



GHANA YOUTH MANIFESTO

A Call to Action for Youth Empowerment in Ghana

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GHANA

YOUTH

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Ghana Youth Manifesto:
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Youth Empowerment Synergy (YES-Ghana)
No. 16 Prince of Peace School Link
Off UPS - ATRACO Rd, East Legon
PMB CT 400 Cantonments, Accra

Tel/Fax: 0302510000
Mobile: 0240435008

Email: info@yesghana.org
Website: www.yesghana.org

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Foreword



There is growing attention to the importance of involving young people as actors in their own right throughout all the stages and processes of our nation's development. Slowly but surely, many stakeholders are realising that investing in youth means a commitment not only to their improved well-being and livelihoods but also to the economic, social and cultural development of future generations and that failure to make such investments can result in steep societal costs.

The Youth Empowerment Synergy (YES-Ghana) has long recognised that the imagination, ideals and energy of young men and women are vital for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. At YES-Ghana, we believe that the nature and quality of young people's lives, as well as the future of Ghana's social and economic development, depend largely on how well young people navigate the transitional period from a protected childhood to adulthood of self-determination. This is why we continue to work with various stakeholders to expand opportunities for youth to participate in and benefit from our nation's development.

Our 'Voices of Youth' project deepens our commitment to working for increased attention and investments on critical youth issues in Ghana's development agenda, given rising concerns over insufficient attention to critical issues affecting youth in our nation. Through this project, we have provided an opportunity for youth to articulate their concerns and to make policy input through the mechanism of the Ghana Youth Manifesto.

The development of the Ghana Youth Manifesto marks a new era of meaningful youth participation in the development of our nation. It represents the first ever effort by Ghanaian youth to work together in providing recommendations and ideas for concrete action for policies and programmes that address their everyday realities and challenges. The key policy messages that form the foundation of the recommended actions contained in this Manifesto can be summarised as follows:

- Recognise, address and respond to youth as a distinct but heterogeneous population group, with particular needs and capacities which stem from their formative age;
- Build the capabilities and expand the choices of young people by enhancing their access to and participation in all dimensions of society;
- Catalyse investment in youth so that they consistently have the proper resources, information and opportunities to realise their full potential;
- Improve the public support available to youth from ad-hoc or last-minute to consistent and mainstreamed;
- Promote partnerships, cooperation and the strengthening of institutional capacity that contribute to more solid investments in youth; and
- Include young people and their representative associations at all stages of the policy development and implementation process.

While some of the recommended actions contained in this Manifesto may be achieved in the short term, others can only be implemented effectively with long-term commitment and recognition by stakeholders that improving the lives of youth is a forward-looking process that itself requires cooperation, institutional support and vital partnerships across society and across the different spheres of governance. It is therefore my hope that the Manifesto will help pave the way for more youth opportunities, empowerment and inclusion.

EMMANUEL EDUDZIE

Executive Director, Youth Empowerment Synergy &
Convenor, Youth Manifesto Coalition

Preamble



We, young people, aged between 15 and 35 years, male and female, hailing from all ten regions of Ghana, of diverse backgrounds, from different faiths and beliefs, from cities and villages, with varying abilities and challenges, and constituting the Voices of Youth Coalition - a nationwide network of over 221 youth groups and 423,457 individuals, altogether reaching over a million youth as of October 2012;

Having been actively involved in the 'Voices of Youth` project initiated by the Youth Empowerment Synergy through which we have built our capacities for effective participation in national development processes;

Inspired by the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, the African Youth Charter, and the United Nations World Programme on Youth all of which recognise the importance of young people` s role in poverty reduction and development;

Appalled by the conditions of poverty and hardship, deprivation and exclusion of rural and urban poor, the majority of which are young people;

Concerned about the insufficient attention to youth issues in national development policy and the lack of structures for effective youth participation in the various sectors of Ghana` s development;

Noting the central role of youth in the economic, social and political development in Ghana and our potential to contribute as current and future leaders;

Recognising that as young people we have a responsibility to position ourselves as formidable and trusted actors in the development process;

Working in unison to place youth issues more prominently on the national development agenda by offering concrete alternative policy options;

Rededicating ourselves to the struggle for a just, independent, democratic, peaceful and gender-equal society;

Pledging to uphold the values of integrity, responsibility and respect for diversity;

Determined to support inclusive national development initiatives as basis for effective political and economic change in Ghana;

Confident that with organization and fortitude we can make a difference to the situation of the current and future generations alike;

Convinced that a Ghana Youth Manifesto which provides a common platform for action by all stakeholders is necessary for effective advocacy for youth-inclusive national development;

Hereby adopt this Ghana Youth manifesto in furtherance of maximising the contribution of youth to the inclusive, gender-equal, democratic rights-based development of our homeland Ghana.

Part I

INTRODUCTION



WHAT IS THE YOUTH MANIFESTO?

The Ghana Youth Manifesto is a comprehensive compilation of youth policy options and proposals to place our issues and perspectives at the heart of Ghana's 2012 elections agenda, and thereafter form the basis for national youth policy. It contains our views, aspirations, perspectives and issues, and covers most aspects of contemporary youth development issues, taking into account internationally agreed frameworks such as the World Programme of Action for Youth and the African Youth Charter. The Ghana Youth Manifesto is the outcome of our own interconnected efforts and those of various stakeholders in youth development in Ghana. Therefore it is owned by our broad constituency of youth from all parts of the country. It is a non-partisan document.

WHY A YOUTH MANIFESTO?

The Ghana Youth Manifesto is a youth-led response to the need for more concerted and coordinated efforts to addressing critical issues affecting us. On the one hand, it serves as a rallying point for us and our organisations to work together with one voice to advocate for more attention to our issues at all levels. On the other hand, it is an innovation which goes a step further by providing concrete alternative policy options on the decision-making table. The ultimate goal therefore is to achieve a more inclusive public policy decision-making process in Ghana.

HOW WAS THE YOUTH MANIFESTO PREPARED?

The Ghana Youth Manifesto is the product of a year-long collaborative effort that we young people have coordinated under the 'Voices of Youth' project implemented by the Youth Empowerment Synergy (YES-Ghana) with the active support and participation of key stakeholders, including representatives of civil society, United Nations and international development agencies, the academia, relevant government agencies, and the media. The Ghana Youth Manifesto emerges out of a coordinated process of building a broad constituency and developing individual and group capacities.

Through a series of consultations with youth groups across the country, the Voices of Youth Coalition was created as the umbrella body through which the process of developing the Manifesto would be coordinated. Members have selected interim executives who lead the Coalition.

A series of capacity building and training workshops were held for leaders of the various groups in the Voices of Youth Coalition. Between March and June 2012, seven capacity building workshops were held altogether reaching 300 Youth Advocates from all ten regions of Ghana. These include Youth Advocacy and Active Citizenship Training workshops in Accra, Takoradi and Tamale; two Participatory Community Radio Production Training workshops in Accra; a combined session of Youth Media Skills and Advocacy Training workshop in Accra; and a Peace-building and Conflict Prevention Training workshop in Tamale.

A Writing and Coordination Taskforce comprising 15 competitively selected youth leaders from across the country was created to oversee the development of the Manifesto from start to finish with support from the Voices of Youth staff at YES-Ghana. Specifically, the Taskforce developed a framework for preparing the Manifesto, format and processes for collecting input from youth and other stakeholders, and actually drafted thematic summaries of the inputs received.

Based on the capacities developed in earlier workshops, the Youth Advocates were deployed through various mediums to collect inputs from young people and stakeholders at the community, district and regional levels in an all-inclusive manner. Local community forums in over 400 locations provided entry points for many unreached youth to speak and be heard. Symposiums in tertiary institutions provided an opportunity for many students to contribute to the Manifesto. Symposiums for youth wings of some political parties ensured that politically active youth were not left out of the process. Partnership with the Ghana Community Radio Network ensured that youth media volunteers produced several programmes on all twelve

community radio stations across Ghana reaching large numbers in local communities and collecting their inputs for the Manifesto. Through the project website and social media platforms, many young people and other members of the Ghanaian society who have access to the internet contributed their own input in very creative ways. Altogether, these activities yielded thousands of inputs mainly in written form, either as individual responses based on a special input collection template developed by the project team, or as activity reports indicating youth positions and recommendations. The project team therefore developed a database of all inputs received.

Based on all the inputs received, the Writing and Coordination Taskforce prepared thematic summaries, clustering the inputs under twelve thematic issues before developing a first draft of the Manifesto with the support of the 'Voice of Youth' project staff. This initial draft was subjected to thorough review by young people through various platforms, including an online consultation and a review workshop held in Accra. This led to the development of a second draft.

The second draft document was presented to a team of experts and development practitioners to provide technical advice for shaping the document during a Technical Review and Advisory workshop held in Accra. Experts from the United Nations, civil society, research and academic institutions, and the private sector reviewed the draft Manifesto's conformity to international frameworks and processes, and checked for thematic cohesion, among others. Based on the outcome of this review, the draft Manifesto received further fine-tuning, leading to a third draft.

A final step in the process was the gathering of all stakeholders at a validation workshop at which members of the taskforce, executives of the Voices of Youth Coalition, and some technical experts, as well as an editor and a designer conducted a thorough content analysis of the final draft before approving the document for press.

The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) provided much needed oversight for ensuring that the process went through smoothly.

HOW IS THIS YOUTH MANIFESTO ORGANISED?

This Ghana Youth Manifesto seeks to place youth issues more prominently on the national development agenda in Ghana. While reflecting the views, perspectives and aspirations of young people and partners in youth development, the Manifesto also draws from national, regional, and international youth development frameworks including the Constitution of Ghana, the African Youth Charter, and the World Programme of Action for Youth, as well as guidelines, tools, standards, and research developed by the United Nations, non-governmental organisations, and academic institutions.

The Ghana Youth Manifesto is divided into three parts. *Part I - Introduction* provides some background information on the Manifesto including its purpose and the processes used in developing it.

Part II - Call to Action highlights key thematic issues under three broad clusters that reflect the challenges youth encounter. The content of each cluster moves from examining the concept of each priority area and how it is experienced by youth, to actions that can enhance the enjoyment of rights, opportunities, and the quality of life of young men and women. This format was chosen because it would have the most practical resonance with policymakers.

The actions recommended in the Ghana Youth Manifesto are directed towards all stakeholders in youth development, including government, civil society, the private sector, United Nations agencies, donors and the international community, young people themselves, among others. Thus, it is important for all stakeholders to recognise that investing in youth calls for cooperation, institutional support, and vital partnerships across society and the different spheres of governance. This is captured in *Part III- Collaborative Effort*.

Part II

Call-to-Action





Our Economy

- **POVERTY REDUCTION**
- **EDUCATION**
- **EMPLOYMENT**
- **YOUTH IN THE DIASPORA**



POVERTY REDUCTION

Even with the considerable growth in the Ghanaian economy and the improvements in standards of living in recent years, poverty still plagues the lives of many young people in the country. We are experiencing poverty not only through financial limitations but also through limitations in access to public services such as clean water, adequate transportation, health care, and education. Unfortunately, we have been overlooked in Ghana's poverty reduction strategies as current data on poverty estimates do not accurately capture our experiences. One reason for this situation is the static definition of poverty by the agencies responsible, typically measured in terms of household income or expenditures. Such a definition tends to focus on persistent poverty among the long-term poverty often caused by entrenched structural, social or economic factors such as location or access to education or health care. But our kind of poverty – youth poverty – is situational and prone to short-term fluctuations. For us, poverty also means a denial of choices and opportunities, the lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society, not having enough to cater for our basic needs, not having a school or a clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow our food or a job to earn a living, not having access to credit, among others.

Actions

1. Improve the lives of young people from rural areas by:

- A.** Initiating a broad approach to education that includes programmes that target older youth who have left school at a young age to work in agriculture;
- B.** Including an explicit agricultural growth strategy with a role for youth in mainstream poverty reduction efforts;
- C.** Using the rural or agricultural environment to enhance and provide context to learning;
- D.** Promoting the provision of agricultural credit schemes;

E. Providing information on how to increase agricultural productivity; and

F. Facilitating the movement of new technologies beyond urban centres to mitigate feelings of rural social and economic isolation.

2. Improve the lives of young people from urban areas by:

A. Including poorer youth who reside in slum or peripheral areas in programmes that target the urban youth labour market; access to jobs and services in urban environments for youth in urban areas should also entail payments for public transportation;

B. Facilitating access to financial institutions so that poor and low-income youth can save, access credit, and accumulate assets;

C. Counting urban youth that live in peripheral areas, overcrowded buildings and illegal settlements so that official poverty statistics do not undercut urban poor youth. Those no longer living with their families risk being overlooked and excluded from poverty reduction measures; and

D. Improving access to sanitation and clean water in slums.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Education is a basic human right and helps us realise our human potential. As young people, education forms our knowledge and competencies that allow us to thrive at home, in the work place and throughout our lifetime. While education enhances opportunities, it also promotes critical and creative thinking, problem solving skills, informed decision-making, self-esteem, teamwork, and language skills and is a precondition for community participation, food security, healthy lifestyles and peaceful societies. The right to education is one that all children and youth in Ghana must be able to access. Youth who drop out of school are more vulnerable to poverty, abuse, HIV/AIDS, hazardous labour, and living in the street and are less likely to acquire the skills needed for the labour market.

Box 1: What characteristics of youth training programmes are helpful in creating more opportunities for youth?

- Promotes entrepreneurial skills
- Flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of the workplace
- Links with the labour market for both wage and self employment
- Internship programmes through partnerships with local businesses
- An emphasis on personal development and career planning
- On-the-job training and work-study programmes
- Inclusion of those who work in the informal economy or those who have never been employed
- Entry requirements that permit informal workers and people from historically disadvantaged groups to participate and benefit
- Opportunities for mentoring and the exchange of information among peers
- Vocational guidance that does not discriminate against or stereotype young women

Actions

1. Improve access to quality basic and secondary education by:

A. Developing long-term education policies and programmes, which are devoid of all political considerations, agreed upon by all stakeholders and all sides of the political divide, and entrenched in law;

B. Ensuring free and compulsory basic education for all and taking steps to eliminate the indirect costs of education;

C. Making all forms of secondary education more readily available, accessible, and affordable by all possible means;

D. Ensuring gender equality within the educational system and promoting girl child education;

E. Expanding the Ghana School Feeding

Programme and other social protection interventions to ensure regular school attendance and reduce drop-out rates; and

F. Paying particular attention to specific groups of youth in distressed circumstances, including street children and poor youth in urban and rural areas, as well as to special problems, including youth with all forms of disabilities

2. Help youth attain higher education by:

A. Making higher education equally accessible to all, including expanding distance learning programmes;

B. Availing multiple access points for education and skills development including opportunities outside of mainstream educational institutions, such as informal learning, lifelong learning, distance learning, e-learning, workplace skills development (on-the-job training), peer education, and national service programmes;

C. Expanding scholarship and bursary programmes to encourage entry into higher education for outstanding youth from disadvantaged communities, especially young girls;

D. Reforming the education content and curricula of secondary schools and tertiary institutions with a view to establishing an appropriate balance between formal education and the requirements of the job market, establishing appropriate linkages between tertiary institutions and industries as well as entrepreneurship training; and

E. Giving youth the opportunity to access apprenticeship programmes and industrial attachments that help them acquire entry-level jobs with growth opportunities and the ability to adjust to changes in labour demand;

3. Encourage non-formal Learning by:

A. Making efforts to reach youth who have dropped out of the formal education system before acquiring basic literacy and math skills and provide them with education or training that will enhance their life skills and employability;

B. Ensuring recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning for young people in acknowledgement of the value of knowledge and experience gained outside of the traditional learning environment, and thereby demonstrating the importance of integrating formal and non-formal learning in one's overall education; and

C. Targeting youth who have never been to school. This represents a second-chance for youth who have spent much of their childhood at work or in dangerous settings and may serve as a force for their inclusion in the mainstream labour market.

4. Strengthen the education - employment nexus by:

A. Training skilled guidance and vocational counsellors so they can provide information on the nature of employment paths as well as wages and working conditions;

B. Establishing and provide adequate funding for local job centres to improve the dissemination of labour market information so that young people will be better equipped in choosing a career path;

C. Partnering with the private sector to identify high-demand skills. While more youth are attending school and staying in school longer, the labour market would absorb more graduates if it had stronger links to the educational system. Such partnerships can work to inform the school and training curriculums and resource distribution channels according to the demands of major employers;

D. Expanding social protection schemes to reach poor youth and enable them to cope with periods of unemployment. As youth are sometimes hired and fired at the discretion of employers, extending and improving the quality of social protection and providing coverage in the informal economy can prevent cushion them from experiencing livelihood fluctuations; and

E. Creating scholarships for girls and young women to work and study in areas where historically women have been underrepresented. Often, young women will need extra incentives to pursue studies in a male-dominated field. Without many role models in such fields, scholarships and mentoring programmes will open up new areas for young women and fuel their confidence and ambitions.

EMPLOYMENT

There is no doubting of the fact that levels of unemployment among young people in Ghana are two to three times higher than among the adult population. In comparison to older workers, the difficulties we face as young people rest largely on a lack of experience, lack of voice, and a tough transition from school to the job market. Even though our current generation of youth can be said to be the most educated in the historical context, we are still viewed as a risk both by employers and mainstream financial institutions. The unemployment problems facing us as young people are not only a challenge for our personal development but also for the preservation of national and regional stability, economic development, and growth.

Box 2: What is decent work?

According to the International Labour Organisation, decent work is characterised by:

- Respect for rights in the workplace
- Pay that represents a liveable wage
- Availability of social protection programmes and schemes
- Safety and security at work
- Voice that includes the ability to take part in decisions that may affect workers
- Opportunities for training and the upgrading of skills

Actions

1. Establish the institutional arrangements to monitor the needs of the labour market and create more jobs for youth by:

A. Integrating national youth policy into a variety of sectors such as education; health and justice in order for there to be a significant impact on employment growth. This can be done through a multi-stakeholder consultative body or task force to forge a comprehensive youth employment policy to include the views and aims of multiple ministries and agencies;

B. Assessing past policies and programmes on youth employment, specifically the number and nature of new vacancies for youth per year. This should be done in association with youth and civil society, and concentrate on actions to increase employment, intensity; and

C. Consulting with youth organizations and young people. This will be helpful in the process of exploring different policy options at different stages of decision-making.

2. Promote an expanding demand for labour that benefits young people by:

A. Assessing and identifying new societal needs through an assessment of the unmet social demands. For example, challenges in housing, nursing care, AIDS care, and urban revitalisation may be met through the implementation of

training and local initiatives to fill these gaps. The ageing of the population in some areas will generate a significant demand for home care and skilled nurses;

B. Investing in public works programmes to use surplus labour for projects that may include upgrading infrastructure and improving irrigations systems, schools or health centres. The employment creation effects of public works can enhance the labour market in the long run in addition to improving local infrastructure that would otherwise not be achieved with private investment. These projects can also stimulate local economies through the demand for tools, equipment, and materials. Public works programmes would be a particularly good entry point into the labour force for youth, especially for young women; and

C. Targeting sectors that have the capacity to create productive jobs, employ a significant percentage of young people, and have profound linkage effects on the growth of other sectors – sectors such as agriculture, oil and gas, information and communication technologies.

3. Develop and implement measures to promote the economic empowerment of young people by:

A. Engaging with the education sector and with the private sector to increase access to education, vocational training and soft skills to meet the needs of the employment market;

B. Integrating entrepreneurship, savings and investment culture and education into the education system at appropriate levels;

C. Supporting an integrated approach to self-employment, micro-enterprise and credit schemes, including the creation of incentives to agencies and private sector partners engaging in microenterprise development for youth, formulating policies that support micro-credit and financing for youth enterprise, the promotion of partnerships of key stakeholders to manage these schemes, the development of youth-led associations for youth enterprise; and the identification of resources for operating and replicating successful micro-financing schemes;

D. Researching and developing poverty alleviation and employment programmes for marginalised young people including young women, rural youth and young people at risk;

E. Formulating appropriate policies to address such issues as the age and experience criteria that facilitate the entry of young people into productive employment;

F. Establishing national schemes and apprenticeship/internship programmes to enable young men and women to acquire a range of skills they will need to be employable; and

G. Providing support to young people in gaining access to land, as a means of building their economic and social base.

4. Expand opportunities in the informal sector and address the challenges of the informal economy by:

A. Ensuring that those in the informal economy can enjoy the full spectrum of rights and legal protections. Information and training for young people in the informal economy are also necessary so that they are aware of their rights and obligations;

B. Supporting and providing information on training for young people involved in informal economy activities. Strict entry requirements to training programmes often represent barriers that discourage or restrict informal workers and

people from historically disadvantaged groups from participating and benefiting. These restrictions should be removed so that youth can increase their knowledge and skills, specifically in relation to new technologies;

C. Setting up an inter-Ministerial coordination taskforce that allows the government, workers and employers to articulate their interests. It is necessary to create a structural arrangement that welcomes the input of organisations of informal workers, including trade unions and informal female workers, in drafting employment-related legislation. As women dominate the informal economy, it is necessary to include a female presence on all sides of the discussion;

D. Paying special attention to those that are more likely to be discriminated against such as young women or persons with disabilities, with the goal of social inclusion. Government should provide guidelines and mandate training for inspectors to identify discriminatory practices; and

E. Strengthening the capacity of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) providing services to high-risk groups in the informal economy. Service delivery in the informal economy can be augmented through closer partnerships with NGOs, many of which already have strong ties in this area.

YOUTH IN THE DIASPORA

Ghanaian youth in the diaspora represent a varied and heterogeneous group, including youth entering other countries through legal and illegal channels, trafficked youth, seasonal migrants, second and third generation migrants who were born in the country, international students, among others. They are in a unique position to support the development process back home.

Actions

Creating opportunities for youth in the diaspora to contribute to and benefit from Ghana's socio-economic development by:

A. Fostering understanding between Ghana and receiving countries to facilitate integration and protection of Ghanaian youth living in the Diaspora;

B. Using effective media campaigns to alert Ghanaian youth to the realities of emigrating overseas;

C. Formulating policies to attract remittances and promote investment by young Ghanaians living abroad, including creating a conducive environment to attract Ghanaian youth in the Diaspora to contribute to the country's development;

D. Establishing structures that encourage and assist Ghanaian youth in the Diaspora to return and fully re-integrate into the social and economic life in Ghana;

E. Creating a platform for keeping Ghanaian youth in the Diaspora informed about new and interesting developments in the country for possible investments by young people in the Diaspora;

F. Creating a platform for including Ghanaian youth in the Diaspora in decision-making process in order to give them opportunities to express their views and expectations; and

G. Making provision for the youth in Diaspora and include their needs in the action planning.





Our Wellbeing

- **HEALTH**
- **GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN**
- **THE DISABLED**
- **JUVENILE DELINQUENCY**
- **CONFLICT PREVENTION**



HEALTH

During this critical phase of our lives as young people, we are faced with questions about our health and wellbeing, including access to health services, lowering the incidence of teen pregnancy through reproductive and sexual health education,

and discouraging the use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, among others. As behaviours that begin in our adolescence can shape our future, life skills planning has also become a challenge for our health and wellbeing. Investments in services and support for our health and wellbeing will help us deal with physical and emotional changes.

Box 3: What are youth-friendly health services?

- Services that empower girls and young women to make decisions in relation to their sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, violence and discrimination. Education should also promote the understanding and respect of young men for those decisions.
- Counselling and practical help for young people relating to their reproductive health, including confidential testing and treatment of STIs, access to contraceptives, family planning assistance and HIV/AIDS prevention messages with the aim of decreasing youth vulnerability to disease, unwanted pregnancies and high-risk behaviours.
- Facilities and services that are available and accessible – both physically and economically – to all youth, without discrimination and provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Actions

Improve the health and wellbeing of youth by:

A. Improving accessibility, availability and affordability of the National Health Insurance Scheme to deliver high quality health care services to young people across the country. Primary health care should especially focus on sexual and reproductive health, as well as education programmes, including those related to sexually transmitted disease, including HIV/AIDS, for youth;

B. Ensuring the full participation of youth in the development and promotion of health-related programmes and policies that enable them to become agents of change in the communities and positively affect their lives and those of their peers;

C. Establishing and promoting youth-friendly health centres for youth within clinics and hospitals and sensitising youth to access health care services provided for them;

D. Reaching young people in a holistic manner with appropriate information, services including counselling, self-care, life skills and livelihood skills planning and provision of a supportive environment for a healthy and successful development;

E. Providing specific training for health workers to be better able to communicate with and provide youth-friendly services to young people. Such health care workers should act in the best interest of the young people; they should be non-judgmental and considerate, and willing to treat all their patients with equal care and respect;

F. Training and deploying more doctors, nurses and other health personnel, including qualified young people, to rural areas to provide care to enable young people also benefit from quality care. This must be linked to the provision of more health care facilities in rural areas which are within reasonable reach of communities to ensure that health care facilities are well

equipped with adequate materials and trained personnel;

G. Providing technical and financial support for building the institutional capacity of youth organisations to address public health concerns including issues concerning youth with disabilities and young people married at an early age;

H. Mainstreaming health education, including life skills, into school curricular and programmes designed for out of school youth. Particular emphasis should be placed on the understanding of basic hygiene requirements and the need to develop and sustain a healthy environment;

I. Establishing local youth health associations in partnership with local government and NGOs to promote good sanitation and hygiene programmes;

J. Raising awareness amongst youth and creating preventive education programmes for youth on the dangers of drug abuse through partnerships with youth, youth organisations and the community;

K. Strengthening local, national, regional and international partnerships to eradicate the demand, supply and trafficking of drugs including using youth to traffic drugs;

L. Providing rehabilitation for young people abusing drugs such that they can be re-integrated into social and economic life;

M. Supporting youth organisations to play a key role in designing and implementing education programmes and individual counselling to encourage the integration of youth into the community, to develop healthy lifestyles and to raise awareness of the damaging impact of drugs;

N. Promoting personal responsibility for a healthy lifestyle and provide the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt a healthy lifestyle, including teaching the legal, social and health consequences of behaviour that poses health risks;

O. Instituting comprehensive preventive and curative programmes to control the consumption of tobacco, exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, and alcohol abuse; and

P. Taking effective steps, including specific preventive measures, to protect children, adolescents and youth from neglect, abandonment and all types of exploitation and abuse, such as abduction, rape and incest, pornography, trafficking and acts of paedophilia, as well as from commercial sexual exploitation resulting from pornography and prostitution.

GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

Girls and young women make up more than half of the youth population in Ghana. They are unique and distinctive individuals with rights and responsibilities similar to those of boys and young men. But they face more difficulties in accessing education, healthcare and employment compared to their male counterparts. Without gender parity in these and other areas of our development process, our national development goals will not be achieved.

Actions

Promote the full participation of girls and young women in the development of the Ghanaian society by:

A. Taking appropriate actions to eliminate discrimination against girls and young women and to ensure their full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms through comprehensive policies, plans of action and programmes on the basis of equality;

B. Ensuring that girls and young women are able to participate actively, equally and effectively with boys and young men at all levels of social, educational, economic, political, cultural, civic life and leaderships as well as scientific endeavours;

C. Instituting programmes that make girls and young women aware of their rights and of opportunities to participate as equal members

of society and to ensure full participation of girls and young women in society and decision-making;

D. Paying more attention to gender mainstreaming in such key areas as education, health and employment;

E. Initiating empowerment, leadership and mentorship programmes to support girls and young women;

F. Support the formation of grassroots girls clubs that educate girls and provide continuous empowerment to girls and young women;

G. Guaranteeing universal and equal access to and completion of primary education for girls and young women as well as equal access to secondary and higher education;

H. Ensuring that the education system does not impede girls and young women, including married and/or pregnant young women, from attending. There should be support for girl child education by providing them with uniforms, learning materials, among others, to stay in school. Parents should be sensitised about the importance of education for girls and young women;

I. Guaranteeing equal access to and completion of vocational, secondary and higher education in order to effectively address the existing imbalance between young men and women in certain professions. In particular, educational materials and practices must be gender balanced/sensitive and encourage girls and young women to undertake studies in the sciences;

J. Placing more emphasis on the education of young girls to the tertiary level by organising awareness campaigns that educate girls and parents to continue education. Special scholarships should be instituted for females who excel in their academic work and who are prepared to climb higher on the academic ladder;

K. Promoting equal access for young women to all employment opportunities and ensure their participation in the traditionally male-dominated sectors;

L. Prohibiting forced marriages and marriages below the age of 18 and designing strategies to reduce early marriages among girls through economic empowerment programmes like skills training and business development;

M. Strictly enforcing laws that protect girls and young women from all forms of violence, genital mutilation, incest, rape, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, trafficking, prostitution and pornography;

N. Developing programmes of action that provide legal, physical and psychological support to girls and young women who have been subjected to violence and abuse such that they can fully re-integrate into social and economic life; and

O. Empowering girls and young women through relevant trainings to equip them with the needed capacities to avoid gender-based violence and report cases of abuse in communities.

THE DISABLED



Young people with disability constitute a significant proportion of the youth population in Ghana. They are faced with numerous challenges including stigmatisation and discrimination, deprivation of fundamental human rights to basic amenities and services, and exclusion from decision-making processes which altogether impede their ability to contribute to and benefit from the socio-economic development of our country. Yet when empowered the disabled can become key actors in the fight against poverty and drivers of social change.

Actions

Promote the full participation of young people with disability in the development of the Ghanaian society by:

A. Ensuring that young people with disability have equal and effective access to education, training, health care services, employment, sports, physical education and cultural and recreational activities. All stakeholders must work towards eliminating any obstacles that may have negative implications for the full integration of mentally and physically challenged youth into society;

B. Empowering young people with disability to meet their basic needs. As a first step, Government should increase to 5% the financial support from the District Assemblies Common Funds and ensure its prudent and timely disbursement;

C. Including young people with disability in all decision-making processes at all levels and removing all forms of social exclusion. Mentally and physically challenged youth should be well represented in all sectors and levels of the Ghanaian economy so as to advance the interest of challenged youth;

D. Offering mentoring for youth with disability to encourage and empower them to utilise their potential for theirs and the nation's development, including through setting up their own businesses;

E. Ensuring the full participation of the disabled youth in all social and economic activities;

F. Building special schools and training facilities for the disabled across the country with special Information and Communication Technology facilities to enhance their learning and capacity building process. This should fit within a broader national effort to provide a wide variety of training and skills development opportunities with adequate learning and teaching materials for physically and mentally challenged youth. Financially resourcing these special educational facilities is key;

G. Expanding scholarship schemes for the disabled and brilliant youth to access education and skills development;

H. Ensuring young people with disability have access to all forms of employment opportunities without any differential treatment. The job market in Ghana should be redesigned to absorb disabled persons and to encourage and motivate them to progress as far as possible in their careers;

I. Expanding counselling centres with well-trained counsellors to assist the disabled youth while providing necessary psychological assistance. Special focus should be given to the rehabilitation of youth with physical and mental challenges; and

J. Providing appropriate infrastructure and services for the disabled youth to facilitate their day-to-day living. This may include provision of free buses for disabled students to and from school, designating special seats and assistance for physically challenged youth in public transportation, and providing the needed equipment such as walking aids, white cane, special computers, tools and equipment Braille materials, digital recorders, and hand frames.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Not all young people are delinquent. But we acknowledge that many young people are criminally active, committing less serious offences rather than violent crime. There is seldom one simple reason for the increased tendency towards criminal behaviour. However, social and economic disparities, as well as the inability to fully integrate youth into society increase the likelihood of

criminal behaviour. Reduction in youth delinquency is key to reducing the overall crime rate in our society.

Actions

1. Prevent youth delinquency by:

A. Ensuring equality of opportunity among youth in education and employment. While poverty alone may not create or aggravate conflict, youth may experience strong resentment and be more inclined to engaging in illegal activity when they experience inequality, feel frustration and perceive a gap between what they have and what they believe they deserve or what others have;

B. Providing mentors to act as role models for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. Mentoring programmes pair screened adult volunteers with youth from troubled backgrounds to foster self-esteem, guidance, trust in adults and friendship;

C. Conducting training sessions on violence, including gender-based violence, in local schools. Instilling an intolerant attitude toward violence and reinforcing positive social orientation can act as a buffer against delinquent behaviour. As an exercise in setting standards, youth should be included in defining school policies related to all forms of violence;

D. Providing free psychosocial support to young people living with the effects of violence. Juvenile offenders have often been exposed to violence within the family. In order to prevent this violence from becoming learned behaviours, programmes should teach youth with difficult childhoods how to communicate and build relationships free from violence. As there is a high correlation between juvenile delinquency and alcohol and drug abuse, these services can also help youth cope so they do not adopt these destructive habits or addictions.

E. Whenever possible, involving parents in any interventions targeting youth delinquency. Successful interventions can help parents improve their “life skills” and help them deal with

everyday issues such as work stress, depression, marital conflict, housing, and money matters. To become better equipped to manage these common life issues, interventions should provide training on how to nurture and communicate effectively with their children and how to parent more effectively; and

F. Empowering local youth groups to take part in improving their own communities. Juvenile delinquency is largely a group phenomenon; however, the propensity of youth to identify strongly with peer groups can be channelled into more positive activities to reinforce the link between low crime rates and social inclusion and to promote respect for the law. Increases in after-school youth programmes will allow youth to participate in more constructive activities and stay off the streets.

2. Provide rehabilitation services and programmes for youth by:

A. Providing guidance to juvenile delinquents to access education and employment programmes that focus on skills building or enhancing self-esteem and confidence. This process requires work with individual youth, their families and communities. Providing marketable skills training and facilitating their entry into the workforce are necessary components of rehabilitation programmes. Such programmes will require inter-ministerial coordination and a multi-stakeholder approach;

B. Using a probationary period for new offenders to target high-risk youth with a range of services such as supervised retreats, community-based sanctions, mentoring and counselling. Art and photography classes or other means for self-expression can complement community service requirements of youth probation. Services should be provided based on the individualised needs of youth;

C. Deploying alternative forms of youth justice that instil respect for the law, provide reconciliation for the victim and the accused, and teach forgiveness. Such alternatives can also address the fundamental problems leading to the criminal activity;

D. Conducting an assessment of detention policy and practice and examine how they relate to the rehabilitation of youth. To ensure the safety of young people, juveniles alleged to be or found to be delinquent shall not be detained or incarcerated in adult jails or correctional facilities. Specialised courts and/or procedures and measures applicable to youth, such as efforts to minimize the time a youth must await trial, should be part of a plan to protect the rights of young offenders; and

E. Building capacity to provide a range of services for youth. A minimum of six months of follow-up is integral to ensuring the non-repetition of juvenile crime and to divert youth from further involvement in the criminal justice system. To achieve the desired outcome, probation monitors should be recruited and trained to work effectively with youth.

CONFLICT PREVENTION

As young people, we face distinct risks in situations of armed conflict. In situations of armed conflict, we are more likely to be recruited into leading the violence, become targets for sexual violence, be forced to generate a livelihood for ourselves and others, and miss out on education opportunities. While male and female youth may face all of these risks, females are often particularly at risk and face distinct consequences. Failure to support us as peace builders poses increased threat to our society and to our families who depend on us for immediate survival and future development.

Actions

Promote active involvement of youth in peace building and conflict prevention in Ghana by:

A. Instituting mechanisms to promote a culture of peace, tolerance and dialogue amongst young people that discourage their participation in acts of violence;

B. Strengthening the capacity of young people and youth organisations in peace building, conflict prevention and conflict resolution through the

promotion of intercultural learning, civic education, human rights education on issues such as mutual respect for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, the importance of dialogue and cooperation, responsibility, solidarity and international cooperation;

C. Organising peace building and conflict resolution trainings and programmes for youth to form an integral part of the educational curriculum;

D. Establishing youth conflict resolution committees in every electoral area and creating a system of early warning and reporting of conflict issues;

E. Instituting awards and scholarships to youth who have excelled or have demonstrated remarkable track record of engaging in peace building and conflict prevention in all districts of Ghana; and

F. Training and deploying youth journalists to provide youth-focused reports that eliminate misappropriation of facts in ways that raise tempers of opposing party supporters.





Our Society

- **PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING**
- **MEDIA AND ICT**
- **ENVIRONMENT**
- **LEISURE**

PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

As young people, we are too often left out of the processes that shape our current and future lives. Many stakeholders in our nation's development process often do not view us as indispensable contributors to policy formulation, evaluation and implementation. Yet, participation is part of the process of our empowerment. Involving us in the home, school and the community will not only benefit our socio-economic environment but also our own capacity and personal development. Our

full and effective participation must be seen both as a means and an end. Active and informed participation by young people is not only consistent with, but also demanded by national, regional and international commitments (such as the Constitution of Ghana, the African Youth Charter, and the United Nations World Programme on Youth) which recognise the importance of young people's role in development and the human rights of young people to participation in policy formulation, decision-making, leadership, and freedom of expression.

Box 4: What conditions help provide a good environment for youth to meaningfully participate in society?

- Freedom to organise without restriction, prejudice or discrimination (freedom of association).
- The ability to meet regularly without impediment (right of assembly).
- The freedom to say what they want without fear of intimidation or reprisal (freedom of expression) and to stay informed (right to information). With improved access to information, young people can make better use of their opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- The ability to receive support from, and collaborate with, other segments of civil society and the media.

Actions

Promote full and effective participation of young people in decision-making at all levels by:

A. Giving young people increased access to the decision-making process and policy implementation at the local level. Many youth do not see a connection between politics and their daily realities; however, this does not mean that they are not interested in their futures. A process of building trust may be initiated when young people have increased access to the decision-making process. Young people can emerge from such exposure with increased self-esteem, better communication skills and better knowledge about their communities and effective leadership. Such opportunities are likely to arise in community-level activities, and youth are more likely to flourish within an

institutional framework of representative local government. Thus, one element of the decentralisation of government and a deepening of democracy is the institutionalisation of opportunities for youth;

B. Offering civic education in schools for young people to learn about their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Most youth have a strong desire to actively engage with their communities but know little about the decision-making process. By knowing more about the political system, young people will be better equipped to identify, support and monitor the elections of candidates who press for economic progress, social justice, and peace;

C. Assessing the organisational structures of institutions so that youth may play a role in their core functions. Young people's role should not be limited to that of bystanders or advisors.

Institutional reform allows youth to participate on a consistent basis and not only in ad hoc or project-based activities. Organisations at every level have felt the pressure to change their structure at some time; adapting government structures to facilitate the participation of youth should be seen as part of the progress of their transformation over time. Government ministries can appoint a focal point who is consistently accessible to youth organisations;

D. Creating national youth parliaments and local youth councils as mechanisms to include youth in the decision-making process. These must be recognised and permanent statutory bodies that guide the development of policies by serving as a resource for civil servants and legislators, as well as major channels for the cooperation and exchange of information with national governments. Networks of local youth councils can foster exchange between different regions.

E. Including youth representatives in national delegations to the General Assembly and other relevant United Nations meetings. Youth delegates enrich the debate and policy dialogue and strengthen existing channels of communication and cooperation between governments and young people. An open and transparent selection process should target a diverse array of youth organisations and include youth in the decision-making process itself;

F. Promoting the accessibility of elected officials to youth. Elected leaders should be encouraged to keep “office hours”, through an established minimum per month, designated specifically for an exchange with youth representatives and youth organisations. Young people may hear the leader’s proposals and hear feedback and offer avenues for follow-up to keep lines of communication open. As part of this effort, leaders should also participate in interviews with youth media;

G. Facilitating the input of youth in the national development planning process. National development plans such as the current Medium-Term National Development Policy Framework: Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda – 2010 to 2013 have to be

owned by all relevant stakeholders within the country, including youth. Being better informed by the views and ideas of poor youth can lead to a more integrated approach based on local, regional and national assessments of the specific challenges lived by poor youth;

H. Providing technical and financial support to build the institutional capacity of youth organisations. This should include instituting measures to professionalise youth work and introducing relevant training programmes in higher education and other such training institutions for that purpose; and

I. Instituting volunteer policy and programmes for youth voluntarism at local, national, regional and international levels as an important form of youth participation in development.

MEDIA AND ICT

There is no doubt that young people are trailblazers when it comes to Information and Communication Technology (ICT). We learn and adapt quickly, and we are always hungry for information. With us at the forefront as users and providers, we have the ability to use traditional and new media to transform people and communities. There is also a clear role for media and ICT in achieving national youth priorities such as education, employment, and the engagement of young people in society. However, while media and ICT play a significant role in youth culture and has become a significant driver of development, their promise remains out of reach for many of us young people in Ghana. Addressing disparities in access is therefore the most pressing issue today, especially inequalities in access that exist between urban and rural youth, and between young women and men.

Actions

1. Use ICT to enhance education and employment for youth by:

A. Facilitating the introduction of Information Technology (IT) systems into all levels of education, including primary and

secondary schools, universities, polytechnics and teacher training colleges. The Ministry of Education should improve ICT integration into curriculum development and teacher training. As with 'Schoolnet' programmes in other countries, ICT should not simply be presented as a new subject, but mainstreamed so that youth can conduct research to embrace the amount of information available and transform it into knowledge. Professional development of staff should complement the physical integration of IT in schools; workshops should focus on using the Internet to enhance teaching and preparing youth for the job market;

B. Targeting skill building and job training in the technology sector. Such policies automatically target youth by focusing on a sector that employs a good percentage of young people and has a profound linkage to the growth of other sectors creating new jobs where youth are viewed as desirable employees;

C. Integrating new technologies beyond urban centres to mitigate feelings of rural social and economic isolation among youth. In remote areas, there may not be sufficient market incentives to establish the connectivity of rural youth; thus, an extra investment by government and development partners is needed so that wireless technology can greatly improve upon the communications infrastructure. The Internet can also be used to incorporate distance and e-learning so rural youth have access to educational and vocational training. Technology can also import libraries to classrooms that do not have access to books, thereby decreasing urban-rural gaps in the quality of education;

D. Providing opportunities and training in e-commerce to enhance the growth of youth-owned and operated businesses. E-commerce can open up livelihood opportunities for young people and provide them with markets for their goods and services that they would not otherwise have. Without relocating, young entrepreneurs as well as independent artisans can reach information, suppliers, and more customers;

E. Improving the educational prospects of

low-income students by providing them and their families with home computers. The younger generation has been busy teaching the old to use emerging technologies; computers in the home can enhance this trend of inter-generational learning. For students without proficiency with computers, youth and their parents may be invited to the school for training programmes that can increase parental involvement in their children's education, help students become more engaged in their own learning, and use computers in the home; and

F. Ensuring that young women and young people with disabilities have equal access to ICT training. If these groups have the skills to access ICT, they are less likely to suffer further social exclusion. As female youth are often steered away from technical sectors in choosing career paths, the Ministries of Employment and Education should develop initiatives to inform female youth about opportunities in the field of ICT. Programmes that target traditionally disadvantaged groups may be part of a larger effort for social inclusion in development. ICT literacy should be seen as part of the effort to foster a contemporary definition of citizenship.

2. Facilitate the contribution of ICT to youth participation in society by:

A. Using ICT to advance youth participation in government and decision-making through encouraging all elected members of parliament and ministries to maintain information on their accessibility to youth on the World Wide Web. Public information improves the quality of leadership and governance and enhances public trust so that the needs and aspirations of all segments of society, particularly those of young people, are met. This is known as 'e-government' which works to make local and national government and the provision of services more efficient and more accountable in delivering better outcomes for people. It also can provide a modality for two-way communications or 'internet discussions' between authorities and youth. This objective can only be a reality if digital content is consistently developed and updated;

B. Providing accurate and up-to-date

information on government resources and programmes for youth on the internet. Many youth regard the internet as the primary source for information on anything from leisure activities to health. For some, it is the first place they look when they want to access reliable information. It is also the first place they post information and communicate when seeking to raise awareness about issues important to them. Accurate information on issues important to youth, such as health and employment, can have the effect of increasing the use of available services; and

C. Giving youth a prominent role in any national ICT task forces or inter-ministerial bodies that develop ICT national strategies. On the international level, youth were one of the most organised and successful stakeholder groups in the World Summit for the Information Society; at the national level they should have a role in drafting national strategies to design and incorporate ICT into education and job training.

3. Promote the development of youth media by:

A. Providing incentives for television and radio stations to broadcast youth-produced programming a set number of hours per week. New technologies can be harnessed as an outlet for youth expression and as a way for youth to influence other youth. When young people themselves are involved in the production of journals, or radio and television programmes, they are often more accessible to their peers and more user-friendly;

B. Encouraging the media to disseminate information that will be of economic, political, social and cultural benefit to youth (e.g. constructive discussions, news items, educative movies, history, etc.);

C. Creating social media channels for the dissemination of information to young people and the creation of various youth related online platforms and programmes to enable the youth to be involved in national development;

D. Promulgate the Right to Information law and ensure its implementation to the fullest;

E. Supporting the setting-up and resourcing of community radio stations across the country. These become localised channels for discussing and addressing youth and community issues which for-profit radio stations may not address; and

F. Empowering the appropriate agencies to monitor all media channels including television, radio and social media with a view to restricting access to programmes that do not promote positive values among youth.

ENVIRONMENT

Every segment of society is responsible for maintaining the environmental integrity of the community. But as young people, we have a special interest in maintaining a healthy environment because we will be the ones to inherit it. The connection between our health and the environment is clear. Access to clean water, sanitation, the right to housing in safe areas that are not contaminated by garbage dumps and factories, and access to basic cooking fuel and energy sources have an impact on our lives. Therefore, promoting sustainable development and protecting the environment is of high priority to our generation.

Actions

1. Support and mobilise youth for environmental protection and sustainability by:

A. Continuing to mainstream environmental education into school curricula. To achieve visible gains from environmental education, youth must have a role in this mainstreaming process. Integrating environmental education into school curricula, and offering training programmes to teachers on the environmental aspects of their subject-matter may enable them to educate youth concerning environmentally-friendly behaviour;

B. Initiating programmes to promote youth participation in tree planting, forestry, combating desert creep, waste reduction, eco-tourism, recycling and other sound environmental practices. The participation of young people and their organisations in such

programmes can provide good leadership training and encourage awareness and action. Waste management programmes and eco-tourism in particular may also represent potential income-generating activities;

C. Increasing production and encourage widespread dissemination of information materials illustrating the global dimensions of environmental protection, its origins and the interrelated effects of environmental degradation. Part of this awareness raising effort should include the creation of an awards programme to recognise young people for projects which demonstrate their commitment to the environment; and

D. Prioritising support for local projects that improve water availability and build capacity at the community level. The costs of inadequate access to water and basic sanitation are steep, especially for girls and young women. Lack of adequate access to water affects their privacy, dignity, health and hygiene and represents an economic burden for the country as a whole. The time and energy of young women and girls devoted to carrying water long distances translates into lost opportunities for education or paid work.

2. Enhance the role of youth in designing good environmental policies by:

A. Establishing a taskforce that includes youth and youth-led organisations to develop educational and awareness programmes specifically targeted to the youth population on critical environmental issues. Such a taskforce should use formal and non-formal education methods to reach a broad audience. National and local media, non-governmental organisations, businesses and other organisations should assist in these taskforces;

B. Appointing a youth focal point or advisory committee in the Ministry of Environment, Science & Technology. Such a role would fill the liaison gap by connecting young people and their organisations to local and central government initiatives on the environment; and

C. Supporting the spread of environmentally

sound technologies in the country, and training youth in making use of those technologies in protecting the environment and conserving resources. These initiatives require cooperation among different areas of government and partnership with the private sector as well as the sharing of good practices and successful initiatives.

LEISURE

As young people, leisure time gives us the chance to define and understand our identity, explore our culture and learn more about the world around us. Where our leisure needs are not met, there is a greater chance that we may engage in high-risk activity that threatens our wellbeing. High levels of youth unemployment and the rising costs of higher education highlight the need for leisure time activities to be viewed in the context of the personal growth and the development of our communities. Leisure time contributes to the development of human and social capital as time to expand skills sets and social networks. Our leisure needs must be considered in urban and rural development planning so that a range of constructive voluntary opportunities are built into their landscape. Due to misperceptions of the role of leisure in our lives, initiatives and spaces for leisure are often the first to get cut when budgets get tight. However, the elimination or under-funding of extracurricular or recreational programmes can endanger our physical, emotional and social wellbeing.

Actions

Support leisure-time activities for youth by:

A Facilitating the development of partnerships between community/government and youth groups so youth can engage in volunteer work and serve their community. The commitment and contribution of youth who spend their unstructured time volunteering often goes unpraised. Recognising the efforts of youth can further promote and support this constructive and collaborative use of their time. Local governments should also provide vouchers for

public transportation for youth to travel to sites where they are volunteering their time;

B. Integrating areas for sports, recreation, and cycling into urban and suburban development plans. Sports contribute not only to one's health and a positive self-image, but can also serve as a platform for inclusion. Adults should be encouraged to coach youth leagues and serve as role models in sportsmanship;

C. Facilitating access to public buildings such as schools or theatres for youth to hold meetings, pursue creative interests and carry on leisure-time activities. The provision of space is particularly important for areas with high population density where youth may be living in close quarters. Facilities for youth should also be maintained to sustain the activities of youth over time;

D. Developing leisure activities and sports teams for youth with disabilities. Youth with disabilities need to access opportunities to develop their physical fitness and gain self-

confidence. Disabled youth may require specialised transportation to facilitate their participation in sports and the arts; and

E. Providing adequate funding to educational institutions for the establishment and expansion of leisure-time activities like games, sport and recreational activities as well as the creation of sports and recreation facilities in the various schools;

F. Engaging young people and youth organisations to understand the nexus between contemporary youth culture and traditional Ghanaian culture, and enabling them to express this fusion through drama, art, writing, music and other cultural and artistic forms;

G. Creating a special fund to be administered by an umbrella of youth organisations to finance local cultural and enrichment activities for youth, including sports, art and cultural programmes open to all.

Part III

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT



COLLABORATION AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

Only with the commitment of all stakeholders will the Ghana Youth Manifesto be more than a statement of intent. Political leadership is intrinsic to the process of marshalling support for partnerships that work to fulfil the vision of the Manifesto. While the actions proposed in Part II of this Manifesto should be led by government, they are designed to engage all stakeholders. Sustained government involvement in youth development should complement the capacity of other actors, such as civil society organisations involved in youth programmes, to avoid duplication, fragmented actions or initiatives with insufficient capital or human resources.

Inclusive policy planning to implement the Ghana Youth Manifesto requires more than just consultation with young people and other relevant stakeholders. Government should consider reforming structures and institutions so that policymakers can maintain communication with national and local actors and establish the means to engage communities and listen to their views. When looking at institutional reform, it is necessary to refrain from simply appending youth onto existing efforts; profound change for youth is dependent on altering organisational frameworks.

The following principal partners have a role in the actions and recommendations discussed in Part II:

PARLIAMENTARIANS

Parliamentarians and other elected officials are leaders in society. They have the mandate, moral obligation and public trust to act in the interests of their constituents and they bear a special responsibility to set examples that spur others into action, especially young people. They enact laws, mediate conflicting interests and engage in debate to establish priorities. Legislative control over national resources and the power to set agendas and determine budgets needed to secure progress underscore the imperative of political leadership.

Parliamentarians therefore have a vital role to play in providing a supportive national framework to encourage and enable both central and local authorities to efficiently administer policies that are

responsive to the challenges and aspirations of youth.

GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES

Government ministries and agencies carry the ultimate responsibility for administering policies and programmes that affect youth. To do this, they must develop tools to support data collection, opinion polls and other reporting systems on youth and the fulfilment of their rights and opportunities. Their research capacity and ability to conduct needs assessments and to monitor and evaluate the impact of existing legislation and policies are essential to effective programmes. It is also important for government ministries and agencies to have the structures in place to translate a national youth policy to the local and regional levels. This can be achieved through the structures of the proposed Ministry of Children and Youth Affairs.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local governments are closest to the neighbourhoods and communities in which their citizens live and are often the most visible to youth. They therefore have an indispensable role in fostering the inclusion of young people into society.

Local governments are immediately responsible for upholding the rights of youth, ensuring community cohesion, a healthy environment, a good quality of life, and sustaining social and economic development. Local governments must provide political leadership and a vision for the future for both individuals and civil society organisations. They need to encourage the participation of youth not just in municipal policy making but also at the family, school and local community levels.

MEDIA

Media help us to understand and interpret the world, communicate with one another, and participate in public life. Consistent with freedom of expression, the media should ensure widespread dissemination of information on issues that affect youth with the aim of raising their awareness. For

example, media campaigns have shown striking successes in providing young people with vital HIV prevention information. Day-to-day contact with accurate and independent reporting is part of the informal education of young people.

National and community media is crucial to the infrastructure of public life and, when shaped by factual information and high quality research, truly represents the public interest. Often, issues important to youth are absent from reporting even though media continue to target youth in terms of advertising and entertainment. New media such as the news outlets on the Internet have, however, proved to be powerful in increasing the visibility of youth in policy making, representing diverse viewpoints, facilitating youth connectivity and creating innovative youth-owned communications. As youth are not passive consumers of news, the media enhance the ability of youth to enter a national discussion and be active members of their society.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society comprises the multitude of associations around which society voluntarily organises itself. Independent from the State, it represents a wide range of interests and ties, from ethnicity and religion to shared professional, developmental and leisure pursuits, and to issues such as environmental protection and human rights.

Either membership-based or formed to produce a public benefit, civil society includes women's groups, business associations, elders, religious leaders, intellectuals, community associations, cooperatives, NGOs and, of course, youth organisations - associations set up and managed by individuals in the youth age bracket - which make up a vital part of civil society. Youth organisations themselves engage in a unique dialogue where they learn from their peers, share information, and act collectively.

Civil society can be a force for scrutiny of government or the market, can mitigate conflict, and inspire policies for change with the power to mobilise and inform. Existing separately from organs of the government, military, or the private sector, civil society plays

an indispensable role in developing an overall system enabling mechanisms to fulfil the objectives of the Ghana Youth Manifesto. The three general functions of civil society maybe summed up as: articulating citizens' interests and demands, defending citizens' rights, and directly providing goods and services.

PRIVATE SECTOR

Youth are an integral part of the private sector either as consumers, employees of large cooperatives, corporations or small family-owned businesses, or as entrepreneurs and innovators themselves. With its own set of resources and expertise, an innovative private sector develops distribution links, provides needed products and services, creates employment and stimulates income growth; it can also integrate young people into the labour market, develop infrastructure and bring information technology to young people. The private sector, with its interest in a healthy, well-educated population of consumers and workers living in a stable society, should engage in partnerships that touch on every area of the Youth Manifesto to support national development.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The international community refers to the nations of the world and their inter-governmental associations. While it plays multiple roles in the lives of youth, an essential role for the international community is cooperation in promoting conditions conducive to the implementation of the Ghana Youth Manifesto, including through assisting the government to translate the recommended actions into specific plans, targets and law. The international community should also provide a platform for exchange of good practices, information sharing and building a community of practice.

Specialised agencies of the United Nations, bilateral and multilateral institutions, and other international donors are encouraged to promote the Ghana Youth Manifesto through the incorporation of its goals into their plans, to undertake comprehensive reviews of the progress achieved and obstacles encountered, and to identify options for further action.?

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Parents and guardians (including extended family) play many roles in young people's social networks. Despite many on-going changes in the structure of families as an institution, parents remain vital for the socialisation of children. Parents are also educators and can fulfil this role by openly discussing issues and concerns with their children.

The dialogue they conduct with their children should be a two-way street where youth feel comfortable to speak with their parents without fear. Parents also have the power to direct the behaviour, capacities and intellectual and emotional character of their children. The investment of parents and guardians in youth, in terms of time and resources spent on their general care, is not limited to early childhood and their influence should not be underestimated; despite the independence of youth, they often inherit their parents' perceptions of the world.

Parents transfer physical assets (such as capital or a home) as well as intangible qualities, such as their values, to their offspring. Ideally, they are engaged in the process of the human development of youth throughout their lifetimes. When their children are youth, parents can serve as educators and can reinforce messages their children learn in the classroom by openly speaking about health concerns, relationships and social behaviour. When young people may be at risk, parents and guardians should know when and how to intervene.

YOUTH

Youth participation is crucial to realising the objectives of the Ghana Youth Manifesto and should be seen as a process through which young people influence and share control over the decisions, plans and resources that affect them. Involving young people in this process is empowering to them though it is up to the other stakeholders, who often act as gatekeepers in policy formation, to involve youth and youth organisations in the interventions that affect their lives.

Empowering young people means allowing them to make informed decisions that affect their lives. Empowerment is more than the opportunity to influence policy; it is a process of capacity building that includes and often requires access to education, employment, health, and resources. If youth are encouraged and given the tools to fully participate in society, they will become more knowledgeable about their rights, more responsible citizens, and often more self-confident. Young people should be given the platform to take an active role in addressing key questions, such as what capacity deficiencies exist that are preventing effective local development and good governance. Enhancing opportunities for youth participation builds their skills and knowledge base and also serves to better cultivate policies that affect their lives.

APPENDIX A:

ABOUT THE 'VOICES OF YOUTH' PROJECT

Given rising concerns over insufficient attention to critical issues affecting youth in Ghana and the lack of structures for mainstreaming youth into national policy-making, YES-Ghana and its partners are providing an opportunity for youth to articulate their concerns and to make policy input through the 'Voices of Youth' project.

The overall development objective is to increase attention and investment on critical youth issues in Ghana's development agenda. More specifically, the project seeks increased youth participation in public policy decision-making in the country. These are being achieved through the development of a Ghana Youth Manifesto - a comprehensive compilation of youth policy options and proposals to place youth issues and perspectives at the heart of Ghana's 2012 elections agenda. The 'Ghana Youth Manifesto' is developed by youth themselves through broad consultation with and participation of other stakeholders under the umbrella of a 'Voices of Youth Coalition' to be established.

Other major activities of the project include: youth dialogue with presidential and parliamentary candidates; youth conference on oil and gas; national 'Voices of Youth' conference; national youth policy dialogue; high level meeting on financing youth development in Ghana; among others. Members of the Voices of Youth Coalition benefit from capacity building training and action in youth advocacy and active citizenship, participatory community radio and social media production, peace-building and conflict prevention, as well as listing in a new directory for youth development.

The project thus results in the creation of a long-term mechanism to draw attention to the concerns of youth, and ultimately make Ghana a more inclusive society, where otherwise marginalised youth are seen and heard in public policy discourse, thereby reducing the social, economic and political risks of exclusion.

The Voices of Youth project started in January 2012 and is expected to have an initial time line of two years. It is an initiative of YES-Ghana in partnership with the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), Crossing Borders and the United Nations Development Programme. Aside from youth groups and associations from all ten regions of Ghana constituting the Voices of Youth Coalition, the project benefits from active engagement with other major stakeholders, including United Nations and international agencies, civil society, the National Youth Authority, youth wings of the main political parties in Ghana, religious and traditional institutions, media organisations, academic and research institutions, and private sector companies.

APPENDIX C:

MEMBERS OF THE WRITING AND COORDINATION TASKFORCE

No.	Name	Organisation
1	Katsepor Amos	Curious Minds
2	Emmanuel Marfo	Global Alliance for Development Foundation
3	Emmanuel Sosu	Ex-Aid Club
4	Adatuu Roland	Youth Link Ghana
5	Christian Kemba Larry	Soul Aid Ghana
6	Abass Hamza	HACEP-Ghana
7	Kassim Awudu	Youth for Development
8	Peter Kwasi Kodjie	Nation Union of Ghana Students (NUGS)
9	Evans Agyekum	Teacher Trainees Association of Ghana (TTAG)
10	Alfred G. Adjabeng	Reach Out to Future Leaders Movement
11	George Atta Quainoo	Saltpond CIC ICT Club
12	Laud K. Addo	University Students Association of Ghana (USAG)
13	Chibeze Ezekiel	Strategic Youth Network for Development
14	Marfo Mickson Somuah	Junior Achievement Ghana
15	Lorenda Parker	Volunteer

APPENDIX D:

TECHNICAL REVIEW AND ADVISORY TEAM

No.	Name	Organisation/Institution
1	Anne Doe	Disability Option Ghana
2	Apostle S.Y. Antwi	Ghana Pentecostal & Charismatic Council
3	Beatrice Mahmood	Ghana Federation of the Disabled
4	David Appiah	UNDP
5	Doris A. Ndebugu	Ghana Federation of the Disabled
6	Dr. Jerome Rudolf Awortwe-Abban	Management Development & Productivity Institute (MDPI)
7	Edem Akakpo	Disability Option Ghana
8	Fred Ayifli	Kumasi Institute of Technology and Environment (KITE)
9	George Mireku Duker	Civil Society Platform for Oil & Gas/ISODEC
10	Isaac Ampomah	Concern Health Education Project
11	Joseph Tuffour	YES-Ghana
12	Nii Saul Mettle	Artegraphics
13	Nana Osei Bonsu	Private Enterprise Foundation
14	Nene Atsure Benta III	Greater Accra Regional House Of Chiefs
15	Patrick Ayisi	Ghana Pentecostal & Charismatic Council
16	Rita Kyerema Kusi	Ghana Federation of the Disabled
17	Stephen Mensah Etsibah	National Youth Authority
18	Victor Appeah	Ghana Television
19	Wilna Quarmyne	Ghana Community Radio Network

APPENDIX E:

PEER REVIEWERS

No.	Name	Organisation
1	Aagelle Paschaline	Piina Youth in Development
2	Abdulai Mohammed	HACEP-Ghana
3	Ackom-Damtey Eugene	Nation Union of Ghana Students (NUGS)
4	Agyei-Okyere Elvis	Global Alliance Development Foundation
5	Akourkor Rosina Teye	Dolly Foundation
6	Andrews K. Gyan	Nation Union of Ghana Students (NUGS)
7	Asiedu Marvin	Teacher Trainees Association of Ghana (TTAG)
8	Belinda Teye	Radio Ada
9	Bertha Yeboah	Global Alliance Development Foundation
10	Bervine Nana Safo	Curious Minds
11	Daniel Nii Acquaye	Radio Emashie
12	Edem Faith Kanyagui	Reach Out to Future Leaders Movement
13	Edem Tornigah	Radio Tongu
14	Fauziya Mukaila	Global Alliance for Development Foundation
15	Florence Koomson	Youth Empowerment for Life (Y.E.F.L.)
16	Fosu Benewah Sarah	Teacher Trainees Association of Ghana (TTAG)
17	Isaac Ampomah	Concern Health Education Project (C.H.E.P.)
18	Joshua Kuqblenu	Radio Ada
19	Kojo Oppong	Radio Peace
20	Martin Limann	Youth Alliance and Awareness Network (YAAN)
21	Mary N.Ofosua Danquah	Nation Union of Ghana Students (NUGS)
22	Masak Diana	HACEP-Ghana
23	Moses Nganwani	Savannah Young Farmers Network (SYFN)
24	Naa Odey Aryeetey	Radio Emashie
25	Ramatu Dauda	HACEP-Ghana
26	Rebecca Naa Adjorkor Palm	Rural and Community Development Association
27	Rejoice Gamor	Radio Tongu
28	Rev. Dr. Joseph Kayos Kwao	Dolly Foundation
29	Salma Nassam	Soul Aid Ghana
30	Sandaw Sophia	University Students Association of Ghana (USAG)
31	Sherifa Awudu	Curious Minds
32	Sylvia Yirenyki	Strategic Youth Network for Development
33	Thompson Hannah	Youth Development Advocate Foundation
34	Vincentia Aguda	Youth Alliance for Development



An initiative of Youth Empowerment Synergy in partnership with Crossing Borders, UNDEF & UNDP.