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GHANA

ROCHA

Caring for God's Creation



**SCHOOLS' ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION PROGRAMME**



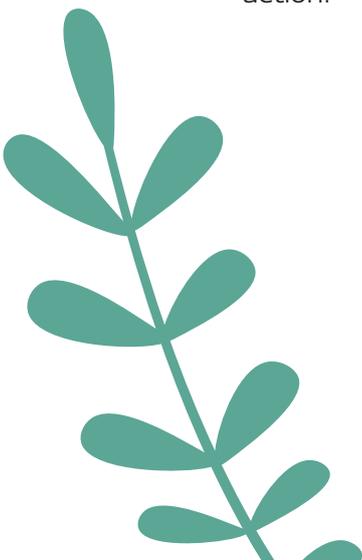
A group of Pupils at the Duampopo (Kubease) JHS take up "trees" during a "Council of all Beings" competition – creative act tool used to increase human understanding from the perspective of non-human life forms



SUMMARY

This document shares insights and information on how A Rocha Ghana has been engaging with schools from the Primary to the Tertiary level in Ghana since 2005. Our schools' environmental education programme prioritizes the intellect and skills of students across the country from all walks of life on issues of environmental governance, protection, utilization, monitoring, and sustainability. The programme has usually focused on project activities of which conservation education has been an integral component. Many of these programmes have been directly or indirectly linked with communities living in and around hotspots in Ghana like Mole National Park, Lake Bosomtwi, Atewa Forest Reserve and Muni Pomadze Ramsar site in Damongo, Kumasi, Kyebi and Winneba respectively.

This document brings together experiences of several years of engaging students across the country in both rural and urban settings. It presents a guide with practical tools and strategies for schools and youth groups to lead on environmental awareness and action.





A video and interactive session with Pupils of Ankaase JHS to increase understanding on the benefits of trees and their contribution to nature and especially water conservation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

05	Introduction
06	Mission
07	The AKASP Model
07	Objectives
08	Awareness
09	Knowledge
10	Attitude
11	Skill
12	Practice
13	Annexes



INTRODUCTION

Ghana's social and economic fabric is dependent on our rich biodiverse socio-economically productive lands and seascapes, providing provisioning, supporting, regulating and cultural services to both children and adults alike.

Increasingly, these biodiverse environmental resources have come under serious pressure over the years, threatening their availability to support us now and also tomorrow's generations. Unsustainable natural resource use as well as environmentally unfriendly lifestyles have been two major drivers of threat and pressure that are reducing the quality of the environment for humans and other life forms. Efforts to address these unsustainable habits often focus on adults with little or no attention to ones who will grow up still repeating the same destructive habits in a vicious cycle. Involving children in environmental stewardship through a school conservation outreach program is therefore imperative. The world-renowned activism of Greta Thunberg, instructively informs us of the good works that an empowered, environmentally conscious and aware child/youth can bring to this world.

A Rocha Ghana's vision is to bring all people together to care for creation always, and that is why we recognize that children possess inherent values, attitudes of care and compassion for their fellow creatures, both human and non-human, and as such the quality of our children's environmental awareness and their sense of wonder of the natural world needs to be supported, channeled and encouraged.

To harness the inherent nurturing attributes of kids and the youth generation, our schools' outreach program serves as an effective tool in fostering learning and awareness as well as amplifying and motivating good environmental behavior, biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management. Our schools' outreach is tuned to align and support the awareness, advocacy and action towards achieving national, regional and global development agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework and Ghana's Medium Term Development Agenda.

MISSION

This schools' environmental education programme seeks to make the SDGs and action for climate and biodiversity a priority and provide a learning platform for students to be environmentally knowledgeable, skilled and dedicated citizens who are willing to achieve and maintain a sustainable relationship with the environment and even more critically take action to secure it for future generations.

Although the schools' programme prioritizes nature and environmentally related SDGs as indicated, school's activities also, directly and indirectly, have ripple impacts on other SDGs.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

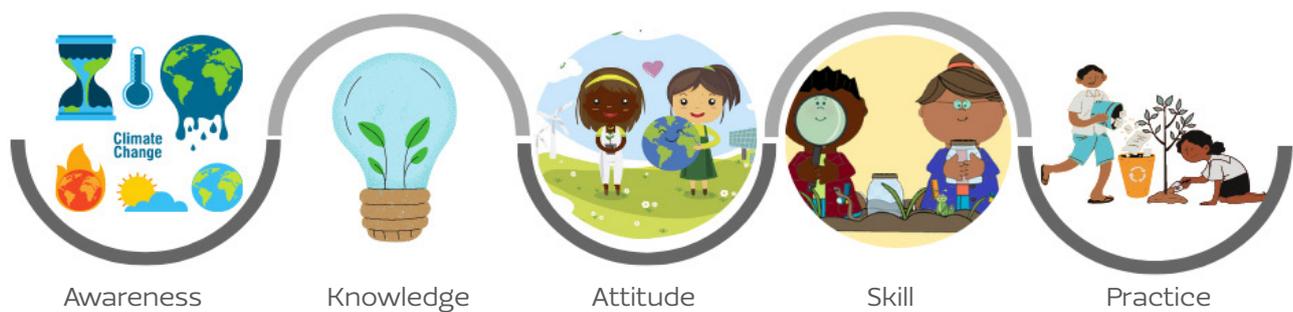


THE AKASP MODEL

A Rocha Ghana's schools' environmental education programme developed the AKASP model for our outreach to ensure different values and attributes of building a positive and action-oriented attitude towards the environment is instilled in the schools and the children. It also aims to give guidance as to what can also be achieved through environmental education of the youth, schools and within our communities.

The AKASP Model builds on enhancing the intrinsic connection of our kids and youth with nature. It is value-focused as well as skills and practice oriented to ensure they have fun and build employable values and skills while taking action to address environmental threats.

The model is based on the following five areas that aim to promote environmentally responsible values and behaviour.



Objectives

- To provide content, guidance and support for students to become environmentally dedicated citizens who are willing to collectively work towards achieving environmentally sustainable development.
- Create a fun but skills development focussed interactive learning experience that will also bring about a much-needed behavioural change amongst students towards achieving environmentally related sustainability outcomes.
- To promote tolerance and understanding of different views of the environment and how these can affect people's interactions with it as well as how they use it. This helps in the thought process in understanding the full picture of how people's views can affect their environment.
- To bring the students and communities together as they learn to engage and work together to address pressing environmental problems in communities where these schools are situated.
- To nurture active nature-loving students to help address some lifestyle related health issues commonly seen in children today, such as obesity, attention deficit disorders, and depression.
- To ensure students are aware of the many sustainable actions we can all easily practice to reduce our impact on the environment and motivate them to implement those actions.

Awareness

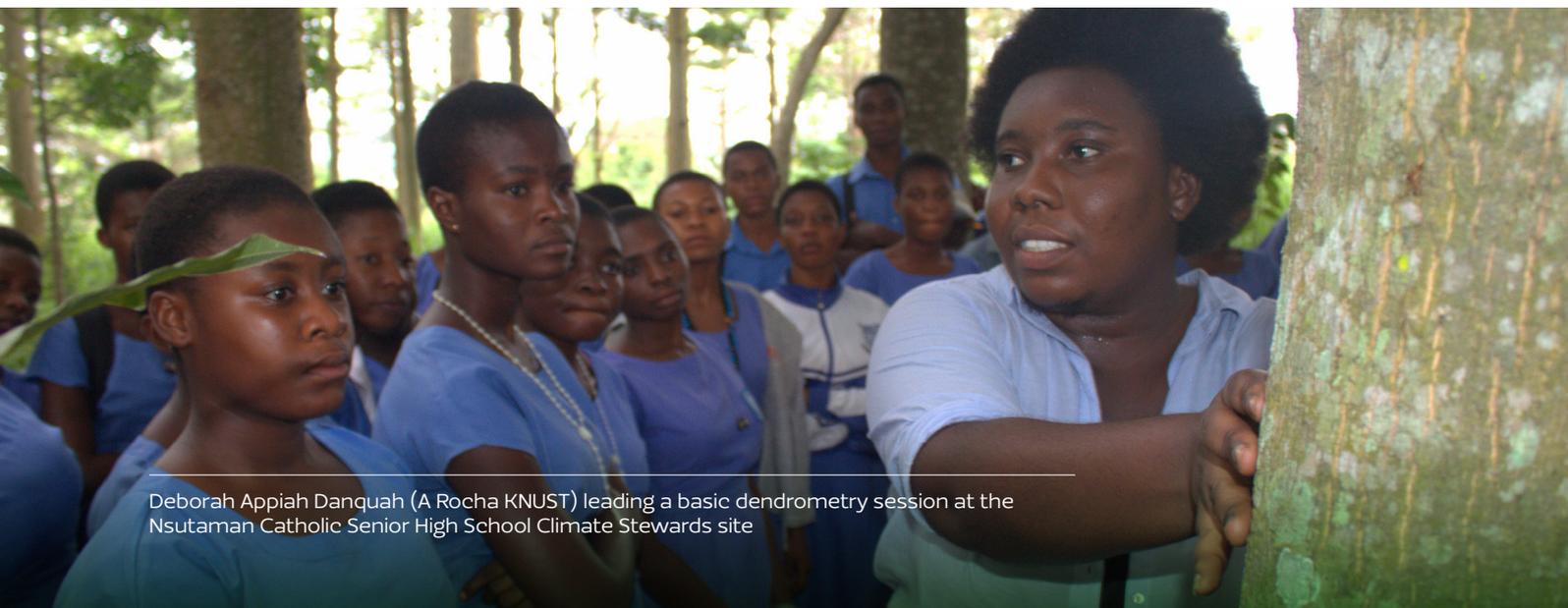
The programme is designed to assist students understand the fragility of the environment and the natural world. This is to help children make caring for nature an integral part of their lives rather than just studying it. Raising environmental awareness will support young people to develop a firm ecological mindset and use it to overcome today's environmental challenges through a proactive attitude and a strong commitment.

Outlook

Students will be educated on various environmental topics that raise questions, thoughts and sensitivity to the environment and issues of concern. This can help contribute towards areas such as how humans interact with and depend on nature as well as thinking about sustainable living, sourcing and career choices.

Activities

- Interactive lessons on selected topics (Climate change, Sustainability, Plastic pollution etc).
- Raising awareness of key environmental days (e.g., World Wildlife Day, World Water Day, World Pangolin Day, Recycling Day etc).
- Interactive storytelling and roleplaying that draws on students' imaginary scenarios with take away lessons.
- Sharing nature documentaries, videos, picture presentations.
- Sharing environmental reading and writing materials.
- Discussions and presentations from students on environmental topics.



Deborah Appiah Danquah (A Rocha KNUST) leading a basic dendrometry session at the Nsutaman Catholic Senior High School Climate Stewards site

Knowledge

This programme is set to foster the understanding of student's capacity for taking in information and using their imagination. This gives them knowledge about environmental issues and the skills in how to investigate and address them. It also encourages them to think innovatively about other ways they can overcome the many environmental challenges we face.

Outlook

Activities will be organised to enhance students' knowledge capacity as well as learning to critically and creatively accomplish tasks.

Activities

- Debates and essay competitions on environmental topics.
- Assignments that allow students to conduct different types of research.
- Students are educated about the Sustainable Development Goals and its importance.
- Exploring and interacting with nature areas within /outside their communities that are protected or affected by human activities.
- Visits to businesses promoting environmental sustainability such as recycling centers.
- Interactions with advocates, activists and experts in areas that promote environmental sustainability.
- Expeditions and excursions to nature areas such as conservation areas.
- Critical thinking sessions on solving environmental problems in their school/community and coming up with ideas.
- Aiding students on where they can source information (online resources, websites etc.).
- Looking at the huge range of possible career choices in nature protection, environmentalism and sustainability to encourage students to consider pursuing them.



Students visit mole park

Attitude

A change in attitude is a key driver within the AKASP model. This helps promote a student's personal motivation and commitment to participate in the environment's improvement and protection. Changes in attitude result from awareness and knowledge.

Outlook

Long term behavioural change that is instilled through various key environmental topic discussions and activities that positively change negative beliefs, effects, and behavioural intentions students may hold regarding environmentally related activities and issues.

Activities

- Conducting of quizzes to assess mindset changes.
- Awarding students who show initiative.
- Partaking in environmentally themed activities (competitions, discussions, debates, seminars etc.).
- Encouraging dialogue between students on how their school could be greener through initiatives.



A group photograph taken with students from Kwabeng Anglican Senior-High School after an education outreach.

Skill

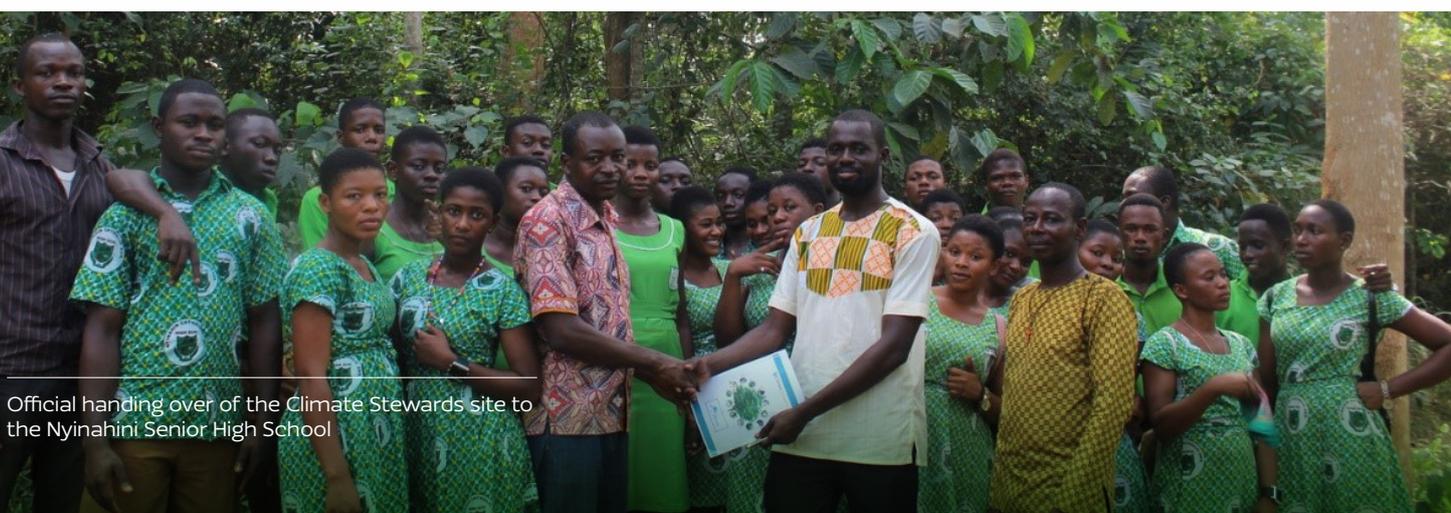
The AKASP model supports students to harness skills that are used when working to identify and investigate environmental problems and to contribute to their resolution. They also learn to work independently or within a team.

Outlook

This is done by guiding and providing students with various skills that advance their understanding and support them to apply solutions to environmental problems they face in their school and communities. These skills can be applied in other subject areas such as maths and science. They will also be introduced to young people around the world who have come up with innovative solutions to address worldwide environmental problems, such as plastic pollution, to encourage them to use their skills in innovative ways to address Ghana's environmental problems.

Activities

- Students conduct community science activities that contribute to research, data monitoring and collection skills (e.g., wildlife survey, water monitoring and community mapping).
- Students learn the different ways materials can be reused and recycle e.g., plastics, paper and aluminium.
- Creating and making DIY (do-it-yourself) projects such as how to create their own compost
- Students learn skills in awareness raising and advocacy through various means such as social media.
- Creative action tools allow students to express their artistic skills to spread environmental advocacy through art, theatre, dance etc.



Official handing over of the Climate Stewards site to the Nyinahini Senior High School

Practice

This is about concrete actions. With the active involvement on working towards resolving environmental issues and putting their new awareness into practice, students are empowered to take on practical actions in their everyday lives that will help reduce the environmental challenges. It is also about learning how to create and manage climate action activities.

Outlook

Students will be taught how to carry out their reviewed action project in some thematic areas such as waste (litter), biodiversity, transport, healthy living etc. They will learn about how their actions impact on climate change and other environmental issues, and how such projects can reduce negative environmental impacts.

Activities

- Conditioning students through environmental nudges such as using reusable water bottles.
- Students partake in hands on climate sustainability projects such as plastic waste separation that promotes the main R's (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle).
- Students promote the importance of maintaining wild plant and green spaces through tree planting activities and urban gardening within their school or communities that shows how urban spaces can be used to grow their own organic foods and help promote pollinators
- Building community citizenship by working together with people within their communities, either to raise awareness or conduct a project.
- Lifestyle changes (walking or cycling short distances.)
- Report persons involved in illegal activities to authorities.
- Take part in ecotourism excursions.

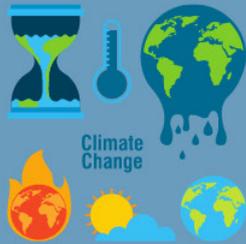


Staff and volunteers of A Rocha Ghana together with students of Nsutaman Catholic Senior High School and their Patron pose at the entrance of their Climate Stewards plantation

ANNEX 1

THE AKASP MODEL

Ensures environmental education is explored and gives guidance as to what is to be achieved for students, schools and communities. It encourages environmental responsibility through the five areas.



AWARENESS

Sensitivity training and exposure to the environment and the issues it faces



KNOWLEDGE

Understanding how the environment functions, our interactions with it and how its problems can be addressed



ATTITUDES

A personal motivation and commitment to participate in the environment's improvement and protection.



SKILL

Harnessing and learning skills used to identify and solve environmental problems



PRACTICE

Being actively involved in carrying out concrete ideas and actions on environmental problems

ANNEX 2

AKASP ACTIVITIES



Climate Change

KNOWLEDGE

- Research style assignments
- Visits to places that promote sustainability (e.g. recycling companies)
- Exploration and brainstorming of environmental project ideas
- Interactions with resource persons that promote environmental sustainability
- Possible future career options that promote environmentalism
- Expeditions and excursions to nature areas such as conservation areas



SKILL

- Students conduct citizen science activities (e.g. wildlife surveys and water quality monitoring)
- Learn different ways materials can be reused and recycled (e.g. plastics, paper and aluminum)
- Creating and making of D.I.Y (do it yourself) projects like creating their own compost
- Learn skills in awareness raising through various means such as social media
- Creative action tools allows for artistic skills to spread environmental advocacy through art, theatre and dance



AWARENESS

- Interactive lessons on topics (climate change, sustainability etc.)
- Raising awareness of key environmental days (World Wildlife Day etc.)
- Showing nature videos and article presentations
- Discussions and presentations from students on various environmental topics



ATTITUDE

- Conducting of quizzes to assess mindset changes
- Awarding students who show initiative
- Working together with nature based solutions
- Encouraging dialogue between students on how their school could be greener



PRACTICE

- Using environmental nudges like reusable water bottles
- Hands on climate projects such as plastic waste recovery to promote the three R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.)
- Promote the importance of maintaining wild plants and green spaces
- Building community citizenship together with people within their communities, either to raise awareness or conduct a project.
- Lifestyle changes (switching off lights and electrical items when not in use, reusable bags for shopping etc.)

ANNEX 3

WAYS YOU CAN GET STARTED



ORGANISE YOURSELVES

An eco-body can be started with students being the center core with support from school heads, teachers, resource persons and even your parents.

INVESTIGATE YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Investigate your school /community. Focus on one or two themes at a time e.g: issues around waste, biodiversity etc.



ACTION PLAN

Prepare an action plan around your selected themes. Have discussions and consultations with the right persons and with adult supervision .

INVOLVING AND INFORMING

This is to let others know about all the amazing eco-actions planned for your school. You could also hold assemblies and get others involved.



MONITOR AND EVALUATE

Self-assessment helps to know if targets, objectives and aims are being met. Your Eco-body monitors the effectiveness of your actions.

ECO CHAMPIONS

Students who are proactive become ambassadors and can publish their outcomes through various outlets . Awards would be handed to such student bodies.





For general inquiries and interest to be part of our
schools' programme kindly contact us

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URL: <https://ghana.arocha.org/environmental-schools-programme>