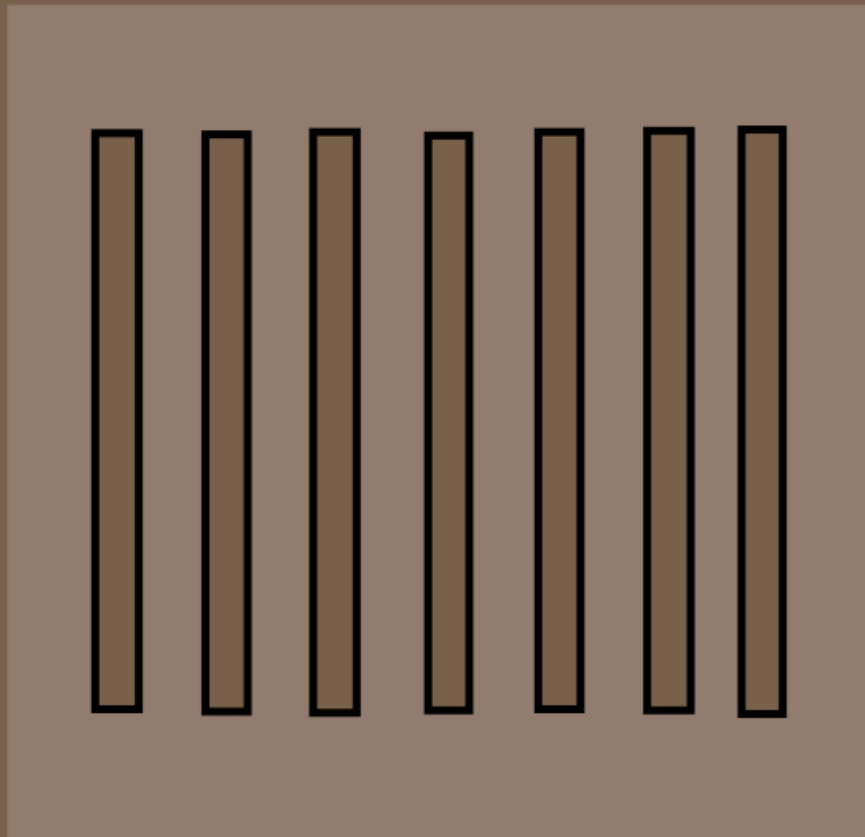


# An Introduction to Project Efiase

KITIWA BIA NSUA



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:

A guide for understanding the rationale behind Project Efiase

Ghana Prisons Service Council

Project Efiase Planning Committee

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# **Introduction**

Project Efiase was launched by His Excellency, John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2015.

The idea for Project Efiase was mooted by the 4<sup>th</sup> Ghana Prisons Service Council (PSC). In the year 2008, the PSC toured the regions to inaugurate the various Regional Prisons Committees and came face to face with some of the poor and inhuman conditions of Ghana's prisons under which human beings were being held. The Council therefore aimed to launch Project Efiase but this vision was not fulfilled during their tenure of office.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Ghana Prisons Service Council (2009-2013) upon assumption of office decided to take off where their predecessors had ended. This PSC initiated the formulation of a Ten Year Strategic Development Plan to tackle the numerous challenges of the Ghana Prisons Service.

In late 2014, the 6<sup>th</sup> Ghana Prisons Service Council were sworn into office and under the Chairmanship of Rev. Dr. Stephen Wengam, this PSC made the launching of both Project Efiase and the Ten Year Strategic Development Plan a reality six months after assumption of office.

## **Functions of GPS**

PRISONS SERVICE ACT - 1972 (NRCD 46)

Section - 1 - Functions of the Service

- 1) It shall be the duty of the Prisons Service to ensure the safe custody and welfare of prisoners and whenever practicable to undertake the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners.
- 2) Every prison officer shall perform such functions as are by law conferred upon a prison officer and shall obey all lawful orders and directions in respect of the execution of his office which he may receive from his superiors in the Prisons Service.

# What is Project Efiase?

Efiase is the Akan/Twi word for prison. Project Efiase is an initiative of the Ghana Prisons Service Council aimed at enabling the Ghana Prisons Service to fulfill the functions mandated of it by law. At present the Service is fraught with a myriad of challenges that hamper the Service from being able to effectively and adequately:

- i. ensure the safe custody of prisoners
- ii. ensure welfare of prisoners
- iii. undertake the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners

The challenges facing the Ghana Prisons Service are enormous, mostly interlinked and require substantial amount of resources to solve.

How does the Prisons Council hope to achieve this? Education, Advocacy and Fund Raising Activities!

Through Project Efiase, the Council seeks to educate the public about the current state of its prisons—sensitizing them about the importance of the Ghana Prisons Service to national development.

Through Project Efiase, the Council is also reaching out to the general public and corporate entities advocating for Public Private Partnerships for the Ghana Prisons Service.

Finally, Project Efiase is a fundraising drive soliciting funds from every Ghanaian in the quest to improve the conditions of prisons in Ghana.

But why do Ghanaians need to take their Prison Service more seriously—funding and resourcing it so it can achieve its mandate?

The Ghana Prison Service is established by article 205 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana as part of the Criminal Justice System and whether or not it is able to effectively carry out its functions has a direct impact on the maintenance of public safety in the country. This is because when a prisons system simply warehouses inmates and does not reform them in a systematic manner, prisons cease to be correctional facilities and remain detention facilities where potential criminals who become menace to society are groomed.

What are some challenges that bedevil the Service?



# **Challenges That Project Efiase Seeks To Address**

As stated above, the challenges of the Service are interrelated. Below are few examples of these challenges as time and space would not allow an in-depth cataloguing of all the challenges.

## **Infrastructure**

In 1850, the country had prison cells in four forts and these held a maximum of 129 prisoners. In 1948, there were twenty-nine prison establishments all over the country. Today, there are 43 prisons around the country. Out of this, only three (3) prisons were purposefully built as prisons. The other forty (40) were inherited from businesses or government entities – many dating to colonial times.

The Yeji camp prison for instance used to be an abandoned clinic; Winneba prison used to be a warehouse dating back to colonial times; Koforidua prison, an armory from the World War period; the Kumasi prison was built in 1946 and the prison at Kenyasi and Dua Yaw Nkwanta were handed to the Prisons Service by the Ministry of Agriculture. The gift of land at Kenyasi came with a solitary structure which the Service had to secure and eventually expand to house prisoners. This is just to mention a few of the 40 prisons inherited from businesses and other governmental agencies. Some of the Prisons in the northern part of Ghana are even built from mud.

## **Congestion**

The fact that many of Ghana's prisons were not purpose-built is a contributory factor to the acute congestion challenge in the prisons today. Kumasi prison has a maximum holding capacity of not more than 450 but it currently holds 2,500 prisoners. Nsawam prison was initially built to hold about 850 prisoners but currently holds 3,400 inmates. This situation is not uncommon in the other prison establishments around the country.

## **Diseases**

The high level of congestion and poor conditions in the prisons due to acute lack of resources has turned the prison environment into incubators of diseases. Research shows that communicable disease such as tuberculosis, hepatitis B and HIV/AIDS are very prevalent in Ghana's prisons because of the above mentioned reason. These diseases accounted for 29 of the 86 deaths recorded in all 43 inmates holding establishments in 2013. Officers, their families and the general public also are at

risk of contracting these communicable diseases. Since the officers work in close contact with the inmates and live with their families in communities outside the prisons walls, any infection contracted can easily be passed on to their families. Visitors to the prisons could also be infected with the diseases of prisoners and transmit them to the general public.

Similarly, inmates who go for outside labour in the community could also infect members in the community. Discharged inmates go back to the community and could be a source of transmission of diseases.

From the above, it can be argued that prison health is a public health concern.

### **Higher Learning Institutions of Criminal Behavior**

Spatial challenges as well as a dearth of capacity inhibit effective classification and treatment programs—leading to a situation where different categories of prisoners as well as remand prisoners in many instances are lumped together in the same space.

This lack of effective classification and treatment has turned Ghana’s prisons into places where less hardened prisoners receive training in crime by association with more hardened criminals, and upon their release potentially practice their newly acquired skills on society. This is because of the infectious nature of crime.

This could be avoided if the service is well resourced. If well resourced, Ghana’s prisons can potentially be world class centres of reformation and rehabilitation—thus fulfilling the legal mandate that set it up.

### **Inadequate Workshops and Tools for Skills Development**

After Governor Guggisberg’s instructive comment on Regulation 171 in 1922, that, “the chief object of the Gold Coast prisons today is reform rather than punishment. The chief way in which it is hoped to secure the reform of prisoners is through trade training...” attempts were made to set up industries in the prison facilities around the country. Overtime the equipment needed for the operation in these industries have deteriorated. With little or no maintenance and replacement most of the equipment have been rendered obsolete and workshops redundant.

The Service seeks to shift its focus from just warehousing convicted persons for the purpose of incapacitation, deterrence and retribution, and forge ahead to treat and equip inmates with beneficial skills to society. This requires that workshops and equipment necessary for this exercise are provided and maintained to ensure

continuity of programs. Many workshops which were formally used for training inmates in some prisons have obsolete equipment. In places where the machines are not obsolete, the number of inmates has outgrown the number of equipment.

Many of the machines in the workshops were inherited from colonial times. This hinders proper teaching and learning in the workshops, thereby impeding Reformation and Rehabilitation efforts.

### **Weak Agricultural Industry**

The Service has lots of arable land which can be used for large scale farming but it lacks the capital to purchase modern farming equipment like tractors, cultivators, chisel plow, irrigation equipment, harvesters, etc. With the human resource (qualified agric officers and inmates) at its disposal, if properly resourced, the Service could make a huge contribution Ghana's agriculture and economy.

### **Lack of Operational and Administrative Vehicles**

Transportation is a big challenge to the Service. Most of the already insufficient vehicles have become unserviceable. Officers often have to rely on their own personal vehicles or take public transport in order to perform their official duties. This is a very worrying phenomenon considering the security risk of conveying inmates in public transport, for example to courts and hospitals. This lack has even impeded effective agriculture in the Prisons Service. This is because most of the prisons (central and local prisons) are located in the middle of towns which are far from their farm lands. Vehicles will therefore be needed for the transportation of inmates to and from the farming lands.

### **Lack of Accommodation and Office Space**

Abraham Marslow's theory of hierarchical needs, states physiological need of which accommodation is included as the primary needs of every individual.

The Service is currently faced with the challenge of providing accommodation for its officers all over the country. Most prisons have barracks around them for accommodating officers who work in them. However these barracks are not able to accommodate the entire workforce since the number of officers needed in the prisons has multiplied since the construction of those barracks. This has compelled the Prisons administration to rely on rented apartments which are very expensive and has plunged the Service into debt.

Also, most of the prisons lack office space for officers. Officers need to have acceptable office spaces where they can operate and perform their duties. The Service needs to develop, plan, execute and monitor reformation and rehabilitation programs for inmates. This task cannot be efficiently and effectively performed if there are no offices for officers to operate from.

### **Lack of Capital and Low Patronage of Inmates’ Products**

The Service’s industries are producing under capacity due to low capital injection into its viable production sectors. For instance the James Camp Prison, in Accra has a cement block factory that is capable of producing 2000 quality blocks at full capacity but is currently producing only 300 blocks.

There is also low patronage of items produced by inmates. The public sometimes doubt the quality of such products and do not take the time to visit exhibitions of the Service to see for themselves the quality of such products.

## **Ten Year Strategic Development Plan**

The 10-Year Strategic Development Plan which project Efiase aims to fund is a systematic plan to solve the aforementioned challenges. The 6<sup>th</sup> Prisons Council launched Project Efiase to help address these challenges. Each of the enumerated challenges will require commitment and a lot of resources (financial and otherwise) to resolve.

## **Latent Potential**

Ghana Prisons has numerous potentials. The Service boasts of some of the finest, qualified, well trained, disciplined, dedicated, hardworking, experienced and ambitious officers.

The Service also has abundant labor. The average national inmate population is 14,500. About 90% are aged between 18 to 45 years—many of which constitute highly skilled labour.

<b>Age range</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
12 – 17	59	59	<b>0.84</b>
18 – 25	3,228	3169	<b>45.13</b>
26 – 35	5,402	2174	<b>30.96</b>
36 – 45	6,403	1001	<b>14.26</b>
46 – 50	6,773	370	<b>5.27</b>

51 – 60	6,914	141	<b>2.01</b>
61 – 70	7,022	108	<b>1.54</b>
71+	7,022	0	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7022</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The Service has workshops in all prison facilities but they need to undergo expansion so they can cater to the inmate population while also being a source of internally generated funds.

The workshops include tailoring, shoe making, auto mechanic, welding and fabrication, auto and general electrical, vulcanizing, carpentry, ceramics, cement block molding, draughtsmanship, bamboo, bead and macramé craft. Others are soap manufacturing, smock and doormat production and blacksmithing.

Also, the Service is engaged in crop farming, poultry, piggery and grasscutter production.

Last but not the least; the Service has a very vibrant music department with top class musicians and instrumentalist. The department placed second in the maiden Band Competition of Security Agencies (BACOSA) held at the National Theater in Accra. The music department can be contracted to perform at all occasions via the Prison Headquarters.

## Support Project Efiase

The Prisons Service Council appeals to you to give financially to Project Efiase. Kitiwa bia nsua, loosely translated ‘No amount is too little’ is the ‘motto’ of Project Efiase. The support you give to this humanitarian cause will go a long way to improve the living conditions and enable the Service to fulfill its functions better—making it a blessing to the Ghanaian society at large.

Support Project Efiase by donating to:

1. Bank: Ecobank Bank Ghana Ltd.  
Branch: Ridge, Accra.  
Account Name: Prisons Reform Trust.  
Account Number: 0010084415563401.
  
2. Bank: Royal Bank  
Branch: Castle Road  
Account Name: Prisons Reform Trust

Account Number: 0210312745617

3. Bank: uniBank Ghana Limited  
Branch: World Trade Centre Building  
Account Name: Prisons Reform Trust  
Account Number: 032022392513 (*Dollar Account*)

4. Bank: uniBank Ghana Limited  
Branch: World Trade Centre Building  
Account Name: Prisons Reform Trust  
Account Number: 2110123092519 (*Cedi Account*)

Or you can make your donations using MTN Mobile Money. Please follow the steps below to make your donations:

- 1) On your phone menu locate “My MTN” and select “Mobile Money”.
- 2) Select “Pay Bill”.
- 3) Select “general payment”.
- 4) Enter “prisons” under “payment code”.
- 5) Please “OK” to confirm payments to Ghana Prison Service
- 6) Give a suitable description under “reference”. Example, Efiase.
- 7) The amount being donated. Example, 100 for 100 Ghana Cedis.
- 8) Confirm payment again by entering your “Mobile Money Pin”.
- 9) You will receive SMS confirmation message for successful payment.

The Prisons Service is also open for Public Private Partnership (PPP). Support Project Efiase and help make a difference in Ghana’s prisons.