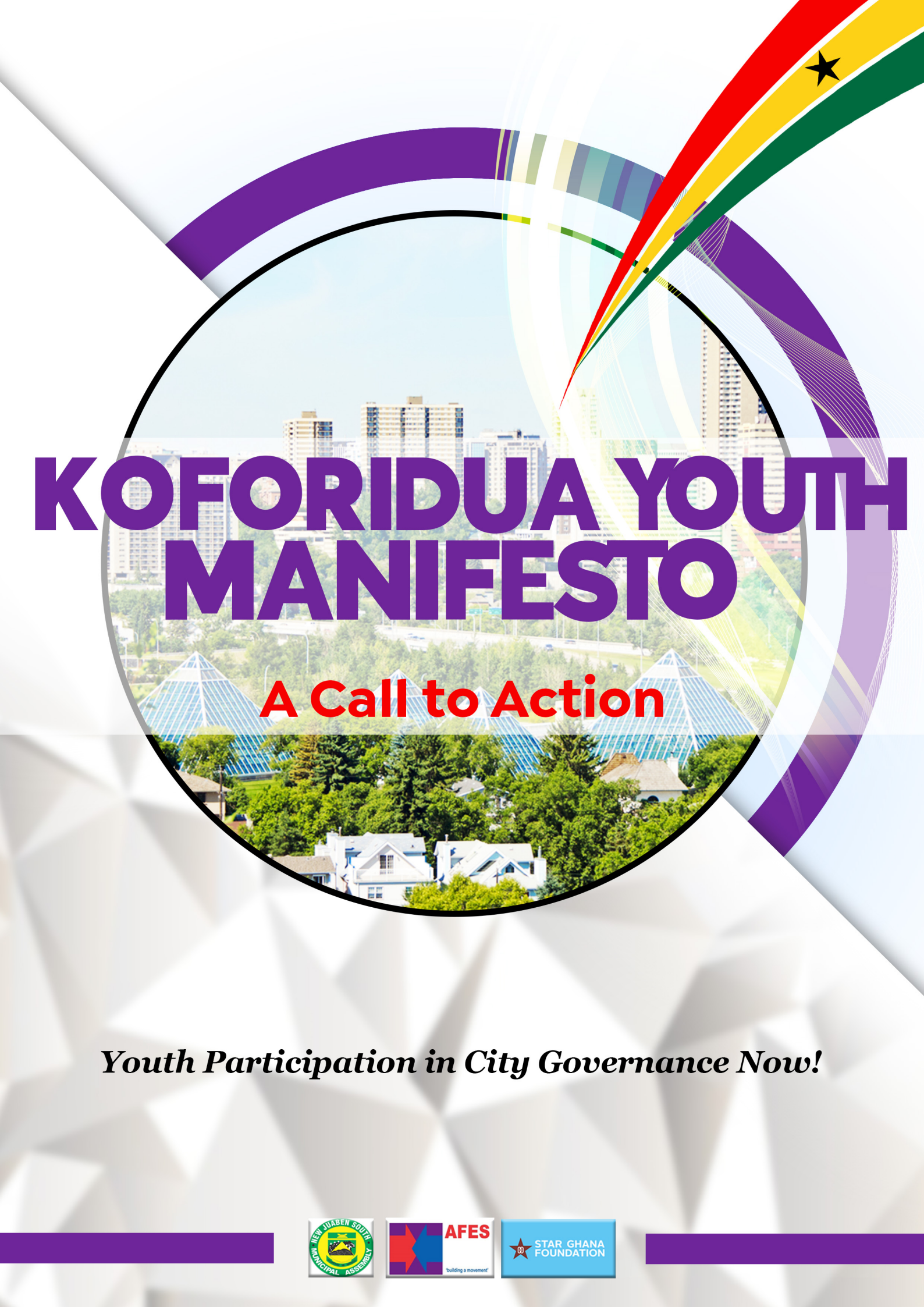




KOFORIDUA YOUTH MANIFESTO

A Call to Action

Youth Participation in City Governance Now!



KOFORIDUA YOUTH MANIFESTO

A call to action for youth participation in city governance

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‘THE MUNICIPALITY WE WANT’

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Acknowledgement

AFES in Collaboration with STAR-Ghana Foundation with funding from Foundation BOTNAR initiated the Koforidua Youth Manifesto project as a vehicle towards the realization of a ‘Municipality where young people are well informed and have capacity to participate actively in their governance processes and influence improved services across all sectors’ of the New Juaben South Municipality through the promulgation and implementation of a Youth Manifesto

As part of processes leading to the development of this Manifesto, over 3638 young people comprising youth groups, civil society organizations and individuals across all 34 electoral areas actively participated. For this reason, we would want to formally express our gratitude for their enthusiastic engagement and participation thus, far.

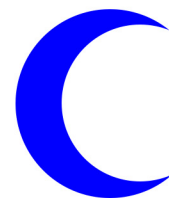
We acknowledge that the New Juaben South Municipal Assembly (NJSMA) was instrumental in giving us all the information we needed when preparing the manifesto.

We also thank the Municipal Directors of National Youth Authority and National Commission for Civic Education. They helped us ensure that we developed a comprehensive youth manifesto by offering advice and technical support.

This manifesto would not have been inclusive without the gracious assistance of the Honorable Assembly Members of NJSMA representing the various electoral areas in organizing their communities to actively engage in our intergenerational consultation sessions. We are also grateful to Koforidua School for the Deaf administration for granting us access to their facilities so that we could mobilize input from the students.

Particular recognition should go to the Writing and Coordination Taskforce for their work in organizing, classifying, and summarizing the thousands of unprocessed submissions they received for the Youth Manifesto as well as for their part in creating and approving the several drafts of the document. We would also want to express our gratitude to our peer and technical reviewers who took time to evaluate and offer editing guidance on the draft manifesto.

We do acknowledge that in developing this manifesto, reference was made to the Ghana Youth Manifesto- 2012, Ghana Women’s’ Manifesto- 2004, Kenya Youth Manifesto- 2018 and the Tanzania Youth Manifesto- 2015, Others include the Ghana National Youth Policy, African Youth Charter, African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) and United Nations World Programme of Action



Foreword

A broad range of topics spanning ten (10) thematic areas, youth challenges and their respective proposed policy alternatives constitute the content of the Koforidua Youth Manifesto. Every issue has its roots in at least one of the thirty-four (34) electoral areas of the Municipality. As such, the concerns outlined in the manifesto are indicative of the goals of the local youth.

Although the Manifesto highlights problems that young people care about, its main purpose is to act as alternative youth policy statement that the municipal authorities can use as a guide when making smart decisions during development planning. Additionally, it aims to support civil society organizations that interact with duty bearers on behalf of the youth by serving as an advocacy tool

The range of topics covered in this manifesto demonstrates young people's willingness and desire to actively participate in orchestrating, overseeing, and assessing municipal development interventions that have an impact on our lives.

In order to ensure a sustainable Municipality, AFES-Ghana, STAR-Ghana and Fondation Botnar through the 'KofKro' project acknowledges that young men and women must actively participate in the development processes of their local communities. To increase possibilities for youth to engage in and gain from the development programs of the New Juaben South Municipal Assembly, young people of the Municipality are empowered to collaborate with local stakeholders.

With growing concerns about youth exclusion from policy decision-making in the Municipality, the "Koforidua Youth Manifesto" project strengthens commitment to bringing attention to and encouraging stakeholders to boost investment on compelling youth issues.

With this, the project partners aspire to create space to enable young people to voice their concerns and contribute policy ideas into the Municipal growth and development agenda. The creation of the manifesto gives birth to a new era of meaningful youth participation through civic technology and direct community engagement. It is the first time that young people in the Municipality have ever collaborated in this kind to offer suggestions and ideas for legislative measures that have an impact on our daily lives.

In order to improve youth inclusion and effective engagement in the governing processes, it is the expectation of 'KofKro' project partners that this Manifesto will assist create and sustain a dynamic civic space in the New Juaben South Municipality.

Preamble

The New Juaben South Municipal Youth Union (NJSMYU) is a district-wide network of seven (7) civil society organizations, youth groups, faith-based organizations, and 3633 individuals, totaling approximately 5000 members. We are young people, both male and female, between the ages of 15 and 35, from all thirty-four (34) electoral areas of the New Juaben South Municipality of the Eastern region of Ghana. We come from different faiths and beliefs, with varying abilities and challenges.

We have developed our capacities for effective engagement in the governance process of the New Juaben South Municipality by actively participating in the "Koforidua Youth Manifesto" project, which was started by the Anchito Foundation for Education & Self-help (AFES-Ghana).

Drawing from various sources such as the Ghanaian Constitution, National Youth Policy, African Youth Charter, African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, and the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth, it is evident that young play a critical role in the socio-economic advancement of any given municipality worldwide.

The Municipality's youth situation is concerning, as the majority of them are marginalized due to disparities in income, unemployment, underemployment, and living in poverty and hunger; in addition, they face inadequate educational systems, limited access to healthcare and modern technology, are not included in the decision-making process for public policy, and are subjected to discrimination and gender-based violence.

Recalling the weak District-Assembly Substructure system that discourages young people from effectively participating in the formulation of local policy and decision-making,

Reiterating the crucial role that youth play in the municipality's social, economic, environmental, and political growth as well as our potential to contribute as leaders both now and in the future,

Realizing that it is our duty as young people to establish ourselves as reliable and strong players in the processes of development in our diverse communities, and cooperating to raise the profile of youth issues in the municipal development agenda by providing tangible alternative policy options,

Recommitting ourselves to the fight for a society that is fair, democratic, responsible, peaceful, and gender-neutral,

Dedicated to maintaining the principles of the rule of law, respect for the rights of all people, integrity, accountability, transparency, and responsibility,

Persuaded that successful advocacy for youth development mainstreaming requires a youth manifesto that offers a shared document for action by all parties involved,

Adopt this manifesto in order to strengthen our will, both individually and collectively, to create a smart and sustainable municipality.

About the “Kofkro” PROJECT



The Action for Youth Development Project (AfYD) also called the “Kofkro” project is being implemented by the STAR-Ghana Foundation with funding from Fondation Botnar. The three-year project will contribute to strengthening an enabling environment for youth inclusion and influence in governance leading to their better access to quality public goods and services in the New Juaben South Municipality.

Overall, the Kofkro project will contribute to a ‘Municipality where young people are informed and have capacity to participate actively in governance and influence improved services across all sectors. It also aims to promote partnership between duty bearers and citizens to ensure that development programming is more meaningful for young people. It will strengthen the capacities of youth led/based organisations to mobilize, represent and engage constructively with duty bearers to sustainably address their needs and priorities in decisions and resources distribution. The project is approached from an inclusion perspective, thereby contributing to reducing inequalities within access to social services for different categories of young people.

The project is currently being implemented with four partners, Anchito Foundation for Education and Self-Help (AFES), Divine Mother and Child (DMAC) Foundation, the Koforidua Youth Parliament (KYP) and Bibia Be Ye Fine (BBF), a youth self-help group and is working closely with the New Juaben South Municipal Assembly and the Eastern regional office of the National Youth Authority.

@2024

Part 1 Introduction



Introducing Koforidua Youth Manifesto with Gratitude

The Koforidua Youth Manifesto – **AN OVERVIEW**

In order to put our issues and perspectives at the center of the 2024 presidential and parliamentary elections in the New Juaben South Constituency, and to serve as the foundation for youth policy programming, the Koforidua Youth Manifesto (KYM) presents an extensive, nonpartisan compilation of youth policy options and proposals.

The Koforidua Youth Manifesto initiative has been implemented as part of the 'KofKro' project. The project started in September 2023 and is expected to end in January 2026. Beyond youth groups, student associations, civil society organizations and individuals from all thirty-four (34) electoral areas of the New Juaben South Municipality constituting 'Koforidua Youth Manifesto Union', the project benefits from active engagement with other major stakeholders, including civil society organizations, National Youth Authority, National Commission for Civic Education, youth wings of major political parties, religious and traditional institutions, media organizations, academic and research institutions, and private sector enterprises.

In the Koforidua Youth Manifesto, we share our opinions, goals, and points of view on a wide range of current issues related to youth development. We do this by taking into account internationally recognized frameworks, including the UN World Programme of Action for Youth African Youth Charter and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

The Koforidua Youth Manifesto is the result of our collaborative effort among youth development players in the New Juaben South Municipality. As a result, a large group of young people from throughout the Municipality own it.

Why Koforidua Youth Manifesto?

The Youth Manifesto is an initiative by young people for young people in the New Juaben South Municipality. It is an intentional and coordinated response to the difficulties that young people in the community face. It also acts as a focal point for young people to unite behind "One Voice" in order to push for increased attention to our problems at all levels.

Furthermore, it is an innovation that seek to put alternative youth development policy ideas on the table for consideration. A more inclusive public policy decision-making process in the New Juaben South Municipality is the ultimate objective.

How was the Koforidua Youth Manifesto developed?

The development of the Koforidua Youth Manifesto involved a seven-month collaborative effort that we young people of New Juaben South Municipality coordinated. We had the active support and participation of key stakeholders, such as members of civil society, student associations, the academic community, relevant government agencies, and the media. The youth manifesto is the result of a concerted effort to develop a large base of support for the advocacy of youth policies.

The "New Juaben South Municipal Youth Union" was established as the umbrella organization that would oversee the coordination of the manifesto development process following a series of discussions with youth organizations in the Municipality.

Following series of capacity building sessions that the Koforidua Youth Manifesto (KYM) project team received from the STAR-Ghana Foundation, two (2) capacity-building workshops were conducted by AFES-Ghana, reaching 100 Youth Advocates across the Municipality. These training sessions' enhanced participants' abilities in youth policy advocacy at the local level as well as youth data collection and documentation.

Twenty (20) youth leaders within the Municipality were chosen through a competitive process to create a writing and coordinating taskforce, which was assisted by AFES-Ghana with secretarial support, to oversee the manifesto's creation from beginning to end. The taskforce created procedures for gathering feedback from youth and other stakeholders, as well as a framework for creating the manifesto format. They also created thematic summaries of the input they received.

Thirty-four (34) youth advocates were assigned, utilizing Google Forms, to conduct door-to-door surveys and gather feedback from youth and other community stakeholders based on the skills they had gained during the workshops. To make sure that young people who are engaged in politics were included in the process, we also contacted the youth wings of some political parties.

As a result, the project team used Google to create and manage a database of all the contributions they had received. With the help of the project staff, the Writing and Coordination Taskforce organized the inputs into ten (10) themes and created thematic area summaries, which led to the creation of the manifesto's initial draft.

Young people reviewed this first draft in-depth using a variety of channels, such as online consultations and review sessions. As a result, a second draft was created and given to a group of specialists and development professionals for technical guidance on how to improve it.

Experts from civil society, academia, research institutions, and private sector players provided technical reviews and advisory comments. The second draft was examined for thematic area coherence, contextual relevance, and adherence to international norms and protocols. A third and final draft of the document was produced after it underwent thorough review and revisions, quality assurance, and coherence testing from the project sponsors before it was ordered for printing.

How is this Youth Manifesto organized?

The goal of this Youth Manifesto is to give young peoples' concerns high priority on the development agenda of New Juaben South Municipality.

The Koforidua Youth Manifesto has three sections.

Part I – Introduction:

This part gives some background on the manifesto's goals and methodology

Part II – Youth challenges and Aspirations

Three overarching themes and ten (10) sub-themes that represent the challenges and aspirations of young people.

Part III- A call to Action

All parties involved in youth development, including the Central Government, the New Juaben South Municipal Assembly, the Central Government, Civil Society, religious bodies, traditional authorities, private sector, donors, international community, media and young people themselves are called to action in this section

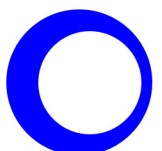
Part II: Youth Challenges and Aspirations

Youth challenges and aspirations are presented under three broad themes: our economy, our wellbeing and our society.



Photo 1: source, Occupy Ghana photo stock

Youth Participation in City Governance Now!

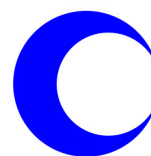


OUR ECONOMY



Picture 3: source, Ghanaweb.com

- ✳ **EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**
- ✳ **YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**
- ✳ **THE YOUTH OF KOFORIDUA IN THE DIASPORA**



EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



Picture 4: source, Modern Ghana.com

As young people, education is a fundamental human right that helps us achieve our potential. The knowledge and skills that enable us to succeed at home, at work, and throughout our lives are shaped by education. While education expands opportunities, it also fosters critical and creative thinking, problem-solving abilities, and the capacity to make informed decisions, self-worth, collaboration, language proficiency, and other qualities. Community organizing and citizen participation are prerequisites for sustainable development, healthy lifestyles, and peaceful coexistence.

All children and young people living in the Municipality must have access to the right to quality education. Children who drop out of school are less likely to learn the skills necessary for the workforce and they are more likely to be exposed to poverty, abuse, promiscuity, and hazardous labour.

Aspiration 1: Improve access to quality basic and secondary education

Proposed policy actions

- A.** Create and execute long-term, legally-based municipal education policies and initiatives that are free of political bias and that are approved by all local parties involved in the education subsector;
- B.** Implement a policy of free and mandatory basic education for all and work toward relieving parents and guardians of the indirect expenses of education;

C. Use every resource at hand to increase the availability, affordability, and accessibility of all secondary education options;

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

- Promote 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
- Emphasize 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 disadvantaged groups to participate and benefit
- Opportunities for mentoring and the exchange of information among peers
- Vocational guidance that does not stereotype young women

Box 1: Youth Skills Development Programmes

C. Create and maintain a municipal scholarship and bursary program to support deserving young people, particularly young girls from low-income families, in their pursuit of higher education.

D. Promote curriculum and content reform in secondary and postsecondary education with the goal of creating a suitable balance between formal education and industry requirements, creating suitable connections between postsecondary institutions and industries, and enabling entrepreneurship training;

E. Expand young people's access to industrial attachments and apprenticeship programs, which enable them to gain first-hand work experience and prospects for advancement.

Aspiration 3: Expand opportunities for non-formal learning

Proposed policy actions:

A. Use youth resource centres to reach out to young people who have left the formal education system and offer them training that will improve their employability and life skills;

B. Ensure that non-formal and informal learning for young people is recognized, validated, and accredited in order to recognise the value of the knowledge and experience gained

D. Promote girl child education and gender equality in the educational system;

E. Keep an eye on the Ghana School Feeding Programme and other social protection initiatives to guarantee consistent attendance and lower dropout rates; and

F. Give special attention to underprivileged youth, such as street children and youth with special needs.

Aspiration 2: Support youth to attain higher education and training

Proposed policy actions:

A. Provide equal access to higher education for all, including through the expansion of distance learning programs;

B. Take advantage of various avenues for education and skill development, including those that are not associated with traditional educational institutions, such as lifelong learning, informal learning, peer education, internships, and national service initiatives;



at these centres and to highlight the significance of integrating formal and non-formal education and learning.

C. Focus on adolescents who have never attended school. It may act as a catalyst for their inclusion in mainstream education and the workforce. For young people who have spent a large portion of their childhood at work or in hazardous environments, this is a second chance.

Aspiration 4: Strengthen interconnection between education and employment

Proposed policy actions:

A. Establish and support local job centers to enhance the distribution of labor market information so that young people are better informed about job advertisements and career paths;

B. Identify and mobilize vocational counselors and skills guidance to offer information on the nature of career paths as well as wages and working conditions;

C. Collaborate with business to determine highly sought-after competencies and establish connections with the academic and/or extracurricular programs. These collaborations can help shape school curricula and resource distribution pathways to better meet the needs of large companies;

D. Make social protection programs more accessible to underprivileged youth so they can deal with unemployment. Since young people are occasionally employed and dismissed at the whim of their employers, expanding and enhancing social protection and offering coverage in the informal economy can help protect them from experiencing swings in their income; and

E. Establish scholarships to enable young women and girls to work and study in fields where women have historically been underrepresented. Young women may require additional encouragement to pursue education in fields where men predominate. Scholarships and mentorship programs will open doors and boost the confidence and ambitions of young women in industries where there aren't enough role models.





Picture 5: source, MasterCard photo stock

It is recognized that compared to older workers, the rate of youth unemployment in the New Juaben South Municipality is significantly higher. The main reasons young people have more difficulty than older workers are because we lack experience, our voice is not as synchronized, and there are not many job chances. Despite the fact that the youth of today are maybe the best educated in history, businesses and traditional financial institutions still see us as a risk.

The issues with unemployment that young people face provide a challenge to national, regional, and local stability in addition to our own personal growth.

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

Proposed policy actions:

In order to significantly affect job growth in the municipality, implement pertinent national youth policy initiatives into a range of sectors, including education, health, and agriculture. The following can be accomplished:

- A.** Evaluate previous policies and programs on youth employment, specifically the number and type of new vacancies for youth per year;
- B.** Develop a comprehensive municipal youth employment policy that incorporates the opinions and goals of numerous ministries, departments, agencies, and private enterprises. and
- C.** Work with youth groups and young people to investigate various policy choices at different stages to shape decision-making on youth policies. This should be done in conjunction with youth and civil society, with an emphasis on activities to increase job possibilities.

Aspiration 2: Promote and expand demand for labour that benefits young people.

Proposed policy actions

A. Evaluate the unfulfilled social demands in order to identify new requirements in society. For instance, the implementation of youth skills training and the support of the formation of associated local business ventures would fill the gaps in unemployment and address difficulties linked to housing, nursing care, AIDS care, and urban revitalization. There will be a big need for qualified nurses and home care in some places due to population aging.

Box 2: What is decent work?

According to the International Labor Organization, decent work is characterized by:

- Respect for rights in the workplace
- Pay that represents a livable 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

Box 1: Youth Skills Development Programmes

B. Make open and transparent investments in public works programs and use surplus labour for projects that could involve infrastructure repair, particularly in the fields of agriculture, health, and education. Long-term labour market improvements can come from public works initiatives that create jobs and improve local infrastructure in ways that would not be possible with private funding. The demand for tools, equipment, and materials from these operations can help boost the local economy. Public works initiatives would be an especially good way for young people, especially women, to get their start in the workforce; and

C. Focus on local economic sectors that can generate jobs, employ a large number of young people, and have a major impact on the expansion of other sectors, like tourism and culture, agriculture, and information and communication technologies.

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

Proposed policy actions:

A. Collaborate with the private and public sectors to expand access to education, training, and soft skills;

B. Appropriately incorporate entrepreneurship, savings and investment, culture, and education into the municipal education system as valuable extracurricular activities;

C. Encourage the creation of incentives for organizations and private sector partners involved in the development of youth microenterprises, and support an integrated approach self-employment, microenterprise, and credit schemes. Create regulations that encourage youth-led associations for youth enterprise, foster partnerships among important stakeholders to oversee these programs,

and find resources for running and duplicating effective microfinance programs;

D. Conduct research and create employment and poverty alleviation programs for marginalized youth, including women and youth at risk;

E. Craft suitable municipal policies to address issues like age and experience requirements that help youth enter the workforce;

F. Create municipal apprenticeship programs to help youth acquire the skills necessary to find employment; and

G. Assist youth in obtaining land so they can establish their social and economic foundation.



Aspiration 4: Expand opportunities and address the challenges of the informal economy.

Proposed policy actions:

- A.** Enure that everyone who works in the informal economy has access to all available legal protections and rights. In order for young people involved in the informal sector to understand their rights and responsibilities, information and training are also essential;
- B.** Offer assistance and information on training to youth engaged in unofficial economic activity. Strict admission standards to training programs frequently act as obstacles that prevent or limit people from historically underrepresented groups and informal workers from enrolling in and benefiting from them. These limitations must to be lifted in order to help young people develop their knowledge and abilities, particularly with regard to new technology;
- C.** Form an interdepartmental committee to facilitate communication and interaction between the employers, informal workers, and the municipal assembly. In order to design a local employment-related guideline, it is required to create a municipal arrangement that invites the input of organizations of informal workers, including trade unions and informal female workers. Since women make up the majority of the informal economy, it is imperative to include young women in all conversations;
- D.** Give particular attention to individuals who are more likely to face discrimination, such as young women or people with disabilities with the aim of promoting social inclusion. Guidelines and the operationalization of a helpdesk to handle complaints and address discriminatory behaviors should be provided by the Municipal Assembly ; and
- E.** Boost the ability of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to assist high-risk populations in the unofficial economy. NGOs, many of which already have experience in these areas, can be partnered with to improve service delivery in the informal economy.



The Youth of Koforidua in the **DIASPORA**



Picture 6: source, Ghanaian times photo stock

The youth of New Juaben South Municipality are diverse and heterogeneous in the diaspora; they include, seasonal migrants, second and third generation migrants who were born abroad, international students and even youth with undocumented status. They are in a unique position to aid in the process of development at home.

Aspiration 1: Creating opportunities for youth in the diaspora to contribute to and benefit from socio-economic development of New Juaben South Municipality.

Proposed policy actions:

- A.** Develop policies to encourage foreign investment and remittances from the Municipality's overseas youth, including setting up favorable conditions to draw them in and help the city flourish;
- B.** Create systems that support and encourage young people from the Municipality who are living abroad to periodically return and support various social and economic initiatives in the municipality
- C.** Create an online network for keeping youth of the Municipality living in the Diaspora aware about new and exciting projects in the Municipality for possible investments;

OUR **WELLBEING**



Picture 7: source, Deposit photo stock



HEALTH CARE DELIVERY



YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS EMPOWERMENT



YOUTH WITH DISABILITY





Picture 8: source, Asaaseradio.com

Aspiration 1: Improve the health and wellbeing of young people.

Proposed policy actions:

- A.** Enhance the National Health Insurance Scheme's affordability, accessibility, and availability to provide young people in the New Juaben South Municipality with high-quality medical care. Primary healthcare should place a special emphasis on sexual and reproductive health, as well as comprehensive sexuality education programs for young people, including those on STDs like HIV/AIDS; syphilis, gonorrhea and so on
- B.** Ensure that young people are fully involved in the development and promotion of health-related programs and policies that empower them to become change agents in their local communities;
- C.** Create and promote youth-friendly health centers within clinics and hospitals throughout the Municipality and raise awareness among young people about the services available to them;
- D.** Provide young people with relevant information and services in a comprehensive way, such as self-care counselling, life skills training, livelihood skills planning, and the creation of a nurturing atmosphere for their successful and healthy growth;
- E.** Give health professionals specialized training so they can interact with young people more effectively and offer services that are youth-friendly. These healthcare professionals ought to behave in the youth's best interests; they ought to be understanding, nonjudgmental, and prepared to treat each patient fairly

G. Offer financial and technical assistance to youth organizations so they can strengthen their institutional capacity to handle public health issues, such as those involving young people with disabilities and those involving young people who get married young;

H. Integrate life skills training and health education into the Municipal health initiatives for youth who are not enrolled in school. Stress the importance of creating and maintaining a healthy environment as well as the knowledge of fundamental hygiene standards;

I. Create local youth health associations, particularly in rural areas, in collaboration with NGOs and the Zonal councils to promote good sanitation and hygiene programmes at all levels

F. Support the training expenses and assign additional medical professionals, such as physicians, nurses, and other health workers, including young people with the necessary qualifications, to treat youth throughout the Municipality. This needs to be connected to the establishment of more healthcare facilities in rural and periurban areas in order to guarantee that those institutions have the necessary supplies and staff with the necessary training;

J. Raise awareness amongst youth and create preventive education programmes for youth on the dangers of drug abuse through partnerships with youth, youth organizations and local communities;

K. Through collaborations with young people, youth organisations, and local communities, build preventative education projects for youth and increase youth understanding of the risks associated with drug addiction;

L. Establish voluntary associations and fortify local relationships with security authorities with the shared objective of eradicating or reducing the supply, demand, and usage of illegal drugs;

M. Provide resources and rehabilitation centres to help young people who abuse drugs so they can get back into the mainstream of society and workforce;

Box 3: What are youth-friendly health services?

- Services that empower girls, boys, young men, 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 youth 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 behaviors.
- 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.

Box 3: Youth-friendly health services

N. Encourage youth organisations to take the lead in creating and executing education and counselling programmes that help drug addicted youth to integrate into their families and communities, support them in adopting healthy lifestyles, and increase public awareness of the harmful effects of drugs;

O. Encourage individuals to take personal responsibility for leading healthy lives and equip them with the information and abilities needed to do so, such as understanding the ethical, legal, and medical ramifications of engaging in risky behaviour;

P. Establish comprehensive programmes aimed at preventing tobacco use, alcohol abuse, and exposure to secondhand smoke.

Q. Take proactive measures, such as targeted preventive measures, to shield children, adolescents, and young adults from maltreatment and exploitation, including trafficking, abduction, rape, and incest, pornography, and commercial sexual exploitation resulting from pornography and prostitution.

YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS EMPOWERMENT

“Our dignity matters”



Picture 9: AFES/PLAN WVL project

New Juaben South Municipality has an estimated population size of 125,256 people of which 57,367 representing 45.8% are within the age bracket of 15-35 years. Out of the total youth population, 31,551 representing 55% are young women and girls according to the 2021 Ghana Population and Housing Census (PHC) report

Young Women and Girls are unique and distinctive individuals with rights and responsibilities like 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 the local economy, our development goals will not be achieved.

Aspiration 1: Promote full participation of girls and young women in the development of New Juaben South Municipality.

Proposed policy actions:

- A.** Implement comprehensive policies, action plans, and initiatives based on equality in order to end discrimination against girls and young women and to guarantee their full enjoyment of human rights and basic freedoms;
- B.** Guarantee that young women and girls can engage in social, educational, economic, political, cultural, and civic life at all levels with boys and young men in an active, equitable, and effective manner;
- C.** Establish programmes that educate young women and girls about their rights and opportunities to participate as equal members of society and to guarantee their full participation in decision-making;
- D.** Give gender transformation and mainstreaming more attention in critical areas like employment, health care, and education;
- E.** Launch mentorship, leadership, and empowerment initiatives to assist young women and girls;
- F.** Establish local girls' clubs and remove all barriers that may hinder all more girls from members. These forums will empower young women and girls by educating them and giving them ongoing support;

G. Ensure that girls and young women have universal and equitable access to, and completion of, elementary education, as well as equal access to secondary and higher education;

H. Encourage girls to pursue an education by giving them access to dignity kits, educational resources, and uniforms, among other things. Parents need to be made aware of how crucial education is for young women and girls;

Box 4: What characteristics of gender transformative programming are helpful for young women and girls empowerment?

- Community-level education on how gender norms influence children throughout their life-course, from birth through to adulthood.
- Promoting girls' and young women's participation in decision-making processes that affect them, by building their knowledge, confidence, skills, and access to and control over resources at the individual level.
- Strengthening school-level governance system in which school children develop interest and involve in the activities of the school management committees such as School performance improvement planning (SPIP), budgeting, implementation, and accountability
- Improving school environment that is gender-responsive by providing separate urinary and latrines for male teachers, female teachers, boys, and girls.
- Enforce code of conducts for teachers and students to address SRGBV, bullying to address socio-cultural factors that entrench gender imbalances both at school and community levels

I. Provide equitable opportunities for vocational, secondary, and postsecondary education completion in order to rectify the current disparity between the sexes in particular occupations. To encourage girls and young women to pursue studies in the sciences, educational practices and materials must be gender sensitive.

J. Increase emphasis on educating young girls through tertiary education by planning awareness campaigns that inform parents and girls about the importance of continuing their education. A special scholarship programme should be established for young women and girls who do very well in school and who are eager to advance;

K. Encourage young women to participate in historically male-dominated fields and to have equal access to all career prospects;

Box 4: Gender Transformative Programming

- L.** Outlaw forced marriages and unions between people under the age of 18, and devise plans to discourage young female marriages by empowering them economically
- M.** Enforce laws protecting girls and young women from sexual abuse, rape, incest, genital mutilation, trafficking, prostitution, sexual exploitation, and all other forms of violence;
- N.** Create action plans that offer legal, medical, and psychological support to girls and young women who have experienced abuse and violence so they can successfully reintegrate into society and the workforce; and
- O.** Give girls and young women the tools they need to report abuse in their communities and prevent gender-based violence by providing them with pertinent training.

YOUTH WITH DISABILITY

'If we are not counted, we do not count, and we remain invisible'



Picture 6: source, Ghanaian times photo stock

A sizeable fraction of 7,830 young people in the New Juaben South Municipality live with one form of disability or another. The prevalent disabilities include physical, visual, hearing and speech impairment, intellect and emotional abnormality. The commonest type of disability however, is physical disability representing 81.8 % according to Ghana 2021 GHPC report

Among the many difficulties they encounter are discrimination and stigmatization, denial of basic human rights to facilities and services, and exclusion from decision-making processes.

All of this makes it more challenging for them to support and profit from the socioeconomic growth of the New Juaben South Municipality. However, when given the right tools, children with disabilities may take the lead in bringing about social change and fighting poverty.

Aspiration 1: Promote full participation of young people with disability in the development of the New Juaben South Municipality.

Proposed policy actions:

- A.** Guarantee equitable and efficient access to school, training, health care, jobs, sports, physical education, and cultural and recreational activities for youth with disabilities. The goal of all parties involved must be to remove any barriers that can prevent young people with mental and physical disabilities from fully integrating into society;
- B.** Give youth with disabilities the tools they need to take care of their fundamental requirements. The Municipal assembly shall, first and foremost, make sure that the 3% of funds from the District Assemblies Common Funds for Persons with Disability are strategically used to further the development of the youth with disabilities
- C.** Eliminate all forms of social exclusion and involve young people with disabilities in all decision-making processes at all levels. To further their interests, mentally and physically challenged children should be well-represented in all spheres and levels of the local economy;
- D.** Provide mentorship to youth with disabilities in order to empower and encourage them to realize their potential for both personal and municipal development, including starting their own businesses;
- E.** Ensure that the youth with disabilities fully participate in all social and economic activities;
- F.** Improve existing information and communication technology-equipped training centres and schools for youth with disabilities to make them disability-friendly and also build new ones where there are no such facilities so as to improve accessibility. This should be part of a larger national initiative to give young people who are physically and cognitively challenged access to a wide range of training and skill-development opportunities as well as appropriate learning and teaching resources.
- G.** Launch and broaden scholarship programmes to enable gifted youth with disabilities to pursue higher education and skill development.
- H.** Ensure that young persons with disabilities receive equal treatment in all work prospects. The employment market in the Municipality should be restructured to accommodate individuals with disabilities and to inspire and drive them to advance in their careers;
- I.** Establish more counselling facilities with professionally qualified counsellors to support the mentally challenged youth while offering essential psychological support. Youth who face both physical and mental issues should receive special attention; and
- J.** Taking into account the Persons with Disability Act, 2006 Act 715, give impaired adolescents the necessary resources and infrastructure to make daily life easier. This might entail giving disabled students free buses to and from school, and supplying the necessary tools, like hand frames, walking aids, white canes, specialized computers, Braille materials, and digital recorders.

OUR SOCIETY



Picture 10: source, shutter stock



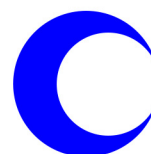
YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING



SPORTS, LEISURE-TIME, ARTS AND CULTURE



YOUTH MEDIA AND INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY



YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

‘...Give us a space, because our voices count’



Picture 11: UNDP in Ghana on X.com

All too frequently, young people are left out of the decision-making processes that have an impact on our lives. A significant number of participants in our municipality’s development planning procedures frequently do not consider us to be indispensable in the creation, execution, assessment, and monitoring of policies. Meanwhile, involvement plays a role in our empowering process. Participating in decision-making processes at the community, school, and home levels will present us with chances to grow individually and as a group.

Our active and complete involvement must be viewed as a means to an aim.

Our demand for an active and effective role in policy decision-making is in line with national and international frameworks such as the United Nations World Programme on Youth, the African Youth Charter, and the National Youth Policy, among others. All of these frameworks acknowledge the critical role that young people play in policy formulation, decision-making, leadership, and freedom of expression—

Box 5: What conditions help provide a good environment for youth to meaningfully participate in city governance?

- Freedom to organize 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.

Box 5: Youth Participation in City/Local Governance

Aspiration 1: Promote full and effective participation of young people in decision-making at all levels of governance processes of New Juaben South Municipality

Proposed policy actions:

- A.** Provide youth with more opportunities to participate in local policy implementation and decision-making processes. Many young people do not believe that politics and their everyday lives are related, but this does not imply that they are not concerned about their own well-being. Giving young people more access to decision-making processes can start a trust-building process. Through this kind of exposure, young people can develop stronger communication skills, a higher sense of self-worth, and a deeper understanding of their local communities. These kinds of possibilities are probably going to encourage local active citizenship;
- B.** Teach young people about their rights and obligations as citizens by providing civic education in schools. The majority of young people want to be actively involved in their communities, but they don't know much about how decisions are made. Youth who have a deeper understanding of the municipal assembly and its subcommittees will be better able to recognize, endorse, and keep an eye on elections involving candidates who advocate for social justice, economic development, and peace;
- C.** Evaluate institutional organizational systems to enable youth participation in their fundamental operations. The function of youth should not be restricted to that of observers or counsellors. Youth can now participate consistently rather than just on an as-needed or project-based basis thanks to institutional transformation. By fortifying the substructure of the municipal assembly, youth will have more room to participate strategically and meaningfully in development planning meetings. If women and young people are fairly represented, the municipal general assembly will be inclusive and representative. Vital decentralized departments, including directorates for health and education, can designate a point of contact for youth organizations that is always available;
- D.** Promote youth participation in decision-making by supporting the Koforidua youth parliament. They need to be acknowledged and actively involved by the decentralized departments and local assembly as a network of young people with the technical know-how to direct the creation of youth policies by acting as a resource for lawmakers and government employees;
- E.** Give young people a voice in groups that oversee municipal growth. Representatives from the youth demographic provide value to policy discussions and expand the current lines of contact and collaboration between youth and city officials. A wide range of youth organisations should be the focus of an open and transparent selection process, and they should be involved in general assembly decision-making;
- F.** Support young people to aspire for and contest in elected positions. It is recommended that elected officials, such as members of parliament, assembly members, and unit committee members from all eight zonal councils, be encouraged to set aside a minimum of one hour each month for "office hours" that are dedicated to meeting with youth representatives and youth organizations. In order to maintain open channels of communication, young people might listen to the leader's suggestions, provide feedback, and provide follow-up opportunities. Leaders should take part in interviews with youth media as part of this endeavor;

- G.** Support young people to participate in the planning process for municipal medium-term development. The framework for the municipal medium-term development policy should be sufficiently consultative to enable young engagement and active participation in the formulation, execution, oversight, and assessment of policies;
- H.** Offer financial and technical assistance to youth organisations in order to strengthen their institutional capabilities. This should involve putting policies in place to professionalize youth work and introducing pertinent training programmes to strengthen the capacities of Koforidua's youth organisations;
- I.** Establishing volunteer policies and programmes for youth volunteerism at the community level to function as a significant avenue for youth involvement in the process of development.

SPORTS, LEISURE-TIME, ARTS AND CULTURE



Picture 12: source, Graphiconline.com

During our free time as young people, we can study our culture, discover more about the world around us, and identify and comprehend who we are. If our requirements for leisure are not satisfied, we are more likely to partake in risky behaviours that could endanger our health.

As time to broaden skill sets and social networks, leisure time helps to the development of human and social capital. Planning for municipal development must take into account our leisure demands in order to incorporate a variety of positive volunteer possibilities into the surrounding environment.

Programmes and areas designated for leisure are frequently the first to be slashed when finances are tight because of misconceptions about the importance of leisure in our lives. On the other hand, our social, mental, and physical health may be jeopardized if recreational initiatives are discontinued or receive inadequate support.

Aspiration 1: Support leisure-time activities for youth

Proposed policy actions:

- A.** Encourage the formation of alliances between youth organisations, the municipal assembly, and communities so that young people can volunteer and support their local communities. The dedication and worth of young people who serve during their free time are frequently overlooked. Acknowledging young people's contributions can help to further encourage and support this productive and cooperative use of their time;
- B.** Establish boundaries, set aside space, and incorporate areas for cycling, sports, and recreation into plans for urban and suburban growth. In addition to improving one's physical and mental well-being, sports can foster inclusivity within the community and reveal hidden skills. Playing sports is a career with significant income potential. It is advisable to support adults coaching youth leagues and acting as positive role models for sportsmanship;
- C.** Make public institutions like theatres, youth centres, and schools accessible to young people so they can meet, explore their creative interests, and engage in recreational activities. It is important to maintain youth facilities so that youth activities are sustained over time;
- D.** Create recreational programmes and sports teams for young people with impairments. Opportunities for youth with disabilities to improve their physical fitness and boost their self-esteem must be made available. Specialized transportation may be necessary for disabled youth to enable them to participate in sports and artistic endeavors.
- E.** Provide more financing to educational institutions so that they can create and maintain recreational programmes like sports, games, and other pastimes; additionally, they should build sports and recreation centres in numerous municipality schools;
- F.** Create opportunities for young people and youth organisations to express this fusion through writing, music, art, theatre, and other cultural and creative programmes by helping them to comprehend the connection between modern youth culture and traditional Ghanaian culture;

YOUTH MEDIA AND ICT



Picture 12: source, MasterCard foundation photo stock

Young people are information-hungry and eager to pick things up. We can use both traditional and new media to affect individuals and communities since we are at the forefront as information consumers, providers, and users. In order to achieve municipal youth priorities in the areas of decision-making, employment, and education, media and ICT play a significant role. Though media and ICT have become important development drivers and play a major role in youth culture, many of us young people in the New Juaben South Municipality still lack access to them.

The most urgent issue of our day is thus to address access gaps (both in terms of reach and cost), particularly those that exist between young people in urban and rural areas as well as between young women and men, including those with disabilities.

Aspiration 1: Improve access and use of ICT to enhance education and employment for youth in New Juaben South Municipality.

Proposed policy actions:

- A.** Encourage the integration of information and communications technology (ICT) systems into all educational settings, such as non-formal education, universities, polytechnics, and teacher training institutes, as well as primary and secondary schools. All educational levels should have better ICT integration, according to the Municipal Education stakeholders. ICT should not only be introduced as a new subject but rather integrated across the whole educational framework, much like "Schoolnet" schemes in other nations, allowing young people to conduct research and embrace the wealth of information available on the internet and turn it into knowledge. The physical integration of ICT in schools should be complemented by professional development for staff and trainers; workshops should centre on enhancing teaching with the Internet and preparing young people for the workforce.

"By linking schools to the Internet, creating links between students, teachers, and schools, sharing information and resources, and facilitating e-learning in online, networked environments, schoolnets foster the development of knowledge societies" -UNESCO Schoolnet toolbox

- B.** Focus on enhancing skills and providing employment training in the technology industry. By concentrating on an industry that employs a sizable proportion of youth and has a strong connection to the expansion of other industries, these programmes inadvertently target youth by generating new positions where children are seen as desirable employees;
- C.** Include modern technology outside of cities to lessen young people's sense of social and economic isolation in rural areas. In remote regions, there might not be enough market incentives to get rural youth connected. Therefore, additional funding from the government and development partners is required so that wireless technology can significantly enhance the communications infrastructure. In order to provide youngsters in marginalized communities with access to education and career training, the internet can also be used to facilitate distance and e-learning. Additionally, technology may bring libraries into classrooms without access to print materials, reducing inequalities in educational quality and access between urban and rural areas;
- D.** Offer e-commerce training and chances to support the expansion of firms run and owned by young people. E-commerce has the potential to give young people new opportunities for employment and markets for their products and services.
- E.** Provide home computers to underprivileged youth and their families to enhance their educational opportunities. Computers in homes can support the intergenerational learning trend that the younger generation has been actively promoting among the elderly.

Students who are not proficient in using computers may be welcomed to the school for training sessions that might help them utilize computers at home, become more interested in their own learning, and improve parental involvement in their kids' education;

- F.** Ensure that access to ICT training is equal for young women and young people with disabilities. These populations are less likely to experience further social isolation if they possess the ICT skills necessary to access it. The Ministries of Employment and Education should create programmes to educate young women about opportunities in the field of information and communication technology (ICT), since female students are frequently discouraged from pursuing careers in technical fields. Programmes aimed at historically marginalized populations could be a component of a greater initiative for social inclusion in youth development. ICT literacy ought to be viewed as a component of the endeavor to promote a modern interpretation of citizenship.

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

Proposed policy actions:

- A.** Encourage members of parliament and assembly to establish and maintain information platforms that enable access and interaction between them and their constituents in order to use ICT to increase youth engagement in city governance and decision-making. Public knowledge raises public trust, strengthens leadership, and advances governance, all of which help to meet the needs and ambitions of all societal segments—young people in particular. This is referred to as "e-government," which aims to improve the efficiency and accountability of municipal governance and service delivery to benefit citizens. It can also give authorities and young people a way to communicate in both directions or over the Internet. The achievement of this goal depends on the regular creation and updating of digital content.
- B.** Publish precise and current information on official youth resources and programmes on the internet. A lot of young people believe that the internet is the best place to get information about anything from health to recreational activities. Some people find it to be a trustworthy source of information when they're looking for trustworthy information. It is also the first platform people use for communication and information posting when trying to spread awareness of causes close to their hearts. Correct information on matters pertaining to youth, such jobs and health, can result in more people using the services that are offered; and
- C.** A strong role for youth should be given in any national ICT task groups or interministerial committees that create national ICT strategies. The youth should be included in developing national policies to design and integrate ICT into education and job training, since they were among the most successful and well-organized stakeholder groups at the World Summit for the Information Society on an international level.

Aspiration 3: Promote development of youth media.

Proposed policy action:

- A.** Give radio and TV companies incentives to air youngster-oriented shows, and set aside a certain amount of airtime each week for kid programming. Such initiatives must also strengthen young people's capacities and enable their participation in creating the program's content. Youth can use new technology as a platform for expression and as a means of influencing other youth. Young people are frequently

more approachable and user-friendly when they are actively participating in the creation of journals, radio shows, or television shows;

- B.** Promote the media's dissemination of information that will benefit youth in the areas of economics, politics, society, and culture (e.g., positive dialogues, news stories, educational films, historical accounts, etc.);
- C.** Establish social media platforms and programmes that connect youth to the nation's development;
- D.** Support the Right to Information law and see to it that it is fully implemented;
- E.** Take another look at the community radio concept and launch more stations throughout all of the districts. These turn into regional forums for talking about and resolving issues pertaining to children and the community that may not be covered by for-profit radio stations; and
- F.** Take a second look at the idea of community radio and start more stations in each district. These turn into regional forums for talking about and resolving issues pertaining to children and the community that may not be covered by for-profit radio stations; and
- G.** Give the relevant organisations the authority to keep an eye on all media platforms, such as radio, television, and social media, and to impose restrictions on the availability of shows that don't instill good moral principles in young people.

WATER, SANITATION, HYGIENE AND ENVIRONMENT



Picture 14: source, *Mordernghana.com*

Being the next generation of leaders, young people have a particular stake in keeping the environment clean for a better future. As such, we must be prepared to support all initiatives aimed at preserving the environment. There is no doubt that the environment has an impact on our health. Our lives are impacted by having access to clean water, sanitary facilities, safe housing free from industrial and waste pollution, and basic cooking fuel and energy sources. For this reason, encouraging sustainable development and preserving the environment are top priorities for our generation.

Aspiration 1: Support and mobilize youth for water, sanitation, hygiene and environmental protection and sustainability.

Proposed policy actions:

- A.** Keep incorporating environmental education, sanitation, hygiene, and water into school curricula. Youth need to be involved in this mainstreaming process in order for water, sanitation, hygiene, and the environment (WASH-E) education to show tangible results. Teachers may be able to instruct young people in environmentally friendly behaviour by including WASH-E education into school curricula and providing training programmes on the WASH-E components of their subject matter;
- B.** Launch campaigns to encourage young people to get involved in recycling, eco-tourism, waste minimization, forestry, fighting desert encroachment, and other environmentally friendly activities. Engaging in these kinds of initiatives can help young people and their organisations develop their leadership skills and promote awareness and action. Programmes for waste management and ecotourism might also be viable sources of revenue;
- C.** Expand the creation and promote broad distribution of educational materials that highlight the significance of environmental protection on a global scale, as well as its historical context and the connections between environmental deterioration and climate change. The development of award programmes to honour youth for initiatives that show a dedication to WASH-E education should be a part of this awareness-raising campaign.
- D.** Give local projects that increase access to water and sanitation and hygiene resources and foster community capacity top priority. The financial burden of not having access to basic sanitation facilities and water is particularly high for young women and girls. Their lack of proper access to water and rudimentary sanitary facilities compromises their privacy, dignity, health, and hygiene and puts a financial strain on the nation.
- E.** Young women and girls who spend their time and energy transporting water over vast distances forfeit their chances to pursue further education or gainful employment

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

Proposed policy actions:

- A. Taskforce comprising youth and young-led organisations should be established in order to create educational and awareness campaigns about important environmental issues that are specifically aimed at the youth demographic. In order to reach as many people as possible, this taskforce ought to employ both official and informal educational techniques. Participation in these taskforces should come from corporations, non-governmental organisations, new and local media, and technology;
- B. Establish an advisory committee or youth focus point within the Environmental Protection Agency's municipal office. By linking youth and their groups with regional and national environmental government programmes, this kind of job would bridge the liaison gap;
- C. Assist the work of Municipal Sanitation Officers, identify and cultivate "Youth Hygiene, Sanitation, and Environment Ambassadors."
- D. Encourage the use of ecologically friendly technologies within the municipality and provide youth with training on how to use them to save the environment and save resources. These projects necessitate collaboration between several branches of government, alliances with the business sector, and the exchange of successful projects and best practices.

Part III: A Collaborative Effort



Picture 14: source, PNGWing

Collaboration among Stakeholders

The commitment of all pertinent stakeholders is necessary because this manifesto is action-oriented rather than a mere declaration of purpose. To mobilize support for collaborations that strive to realize the Manifesto's goal, political leadership is absolutely necessary. Though they are intended to involve all parties. The measures outlined in this manifesto's Part II should be spearheaded by the New Juaben Municipal Assembly.

In order to prevent duplication, fragmented actions, or initiatives with insufficient capital or human resources, the New Juaben South Municipal Authority's persistent interest in and commitment to youth development should complement the ability of other actors, such as civil society organisations involved in youth programmes. Developing inclusive policies to carry out the Youth Manifesto calls for more than just talking to youth and other pertinent stakeholders.

In order for policymakers to stay in touch with both local and national players and to create the means of engaging communities and hearing their opinions, the government ought to think about reorganizing its institutions and structures. It is important to avoid merely adding youth to already-existing initiatives when considering institutional transformation; instead, organizational structures must be changed in order to bring about significant change for young people. The actions and suggestions covered in Part II involve the following key partners:

Members of Parliament

Politicians and other local authorities hold prominent positions in the community. They hold a particular responsibility to set an example that inspires others to take action, particularly young people. They are mandated, morally obligated, and trusted by the public to act in the best interests of their constituents. They pass laws, settle disputes between parties, and hold discussions to decide what should come first. The need of political leadership is highlighted by legislative control over local resources, the ability to define compelling agendas, and the authority to appropriate the MPs common budget to secure progress.

In order to support and enable the Municipal Assembly, Ministries, departments, and agencies to effectively administer policies that are responsive to the challenges and aspirations of youth, members of parliament representing the New Juaben South constituency must play a crucial role.

Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies

Ultimately, it is the duty of government ministries and agencies to oversee youth-affecting policies and initiatives. They must create instruments to facilitate data gathering, opinion surveys, and other reporting systems on youth and the realization of their rights and opportunities if they are to do this.

Effective programming depends on their capacity for research, their ability to monitor and assess the effects of current laws and policies, and their ability to undertake needs assessments.

It is imperative that government ministries and organisations operating in the municipality provide the necessary frameworks to effectively implement the national youth policy at the local level. The mechanisms of the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection can help achieve this.

Local Government Authority

The most visible to young people in the towns where its residents reside is the New Juaben South Municipal Assembly, which serves as the central government's representation. Its job is to spearhead the district's growth. As a result, it plays a critical role in encouraging youth integration into society. The local government is in charge of protecting youth rights, maintaining social and economic development, a healthy environment, a cohesive society, and high standards of living.

The local government must offer both individuals and civil society organisations political leadership and a future vision. It must promote youth participation in family, school, and local community decision-making as well as in the formulation of municipal policies.

Media

The purpose of the media is to inform, educate, and amuse. Our ability to interact with one another, comprehend and interpret the world, and engage in public life is all made possible by the work of the media. In keeping with the right to free speech, the municipality's media outlets ought to make sure that information about issues affecting young people is widely shared in order to increase youth awareness. For instance, media campaigns have been remarkably successful in educating young people about HIV prevention. A regular exposure to factual and impartial reporting is a component of youth informal education.

Youth rely heavily on municipal and community media, which really reflects the public interest when it shapes stories with facts and excellent research. Despite the media's continued focus on adolescent consumption of entertainment and advertising, youth-related concerns are frequently left out of the headlines. However, news media, including online news sources, has shown to be effective in bringing young people into the public eye when it comes to policymaking, expressing a range of opinions, promoting youth connectedness, and producing creative youth-owned communications. The media should help young people become active citizens of their communities and contributors to local and national discourse, since they are not merely consumers of news.

Civil Society

The vast array of organisations that compose civil society are those around which society freely organizes. It is separate from the State and stands for a variety of connections and interests, including shared interests in professional, recreational, and developmental activities as well as linkages to the environment and human rights. Women's groups, business associations, elders, religious leaders, intellectuals, community associations, cooperatives, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and, of course, youth organizations—associations founded and run by people in the youth age range—are all essential components of civil society. These associations can be membership-based or created to achieve a public benefit.

Within a unique discourse, youth organisations themselves share information, work as a group, and learn from one another. Civil society has the ability to mobilise and inform people, and it can be a force for critical analysis of the market or the government, as well as for dispute resolution and policy inspiration. Having its own existence outside from governmental, military, or commercial entities, civil society is essential to creating a comprehensive framework of supporting



mechanisms that will allow the Koforidua Youth Manifesto's goals to be achieved. A citizen's ability to express their needs and demands, defend their rights, and directly provide goods and services might be considered the three main roles of civil society.

Private Sector

Young people play a crucial role in the private economy as consumers, workers in cooperatives or small family-run enterprises, or as independent contractors and inventors. An innovative private sector establishes distribution channels, offers necessary goods and services, generates jobs, and promotes economic growth using its own resources and experience. It can also help young people enter the workforce, build infrastructure, and provide them with access to information technology.

In order to promote municipal growth, the corporate sector should form partnerships that address every aspect of the Youth Manifesto, as it has a vested interest in a stable, well-educated, and healthy populace of workers and customers.

International Community

The nations of the world as well as their intergovernmental organisations are referred to as the international community. Even though it affects youth in many ways, the international community must work together to create the conditions necessary for the Koforidua Youth Manifesto to be implemented. One way it can do this is by helping the New Juaben South Municipal Authority turn the suggested actions into concrete plans, goals, and results.

Building a community of practice, exchanging knowledge, and exchanging best practices should all be facilitated by the global community. The UN's specialized agencies, bilateral and multilateral organisations, and other foreign donors are urged to support the Koforidua Youth Manifesto by incorporating its objectives into their plans, conducting thorough evaluations of the progress made and challenges faced, and determining opportunities for additional action.

Parents and Guardians

In addition to shaping young people's social networks, parents and guardians—including extended family—play a variety of responsibilities in the growth and development of youth. Parents play a crucial role in helping children socialize, even in the face of numerous ongoing changes to the family unit. In addition to being teachers, parents can serve as educators by being transparent with their kids about problems and concerns. Parents and children should have a two-way conversation in which young people feel free to talk to their parents. Additionally, parents have the ability to set an example for their children's abilities, character, and intelligence.

Even though young people are independent, they frequently inherit their parents' worldviews. As such, parents and guardians invest a great deal of time and money in their general care, development, and well-being. This investment does not end in early childhood. In addition to immaterial possessions like money or a house, parents also give their children intangible traits like values. In an ideal world, they spend their entire lives participating in the

process of youth development. In their early years, parents can act as educators and reinforce concepts taught in the classroom by having honest conversations with their kids about relationships, health issues, and social behaviour. Parents and guardians should know when and how to step in when they believe that a young person is in danger.

Traditional Authority

Traditional Authorities have a duty to work for the progress of their communities. The material progress of a community, and the maintenance of its peace and unity, are seen as the principal duties of a chief. Interface engagement among Chiefs and Queen Mothers of New Juaben Traditional Area and youth groups will accelerate the implementation of this manifesto and go a long way to improve youth development and volunteerism within their respective communities

Religious Bodies

Whilst young people are currently faced with challenges of unemployment, moral decadence, social neglect, relationships and the acute effects of corruption, religious bodies have vital role in youth development by paying attention to the socialization processes of the youth at home, church, Mosque and school. The religious bodies should collaborate with professional youth development workers to create youth-focused ministries to help young people in their congregations to develop their individual and collective sense of purpose and a strong moral compass such as integrity, compassion and social responsibility

Political Parties

The issue of poor participation of Women and Young people in political activities is receiving a great deal of attention in recent years. Political parties should strengthen their structures to enable party youth-wings to improve engagement with young people or rather youth groups so as to effectively influence political party manifestos both at the national and constituency levels

Youth

In order to achieve the goals of this manifesto, youth involvement is essential. It should be viewed as a process that allows young people to share and influence the decisions, plans, and resources that have an impact on them. Although it is up to the other stakeholders, who frequently serve as gatekeepers in policy making, to incorporate youth and youth organisations in the interventions that affect their lives, involving young people in this process is empowering for them.

Giving young people the freedom to make decisions that impact their own life is a key component of empowerment. Empowerment is a process of increasing capability that involves and frequently necessitates access to resources, work, education, and healthcare in addition to the ability to influence policy. Youth will become more aware of their rights, more responsible citizens, and frequently more self-assured if they are supported and equipped to actively engage in society.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A: About the Koforidua Youth Manifesto project

Given rising concerns over insufficient attention to critical issues affecting youth in Ghana and the weak nature of substructures for mainstreaming youth and youth development issues into national, subnational, and district-level policy decision-making, AFES-Ghana and its partners sought to provide an opportunity for youth to articulate their concerns and to make policy input in the development trajectory of New Juaben South Municipality through the Koforidua Youth Manifesto project.

The goal of the project is to promote opportunities for adolescent boys and girls, young men and young women including youth with disability to engage and influence the New Juaben South Municipal Assembly to strengthen their representation and increase investment for youth empowerment by integrating their plans into the Municipal Development agenda.

More specifically, the project seeks to amplify youth voices and increase youth participation in the development planning and decision-making processes within the Municipal Assembly system. It also seeks to strengthen the Municipal assembly through its substructures by building the capacity of Assembly persons, Unit committee members and youth leaders in community-level advocacy on issues affecting youth and youth development.

These are being achieved through the development of a 'Youth Manifesto' a comprehensive compilation of youth policy options and proposals to place youth issues and perspectives at the heart of the 2024 Presidential and Parliamentary elections campaign and thereafter form the basis for smart youth policy decision-making in the Municipality. The 'Youth Manifesto' is developed by young people through broad consultation with, and participation of other stakeholders under the umbrella of the 'New Juaben South Municipal Youth Union'.

Related activities of the project include: Organizing campaign platforms for Assembly person aspirants during the 2023 District Level Elections (DLE), signature mobilization in support of the manifesto, youth dialogue with key political parties, youth engagement with presidential and parliamentary candidates ahead of the 2024 general elections; annual youth conferences, youth status research and reporting, symposia on participatory local governance, capacity building training in community mobilization and grassroots advocacy and so on

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

Appendix B: Local Project Advisory Committee (L-PAC)

HON. AMO SAMUEL SENIOR	ASSEMBLY MEMBER, ADWESO TOWN ELECTORAL AREA
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HON. NICHOLAS OWUSU SEKYERE	ASSEMBLY MEMBER, RESIDENTIAL AREA ELECTORAL AREA
HON. DEBRAH ADJEI YAW	ASSEMBLY MEMBER, ASUOFIRISO ELECTORAL AREA
HON. AGYARE BOATENG	ASSEMBLY MEMBER, ADONTUA ELECTORAL AREA
HON. ASARE FRANK	ASSEMBLY MEMBER, TANOSO ELECTORAL AREA
HON. OFORI BANNING BISMARCK	ASSEMBLY MEMBER, KANTUDU ELECTORAL AREA
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Appendix G: Members of Koforidua Youth Manifesto Union





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The Koforidua Youth Manifesto project is an initiative of AFES-Ghana, implemented in partnership with New Juaben South Municipal Assembly and STAR-Ghana Foundation with funds from Fondation Botnar of Switzerland under the 'KofKro' project which is initially spanning from September 2023 to January 2026.

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