

STRATEGIC YOUTH NETWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT (SYND)

Youth in Climate Action



"...sustaining the environment through Youth inclusion"

Gender and Climate Action Advocacy Report

Project Documentary: <https://youtu.be/iFT8fTw7RUg>

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I. Background and context:

The adverse impact of climate change cannot be overemphasized. Evidence shows how it is increasingly affecting different facets of the global community hence the need to take critical measures in tackling it resulting in the planning and execution of two main – Mitigation and Adaptation. What is certain and globally accepted is to ensure that such interventions are pursued from a gender perspective. In the case of Ghana, the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) of Ghana notes that interventions to strengthen livelihoods and food security from external shocks for example are more effective when gender differences are properly understood and addressed. Promoting a gender perspective in climate change adaptation is critical for improved impacts on development.

The Policy further notes that *“the evidence shows that climate change will hit women harder than men because of existing vulnerabilities and gender inequalities. Whilst it is clear that climate change affects all, the impact and degree of vulnerability is different for men and women. Women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than men—primarily as they constitute the majority of the poor and are more dependent on natural resources for their livelihood. Their limited adaptive capacities also arise from factors such as social inequalities that have been perpetuated for decades, ascribed social and economic roles that manifest themselves in unequal access to resources and to decision-making processes, reduced access to information, ineffective property rights and reduced mobility. Women’s vulnerability to climate change is exacerbated by their comparative lack of assets — physical, financial and social. As climate change affects men and women differently, there will be no climate justice until gender issues are resolved.”*

While in principle, gender mainstreaming or analysis is extremely necessary in the planning and execution of climate interventions, the Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND) argues that, there is over reliance on WOMEN to the detriment of other components of Gender that is, MEN, GIRLS AND BOYS. Ghana’s climate change policy states that vulnerable groups, such as the disabled, the aged, children, youth and women, are particularly affected as they have poorer coping mechanisms. Indeed it acknowledged that, the youth form a significant proportion of the population of Ghana and live with the impacts of climate change much longer. As such, the youth are key stakeholders in the climate change process. In spite of such recognition, the policy makes no concrete provision in tackling the effect of climate change on the youth (Girls and Boys). A study on the impact of climate change on women in three districts was conducted which confirmed that, although women undertake 85% of Ghana’s food distribution, they have difficulties in accessing land, land tenure security and formal financial services. Unfortunately, no similar study on the impact of climate change on young people has been conducted.

The case is no different in decision making processes. During the 33rd Session of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Cancun from 30th November – 4th December 2010, Parties (including Ghana) agreed as captured under Article 6 (2e) of the Convention the need “To foster the participation of women, youth... in decision-making on



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climate change at the national level and their attendance at intergovernmental meetings, including sessions of the Conference of the Parties...”.

Also Section 5.2.1 of the 2010 National Youth Policy of Ghana states that *“the views of the youth and their participation in national development must be sought. The government and other stakeholders must consciously and consistently involve young people in decision-making”*. Indeed, the National Climate & Green Economy Strategy, 2016 of Ghana notes that *“children and youth are vulnerable to the impact of climate change but can also be agents of change in the fight against climate change.”* Unfortunately, no governance framework or processes exists to ensure that such commitments are implemented.

The Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND) in Ghana therefore embarked on a *“Gender and Climate Change Advocacy”* project which primarily sought to identify and empower more young people as climate change champions in their respective communities. It focused on obtaining the impact of climate change from a gender perspective (**specifically young males and females**) in selected districts and then using the outcomes of the consultations to contribute to the fight against climate change at the local level through the district assemblies. . A deliberate addition to this project was educating the young people on how to use social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter as tools or medium of creating awareness and sensitizing the public on climate issues. Generally, the young climate activists are expected to work closely with their respective district assemblies in supporting the localizing of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal 13 (Climate Action).

II. Objectives:

1. Train young females and males in selected communities through evidence based advocacy approach such as the use of climate related photos and stories.
2. Empower them as climate change champions in their various communities so as to use knowledge acquired to contribute to the planning and implementation of local level (District Assemblies) climate change interventions.

III. Description of communities:

One community per District identified was selected in each of the Northern, Middle and Southern zones of Ghana due to their unique geographical and environmental characteristics bringing it to a total of 3 communities. Thus the communities engaged were as follows:

1. Haatso/Bohye – Ga East Municipal Assembly, Accra (Greater Accra region)
2. Mampongeng – Kwabre East District Assembly, Kumasi (Ashanti region) &
3. Shishegu – Sagnarigu District Assembly, Tamale (Northern region)



IV. Training Approach adopted:

Participants were taken through 3 different powerpoint presentations. The first presentation was on the basics of climate change (such as what it climate change; causes of climate change; effects of climate change and some of its evidential impacts using pictures). The second presentation touched on the project (its object and simple ways by which young people can contribute to the fight against climate change). The final presentation focused on social media campaigning (that is, how to use/boost campaigns on social media to achieve a desired result).

The workshop also reviewed the various 2016 Annual Progress reports of the selected districts. The meeting considered climate change and other environmental-related activities organized within that period and how well young people were actively included in decision making process at the local level.

The workshop in Accra and Kumasi witnessed representations from the District Assemblies who pledged their support and willingness to engage young people in their work. This has provided opportunity for the empowered young people to engage their respective Assemblies in their development plans especially around climate change issues.

Based on the knowledge acquired from the workshop, the young people developed a set of activities to be submitted to their Assemblies for consideration – and more importantly the role they want to play in supporting the Assemblies. Below are the proposed activities:

Haatso/Bohye in the Ga East Municipal Assembly

1. Support the Assembly with relevant information and other assistance in implementing climate change related interventions to feed into national policies, strategies and planning.
2. Use various artwork designs to assist in the Assembly's education and awareness-raising exercises on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.
3. Actively participate in community activities such as clean-up exercises, tree planting & community meetings and durbars.
4. Sensitize community members especially young people as climate change advocates
5. Publicize the Assembly's climate change work via our social media handles.

Akua, a Junior High School student pledged to be a climate activist by educating people in her community on environmental issues. She intends to participate in communal activities which will serve as a platform for her sensitization exercise. **[11-year old, Akua Asiedu Agyeman]**





Having gained knowledge from the training program, Ayuumah seeks to share his knowledge with colleagues who are not aware about climate change. He desires to support the need for paperless system or less use of paper so as to save our forest. Also, he wants to encourage the use of clean cookstoves and affordable electric cars in Ghana. Ayuumah is a Level 100 student with the University of Ghana, Legon reading Psychology and Information Studies. **[Ayuumah Sandys]**



Mariam is a Senior High School student and a key member of the EnterCom (the entertainment group) in her school. She wants to #ShiftPower in her school and community as a whole by using her group's platform to educate or sensitize her peers on climate change. **[Mariam Sanda]**



Martha is a young teacher who is good with artwork and has decided as a #ClimateActivist to employ her skills in educating family members and friends on climate change. Doubling up as a teacher, she also intends to engage the existing clubs in her school on climate change. **[Martha Peprah]**

Mampong, Kwabre East District, Kumasi

1. Encourage community members to grow more trees and to stop cutting them.
2. Organize regular clean-up exercises and encourage more youth to participate.
3. Sensitize individuals in the community on the importance of keeping the environment clean by not dumping refuse anywhere. Encourage community leaders and assembly to provide waste bins and also have a proper place to keep the waste.
4. Consult the assembly to check members' building plans and locations so that they do not build on waterlogged areas to avoid flooding.
5. Engage assembly members on the need to develop or build proper drainage systems.
6. Educate others on the effects, causes and ways of reducing climate change
7. Train more youth to be climate change ambassadors



I will educate people especially my peers to take climate change seriously to reduce its impact on their lives and community. **[Hilda Acheampong]**



I intend to educate people not to build close to water ways; avoid littering and to advocate for rubbish dustbins in the vicinity. **[Naomi Gyimah]**



Based on what I have learned, I have decided to educate people who deforest to also plant trees and I will also sensitize people against littering. **[Abigail Sarfo]**

Shishegu, Sagnarigu District, Tamale

1. Organize community forum to educate on recycling sachet water to produce school bags and raincoats for children.
2. Organize massive campaign against the cutting down of trees.
3. Encourage people to grow more trees.
4. Sensitize the youth on how to use social media to maximize campaign results.
5. Organize clean-up exercises and sensitize community members on the importance of having a clean environment.
6. Encourage more youth to become climate change ambassadors.



I have decided to personally separate my rubbish (organic from inorganic) as well as to stop littering. I will now educate my colleagues on Climate Change **[Sumaya Sulemana]**



I will strongly advocate against deforestation and promote reforestation. **[Zakaria Hafsaah]**

I will advocate for household toilet facilities to help stop defecation. I will also advocate for adequate waste bins to reducing littering.

[Bintu Issah]



V. Conclusion

As potential change agents, young people ought to be given equal opportunities and the space to add their voice in the fight against climate change. Government's effort to localizing the SDGs is very laudable and should be pursued effectively through gender lens (young people inclusive).

SYND as part of its core mandate seeks to assist in raising a generation of responsible young females and males who are committed to ensuring environmental sustainability through effective collaboration or partnership with relevant stakeholders such as government, private sector, civil society and media.



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About Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND):

SYND is a youth-oriented NGO in Ghana which focuses primarily on deepening good environmental governance. Our operational work involves tracking and contributing to environment-related policies and programming at levels from a youth perspective. Our vision is to help achieve environmental sustainability through the development and active participation of young people in managing the environment through policy formulation, programs planning and implementation of projects and activities to sustaining society.

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