



Achimota Health Crisis – FACT SHEET

Closure Order	On 19 Jan. 2010, the AMA issued an ultimatum to the Headmistress to solve the health crisis caused by the collapsed sewage system or close down.
An Antiquated Sewage System	More than 5000 students, staff members, and others use the system. Since it was installed in the early 1930s, it never been upgraded. It is outmoded.
The Public Health Risk	An outbreak of air-borne or water-borne communicable diseases. For example, flies feeding on faecal matter could alight on food eaten by students. The water supply could also become contaminated. The situation will only get worse until something is done.
The Potential Legal Risk	The AMA has previously warned the school about unacceptably low public health standards. The violations were not corrected because of lack of funds. It is further alleged that a student recently died from cholera, possibly contracted through food from a street vendor. Therefore, if another student dies during this current health crisis, the school authorities and the Government could face a major lawsuit. There have been enough warnings and danger signals.
Petition Drive Expressing Public Outrage	A petition to urge the Government to step in and resolve this crisis has garnered more than 1000 signatures from all over the world in less than a week, and the numbers are growing by the day.
Achimota’s Financial Situation	Because of its size, Achimota’s maintenance needs far exceed the maintenance funds it receives from Government, even compared to other secondary schools. Even if its maintenance budget were increased, the school would still not have the financial means to undertake a project as complex as re-engineering an 80-year-old, 5000-user sewage plant.
How Encroachment Affects the Sewage Problem	The sewage system’s efficiency has declined rapidly because the encroachments built on top of the main pipes have cracked and blocked some of the pipes, causing the spillage of raw sewage. Secondly, rehabilitating the sewage treatment plant may be virtually impossible unless the illegal buildings next to it are demolished.
Government’s Responsibility	The school is a government-owned school. The government sets the curriculum, sets the school fees, and chooses the teachers. The school therefore falls under the Government’s responsibility. The bulk, if not all, of the money must come from Government.
The Alumni’s Responsibility	Achimota’s Old Students continue to support the school actively. However, a major infrastructural project such as this goes beyond the charity or goodwill of the alumni. They are under no legal obligation to support the school, and cannot be compelled to give.
General Specifications of New Sewage System	Engineering experts will consider a range of options. However, many experts indicate that what the School needs is a cost-effective, low-maintenance, environmentally friendly, gravity-fed sewer system that covers the current usage area (Achimota Folly, Anumle, etc). It should not be an Achimota School-only system, because that would cause chaos when the other users are cut off. They have nowhere else to go. The financial outlay will be substantial, but the cost of doing nothing would be even higher.

<p>Does the school have other important infrastructural needs?</p>	<p>Yes, a functioning sewage system is not the school's only urgent need. The entire infrastructure is in a state of profound disrepair. Alumni groups and the PTA are working on several projects, including fencing the school; extension of the Aggrey Chapel and Assembly Hall; rehabilitation of the swimming pool, science laboratories, classrooms, certain Art studios, dining halls, Music School, and the Girls' Gymnasium; construction of a waste incinerator; construction of new computer laboratories; repair of roofs; and completion of the new canteen.</p>
<p>The Importance of this Achimota Case</p>	<p>How this case is handled may set an important precedent for similar cases involving school, state and stool lands. If the encroachers get away with it, those encroaching on other lands will only be further emboldened.</p>
<p>A Human Rights Issue</p>	<p>Achimota's students are not responsible for this crisis. They should not be "punished" for the failure of other people. They only took an exam and got admitted. They have a right to be able to pursue their studies in a sanitary environment that does not pose a high risk of disease. This is a human rights issue.</p>
<p>Is Achimota Primary part of Achimota School?</p>	<p>Yes. Achimota School comprises Achimota Secondary School and Achimota Primary School. Achimota School sits on approx. 1300 acres of land. Achimota Hospital, located on the campus, is now managed by the Ghana Health Service. The post office on the campus is managed by Ghana Post. Achimota Golf Club leases land from the School for its golf course.</p>
<p>Whom does the current sewer system serve?</p>	<p>It serves Achimota Secondary and Primary Schools, along with the neighbouring community including the Achimota Hospital, Golf Course, the Achimota Folly, and Anumle and Christian Villages.</p>
<p>What exactly does the sewage system consist of?</p>	<p>It consists of a sewage treatment plant located in an area of the campus known as the Achimota Folly, and an extensive network of underground pipes that carry waste to the plant for processing into compost and filtered wastewater for the school farm. The treatment plant is nearly defunct and can no longer process waste well. This is partly because it was installed almost 80 years ago, and since then the number of users has more than quadrupled. In the last few years, land encroachment has accelerated the sewage system's deterioration.</p>
<p>What was the cost of the Achimota school land and property and what is its current valuation?</p>	<p>In 1922, the colonial government acquired land from two Accra families for £4,000 to construct the school. The school's geographic coordinates are described in detail in the Achimota College 1934 Ordinance ("1934 Ordinance"). It cost approx. £660,000 to build the school, and annual maintenance costs were about £50,000. No valuation has been undertaken in recent times for the real and personal property.</p>
<p>Who owns Achimota School? In whom does its land and property vest?</p>	<p>The colonial government vested Achimota School's real and personal property in the Council (now the Board of Governors) under the terms of the 1934 Ordinance. Article 257 of the 1992 Constitution vested all public lands in the President on behalf of, and in trust for, the people of Ghana and for the public service of Ghana. Since Achimota school lands are public lands, they are vested in the President of the Republic of Ghana.</p>