

SYND'S NEWSLETTER

2023 - 2ND QUARTER ISSUE



**Maiden
National Youth Conference
on Natural Resources and
Environmental Governance**

Green Ghana Day



**Capacity Building
Workshop for SYND Young
Green Entrepreneurs**



**CHILDREN
FOR CLIMATE
ACTION (C4C)**



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NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

On Natural Resources and Environmental Governance

YOUTH-NREG



On April 27th, 2023, the inaugural National Youth Conference on Natural Resources and Environmental Governance took place at the British Council in Accra, drawing together over 200 enthusiastic young individuals. The conference aimed to raise awareness among the youth about Ghana's natural resources and environmental sector while highlighting the abundant career prospects available.

Distinguished guests, including Hon. Samuel A. Jinapor, Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Mr. Sukhrob Khoshmukhamedov, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Ghana, Madam Roselyn Adjei and other industry players were present at the event, emphasizing its significance.

Throughout the conference, attendees actively engaged in a variety of inclusive activities, ranging from exhibition booth walkthroughs to attention-grabbing panel discussions, informative presentations, and lively plenary sessions. Esteemed young leaders, green entrepreneurs, and industry experts generously shared their insights, inspiring the young audience to take immediate action towards ensuring environmental sustainability.

Organizers and participants alike are eagerly anticipating an even more remarkable second edition of the National Youth Conference on Natural Resources and Environmental Governance next year. The success of the maiden conference has further invigorated the commitment of the Youth-NREG platform to foster the active participation of Ghana's youth in the governance and sustainable management of the country's natural resources and environment, creating a brighter and greener future.

The organizers express their heartfelt appreciation to the supporters of the conference, including Ford Foundation, 350.org, Gower Street, British High Commission and Kasa Initiative Ghana. Their invaluable contributions helped make the event a resounding success and underscore their shared dedication to empowering young leaders and promoting the responsible stewardship of Ghana's natural resources and environment.

About Youth-NREG: The Youth-NREG platform is dedicated to empowering Ghana's youth and fostering their active engagement in the governance and sustainable management of the country's natural resources and environment. By providing education, opportunities, and a platform for dialogue, Youth-NREG aims to shape the next generation of environmentally conscious leaders who will contribute to a sustainable and prosperous future for Ghana. The platform is convened by the Strategic Youth Network for Development.



DIALOGUE WITH STUDENTS OF SD DOMBO UNIVERSITY OF BUSINESS AND INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STUDIES IN WA

YOUTH-NREG



The workshop provided a platform for students to gain valuable knowledge, interact with industry experts, and develop a deeper understanding of the potential career paths and avenues for engagement in the natural resources and environment sector. By empowering and equipping these young leaders with the necessary tools and insights, the Youth-NREG platform aims to foster a generation of environmentally conscious individuals who will actively contribute to the sustainable management of Ghana's natural resources and environmental preservation.

In May, the Youth-NREG platform, in partnership with Eco-Clean Ghana, organized a transformative workshop for students of the SD Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (UDS) in Bamahu, located in Ghana's Upper West region. The workshop aimed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of Ghana's Natural Resources and Environmental Governance, shedding light on the abundance of opportunities available for young individuals within the sector.

Mr. Chibeze Ezekiel, the Executive Coordinator of the Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND), delivered valuable insights during the workshop, emphasizing the importance of youth engagement and participation in the natural resources and environment sector. Additionally, thematic leads for Climate Change, Biodiversity, Energy Access and Forestry within SYND shared their expertise, offering comprehensive overviews of their respective areas of work, discussing methodologies employed, and inspiring the young students to take action and capitalize on the numerous opportunities present within the Natural Resources and Environmental Governance sector.



YOUTH DIALOGUE WITH EXPERTS ON NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

YOUTH-NREG



Following the success of the National Youth Conference, the Youth-NREG Platform took a step further to empower and engage young minds by organizing a transformative Dialogue session with experts in the Natural Resources and Environmental (NRE) sector. The session designed to foster discussions on governance issues and explore opportunities in Fisheries, Forestry, Biodiversity, and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sectors, provided a platform for students and young advocates from prestigious universities to interact with industry professionals, bridging the gap between academic knowledge and practical applications.

Esteemed universities such as the University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), University of Environment and Sustainable Development (UESD), University of Mines and Technology (UMaT), University of Energy and Natural Resources (UNER), and University of Development Studies (UDS) participated in the Dialogue, contributing their insights and gaining valuable insights from seasoned industry players. The inclusivity of the event was amplified with the participation of online attendees, creating an atmosphere of meaningful interactions and knowledge exchange.

In response to the overwhelming interest and requests from participants, a dedicated Tertiary Student Platform has been established specifically for students pursuing natural resources and environmental-related courses in universities. This platform aims to connect academic knowledge with practical experiences, empowering students to become active stakeholders in influencing natural resources and environmental issues within their respective communities. To foster continuous learning and collaboration, the platform will host monthly knowledge sharing and learning series, connecting young individuals with professionals in the sector and promoting student-led NRE projects.

Through initiatives like these, the Youth-NREG Platform is nurturing the next generation of leaders and change-makers, equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and networks to create a sustainable future and drive positive transformation in the Natural Resources and Environmental sector.



INCEPTION MEETING – YOUTH IN CLIMATE ACTION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

CLIMATE CHANGE

On June 7th, 2023, the Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND) organized an impactful inception meeting focused on Youth for Climate Action at the local level. The meeting gathered 30 young individuals with the objective of equipping them with the necessary tools to actively contribute to the development and execution of climate policies and programs within local assemblies' Medium-Term Development Plans (MTDPs).

During the meeting, participants expressed their expectations, which included gaining insights on engaging with district assemblies, acquiring knowledge about existing climate action initiatives, building networks, identifying green entrepreneurship opportunities, contributing to national agendas, and understanding the governance structures in Ghana. Representatives from the Ga East Municipal Assembly and the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) delivered informative presentations on Ghana's National and Local Governance Structures in Development Planning, as well as effective ways for young people to engage with local assemblies in climate response programs.

Engaging question and answer sessions addressed participants' concerns about timely issuance and review processes of the MTDPs and Annual Action plans, accessing district documents, implementation gaps at the local level, and funding for assemblies. Various methods for obtaining information from assemblies were shared, including visiting websites, accessing SDG platforms, and establishing direct communication with district officers.

The meeting concluded with participants gaining a comprehensive understanding of Ghana's development planning system, encompassing institutional architecture, local governance structures, legislations, as well as insights into climate policy formulation and implementation in the MTDPs. Moving forward, Miss Patience Agyekum, the Focal Lead on Climate Change, encouraged participants to take action by writing to their assemblies, requesting Medium-Term Development Plans and Annual Action Plans, and visiting their assemblies to seek information on town hall meetings and ways to actively participate.

Stay tuned for our next newsletter update in September, where we will share the outcomes of these dedicated efforts, successful and unsuccessful stories, and challenges faced by youth engaging with local assemblies. The journey to empower youth for climate action has just begun, and SYND remains committed to fostering a sustainable future in partnership with passionate young leaders.



CLIMATE AWARENESS EDUCATION IN WA

C4C



In an effort to promote environmental sustainability and educate young minds about the importance of climate action, the SYND team embarked on an educational engagement with students from Leadership Community School and Star Standard School International in Bamahu, a vibrant community in the Upper West region of Ghana. On May 19th, 2023, the team organized an interactive session, leaving a lasting impact on the students and inspiring them to become advocates for a greener future.

The day began with an electrifying atmosphere as the team connected with pupils from the Leadership Community School and later engaged the entire student body of Star Standard School International, comprising approximately 1000 pupils. Armed with educational materials like Children for Climate, RE-champ, and Climate Change Basics, the team divided themselves into classes, ensuring every student from Class 1 to JHS 3 received personalized attention. Through one-on-one interactions, the students were enlightened about the significance of environmental protection and sustainability. Impressively, the students exhibited their creativity by showcasing innovative items crafted from recycled plastic and paper waste, showcasing their commitment to combating plastic pollution in their community.

At Leadership Community School, the team engaged with 32 enthusiastic students from the Arts and Crafts club. The young participants showcased their immense potential as they performed captivating songs, recited inspiring poems, and staged thought-provoking dramas highlighting the essence of environmental protection. Some students confidently answered questions and posed insightful inquiries, showcasing their eagerness to learn and actively contribute to safeguarding the environment.

The SYND team's engagement in the Upper West region left an indelible mark on the students, igniting a passion for climate action and instilling a sense of responsibility towards the environment. Through this transformative initiative, the young leaders of tomorrow are now equipped with the knowledge and inspiration to champion sustainable practices in their communities and drive positive change for a greener, more resilient future.



PLASTIC RECOVERY CHALLENGE WITH STUDENTS OF HIGH SPEED ACADEMY

C4C



On 2nd June, C4C partnered with High Speed Academy at Pokuase to organize a Plastic Recovery Challenge with 25 pupils on the theme, "Beat Plastic Pollution" to commemorate World Environment Day.

25 pupils were divided into five groups of five, with each group embarking on unique projects. Two facilitators from the SYND team were each assigned to every group. The event brought Women Aspire Network, SESA Recycling and Trashy Beauties as partners, who stood in as judges with their expertise to groom these young innovators. Aero planes, Gliding bird, flower vase, torch lights and many other items made out of straws, plastic bottles, pure water sachets, cardboard papers, and waste body parts of plastic toy cars were innovatively made by these students to reduce plastic pollution in their environment.

At the end of the day, the students were awarded with repurposed bags made from empty pure water sachets and African print cloths. Excited about the event, the children learnt about climate change and how to take action by practically turning plastic waste into useful artefacts, which could be used at home, school or places of desire.



CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR YOUNG GREEN ENTREPRENEURS

ENERGY



The Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND) organized a capacity building workshop aimed at empowering and supporting young green entrepreneurs in Ghana. The gathering featured various speakers who shared valuable insights and practical knowledge on topics such as aligning green businesses with national policies, achieving business growth and sustainability, and accessing financial support. Chibeze Ezekiel, the Executive Coordinator of SYND, emphasized the importance of collaboration and understanding national policies like SDG 7, REMP, and NDCs to strengthen business proposals and achieve policy targets. Maxwell Beganim, the Project Lead for Young Green Entrepreneurs, engaged participants in an activity to enhance their elevator pitches and market their ideas effectively. The event also included representatives from financial institutions like Fidelity Bank Limited and Agricultural Development Bank Ltd (ADB), who expressed their commitment to supporting young green entrepreneurs and fostering partnerships for sustainable business growth. The event concluded with Chibeze Ezekiel's closing remarks, expressing optimism for future collaborations and the creation of productive spaces for discussions at COP 28.

The event organized by SYND proved to be a significant platform for young green entrepreneurs in Ghana to gain valuable knowledge and insights to navigate the green business space. Participants had the opportunity to learn about aligning their businesses with national policies, accessing financial support, and achieving growth and sustainability. The interactive nature of the event, including an activity led by Maxwell Beganim to enhance participants' elevator pitches, facilitated practical skills development in marketing their ideas effectively. Representatives from financial institutions such as Fidelity Bank Limited and ADB expressed their support for young green entrepreneurs and provided information about mentorship programs and funding assistance. The event's success highlighted the commitment of SYND to empower young entrepreneurs and foster collaboration in the pursuit of a sustainable and prosperous future for Ghana's green economy.



YGE DIALOGUE SESSION WITH KEY STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS

ENERGY



The Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND) hosted a highly informative and engaging event aimed at empowering green entrepreneurs in Ghana. Solomon Yamoah, the Partnership Coordinator at SYND, expressed his delight in having relevant stakeholders present and highlighted the organization's belief in the potential of young people to create positive change. The event featured keynote speaker Dr. Theo Acheampong, an economist and political risk analyst, who emphasized the crucial role of young entrepreneurs in decarbonizing the economy and highlighted the need for skills training, apprenticeships, and policy support. Presentations by the Ghana Standards Authority (GSA), tax experts, and industry professionals provided valuable insights on standards, taxation, and key skills and competencies for success in the green business space. Representatives from financial institutions such as Prudential Bank and Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) emphasized their commitment to sustainability and supporting green businesses. The event concluded with a dialogue between green entrepreneurs and state and non-state actors, where challenges related to taxation and standardization processes were discussed.

The event organized by SYND was a great success, providing green entrepreneurs in Ghana with valuable knowledge and resources to thrive in the green business space. Keynote speaker Dr. Theo Acheampong emphasized the critical role of young entrepreneurs in driving the transition to a low-carbon economy and urged them to embrace skills training and seek policy support. Presentations by the Ghana Standards Authority highlighted the importance of standards in promoting green business and outlined specific standards for green businesses to follow. Tax experts shed light on tax incentives and requirements for green entrepreneurs, encouraging compliance to benefit from exemptions and special rates. The event also provided an opportunity for green entrepreneurs to engage in a dialogue with state and non-state actors, discussing pressing issues such as taxation and standardization processes. The event's closing remarks emphasized the importance of compliance, collaboration, and international exposure for the growth and success of green businesses.





In a collaborative effort with the Forestry Commission and the SDGs Advisory Unit, Office of the President, SYND (Strategic Youth Network for Development) and the enthusiastic members of the Youth-NREG platform came together to actively participate in the nationwide Green Ghana Day initiative. Held at the beautiful Shai Hills Resources Reserve under the theme "Our Forest, Our Health," the event proved to be a remarkable success. The highlight of the day was the planting of an impressive total of 1,000 trees, symbolizing the dedication of the participants to creating a greener and healthier Ghana.

Beyond the tree planting exercise, SYND recognized the significance of educating children on environmental sustainability. The team engaged with the pupils of Luom Presby Basic School, imparting knowledge about the importance of tree planting and the detrimental effects of deforestation and forest degradation. Through interactive sessions and informative discussions, the pupils were inspired to become nature champions and were encouraged to raise awareness within their communities.

The event also featured an exciting eco-tour, allowing the team to explore the wonders of the Shai Hills Resources Reserve. Amidst breathtaking landscapes, the participants encountered a variety of animals, including playful monkeys, majestic zebras, and graceful ostriches. This firsthand experience of Ghana's diverse wildlife further reinforced their commitment to preserving habitats and fostering ecological balance. Additionally, the team visited the museum of the reserve, delving into the rich history of the Shai people and gaining valuable insights into the cultural heritage and traditional practices of the local community.

The Green Ghana Day event at Shai Hills Resources Reserve served as a powerful reminder of the profound connection between the well-being of our forests and our own health. Through tree planting and engaging with nature, the SYND team exemplified the importance of nurturing our forests for the benefit of our collective well-being. Their efforts, in partnership with the Forestry Commission and the SDGs Advisory Unit, highlighted the significance of environmental education and the preservation of Ghana's natural treasures, inspiring a new generation of eco-conscious individuals ready to make a positive impact.



SYND FOREST RESTORATION PROGRAM

FORESTRY



The Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND) took part in a public forum organized by the Lands Commission and the Asante Akim North Municipal Assembly. The forum aimed to engage the community members of Nsonyameye in discussions about a forest restoration project focused on rejuvenating the local ecosystem and fostering sustainable development. SYND, entrusted with the land by the Agogo traditional council under the leadership of Paramount Chief Nana Kwame Akuoko Sarpong, presented their comprehensive plans during the event, highlighting the numerous benefits that the project would bring to the community. These include employment generation, alternative livelihood sources, and improved infrastructure. Jacqueline Twintoh, the project consultant, emphasized the positive impact of tree planting, highlighting the employment opportunities and alternative livelihoods that would be created, as well as the environmental sustainability benefits through contributions to the carbon market.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) District Office, while endorsing the project, requested SYND to submit the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and conduct on-site visits for further assessments. Mr. Yeboah Okyere, the project lead, assured the EPA of SYND's willingness to collaborate and visit the District Office to establish a working relationship. The Forestry Commission also expressed their support for the project, acknowledging its potential benefits for the Nsonyameye community. Mr. Gideon Yaw Willie, the Assistant District Manager, emphasized the significance of the carbon market and commended SYND for their substantial investment in the restoration project. The forum successfully fostered collaboration and commitment among community members and governmental agencies, ensuring a sustainable and inclusive approach to the land restoration project. As SYND continues to work closely with local authorities and community members, their joint effort aims to restore the land, promote environmental sustainability, and create opportunities for socio-economic development in Nsonyameye, setting a precedent for effective resource utilization, environmental stewardship, and community empowerment in the region.

