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**Practicum Site:** The World Bank

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## ***Extending Universal Health Coverage for the Urban Poor in Ghana***



**Introduction:** The Government of Ghana (GoG), with support from the World Bank's (WB) Primary Health Care Investment Program-for-Results (PforR), is focused on enhancing primary health care in rapidly growing urban areas, particularly targeting the urban poor. This initiative addresses the challenges faced by these populations, including barriers faced by vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, mental health conditions, and survivors of gender-based violence. The WB's Advisory Services and Analytics (ASA) conducted a study to improve access to health care for these disadvantaged groups.

**Methods:** The practicum involved a review of over 500 sources, including peer-reviewed articles and grey literature to assess health financing and Universal Health Coverage (UHC) strategies for urban poor in low- and middle-income countries. A country portfolio was created to extend UHC in Ghana followed by a high-level consultation with Ghana's Ministry of Health and Ghana Health Service to validate the results.

**Results:** Key findings indicate significant gaps in data collection and reporting on urban health issues by socio-economic status, lack of disaggregated coverage data on resource allocation and health financing expenditure, and poor referral systems for urban poor. The rapid urbanization has not been matched by corresponding health care service expansion. Lessons from other countries, such as India, Thailand, and Bangladesh informed the recommended strategies. These include development of a comprehensive urban health policy, enhancement of data collection through Ghana's Demographic and Health Survey, improvement to referral systems through networks of practice, and exploration of health financing options for urban poor.

**Conclusions:** The GoG's commitment, supported by the WB's PforR, highlights the need for better health data disaggregation and more equitable service distribution. Addressing these issues and adopting effective strategies will advance UHC for the urban poor, improve health outcomes, and promote greater equity in health care access and health financing in Ghana.