

**BARAKA POLICY INSTITUTE (BPI)
ACCRA**

**A SUMMARY RESEARCH REPORT
ON
THE PREVALENCE OF SPORTS BETTING AND ITS
EFFECTS ON EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA**

INTRODUCTION

The menace of sports gambling popularly described as “sports betting” has been on the ascendency in Ghana in recent times. This menace has created a situation whereby the youth spend their valuable time at betting centres and the scarce resources of the family on gambling. This has resulted in gross laziness in the youth; increasing the get-rich-quick syndrome among our youth, and growing school drop-outs and delinquency in our communities. It is in the light of the above havoc caused by contemporary sports betting that the Baraka Policy Institute (BPI), a policy think tank on education and national development decided to do a sample survey in selected communities in Ghana on the prevalence of sport betting in our communities and its effects on the education of the youth especially in deprived communities.

OBJECTIVES

The following are the objectives which anchored the survey:

1. To explore the extent of youth/children involvement in sports betting in Ghana
2. To ascertain the consequences of sports betting in relation to schooling of young people
3. To understand the negative impacts of sports betting on the development of the youth

METHODOLOGY

The study administered simple close-ended survey questionnaires to 360 randomly sampled clients of betting centres across eight (largely) deprived communities in Ghana. These communities are located in Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi and Tamale. Our

Research Assistants administered the questionnaires directly to clients who were at the betting centres and engaged in sports betting at the time of the survey.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Sports Betting Companies operating in the sampled communities

The study found that there is a proliferation of sports betting companies/centres in Ghana with a total of 82 sports betting centres in the 8 sampled communities. This implies that the market for sports betting is bigger and also keeps growing. The following shows the distributions of the betting companies/centres located the sampled communities.

Code 1: Names of sports betting companies/centres in the sampled communities

No.	Madina	Mamobi	Nima	Ashaiman
1	My bet.com	Socca bet	My bet	Supa bet
2	Eazi bet	Premier bet	Safari bet	Safari bet
3	Champion bet	Supa bet	Socca bet	My bet
4	Socca bet	Safari bet	Simba bet	Eazi bet
5	Supa bet	Simba bet	Supa bet	Premier bet
6		Bet way	Bet way	Socca bet
7		My bet	Premier bet	Millionaires bet
8			Eazi bet	
9			Africa bet	
10			Euro bet	
11			1 X bet	

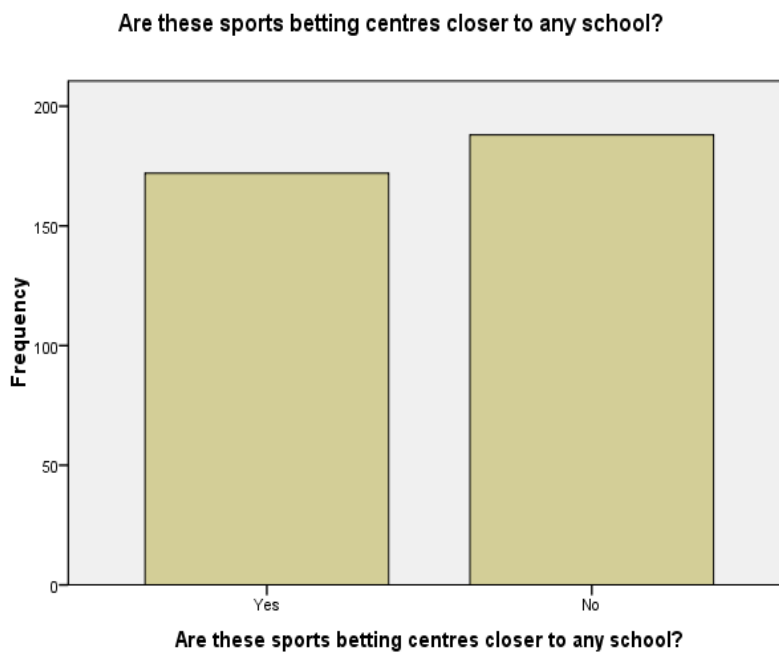
No.	James Town	Tamale	Kumasi	Takoradi
1	Premier bet	Premier	Socca bet	Socca bet
2	Supa bet	Safari	Premier	Premier
3	Simba bet	Bet way	Supa	Supa bet
4	Euro bet	Alfa bet	Simba	Simba bet
5	Safari bet	Najia bet	Euro bet	Euro bet
6	My bet	Socca bet	Safari	Safari bet
7	Socca bet	Supa bet	My bet	My bet
8		Simba bet	1xbet	Bet way
9		Euro bet	Eazi bet	Sporty bet
10		My bet	Winner bet	Najia bet
11		Bet 360	Bet way	Champion bet
12			Bet power	Euro bet
13			Lolly bet	Afro bet
14			Bet fair	1xbet

15			Sun bet	Winner bet
16			Pawa bet	Africa bet
17			Bet yetu	
18			Bet 365	

Again, the location of betting centres within the community itself is also another great concern as several of these centres are situated close to schools especially in many of the deprived communities the survey sampled. This makes it easy for children from such schools to easily enter these betting centres with the slightest space of time. As seen in **Code 2** below, information provided by respondents indicates that a sizable number of betting centres are seen to be situated closer to schools.

Code 2: Are sports betting centres closer to any school?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	172	47.8	47.8
No	188	52.2	100.0
Total	360	100.0	



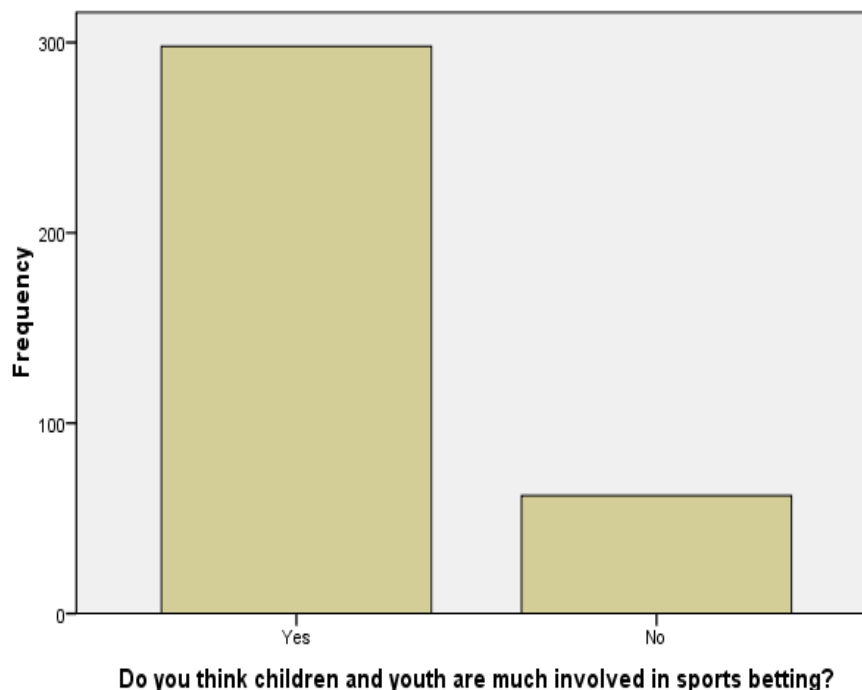
2. Involvement of children/youth in Sport Betting

One of the revelations of the BPI research suggests that children between the ages of 10-17 years actively engage in sport betting at various betting centres in Ghana. As seen **code 3** below, almost 82.8% of the respondents affirm that children are actively engaged in sports betting contrary to the law guiding gaming in Ghana. Also, (as seen in **code 4**) out of 360 respondents who were found in sampled betting centres in Accra, Kumasi, Tamale and Takoradi, 126 representing 40 percent were children between the ages 10-17.

Code 3: Do you think children and youth are involved in sports betting?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	298	82.8	82.8
No	62	17.2	100.0
Total	360	100.0	

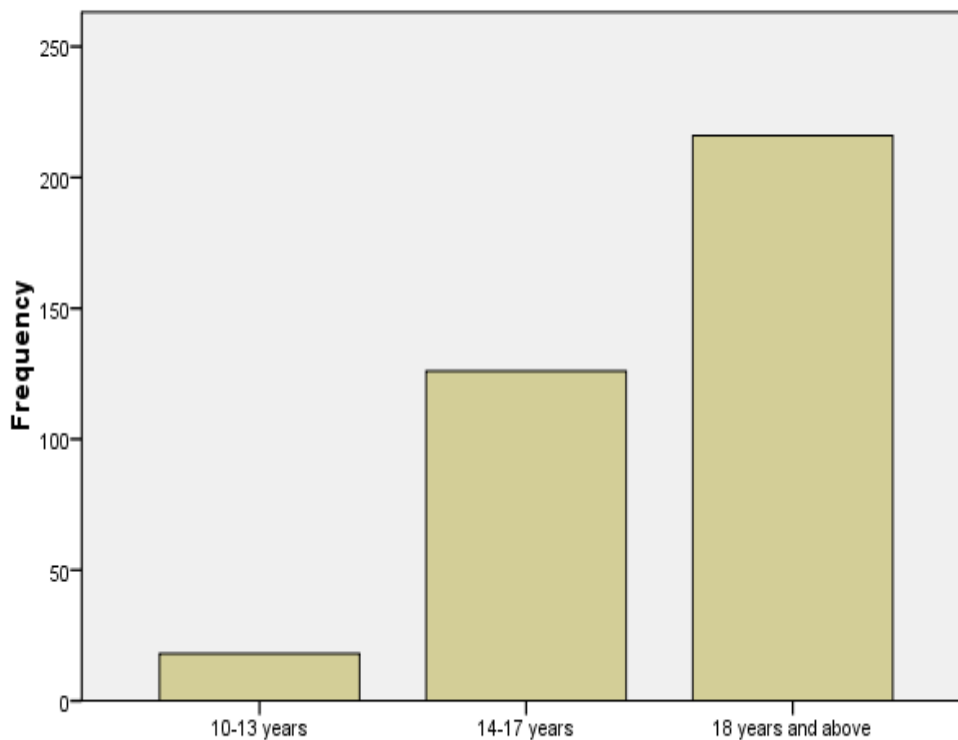
Do you think children and youth are much involved in sports betting?



Code 4: Which of these age range do you belong to?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
10-13 years	18	5.0	5.0
14-17 years	126	35.0	40.0
18 years and above	216	60.0	100.0
Total	360	100.0	

Which of these age range do you belong to?



Which of these age range do you belong to?

The involvement of children in sports betting contravenes the Gambling Act 2006 (Act 721) which prohibits children from entering betting premises or to engage in any form of gambling activity. The Act charges operators of betting centres not to allow minors entry into betting places, yet this is happening without strict enforcement of

the law. Gambling is supposed to be an activity for adults and children are supposed to be protected by any means against social harm gambling can cause them.

3. Betting strategies used by the youth (particularly, those under age)

The study found that the non-enforcement of the regulation which forbids under aged to be seen at sports betting centres has made it easy and become very common for children of school going age to take advantage of this laxity and visit betting centres on regular basis. Apart from this, some other strategies are adopted by children to engage in sports betting some of which include the following:

- A large number of the youth engage in sports betting whiles at home. They do that through their mobile phones.
- Children below eighteen (18) years register their sports betting account with the names of their relatives who are above 18 years. They use the names and ID Cards of their elderly family members to enable them access their money when they win the bet. As seen in **codes 5 and 6** below, majority of the respondents indicated having cell phones and using them for betting purposes.

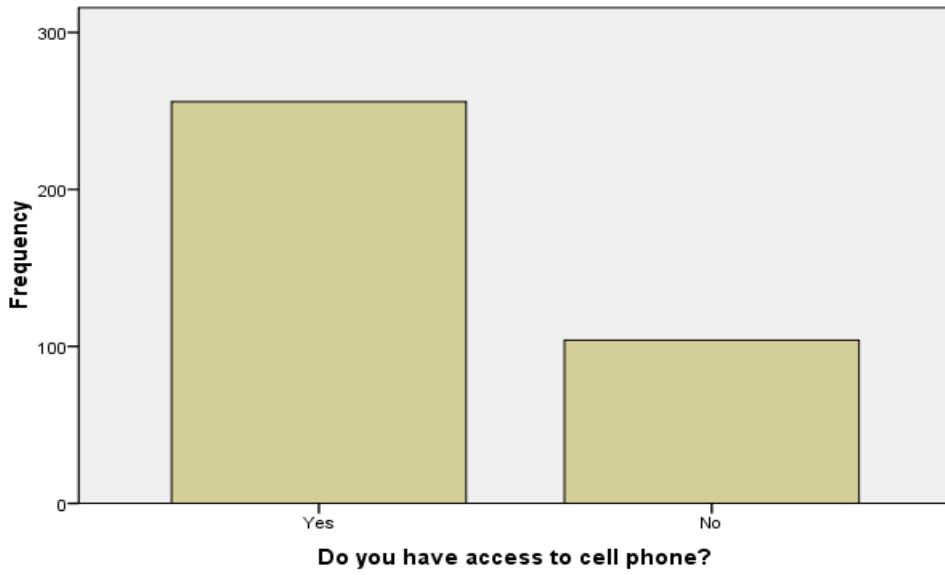
Code 5: Do you have access to cell phone?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	256	71.1	71.1
No	104	28.9	100.0
Total	360	100.0	

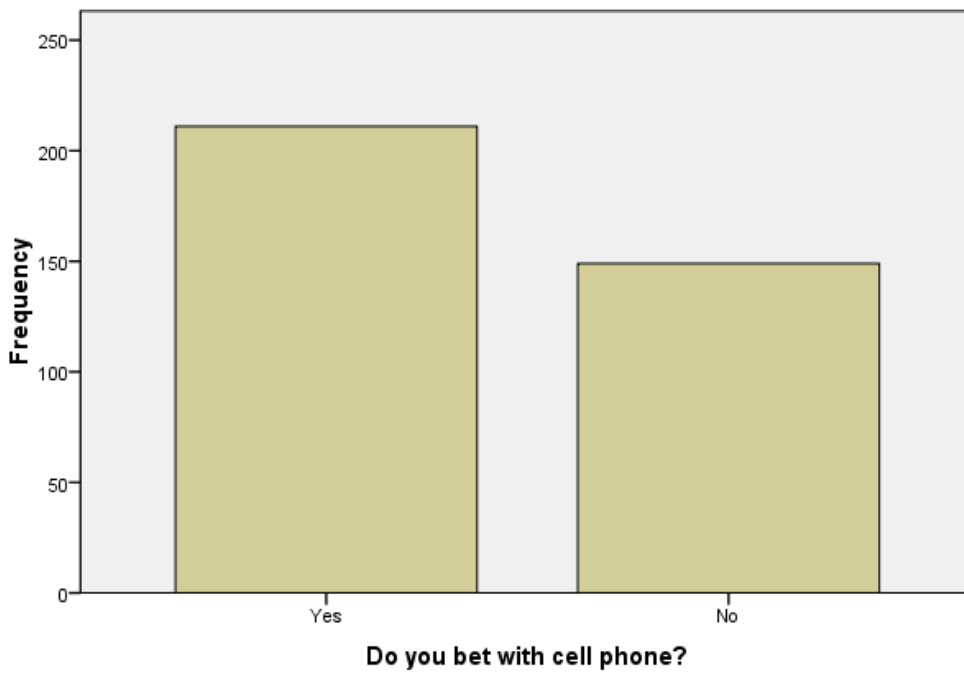
Code 6: Do you bet with cell phone?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	211	58.6	58.6
No	149	41.4	100.0
Total	360	100.0	

Do you have access to cell phone?



Do you bet with cell phone?



4. The effects of children's involvement in sports betting on schooling

What is probably more disturbing is the results of the youth involvement in sports betting on schooling which includes among others, truancy, lack of time for learning, indiscipline. As seen **code 7**, when respondents were asked whether they still go to school or not, **42.5 percent** responded in the negative. They have stopped going to school for reasons that include gambling (sport betting). And even for the rest of the respondents (who indicated still going to school) when asked about how often they went to school in a week (**see code 8**), **49.2 percent** indicated going to school 1-3 times a week. This is very alarming development and stakeholders must act as quick as possible to safeguard the future of this generation.

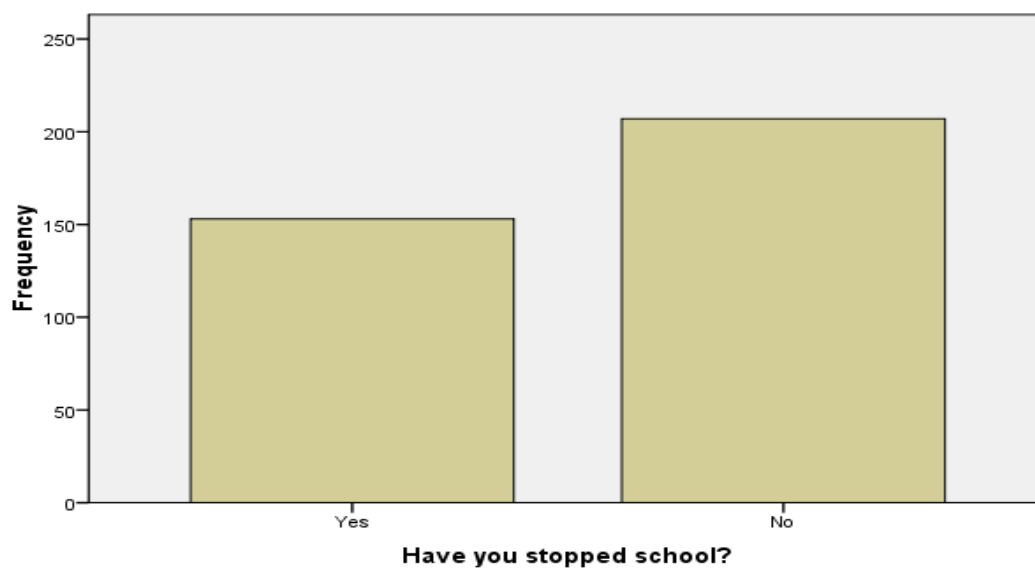
Code 7: Have you stopped school?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	153	42.5	42.5
No	207	57.5	100.0
Total	360	100.0	

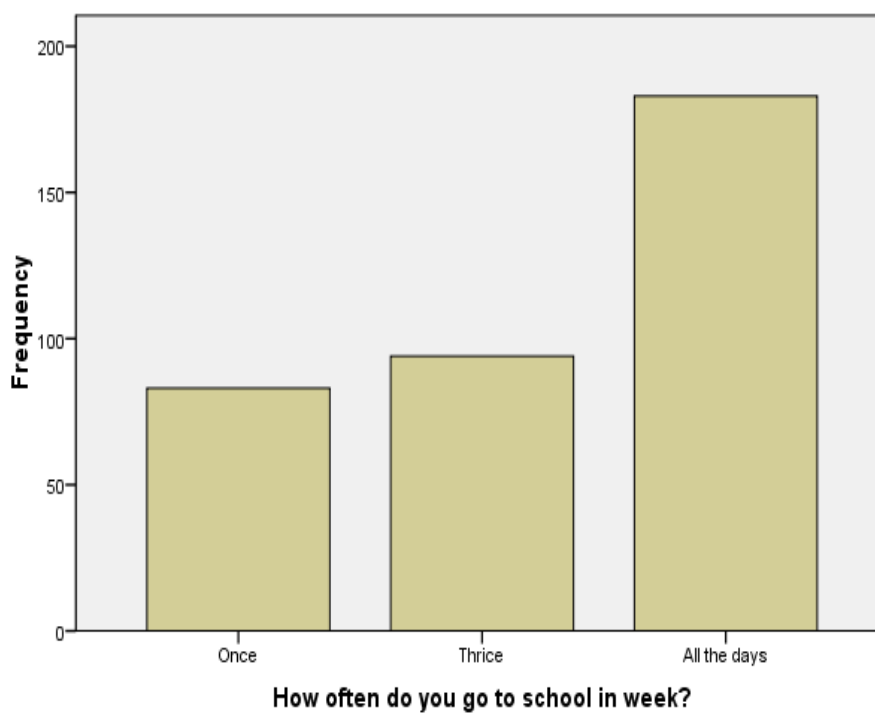
Code 8: How often do you go to school in week?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Once	83	23.1	23.1
Thrice	94	26.1	49.2
All the days	183	50.8	100.0
Total	360	100.0	

Have you stopped school?



How often do you go to school in week?



5. Drivers of Sport Betting in deprived Communities in Ghana

The survey also gathered information on factors that were seen to be driving the youth into gambling (Sports Betting) and the following were found:

- Peer pressure
- Lack of employment
- Lack of education/ School drop out
- Lack of parental control and responsibility
- Legality
- Proximity to house
- Broken home
- For entertainment (fun)
- Search of quick money
- Curiosity
- Advertisement
- Poverty

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has revealed that Sport Betting is fast becoming a serious social force against schooling in the country; and that if nothing is done about it, it will derail the efforts by government and other non-state actors to ensure every child is in school. This will affect educational development aspirations including the SDGs' target of ensuring that all girls and boys completes quality primary and secondary education by 2030.

In the light of this finding, BPI wish to recommend the following:

- i. That regulatory bodies including the Gaming Commission must collaborate with key stakeholders such as education authorities to intensify public education and strictly enforce the laws governing gaming as well as enacting reforms that will totally eliminate young people from the ambit of sports betting.
- ii. There should be a concerted and united effort from community leaders to confront this dangerous development in their communities and be convinced that Gambling brings along more deprivation than riches.

- iii. There is the need for a strong coalition of Moral Authorities such as religious and community leaders to mount campaign for enforcing strict regulation on gaming (in general) in Ghana. Our religious bodies and the broad civil society must intensify advocacy on the negative effects of sports gambling on our communities.

CONCLUSION

Indeed, Ghana can learn from the positive efforts being made by many countries which are faced with this social canker in order to safeguard the future of our children. For instance, the Ugandan government has recently taken good steps in curbing the growing negative impact of sport betting on children and youth by not renewing the licenses of betting companies to operate. Kenya which has the third largest gambling market in Africa after Nigeria and South Africa has also resolved to minimize the growing effects of the betting industry on its youth by introducing tax disincentive regime on the industry. Even in countries where football industry is recognised and known to be a huge economic activity such as Brazil, sports betting is illegal and never entertained. In all this, the least Ghana could do is to put in place strict enforcement of the provisions in the existing Gaming Act 2006 (Act 721) to protect the innocent and vulnerable against stealing their innate dreams of becoming useful to themselves, their families, their communities and Ghana as a whole through education.