

Diverse Characteristics in Ghana

Ky'Leah Walls

Longwood University

Dr. Brown-Meredith

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Knowing the importance and impact diversity has on the community is crucial in social work. It gives us the groundwork for appropriately handling the population and its needs. As an upcoming social worker, I have been shown that you can work with a diverse population globally. For example, I got to study abroad in Ghana, Africa, in July 2023. I could see different perspectives on poverty, lifestyles, and cultural backgrounds. During this time in Ghana, I saw firsthand the needs and how I can educate and advocate for those who live internationally. The approach for advocacy would be included at the macro system level because it is such a significant concern for those in the country. However, the micro, mezzo, and macro systems levels can be used in the advocacy process for the enhancement of Ghana.

Poverty is all over the world; however, it significantly impacts Africa. Africa is a continent that has every natural resource, such as gold, brass, chocolate, minerals, oil, etc. Yet, they are still co-dependent on other countries and continents. They have suffered from oppression and discrimination for over 400 years, politically and individually. It started with the slave trade, and they are still in the process of recovering and being released from the shackles. The group had the opportunity to walk through the slave dungeons. That was a very emotional walk; however, it was necessary for me to have a deeper connection with my heritage and the purpose of the experience.

In 1957, Ghana was led by its president, Kwame Nkrumah, who guided and directed Ghana to get its independence. Nkrumah stated that “we seek to create a society where material resources are held in common, and we reject the idea of selfish gain as the end of itself.” As we walked through his museum, I interpreted that quote as if Africa continues to strive for unification and work together. They can create the nation that they wish for.

Nkrumah worked hard during his time to help Africa have their own money currency and telephone line. Once those two specialties would've been settled, Africa would 100% be an independent continent. Ultimately, it is not common for a leader to lead in the correct path and then be suddenly assassinated.

Additionally, the African culture and traditions are built on strong spiritual awareness. Their source of healing is fasting and praying to their ancestors and God. During the duration of the group being in Ghana, we were able to be involved in some of the spiritual ceremonies. For example, the naming ceremony is defined as naming the baby by the day he or she was born. The day signifies your destiny, path in life, characteristics, and traits. The naming ceremony is a massive part of the African traditions that every baby has experienced. It is to introduce the baby to the good and bad things in life. It serves as a foundational purpose in the lives of Africans.

The food is also a significant part of their culture. The food is less processed and more natural. For us in America, processed food is regular, and we become more immune to it. In Ghana, processed food is a luxury, and it is mainly consumed by the wealthy and tourists. We had a course before going to Ghana, and we learned that it takes longer to cook in Ghana than in America. That is a part of the natural system they have when consuming food.

Overall, experiencing the culture induces your adoration for Africa more. The part that I made sure to take home with me was the symbols. I became attached to the symbol "Gye Nyame," which is the Except for God. It is the symbol of the omnipotence and immortality of God. In American translation, that is us saying nobody but God. It enhances the power and presence of God. Both cultures carry the love of God. However, it is projected and stated in two different ways.

Furthermore, this trip impacted and significantly impacted my social work developmental growth. I was introduced to global social work and global advocacy. I was able to see how important it is for individuals to experience life worldwide to understand their privilege, purpose genuinely, and people's needs. It was great to have this experience during my undergraduate. Therefore, I will always have this experience to reflect back on. It will always be used as a guide when I am in need of cultural competence and referral for finding purpose in self and profession.

The duties as a social worker would be to get Ghana the services I see as a concern but also one that they see as a concern. Therefore, I need to have an open dialogue with the community so that proper assessments can be taken. The PREPARE model could be used in the beginning stages, as well as the change model. They will serve as the foundation for assessing and gathering information for the improvement of the issue. These will be the steps to be used before and during assessments. The concerns shown in Ghana include a lack of proper water resources, food insecurity, stigmas against mental health, and a lack of educational resources and equipment.

In conclusion, various needs and opportunities exist to advocate for those internationally. The study abroad trip was a part of the advocacy. It allowed students to see the issues authentically and encouraged us to make global pathways to a better world. When working with minority populations, it is crucial to be culturally competent. It allows you to have an understanding and inducement to connect with the culture. As stated by Kwame Nkrumah, "Freedom is not something that one person can bestow on another as a gift. They claim it as their own, and none can keep it from them." That continues as my guide to know that as long as I strive, learn, engage in historical events, and blossom as an intelligent individual, I claim my freedom.