



## **THE POWER OF CLIMATE CHANGE CLUBS**

Hear the voice of some Ghanaian youth:

***“fishing with dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) is not good, it is bad for the fisheries sector, it is not suitable for human consumption but most fishermen still fish with DDT.***

***“the fishermen are destroying the future of our fisheries; using chemicals to fish means poisoning the fish we eat and destroying the sea”***

***“...the DDT kills even the juvenile fish, like killing young children in a town”***

***“...But we are always consuming fish, what happens to our health and future?”***

***“...such fish when consumed will affect our health but the fishermen seem not to care about us”.***

***“...My Father is a fisherman; I know they use such substances but did not know it was that harmful. Now I know so I will advise him not to use DDT for fishing again”.***

These were some of the comments made by members of Akwidaa Seventh-Day Adventist & Yabiw Methodist Junior High Schools' Climate Change Clubs (CCC) at a Coastal Sustainable Landscapes Project (CSLP)-facilitated training in June 2016. Akwidaa is a major fishing community adjacent to significant wetland areas. The CSLP is engaged in this area partially because these wetlands are degraded but have potential to be restored. In addition to working to raise awareness amongst the community such as through the climate change clubs, the project is also working to replant over 12,000 mangrove seedlings and to help develop a local management plan for 208 hectares of these precious mangroves.

The students, now more aware of critical environmental issues and the implications for the future, are poised to contribute towards addressing such preventable problems.

Informal discussions by the CSLP staff with a parent and fisherman in the community revealed that he is , “...touched and appreciates the concerns of our children and will urge my colleagues to stop such bad practices as the future generation equally needs the resource in a better state”.

Illegal fishing methods are among the key problems in the Ghanaian fisheries sector and a major contributor to the decline in fish stock. The situation is widespread particularly among the artisanal fisheries sector. The CSLP believes raising awareness among its Climate Change Club Ambassadors (members of the climate change clubs) is one important means of addressing the problem. The USAID-funded and US Forest Service-managed CSLP has helped to form eight clubs to date, with membership of over 600 students. The clubs have been formed in the coastal districts of Ghana's Western Region and are engaged in several behavioural change activities with one of the clubs having won a National Award in December 2015 for its work related to agriculture and the environment.



*CCC members on an educational tour to agroforestry site*



*Drama by CCC members*