

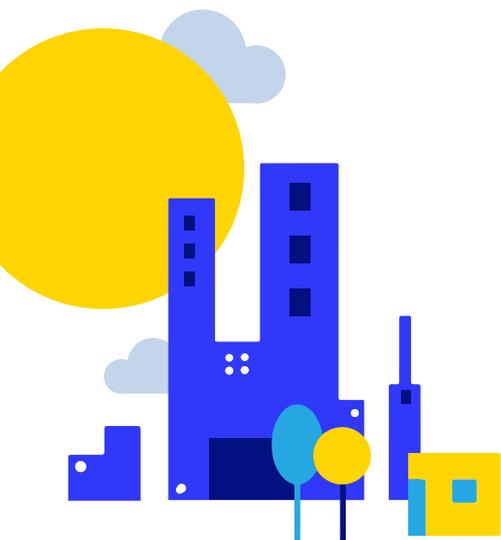
Opportunities to Advance Clean Air and Climate Action in Accra

Summary for Decisionmakers

The Cityzens for Clean Air initiative seeks to amplify youth voices to advance evidence-informed action on clean air and healthy public space across the African continent, including Accra.

Using an open call for applications, young people aged 18-35 years applied to be citizen scientists and “Run Leaders”. In Accra, ten young people were selected and trained. On 6 August 2022, the Run Leaders were joined by over 100 runners whom they recruited and took to the streets of Accra to run ten different 5-15km routes and collect data. The routes were designed to capture the diverse socio-economic spectrum across the city. During the runs, they collected data on air quality using wearable sensors. Using a bespoke mobile application, citizen scientists also captured multimedia (photo, audio, video, text) data on aspects of the built environment that influence health and perceived sources of polluted or clean air encountered during the run.

This briefing offers a summary of key results and makes recommendations for how the City of Accra can become a leading player in air quality, youth engagement, and climate action.



Key Findings

There are large inequities in clean air across different areas of the city.

Areas with green cover such as East Legon and West Legon close to the University of Ghana had mostly good air quality with only a few instances of moderate air quality measured. Areas close to Madina and Adenta displayed more variability in terms of good and moderate air quality. Adenta had predominantly moderate air quality. Sakumono Estate stood out as an area with no measurements of good air quality; All the readings detected were either moderate, unhealthy for sensitive groups or unhealthy.

The area around Sakumono is known as an industrial hub, with a harbour, an oil refinery and numerous factories which likely contribute to the poor air quality.

Improving data access increases public engagement.

Access to air quality data, complemented by multimedia health and climate risk data, increases citizens' awareness, enfranchises the public, and motivates public engagement and support for clean air and climate policy agendas.

Young people are motivated and eager to support clean air action in their neighbourhoods, but do not have clear, accessible opportunities to do so.

Over 175 people participated in the #CityzensforCleanAir running events organised by youth leaders between July and October, and hundreds more are expected to join future runs. The energy unleashed by the Cityzens initiative shows the untapped energy of young people to help improve their city and neighbourhood.



We want to run and we want to live. We need clean air for our lungs and our future.

Yin Francis, youth citizen scientist and student athlete, Accra

How Accra Decisionmakers Can Take Action

1

Accra citizens have real-time access to data about the air we breathe.

Recommendations:

- Create a network of low-cost, community-based air quality sensors distributed across city neighbourhoods, with open-source, real-time data access for the public.
- Make current air quality data open to the public and easily accessible, so residents check real-time data about the air they breathe at any time.

2

Young people have a say in the decisions that affect our air and future.

Recommendations:

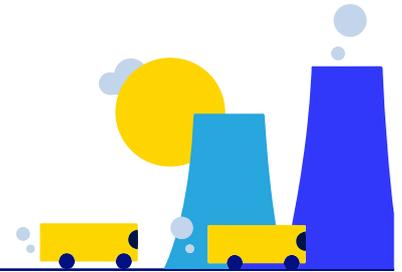
- Establish a participatory decision making mechanism that includes young people from diverse areas of Accra on where air quality sensors go, what interventions happen as a result of the data, and how the results are shared with the public in a timely manner.

3

Accra is a climate resilient city that helps – not harms – our health.

Recommendations:

- Measure the health impact of urban infrastructure and public space development projects, and make those data easily and freely available to the public.



Contact: hello@urbanbetter.science

Learn more and access the full findings for Accra:

