

CLOSE TO 2,000 STUDENTS PROMOTE PROPER SANITATION IN THEIR COMMUNITIES



Climate change club members clearing weeds in a community during one of their clean up exercises

A total of 1,910 students, comprising 932 boys and 978 girls in 36 public schools in Shama district of Ghana's Western Region have committed themselves to helping tackle insanitary conditions that breed diseases and cause injuries in their communities. This was a result of the Feed the Future Ghana Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project's (CSLP) follow-on monitoring activities as part of a Trainer of Trainers (ToT) organized in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service (GES) for 74 teachers.

The students, led by their teachers, and actively supported by officials of the education unit, are championing the promotion of proper sanitation conditions through effective behavioural change campaigns; especially clean-up exercises and peer education. **One of their key messages is the use of the 3Rs: REDUCE, REUSE and RECYCLE.** Students in the coastal communities are advocating for open defecation-free practices at the beaches and surrounding areas. They are promulgating the negative linkages between such deviant behavior and the outbreak of diseases and believe such practices impact on the incomes of their parents as monies that could otherwise be spent on their studies are rather used in the treatment of preventable diseases.

Due to the poor sanitation conditions in Ghana, the first Saturday of every month has been earmarked as National Sanitation Day. The day, declared in 2014 by the Government of Ghana, through the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, was in response to cholera outbreaks in the country in 2014. All residents mark it with a nationwide clean-up exercise. A bill currently before parliament is soon to be approved and will ensure that individuals and groups who refuse to join the activities on the day are duly prosecuted.

The US Forest Service-managed CSLP has Climate Change Clubs (CCCs) in selected junior high schools within the project's zone of influence and members serve as climate change ambassadors. Clean up exercises are among the frequent activities of the school clubs and are meant to help reduce unsanitary conditions.

The CSLP recognizes the need for proper sanitation as a national duty call and continue to support the involvement and contribution of youth groups.

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