ALLIANCE FOR EMPOWERING RURAL COMMUNITIES

POLICY BRIEF

FROM WASTE TO SOIL

Advancing community-led composting in Kpone-Katamanso, Ghana

Practical lessons for inclusive and sustainable municipal waste management

A local solution with a clear policy ask

Organic waste recovery can support cleaner communities and local livelihoods, if the enabling conditions are put in place.

30 **young people trained**
in waste separation, composting techniques and safe handling

AERC GHANA YOUTH ZERO WASTE & COMMUNITY COMPOSTING INITIATIVE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Kpone-Katamanso, biodegradable waste is routinely mixed with other municipal waste, increasing pressure on collection and disposal systems and reducing opportunities for useful resource recovery. AERC Ghana trained 30 young people and established a community-based composting demonstration, engaging informal waste workers, residents and local authorities. Hands-on practice helped participants understand how organic waste can be turned into compost. The experience also exposed barriers: dependable site access, competing livelihood demands and the need for sustained support to change household and vendor waste-separation habits.

KEY MESSAGE

Community composting is a practical opportunity, but training alone is not enough. AERC Ghana calls for secure operating space, source separation, community participation and sustained municipal support to turn demonstrations into reliable local services.

The conditions for action already exist

The priority now is to connect policy commitments to community-scale operations.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

What residents raised at Gbetsile

At the June 2026 dialogue, residents highlighted irregular collection, indiscriminate dumping, open burning and blocked drains. They sought stronger sanitation services, repeated education and closer cooperation with local authorities.

POLICY OPENING

What the Assembly has committed to pursue

KKMA's climate plan prioritises better waste collection and recycling, school waste-separation bins and public education. Ghana's October 2026 reform announcement also points to separation at household level.

FROM BARRIERS TO PRACTICAL RESPONSES

1 **Mixed waste streams**
Make biodegradable waste separation simple at selected homes, markets and food stalls.

2 **Insecure operating space**
Agree on an appropriate composting site or safeguarded small-bin option before scaling.

3 **Short-lived behaviour change**
Pair outreach with repeat visits, reliable collection and visible local benefits.

The opportunity is not a new direction; it is workable local implementation.

AERC Ghana's pilot shows where practical training helps - and where institutional support is essential.

Four lessons from the field

1

Practical skills turn awareness into action

Thirty young people were trained in waste separation, composting methods, safe handling and basic use of protective equipment. Demonstrations made the process tangible.

2

Flexible methods still need reliable space

Access to a suitable site was difficult. The team adapted by renting space and drawing organic materials from local markets and vegetable vendors; sustainable operations still require secure facilities.

3

Waste separation needs regular follow-through

Households and vendors are accustomed to mixed disposal. Durable changes depend on repeated education, convenient collection arrangements and visible practical support.

4

Practical skills turn awareness into action

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Evidence to build next: consistently measure waste volumes, compost yield, safe use, costs and participant outcomes in any larger demonstration.

Five municipal actions that matter

Specific, achievable steps to convert promising activities into sustained organic-waste recovery.

1

Secure safe, dependable operating spaces

KKMA should help identify and facilitate appropriate spaces for community composting. Where land is constrained, consider small-bin systems with environmental, health and operational safeguards.

2

Make separation part of sanitation services

Pilot segregation with selected households, markets and food vendors. Supply suitable containers, simple guidance, predictable collection arrangements and continuous sensitisation.

3

Recognise frontline workers and youth

Incorporate young people and informal waste workers in design and delivery. Provide training, occupational protections, decision-making opportunities and fair livelihood pathways.

4

Place composting in municipal workplans

Include organic-waste recovery in relevant sanitation and environmental plans, with assigned roles, realistic finance and collaboration among service providers, civil society and agriculture actors.

5

Build monitoring into delivery from day one

Track quantities collected, compost produced, participation, operating costs, quality and end use. Use the evidence to judge value, improve operations and decide whether expansion is justified.

AERC Ghana proposes a collaborative demonstration with KKMA and relevant local stakeholders.

A proposed 12-month pathway

1

MONTHS 1-3

Prepare the conditions

Agree on a safe site and responsibilities; assess available organic waste; identify participating households, vendors and workers.

2

MONTHS 4-9

Operate and engage

Run source separation, safe processing and practical education; monitor participation and operational performance.

3

MONTHS 10-12

Review and decide

Consolidate results, review costs and safeguards with partners, and agree whether and how the model should continue or expand.

MONITOR WHAT MATTERS

ORGANICS
Material collected

COMPOST
Quantity & quality

PEOPLE
Participation & safety

COSTS
Operating expenditure

USE
Destination of compost

LEARNING
Quarterly reviews

Turn a pilot into lasting practice

AERC Ghana's experience shows that communities can contribute meaningfully to organic waste recovery when they have practical skills, accessible infrastructure and local institutional backing.

Training 30 young people and establishing a demonstration were important beginnings. The next step is a jointly supported approach that encourages consistent waste separation, recognises frontline workers and links composting to safe agricultural use.

THE POLICY PRIORITY

Move community composting from an isolated project activity to a recognised and supported component of local waste management.

REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

01 AERC Ghana. Zero Waste Microgranting: End-of-Project Report. Internal completion report.

02 AERC Ghana (2026). World Environment Day community dialogue in Gbetsile.

03 Kpone-Katamanso Municipal Assembly. Climate Change Resilience, Adaptation and Sustainability Plan.

04 Information Services Department (2026). Government announces integrated waste-management reforms.

05 Republic of Ghana. Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936).

ABOUT AERC GHANA

Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities is a youth-led, community-driven nonprofit working across environmental sustainability, climate resilience, inclusive development and grassroots policy advocacy.

Building Resilient Communities

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