



**Advocates for
Community
Alternatives**



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WELCOME TO QUARTERS 2 & 3 NEWSLETTER

This edition features inspiring achievements, from supporting the next generation of development leaders and advocates to making progress in community health, water access, and land rights. Read about Eric Anorrey's prestigious Fellowship award and the launch of a historic moot court competition.



CDD

Eric Anorrey named the Most Outstanding Sora Kaufman Fellow for 2025

In the heart of Ghana's Bono Region, a quiet revolution is taking place. It's not led by politicians or corporations, but by a determined young change-maker named Eric Anorrey, who has been named as the Most Outstanding Sora Kaufman Fellow 2025. His recognition is not merely a personal accolade—it is a resounding endorsement of a vision that empowers communities to define their own path.

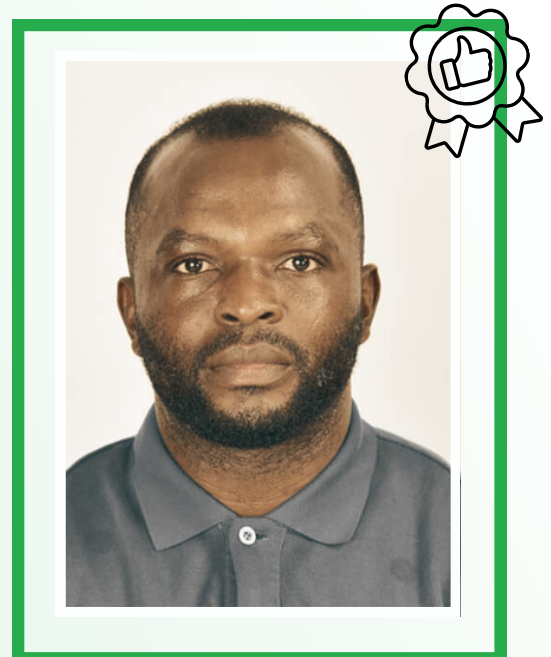
The Sora Kaufman Fellowship is ACA's flagship program to establish a network of African leaders and practitioners in the field of community-driven development and advocacy. This residential practicum targets practitioners who collaborate with relevant stakeholders to tackle community and systemic challenges that hinder the accessibility and involvement of citizens in decision-making.

For emerging as the Most Outstanding Sora Kaufman Fellow 2025, Eric is receiving a \$10,000 grant from the Fellowship to embark on a community-driven initiative designed to improve the economic wellbeing of 20 vulnerable teenage mothers and unemployed women below the age of 45 in the informal sector in Sunyani Zongo Community. Eric's initiative will provide beneficiaries with guidance and mentorship as they pursue various economic ventures of their choices to achieve sustainable livelihoods and financial independence.

In the course of the project, the beneficiary women will work hand-in-hand with the Sunyani Municipal Assembly to ensure the incorporation of marginalized women's needs into the Municipality's Medium-Term Development Plan beginning in 2026.

About GYIC

Eric is the Executive Director of the Global Youth Innovation Center (GYIC) LBG, which was founded in May 2019. GYIC is legally registered in Ghana as a non-profit organization that uses cutting-edge technology for advocacy and provides tools





and opportunities to empower the youth and other vulnerable populations for improved livelihoods. Its thematic areas of focus are Climate Change, Economic Empowerment, Gender and Youth Development.

Gratitude

Eric's selection as the Most Outstanding Fellow is not just a mark of distinction, it reflects how he has embodied the values of the Fellowship. His gratitude message captured it best: "Being named the Most Outstanding Fellow is both humbling and inspiring. I see it as a responsibility to do more, give more, and lead with integrity and empathy. My selection is a celebration of the collective effort of everyone who believes in grassroots-led change. Together, we are shaping a future where communities are not just beneficiaries, but architects of their own development"; he said.

Bonsu community improves access to water through *Oman Yie Die*

Access to clean water is no longer a distant dream but a growing reality at Bonsu, a farming community in the Nkoranza South Municipality of Ghana's Bono East Region, thanks to a community-led development initiative that ACA facilitated as part of its *Oman Yie Die* project, using the Facilitated Collective Action Process (FCAP).

For years, residents of Bonsu, especially those living in outlying or newly developed areas, had to commute long distances every day in search of water from either a nearby stream or from a few individuals with mechanized boreholes in their homes. These residents, especially women and children, would typically load a bicycle with jerrycans and push them for long distances, thereby negatively impacting their health.



To address this challenge, the people of Bonsu began working collectively to extend pipe-borne water directly to homes in October 2024. This bold step toward improving public health and daily living conditions was made possible with a GHS 120,000.00 microgrant from Advocates for Community Alternatives (ACA).



So far, the impact has been quite remarkable, as about a hundred out of about 307 households have been connected to the water system, while most of the remaining households are in the process of getting connected. This is expected to significantly reduce the burden of walking long distances for water and ensure a safer, more convenient water supply.

Sustainability

Beyond improving access to water, the project is also strengthening the community's financial sustainability. Any household that seeks to connect to the extended water distribution network contributes a token of GHS 200.00 to the *Oman Yie Die* Committee, creating a local fund that will be used to support other development priorities identified during the visioning and goal-setting stage of the community's FCAP process.

Sharing his enthusiasm about the project's long-term impact, Mr. Ameyaw Franklin, Technical Advisor from the Nkoranza South Municipal Assembly, said:

"I'm excited about the fact that water will not be wasted but rather stored and used efficiently to benefit residents. Even more importantly, the small contributions from households will help generate income that the community can reinvest in future development initiatives."

Ms. Juliet Fosuaa, the Community-Based Facilitator, also reflected on the journey with pride, saying: "I'm really excited about the knowledge ACA equipped me with through the FCAP methodology. It gave me the skills to guide my community in developing a shared vision, and today, that vision is becoming a reality through this successful water extension project."



Community-led

The Bonsu water extension project stands as a compelling example of community-led development in action, where local voices, local leadership, and shared responsibility come together to create lasting change. ACA staff are excited to watch communities own their development trajectory, hoping that government and other social actors will be interested in adopting this strategy towards community planning and development.

Nkwabeng community expands healthcare access

Nkwabeng, a community near Nkoranza in Ghana's Bono East Region, is taking bold steps to improve healthcare delivery by expanding its health centre, a project driven by the community's vision for accessible, quality health services. Originally aiming for an outpatient department, the community is now rallying additional funds to build a 24-room health facility. Their goal is to upgrade their modest clinic into a fully functional polyclinic — a leap forward in rural healthcare.

While all *Oman Yie Die* communities make significant contributions to their FCAP project rather than relying solely on external investment, Nkwabeng has dug especially deep. Nkwabeng's residents saw the FCAP as an opportunity to achieve a long-held goal that had been frustrated by internal divisions and lack of community organization. They thus seized on the USD 9,000 microgrant from ACA and the District Assembly's and used the FCAP methodology as a tool to overcome their previous challenges and disappointments. The regular facilitated meetings have united the community and empowered it to lead and manage the project, ensuring that the intervention reflects local priorities and promotes long-term sustainability. And capitalizing on broad community buy-in and excitement for the project, they are making cash and in-kind contributions that far outstrip the external investment from ACA and the local authorities.

Mr. Herthson Kumah, FCAP Chairman for Nkwabeng, expressed his enthusiasm for the project.

"We are very excited about this initiative. I am especially glad that ACA, through the Municipal Assembly of Nkoranza South, chose our community as a beneficiary of the *Oman Yie Die* project.

Mr. Osei Nimako, Program Manager, also shared his thoughts about the project's impact when completed and praised ACA's model of community empowerment.



“I am very hopeful this project will serve the community well. I commend ACA for its consistent efforts in promoting community-driven development and facilitating spaces where communities like Nkwabeng can lead their development initiatives.” Once completed, the clinic expansion is expected to significantly reduce waiting time, improve service delivery, and create a healthier environment for both patients and healthcare workers.

The Nkwabeng project underscores the strength of community leadership in achieving sustainable development goals. By combining local initiative with ACA's facilitation approach, the community has moved from dependency to self-determination — setting a clear example of how investment in local capacity yields impact far beyond external financial contributions.

Legal

ACA-PILIWA Moot Court Competition 2025 takes off

Advocates for Community Alternatives (ACA), in partnership with the Public Interest Lawyering Initiative for West Africa (PILIWA), is pleased to announce the inaugural edition of the ACA-PILIWA Moot Court Competition—open exclusively to law students from universities in South-West Nigeria.

The competition will take place in a hybrid format from 17th to 28th November 2025. The preliminary and the quarter-final rounds will be held virtually while the semi-finals and the final rounds will take place in-person at the College of Law, Caleb University, Magodo City Campus, Lagos State, Nigeria. This landmark event aims to inspire the next generation of public interest lawyers by engaging undergraduate law students in critical issues surrounding human rights and environmental justice in Africa.

Participants will explore the application of regional and international human rights instruments, strengthen their legal research and oral advocacy skills, and deepen their understanding of public interest litigation in contemporary legal and social contexts.

Interested qualified applicants are to reach out to the organizers via this e-mail address for further information: piliwamoot@advocatesforalternatives.org



20 community members complete legal training on land and property rights

Twenty representatives from ACA's partner communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana have successfully completed a three-day legal training program focused on land and property rights, as well as Ghana's mining laws.

The training, organized and facilitated by ACA, sought to strengthen participants' understanding of the legal framework governing land acquisition, ownership, and registration, while equipping them with the tools to educate their communities on sustainable and lawful practices.

This program formed part of ACA's ongoing capacity-building initiative and served as a follow-up to an initial session conducted in April 2025. The series was informed by a needs assessment undertaken by ACA's Legal Department, which highlighted significant challenges faced by local communities, including disputes over land acquisition and the adverse impacts of mining activities.



Land rights for the people

Training participants were given a crash course in the key Ghanaian laws that govern land rights and community rights in the mining context. In ACA's experience, rural residents and communities often lose out to powerful economic actors - mining companies, traditional authorities, and others - because they are not familiar with the procedures and safeguards that protect their rights and well-being.

Participants learned, for example, that they and their local authorities have the right to prior notification about plans to mine in their vicinity, that they have the right to negotiate access to land and compensation before that land is taken, and that the law prescribes clear guidelines about how compensation should be calculated. Moreover, in a bid to ensure that the knowledge imparted through the training is spread widely in communities and used in practical situations, ACA prepared and distributed models and templates for use in documenting land transactions and calculating land and crop compensation. Armed with these resources, ACA's partner communities have been able to hold companies to higher standards and protect their land from arbitrary expropriation.



Empowered Through Knowledge

“Before this training, many of us did not fully understand the laws governing land in Ghana. Now I feel more confident that I can protect my family’s land and help others in my community avoid mistakes. This knowledge is very empowering,” said Asabea Sarah, a representative from the Odumase community in the Eastern Region. They also called for similar training programs to be extended to other districts and regions facing similar challenges.



Science

In this edition of our Newsletter, we shine a spotlight on the activities of Paul Adjekota, ACA’s inaugural Science Fellow, who is based in Warri, Delta State, Nigeria. With the support of ACA’s Science Adviser, Dr. Kwabina Ibrahim, Paul has used his expertise to boost community-led initiatives aimed at improving agriculture and safeguarding the water supply in Nigerian communities.

Safe water in our hands: Igbogidi community takes action

Residents of the Nigerian town of Igbogidi became alarmed when boreholes were drilled dangerously close to septic tanks, raising fears about their drinking water safety. Instead of waiting for outside help, the community took proactive steps. With the support of Advocates for Community Alternatives and guidance from a hydrogeologist, the community swung into action.

Beyond just uncovering contamination, the project empowered the community with knowledge and practical skills. Residents gained confidence in understanding water safety, learning to demand better borehole siting and proper drilling depths to protect their water sources. This grassroots initiative demonstrated how community-led efforts can transform access to safe water, equipping people to safeguard their health and advocate for better infrastructure. The Igbogidi experience highlights the power of education and local action in securing safe drinking water for all families.



Reviving the Soil: Farmers in DSC take science into their own hands

On the farmlands of the Delta Steel Company (DSC) estate, farmers faced declining harvests despite trying various methods like chemical fertilizers and crop rotation. Frustration mounted as yields dropped and fertilizer costs rose, signaling that the soil was exhausted. In late 2024, with help from Advocates for Community Alternatives (ACA), farmers embraced citizen science, an approach that draws on their own indigenous knowledge to test and understand soil health. They learned how to collect and analyze soil samples, revealing that the soil was acidic, low in organic matter, and deficient in key nutrients like phosphorus and potassium. The community concluded that overuse of chemical fertilizers was contributing to soil depletion.

Armed with these insights, the farmers adopted practical, affordable solutions such as liming with local materials, adding fermented cow dung to improve organic content, and applying fertilizers based on actual soil needs. This shift transformed their farming approach from guesswork to informed decisions, improving yields, reducing costs, and promoting sustainable land management. The DSC farmers' experience highlights the power of communities wielding scientific knowledge to diagnose and revive even the most "tired" soils, enabling them to protect their livelihoods through sustainable agriculture.

Farming under pressure: How Orhuwhorun farmers discovered the secrets of their soil

In Orhuwhorun, rapid urbanization is shrinking farmland, pushing farmers to repeatedly cultivate the same plots with heavy fertilizer use, leading to rising costs, lower yields, and growing frustration. In response, twelve farmers, supported by Advocates for Community Alternatives (ACA), embraced citizen science to better understand their soil. Through simple training on soil sampling and testing, they uncovered critical insights: while nitrogen levels were adequate, essential nutrients like phosphorus and potassium were often deficient, and issues like soil acidity and high conductivity explained their struggling crops. This new understanding transformed their view of the soil from a mystery into something manageable.



Armed with scientific knowledge, the farmers discovered practical solutions using local resources, such as neutralizing acidity with burnt palm stems or dolomitic lime and restoring fertility with organic manure and covering crops. This shift empowered them to farm smarter, not harder, even on diminishing land. The experience turned science from a distant concept into a valuable tool they could wield confidently, helping them protect their soil, reduce waste, and secure food for their families.

Can Organic Manure Feed Us? Lessons from a Pilot in DSC

Farmers across Nigeria often struggle with choosing between chemical fertilizers, which boost yields quickly but are costly and harm the soil, and organic manure, which is cheaper and environmentally friendly but doubted for its effectiveness. At the Delta Steel Company (DSC) estate, a group of farmers conducted an experiment supported by Advocates for Community Alternatives (ACA) to test different amounts of organic manure against chemical fertilizers. The results showed that crops grown with well-prepared organic manure produced better yields and helped restore soil health.

The experiment also highlighted the importance of balance—too much manure caused issues like odor and waterlogging, while too little had little effect. Farmers learned the value of using the right type, amount, and timing of organic manure. For the DSC farmers, this pilot represented more than just a test; it offered a hopeful vision of affordable, sustainable farming that reduces reliance on expensive chemicals and nurtures the land. The key takeaway is that what was once considered waste can be transformed into a valuable resource when farmers lead the transition to practical, lasting solutions.

From classroom to community: Delta State University scientists and students take science into the field

At Delta State University in Abraka, Nigeria, a unique citizen science training workshop led by Dr. Ibrahim brought students, lecturers, and researchers out of the classroom and into real-world settings like farms, boreholes, and villages.



Supported by Advocates for Community Alternatives (ACA), the workshop combined lectures with hands-on practicums to teach participants how to conduct community-driven science—listening to local needs, designing practical sampling protocols, and interpreting results in clear language.

Through exercises on water quality, soil health, and organic manure application, students gained firsthand experience linking scientific methods to immediate community challenges, learning to translate data into actionable solutions alongside faculty mentors. This immersive approach transformed theoretical knowledge into impactful practice, fostering a two-way exchange between the university and local communities.

By the workshop's end, participants co-authored briefs recommending tangible actions like relocating boreholes away from contamination sources and optimizing soil treatments. The initiative also sparked commitments to integrate community science into academic curricula and to continue monitoring outcomes in partner villages. Equipped with new skills and manuals, teams of students and staff are already supporting ongoing water and soil projects, exemplifying how collaborative science can lead to healthier environments, stronger crops, and a more engaged, practically skilled generation of scientists.

Thank you for reading !

