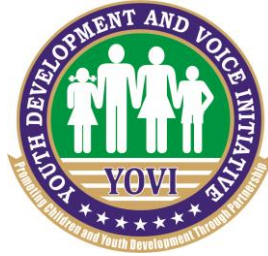


# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND VOICE INITIATIVE



## Profile

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## **Organizational Background & History**

Youth Development and Voice Initiative (YOVI) was founded in 2006 and registered under the Ghana company code of 1963 (Act 179) in 2009 and 2011, respectively. We are both registered with the Registrar General's Department (RGD) and the Department of Social Welfare (DSW).

YOVI was founded by young people who showed concern about the plight of the rural population in the Northern Region of Ghana; especially the conditions of many women and children. They pledged their commitment to work together to improve the prospects and opportunities of these vulnerable groups.

YOVI is a registered Youth development Non-profit, Nonpolitical, Non-ethnic NGO that exists to help empower youth, women and children and other vulnerable groups to contribute meaningfully towards national development and prosperity. Members of YOVI in forming the organization, recognized the fact that children are the most vulnerable group in society and need a little push in order to realize their dreams and aspirations. With solid backgrounds and experience in working with children, YOVI developed educational programmes to help unlock new opportunities and develop their full potential.

We began providing revolving loans to help families who only need a small amount of capital to facilitate their businesses. These loans are organised around groups to provide a network of support and discussion whilst also creating a feeling of community. YOVI is a member of the Girls Not Brides (GNB), Global partnership to end child marriage, Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child (GNCRC), NGOs in Health Coalition, SDG 2 Network, Livelihood Support Network (LSN) responsible for child rights issues, Health and well-being.

## **Our Mission**

To work together with Stakeholders, development partners, and poor communities to advocate for the respect of the rights of children, Youth and Women to derive change on their own terms whilst contributing to the improvement of the quality of life of young people through SRHR education and services.

## **Our Vision**

A society free from all forms of abuses, poverty and gender inequality, violence against women and children with improved quality education for all, health and well-being.

## **Governing Body**

The organization is headed by a five (5) member Advisory Board [herein after referred to as BOARD OF TRUSTEES] who are child rights activist, educationist, health professionals, youth development activists, gender and human rights activists; dedicated and self-motivated to ensure smooth running of YOVI. The Board is responsible for policy formulation, direction and supervision of all activities. The Executive Director is responsible for the implementation of policies formulated by the Board of Trustees; assisted by Programme Manager, Finance & Administrative Manager, Project Officers and volunteers.

## **Situation of Northern Region of Ghana**

The Northern Region of Ghana occupies approximately 30% of Ghana's land mass. The region currently has 26 Administrative Districts, with Tamale Metropolitan as the Regional Capital. The 2010 Population and Housing Census returned a regional population size of 2,479,461 (1,249,574 males and 1,229,887 females – a sex ratio of 98.4. Generally, Northern Region has rural population of 69.7% as against 30.3% urban, population density of 35 persons per sq.km; child dependency ratio of 88.2 and adult dependency ratio of 8.7 and total dependency ratio of 96.9. The people are largely Mole-Dagbani (52.7%) and Gurma (27.3%, with 60% and 16.0% practicing Islam and Traditional Religions respectively). Agriculture is the major occupation. The literacy rate is as low as 37.2%, being the worse among the 10 regions in Ghana.

Poverty is particularly a predominant factor in this part of the country, where hunger and malnutrition constitute serious health problems for most people despite the fact that most of the agricultural production is undertaken in the North. As a result of the historical concentration of commercial, government and industrial institutions in Southern Ghana, the north-south inequalities and gender disparities in wealth and well-being has been observed by the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme

I&II (GPRSP I&II) as being on the increase. Most of the population lives in the rural areas where education, health and other basic social amenities are poor.

In effect, gender inequalities prevail and women have limited access to resources and difficulty in generating income. The existence of streetism, child trafficking and physical abuse of children is a commonplace. Interventions that are gender sensitive and pro-poor are needed to ensure sustained livelihoods for women, youth and children in Northern Ghana.

### **Operational Areas**

Currently we operate in 7 Districts of Northern Region, Namely Tamale Metropolis, Sagnarigu Municipal, Tolon District, Savelugu Municipal, Nanton District, Gushegu and Karaga Districts.

### **Thematic Areas of Operation**

- Health
- Food security and Nutrition
- Women and Youth Empowerment
- Child Protection
- Governance

### ***Beliefs***

YOVI believes in collaboration as impetus for cost-effective intervention. The activities of YOVI are oriented towards encouraging entrepreneurship as a solution to eliminating poverty. Moreover, our core vision lies in enhancing the welfare of families living in rural communities in Northern Ghana. Recognised as the most vulnerable groups, there is a special focus on promoting the survival, protection and empowerment needs of youth, women and children.

### ***Impact***

*Some achievements since our establishment in 2009:*

Since our establishment, YOVI has provided over **364** eligible rural women with revolving loans to better the lives and improve family income. These loans are

provided along with skills training and educational programmes to ensure that all participants come together to learn and support each other in their ventures. As part of our organisation's development plan, YOVI intends to set up a sheabutter village and register women groups with the Ghana Export Promotion Council to export sheabutter and Soybeans other parts of the globe.

Furthermore, we have successfully supported women located in our project communities to embark on agriculture production in variety of crops such as maize, soybean and millet. Since 2014 to date, YOVI has supported more than **175** women farmers to engage in Soybean production and local processing into Soy milk as a nutritional value for children. In the near future, YOVI intends to organize these young people into cooperatives to engage in agribusiness.

We have reached over 35 basic and senior high schools and 2,780 in-school youth reached with messages on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) education and services within the Tamale Metropolis and its environs. Young people, mostly adolescents are organized into clubs and through round table discussions, deliberate issues concerning their sexuality, education, child rights & responsibilities, and carrier development.

Since 2009 to date, we have intensified education and services on SRHR particularly improving safe abortion practices among young girls in three Districts and 15 communities in Northern Region. The programme has reached more than 130 religious leaders and traditional authorities in catchment communities as agents of change. Through community education campaigns we seek to change attitudes and practices so that children's rights are upheld. Main activities include: Sensitization, open fora, 'durbars' or community discussions on children and discussions with children on their perspectives, and Annual reviews with stakeholders.

### ***Funding***

YOVI is currently seeking funding to undertake the following development programmes:

#### ***1. Construction of an Ultra-modern ICT Centre.***

The power of ICT in learning and transformation has been widely documented. While the benefits are widely recognized, very little has been done by stakeholders to ensure that these benefits trickle down to all sections of society including children. This ultra-modern ICT centre will recruit and train children between the ages of 10-18 years on information technology to ensure that children remain a key part of the digital revolution, and also to offer opportunities for them to expand on their creativity and talents.

## ***2. Improving Nutrition for families in Northern Ghana***

To achieve this YOVI will work with families in catchment communities to raise awareness and knowledge about good nutrition for children as well as feeding methodologies (quantities and frequency). YOVI will also work with same to ensure that child rights are observed including the right to good health in which case it will collaborate with government to ensure that malnourished children are effectively rehabilitated. YOVI will also work with the children and create awareness of their rights, roles and responsibilities including teaching them good nutrition and the importance of good eating habits and diverse cropping. Children will be mentored and taught good behaviour, tolerance, appreciation of self and others as well as community responsibility. Using various approaches including exposure trips, children will be encouraged to work hard and pursue better education outcomes.

## ***3. Violence against Women & Girls***

Ghana assented to following the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, 1994), the Beijing Platform (1995), Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW) among others. All these, including United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), attest to the seriousness attached to the well-being and protection of women and girls. Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre (GSHRDC) exists to promote violent-free situation for women and girls and commits researches to enrich programmes. All these rest on the 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana as National blueprint. Contrary to established cultural norms, traditional values, religious precepts and social standards, violence against women and girls remain

nagging and turbulent to individual, family and community development. It is indeed pervasive in Northern Ghana.

#### ***4. Youth and ICT in Agriculture programme***

The overall goal of the programme is aimed at facilitating the economic transformation of youth in Northern Ghana's agricultural sector, particularly soybean to achieve a greater degree of stability in their enterprises and livelihoods, and will as well contribute to nutritional improvement for children and their families. Current global efforts at addressing the challenges of Youth participation and commitment to exploiting and utilising ICT to enhance their capacities for self-employment, entrepreneurship and empowerment have so far yielded widely varied results. By its design the programme will recognize the complexity of factors that drive youth entrepreneurship and the multi-sectoral nature of the phenomenon and challenge of youth unemployment/under-employment in Northern Ghana in addressing factors impacting entrepreneurship (such as access to credit, property rights, regulatory restrictions, and weak infrastructure) and the societal context shaping youth entrepreneurship, such as values, attitudes towards youth entrepreneurship, and social and professional networks.