



the

Curious Mind

setting the young people's agenda

August 2016 Edition

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Exec. Dir. of HFFG
- Mrs. Cecilia Senoo p.12

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She is fighting to end child marriage in Africa p.9

Curious Minds turns

20

years



Editorial

REAPING THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND

African societies have for a long time been described as being pro natalist, that is, favouring large families. In the past women were even honored for giving birth to their tenth child. Depending on where they came from, they had what was called *Badudwan* or *Nyonmatoo* (reward given to a mother for giving birth to a tenth child). It was a time of pride for many and their families celebrated that 'achievement'. With time however and with changing circumstances, this has been found not to help the woman's health. Apart from taking its toll on the woman concerned, it rapidly increased the population that a country had to cater for. Serious population discussions had led to a revision downwards of the number of children given birth to per woman. This is what the experts describe as the total fertility rate being reduced. This has its advantages. With the large number of children given birth to in the past however, the country has reached a stage where the benefits of the initial high rate of population growth should give an advantage in spurring our development aspirations as a country. This is called the DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND. Here, there will be more people for the labour market and a variety of expertise to handle the diverse sectors of our economy is expected. In addition, the demographic dividend, if it should work well will mean a reduction in the number of dependents since more people would be in the active working range.

However, what has been described is the ideal situation. It will depend on what the economists call *ceteris paribus* (all things being equal). Before reaping benefits it is natural to expect that we have deliberately invested in young people. Targeted investment is so vital that we can almost conclude that the demographic dividend is not by accident. Getting the right infrastructure for schools and having competent and well motivated teachers is one. Also directing our potential human resource into areas where the country needs them most and not just an academic qualification purposes is essential. Directly investing in adolescent reproductive health issues is also a means of achieving this since

it will equip young people with the knowledge not to start a family too early and give birth to children they cannot care for. In all these cases, the factor that will help us reap the dividend is to invest, invest and invest in young people. How are we doing it as a country? How have the young people been brought in to be part of the discussions about this potential benefit? Worthy participation can never be ruled out of the argument for progress. Occasionally some will mention young people's participation only to find out it is just decorative in nature. Young people's involvement when well targeted helps to achieve a lot. The question then is how are they being engaged?

At a time when there is heightened awareness of the need to plan ahead for our development we should not relent in this engagement. In real terms, discussions about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), African Union's Agenda 2063 and Ghana's own forty-year development plan is about young people because they will inherit a fruitful system. This means that they should not be left out. Young people should also avail themselves for the opportunity to contribute worthily when brought to the table. To learn and contribute effectively is a sign of the determination to progress.

The caution is often sounded that if we do not work hard to reap the demographic dividend, the youth bulge as we have now might become the youth bomb. Let it not be said that the potential benefit became rather a threat to our stability because we failed to do the right thing. We stand at the demographic junction, let us turn in the right direction to progress through targeted investment.

Tune in! every Saturday

Programme Name	Radio Station	Frequency	Time
Greater Accra Region			
Momlikoo (Ga language)	Obonu FM	96.5 MHz	08:15 AM
Uniiq Curious Minds	Uniiq FM	95.7 MHz	11:05 AM
Gems of Our Time	Uniiq FM	95.7 MHz	04:05 PM
Central Region			
Youth Action	Radio Central	92.5 MHz	05:05 PM
Northern Region			
Youth Talk	Radio Savannah	91.2 MHz	02:30 PM
Also catch us on television...			
Momlikoo (Ga language)	Obonu TV Repeats	Saturdays Wednesdays	10:00 AM 06:00 PM

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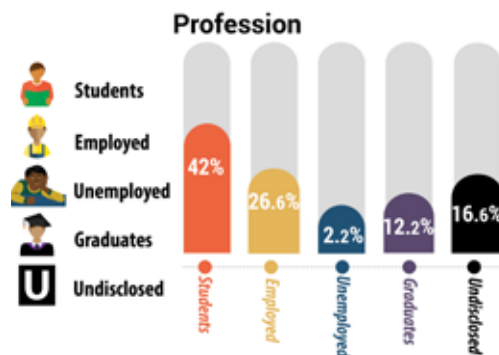
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Almost 80% literate Ghanaian youth do not know about SDGs

Development is about people. Therefore, any effort countries make to develop without involving everyone is an effort awaiting failure.

For half a year since the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted, knowledge of this framework has yet to get to millions of Ghanaians. *The Curious Mind* conducted a survey to assess the knowledge of young Ghanaians about the SDGs.

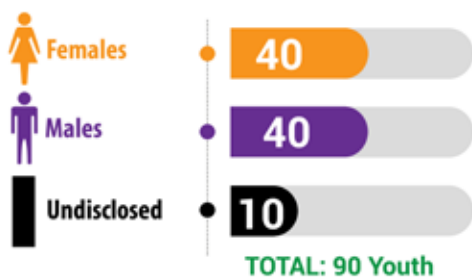
know what and what has been added to make it 17,” explains Alexandra Hughes, a 23 year old Senior High School graduate.



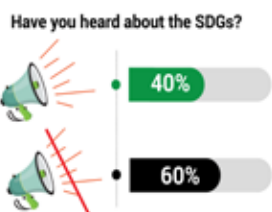
relating to poverty, mother and child mortality, malnutrition and so on,” guessed a 28 year old female teacher in the Central Region.

“Long term goals that can be sustained,” guessed another. For a 23 year old male teacher who hadn't heard about the SDGs, “SDGs” may have sounded like “STDs” when he attempted to take a guess at what that meant: “Like sexual disease or?” he asked.

Literate Young Ghanaians Interviewed

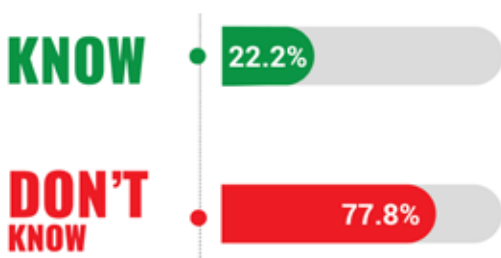


The results showed that 60 percent had never heard about the goals. Of the 40 percent who had heard about the SDGs, only 55.5 percent of them could say what the goals are and what they are meant to achieve.



Statistically, this shows that almost 80 percent (77.7%) of literate Ghanaian youth do not know about the SDGs.

Knowledge of SDGs?



“I know they are from the Millennium Development Goals and I heard it has been increased to 17. But I don't really

During the field interviews, one profound response emerged from an anonymous young person in the Northern Region who had heard about the SDGs but had no understanding what they are.

“I have no idea. Just heard [about SDGs] on TV but me I don't like this politics thing.”

This statement speaks volumes about the perceived credibility and ownership of the SDGs. For this person, national politicking has crowded out the essence, significance and credibility of a development agenda that is meant to be for every single one on planet earth, including children yet to be born.

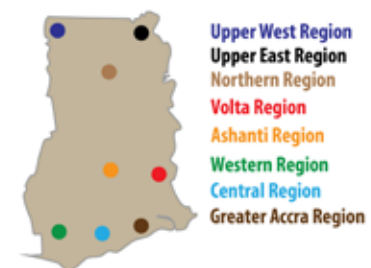
Having gone through a series of processes to engage every constituency, the SDGs reflect, to a very large extent, the biggest development challenges that face humanity. Its formulation was participatory with diverse representatives of interest groups.

For the 60 percent of all those interviewed in this survey who have not heard about the SDGs, only thirteen (13) percent could correctly guess what “sustainable development goals meant, with some interesting guesses.

“Set of goals relating to solving problems

Perhaps, it is ironic that a teacher who passes knowledge on to his students seems to lack information about the development framework that his work is situated within. But should he be blamed? Certainly not!

Geographical location of respondents



The three northern regions of Ghana – Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions – have a heavy concentration of NGOs working to improve the lives of children, women and disadvantaged communities. No wonder 29 year old self-employed man, Alexander who lives in the Upper East Region thought SDGs could be the name of an NGO when asked whether he could guess what the SDGs meant. He said:

“I think it will be an NGO.”

Need it be emphasised that sustainable development is only possible if those who must benefit from it actually know and understand the goals? Information gap is

...continued at page 10

WORD SEARCH

In this edition, we will focus on words that pertain to socio-economic development

S V P Y A N N B R T Q M T V P
 V U C O T F A E N V E T N U R
 I H S Q P L R E M N B M E L E
 H T J T U U M I S O I G M N G
 Y U S T A T L T C G W H P E N
 Z T S E S I R A R A Y B O R A
 N I I E I U N A T O M H L A N
 F Z V N A T T A U I X M E B C
 J N T T G I I T B N O D V I Y
 I F I B O I H N K I D N E L G
 H O P N P G D B U L L Z D I I
 N O I T R O B A R M F I R T R
 G O V E R N M E N T M H T Y L
 C O J G L O B A L K J O U Y S
 S T H G I R N A M U H O C E C

Find WORDS on page 14



CM DIARIES



CURIOUS MINDS HOSTS ACSHR 2016

Curious Minds hosted the 7th Africa Conference on Sexual Health & Rights in Accra in February. The Conference brought together over 600 participants from across the world. Also in attendance were the President & First Lady of Ghana, high level delegations from the UN, AU & African governments headed by First Ladies and their representatives.

CONFERENCE ON HEALTH PROMOTION

Health promotion and education experts, civil society and young people convened in Curitiba, Brazil to discuss best practices in health promotion. Curious Minds made a presentation on the use of radio in the provision of quality information on sexual and reproductive health including comprehensive sexuality education. Edmund Agbeve represented the Organisation.

AFRICAN YOUTH CHARTER AT 10

Curious Minds participated in the 10th Anniversary commemoration of the African Youth Charter. The event reviewed the implementation of the Charter and emerging issues especially the 2017 African Union Demographic Dividend (DD) Roadmap on "harnessing DD through investments in the youth." The event took place at the birthplace of the Charter, Banjul, The Gambia in May 2016. Joseph Quaye Amoo represented the Organisation.

Excerpts from the 7th Africa Conference on Sexual Health & Rights (#ACSHR2016) Outcome Document

Call on Governments to invest in the rights and capabilities of adolescents and youth;

Paragraph 17. In advancing Africa's agenda on sexual health and rights and intensifying efforts towards the realization of the demographic dividend, we call for recognition of the continents diversity characterized by language, regions (North, South, East and West) and political context which has a bearing on the presentation and trends on sexual and reproductive health and rights within the continent and hence requiring context specific interventions towards realization of the demographic dividend in Africa;

Paragraph 18. Governments must recognize that achievement of a demographic dividend is not an end-goal unto itself, but a possible by-product that can result from investing in the empowerment, health, education and creating gainful employment opportunities for all people. The dividend will only arrive

if governments invest strategically in policies that preserve the freedom of young people from harmful traditional and social practices that diminish their integrity and autonomy, ensure that all young people can enter into marriage and family life if and when they choose, ensure their good health, ensure that they have access to quality education, at the highest level they wish to pursue, including comprehensive sexuality education, and create equitable structures for entrepreneurship and business within and across countries that will advance the decent employment of all people.



10 Things You Can Do to Make the SDGs Achievable

The SDGs call for long-term behavioural change from the way we live and how we consume. Young people are active drivers of change in local communities. Young people have a role in engaging people at the grassroots level and communicating the goals to a wider society. In fact, it will be difficult if not impossible to achieve the SDGs without the full involvement of the youth.

Here are 10 things you can do to make the SDGs achievable:



By: E. T. Jamani Jnr

1. Form advocacy groups in your locality

How many citizens are aware of the SDGs? A greater percentage of those who know about these goals may perhaps just hear about them. Truth is, you cannot achieve what you don't know. The future belongs to the youth and so is sustainable development. Every youth must therefore endeavour to join advocacy groups in their localities to learn and educate others about the goals and ensure that leaders in authority prioritise these goals in their developmental agenda.

2. Break the poverty cycle through investment

Poverty thrives when young people grow with high dependency and consumer mentality. The good news however is this "harmful mentality" can be changed or defeated with the "investment mentality". Every young person should learn to invest at least 30% of his/her income

irrespective of how little the income might be. For instance, if your income is GHS 100, 30% is GHS 30. And if you invest it for a year, you will have GHS 360 plus about 25% in total. This money can help you start some small business.

3. Initiate backyard gardening

Food security is assured if we all can produce what we consume without importation. Our country is blessed with suitable land for agriculture so the youth should get involved in farming. It is clear that not all young people will be engaged fulltime in agriculture. However, if we can all take advantage of backyard gardening, we will be able to produce vegetables and others foodstuffs that we need. If a good percentage of our population goes into farming, we will have more to feed the nation and also export the surplus to other countries. This will reduce unemployment as well as generate income and foreign exchange to a large extent.

4. Embark on peace campaigns

The basic foundation on which development thrives is peace and justice. Peace therefore is a necessity that everyone and more especially the youth should love and cherish at all times. Ghana, our beloved country is relatively peace-

ful. However, much needs to be done to promote and protect the peace. The youth in our various communities should therefore take it as a responsibility to embark on peace campaigns regularly to sensitise the public, young people and feuding factions on the need for peace.

5. Organise clean-up campaigns and sanitation projects

The cliché "cleanliness is next to godliness" is ever relevant in 2016 and even beyond. The recent year-to-year outbreak of cholera and other diseases is as a result of poor sanitation and the use of unclean water in many communities especially in rural Ghana and among poor urban slums and communities. The number of lives lost to these diseases could be saved if our environments are kept clean. Campaigns can focus on the adoption of long-term sustainable lifestyles, recycling, consumer culture and most importantly the leadership needed to make these changes work.

6. Join voluntary teaching projects

The SDGs are for young people and it is critical that young people own it. It is therefore the responsibility of young graduates accept postings to underprivileged rural schools through the National



#ACSHR2016

“The biggest asset Africa has which is sitting there and is not utilised are the **Curious Minds**. We need to invest in them. We need to ensure that they are skilled to develop Africa and the world... Africa's time has come and it is the young people.”

UN Under-Secretary-General & Executive Director, UNFPA

Prof. Babatunde Osotimehin

Service Scheme in order to inspire children to learn and open their hearts and minds to sustainable development and what it means to them. Alternatively, social and community groups of young people can volunteer their time to teach in rural and underserved schools during holidays and even mobilize support from their network of well-to-do friends to support development in those rural settings.

7. Organise health education programmes

Health is a non-financial wealth. Youth in our communities should take it upon themselves to organise health education programs on our local radio stations and health-talk workshops for people in our towns and villages. One main area of focus should be sexual and reproductive health and rights. Education is the best form of vaccine against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV; a solid protection from unwanted, unintended and teenage pregnancies; as well as a window of endless opportunities for informed choices on our sexuality.

8. Promote girl-child education

Everyone should ensure that the girl-child is given the necessary support to enable her compete favourably with their male counterparts in every field of endeavour and especially in school. The marginalization of the girl-child through our religious and cultural practices must be discouraged. Gender equality is only possible if young girls are able to continue their education irrespective of the circumstances they find themselves in whether they get pregnant or not; whether their parents can afford their education or not; whether they live in rural areas or not.

9. Establish friends of the land and water clubs

The youth should join or form interest groups to protect the land and its resources. Ghana is endowed with a lot of natural resources but if we don't protect the land, we may soon lose them all because of reckless mining activities. The depletion of our land and its resources through illegal mining popularly known as "galamsey" can be halted if young people stand against such

bad commercial practices.

10. Help the Needy

Every society consists of the haves and have-nots. Just as there are countries that are richer than others, some individuals are also richer than others. Ghana our country is blessed with almost every natural gift yet it benefits a much lesser number of the population. From a philosophical point of view, happiness is best felt when you reach out to help others. So it is a mutual benefit. The world needs more happy people to go out and spread happiness.



Curious Minds organises first ever live radio event at Women Deliver

A 50-member Ghana delegation attended the Women Deliver 4th Global Conference held in the Danish capital, Copenhagen in May, 2016.

Of this number, 15 were young people including 5 from Curious Minds - Edith Esinam Asamani, Richard Dzikunu, Francis Oko Armah, who are Women Deliver Young Leaders and Sarah Abena Benewaa Fosu and Daniel Agbenoto who were Women Deliver Youth Scholars. Hon. Nana Oye Lithur, the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection also participated in the Conference.

Twenty percent of the 5000 delegates were young people who participated in the discussions on how to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) so they matter most for girls and women, with a specific focus on health – in particular maternal, sexual, and reproductive health and rights – and on gender equality, education, environment, and economic empowerment.

Curious Minds organised the first ever live radio event in the history of the Conference. At the exhibition at the Bella Centre - the main conference venue – was a colourful, youthful and vibrant setting named the Youth Zone – a specially designed space for youth participants to hangout and share ideas.

A special edition of Curious Minds' flagship youth radio programme *Gems of Our Time – Broadcasting Youth Voices* streamed on WDLive.org while an international panel of young advocates discussed how the media can be leveraged to promote youth sexual and reproductive health and rights. Several audiences listened and participated with questions and comments.

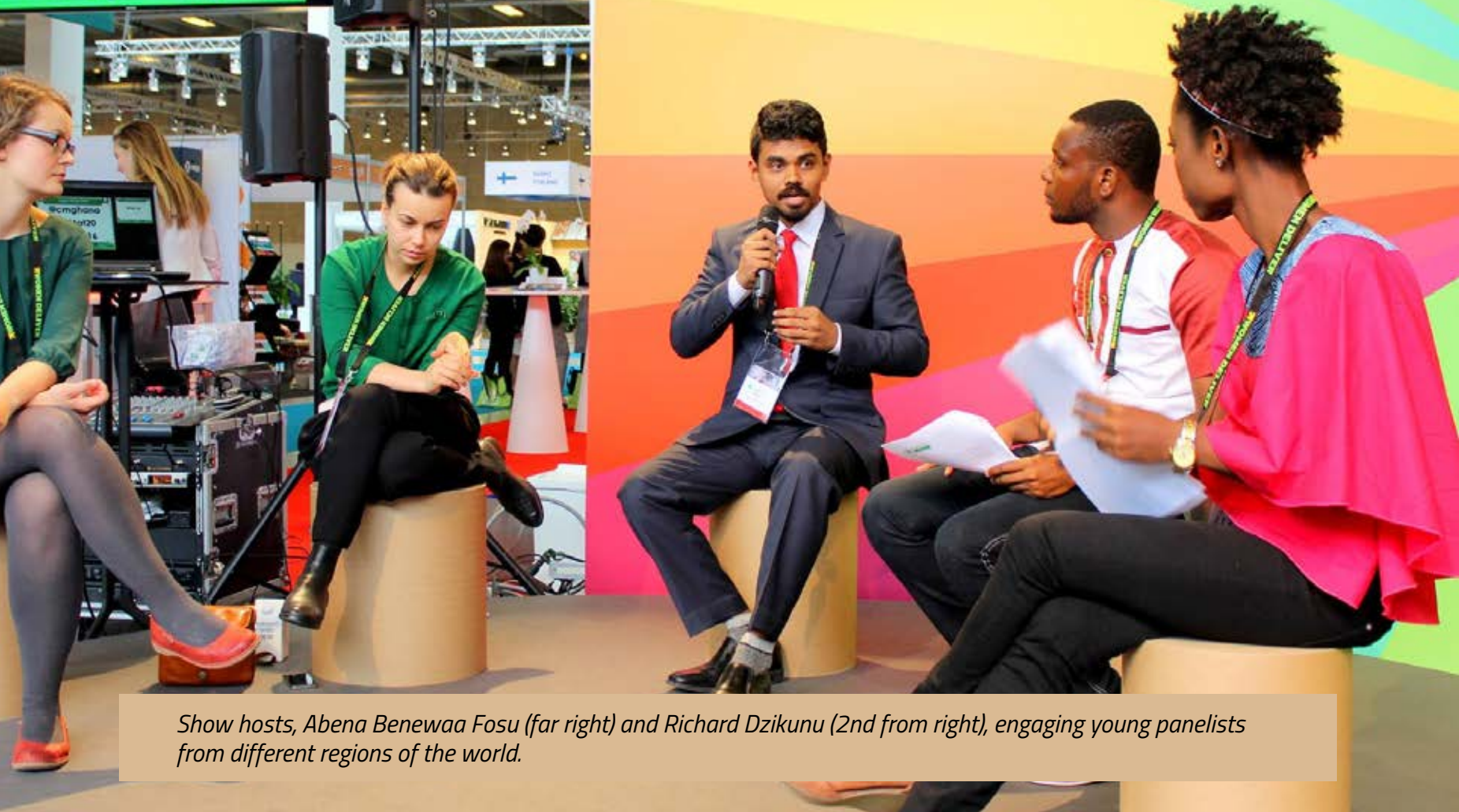


@cmghana
#CMat20
#WD2016

Gems of Our Time
Broadcasting Youth Voices

live radio at

**WOMEN
DELIVER**



Show hosts, Abena Benewaa Fosu (far right) and Richard Dzikunu (2nd from right), engaging young panelists from different regions of the world.

Francis Oko Armah delivered a statement at the official closing ceremony. Here is his unedited speech:



photo credit: Birgitta Lund

“When Jill Sheffield, the President and founder of Women Deliver informed me I had 90 seconds to speak I thought it was not enough, for a talkative like me. But then it reminded me of that life changing moment as a boy when I discovered I lost three sisters, nearly lost my mother and a cousin because of pregnancy and child birth-related complications. I can't do much about it, I thought!

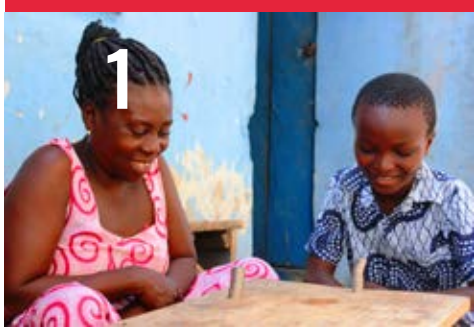
Yet knew I needed a commitment on what to do, to be the change I want to see, knowing that when girls and women can plan their fertility, they can plan their futures. I committed to educating girls, women, and young people about their sexual and reproductive health and rights including family planning. Using the media to reach and engage thousands of people, to advocate for the health, rights and wellbeing of women, girls, and young people, but I cannot do it alone.

Now I ask you, what are your commitments after Women Deliver 2016? As you think about it, never forget that investing in reproductive, maternal, and new-born health, saves lives, improves economies, and strengthens health systems. The time to invest is now.

”

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

as seen from the eyes of a



Goal 1 – Davi is a petty trader who sells beans in her community. Mantey is her Grandson and she makes sure that she provides for him and takes good care of him with what she earns. Together, we end poverty.



Goal 2 – Akwetteh is a twin who lives with his mother – a single parent - and his twin brother in a coastal community in Accra. He is growing healthily and happily because his mum gives him good nutritious meals every day. Together, we can kill hunger before hunger kills us.



Goal 3 – Kobby and Aban are very close friends. They join their friends to play basketball at their leisure time to stay fit and healthy. "Good health makes us happy and rich," they said.



Goal 7 – Samuel is able to study at night because her father bought her a lamp that is reliable and renewable with solar energy. With the right investment in renewable energy, the world will be safe from pollution and be energy secured for the times to come.



Goal 8 – Madam Cynthia (left) is a professional seamstress who trains young people on how to sew cloths and make designs on them. She provides them with all the necessary sewing equipment to ensure that they work safely and in a timely and efficient manner.



Goal 9 – Nii Adjei is a young boy who wishes to become an automobile engineer. He has already started developing his creative ideas by building his own car like many children in his community. This shows that every human being is capable of creating new things and with the right investment in youth, many of the world's problems could meet creative solutions.



Goal 13 – Lydia loves the rain but doesn't like to go to school and experience unpredictable rains. According to her, her father who is a farmer is constantly complaining about the unpredictable weather patterns in the last few years and fears it would ruin his job as a farmer.



Goal 14 - Meet Portia, my new marine friend. She is growing because she swims in a clean environment that is not polluted. Humans have to take responsibility of life under water and desist from over fishing and polluting water bodies through illegal alluvial mining activities.



Goal 15 – Every new life on land needs an enabling environment that will enhance their growth. Conservation and restoration of forests, wetlands and drylands does not only sustain our environments but also boosts a country's economic growth.

GOALS

young aspiring photographer



Goal 4 – Meet Felicia Ayorkor. She wants to become a doctor when she grows up and she is happy because she is getting access to a free and quality education with her friends. This shows that when young people acquire knowledge and skills in school, their future is assured.



Goal 5 – Louis and Elizabeth are siblings, Louis agrees that household duties are not solely Elizabeth's responsibility so they sweep, wash and clean the house together. This shows that when parents begin to inculcate the values of equality in their children at an early stage, they grow up to become responsible adults who will support each other.



Goal 6 – Nana Yaa has access to safe and clean drinking water so she practices good sanitation and hygiene practices. Here, she washes her hands after visiting the toilet recently built in their house.



Goal 10 – Gifty Maamle Tagoe is a member of Curious Minds and dreams of becoming a journalist when she grows up. Believing in young girls and giving them the support and opportunities they need will significantly reduce gender, economic, social and political inequalities in the next 15 years.



Goal 11 – Thomas Armah loves to ride his bicycle to work and to meet his friends. This is a personal choice he made and he believes more space needs to be created in Accra to enable people to cycle to work, thereby easing vehicular traffic and poisonous emissions in the city.



Goal 12- Charles and Michael are brothers. They have a small farm behind their house where they plant maize seasonally and sell some at the community market. If every household produces some amount of food, there is surely going to be food security for all.



Goal 16 – Meet Faiza and Naa, they are two close friends with different religious backgrounds. They don't allow that to separate them or affect their relationship in anyway. They are always happy to see each other. Peace is a prerequisite for development.



Goal 17 – Pictures say a thousand words and indeed with partnership, the SDGs is definitely achievable.



Eugene Tetteh Odoi

18 years old

Youth Advocate and aspiring photographer



Personality Profile

Marriage is a union of two people who have agreed to be together for the rest of their lives. This is however not the case for many girls in Africa who are not only forced into marrying, often older people, but also at a very young age. Such marriages result in girls missing out on education and assuming motherhood at an early age. Victoria Quaynor has devoted herself to rallying other young women to campaign against this unfortunate practice and to end child, early and forced marriages in Ghana and Africa. **The Curious Mind** interacted with Ms. Quaynor on her campaign. Here's what ensued:

TCM: Who is Victoria Quaynor?

Victoria: Victoria is a young girl. The last born of my father and the second born of my mother. I am very passionate about issues of young people especially girls. That's basically what I can say about Victoria.

TCM: Where did you have your education?

Victoria: I went to Joyful Hope Academy, then to Dzorwulu Junior High School and to Christian Methodist Senior High School. So as I speak, I am waiting to start my tertiary education this year.

TCM: You are an ambassador against early marriage. When did you start getting the passion to campaign for an end to early and child marriage in Ghana and Africa?

Victoria: When you look at statistics from UNICEF, 15 million girls globally get married in a year. This means that we have around 41,000 girls getting married every day. Ghana is losing future leaders and people who can help in the development of the nation.

These girls are being exposed to risks of fistula, gender-based violence and even death. Based on these things I see around and I could read from different sources, I felt

strongly that something needs to be done because if girls are married off, their future, our future is compromised. So based on all these and through the help of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, I was appointed an ambassador in the campaign. So the pains I see some girls go through made me stand out to defend girls.

TCM: Are girls your age empowered enough to say no when their parents ask them to marry someone?

Victoria: Some girls are empowered and others are not. Based on the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2014) which shows that, about 18% of urban girls get married as compared with 36% of rural girls. Clearly, there's a gap. Why this gap? More urban girls than rural girls are more confident to say no to early marriage. You know, in the urban areas, education and sensitisation is going on so people get the knowledge unlike the rural areas where sometimes there's no electricity so getting some information becomes a problem.

TCM: What will the picture look like if you and other campaigners succeed in ending child marriage in Ghana and Africa?

Victoria: We will get to see parents playing a

major role in educating their girls and that is where it starts. We will also see that specific actions are taken to ensure that schools are safe for girls. There will be more girls in school. More girls will feel empowered to take up initiatives by themselves. We will see an end to maternal and child mortality.

TCM: If child marriage persists in say 15 years from now, who would you blame?

Victoria: I will blame our governments for failing to enforce laws. I will blame government for failing to provide the environment for adults to be sensitized and educated on the need to stop child marriage.

TCM: Thank you for your time.

Victoria: My pleasure

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www.cmghana.org

...continued from page 2

a development gap.

During the interviews, our correspondents explained the SDGs to all the respondents and we gathered a tall list of recommendations on what Ghana should do to make the SDGs achievable.

Nineteen percent of all those interviewed called for more education and awareness creation on the SDGs. Publicity on the SDGs can significantly improve transparency and accountability at the local and national levels.

It therefore remains necessary that the SDGs message trickles down to every young person and in extension every individual, organisation and institution in Ghana because that is the first true step to a realisable development agenda.

“The SDGs should be explained to everyone. That is laymen or not, and why the need to embark on such a thing and after that we can then think about how to achieve it,” remarked a 25 year old female university graduate in Kumasi.”

Ebenezer Cudjoe, a 22 year old student from the Ashanti Region believes that information on the SDGs must be decentralised: “All the districts have to know the [goals and] targets. I think some of those issues are [too] centralised. If they decentralise these programs, we [Ghana] will be more efficient than we have been doing... I think decentralisation will help us imple-

ment them.”

“I think the goals should be made known to people... If the goals are made known just like the Millennium Development Goals... then we will work towards it. Then definitely it will be achieved. But if you don't know the goals, what they are and the targets they want to meet how do we achieve them?” quiz-
Marble Anaam from the Upper East Region.

“Ghana needs prayers.”

For Harriet Alabi who recently completed her Senior High School education in the Central Region, people in rural communities must never be left ignorant of the SDGs.

“The government should send people to the rural areas to explain to the people the importance of the SDGs.” She added: “... and the media should talk more about it.”

Others called for good governance, effective policy and planning, behavioral change, establishment of effective systems and mechanisms to monitor the goals, youth involvement in all sectors of development, government investment through internally generated funds among others.

Every institution must have a poster of the relevant goal(s) at the entrance of its premises to constantly remind workers to link their daily efforts to those specific

goals. The goals are aspirational and Ghanaians need inspiration from their leaders to own and work hard towards achieving them.

Interestingly, Ghanaians are very religious and many have the tendency of shirking responsibility to the God or gods they serve. “Ghana needs prayers,” is what 18 year old student in Accra said when asked: What can Ghana do to achieve the SDGs. Perhaps with prayer and consistent action, Ghana will succeed in securing a sustainable future for her people and environment.



SDGs



“
I commend the local youth organisers of the 7th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights, Curious Minds for mobilising so many organisations that prioritise the health of young people on the African Continent.
”

Lordina Mahama - First Lady of the Republic of Ghana

#ACSHR2016



Activities In Pictures



Curious Minds' Executive Coordinator, Kingsley Obeng-Kyereh, mceeing the opening ceremony of the 7th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights. Seated on the high table are the President and the First Lady of Ghana and other African first ladies.



The official cake-cutting ceremony to launch the 20th Anniversary celebrations of Curious Minds. Hon. Dzifa Gomashie, Dept. Min. of Tourism and Creative Arts is assisted by partners from UNFPA, Nat. Youth Authority and Ghana AIDS Commission.



Children from Happy Kids School performing a choreographed dance to entertain the attendees of the Curious Minds 20th Anniversary launch event.



The big family picture! Curious Minds members and partners take a 20th Anniversary group picture.

Role of Religious Leaders in the Attainment of the SDGs



By: Michael Korsah Jr
[@kishmentjnr](#)

Islam, Christianity, Paganism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism are but a few major religions practiced across the world. Religion is perhaps the one “non-political” institution with the biggest influence on people’s lives, beliefs and actions. The big question for the next fifteen years remains: How can religion help the world attain the SDGs?

Religion can be a source of social strife and violent conflict which in turn can undermine development. From religious fundamentalism and extremism to hard line terrorism, recent events suggest that religion can do both harm and good.

Primarily, religious tolerance is the bedrock of peace and mutual respect between people, communities and nations. In Ghana, we are fortunate to enjoy peaceful co-existence between reli-

gions and this is something we should keep. However, Ghana has seen some religious leaders misinform people and provide false hopes to their congregants regarding their health and other development related challenges.

There is an enormous amount of opportunity that Ghana can gain through religion when it comes to the attainment of the SDGs. For example, religious leaders and preachers must use their platforms to educate their members on the SDGs. Again, they can act as accountability advocates by pressuring the government to keep working to attain the SDGs through their messages and encourage their members to be corruption-free and demand the same from people who hold power.





Hope for Future Generations (HFFG)

The fight against HIV is still on. In spite of the progress in the search for a cure for or vaccines against HIV, there are serious concerns around prevention of HIV, treatment, care and support for persons living with the virus. HFFG is an organisation fighting HIV in Ghana and its Executive Director, Cecilia Senoo believes Ghana needs to do more to win the fight against HIV. She shared her views with *The Curious Mind*.

“This issue needs a multisectorial approach. One person cannot do it and I think everybody must actually be involved. Some countries, for example Cuba, have been able to eliminate mother-to-child transmission. Ghana should really focus and be putting in a lot of resources.

Make the test kits available because that is the entry point to treatment. If infected people are treated, then we are gradually eliminating it. Information to families should be out there and we must promote behavioral change.

I also feel that we should really look at our educational system again. I think we should really look at comprehensive sexuality education in schools and among young people, so that we can empower them with information. We should look at the strategies that we are using in addressing HIV. We should involve young people. We should allow them to explore and then they take the lead.



Mrs. Cecilia Senoo
Executive Director, HFFG

It is also important that we migrate a lot of people onto treatment, because the people who don't know their status are the ones spreading it. We should actually make services available. Whether we like it or not, there are so many men having sex with men and we know that our epidemic in many cases comes from those key populations. So we should focus on addressing some of them and then make treatment accessible to them as a country. We shouldn't discriminate against anybody. So by doing that we hope to actually get to eliminate HIV in the system.”



Examination

Three University guys dodged exam because they did not study. They came up with a plan, got themselves dirty using grease, then went to see the Lecturer. "Sir we are sorry we couldn't make it to the exam. We attended a wedding and on our way back the car broke down thus we became so dirty as you can see". The Lecturer understood and gave them three days to prepare. After three days, they went to the Lecturer very ready for the exam because they had studied. The Lecturer put them in three separate classes with only four questions in the exam paper;

1. Who and who got married? (25 marks)
2. Where was the reception held? (25mks)
3. Where exactly did the car break down? (25mks)
4. What type of car broke down? (25mks)

Marking scheme: your answers must be the same!!
Good Luck

The Married Couple

A man and woman had been married for 30 years, and in those 30 years, they always left the lights off when having sex. He was embarrassed and scared that he couldn't please her, so he always used a big dildo on her. All these years she had no clue. One day, she decided to reach over and flip the light switch on and saw that he was using a dildo. She said "I knew it, asshole, explain the dildo!" He said, "Explain the kids!"

QUESTIONS FOR AUNTIE



1. I am a teenager living with my dad. My mum passed away a few years ago. I had to live with relatives for a while because my dad could not take care of me. But now he is in a better position to. Recently I have realised something which makes me uncomfortable. He has been touching me inappropriately, and makes comments on my body and looks. He also bought me some skimpy clothes to wear at home. I'm afraid one of these days he might take it further by trying to forcibly have sex with me. I am in school and do not have anywhere else to go. Please what do you advise I do?

Alice, Cape Coast.

Hello Alice,

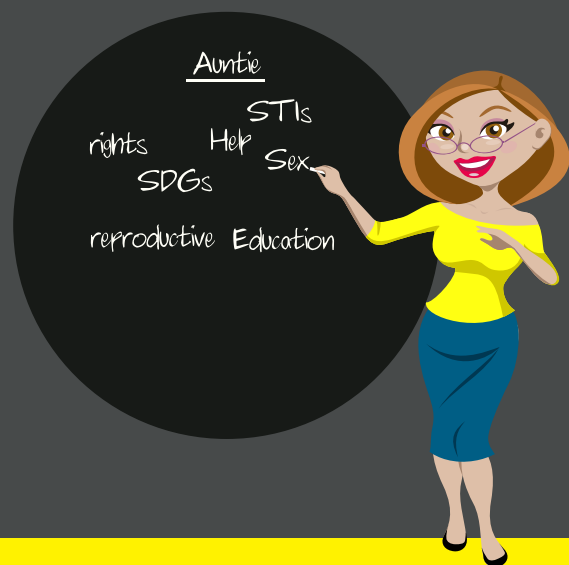
I can understand how difficult your situation is especially when the one attempting to sexually harass you is your own father. First, I need you to be confident and still respectful. You need to gather courage and open up the conversation with your father. Tell him respectfully that you don't feel comfortable with how he touches you and that he needs to protect you from any harm because he is your father. If his actions continue after you tell him all these, then inform a responsible adult in your family or someone your father knows and respects. Ask that adult that to talk to your father and encourage him to desist from the harassment. If that also fails, go to the nearest Police station and report your father to the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit. From here, we can all trust that the law will work to protect you.

2. Dear Auntie, I am a boy of 14 years and I have a problem and need your help. My parents are divorced and I live with my dad. We recently had a distant relative come to live with us from the United States. She is 13 and we share the same bed. She is constantly trying to get me to have sex with her and there have been numerous times she takes her clothes off in front of me. I fear reporting this incidence to my mother because I do not want to cause a fight and I cannot tell my dad or my step mum because I am terrified at what they might do or say.

Hello,

Let me commend you for coming out to say this. Many adolescents your age would rather keep quiet over this and never share with anyone. It is good that you are thinking about the conse-

quences of reporting the issue to your mother or father or step mum. In any circumstances, make sure to tell the person making attempts to have sex with you that you are uncomfortable with it and would like him/her to stop. So inform your distant relative whom you share a bed with that you are not comfortable and you wish that she stops. If this continues, ask your father that you want to sleep somewhere else if there is space in your house. If this isn't possible and she still continues, be confident and warn her that you'll inform your father and step mother about this. If this also fails, then I'm afraid you have to inform them about her behaviour since you already warned her and she still persisted. Never fight with her. Always be diplomatic.



Do you have any questions for Auntie? She will be glad to respond. Send your questions via e-mail to thecuriousmind@cmghana.org or send as a message to our Facebook page **Curious Minds-Ghana**. Also, you can send us a message on WhatsApp **+233 207 384 276**.



This is our postal address:

Questions for Auntie
The Curious Mind,
P. O. Box AN 8601,
Accra- North.

Hi



Social media is more than liking and sharing. It's a powerful tool for sustainable development

The SDGs are a universal agenda for “transforming our world.” To achieve this transformation, we must rethink the approaches of the Millennium Development Goals era that largely left young people out of the process. Governments that recognize the value of collaborating with young people including those using social media can establish clear and explicit pathways for their meaningful engagement in the development process which will enable better positioning of countries to achieve the 17 SDGs and 169 targets. Social media can be an important space for young people to shape their identities; build relationships; share innovative and transformative ideas; improve transparency and accountability; and enrich discussion around development. Indeed, joining online communities can motivate young people to get involved in real life communities. There have been good and bad examples of online

campaigns going offline. From #OccupyGhana to #BringBackOurGirls, social media has proven itself as a means of mobilising young people to take action. Knowing the SDGs is one step to achieving them. Remarkably, young leaders, youth advocates, the United Nations agencies and even government have leveraged the power of social media to raise awareness on where the world is heading in terms of sustainable development. People cannot develop if they do not know what to develop and therefore it remains important for young leaders and advocates to keep reaching out to their online peers on sustainable development. If you are uncertain about what to do with social media to drive sustainable development, here are a few tips:

- Make connections and engage young people on social media on the SDGs
- Promote events that are organised either online or at physical locations on the subject of the SDGs within your

online circles

- Promote opportunities for young people to be involved in the SDGs process in your community, country or region
- Mobilise youth leaders through social media and reach out with sustainable development messages to young people in rural areas.
- Social media is a network of networks and working alone is certainly not the ideal thing to do. Make connections with organisations working on the SDGs.



By: Felix Aryee
@paintermain



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WORD SEARCH

ABORTION	HUMANRIGHTS
AFRICA	INVESTMENT
COMMUNITIES	MENSTRUATION
DEVELOPMENT	MIGRATION
DIGNITY	POPULATION
FISTULA	PREGNANCY
GIRLS	SUSTAINABILITY
GLOBAL	VULNERABILITY
GOVERNMENT	WOMEN
HIV	YOUTH



In 60 seconds

According to the Academy of General Dentistry, the average person only brushes for **60 seconds** a day, the recommended amount of time is 2-3 minutes



“ Our host,
Curious Minds,
a very active
youth
adolescent
group...”

President of the Republic of Ghana

His Excellency John Dramani Mahama

A **Curious Minds** Publication



... setting young people's agenda

Oh! Did you know?

A flock of crows is known as a murder.

If you lift a kangaroo's tail off the ground it can't hop.

During your lifetime, you will produce enough saliva to fill two swimming pools.

Billy goats urinate on their own heads to smell more attractive to females.

“Facebook Addiction Disorder” is a mental disorder identified by Psychologists.

Your average healthy man produces approximately 300 million sperm in just a teaspoon of his semen. However, it only takes one little swimmer to fertilize a woman's egg and it can live for up to a week inside your body

Do you have anything to say or show?

Send in your contributions!

1. Contributions should be in the form of articles, riddles, cartoons and letters
2. Your contributions should be related to children and youth development, including adolescent sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS and policy issues.
3. Include your full name, twitter handle (if available), age, school or institution and a passport photo (if available)
4. Send them by e-mail to : thecuriousmind@cmghana.org

 Curious Minds-Ghana
 @cmghana
 @cmghana
 www.cmghana.org
 thecuriousmind@cmghana.org
 +233(0) 207 384 276

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