Background
Diabetes Youth Care (DYC) is a Non-profit organization, which aims at complementing the efforts of medical personnel in the care of young people under the age of 30 living with diabetes mellitus (DM) in Ghana. It started in October 2010 in the Western region of Ghana and was registered as a non-governmental organization in January 2012. The organization seeks to serve as a support network for young people living with Diabetes Mellitus, educate young people living with diabetes about nutrition, eye care, foot care, etc. and to support families with diabetics on how to manage various problems they may encounter.

The organization provides education to its members by organizing monthly support group meetings in four regions in Ghana; namely Western Region, Central Region, Greater Accra Region and Ashanti Region. Each region has coordinators and nationally an executive group made up of young people living with diabetes who are well versed in leadership roles. Volunteers who manage the groups are mostly medical personnel including Diabetologists, General Practitioners and Nurses.

Aim
To assess the effectiveness of the organization as a support network for young people living with DM

Method
A qualitative research was conducted using the simple random method of data collection. This was to give each member an equal chance of being selected. A total number of 29 (12 males, 17 females) members were selected for the study. Questionnaires were administered to them either face to face or self-administered after consenting to the study. This was analyzed using SPSS21.0

Results
The mean age of the respondents was 23.93 with a range from 16-32 years. The mean duration of living with DM is 5.5 years. 26 out of 29 have a glucometer of their own and 4 (13.7%) had it purchased by their family with only 5 out of 29 checking their blood sugar levels more than once a day. Eighty-six percent (n25) found out about the support group from their medical doctor and the average duration of membership of the respondents was 2.34 years. All respondents reported joining the group had an impact on their lives.

Results (Cont’d)
There was a reported sense of belonging and a family environment or setting during support group meetings and this was demonstrated by the volunteers and medics who were present who are seen to have executed their work very well (89%) as reported by the respondents making them feel at home and welcomed into the group. 86.2% joined the support network to learn more about DM. Interactions between the young people living with diabetes was reported by 65.1% (n19) to be very good and they also experienced very good interactions between the medical volunteers and themselves.

Discussion
Living with DM is a life-long condition, support groups are important as they give an opportunity for meeting other young people living with DM. This creates a forum where they talk to each other and share various problems they may be encountering. This is best done in comfort and in a non-clinic/hospital based setting to decrease the probability of being judged by the medical personnel. Members have gained much benefits from the organization such as glucometers, syringes, and strips. Education about DM helps them to become independent and able to practice healthy nutrition.

Members highlighted that coordinators and volunteers’ work was effectively demonstrated during the monthly support group meetings. The validation of the support group being accommodative was reported by respondents noting that their views and contributions are welcomed during these sessions. There was also a confidence boost for the young ones living with diabetes as only 2 young ones still reported they were shy. All members would recommend DYC to any other person living with this condition.

Challenges encountered by the young ones included difficulty in getting funds for transportation to attend the monthly meetings and some of the young ones who are in boarding school unable to attend the meetings due to schooling.

Conclusion
Diabetes Youth Care is reported to have a positive impact on the lives of young people living with DM and their families in Ghana. More support groups are to be encouraged to improve their lives and help them reach their fullest potential.