



The Aya Centre

# Akwaaba!

The Aya Centre Newsletter on Studying Abroad in Ghana

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## Welcome To Our Newsletter!

Dear Readers,

The Aya Centre for Intercultural Awareness and Development is pleased to announce the launching of the maiden issue of our tri-annual newsletter, *Akwaaba!* The purpose of this newsletter is twofold. First, it is designed to provide news and information about the vast opportunities and unique challenges of studying abroad in the Republic of Ghana. Secondly, it aims to provide information on the contributions the Aya Centre is making to enhance the exciting field of international education in Ghana. Our target audience includes the global community of students, faculty and staff, and the institutions they belong to, who share an interest in this endeavor.

We have a particular interest in Service Learning, which is one of the most dynamic areas within the field of international education.

These days, a growing number of students who apply for study abroad programs are less interested in just sitting in classrooms for long hours; nor are they interested in simply taking long field trips to visit the wide variety of historical and contemporary sites most countries have to offer. Instead, students who study abroad today are more interested in learning by doing, i.e., working in areas related to their academic interests and/or contributing their time, talent, knowledge and labour towards helping communities help themselves. Moreover, by working alongside their international counterparts and/or other local residents in foreign lands, students are better able to immerse themselves, culturally, in the countries they visit. Our newsletter, then, will focus a considerable amount of its attention on bringing these engaging and transformative experiences that are available, and are

currently taking place, in Ghana to the attention of the global community.

In short, the main goal of *Akwaaba!* is to contribute to an increasing awareness in the global community of exactly how persons traveling to the Republic of Ghana can benefit from, and contribute to, the experience of being in Ghana. Without trying to conceal any of the real problems and challenges students, faculty and staff may face in their experiences in Ghana, we plan to offer a fresh and open discussion on as many of the concrete issues relevant to international education in Ghana as possible. We are hoping that, in turn, you will feel obliged to ask the tough questions, and to share with us your own unique vision of how you believe international educational exchange in Ghana can help to transform our students, both local and international, and to impact our world in a positive way.

## About The Aya Centre

The Aya Centre is a single-purpose, multi-service organization designed to enhance the learning experience and cultural awareness of persons traveling to Ghana. We are also committed to contributing to the development of Ghana in particular and Africa in general. Towards this end, we are able to provide groups with opportunities to engage in a variety of learning experiences during their stay in Ghana—including classroom instruction, community service projects, and internship arrangements. In short, at the Aya Centre—depending on you and/or your group's unique interests, needs, preferences, and goals—we can make all of the necessary arrangements to



ensure that your time in Ghana is well spent!

The Aya Centre can assist you and your group in meeting whatever transportation and accommodation needs you may have while visiting Ghana. From home stays to the executive suite of one of Ghana's five star hotels, we can make the necessary arrangements to ensure that your visit to Ghana meets with your highest expectations. The same is true in the transportation field. Let us know what type of vehicle you need, and we will make the necessary arrangements to secure it for your time spent in Ghana.

The Aya Centre can provide an assortment of opportunities for groups

traveling to Ghana who would like to contribute to community development in Ghana. From one afternoon to several months, community service projects can be organized for individuals as well as groups of all sizes. Moreover, we can place persons in urban or rural settings, depending on their interest, and in any one of the ten regions of Ghana. The Aya Centre works with a variety of NGOs and other private agencies to assist them in the realization of their goals and objectives. In this way we are able to ensure that we also meet our objective of contributing to national development in Ghana. Moreover, we make every effort to ensure that your community



## About The Aya Centre...



The Aya Centre organizes seminars to suit the unique interest of various groups, regardless of subject matter. For nearly ten years, now, we have been organizing educational seminars for universities, institutes, youth organizations and churches from around the world. Our presenters—always Ghanaian, well informed, and dynamic -- include university faculty, top government officials, NGO representatives, and managing directors from the private sector. Moreover, our seminars -- lasting anywhere between 1 - 5 weeks -- always include field trips and site visits that complement the material covered in the seminar.

Simply contact us with your seminar idea or proposal and we can do all the

rest, including helping you develop the seminar topics, schedule and budget projection.

The Aya Centre is equipped to assist persons interested in conducting research about Ghana, the West African sub-region, and/or the entire African continent. From conceptualization to the analysis of data, the Aya Centre can provide the necessary support, logistics, expertise, and equipment that researchers need to conduct their studies.



Our team of research associates can assist with all matters related to ethics, research design, measurement, sampling, and data collection (including questionnaire construction, survey research, interviewing, and participant observation).

“Aya stands for endurance and defiance of difficulties in all aspects of human endeavor.”  
Aya Centre

The Aya symbol, portrayed below, is one of the famous Adinkra symbols of Ghana. Although they were first used by the Asante, the Adinkra symbols are now embraced by the entire Ghanaian population and have become uniquely Ghanaian. In addition to providing aesthetic value, the Adinkra symbols also reflect the philosophical outlook of the people in the form of non-verbal expressions of proverbs, parables and maxims. Aya stands for endurance and defiance of difficulties in all aspects of human endeavor. It stresses the need for human beings to be strong-willed, self-reliant and resourceful in order to meet the uncertainties of life. These are the characteristics that we at the Aya Centre try our best to exemplify.



## Service Learning

The Republic of Ghana offers an incredible array of opportunities for international students to learn, *by doing*, in a wide variety of service learning programs and community development projects—all of which include experiences in both the classroom *and* the field. The Aya Centre can arrange both the classes and the related internship experiences. These experiences are in areas as diverse as health care, education, environment, gender, youth, communications and many others. What better way for students to learn what they are studying in their books than by doing it in the field?



What follows are two unedited 'testimonials' from students who recently interned at local institutions in Ghana (arranged by the Aya Centre) during their semester abroad.

*“Overall, I think that People’s Dialogue’s contribution to me was inevitably far greater than mine to them. Some of my most genuine interactions with Ghanaians took place through my internship: from community meetings to praying at the mosque and celebrating the Salah with my bosses to just listening to them discuss projects and politics. It has been so exciting and reassuring to see ‘development’ achieved through such tangible, grassroots efforts, and it’s helped to shed some light on my own studies. It is in changing the capacities of the individuals that positive social change can be achieved, and although funding is crucial and often a major obstacle for many of these smaller, grassroots organizations, throwing money at a country is not the way to assist it. It is through my experiences studying and witnessing development at work throughout Ghana and specifically at People’s Dialogue, that I feel a renewed confidence in the line of work that I have chosen, and in the legitimacy and sustainability of the field as a whole.” - Kelly Jacques, Tulane University*

*“Nestled in the mango groves in a rural community north of Accra lies a clinic where I was lucky enough to intern. It is here at this*



*clinic where I have learned so much about development, as I have seen the challenges that stem from development played out in the practices and policies of the clinic, which is a microcosm of the larger Ghana Health Service. I have also thought about my own history as a citizen of a developed country, and the history of that country, in understanding by comparison how challenging the realities of being a developing nation can be.*

*“Overall, the experience I had at the clinic was a great one. I learned about something other than what I have studied at my university, but this allowed me to look at the health care system and development with a sociological perspective.” - Rachel Mocker, The College of New Jersey*



A K W A A B A I

## AHA International



### Ghana

When searching for where to study abroad, choose The AHA International **Ghana** Program!

Ghana, the *Gateway to West Africa*, is a great country to spend a semester studying abroad! The Ghanaian people are famous for their warmth, hospitality, and friendliness. Moreover, the country itself is very stable and peaceful—devoid of the divisive ethnic, religious, and political cleavages that plague so many countries in Africa in particular and the world at-large. And Accra, the capital of Ghana where the program is located, is a city with as much excitement and cultural diversity that you will find anywhere.

One of the things that makes the AHA Program in Ghana so attractive is its **Service-Learning** component. In addition to a dynamic classroom experience and exhilarating weekend excursions, students on this program learn by *doing*, i.e., they have the opportunity to work in areas related to their academic interests and/or career ambitions. In short, students are able to contribute their time, talent, knowledge and labour towards helping communities help themselves. And by working alongside their Ghanaian counterparts and/or other local community residents, AHA International students are better able to immerse themselves, culturally, into Ghanaian society. Ghana is an ideal location for Service Learning because, as a developing nation, it has immense socio-economic challenges. What better way for students to learn what they

## Links

Below are several links to various sources of information that potential visitors to Ghana may find useful.

#### News and Information about Ghana:

<http://www.ghanaweb.com>  
<http://www.ghanareview.co.uk>  
<http://www.ghanarepublic.com/>  
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/dest/afr/gha.htm>

#### Weather Conditions in Ghana:

<http://worldweather.wmo.int/151/m151.htm>

#### Currency and Exchange Rates:

[www.x-rates.com](http://www.x-rates.com) or [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com)

are studying in their books than by doing it in the field?



*A portion of the Fall 2009 group of AHA International students on the steps of Elmina Castle on a weekend excursion to the south central coastal region of Ghana.*

**Program Theme:** Development Studies and Service Learning

**Program description:** This program is designed for students interested in interning at local non-governmental organizations. You will also take classes at the Aya Centre, a single-purpose, multi-service organization designed to enhance the learning experience and cultural awareness of persons traveling to Ghana. Through your courses (taught in English), your internship experience, and the outstanding excursions, you will gain a greater appreciation of Ghana and its people, and a deeper understanding of yourself.

**Location:** This program is based in Accra, Ghana's largest city and home to nearly three million people, an ideal location for your international experience. Accra is a huge sprawling metropolis, serving as the administrative, communication, and financial center of Ghana.

**Disciplines:**  
 DEVELOPMENT STUDIES  
 CULTURAL STUDIES

#### Immunization and Regional Health Advisories:

<http://www.cdc.gov>

#### Malaria Prophylaxis:

<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/content/MalariaDrugsPublic.aspx>

#### US Department of State's website:

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1124.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1124.html)

#### US Embassy Information:

<http://usembassy.state.gov/accra>

POLITICAL SCIENCE  
 GENDER STUDIES  
 AFRICAN STUDIES  
 ECONOMICS  
 SOCIOLOGY  
 HISTORY

#### Dates:

Fall: mid-August – mid-December

Spring: mid-January – mid-May

**Housing:** The students stay in a large house with several private toilets and showers. This house, located in East Legon, a quiet and very safe neighborhood in greater Accra, has a kitchen with a stove, two refrigerators, and various kitchen utensils. The house, which is fully furnished, also has a living room (with a television), dining room, veranda, mid-size compound, and 24-hour security. It is also walking distance from the Aya Centre and the University of Ghana.

**Excursions:** The city will become your classroom as the Aya Centre staff lead you on an extensive tour of Accra, including visits to significant historical and cultural sites. You will also be given a practical lesson on how to ride the *tro tro*, the cheapest and most common mode of transportation in Accra. Additionally, on various weekends, the Aya Centre will organize a number of excursions to different regions in Ghana to ensure that you get a full appreciation of Ghana's historical, cultural, and ecological splendor. From the infamous slave dungeons used during the transatlantic slave trade to Vli Falls, West Africa's highest water falls, you will see and experience it all!

For exact dates and program prices visit our website:

<http://www.ahastudyabroad.org/>

#### A Highly Successful Study Abroad Program in Ghana:

<http://www.csupomona.edu/~rrreese/nonfla/ghana.html>

#### Music Scene in Contemporary Ghana :

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziJQZVzkJnA>

#### President Obama's Visit to Cape Coast Castle:

[http://www.youtube.com/Bomani2007#play/all/uploads-all/0/OgmDoon\\_vCO](http://www.youtube.com/Bomani2007#play/all/uploads-all/0/OgmDoon_vCO)

**"The Ghanaian people are famous for their warmth, hospitality, and friendliness. Moreover, the country itself is very stable and peaceful—devoid of the divisive ethnic, religious, and political cleavages that plague so many countries in Africa in particular and the world at-large."**

*AHA International*



AKWAABA!

## Ghana Map, Coat of Arms and Flag.



The Ghana Flag was designed by Mrs. Theodosia Salome Okoh, a Ghanaian, to replace the flag of the United Kingdom upon attainment of independence in 1957. The Flag of Ghana consists of the colours RED, GOLD and GREEN in horizontal stripes with a five-pointed star in the center of the gold stripe. RED represents the blood of those who died in the country's struggle for independence. GOLD represents the mineral wealth of the country. GREEN symbolizes the country's rich forests And THE BLACK STAR stands for the lodestar of African freedom.

"We have the blessing of the wealth of our vast resources, the power of our talents and the potentialities of our people."  
Dr. Kwame Nkrumah



AKWAABA!



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#### **Mailing Address**

The Aya Centre  
Private Mail Bag L 73  
University of Ghana  
Ghana – West Africa

#### **Office Location**

Okponglo Junction / East Legon  
(Approximately 5 Minutes from the University of Ghana)

#### **Telephone**

Office Phone: +233-30-2544024  
Managing Director: +233-20-2887807  
Chairman: +233-20-5073920

#### **Email**

[info@ayacentre.com](mailto:info@ayacentre.com)

#### **Website**

<http://www.ayacentre.com>

**CONTACT US**