

John Nyahe

SAKUMONO TMA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SAKUMONO VILLAGE



Image above:
Mr. John Nyahe.

We meet Mr. John Nyahe in his office at Sakumono TMA Junior High School in Sakumono Village. The school houses over 300 students. The school grounds are bordering the edge of the lagoon; just a man-high brick wall is dividing them.

What is your relation to this school and community?

I am John Nyahe, I came here in 2017 to be Principal and Head Master of this school. Before I worked as an officer in the Education Office, coordinating for the whole district. So I know many of the schools here. God has been good to me; I love my work very much.

Does the new port development affect Sakumono village?

Construction has come very close to our community, but it does not affect us directly because the water does not come all the way to this place. The road is still in between. But if the port is bigger, it will bring about more

business activity. So who knows? It might benefit us in a way. If our people would have access, that might transform their life style. If it keeps them out, for technical reasons, no one knows, then it is only an inconvenience to them.

The new port is positioned in the major fishing grounds of this community, and fishing and fish processing is our only activity here. So by taking these grounds away, it also takes away the future for our children.

How can the port development make things better for your community?

Honestly, this school is so full of destitute children, of very poor background and a good number of broken homes. We have some charitable organisations that are supporting us; like the church and the assembly, this helps our school. So we can educate them to abstain for immoral behaviour. But only very few can afford to pay fees, so most cannot get further education. And the only business is fishing, so most of them will assist the fishermen or the netters to earn some money for a living.

The only way to change things is to empower them though education. The port could help build that, imagine a government project of a higher school, or even a university in this place. Because in the future, children can only be employable after they have specialised.

How do you think the community will look like in 20 years time?

Well, the lagoon is dry now, but in the rainy season it fills up. It becomes a fishing ground for this community. But if the port project extends to affect the lagoon, then

this important source of income would also be affected. If there is no fish, what are they going to do? The only option would be to move. This community consists mainly of two ethnic groups, the Damgbe from the south and the Ewe from the north. Being an Ewe myself, I know that Ewe are settlers, with fishing and farming as main occupation. So if the fishing ends, we are displaced. The only option is to go back north, where the land is impoverished and no longer offers the livelihood people would expect.

What do you hope it will look like in 20 years time?

I think the social aspects of the project must also be added into the plan. Then I hope that there will be different jobs than fishing. For example there could be invested in some big cool stores in this community that would be owned communally with the help of the assembly. Then big fish from the deep sea could be brought in, fish that our fishermen would like to catch, but cannot reach now. The fish from the cool store can be bought by the people here and they can process it. They can smoke it, fry it, and sell it. These are businesses they know already and they can easily adapt. That will give them jobs.

For the school, I think it will become beautiful here. I pray for this every day. I envision a library for our school, because books are most important in education. It should be the priority of our government. Also I see a nice fence around the school grounds, modern canteens, and grassing of the park. It will look so nice, that holidaymakers come over to see our place. And that will give little shops at the street some business as well, so the whole community will benefit.