

Mobilizing 500 students for Community Engagement Program to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ghana

Introduction

As agents of change, tertiary students, who form part of the youthful population, are capable of mobilizing limited human and non-human resources to build the resilience of their institutions and communities, and contributing to improving the lives of people and the health of the planet, end poverty, combat climate change and reduce inequalities.

These can be achieved via inexpensive behavioral interventions program anchored on engagement with relevant communities. Indeed, a lot of the problems facing communities in Ghana result mostly from behavioral and attitudinal problems. These include indiscriminate disposal of waste and refuse, including food particles, poor sanitary and hygiene practices, and poor cooking and eating practices such as not washing hands properly before eating.

However, for several reasons such as lack of resources, tertiary students hardly undertake community engagement services to benefit their local communities in terms of promoting good community practices and behaviors for sustainable community development. REGIG has equipped 50 students to undertake community engagement activities in four communities with the aim of changing some of aforementioned behaviors and practices.

REGIG is scaling-up this initiative by mobilizing 1,000 students in 10 tertiary institutions located across various part of Ghana to contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) via community engagement. REGIG is seeking to partner with individuals and institutions to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs through research, advocacy and community engagement

Objectives/Goals of the Program

- ✚ Increase awareness, expand the knowledge-base and increase the participation and involvement of tertiary students in discourses, programs, and activities relating to community development and growth.
- ✚ Provide opportunity for students to engage with some selected communities to develop, implement and monitor programs aimed at addressing pertinent community problems to achieve the SDGs.

Framework for Implementation

This section details the various activities and ways through which the students will execute their responsibilities;

- Students will undertake community outreach program to create awareness on about the SDGs.
- The students will conduct needs assessment of some selected communities in relation to the SDGs prior to undertaking such outreach programs.
- The outcome of the needs assessment will inform the students on which goal or indicator is of priority to such community.
- The students will then initiate tailored advocacy towards such priority area(s).
- The students will visit the communities and hold town hall meetings to address such SDGs related issues.
- The students will evaluate and monitor their progress and submit detailed report to REGIG secretariat.

Target Institutions

The program is currently limited to 10 tertiary institutions located across 10 regions in the country, as shown in Table 1. A total of 100 students will be selected from each institution. Thus, a total of 1000 will be recruited for the program.

Table 1: Institutions for Program

S/N	Region	Institution	No
1	Greater Accra	University of Ghana	100
2	Ashanti	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology	100
3	Central	University of Cape Coast	100
4	Northern	University for Development studies	100
5	Volta	University of Allied Health Sciences	100
6	Eastern	Koforidua Technical University	100
7	Western	Takoradi Technical University	100
8	Sunyani	University of Energy & Natural Resource	100
9	Upper East	Bolgatanga Polytechnic	100
10	Upper West	Wa Polytechnic	100
		Total	1000

Selection of Students

- ✚ **First phase:** Call for applications into the program shall be advertised widely using various platforms, including social media, print and electronic media, and websites.
- ✚ **Second phase:** The applications shall be reviewed to develop a shortlist of applicants.
- ✚ **Third phase:** The shortlisted applicants shall be interviewed and a final selection will be made.
- ✚ **Fourth phase:** The students shall receive training.

Gender and Inclusiveness of the Ambassadors

The program is designed to be gender sensitive and inclusive for persons with disabilities. In this regard, for each institution, 40% and 20% of the position shall be reserved for competent and motivated females and persons with disability, respectively.

Training and Resourcing the students

- ✚ The students shall be trained on community engagement and SDGs by resource persons from notable organizations such as;
- ✚ National Development Planning Commission of Ghana
- ✚ United Nations Development Program
- ✚ Local, national and international NGOs working on community engagement

Relevant Institutions for Support and Partnership

The following institutions have been identified as key institutions for support and partnership to implement this program.

- ✚ United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- ✚ National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)
- ✚ Ghana Investment and Promotion Center (GIPC)
- ✚ Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI)
- ✚ Ministry of Education
- ✚ Ghana Statistical Services
- ✚ STAR-Ghana Foundation
- ✚ Civil Society Platforms on SDGs in Ghana
- ✚ The universities and polytechnics in Table 1 and their various student associations
- ✚ Private Enterprise Federation
- ✚ Ghana Free Zones Authority

Expected Outcome of the Program

- ✚ The resilience of communities to utilize available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations will increase by at least 60% each year.
- ✚ Community collective efficacy, defined as mutual trust among community members and willingness to intervene on the behalf of the common good, will increase by at least 60%

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Program

The program will be monitored and evaluated periodically. The key performance indicators (KPIs) relating to the program and the associated monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are contained in Table 2.

KPIs	Assessment/Data Collection Tools
<i>Community outreach and engagement</i>	
• Visibility of the ambassadors' activities in their chosen communities	Observation and interviews
• Building resilient communities	Surveys, interviews, focus group and observations will be used to collect data
• Increasing community collective efficacy	Surveys, interviews, focus group and observations will be used to collect data

Summary and Conclusion

Provided with the necessary skills and opportunities, tertiary students can be a driving force for changing behaviors and attitudes that are detrimental to community development and growth.

BUDGET: Mobilizing 1,000 students for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ghana

Item	Unit cost	Quantity	Total cost(\$)	Justification/Explanation
A: SDG Community Outreach Program				
1. Transportation	5	1000	5000	For students to travel to and from the communities twice in a year
2. Branded t-shirt for the program	6	1000	6000	Acquire special T-shirt to increase the visibility of students
3. Honorarium for ambassadors	8	1000	8000	Motivate and compensate the students for their time and effort.
<i>Subtotal A</i>			19000	
B: Others				
1. Communication	500	1	500	To facilitate communication during the project
2. Monitoring and evaluation	1,000	1	1000	To ensure the project delivers the intended objectives
3. Administrative expenses	2,000	1	2000	To cater for administrative costs relating to the project
<i>subtotal D</i>			3500	
Grand Total			22,500	