

YOUTH RALLY 2013 YOUNG ADULTS SUPPORT SERVICE

(BY LETIZIA LUSARDI)

The YASS team celebrated its annual Youth Rally the last Friday of August. This is a long awaited event amongst beneficiaries, as it gives them the opportunity to meet outside the office and engage in multiple leisure activities during a whole day. The Youth Rally is also an opportunity for them to commemorate the end of another year of friendship and community, and the start of a new one of hard and focused work in the direction of fulfilling their aspirations.

For the first time, it was the YASS Youth Board to choose the venue of the event. This time, the Youth Rally was held at a recreational park in Somanya, the capital of Yilo Krobo District, a district in the Eastern Region of south Ghana. The team was proud to know that this year's turnout was the highest ever: 76 beneficiaries as opposed to 50 in 2012.

The day started off with a two-hour bus ride, in which the young adults laughed, shared stories about their summers and sang to popular Ghanaian tunes. The arrival to destination was marked by excitement and anticipation, a mood that reflected the writing on the entrance gate to perfection: "For happy people only".



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The YASS beneficiaries did not hide their surprise at the multiplicity of activities available at the venue, which included a trampoline, soccer and volleyball courts, a swimming pool, ping-pong tables, a dance floor, board games. . . For many, this is the only time of the year in which they have access to such facilities.



YASS' staff reunited the young adults into a conference room and congratulated them for their hard work and motivation throughout year. They expressed their pride at having been able to witness each and every beneficiary's individual progresses, be it in school, vocational training, university, work, etc. Undoubtedly, what makes the YASS bond so strong is its members' unswerving commitment to make the most out of every situation and the will to not give up in the face of hardship.



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Two speakers arrived, ready to share their experiences with the group. Mr. Maori, a self-made professional photographer, gave a motivational speech in which he insisted that the key to success is engaging in positive thinking. He urged the young adults to believe that they are all more important than they think they are in moments of disillusionment. The room burst in acknowledgement and applause.

Mrs. Ama, a human resources consultant, was up next, engaging the beneficiaries in interactive group exercises throughout her career-oriented speech. She advised them to pursue a profession that would enable them to feel happy when they got up in the morning, but to have determination and flexibility as their leitmotif. Beneficiaries' high level of interest and appreciation throughout both interventions reinforced TSSI's strong conviction that offering a direct exchange with well-educated professionals should remain an important part of its program.



After lunch, the young adults were free to engage in any of the multiple activities. Most rotated from one to the other, but unsurprisingly, the swimming pool was a main attraction.



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At around 6PM the day came to an end, and staff reunited everyone for the first-ever YASS prize draw. The young adults were thrilled at the initiative, and commented that this was the best Youth Rally so far. They expressed their gratitude to TSSI, to the YASS staff, but mostly to the Youth Board's, who is indisputably becoming a source of inspiration among peers for their hard efforts.

