

# YOUTH EMPLOYMENT NETWORK FOR WEST AFRICA

WA

SEPTEMBER 2007

YEN-WA NEWSLETTER

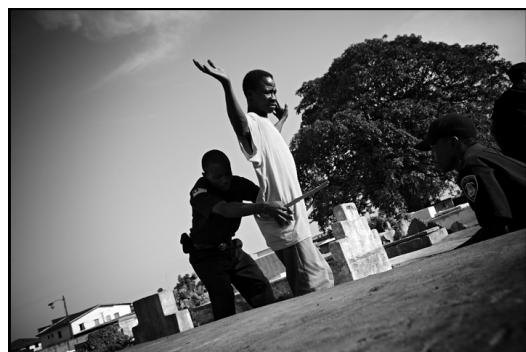
SPOTLIGHT



YEN-WA

## Illegal drugs trade: The wrong solution to youth unemployment in Guinea Bissau

The growing use of Guinea Bissau as a transshipment point in the global trade of cocaine has recently received increasing attention in the media. According to the Independent Newspaper an estimated tonne of pure cocaine from South America transits through Guinea Bissau daily. Experts agree that the problem of drug trafficking is pervasive in the West Africa sub-region with countries including Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Mauritania, Sierra Leone already faced with similar challenges and many more at risk. Interpol estimates that two-thirds of all the cocaine destined for Europe flows through West Africa. The severity of the issue has been underlined by recent events such as record breaking cocaine hauls in Senegal in July of 1.2 tonnes and 1.25 tonnes, the discovery in Belgium in June of 350 kg of cocaine in unchecked baggage from Sierra Leone and Gambia as well as 630 kg at an airport in Mali in May.



**Anti-narcotics Operation in Liberia**

© UNODC/Alessandro Scotti

Furthermore, the 5,7 tonnes of cocaine seized in the last 8 months of this year are more than double the total for last year. In this issue we take a look at the impact the fast growing drug trafficking industry has on youth and their employment prospects focussing on Guinea Bissau, one of the countries hardest hit by this problem.

Guinea Bissau is one of the poorest countries in the world and ranks 173 out of 175 on UNDP's Human Development Index. A civil war in the late 1990s severely disrupted most public services such as health and education, and

recovery since then has been slow. In 2004, the majority of children in Guinea Bissau were not enrolled in primary school and only 9% were enrolled in secondary school. Conflict and political instability has led to poor economic performance and limited employment opportunities. In addition, Guinea Bissau has struggled to tackle criminal activity through its weak law enforcement and judicial sectors whose work is made more difficult by the absence of a single prison in the country.

These challenges, in conjunction with Guinea Bissau's strategic location between Latin America and Europe and geographical nature - a poorly patrolled mangrove coastline with hundreds of uninhabited islands - make the nation a prime target as a drop off and pick up location for cocaine destined for growing European markets and beyond. According to Amado De Andres, the Deputy Representative for West and Central Africa of the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Guinea Bissau has seen a rise in Latin American operators often from Colombia, Brazil and Venezuela who have succeeded in transporting industrial sized shipments of cocaine via this West African nation. In April police in Guinea Bissau managed to seize 635 kg of cocaine which was believed to be just the remainder of a 2.5 tonne consignment. De Andres explained that there are also local and regional networks in operation that are transporting batches of several hundred kilograms of cocaine to regional markets and to final destinations in Europe and South Africa largely through the use of mules.

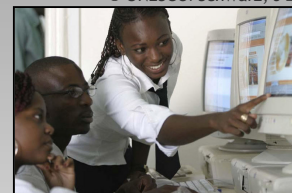
These drug related activities along with the flashy cars and expensive lifestyle they offer have not gone unnoticed by the large youth population in this country where the average age is 19 years. The trade has been particularly attractive to young people, the majority of whom are faced with bleak prospects for their future. As Director of the National Youth Council, Nkitcha Na Obna pointed out, "[Drug trafficking] is becoming very serious. Young people are very susceptible to these bad influences." Linking the issue to economic opportunities the director went on to explain

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### WHAT IS YEN-WA?

YEN-WA is the recently launched youth employment unit hosted at UNOWA in Dakar, Senegal. Created as a UN interagency initiative, our objectives are to: raise awareness and to mainstream youth employment as both a political and a security issue, to facilitate capacity-building both at the national and regional level and to engage with the private sector find ways to increase their involvement in initiatives to create jobs for young people.

that “underemployment is an open door to drugs and prostitution. Youth delinquency, with people just sitting around with nothing to do, leads to risky behaviour”.

There is growing evidence that youth are increasingly turning to drugs either as a means to earn quick money or as a way to temporarily escape reality and forget their problems.

The cocaine trade has opened up a multi-billion dollar industry in Guinea Bissau revolving around the collection, storage, security, relocation and dissemination of cocaine. The street value of the 635kg of cocaine seized by the police in April is equivalent to 18% of the country’s total GDP in 2006, while the 2.5

tonne consignment of which the seizure was just a part has a street value in Europe of about \$212.6 million; 70% of Guinea Bissau’s GDP. With several large consignments transiting through the country on a weekly basis, one can appreciate the impact this level of money can have in attracting local people to facilitate the transport of cocaine to final destinations. Young people are being hired to perform a range of tasks such as picking up cocaine that is abandoned at sea, loading and unloading packages of cocaine or couriering drugs as mules to European destinations.

According to the UNODC on just one flight, officials at an Amsterdam airport found 32 West African drug couriers who had left from Guinea Bissau. These mules carrying cocaine to Europe can easily earn several thousands dollars for each trip where they successfully transport the drugs to their final destination. Many youth are unable to resist the opportunity to make this fast money, especially as their alternative is typically unemployment or underemployment.



635kg cocaine seized in Bissau with street value of about \$54million

© UNODC/Alessandro Scotti

As is often the case in the industry, youth are sometimes compensated in cocaine which they can then sell on the street for their own profit. This in turn creates an incentive to establish local markets for cocaine. UNODC has noted growing cocaine use in West Africa, as have people working on youth issues in Guinea Bissau. According to Domingos Te, a priest who has established a drug rehabilitation centre in Bissau,

increasing numbers of youth are getting involved in the use of drugs. He has noted a sharp rise in the number of youth coming to the centre in search of assistance with their cocaine

addiction. He said many young people were smoking a local form of crack cocaine processed from flour and cocaine. This crack cocaine is cheap and easily accessible. According to Mr. Te, those who have now become hooked often resort to theft as a means to support the addiction.

The cocaine trade may have devastating long term implications on youth. As Mr Te pointed out, many youth no longer want to go to school. They see many of those who are educated and working as civil servants being paid low and

intermittent wages due to budget constraints in comparison to dealers with expensive clothes and grand mansions. Faced with this choice many youth opt for the criminal employment route through which

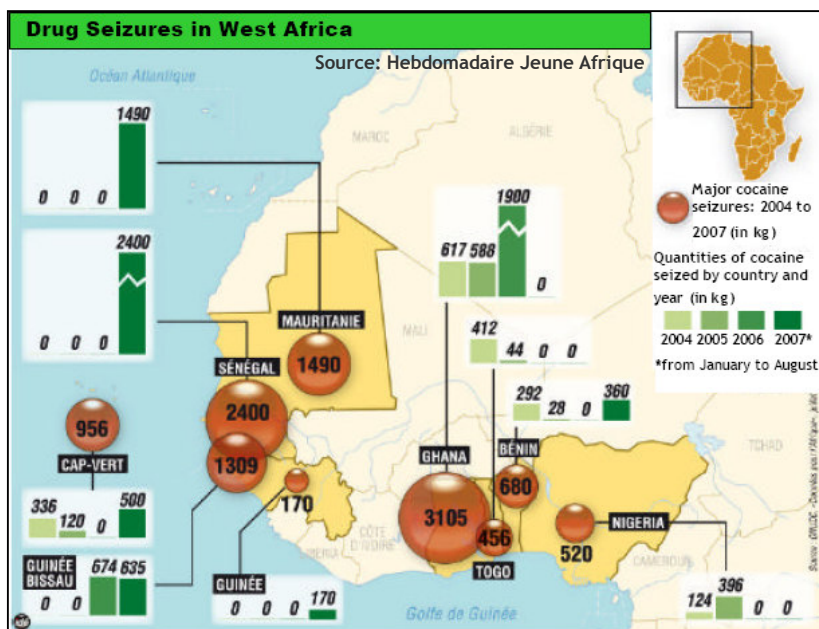
they can immediately earn a substantial amount of money. Experts say one of the long-term dangers is the emergence of a well connected criminal class in Guinea Bissau and the region. Meanwhile, the economic development of all the wealth the industry creates will only have a limited effect on Guinea Bissau’s economy with most of the money being invested outside the country or being used to purchase non-productive goods such as imported cars. Given the easy access to small arms in Guinea Bissau, there are fears of a potential rise in conflict in the future, should drug dealing gangs start to compete aggressively for turf. Furthermore, the drug trade will likely exacerbate other social issues linked to exploitation including human trafficking and prostitution.

UNODC is working with the government and donors to build capacity in the law enforcement and judicial system. Presently, they are working to establish a database which will enable 7 Latin American countries, 6 West African countries and the EU to share information on drug trafficking activities. This is expected to significantly increase the number of seizures in the long term once it is complete. The process of setting up a national database is now complete in Cape Verde and will commence in Guinea Bissau this October. Until then, young people in Guinea Bissau will continue to be faced with difficult choices on how best to solve their employment problems. If better options are not offered to them, many will continue to choose drugs as their way out of poverty.

### Sport and Youth Employment: The Call of the Arena

Considered the national sport of Senegal, “la lutte”, traditional Senegalese wrestling is growing in popularity as many have begun to see it as a vehicle to fame and wealth.

Its 6pm on a summers week-end, at the Guediawaye beach in the suburbs of Dakar, young, muscular fighters devote themselves to a warriors’ combat, under the watchful eye of their ‘coach’ and referee. In the middle of the beach, a 30 metre circle outlined in the sand serves as a ‘ring’. Unlike in boxing, there are no ‘rounds’, only a few seconds of observation, and the first person who manages to pin his



opponent to the ground wins! All that is needed is a fastened *gimbe* (garment worn by wrestlers), a bit of faith, technique, and a sprinkling of *gris-gris magic powder*...



Source: Luttemagazine.com

### *La lutte* has now become Senegal's national sport

A few metres away, another group of fighters climb the sand dunes. These young men who identify themselves with their idols like Yekini, Tyson, Bombardier, Tapha Gueye, Balla Beye II and Gris Bordeaux... also share the same ambition: to one day take their place on the grand stage. A professional bout is highly coveted, and can come with handsome rewards of as much as 120 million CFA francs (\$250,000) and even more. The hope of success as a wrestler is for many young men in this age group a more attractive alternative than the mundane reality of long days spent sitting in the shade, drinking tea, or idling at the minibus stops, in hopes of a few coins in return for performing odd jobs. We are currently in the *lambji* (combat fighting) era where a champion becomes a revered star of an entire country, a well-known figure in his neighbourhood, rising to fame and experiencing a level of social ascension thanks to his involvement in *la lutte*.

In recent years, *la lutte* has become enormously successful among young men and women in Senegal. Formerly practised in the *mbapattes* (often-contested traditional *lutte* sessions) which pitted young fighters from surrounding villages and neighbourhoods against each other, *la lutte* has become a well accepted form of entertainment in urban areas, allowing fighters and promoters to reap significant profits. In fact, *la lutte* has slowly replaced football and basketball as the preferred sports of young city-dwellers. Increased media coverage has also been a factor in bringing this sport to a new audience. The new image of wrestling in the country helps to account for change in earnings that fighters receive. In the 1970s, a fighter could expect 100,000 at the low end and up to one million CFA for a championship match. This year's championship between Balla Beye II of the "Toucouleur" club vs. Yahya Diop Yekini of the "Ndakaru" club saw the winner take home 200 million which translates to something closer to NBA salaries.

In addition to the large-scale fights, mini-championships are organised across the country, providing the opportunity for undiscovered talent to gain experience and be seen by scouts. Judging from some of their profiles, the average "up-and-coming" contender is between 18-25 and lives in an ordinary neighbourhood of Dakar (Medina, Fass, Pikine, Guediawaye, Parcelles, Thiaroye), has attained a relatively low level of formal education and often lacks real professional qualifications. Some are passionate and influenced by their surroundings, others, inspired by the quest for financial reward.

The pull factor of the sport is all the more understandable in the context of high youth unemployment and under-employment figures across Senegal. "It's great if (young people) are finding a way to earn a living this way! I don't see any problem with that," says an elderly man with an unflinching look of admiration in front of his television set, watching the elaborate steps of the *lutteurs* entering the arena. However, this opinion is not shared by A.M., another admirer of *la lutte* from Pikine (an area from which many champions hail), who feels that young people should not get

involved in the sport simply to earn money, even if it can be considered an alternative to unemployment.

This serves to demonstrate, the draw that the sport has taken on as a vehicle to escape the cycle of poverty within which many have grown up. Like illegal migration, the call of the arena demonstrates the desperation of young people when it comes to the question of unemployment. The potential profits from the sport have not gone unnoticed by promoters, professional fighters and the media who are looking to capitalize on this lucrative opportunity.

At the same time, the exponential development of wrestling should not be seen simply as a means of 'getting rich quickly'. With the attendant growth in popularity, the sport is spawning an industry that includes fashion merchandising and music which will have effects on job creation in the future. In addition, there is a palpable sense of camaraderie among champions of the discipline, which can be viewed as mentoring young people. This is something that Yahya Diop Yekini, the current king of the arena, endeavours to point out to young recruits at his training centre for local youth in the capital: "I've noticed that many young people want to come to Dakar, especially those from my county. Some of them have a real future in wrestling, whereas others are more interested in dreams of getting to Dakar. Once they arrive, they often live in difficult conditions. Eventually, they get discouraged and become totally disinterested in the sport. In order to help them develop as athletes, I've purchased equipment for a training centre which will be established in Joal - [district]." Yekini added that "It is true that wrestling contributed to the interruption of my academic studies, as it was my one passion. We need to serve as models for young people, unlike in the past. Nowadays, a fighter should be seen as a serious athlete."

### Fighting Brain Drain in West Africa: Is Improving Higher Education the Key?

The "brain drain" is not a new discussion topic and over the years various theories have been engineered on how to best combat a problem which robs Africa and other regions of the world of much needed, highly educated pools of talent.

Now more than ever, educators and members of the private sector are collaborating more closely to address some of the reasons that motivate people to leave their countries. They hope that by tacking these push factors they will create mechanisms to retain promising human resource profiles at home.

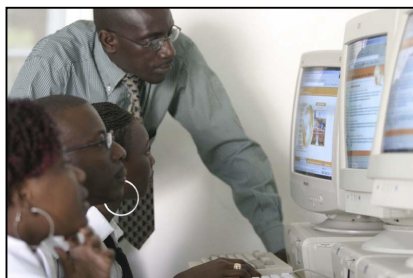
One of the most common reasons for young people to emigrate from their home countries is for the pursuit of higher or tertiary education. While the public sector once dominated the provision of education at the tertiary level the private sector is playing an increasingly important role. Part of this is in response to a number of governments' failure to provide sufficiently resourced learning facilities given their budget constraints, various priorities and the restrictions imposed by Structural Adjustment Programmes.

In recent years, the quality and quantity of institutions has steadily increased, attracting students and employers to these academic centres in greater numbers. For instance, Asheshi University of Ghana is the nation's first not-for-profit private university and has gained an excellent reputation for innovation and quality education in country. Founded in 2002 by a team of MBA graduates from the University of Berkeley, Ashesi University offers a curriculum that responds to the practical criteria of business while still remaining true to the principles of a liberal arts education.

The philosophy of Asheshi is to collaborate with companies such as Goldman Sachs and Microsoft, through internships, training programs, and scholarships, to ensure a successful transition to

the world of work. ICT tools have also been mainstreamed into in all aspects of the various curricula and classroom learning is combined with local business internships. Furthermore, the student-staff ratio is far better than at Ghana's state universities, where students often have to stand outside a packed lecture hall to follow class. Course offerings have been supplemented by visiting professors from institutions such as Carnegie Mellon and New York Universities. It is hoped that institutions such as Asheshi will encourage the retention of the 46% of highly educated Ghanaians who emigrate to OECD countries, according to the OECD Database on Immigrants and Expatriates (2005).

The International School of Management (ISM) in Senegal is the nation's first private business school and was established in 1992. ISM offers courses leading to French and US terminal degrees at the undergraduate, Masters and doctoral level. In a country where 29% of highly educated individuals leave for OECD countries (OECD 2005), a school such as ISM holds promise in reducing such an expatriate rate through the quality of instruction and links with relevant industry. The school also has a multinational student body that represents much of French West Africa (Mali, Guinea Cote d'Ivoire, and Gabon). School administrators report that graduates have an 80% rate of placement and that internship programs are an asset to students in building a professional network of contacts for permanent employment.



Students at ISM, Dakar

Source: ISM

During the recent AfricTalents Career Fair held in Dakar last June, representatives from employers such as Total, Philip Morris International and Orange stated that they do not have any difficulty in identifying suitable candidates for jobs in major markets. The challenge presents itself when looking to fill posts in smaller countries or those requiring multi-lingual abilities.

Unfortunately, analyses backed by statistics are not readily available to let us know whether an optimal solution has been found to one of the persistent factors that cause Africa to lose scores of young talent each year. However, it is an encouraging sign that education and the private sector have begun to co-operate on an issue that concerns them both.

### Technology and innovation: entrepreneurs expand access across the continent

The global economy is becoming increasingly dependent on the internet. Not only has the last half decade seen a boom in

ICT-related industry, many businesses are increasingly relying on fast, cheap and easy web access to carry out their day-to-day work. Anything from elaborate financial transitions to simple e-mail communications is now done online. However, such improvements threaten to widen the so-called 'digital divide'.

Out of a worldwide population of 6 billion, there are approximately 1 billion internet users, largely concentrated in North America and Europe. In Asia, just 11% are online and this figure drops to less than 4% in Africa. Why such a gap? Traditionally, poor infrastructure and unreliable electricity supplies have provided considerable barriers, and the resulting lack of competition fails to drive service improvements. But in Africa, internet usage is growing apace. According to the BBC, the number of people on the continent with connectivity rose over 600% in the six years previous to 2006.

There are signs that Africa is making a technological jump. Just as the region embraced mobile phone technology over landlines, it seems as if Africa might benefit more from wireless, rather than wired, internet access. Dial-up, or wired, networks require cables and a physical connection: something that is often prohibitively expensive. Wireless, or Wi-Fi, networks offer greater mobility and do not require extensive infrastructure. Wi-Fi also enables a greater bandwidth for internet connection - most users in Africa only have a fraction of the speed enjoyed in western countries.

In a few countries, this dual problem of access and speed is being addressed by local entrepreneurs. In Ghana, iBurst technology is used to provide Wi-Fi broadband access to central Accra. The service is available to commercial and residential customers on a monthly subscription and pay-as-you-go basis. There are plans to introduce a similar system to Guinea. Moustapha Naite, who owns 'MounaInternet', a chain of internet cafés, hopes such technology will make a faster and cheaper internet available to more of Conakry. Naite's flagship store,



Source: MounaInternet.com

Mouna Internet Flagship store

located in the center of town on Avenue de la Republique, is one of the capital's most popular cybercafés and has been an inspiration to other Guineans. Soon after its opening, new businesses specializing in providing internet access began to pop up.

Moustapha is now looking to expand and improve his service. With competition comes innovation, so the saying goes. In the absence of big business, it will be this mobilization of local resources and expertise that will fund the much-needed technology advancements.

### IN THE NEWS



### YEN-WA

#### Funding and resources

#### WEST AFRICA: \$6 billion to be invested in raise living standards and curb youth emigration

West Africa's Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) will invest \$6 billion on regional infrastructure over five years to raise living standards and curb youth emigration, an official said on Tuesday. Foreign donors pledged around \$5 billion at a roundtable in Dakar last November and UEMOA member states will stump up a further \$472 billion CFA

(\$970 million) for a host of projects -- the costliest of which will be linking the region's rail networks and building new roads. The development, the prosperity that we create on a community scale, will help to curb or stop clandestine emigration," said Amadou Diop, diplomatic adviser to the president of the UEMOA Commission. For more see *Reuters*, 21/08/2007

<http://africa.reuters.com/wire/news/usnL21815083.html>

### **GHANA: Over 500 Youth Employed Under The NYEP In The Kwabre District**

Over 500 youth in the Kwabre District of Ashanti have been employed under the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP). They include teaching assistants, health extension workers, sanitation workers, community policing and youth-in-agriculture. Mr Opoku Agyemang Bonsu, Kwabre District Co-ordinator of the NYEP, said this at the inauguration of a KVIP Aqua Privy place of convenience at Dumanafa last Tuesday. The project was funded through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Fund. For more see *Modern Ghana*, 23/08/2007 [http://www.modernghana.com/GhanaHome/NewsArchive/news\\_details.asp?menu\\_id=1&id=VFZSUmVFNXFVFE9](http://www.modernghana.com/GhanaHome/NewsArchive/news_details.asp?menu_id=1&id=VFZSUmVFNXFVFE9)

### **BENIN: BOAD commits \$6.2 million into Benin craft industry**

The West Africa Development Bank (BOAD) has committed 3 billion CFA (\$6.2 million) to the Benin craft industry under the Crafts Industry Support Project. Fifty percent of this funding is committed for women and youth, and the funding will provide access to financing for 2500 micro-projects. This is an effort to bolster the craft sector in Benin which faces competition with lower quality imported goods. For more information see: *Africa News*, 02/08/2007 [http://www.africanews.com/site/list\\_messages/10364](http://www.africanews.com/site/list_messages/10364)

### **SENEGAL: Four new universities for Senegal**

Senegal will have four new universities by 2011, it was announced by Minister for Education, Moustapha Sourang. These 'third generation' universities will be in Saint-Louis, Diourbel, Kaolack and Tambacounda. This plan is hoped to create an intellectual elite able to deal with the mining of Senegal's natural resources, with the result that young people will be trained to be employed in their own region. Minister Sourang said that currently there are approximately 1000 lecturers teaching in French universities who want to return to Senegal, 95 % of whom are mathematicians, physicists, chemists, biologists and data processors. For more see (in French) *Senactu*, 24/07/2007 <http://www.senactu.info/Moustapha-SOURANG-ministre-de-l-3689>

### **GHANA: Ghana Youth Development Network Launched**

The Ghana Youth Development Network comprising over 200 representatives, from youth organizations all over Ghana, was launched to serve as an umbrella body for all youth organizations and also to mark this year's International Youth Day, which observed the 'Be Seen, Be Heard, Youth Participation in Development'. The event organized at the Ghana International Press Centre, witnessed the speeches of many eminent people, including the World Bank Country Director, Mats Karlsson, who was the special guest. A number of youth speakers also voiced their opinions during the event. For more see *The Ghana Web*, 13/08/2007 <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=128914>

### **CAPE VERDE: Students on Boa Vista Analyze New Work Opportunities**

Students from various educational institutions on the island of Boa Vista convened at the Sal Rei Youth Center amphitheater to discuss and analyze the Cape Verdean educational system and new employment and training opportunities. The seminar provided a forum for students to voice their ideas concerning the job market and new employment opportunities on the island. Representatives of the construction and real estate company CEU, the

Banco Cabo-verdiano de Negócios and the Boa Vista and Maio Integrated Tourist Development Corporation were on hand to participate in the discussions. The seminar will then be followed by a debate. For more see *A Semana*, 20/08/2007

[http://www.asemana.cv/article.php3?id\\_article=25920](http://www.asemana.cv/article.php3?id_article=25920)

### **IT and Youth**

#### **BENIN: Internet new frontline in AIDS awareness**

Beninese youth are becoming involved in the fight against HIV and AIDS, and are using the Internet as their tool to spread awareness about the disease. By sending emails on a regular basis, they are able to effectively and cheaply convey information about AIDS prevention to people they have never met. UN figures from 2005 show that about 1.8 percent of Benin's population is HIV-positive, a decrease from 2003, and although there has been a decrease in the HIV positive population, there is still work to be done in AIDS awareness. While the Internet is not yet widely used in Benin, Internet use is on the rise. For more see *IRIN*, 10/08/2007 <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=73674>

#### **GHANA: Presbyterian Church Opens Computer Centre At Akosombo**

In collaboration with its Korean affiliate, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) has established a computer training centre in Akosombo to provide free computer lessons to interested students area. So far, about 120 students have received training in the fundamentals of computers, Internet literacy and Microsoft Office software packages. The centre was established in 2004, and is equipped with about 52 computers and a multimedia library. Plans for setting up a hostel are also underway. For more see *New Times Online*, 15/08/2007 [http://www.newtimesonline.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=10927&Itemid=181](http://www.newtimesonline.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10927&Itemid=181)

#### **Training**

#### **MALI: Young People Educate Themselves about Oil and Employment**

Oil research was the topic chosen by the forum organized by the "Génération efficiente" youth movement on August 10-11, 2007. "Génération efficiente" gathers young people together across Mali and the diaspora to support and expand upon the government's large-scale employment reforms since 2002, which include the reorganization of the Office of Labour within the National Agency for Employment (ANPE), the creation of the APEJ, and the installation of measures to support the projects of young people and increase youth employment. The forum allowed youth leaders to learn more about how investment in the capital-intensive oil sector can provide durable youth employment. For more see (in French), *Le Républicain*, 16/08/2007

[http://www.malikounda.com/nouvelle\\_voir.php?idNouvelle=13610](http://www.malikounda.com/nouvelle_voir.php?idNouvelle=13610)

#### **CAPE VERDE: Youth on Santo Antão Trained in Typography and Serigraphy**

The Santo Antão Regional Council of Partners, in an alliance with Jackie Publishing and the Ribeira Grande Municipal Youth Center, held a ceremony on August 10 to mark the conclusion of a professional typography and serigraphy course attended by 25 youths. Adriel Mendes, the Santo Antão Regional Council of Partners administrator, said professional training for youths and business incentives were the main objectives of his

organization's new strategy to fight poverty on the island of Santo Antão. State Finance Secretary Leonesa Fortes attended the ceremony on behalf of the Cape Verde government. For more see: *A Semana*, 10/08/2007 [http://www.asemana.cv/article.php3?id\\_article=25712](http://www.asemana.cv/article.php3?id_article=25712)

#### **GHANA: NDC Youth Unhappy With Increases In University User Fee**

Student members of the National Democratic Congress branch of the Kwame Nkrumah University Of Science and Technology (KNUST), are asking the government to stop what they say is a reckless dissipation of the nation's resources and rather use such funds to finance education. The President of KNUST, Moses K. Armah speaking at a press conference in Kumasi, expressed worry about the 20 per cent increase in the academic facility user fee paid by students for the 2006/07 academic year, and asked the government to reduce the fees. For more see: *Graphic Online*, 17/08/2007

<http://www.graphicghana.com/link.asp?smenu=88&sdetail=191&mad=No&wpage=&keyword=&sidate=>

#### **CAPE VERDE: Órgãos to Get High School in Coming School Year**

The village of Achada Igreja in the municipality of São Lourenço dos Órgãos will get a high school in the coming school year, which should be completed by December. The creation of the school means the municipality's students will no longer need to go to neighboring regions to attend classes. In addition, Victor Baessa, the president of the commission charged with setting up the administrative infrastructure of São Lourenço dos Órgãos, said he has sought to obtain university scholarships for students in the municipality as well as professional training courses aimed at young people. He said "a one-year electricity and plumbing course is under way for 48 trainees." For more see: *A Semana*, 22/08/2007

[http://www.asemana.cv/article.php3?id\\_article=25964](http://www.asemana.cv/article.php3?id_article=25964)

### **Youth and policy**

#### **SIERRA LEONE: Young voters majority in the elections**

Young voters played a key role in recent election held in Sierra Leone. According to the article out of the 91 percent of eligible voters that participated, youth under the ages of 32 were in the majority. Voter turnout was high and that reports showed that thousands of young people including women trooped to the polls in last Aug. 11 elections across the country and voted for change. For more see *Standard Times Press*, 13/08/2007

[http://standardtimespress.net/cgi-bin/artman/publish/article\\_1862.shtml](http://standardtimespress.net/cgi-bin/artman/publish/article_1862.shtml)

#### **MALI: Kati Youths Mobilize Against Unemployment**

A youth conference was held on August 17, 2007 in Kati, Mali to discuss the possibility of job creation for youth within the country's mining and water sectors. Lecturers emphasized that Mali's successful development depends on creative young people becoming involved in the electricity and water industries and provided statistics detailing the opportunities that mining and water jobs have to reduce youth unemployment within Mali. The conference was held during the same week as National Youth Day (August 12) within Mali. For more see (in French), *Les Echos*, 20 August 2007,

[http://www.jamana.org/lesechos/articles/2007/aout/ec\\_20aout.html#2](http://www.jamana.org/lesechos/articles/2007/aout/ec_20aout.html#2)

#### **SIERRA LEONE: Hundreds of Sierra Leonean diaspora youth meet to contribute to development**

The U.S. Branch of Young Leaders-Sierra Leone Organization will host 300 young Sierra Leoneans in the first annual Sierra Youth Empowerment Conference in Maryland U.S.A in September. The conference is aimed at increasing the participation of youth from this country in Sierra Leone's reconstruction and national development programs. Issues to be tackled during the conference are on the pressing challenges faced by the youth. For more see *Standard Times Press*, 16/08/2007

[http://standardtimespress.net/cgi-bin/artman/publish/article\\_1877.shtml](http://standardtimespress.net/cgi-bin/artman/publish/article_1877.shtml)

#### **SIERRA LEONE: Sierra Leone Young People's Manifesto to be launched**

The Sierra Leone Young People's Manifesto will be launched prior to the country's elections. The manifesto was a result of the inputs made during the July 2006 Youth-led National Development Conference in Freetown. The conference was organized by the Sierra Leone Young Leaders Network with support from British Council, ENCISS, Sierra Leone Network and a host of youth and children's organizations. Participating in the conference last year were youth, children, civil society, journalists, academics, government officials, political parties' stalwarts and local authority representatives who recommended that a Sierra Leone Young People's Manifesto be drafted to serve as an advocacy tool, and to promote the interests of young people during the 2007 Parliamentary and presidential elections. For more see *Standard Times Press*, Aug. 7, 2007.

[http://standardtimespress.net/cgi-bin/artman/publish/article\\_1813.shtml](http://standardtimespress.net/cgi-bin/artman/publish/article_1813.shtml)

#### **SIERRA LEONE: War-scarred youth hold key to Sierra Leone polls**

Youths of Sierra Leone believe that, the only way for sustained peace and a developed nation is achieved by election. Despite the unemployed youths were always marginalized and misused by different parties and rebels, this time youths are eager to vote for peace, education, job, road, electricity etc. Every youth wishes for peace. This is revealed on streets of Sierra Leone as Artists for Peace (group of artists) are singing "Go Vote, No Violence". This is the opportune time all youths must unite to build country as they dream. For more see: *Boston.com* 7/08/2007

[http://www.boston.com/news/world/africa/articles/2007/08/07/war\\_scarred\\_youth\\_hold\\_key\\_to\\_sierra\\_leone\\_polls/?page=2](http://www.boston.com/news/world/africa/articles/2007/08/07/war_scarred_youth_hold_key_to_sierra_leone_polls/?page=2)

#### **SENEGAL: Youth Council President calls for the ratification of African Youth Charter**

The President of the national youth council (CNJS) in Senegal, Malick Diop has called for the ratification of the African Youth charter. He underlined the fact that his nation has always taken the lead and should once again set an example for others to follow in this area. He said this at a workshop organised in celebration of the International Day for Youth. The objective of the workshop was to help young people and parliamentarians to better appreciate and work in the interest of the African Youth Charter. For more see (in French) *Agence Presse Senegalais*, 13/08/2007

[http://www.aps.sn/articles.php?id\\_article=34087&PHPSSESID=20a5782a89c0a7ddb94625f4d3354e6c](http://www.aps.sn/articles.php?id_article=34087&PHPSSESID=20a5782a89c0a7ddb94625f4d3354e6c)

## Other News

### Centenary of Scouting Movement celebration in Dakar

From the 27<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> August in Dakar, 400 young people from West Africa and Europe will celebrate 100 years of Scouting and take part in the French-speaking 'International Camp of Peace' forum on education with peace. The centenary of Scouting coincides with 70 years of Girl Guides. Organizers hope to obtain a greater recognition of the Scouting Movement's success in the education of young people, and their training to become future leaders. For more see (in French) *Sudonline* 21/07/2007 <http://www.sudonline.sn/spip.php?article4934>

### GHANA: African youth face too many challenges

The Corporate Services Executive of MTN, Mawuena Dumor has expressed her indignation at the numerous challenges the African youth face in their attempt to survive and make effective contributions to national development. The comments were made at a forum on the occasion of the International Youth Day Celebration in Accra over the weekend. A good number of the youth in Africa live in unacceptable conditions of poverty and the challenges they had to face have made some of them to fall prey to the lure of the illicit drug trade. For more see: *The Statesman*, 15 August 2007, [http://www.thestatesmanonline.com/pages/news\\_detail.php?newsid=4448&section=1](http://www.thestatesmanonline.com/pages/news_detail.php?newsid=4448&section=1)

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### 10 September: Conference on youth enterprise and sustainable livelihoods, London, UK

The Commonwealth Youth Programme is hosting a one-day conference, entitled "Investing in youth: unleashing the potential of young entrepreneurs" on 10 September 2007 at Marlborough House, Headquarters of the Commonwealth Secretariat in London. The objective of the conference is to strengthen youth enterprise by providing opportunities for young entrepreneurs to gain access to finance, markets, and skills. For more details see: <http://www.thecommonwealth.org/news/166531/1307071nvestingyouth.htm>

### 10-11 September, The Youth Microenterprise Conference, Washington DC, USA

Making Cents International will hold a conference that will unite specialists from multiple disciplines and all sectors to create innovative strategies, programs, and partnerships that support the development of economic opportunity among youth. The conference aims to identify and build on positive initiatives being taken around the world to provide youth with the skills and opportunities they need to have productive and healthy futures.

For more details see: [www.ymeconference.org](http://www.ymeconference.org)

### 13 September, Preparatory Event for the Global Forum on Youth and ICT for Development, New York, USA

This event will act as a preparatory session for the Global Forum: "Youth and ICT as Agents of Change" taking place in Geneva from 24-26 September 2007. Youth participants and speakers will interact with experts on ICT for Development issues from the UN community as well as the public and private sectors. The focus of the seminar will be to provide a forum for learning and meaningful information exchanges among youth and the diplomatic community. Particular emphasis will be placed on the value of youth-driven innovation as a potential driver of development. The event will also showcase a set of case studies highlighting ICT projects by and for youth in developing countries. For more details see:

[http://www.unitarny.org/en/ict\\_youth.html](http://www.unitarny.org/en/ict_youth.html)

### 20-21 September, 2nd African Youth Peace Conference, Monrovia, Liberia

The 2nd African Youth Peace Conference is a follow up organized by the Centre for Advocacy and Development in Africa (CADA Nigeria) in Partnership with West African Youth Network, Clean & Green Cities Foundation, Peace Corps of Nigeria, and with support from UNHCR, UNDP and the World Bank. The focus of the 2nd Edition is to assess the contribution of the Youth in attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa, with particular emphasis on these root causes of Youth Restiveness in

Africa, Poverty, Weak Governance, Development choices, Unemployment. For more details see: <http://events.takingitglobal.org/14115>

### 24-26 September, Global Forum on Youth and ICT for Development: Youth and ICT as Agents of Change, Geneva, Switzerland

The Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID), is organizing a forum that will help harness the creativity and dynamism that the youth has in exploring and exploiting ICT for their own benefit and for the benefit of their peers and communities in advancement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Forum aims at actively engaging youth in debates and discussions with their peer representatives, policy makers, private sector, technology and thought leaders and others in exploring ways to empower the community and to participate more fully in society through the appropriate and responsible use of ICT. In order to generate a global dynamic leading up to the Forum, organizers are launching a worldwide consultation with young people, as well as other stakeholders. For more details see: <http://www.un-gaid.org/gfyouth>

### 4-7 December, Africa-Europe Youth Summit, Lisbon, Portugal

The Summit will gather African and European participants interested in the developing EU-Africa partnership. The aim is to increase young people's participation in the Euro-African Cooperation and to reinforce youth work in Africa and Europe influencing the youth policy in Euro-African Cooperation. An immediate expected result is the submission of a final declaration by a youth delegation to the EU-Africa Heads of State Summit. The summit is organized by a steering group facilitated by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe. In order to participate, applications must be sent before 21 September. For more information please see:

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/Youth\\_Summit\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/Youth_Summit_en.asp)

### 20-21 December, Meeting of Young Cape Verdean Researchers, Praia, Cape Verde

The theme of this year's meeting which brings together Cape Verdean students and researchers is "Promoting Young Researchers in Cape Verde." The promoters of the event are the University of Cape Verde (UniCV) and the Association of Young Cape Verdean Researchers, a not-for-profit organization whose main aim is to promote scientific research. The event, according to the Association, is aimed at young scientist (40 years old and under) currently carrying out graduate studies. For further details please see: [www.unicv.edu.cv](http://www.unicv.edu.cv), [www.ejicv.blogspot.com](http://www.ejicv.blogspot.com) or [www.embcv.pt](http://www.embcv.pt)