentery, and other diseases and sanitation issues common to the urban areas of Accra, Ghana.**

PROFESA's primary goal: edification of young women in secretarial trade so they can secure jobs, improve their lives, and transform society. Educational opportunity not also leads to an improved economic position but also can expand property rights, political representation and societal equality for women.



Longitude's Accomplishments: From 2000 to 2006, more than 200 students enrolled in PROFESA, but due to limited facilities and funds, few young women graduated. **Since Longitude's involvement in 2006, program enrolment has doubled, and 80% of students have graduated.** Furthermore, in 2009, with help from Longitude, PROFESA built a new school with much-needed classrooms, office space, and a computer lab, all of which inspires impoverished students who, without Longitude, would never use a computer or sit in a classroom.

With Longitude's funding from Dining for Women, PROFESA will be able to:

- ♀ **Increase student scholarships**, thus providing more young women with training needed to obtain jobs in Ghana.
- ♀ **Retain current students**, thus ensuring that women complete the program and pass government exams.
- ♀ **Strengthen the job placement program** by hiring a job placement coordinator, thus connecting more graduates with employers.
- ♀ **Implement a health information program** for young women in the community of Abeka, Ghana, thus providing Ghana with a vital, desirable work force.

Expenses	Dollar amount/year	Total Amount
Ten scholarships for new students. Annual cost, \$160 per student	\$1,600	\$4,800
Expansion of existing partial and full Scholarships	\$1,100	\$3,300
Job placement coordinator salary	\$1,500	\$4,500
Job placement program materials	\$200	\$600
Health care professional or health training for PROFESA instructors	\$500	\$1,500
Marketing and student recruitment	\$200	\$600
Examination Fees	\$150	\$450
Total	\$5,250	\$15,750

Project Specific Goals:

- ♀ **Increase enrollment** by 25% in one year.
- ♀ **Ensure that 80%** of students pass government exams.

- ♀ **Increase percent of graduates** creating resumes, connecting with employers, and obtaining jobs, after establishing a baseline percent for employment in year one. 3% growth is the goal for the next two years. 90% of students will create resumes.
 - ♀ **Have 100% of students attending PROFESA complete the health curriculum program** and provide four junior secondary schools with health presentations from trained instructors or nurses.
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Why DFW's funding is vital to this project:

PROFESA is the only non-profit professional training academy in the Accra region. Until PROFESA gains outside financial support, increased enrolment and successful job placement will be thwarted by several factors, including:

- **The inability to provide need-based scholarships:**
For many students PROFESA's \$15 per month tuition prohibits enrolment since young women are perceived as having lower earning potential than men and thus are vulnerable to losing their family financial support.
 - **The need for a full-time job placement program:**
Since the recession in 2008, Ghana's job market has suffered. Because jobs are hard to find, PROFESA needs to hire a career counselor who can provide additional help with students' resumes, cover letters, and interviews; and connect students with business leaders in Abeka.
 - **Funding for increased teacher training:**
Once Ghanaian students leave the public school system, they have no organization to provide health-related content for young women. PROFESA provides health education through Meshach Bondzie, the school's founder, who needs further training or the assistance of a skilled nurse in order to improve the quality of information presented at the school.
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How PROFESA measures success:

1. **Enrollment and retention records:**
Attendance records show if quarterly enrollment goals are reached.
2. **Test score results:**
PROFESA teachers train students so that they can pass certification tests in three government examinations. These test scores help manifest the success of student training:
 - a. NVTI: (National Vocational Training Institute), which tests for typing and stenography skills
 - b. GBCE: (Business Secretarial/Business Accounting exams), which tests for business acumen
 - c. DBS: (Diploma in Business Studies), which is the second level of business certification in Ghana.
3. **Job Search Process Outcomes:**
The number of women able to find jobs upon graduating and securing their national certifications is PROFESA's ultimate measure of success. Longitude and PROFESA track the

number of students hired upon completion of their coursework and measure the completed resumes, cover letters, and interviews for each graduate.

4. Health Awareness Research:

Longitude measures the significance of “HIV Pre-test and Post-test” results and other health awareness and research tools that show the efficacy of PROFESA’s health education materials.

Financial Profile of the organization (2008):

Total Spent on programming for 2008 = \$53,658.66

Total spent on fund raising for 2008 = \$285.83

Total spent on administrative expenses for 2008 = \$906.69

Goal of DFW gift:

\$15,750

Sources:

Longitude

Wikipedia.org

Prb.org

Bbc.org

thinkpeace.org

ruralpovertyportal .org