

Empowering Women, Transforming Communities: The Women Of Amui Dzor Leading Change

ACROSS THE world, women are at the heart of community transformation, and in Ghana, their role in shaping resilient urban spaces has never been more critical. As we mark International Women's Day, the UN in Ghana celebrates the remarkable contributions of women in the Amui Dzor community in the Ashaiman Municipality, where they are redefining leadership and resilience by mobilizing themselves along savings to access housing, basic services and livelihood opportunities.

Women at the Forefront of Change

For decades, women in informal settlements have faced daily struggles—unsafe living conditions, inadequate sanitation, and the constant threat of eviction. However, the story is changing, these challenges are being addressed with women taking center stage, thanks to UN-Habitat Ghana's People's Dialogue project being implemented in partnership with the Ministries of Works, Housing and Water Resources and Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs Traditional Authorities, and the Ghana Federation of Urban Poor (GHAFUP).

After over a decade of benefitting from the UN-Habitat supported Slum Upgrading Facility, the women of Amui-Dzor continue to play a pivotal role in ensuring the three-story social housing facility with one and two-bedroom apartments, commercial units, and a community-managed public toilet developed under the project are well maintained. This project not only provides safe and affordable housing but also incorporates traditional spatial designs that foster communal living, with the open area serving as meeting space for federation and vaccination points in the community among other uses as needed.

Breaking Barriers, Building Resilience

Madam Hafsatu Salifu, a petty trader and mother of two, recalls how women's voices were often excluded from urban development conversations. "Before, we were left out

of these discussions. Now, we are part of every step. It's not just about improving our homes; it's about shaping our futures."

Their engagement from the outset ensured that critical issues—such as the installation of sanitation facilities and clean water access—were prioritized. Hafsatu highlights the stark difference between life before and after the project: "I used to worry every day about my children getting sick because of the dirty water and poor sanitary conditions. Now, we have clean water, and I feel more secure knowing my family is healthier and safer."



Hafsatu Salifu, a beneficiary of UN Habitat

A New Era of Women's Leadership

One of the most significant achievements of the project is the shift in gender roles within the community. Women are now leading in urban planning and community decision-making. Their leadership in these traditionally male-dominated sectors is not only transforming their own lives but is also inspiring younger generations to take active roles in shaping their communities.

Women as Pillars of Sustainable Urban Development

UN-Habitat Ghana's Slum Upgrading Facility is a testament to the power of women-led development. By ensuring that women are not just beneficiaries but active agents of change, the project is setting a precedent for inclusive

urban development. When women lead, communities thrive, and when they are empowered, cities become stronger, more resilient, and more sustainable.

As we celebrate International Women's Day, we reaffirm our commitment to advancing gender equality in urban development. The women of Amui Dzor have shown that with the right support and opportunities, they can break barriers, build resilience, and create lasting change for generations to come.

Source: UN Habitat