

Sport betting affecting education in zongos

— Dr Zagoon-Sayeed

By Salifu B.B. Moro

THE Executive Director of the Baraka Policy Institute (BPI), Dr Haruna Zagoon-Sayeed, says sport betting is negatively affecting education in zongo communities in the country.

He said a study conducted by the BPI in Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi on the effect of sport betting on education and child development revealed that it was fast becoming a major social force against schooling in the country, especially among the youth in the zongos.

He said 80 per cent of the people

engaged in the act were children between the ages of 10 and 17 years.

"What is even more disturbing is that when these children were asked whether they go to school or not, 62.5 per cent responded in the negative, meaning that they have stopped schooling for gambling".

Out of the few who said they were in school, 49.2 per cent said they attended class between one and three times a week.

"This is very alarming, and stakeholders must act as quickly as possible to safeguard the future of this generation," he said.

Advise

Dr Zagoon-Sayeed has consequently

urged Muslims in the country to use education to get the needed recognition, respect and influence within the country's socio-economic affairs.

He said he believed most of the challenges and troubles confronting the zongos were largely due to the lack of interest of parents and opinion leaders in issues of education in the various communities.

"To change the narrative, we must ensure that our children get quality education at all levels, especially the secondary level. This is the only way to help them make the grades needed to pursue professional courses at the university," he indicated.

Dr Zagoon-Sayeed said that at the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Islamic Education Unit (IEU) in Accra last Friday.

The AGM

The AGM was held under the auspices

of the BPI, an educational policy think tank with a special focus on Muslim communities to bring all key stakeholders under the IEU to discuss how best they could move the unit forward.

The IEU, he said, had been tasked by its new constitution to restructure the council in order to enhance quality teaching and learning in all Muslim pre-tertiary schools.

Participants in the event included the national council members which encapsulated all the key stakeholders under the IEU and the regional managers in charge of the various Islamic schools.

Other guests at the conference included the Executive Secretary to the National Council of the Islamic Educational Unit, Rear Admiral (ret'd) Mohammed Munir Tahir; and an Education Consultant, Dr Nasiba Taahir; among others.

The meeting was on the theme "Repositioning the IEU for effective Teaching and Learning in Public Islamic School in Ghana".

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal Four enjoins member states to ensure inclusive and equitable education and the promotion of life-long learning, but Dr Sayeed said that might not be realised in Ghana if sport betting was allowed to keep luring underage schoolchildren out of school.