

Ghana, Agbogbloshie: Dangerous burning of electronic waste replaced by mechanized recycling

Informal e-waste recycling is an important source of income for the thousands in Agbogbloshie, in the heart of Accra, a city of 2 million. Burning the electronic scrap to recover prized metals, particularly copper, has taken a dreadful toll on the health of recyclers and on the environment. Now wire-stripping machines offer a safer and better way to extract the metals. Plans are already underway to make Agbogbloshie a model for sustainable e-waste recycling in Ghana and Africa.

Location	Agbogbloshie, Ghana
Pollutant	Heavy metals, particulates, lead, mercury, PCBs, PAH, phalates
Source	Burning and dismantling of e-waste
Population affected	50,000 - 250,000
Health and environmental impacts	Air pollution from piles of e-waste lit up to burn off plastic-coated wires; Soil and water pollution with heavy metals from irregular dumping of waste materials
Intervention	A mechanized recycling facility that would help eliminating open burning of e-waste.
Outcome	The goal is to reduce all types of pollution while increasing benefit for recyclers.
Co-benefits	Health and income improvement locally. The project can be expanded and be replicated as a model for other e-waste sites in Ghana and beyond.

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