

VOICE IN COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT – EAST AYAWASO CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER #1

We are very excited to present to the development community in Accra and beyond our inaugural newsletter! Voice in Community Empowerment (VOiCE) is a non-political, non-religious and non-profit youth organization (NGO) aimed at facilitating the implementation of socio-economic and developmental projects in the East Ayawaso Submetro area, through concerted volunteerism from our very capable and committed youth. Indeed, we place the concerns of youth at the centre of our agenda and activities. VOiCE was established in response to the need for more authentic, sincere and legitimized integration of youth and their developmental and recreational interests in the decision-making that impacts their communities. Such interests include: youth employment, education and skills training, community upgrading, water and sanitation, girls' empowerment, and supporting youth recreation such as sports and the arts.

VOiCE has been active as a youth group since 2010 but we chose to “take the next step” to become a registered NGO in 2013, in order to bring specific projects for the benefit of the East Ayawaso area. Our partners include the Millennium Cities Initiative at the Earth Institute (Columbia University, New York), or MCI, and the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. We are happy to build new partnerships with NGOs and donor organizations interested in collaborating with “grassroots” youth leaders and other key stakeholders in Nima, Maamobi, Kanda, Kwao Tsuru, and Kotobabi.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Upgrading of community center

Pic.

One of the biggest challenges facing youth in the East Ayawaso area, especially Nima-Maamobi, has been the absence of a special venue of their own, where they could meet, create and participate in youth developmental and recreational activities. It was a priority for VOiCE to address this challenge. We identified a building that, if renovated, could serve as the “East Ayawaso Youth Community Centre.” With the support of our partner, MCI, the Centre has been fully renovated and is now open to all youth in the Submetro!

Youth forum

Pic.

In collaboration with MCI, VOiCE organized a very successful community youth forum that brought many youth leaders within Nima-Maamobi community to brain storm on the challenges and difficulties facing the youth and the community at large. Under the theme “The role of youth in community development.” It was realized that a single forum was not enough to really address the concerns of youth in the community, so we are planning more activities to go deeper into this important topic.

Ladies forum

Pic.

VOiCE in collaboration with MCI also organized an effective “girls and young ladies forum,” which gathered many girls and young ladies in the community to discuss their challenges that prevent them from being part of decision-making processes or taking a leadership position. The value of girls' education was a key topic, as well as their concerns over security at night in Nima and Maamobi. We identified the need to build a campaign around the value of girls' education, and also the need to acquire streetlights in the unsafe areas of Nima-Maamobi.

Midwifery celebration

Pic.

VOiCE in collaboration with MCI and the Greater Accra Midwives' Association held the Annual Midwives' Celebration, which targeted girls, young and adult ladies in the community to be educated on maternal and reproductive health, family planning, and becoming a midwife as a career option, given that there are not enough midwives in our communities. The occasion marked the first time that the Celebration was held in a predominantly Muslim community.

Solid waste pollution control

Pic.

Solid waste pollution is a major concern for residents in East Ayawaso, particularly in Nima, Maamobi and Kwao Tsuru. MCI donated a set of clean-up exercise tools to the community through VOiCE as the custodian to the equipment to facilitate the easy accessibility of tools for sanitation programs in the community.

Pic.

Also, VOiCE, with support from MCI, organized an effective and successful “Pre-Ramadan clean-up exercise” in collaboration with waste management company Zoom Lion and the Nima-Maamobi Mothers’ Club, under the theme “welcoming the holy month of Ramadan in healthy and clean environment.” Volunteers cleaned the alleys in a large part of Nima East and residents were able to dump all of their accumulated household waste into the garbage truck. There was an obvious feeling of relief and appreciation from residents, knowing their environs would be clean and free of waste right before the commencement of Ramadan.

Nima-Kanda Walkway

Pic.

Accessibility in Nima East, between Nima Highway and Kanda Highway, is a big challenge. There is no road or pedestrian walkway that links the two together. VOiCE was happy to partner with MCI and the Accra Metropolitan Assembly to work on the establishment of the “Nima-Kanda Walkway,” which paved a large dirt path used by residents to move between the two highways. This project helps improve access, promote walking and attract small enterprise growth along the walkway. Residents were unanimous that the project was going to have a big impact.

Messages

Founder of VoiCE

Pic.

Executive director

Coordinator

Youth leader

Gender equality coordinator

Opinion leader