



Capacity Building training for the Policy Team Members of the Youth in Natural Resources and Environmental Governance (Youth-NREG) Platform.

Report written by Patience Agyekum (Policy Team Lead, SYND)

Introduction:

The Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND) in partnership with Africa Centre for Energy Policy (ACEP) organised a two-day training workshop for the Policy Team of its Youth in Natural Resources and Environmental Governance (Youth-NREG) Platform. Total participants were 20 made up of 12 females and 8 males.

Also, in attendance were some staff of ACEP namely Pauline Anaman (Head of Policy Unit), Mabel Acquaye (Program manager), Ofori Gyamfi (Policy Analyst), Sylvana Zuanah (Policy Analyst), Valentine Agbenoworsi (Head of communications) and Alexander Kwabena Boakye (Communications and Admin Officer).

The purpose of the workshop was to build the capacity of participants on how to develop advocacy materials such as policy briefs, position papers, factsheets and other educational materials to engage policy makers and other relevant stakeholders. This training formed an integral part of SYND's Youth in Renewable Energy Movement project, which seeks to increase advocacy on the development and utilization of renewables as well as strengthen the Youth-NREG Platform as the youth voice positively influencing Renewable Energy policy, legislation or regulations and programming in Ghana.

DAY 1

Solomon Yamoah briefly spoke about SYND and the Youth-NREG platform indicating that SYND is the Convener of Youth-NREG platform, made up of different organisations and individuals working on different environmental actions in the natural resources and environmental sector. There was a round of introduction to help members familiarise themselves with each other.



Welcome Address by Benjamin Boakye, Executive Director (ACEP).

Mr. Boakye officially welcomed SYND to their organisation and expressed that they are happy to host this meeting because it is interesting to see young people who have started showing interest in the energy sector and are committed to advocating for the adoption of renewable energy. In his address, he stressed that "the future is renewable" and that there is the need for more civil society organisations to push our government to appreciate the importance of having open conversations around renewable energy and to explore the country's vast renewable energy potentials. This he believes will

help Ghana benefit from the global energy transitioning processes, just like China and other developing countries.

1st Presentation: How to develop policy briefs, position papers and fact sheets by Patience Agyekum (Policy Team Lead, SYND).



Key notes from the Presentation:

- Policy briefs are developed to influence policies
- One must identify a problem that needs to be resolved before writing a brief.
- Research is very important in writing briefs. After identifying a problem, research must be conducted to understand the problem.
- Research also helps you to put the identified problem into context.
- Every brief must contain some policy recommendations.
- There is no one particular format for writing briefs.
- Position papers are written to declare the stance of

an organisation or individual on a general\ debate or topic.

- They are written to convince your audience to accept the stance that has been chosen by the writer.
- Fact sheets contains summaries of a written document or briefs.

Participants made valuable inputs\comments and asked very relevant questions after the presentation. Some of the issues discussed bothered on the importance of cultural consideration and the importance of getting information from credible sources when developing briefs.

2ND Presentation: Setting the Agenda by Chibeze Ezekiel (Exec. Coordinator, SYND)

Chibeze shared that at SYND, we engage the youth in our four thematic areas i.e., Climate Change, Renewable Energy, Biodiversity and Forestry through Research and Advocacy as well as Youth Engagement. He further indicated that SYND's work is largely influence by the global, regional and national call to involve young people in decision-making processes. Even though such provisions exist, the implementation has been a challenge particularly in our part of the world. While, lack of political and effective institutional arrangement have been major drawbacks, the limited capacity of young people to engage meaningfully also exist. This therefore explains why this workshop is being organised to build the capacity of members to effectively engage policy makers or duty bearers and ultimately contribute to renewable energy development processes.



He employed Abraham Maslow's theory of Change to sensitize participants on the need to take the workshop seriously, as it can help them or contribute to their quest to "self-actualize".

Some key points from his submission:

- Policy is the engine while (social) media is the wheel that propels advocacy.
- Development partners like such advocacy approach as it's a means of engaging government.
- Policy advocacy can help address issues for the long term
- It can help shift resources to where they are most needed.
- Policy briefs are not always negative, they can be written to commend Government for a good thing they have done.

Steps on how to write a brief on an already existing policy:

- Open the document on your laptop or computer
- Click on ctrl plus F
- Search for keywords that are relevant to the brief you want to write for example, renewable energy, clean energy, young people, climate change, and others.
- Research to gather relevant materials of information (Identify what government has done or is doing on the subject matter, check for similar cases from other countries etc)
- Package the information you have gathered well and share.

Dialogue with ACEP:



Pauline and Maybel of ACEP joined the meeting to share some tips on policy advocacy as follows:

- Government makes a number of considerations including the interests of various stakeholders before taking decisions.
- Government is an interested party.
- Map out your stakeholders
- There are trade-offs you need to consider.
- You have to be strategic. Nothing really works unless you make sense
- Develop communication strategies for different issues.
- There are windows of opportunities that every policy advocate must be smart enough to take advantage of.

Pauline then shared an example about how ACEP took advantage of the 2016 election period to influence decisions in the energy sector by conducting a research and engaging both New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) with the views they gathered from citizens on energy related issues.

Group Breakouts:

Chibeze presented and explained the tasks of the four breakout groups to be formed. They are:

1. Educational materials Group – Responsible for developing materials that will be used to educate children, young people and the general public on renewable energy.
2. Case Study Group – Responsible for developing case studies on how local assemblies for example are contributing to achieving Ghana’s renewable energy target.
3. Fact Sheet Group – Responsible for developing summarised key facts or issues in the renewable energy sector purposely to enhance awareness or sensitization activities.
4. Position Paper Group – Responsible for developing position papers.

Participants were put into groups, which ended the day’s meeting.

DAY 2

The meeting begun with an opening prayer from Salomey Adjei, which led to a recap session led by Patience Agyekum.

1ST PRESENTATION:

Chibeze gave a short presentation on the tasks that each identified group is to perform which led to the commencement of the group work. Each group was task with presenting a framework or structure for their respective papers.

Dialogue with ACEP:

Valentine Agbenoworsi, the Head of Communications spoke about the importance of communication in advocacy.

Key Points from his presentation:

- Communication is an essential part of every organisation
- It is the bridge through which you connect your organisation to your audience
- He stressed on the fact that looking at how technical the energy sector and policy is, communication personnel have to go the extra mile of breaking down the issues and words to its simplest form to enable their audience, understand without distorting the message.
- He cautioned SYND’s communications team to be extra careful when it comes to how they communicate policy issues to their audience.
- He also entreated them to device different strategies for different issues that can be used at different times to reach their target audience.



Ofori Gyamfi, a Policy Analyst also presented on how to write policy briefs. He used samples of briefs published by ACEP for his presentation. He noted that considering how complicated issues around the energy sector and policy is, anybody who wants to write a brief must ensure to get information from right sources before publishing the information or else, government or the people affected by the paper will take advantage of that published brief to trash your credibility and reputation. He cited an example of how the Energy Minister organised a press conference to counter a brief published by a civil society organisation in Ghana.

Tips for writing policy briefs:



- Start by introducing what your brief is about
- Use statistics/data to buttress your points
- State some causes of the problem
- Show examples from other countries
- Use pictures or infographics for data representation in the brief
- Show the implications the problem is having or will have on different sectors of the country's economy
- Tell a story with your analysis
- Make projections based on your analysis
- Make sure recommendations are included in your brief
- Make sure you talk to the right people
- Get information from the right source. He mentioned Energy commission, The Ministries, Government institutions, World Bank, Ghana Statistical Service, World Development Indicators and IRENA as some of the credible sources of information.

He also responded to Chibeze's question of how long it takes to write a policy brief by stating that it depends on your experience in writing briefs. There is no specific timeframe for writing briefs. He added that it's not easy but you can do it if with determination.

Group Presentations:

GROUP 1 – Educational Materials

- Educational materials on renewable energy will be developed for pupils and students in primary schools, JHS, SHS, tertiary institutions, NGOs and the private sector.
- All the materials will be developed based on this basic outline;
 1. Overview of renewable energy
 - a. Sources, types
 - b. Uses (Domestic & Industrial)
 2. Advantages & Disadvantages
Through this, we will introduce
 3. Climate change and its causes.
 4. How RE can be used to reduce climate change.



Activities

- Video, animations, infographics will be used to make the educational for our audience especially children and youth.

GROUP 2 – Factsheet & Case Study

Factsheet:

- A paper will be developed titled, "The contributions of some selected West Africa countries in Renewable Energy.
- The countries will include, Ghana, Senegal, Cote D'voire, Nigeria.
- It will contain facts about the current state of these countries when it comes to renewable energy.

Case Study:

- A paper will be developed to assess the contribution of MMDAs to achieving Ghana's Renewable Energy Agenda.
- We will analyse the Medium -Term Development plans of some MMDA's
- The first Assembly we will look at is the GA Central Assembly.

Details of the Presentation can be found at the appendix

Next Steps and Closing Remarks

Chibeze thanked all participants for their contribution towards the success of the 2-day workshop. He encouraged the groups to continue working on their respective tasks and submit their zero drafts by Friday, 18th September 2020 based on collective decision.

Chibeze reiterated that SYND has received a small grant from the French Embassy to educate young people on Ghana's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and the Nationally Determined Contributions (Gh-NDCs) this year. In a related development, provision have been made for youth representation in four out of the five Technical Working Groups on Ghana's NAP, which shows some positive signs of youth inclusion in the climate change processes. Again, he said that our Social Media team has been recommended to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to support the Communications aspect of the NAP.

Lastly, Chibeze encouraged the policy group to be committed to the tasks given because it can trigger a number of opportunities.

The meeting ended with a closing prayer from Gifty Agbenyefia.



APPENDICES

I. Presentations:

Click here to access all presentations from the workshop.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Ksavq_g5SBrfSbEVT2fg-9xWuePwDupn?usp=sharing

II. Group Presentations:

Group 1 – Developing Educational Materials (Framework)

Stakeholder Mapping

Our audience will be pupils and students in primary schools, JHS, SHS, tertiary institutions, NGOs and the private sector.

Basic Outline

5. Overview of renewable energy
 - c. Sources, types
 - d. Uses (Domestic & Industrial)
6. Advantages & Disadvantages
Through this, we will introduce
7. Climate change and its causes.
8. How RE can be used to reduce climate change.
9. Activities.

PRIMARY LEVEL

1. Overview of renewable energy
 - a. Sources, types
 - b. Uses (Domestic)
2. Advantages & Disadvantages
Through this, we will introduce
3. Climate change and its causes.
4. How RE can be used to reduce climate change.
5. Activities.
 - a. Identifying some sources of RE.
 - b. Identifying some causes of climate change.

RESOURCES

1. Posters
2. Colour books
3. Picture charts

JHS LEVEL

1. Overview of renewable energy
 - a. Sources, types
 - b. Uses (Domestic & industrial)



2. Advantages & Disadvantages
Through this, we will introduce
3. Climate change and its causes.
4. How RE can be used to reduce climate change.
5. Activities.
 - a. Field trips
 - b. Create climate change clubs

RESOURCES

1. Posters
2. Social media handles to clubs and associations like Y-NREG.
3. URLs to online platforms

SHS LEVEL

1. Overview of renewable energy
 - a. Sources, types
 - b. Uses (Domestic & Industrial)
2. Advantages & Disadvantages
Through this, we will introduce
3. Climate change and its causes.
4. How RE can be used to reduce climate change.
5. Activities.
 - a. Field trips
 - b. Create climate change clubs
 - c. Expose them to courses related to climate change and renewable energy.

RESOURCES

4. Posters
5. URLs for online platforms
6. Pamphlets
7. Social media handles to clubs and associations like Y-NREG.

TERTIARY LEVEL, NGOs & PRIVATE SECTOR.

1. Overview of renewable energy
 - a. Sources, types
 - b. Uses (Domestic)
2. Advantages & Disadvantages

Through this, we will introduce

3. Climate change and its causes.
4. How RE can be used to reduce climate change.
5. Activities.
 - a. Industrial visits



- b. Exposure and introduce climate change and renewable policies and documents in general.

RESOURCES

8. Posters
9. URLs for online platforms
10. Social media handles to clubs and associations like Y-NREG.

Group 2 – Factsheet

Fact sheet on the contribution of some selected West African countries.

As of November 2019, Renewable Energy installations (in the form of Biogas, Biomass, Geothermal, Hydro, Ocean, Solar and Wind) currently operating Africa stand at 14,454 MW.

- Research on the RE component of Energy Mix.

SENEGAL

- The Renewable Energy in Senegal has a 10.8% shared of installed capacity and 89.3% of energy capacity under construction.

COTE D'IVOIRE

- In Cote D'Ivoire, Renewable Energy has a 2.3% shared of installed capacity and the target for RE by 2030 is 42%.

NIGERIA

- Nigeria has a 0.4% shared of installed capacity and 1% of energy capacity under construction.
- As of 2016, 76.8 Million people in Nigeria don't have access to electricity.

GHANA

- The RE in Ghana has 1% shared of installed capacity and 0.9% of energy capacity under construction is RE.
- About 5,000 people do not have access to electricity.

Case Study

Case study of Ga Central Municipal Assembly (Framework/Approach)

- We would commend the Assembly for its intention to make improvement in the energy and infrastructure secure to ensure access to reliable energy.
- However, it would have been more appropriate for the Assembly to clearly state or indicate source of energy to be used. We as advocates for RE will recommend that the Assembly to consider RE as alternative energy in its development agenda.
- The Assembly identified high cost of energy is a major issue which it intends to address.



- Recommendation: We recommend that cost of RE should be added to the cost budget of all new buildings it intends to build rather than embarking on RE projects as separate entities. Switching to RE projects such as solar panel might be quite expensive at the initial stage but it's an investment can reduce electricity bills by almost by half over a period of time.
- Incentives should be given on building permits which incorporate RE on them.
- Assembly should ensure that all public buildings within the catchment area go green and adopt RE as an alternative energy and through a gradual process become off grid and fully dependent on RE.

Low utilization of biofuels

- Schools within the Assembly should be encouraged and supported to generate biogas or energy from the human waste using appropriate waste to energy technologies. This will go a long way to reduce the energy bills of the schools. Industries within the Assembly can also take advantage of these waste to energy technologies to reduce their dependence on the national grid for electricity and reduce their utility bills.
- Citizens should be encouraged on how to conserve energy be it renewable or fossil. For example, solar energy is limitless but you cannot be assured of continuous sunshine on some days so the energy should be used judiciously.
- SYND can be engaged by the Assembly to carry out social media for the Assembly in this regard. We can also be engaged by the Assembly when it begins process to plan and prepare 2022 to 2026 MTDP from next year. We will be willing to offer support and inputs in preparing a development agenda on RE for the Assembly using the Renewable Energy Masterplan as a guide.
- We also recommend that small traders especially those in trade at night should be supported to use solar lanterns in the evening instead of the bobo which generate soot which can be harmful to their health.

Photo Gallery:

