

## Environmental and health education in the Amanzuri wetland

In order for any rural project to be successful, one must pay attention to the people's key assets: their health and their environment. This is why Microsfere started implementing since 2014 a Health Education Programme and an Environmental Education Programme, both addressed to Microsfere's beneficiaries.

The Environmental Education Programme is being implemented by Martin, our Amanzuri coordinator. Each month a topic related to local environmental concerns is selected, prepared and presented to the four participating communities. Issues that have

been covered so far include topics such as waste management, illegal logging, protection of water resources, air pollution, protection of sea turtles and the coastal environment, flood prevention, etc. The presentations are participatory and interactive and the aim is to discuss local problems and local solutions. The Amanzuri coordinator also organises from time to time school quizzes on environmental topics; during those quizz games student teams are asked to compete against each other in terms of environmental knowledge.

The Health Education Programme is being implemented by Microsfere in collaboration with a local Health Centre. The awareness raising sessions are being presented by a

rural health extension agent. The topics that have been covered so far included issues such as family planning, hygiene, illnesses and their prevention/treatment (malaria, cancer, AIDS, Ebola, cholera, etc ), hypertension and nutrition.



## Training of community librarians

Microsfere has been operating a total of three children's libraries in three communities (two in Kakum National Park and one in Amanzuri wetland), the first two since 2013 and the third since 2014.

The three libraries have had great success, which is confirmed by the high attendance rates, thanks on one hand to the good quality and interesting books that have been provided by Microsfere, and on the other hand to the conscientious efforts of the librarians.

In Amanzuri, the library is being operated by our local coordinator, while in Kakum the two communities have each appointed one local person as librarian. In order to enhance their skills, Microsfere organized a training session for the two Kakum librarians in March 2015. The training was provided gratuitously by the Osu Children's Library Fund, which is an NGO that has been sharing the joy or reading with African children for over 25 years, through the operation of a network

of libraries (For more information: [www.osuchildrenslibraryfund.ca](http://www.osuchildrenslibraryfund.ca)).



Vida, the librarian in Brahabebome

The training took place in Accra over one week, and the two librarians learned a number of practical skills such as handling and maintenance of the books, friendly supervision and assistance of the children during their reading activities, assistance of adults for reading and writing and management of the attendance.

Microsfere would like to express its gratitude to the Osu Children's Library Fund, and also congratulate the librarians for their excellent work and commitment to their communities. Medaassi pii!

However Microsfere's library projects do not end here! Given the high demand from neighbouring communities for the creation of similar libraries, the opening of the next library is foreseen in the village of Afiaso, also in the Kakum National Park. The community has decided to undertake the construction of a new building, which will host the library.



Joseph, the librarian in Abeka Nkwantaa

## Interview : John Mensah, group promoter



John has been working for Microsfere since 2012, as a group promoter. His role is to be the contact point between Microsfere and the community people in the village of Abeka Nkwantaa, one of the six villages

in Kakum National Park where Microsfere operates.

His function is very important as he facilitates a two-way communication and decision-making channel, between the community members and Microsfere's regional coordinator. John is a teacher and was selected by the community as group promoter because of his reading and writing skills, as well as his previous experience with community issues.

When John took over, one of his first concerns was to arrange regular meetings with the project beneficiaries, talk to them regularly and pay them house visits in order to ensure that their motivation for the project would remain strong. According to him, Microsfere's projects have helped the community immensely by strengthening people's capacity building through training and by giving them the financial means through microcredit to pursue their economic activities. For instance farmers have increased their cocoa yields and many traders have moved from selling their items on tables to building small shops.

When asked to mention a memorable occasion, John mentioned the overnight stay of the MSFR president and her daughter in their community, which brought a lot of pride to the village of Abeka Nkwantaa.