

Playground – Empowering young people in Ghana to build their dreams

ACCRA, Ghana – On 2 July 2021, in Jamestown, Accra, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Delegation of the European Union to Ghana, the [Sports for Education and Economic Development \(SEED\) Project](#) and DUNK Grassroots, together with some 200 youth, inaugurated the newly renovated basketball court at the GaMashie Development Agency.

The renovation and inauguration are part of a project titled “Playground” that was created to empower young people to create viable alternatives to irregular migration. It leverages the educational power of basketball to equip the youth with life skills and self-resilience.

“Using basketball as a vehicle to foster life skills, is a fantastic approach that will be beneficial for the youth of Jamestown and neighbouring communities. Our youth has a lot of potential, and they need safe spaces to grow and thrive. This is an opportunity to allow them to create their own alternatives to irregular migration,” said the Mayor of Accra, Honourable Mohammed Adjei Sowah.

The Playground project is a partnership made possible through the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, funded by the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

“Playground has the youth and community at its heart. We work with our partners to inform about safe migration options as well as the dangers of irregular migration,” said Abibatou Wane-Fall, Chief of Mission IOM Ghana. She added: “Together, we bring the vision of an open and inclusive space to life – a space for girls and boys, young women and young men, from all walks of lives and backgrounds, migrants, returnees, neighbours, and locals. Everyone is invited to play and learn and grow together.”

The Playground project partners work together to empower young people to make well-informed migration choices, to decide on their own futures and to build their dreams. Together with local partners, it builds a culture of self-development and pride on and beyond the court.

“Ensuring youth have access to safe places to play is fundamental, as it’s the place where all the life skills programmes, games and community outreach occur – it all begins on the court,” explained Mactar NDiaye, Director of Operations, SEED Project. “This is why we at SEED are incredibly honored to have worked on the ground with the community of Jamestown to refurbish this basketball court, which also helps better secure their actual needs and ownership.”

This inauguration event concludes a series of youth engagement initiatives designed to empower young people. Implemented under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative since 2017 in 12 countries in the region, these activities mostly happen in public spaces using sports and art. IOM has supported over 1800 Ghanaian migrants to voluntarily and safely return home. Over 700 returnees have completed their reintegration to date, despite the challenges posed by COVID-19. Overall, over 300 awareness-raising sessions have taken place in communities and schools across the country, while radio and TV broadcasts have reached approximately 1,100,000 Ghanaians nationwide.

For more information visit <https://yenna.org/playground>, or contact:

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