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he Akosombo International School (AIS) has made its consistent excellence count once again with another win of the British Council's social-activism contest dubbed: 'Your World Video Competition'.

The school established its dominance with another impressive achievement when it was declared the country winner and the regional (sub-Saharan Africa) winner of the 2024 'Your World Competition', making it an emphatic six straight wins since the inception of the competition eight years ago.

Prior to this recent feat, AIS struck gold when it triumphed as national winner in 2019 and 2020, as both national

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By: Michael Danso, CA&ER, Accra

s part of its Local Content Policy, Management of the Volta River Authority (VRA) have facilitated the procurement of eight brand new double-cabin pick-up vehicles from the Kantanka Automobile Company Ltd., to augment its fleet.

The procurement of the 2020 edition of the locally assembled 'Kantanka Omama' vehicles formed part of Management's drive to boost and support the local economy.

The locally assembled vehicle comes with modern safety and security features such as ABS+EBD, Dual Airbags, Central locking, 360-degree camera system, Visual Reverse Radar, Electric four-wheel drive, Navigation system, and Parking sensors among others.

Principal Administrative Officer (Traffic), Technical Services Department, Isaac Doe, speaking to the VRA News described the 'Kantanka Omama' as a solid locally assembled vehicle with modern features.

He said the vehicles are Semi-Knocked-Down (SKD) types which were partially manufactured in China for our local terrain.

He explained that SKD vehicles are partially assembled, typically with the body and chassis already attached, but lacking some components such as the engine, transmission, and other parts. "SKD vehicles are often

exported and then completed by a local manufacturer or assembler, who installs the remaining components and completes the manufacturing of the vehicle."

He noted that all eight vehicles have been delivered and currently in use since April 2024.

He said although his outfit has completed a thorough vehicle assessment on each of the vehicles to evaluate performance, comfort, features, suitability and overall condition, there was the need to generate data to fully know the challenges with the vehicle such as its fuel consumption and long drive comfort.



Mr. Isaac Doe

Six and counting: AIS Dominates British Council Competition

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Proud winners of the competition in a group photograph with officials from the British Council and the Ag. Headmistress

and regional winner in 2021, global winner in 2022, national and regional winner in 2023.

At a colourful presentation ceremony organized at the school in Akosombo recently, the school received honours for emerging as winner for both national and sub-Saharan Africa regional awards from the British Council

The five-member team who brought pride and honour to the school; Daniella Addo-Listowell, Klenam De-Souza, Anaba Nasya Yinesakia, Dildar Nasir and Harris Issah, were each awarded with a certificate and a sourvenir.

The Country Director of the British Council Team in Ghana, Nii Doodo Dodoo, making the presentation commended the school for the incredible achievement.

According to him, emerging as winners of both the national and sub-Saharan Africa regional championships was a testament to the dedication, creativity, commitment and hard work of the students, teachers, and the entire staff body of the school.

The British Council Your World Video Competition is a contest that presents real world challenges needing practical solutions to the students. The video competition provides a valuable oppor-

tunity for the students from British Council partner schools to showcase their talent to connect and to compete with their peers from all over the world.

Since its inception, the competition every year opens an opportunity to all students who took part in the UK International School Qualifications, and Ordinary and Advanced Level in British Council partner schools.

This year's event was organized under the theme, "Climate change: From crisis to action". The AIS students presented a three-minute video and demonstrated a social action project in the school's communities, like Abume, a fishing community in the Asuogyaman District.

Leader of the AIS team, Daniella Addo-Listowell, expressed gratitude to both the school authorities and the British Council for the opportunity to broaden their academic knowledge and other skills such as the spirit of teamwork, leadership, and creativity. She encouraged other students to brave the challenge and keep the school at the first position in subsequent editions.

Speaking to the Ag. Headmistress of AIS, Mrs. Sarah Freda Adei, on the sidelines of the event, she noted that although this year marks the eighth edition of the competition, AIS was competing for the sixth time.

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Kpong GS Staff eulogize 'JB Desert Canteen' founding Member

taff of the Kpong Generating Station (KGS) have honoured and paid glowing tribute to Joseph Essien Blay, an Assistant Chief Technician Engineer, who retired recently from the Authority after 26 years of active service.

Mr. Blay was very instrumental in the daily management of KGS, especially on issues relating to utility services. He led the construction of the newly commissioned canteen at the Station which was subsequently named after him in recognition of his pivotal role in the construction of the canteen.

The management of the Plant christened the canteen 'Joseph Blay Desert Canteen (JB Desert Canteen)' in his honour as a memorial for his renowned dedication and contributions towards the construction of the eatery.

At a sendoff programme held in his honour at the KGS Conference Room recently, his colleagues took turns to bid him a fond farewell for his exemplary qualities and work culture which left an indelible mark on the lives of staff and the station's history.

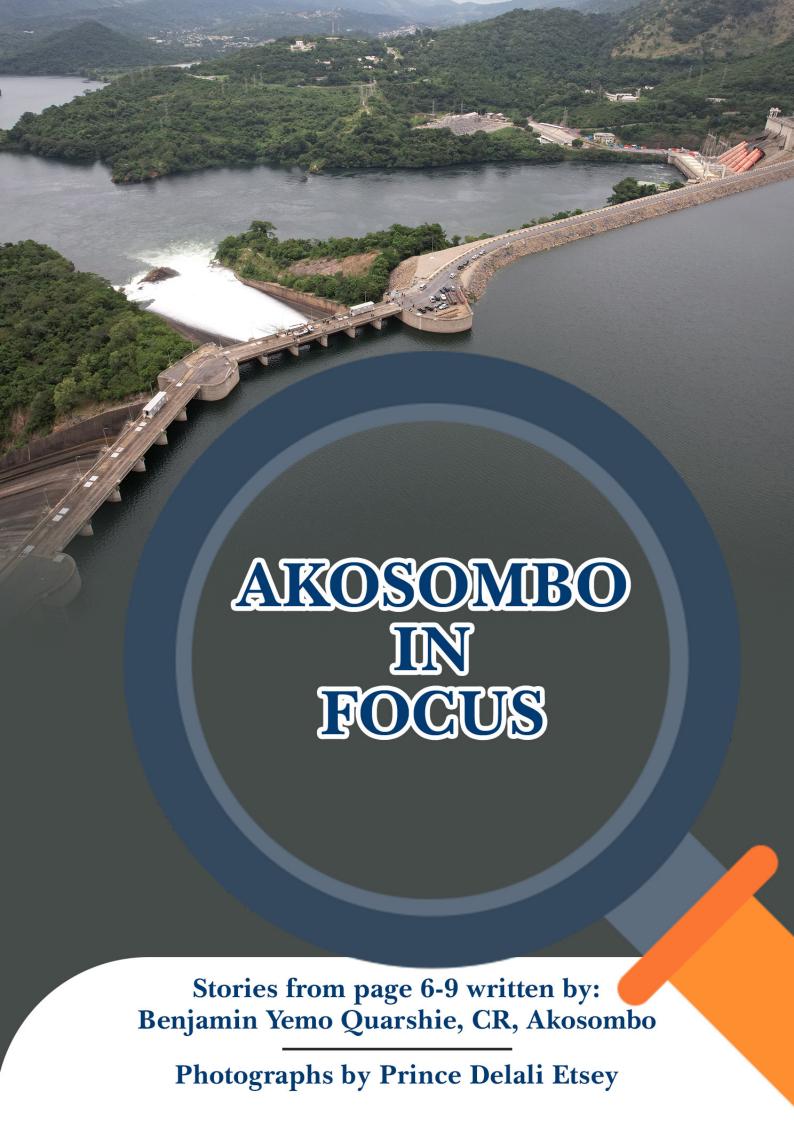
Many described Mr. Blay as a revered Utility Supervisor, who maintained a high standard of service in the Plant.

Mr. Blay joined the Authority on April 1,1998 as a Technician Engineer (Utility Supervisor) and rose through the ranks to the esteemed position of Assistant Chief Technician Engineer.

He was fully involved in many key activities at KGS such as the supervision of maintenance of the dyke, housekeeping of the Plant, washing of the scroll-case during major plant inspections and mini-retrofit projects, as well as washing of the air supply fan filters to ensure continuous supply of good quality of air in the powerhouse, sandblasting of trash-racks and other equipment, and carried out some civil works in the Plant, including masonry, carpentry, and painting works.

As a Civil Technician Engineer who specialized in plumbing related jobs, Mr. Blay ensured that potable drinking water was always available for use in the Plant by extending the Ghana Water service line to the Plant and carried out installation and maintenance of plumbing related equipment in the Plant.

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he Technical Services Department (TSD) in collaboration with the Northern Electricity Distribution Company (NEDCo), have trained Distribution and Commercial Services staff on the installation and operation of smart prepaid meters.

The five-day workshop was facilitated by Ing. Charles Philips of NEDCo who introduced the participants to the rudiments of using smart prepaid meters, and lectured them on vending processes, token application and management, smart billing, tariff broadcast among others.

Opening the workshop, the Director, TSD, Ing. Samuel Odartey Lamptey, said the benefits of the introduction of smart prepayment metering system to customers cannot be overemphasized.

He said in an era where VRA is focused to become a resilient, sustainable, and growing multi-business holding organization, the application of a private mindset is invariably crucial.

He said the roll out of this project would improve service

delivery as well as revenue collection and further noted that about 99 percent of new applicants prefer using prepaid meters.

He, therefore, urged the participants to step up the sensitization of customers and start redeployment of the smart prepaid meters after the training.

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In an era where VRA is focused to become a resilient, sustainable, and growing multibusiness holding organization, the application of a private mindset is invariably crucial.



VRA, Smile4Ghana offer free dental care for North Tongu residents

he Volta River Authority and Smile4Ghana, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) based in the UK have improved the oral hygiene of residents of Mepe and its adjoining communities in the North Tongu District by offering free dental care to them.

The three-day free dental health screening gathered thousands of community members from Degorme Camp 1 and 2 Safe Havens, Agbetikpo Safe Haven, Battor-Dugame, Battor Abilordzor, Aveyime, Aveyime Ananekope, Ayibor Manya Vortuamekope, Manya Losukope, Sikor and Blabotikope among others.

The Medical Director, VRA Health Services Limited (VHSL), Dr. Kwabena Omari Yeboah noted that the importance of continuous assistance to the victims of last year's dam spillage is of great importance to the Authority.

He stated that, the North Tongu District lacks access to dental care, prompting the Authority to collaborate with Smile4Ghana to extend dental services to the affected persons with the aim of ensuring their full recovery and ability to resume their economic activities.

Leader and Trustee of the Smile4Ghana team, Dr. George Brown, a Dental Surgeon, said the lack of dental surgeons in the district necessitated the need to collaborate with the VRA medical team for the exercise.

He said the team treated various dental conditions such as tooth decay, gum diseases, tooth repair, cleaning, extractions, and general oral hygiene sensitization.



Some beneficiaries demonstrating the proper use of a toothbrush



s part of continuous commitment to bring relief to persons affected by the 2023 Akosombo Dam spillage, the Volta River Authority has constructed two separate 10-seater bio-digester sanitation facilities at Degorme 'Camp 1 and 2' Safe Havens at Mepe in the North Tongu District.

This aligns with the Authority's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) objective of offering environmentally sustainable sanitation amenities. The provision of these facilities aims to deliver easily accessible, sustainable sanitation solutions, ultimately enhancing the overall health and well-being of the impacted people.

Representatives from both Camps conveyed their appreciation to the Management and Staff of VRA for the assistance, underscoring how the provision of water and sanitation facilities would enhance their living standards at the camps.

In a somewhat unrelated development, the Authority has also made available a bus service that conveys school children in the various safe havens to their respective schools daily to ensure they still have access to education.



VRA SUPPORTS CONSTRUCTION OF HOSTEL FACILITY FOR VOLO SHS

he Authority has donated GH¢20,000.00 in support of the construction of a hostel facility for the Volo Senior High School.

The donation was made during the celebration of the annual Tugbedzo Festival on the theme 'Fostering Collaborative Synergy to Enhance Educational Infrastructural Development.'

The support was in line with the broader efforts to strengthen partnership, sustain mutually beneficial relationships and to improve education in Volo, an impacted community of VRA.

On behalf of the Chief Executive of VRA, the Principal Community Relations Officer, Mrs. Rhoda Arthur, acknowledged the significant role the Volo Traditional Area plays in the business sustainability of the Authority.

Mrs. Arthur noted that the donation is aimed at supporting the Volo SHS Hostel project to enhance the comfort of students and facilitate a smooth learning journey towards a brighter future.

The Regent of the Volo Traditional Area, Benett Koblah Appleh commended VRA for the charitable donation and expressed confidence that it would fulfil its intended purpose.

Present at the festival were representatives of the MP for NorthTongu, Hon. SamuelOkudzeto Ablakwah, and Hon. Osborn Divine Fenu, DCE, North Tongu among others.



Mrs. Arthur addressing the gathering.



THE BRAND VRA-PAINTING THE ENERGY **SECTOR IN ITS OWN COLOURS**

By: Michael Danso, CA&ER, Accra



olours have psychological and found effect on our mood and our general way of life most of the time. They have incredible abilities to influence our emotions, thoughts, efficiency, and perceptions.

For instance, warm and stimulating colours like yellow or orange can evoke emotions ranging from feelings of warmth and comfort to feelings of anger and hostility, and at the same time encourage strength, creativity, and collaboration.

Moreso, calmer tones such as blue or green, on the other hand, promote calmness, focus, and efficiency. By incorporating these colours into corporate workspaces or even personal way of life, employers can create an environment that enhances productivity and fosters a positive mindset.

In today's competitive business landscape, establishing a strong brand identity is vital for success. Colours play a pivotal role in shaping brand perception and recognition. Most organizations strategically select colours that align with their core values and target audience.

In a corporate environment, like the Volta River Authority (VRA) where productivity and creativity are valued, the choice of colours can have a direct impact on employees' productivity and performance. I am sure you are eager to know what VRA's corporate colours are and their distinctive importance to our efforts at strategically achieving success.

The VRA colours are: Black, White, Yellow, Cyan Blue, Gradient Green, and Blue Gradient, each of which has a significant meaning to the business.

What our colours mean to us

BLACK: Reinforces the Black Star of Africa

WHITE: Stands for peace and tranquility born of excellence

YELLOW: Symbolizes wealth

CYAN BLUE: Represents the blue waters of the Volta

Lake

GRADIENT GREEN: Represents the effects of irrigation for which the Volta Lake will also be utilized especially in the communities along the lower basin.

BLUE GRADIENT: Inspired by the Volta River or water, the blue blends from a light fresher blue by its closeness to the sun and reflection over water and the environment to a darker hue.

Don't be misled by the title of this opinion article. I am only attempting to metaphorically use colours to illustrate a wide range of strategic achievements a signature brand called VRA has chalked in the energy sector in recent years.

The title is comparing the brand VRA's approach to the energy sector to an artist painting a picture, suggesting that VRA is depicting the energy sector in a way that is authentic, unique and true to itself, rather than trying to conform to someone else's vision. The phrase "in its own colours" is a metaphorical expression that means "in its own unique way" or "with its own distinctive characteristics".

What the VRA brand stands for

The Volta River Authority having dominated the energy market as the sole energy producer since Ghana's independence in the 1960's up until 2005, has grown to be one of the largest assets owning companies in



Kpong Farms Limited (KFL) was incorporated in May 1982 by the VRA as a wholly-owned agricultural commercial venture to carry out mechanized commercial farming, agro-processing and provision of machinery services. The KFL's 252 hectares landed property presently cultivates 100 hectares of irrigated land for rice production, and serves both local and international markets.

It contains lots of nutrients which includes carbohydrate, protein, high fiber, fats, vitamins and minerals such as folic acid, phosphorus, vitamin B1 (thiamine), vitamin B3(niacin), magnesium, selenium, manganese, and iron.



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Ghana. For 63 years, VRA has been at the forefront of powering economies and adding value to lives.

Over the years VRA has not only added value to lives and powered economies but raised the living standards of the people of Ghana and West Africa. VRA continues to supply electricity and related services in a reliable, safe, and environmentally friendly manner to add economic, financial, and social values to its esteemed customers and meet stakeholders' expectations.

VRA is not just a power utility – but an organisation that has the right mix of a team of disciplined professionals who are deep thinkers, innovators, problem-solvers, and trailblazers with the appetite for creativity, Innovation, efficiency, and excellence.

Value addition and Landmark projects

Over the past seven years, the VRA has attained many pre-eminent achievements through its visionary leadership and its dedicated workforce. VRA has become a critical foundation for the growth and socioeconomic development of Ghana and our neighbouring countries. In the face of the current global economy challenges and existential threat from competitors, the Authority has managed to execute several new projects, implemented policies and capacity addition towards its mission of providing sustainable energy solutions and services.

Some of these include: the completion of the Phase One of the 150-megawatts (MW) Anwomaso Thermal Power Station (ATPS) (through the relocation of the AMERI Plant from Aboadze to Anwomaso), the successful completion of the 6.5MWp Lawra Solar Plant, 13MWp Kaleo Solar Plant (Phase 1), 15MWp Kaleo Phase 2 Solar project, the successful completion of the Kpong Generating Station Retrofit project, completion of the Akosombo Generating Station SCADA project, the novel procurement of two brand new 35-seater Electric buses and charging stations (the first of its kind in Ghana), and the successful renegotiation of the NGAS Gas Sales Agreement to reduce the payment and security obligations, just to mention a few.

On the other hand, there has been the introduction and provision of Value-Added Services (VAS) to our customers, the facilitation of a-three-month quasi-classroom and industrial attachment for thermal generation staff with Saskatchewan Polytechnic and Saskatchewan Power in Canada, the introduction of the VRA Creativity & Innovation Day, revision of the VRA core values from "ACT IT" to "S.O.C.I.E.T.I" amongst others. These are intended to make the

organization more efficient, resilient, stronger and serve stakeholders better with our products and services.

Commendation

Having worked in VRA over the past decade, I must admit that I have witnessed a couple of changes in administration, but the achievements of the current Board and Management of the Authority show that leadership is indeed a calling. If you dart your eye across the expanse of the energy sector, you will see the massive footprints of VRA and "its colours" all over the country. I would like to commend the current crop of Management for putting the Authority's business on an inspiring journey of growth. Thank you, Management, for instilling in us the very essence of 'can-do spirit' and re-setting our corporate mindset to be a public institution with a private sector mindset which has sharpened our work values, skills and competence for superior service delivery, innovative solutions, that are responsiveness to our new strategy.

Conclusion

Rounding up, I would like to say that anyone who is a direct or indirect beneficiary of VRA will attest that as an energy generation organization, we have not let our stakeholders and shareholders down. We have played a pivotal role in advancing our footprints and contributing to a sustainable future for the sector. We have lived to fulfil our most edifying tradition of adding value to lives.

Permit me, however, to remind ourselves of the gospel according to the Chief Executive, Mr. Emmanuel Antwi-Darkwa, which says, "there is the need to remind ourselves of the overarching objective of sustaining our operations and this can only happen when we all embrace new ways of doing things. It is imperative that we strengthen the VRA as a building-block to become a multi-faceted business holding enterprise". Let us continue to work hard to ensure that VRA stamps its feet of Authority on the energy sector and paint the entire sector in its own colours.





Isaac Ewuah Finance and Investment Analyst

Pensions & Investments



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE INVESTMENT OPTIONS IN GHANA UNDER THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

hana, like many other African countries, is facing economic challenges. The country has been hit by a combination of factors such as high inflation, currency depreciation, and rising interest rates. These factors have made it difficult for investors to find profitable investment opportunities. However, there are still some investment options that can provide good returns despite the current economic challenges. In this article, we will discuss some of the best investment options available in Ghana. It is however important to note that every investment activity carries with it some level of risk, so it is important to assess your individual risk appetite before engaging in any investment activity.

1.Real Estate Investment

Real estate investment is one of the most popular investment options in Ghana. Despite the current economic challenges, the real estate market in Ghana has remained relatively stable. This is because the demand for housing in Ghana is still high, and the supply is limited. Investing in real estate can provide good returns in the long run, especially if you invest in areas with high potential for growth. Real estate includes investment in lands which also offers huge returns on investment. Investment in landed properties around this time is a sure way of ensuring value for money and hedging your losses against inflation. Among the benefits for investing in real estate are high rate of return, serves as a hedge against inflation, investor has total control over investment asset, offers

a sense of gratification or fulfilment to some investor.

2. Foreign Currency

Investing in foreign currency can provide good returns while serving as a store of value, especially if you invest in currencies that are expected to appreciate against the Ghanaian cedi. This serves as a store of value against the depreciating cedi while offering you value appreciation through exchange gains. Again, to a very large extent you have direct control over your assets (cash) if not lodged within the Banking sector which offers you liquidity. However, holding onto the physical cash comes along with its inherent security risk of theft/robbery. Investing in foreign currency also requires a good understanding of the market and the ability to identify undervalued currencies.

3. Agriculture

Agriculture is an important sector in Ghana's economy. Investing in agriculture can provide good returns, especially if you invest in crops with high demand such as cocoa, coffee, and cashew nuts. A lot more is also doing well in the vegetables (tomatoes, cabbage, pepper, okro) and other food crops such as yams, rice cassava etc. Another booming cash crop on the market now is Turkey Berries what we call in our local parlance (abedru', 'Kwahu nsusua', or 'nsaman ntroba' in Fante) this pea-size berry is used for a range of culinary and medicinal applications. Some medical

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Best strategies towards retirement planning...

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A good pension plan helps you to maintain your standard of living in retirement.

doctors highly recommend it in meals. However, investing in agriculture requires a medium to long-term investment horizon and a good understanding of the sector. Lives stock is also booming (piggery, cattle, goat/sheep) as well as poultry. All these investments carry their specific industry risk which one needs to understand and be aware before deciding.

4.Gold

Gold is a popular investment option in Ghana. There is always an inverse relationship between the price of gold and interest rates. While interest rates are going down, the price of gold appreciates because it becomes the alternative and best store of value for investors. You can buy some jewelries made from these minerals as a store of value and sell off at later dates when the need arises. Investing in gold can provide good returns, especially if you invest in gold mining companies i.e., small scale mining or buy physical gold.

5.Peer-to-Peer Lending

Peer-to-peer lending is a new investment option that has gained popularity in Ghana. This involves lending money to individuals or businesses through online platforms. Investing in peer-to-peer lending can provide good returns, especially if you invest in borrowers with a

good credit history. However, investing in peer-to-peer lending requires a good understanding of the market and the ability to identify reliable borrowers. If you luck the knowledge on these, you can participate through credit finance institutions (Micro credits) whose main market is to target the unserved banking public through credits.

6. Fixed Income Securities

Fixed income securities are another investment option that can provide good returns in Ghana. These securities include government bonds, corporate bonds, and treasury bills. The interest rates on these securities are relatively high, which makes them attractive to investors. However, investing in fixed income securities requires a long-term investment horizon. Currently, government securities in Ghana are considered risky due to the on-going domestic debt programme. However, they seem to be among the few options available to the investing public which offers some cushion against inflation.

7. Mutual Funds

Mutual funds are a popular investment option in Ghana. These funds pool money from different investors and



Best strategies towards retirement planning...

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invest in a diversified portfolio of stocks, bonds, and other securities. Mutual funds are managed by professional fund managers who make investment decisions on behalf of the investors. Investing in mutual funds can provide good returns in the long run, especially if you invest in funds and companies with a good track record.

8. Stocks

Investing in stocks is another option that can provide good returns in Ghana. The stock market in Ghana has been relatively stable despite the current economic challenges. Stocks of the following companies are actively trading and doing well on the stock market; Fan milk, Unilever, Goil, MTN Ghana etc. Investing in stocks requires a good understanding of the market and the ability to identify undervalued stocks. It is important to diversify your portfolio to reduce the risk of losses.

9. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of Ghana's economy. Investing in SMEs can provide good returns, especially if you invest in businesses with high growth potential. However, investing in SMEs requires a good understanding of the business and the ability to identify businesses with high potential.

10.Treasury Bills/Fixed Deposits

The most risk averse investor out there knows that as we speak there are no risk-free instruments. You may be contemplating on "to invest or not to invest". The truth is, doing nothing in times like this is more costly than doing something no matter how insignificant. Your money loses value with each passing day of idleness either in your pocket, safe, or account due to rising inflation which competes against our purchasing power. You are, therefore, better off investing any activity that can offer you some returns to at least reduce your loses with regards to your purchasing power. Your prime objective should be to enhance your purchasing power and not quick asset growth.

"Six and counting: AIS **Dominates British Council** Competition. Contd. from page 3

Mrs. Adei who doubles as the school's coordinator of the competition said, "the impact some of these competitions have had on our School Community and the communities along the Volta Lake is huge."

"For instance, coordinating the work of my student team to explore solutions pertaining to Mental Health among young people and Schistosomiasis proved to be a valuable learning experience for me. Students are now opening up more on their challenges, knowing that they are not alone and that they can readily get help."

She made it known that girls in the deprived school who could not afford sanitary pads and were experiencing low self-esteem are now very confident as they no longer miss lessons during their menses.

Kpong GS Staff eulogize 'JB **Desert Canteen' founding**

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Mr. Blay expressed gratitude to the entire staff for recognizing and appreciating his work, on his journey, emphasizing importance of building communities and memories.

As he steps into a new phase of his life's journey, Mr. Blay's legacy continues in the structures he built and the people he inspired.

The VRA News Team would like to join hands with the staff of KGS to congratulate him and wish him a successful retirement.



WHEN AMERI MOVED: Transformative Story of Competence

and Value

By: Laud Evans Ofori, Strategic Projects and New Business

ver the past few years, darkness and light have nestled themselves in the heart of Ghana's middle and northern belts, tussling for some form of dominance at the expense of citizens who depend on stable electricity to live out their lives. In some suburbs of Kumasi for instance, erratic power supply heavily endured, becoming a kind of second nature to these communities.

The existing power transmission infrastructure could not adequately meet the growing demand for electricity within the middle and northern belts of Ghana leading to electricity instability which brought businesses to their knees and created significant organizational haircuts.

While other parts of the country

experienced reliable electricity, an unfortunate story continued to unfold in the sister regions atop the capital. But recently, a new chapter has begun – one that's reshaping the story and reinvigorating livelihoods. This revival comes in the form of the Volta River Authority's 150 MW Anwomaso Thermal Power Station, a development that responds to a pressing need: to bring the power closer to the people.

The Plant ensures the improvement in reliability and quality of power supply in Greater Kumasi and the Northern parts of the country, along with a significant reduction in the amount of electricity lost in the transmission of power to consumers in the country.

The History

The Anwomaso Power Station in Kumasi has its roots in Aboadze in the

Western Region in the form of the erst-while Ameri Power Plant. Through its own internally generated funds, the VRA in July 2023 kickstarted the decommissioning, relocation, reassembly and commissioning of the Ameri Plant's six (6) General Electric generating units, switchyard and gas interconnected facilities along with their auxiliaries and balance of plant infrastructure. The new home of the Power Plant was Anwomaso in the Ashanti Region.

AModel of Excellence: Exhibiting Power Engineering Competency

For the first time in Ghana's history, Ghanaian engineers led the charge. The momentous task was carried out entirely by VRA engineers. It was an engineering challenge that no company within Ghana had ever taken on.

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CREATING A STRONG OWNERSHIP CULTURE TO ENSURE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF VRA

Mrs. Marian Atta-Benyah

Human Resources, Aboadze

he Authority is sixty-three (63) and still sustaining its gains in the power industry amidst the competition.

The gains achieved have been because of strategies put in place by Management and the collective effort by all staff.

The value of ownership is vital in ensuring the sustainability of the Authority. There is, therefore, the need to create a stronger ownership culture in the Authority.

As we continue to live the culture of ownership, which is one of our core values (S.O.C.I.E.T.I), we should not lose sight of the fact that there should be conscious effort on our part to create a strong ownership culture.

Ownership is the state, act or right of possessing or owning something. Taking ownership provides a sense of responsibility and control over one's work environment. It also means taking initiative and responsibility for your growth and the success of your team or organization.

The VRA Corporate Teaser on Ownership indicates, "A culture of Ownership will empower staff to take full responsibility for tasks as they arise, follow through with tasks from end-to-end, as well as go beyond what is required of them — unlike the alternative, where people stick only to their assigned responsibilities".

At VRA, taking Ownership means that staff have an obligation to the organization in terms of results and are expected to act on the items that impact those results. We must be accountable and own the results of our actions.

Employees are to accept responsibility for their actions and own the outcomes. Staff must be accountable for their ideas, tasks, decisions, objectives, and choices, especially at work, as well as colleagues and clients.

By embracing this mindset, employees focus on more than just monetary gain; rather invest their time and energy into the company's success.

As we, work to create a stronger ownership culture there is the need to enhance employee information sharing, offer more training and development programmes, foster participatory management culture, involve employees in decision-making and empower employees to be accountable.

The sustainability agenda should, therefore, be our focus and not to rest on our oars. Staff are expected to continue to work assiduously to sustain the gains for our next generation. Let us put our shoulders to the wheel and build a stronger ownership culture.



ADAPTING TO THE DIGITAL ERA: NAVIGATING THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT.

Mrs. Charlotte Selorm Adza-Yawo

Senior Non-Technical Officer (Organisational Learning) VRA Academy

s the records management profession continues to evolve, and in some cases, struggles to find relevance or acceptance in the face of the digital information universe, Records Managers must learn new skills to survive; skills that will require more knowledge and understanding of technology than ever before. Ref. Robert Jones, Kathryn Scanland & Steve Gunderson. The Jobs Revolution: Changing How America Works. (2004).

The world of Records Management (RM) is undergoing rapid change, fueled by an increase in digital content creation, dependence on technology and the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI). As organizations grapple with this transformation, a critical question arises: "How can we leverage these changes to optimize records management and safeguard an organization's Institutional Memory (IM)? The value of ownership is vital in ensuring the sustainability of the Authority. There is, therefore, the need to create a stronger ownership culture in the Authority.

In this article, we will consider Jesse Wilkins (CRM) whose insights are featured in the article 'Taking the lead in the information Race," published in ARMA International's Information Management magazine. Wilkins emphasizes that records managers must adapt by honing their 'technology chops' and maintain an insatiable thirst for learning. As the RM landscape evolves, professionals in the field must acquire new skills to remain relevant.

Indeed, the landscape of Records Management (RM) has undergone significant transformations; key trends and

changes key trends and changes that have shaped the field largely include new regulations, digital advancements and evolving technologies. Let's explore a few of them that are changing and shaping the field:

NEW REGULATIONS:

Data Protection

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) are seeing an increased enforcement in data usage with possible fines because of breach.

2023 saw the largest GDPR fine ever handed down, approximately €1.2 billion, to Meta by Ireland. In keeping with a general tendency towards higher fines and more stringent enforcement, the legal ruling concerned EU to US data transfers. Meta was found not to have ensured adequate data-protection during the data-transfer phase.

In Ghana the data protection commission announced intentions to scale up enforcement measures for the Data Protection Act 2012 (Act 843). It reiterated its decision to act against entities and individuals who failed to comply with the provisions outlined in the law. The exercise was to involve the arrest of ultimate decision makers/heads of institutions who have neglected their legal responsibilities enshrined in the Act and have defaulted from 14 August 2023. General News of Friday, 21 July 2023 (ghanaweb.com).

In China, the establishment of a national data security commission in 2023 signaled their intent to provide rigor

over the nation's vast data resources. This powerful body aims to centralize data governance, oversee cross-border data flows, and ensure national security.

This will have important implications for Meta moving forward into 2024 and beyond.

Right to information Law

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN RECORDS MANAGEMENT:

2023 was billed "the year of AI" and many fields Information Management not excluded, saw increasing adoption of Artificial Intelligence in the bid to remain relevant in an ever-developing world. AI, particularly Generative AI, has been increasingly utilized for tasks such as document classification, metadata extraction, and eDiscovery, enhancing efficiency and accuracy in managing large volumes of data. Developing "technology chops" and staying informed and acquiring new skills sets in AI developments has become crucial for records managers to adapt to this changing landscape.

BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY:

This is a technological structure that stores transactional records of the public in several databases, known as the "chain," in a network connected through peer-to-peer nodes. It is an advanced database mechanism that allows transparent information sharing within a business network. It stores data in blocks that are linked together in a chain. Blockchain mechanisms can aid records managers in ensuring that their records are consistent, reliable, and accurate. and can be audited and verified by any authorized party.

CLOUD STORAGE ADOPTION:

More organizations are moving their records management systems to cloud storage solutions. This shift is raising important questions about data sovereignty and control, especially considering various global data protection regulations.

REMOTE WORK CHALLENGES:

The ongoing shift to remote work by the modern organization is posing unique challenges in managing records securely and efficiently outside the traditional office environments. This requires the organization to develop new strategies, technologies and policies for remote records management.

WORKPLACE SURVEILLANCE:

Increased use of monitoring software in workplaces is sparking new discussions about employee privacy and rights. Employee information collection as a result is leading to a re-evaluation of surveillance practices in the context of ethical information management.

THREATS OF CYBERSECURITY ATTACKS:

The year 2023 also witnessed significant attacks in the cyber space and data breaches, highlighting the need for organizations to put measures in place for robust cybersecurity requirements and information governance. Notably, ransomware has been identified as arguably the most common form of major attacks.

THE FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE GOALS (ESG), SUSTAINABILITY AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR):

Information management practices are becoming increasingly intertwined with environmental sustainability and corporate social responsibility. Records in their physical and digital forms can have a significant environmental footprint. Organizations alike are increasingly recognizing the role of effective records management in supporting their ESG goals and CSR initiatives.

This year saw a monumental change across the Information Management landscape. Greater enforcement of GDPR, the integration of Al into records workflows, and the challenges of remote work environments have collectively steered organizations towards more secure, efficient, and compliant information management practices. These advancements not only respond to immediate needs but also lay a foundation for the evolving digital landscape. As such, the VRA should not be left out in this evolution journey. Records and information management professionals in the Authority need to be carried along, to ensure the Authority's records and information assets are captured accurately, stored and preserved for posterity in whatever form they may be generated.

In 2004, the authors of the book The Jobs Revolution: Changing How America Works concluded that American employees needed to improve their skills for the 21st century. One of the most frequently cited extracts from the book is that 'the top 10 jobs that will be in demand in 2010 didn't exist in 2004' Reference: Robert Jones, Kathryn Scanland & Steve Gunderson. The Jobs Revolution: Changing How America Works. (2004).

The call for Information management professionals to improve their skills cannot be timelier, as the domain of the profession is evolving at such an alarming rate. With such rapid changes, this is the question I ask: how will the shift towards more digital content creation affect the field of our profession? The following are some of the transformations that are beginning to occur and will continue at a thunderbolt pace in the coming years.

- 1. The primary source of information, its creation, capture. Storage and management are affected by virtual space.
- 2. The choice of telecommuting is becoming more popular with organizations and convenient with the average employee, this means more electronic content.
- 3. The advent of virtual collaboration tools is resulting in electronic document creation
- 4.Information Management positions will require stronger, more intensive IT skills and comprehension, as we are creating more electronic documents.
- 5.Organizations are converting and storing documents in electronic format.
- 6.Increased use of shared drives and the Cloud for storage.
- 7.Increased use of sophisticated and enterprise computer applications.

8.Less office space will be dedicated to paper file storage. Paper records that will remain in that format for one reason or the other will require separate policies for handling. This will require a small number of specialists to deal solely with them, as many workers in record management will focus on electronic systems.

In our world today, the skills required by information management professionals are increasingly focused on the ability to understand, manipulate, and manage structured data, with associated metadata in the era of big data. Search engines, open sources, and information overload.

The Volta River Authority has been in existence for the past 63 years and, consequentially, has generated volumes of records over the years. The Volta River Development Act (Act 46) 1966 section 16 as amended also requires the Authority to capture, store, and preserve records from its operation and make the same available for public consultations and research. VRA, therefore, has the sense of duty to keep important records that are byproducts of business operations and transactions, to fulfill this mandate.

Acursory observation of VRA's information management landscape as an information professional shows that these information assets are threatened, and we stand to lose them if care is not taken. These materials include vital records in different formats all over the Authority. More noteworthy among them are the preand post-preparatory commission records that are endangered due to their age and nature. Another group is made up of video recordings of VRA's programs, celebrations, and installations that have not been migrated over the years to new media. These records house important information that should be kept by the Authority. However, they can be lost permanently due to obsolete technology. Now, the biggest challenge is the group of records that are being created electronically that are not being classified, indexed, and stored professionally. Such records could soon be lost because they cannot be retrieved when needed.

Records management is a technical field that requires deliberate effort, tools, and strategy to be able to capture, store, organize, manage, retrieve, and disseminate information. VRA has, over the years, managed the physical records generated quite well; the challenge, therefore, lies in migrating to a more modern media and managing the electronic documents that are being generated because of modernity.

The solution to the myriads of challenges is to build the capacity of the information management professionals, equip them with appropriate skills and resources, develop appropriate policies, and empower them to carry out their mandate. Also, information professionals, particularly Records Managers and Librarians, must embrace technological advancements, stay informed, and continuously develop skill sets to navigate the evolving landscape effectively and efficiently.





STAFF BUILD CAPACITY IN PRESENTATION SKILLS

By: Michael Danso, CA&ER, Accra



Participants in a photograph with Mr. Richard Essuman (arrowed).

section of staff from the various work locations of the Authority have benefited from a three-day specialized training course on Presentation Skills at the VRA Academy at Akuse recently.

The course which formed part of the implementation plan for the Scheme of Service, was aimed at continuous upskilling of staff in the Authority. It also had the objective of equipping participants with advanced presentation skills to effectively communicate ideas, persuade stakeholders, and deliver impactful presentations in a corporate environment.

The training program brought together staff from departments such as the Finance and Investment, Human Resources, Thermal Generation SBU, Engineering Services, Environment & Sustainability Development, VRA Health Services Ltd., VRA Schools SBU, Corporate Office, Technical Services and Real Estate & Security Services.

The course, which was facilitated by a Senior Training Officer, at the VRA Academy, Dr. Edwin Kodwo Kuntu Blankson was segmented into seven modules consisting of sub-topics such as Introduction to Presentation Skills, Structuring Your Presentation, Audience Analysis and Engagement, Delivering Your Presentation, Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication, Handling Questions and Objectives, and PowerPoint and Slide Preparation which was taught by Mr. Richard Kwame Essuman, Senior Training Officer, VRA Academy.

Opening the program, Dr. Blankson inquired from each participant their personal objective for embarking on the course, many of whom sought to gain understanding of the concept of Presentation Skills, advance and

improve confidence, as well as communicate ideas effectively and impactfully to any audience that will leave lasting impressions.

At the end of the course, participants through their course representative, Mrs. Mabel Akua Appiah-Yeboah of the HR Department expressed satisfaction about the training and commended the facilitators.

She expressed appreciation to the facilitators and assured them of putting the knowledge acquired to good use to achieve organizational and personal goals.

Participants were highly impressed with the approach and methodology used in teaching the subject as the trainers ensured that knowledge was not only shared but also received and understood by the participants.

With the use of PowerPoint presentations, video illustrations, practical exercises, and group assessments activities, the training was intermittently opened for discussions, questions, and feedback which made it interactive and participatory.

Dr. Blankson charged the participants to be worthy ambassadors of the course and often practice in order to gain mastery and expertise.









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INFORMATION CONSIDERED EXEMPT IN THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT. 2019

Hello reader,

n previous editions, we began discussing information considered exempt in the Right to Information Act (RTI), 2019 (Act 989).

We indicated that the RTI Act bars public institutions, as well as private institutions that receive public funding, from releasing information prepared for the attention of the President and the Vice President.

This also includes matters, the disclosure of which would reveal information concerning an opinion, advice, deliberation, recommendation, minutes or consultation made or given to the President or the Vice-President. However, information which contains factual or statistical data isn't exempt.

Information prepared for the attention of the Cabinet is also considered exempt. Cabinet can, however, choose to voluntarily publish information it believes is not exempt. 'Cabinet', per the Act, also includes a committee or a sub-committee of Cabinet.

In this edition, we would briefly touch on other pieces of information considered exempt. Per Section 7 of the Act, institutions that are mandated to enforce laws and ensure public safety cannot be compelled to share information that directly related to their modus operandi. This is especially true if a request for information to such institutions is designed to elicit details about the work they do.

Information is also considered exempt if it is deemed to have the tendency of damaging or prejudicing Ghana's relations with other countries. However, such information could be released if the President gives prior approval for its disclosure.

The RTI Act also forbids the release of information if its disclosure can reasonably be expected to damage or prejudice Ghana's defenses, or the detection, prevention or suppression of terrorism, sabotage or espionage.

Subject to article 135 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, information created by, or in the custody of the Ghana Armed Forces, or the security or intelligence services established under the Security and Intelligence Agencies Act, 1996 (Act 526), which is likely to threaten the security of the State, is exempt information.

Economic information, generated by, or about third parties, is also considered exempt. Information which would reveal a trade secret, research, scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour-related, which is supplied in confidence, is deemed to be exempt, especially if its disclosure is likely to prejudice the competitive position of a person, a group or an organisation.

It is also exempt if it is likely to adversely affect negotiations with a third party, or result in undue loss to a person, a group or an organisation, a financial institution, or any other body.

For further information and enquiries on the implementation of the RTI Law in the Authority, you may contact the RTI Officer via telephone: 0575423334/0575423335 and email: vra.rti@vra.com.



Karen Eyram Hayibor Legal Services Department

ADVOCATE OF THE VOLTA'S EDGE THE TALE OF THE TWO WIVES- Episode 1

he story unfolds along the serene shores of the Volta River, where each dawn arrives with a magnificent display of light, painting the horizon with hues of gold and amber. Here, where water and earth intertwine, inviting fishes to glide in a graceful dance and fishermen to cast their nets, the tale carries on.

Kekeli, nestled by a window at her father's house, observed as schoolchildren hastened by, eager to absorb knowledge, their faces aglow with the promise of tomorrow's adventures. Lost in thought, she pondered the boundless prospects awaiting these young minds—science, art, politics, and indeed, the realm of law.

Her morning beverage was a concoction of corn dough sweetened with a hint of honey and adorned with groundnut. As she sipped from the vessel fashioned by the skilled hands of her forefathers, she sighed with relief as a gentle breeze rustled the leaves of the grand mango tree dripping with fruit in the middle of the compound.

In the days following her arrival, whispers of Kekeli's wisdom and unwavering commitment to fairness swept through the village with the speed of a prairie fire. Not long ago, she earned acclaim for resolving a dispute between two quarrelsome market women, employing her talent for mediation. The crux of the matter? Establishing the rightful owner of a mischievous fowl that had slipped from its coop, merrily evading the grasp of marketgoers.

Turning her attention to the present challenge, Kekeli, armed with the wisdom inherited from her ancestors and the knowledge gleaned from contemporary times, recognized the intricacies of Tordia Zanu's predicament. It resembled a delicate dance, much akin to the harmonious melody of a flute, delicately strumming the taut strings between age-old customs and the emerging laws encapsulated within PNDC Law 111. This statute aimed to reshape the landscape of inheritance and marital property rights within the realm of Ghana, weaving a tapestry that intertwined the traditions of yore with the evolving fabric of modernity.

Tordia Zanu's tale had echoed throughout the village which hastened his footsteps to trace a familiar path to her father's abode for a fortnight. Seeking solace, he jestingly lamented how his ancestors remained silent even during his earnest calls upon them amidst a fishing expedition to a secluded island—the ancestral abode of the people of Adzokoe. Yet, in their silence, he felt adrift, longing for answers that seemed elusive, lost amidst the whispers of the river's current.

In the heart of Ghana, where the Volta River nourishes the land and its people, customary law has long dictated that a man's property is to be distributed upon his passing, not whilst he breathes the air of the living. Yet, here were two wives, under the same moon and sun, demanding what tradition had not promised them. It was a matter of both the heart and the law, entangled in the modern aspirations of individual rights and the communal ethos of African society.

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In the forenoon, Kekeli leisurely strolled through the front yard of her father's house, surrounded by the lush garden where tomatoes and peppers flourished alongside Da Mawufemor's pineapple farm. She took in the picturesque scenery, exchanging greetings with the farm workers as they made their way to the market, their baskets brimming with produce.

Approaching the front yard of the Chief's Palace, she quietly sought an audience with the elders gathered in the courtyard. A traditional tribunal known as the "Donudodro nyuie," had been established there to resolve disputes, and Kekeli had become its ninth member, defying the convention that only allowed men to sit in such gatherings. Primarily tasked with mediation, they have amicably resolved myriad of issues without recourse to the Courts.

Astheday's deliberations came to aclose, Kekelijourneyed to the Baobab tree in the town square, where she had established a modest office to attend to her clients and offer counsel to those in need. Before long, Tordia Zanu approached, flanked by his two wives, Dzifa and Kafui.

Dzifa, tall and vivacious, exuded an effortless grace. Serving as the assistant to the market queen, she displayed remarkable entrepreneurial spirit. She held the esteemed position of Tordia Zanu's first wife and was the devoted mother of Aseye, Amenyo, and Agbenyo.

Kafui, on the other hand, was Tordia Zanu's second wife, renowned for her meticulous beadwork and acute attention to detail. Commanding great respect within the community, she was the nurturing mother of his youngest children, Nyuietor, Nutifafa, and Nukunu.

Following the customary exchange of greetings, Kekeli signaled for Tordia to begin, readying herself to listen to their concerns.

"My dear daughter, I've traversed distant lands in my prime, beholding the beauty of many places and encountering captivating women. Yet, as tradition dictates for one poised to inherit the esteemed position of "Dutor" (father of the land) in our community, my people orchestrated visits to the homes of my cherished wives, seeking their hands in marriage. Dzifa was the first to join our family, followed by Kafui nearly ten market days later. My children bring boundless joy, and harmony reigned within our home until the day I broached the subject of taking a third wife. To my dismay, both wives vehemently opposed the notion, insisting that if I proceed, they should receive their rightful share of my possessions immediately. This dilemma echoes the tale of my forefather, Ankutsede, whose decisions led him to an early visit with our ancestors, contrary to the predictions of Kofi the seer who had assured him that he would live to be a hundred years old. My Daughter, I implore you to counsel my wives. The expectations of my people weigh heavily upon me, anticipating a multitude of wives and offspring to carry forth our legacy".

His wives took their turn, expressing their displeasure at Tordia's sudden penchant for courting the village's fairest maidens particularly his desire to wed Dede, the Chief's niece, who had triumphed in the recent beauty contest organized by the market women. They adamantly argued that adding a third wife would only dissipate Tordia's prosperity and divert attention from the familial bonds he had forged with Kafui and Dzifa. They insisted that a third wife will simply dilute Tordia's wealth and take attention away from the family he has built with Kafui and Dzifa. Consequently, they demanded that he divide his belongings among them, or else they would not sanction his nuptials.

Kekeli proceeded to address her audience who were listening with rapt attention.

""I am grateful that this issue has been brought to my attention for resolution. Firstly, let me affirm that, after thorough investigation with your family members, Tordia, you are indeed validly married to Kafui and Dzifa under customary law, which holds recognition within the laws of Ghana. Before I proceed to discuss the various forms of marriage in Ghana, I must emphasize that under customary law, a man retains the right to marry as many wives as he desires; there exists no restriction on the number of wives permissible under such law."

"I stand as the limitation, I am the boundary," Kafui quipped, her voice carrying the weight of her concerns. "I shall restrict the count of women he may wed, for we are already two, bearing six offspring between us. Our riches are stretched thin already; why then should he usher in another?"

"We must rein him in; it cannot come to pass," Dzifa asserted. "Daughter, as a woman yourself, I beseech you, dissuade him from proceeding with this union. The youth of today may speak of women's empowerment and equality, but we urge you to champion our cause. Stand firm against him taking another wife, for it would only serve to diminish the rightful inheritance of each of us."

In a moment reminiscent of a tragic story told by the fireside under a starry night, Tordia Zanu's hand found refuge upon his forehead, his countenance wrought with utter dismay as his wives engaged in a volley of dissenting opinions.

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Kekeli found herself burdened, knowing that harmony between Tordia and his wives could only be attained through a thorough exploration of Ghana's rich tapestry of marital traditions ...to be continued

The "Advocate of Volta's Edge", a tale of a daughter's return, a community's transformation, and the power of knowledge to bridge the gap between old and new, is a serialized folklore which would be told quarterly in the VRA Newsletter.

WHEN AMERI MOVED: A

Transformative Story of Competence and Value

Contd. from page 16

Kumasi has its roots in Aboadze in the Western Region in the form of the erstwhile Ameri Power Plant. Through its own internally generated funds, the VRA in July 2023 kickstarted the decommissioning, relocation, reassembly and commissioning of the Ameri Plant's six (6) General Electric generating units, switchyard and gas interconnected facilities along with their auxiliaries and balance of plant infrastructure. The new home of the Power Plant was Anwomaso in the Ashanti Region.

A Model of Excellence: Exhibiting Power Engineering Competency

For the first time in Ghana's history, Ghanaian engineers led the charge. The momentous task was carried out entirely by VRA engineers. It was an engineering challenge that no company within Ghana had ever taken on. The mettle of VRA's engineers was tested and they rose to the occasion, becoming a blueprint for future engineering challenges and demonstrating that the Authority's over sixty years of power business experience was not for show. With meticulous planning and a commitment to excellence, the Anwomaso Power Station was raised, not only as a testament to VRA's professional capability but also as evidence to her cause of adding value to lives.

Economic Revival: Jobs and the Business Economy

The Ashanti Region's reputation for fostering the development of small and medium-scale enterprises, as well as commercial and industrial ventures cannot be overemphasized. It is undeniable how most southern businesses get their stock from Kumasi and parts of the Northern belt.

The Anwomaso Thermal Power Station, therefore, presents a renaissance to the local business economy. A production boom is expected as the plant becomes operational, supporting local labour and creating an influx of employment opportunities.

A resident of Santasi notes, "I own industrial freezers I use for my Cold Store business, but I had not been able to turn them on in a while because of the electricity instability. In the past two weeks and a half, we've been operating non-stop, and I've had to hire more hands for my business. That's a good problem to have."

New businesses will continue to sprout because of VRA's game-changing power plant, injecting life into Ghana's economy. Clearly, at the heart of VRA's business is the commitment to raising the living standards of the people of Ghana.

Educational Impact

The existence of the Anwomaso Power Station (ATPS) is partly possible because of the collaboration between VRA and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, with the latter providing the land that houses the Station.

With VRA's vehement interest in STEM education, the ATPS provides an environment for hands-on learning experiences and internships for students of Engineering. Students can now have access to practical power generation operations which was unimaginable a few years ago.

It is incredible how a single decision to move a power plant into the Ashanti region is igniting a fire that will raise capable professionals and inspire the next generation of engineers and scientists.

The Road Ahead

VRA's ultimate goal with the ATPS is to achieve a generation capacity of 250MW. Consequently, the Authority has initiated the transportation of the remaining four General Electric Units from Aboadze to Anwomaso to further augment power services in the middle and Northern sectors of Ghana.

The Anwomaso Thermal Power Station (ATPS) is a reflection of VRA's drive to boost industry and enhance Ghana's economic resilience through electricity generation. Going into the future, VRA's strategic direction guided by its SPICE Objectives is to increase its generation portfolio with key power projects to meet demand.

Through VRA, a new day has dawned on communities within the middle and northern belts, presenting a fresh wave of socio-economic growth to these areas. VRA will continue to push the boundaries of power services, standing as a model of excellence for Ghana and the sub-region at large.





Please send your concerns, questions, congratulatory messages, issues, suggestions, etc., to corpcomm@vra.com

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