



UNFPA GHANA PROGRAMME REPORT 2018

LEAVING NO ONE
BEHIND THROUGH
DIRECT COMMUNITY
INTERVENTIONS

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UNFPA's mandate to reach the furthest behind first is the foundation of our program's objectives and guides their implementation. Over the years, our mission to ensure that no one is left behind has had a significant impact in several communities. Initiatives range from empowering adolescents in Jamestown and Old Fadama through Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) information sessions, to educating adolescent girls in refugee camps on SRH/Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) issues. UNFPA Ghana has also supported many projects such as the establishment of Adolescent Health Clubs, the refurbishment of the Kayayei Children's School (Agboglobshie), and the renovation of the Adolescent Health, Sewing, and Nutrition Units in Ussher Polyclinic, Jamestown.

JAMESTOWN

Jamestown, one of the oldest districts in Accra, experienced periods of rapid economic growth in the past, but it is now plagued by poverty, high levels of teenage pregnancy, youth unemployment, and social neglect.

SRH outreach

On 18th September 2018, UNFPA, in collaboration with the Ghana Health Service (GHS)/Adolescent Health Unit of the Ussher Polyclinic and other partners, conducted an Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) outreach at the forecourt of the Gbese Mantse Palace, in the heart of Jamestown. This outreach targeted adolescents, young people, and the at-risk population of Kayayei (female head porters). As part of the preparation, an integrated planning committee was formed, comprising community leaders, medical personnel, representative of an NGO (PAYPDP), staff of the Community Health Department of Korle Bu Teaching Hospital/Medical School and staff of UNFPA. The committee held various meetings and discussions to design and implement the outreach activity.

In attendance at the outreach was the Assembly man of Kinka Assembly, Hon. Emmanuel Botchway, who highlighted the importance of the outreach in bringing SRH issues and services to the doorsteps of adolescents and the youth in the community. He encouraged the patronage of the Adolescent Health Unit in the Ussher Polyclinic, which was easily accessible in the heart of the community. His Majesty Nii Ayi-Bonte II, who was the Chairman of the event, expressed his appreciation of the collaboration by all partners in conducting the outreach. He, however, lamented on the alarming rate of sexual immorality and its related issues, and expressed hope that the intervention would help in the sensitization of the youth in the community on those issues. The Medical Director of Ussher Polyclinic, Dr. Patrick Amo Mensah, zeroed in on the high incidence of unwanted pregnancies and STIs, particularly due to unprotected sex, among adolescents in the area. He encouraged adolescents to frequent the Adolescent Health Unit in his facility.

Mr. Niyi Ojuolape, the Representative of UNFPA-Ghana, emphasised UNFPA's commitment to delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled. He expressed UNFPA's mission of empowering the youth and added his voice to the utilization of the Adolescent Health Unit in Ussher Polyclinic. He made a symbolic donation of 300 Dignity Kits to Dr. Amo-Mensah, in support of the Adolescent Health Unit's services to the community; in addition to 100 Dignity Kits to His Majesty Nii Ayi-Bonte II and Hon. Emmanuel Botchway.

During the outreach, talks were given on ASRH topics such as family planning, teenage pregnancies and STIs by Ophelia Palm (the In-Charge of Adolescent Health Unit, Ussher Polyclinic); and substance abuse by Madam Rosemond Kwei. A very interactive Q & A session provided an opportunity for participants to ask questions on various SRH issues. Nana Oye Lithur, a former Minister of Gender, Child and Social Protection, was excited that this activity took place in a community close to her heart. She advised the youth to take full advantage of SRH services (especially family planning) offered them.

A short role play was performed by some members of the Adolescent Health Club to encourage participants to patronize services offered at the Adolescent Health Unit. An adolescent girl shared her experience of visiting the Adolescent Health Unit in the Ussher Polyclinic, narrating the counselling on body hygiene, Sexually Transmitted Illnesses (STIs) and other valuable information she received. She therefore highly recommended the Adolescent Health Unit to her peers, encouraging them to attend.

A key part of the outreach was the provision of SRH counselling and services (including family planning methods and STI treatment), as well as voluntary HIV and Hepatitis B testing.

The intervention reached 180 adolescents, 120 children, and 72 adults. It served as a pivotal

opportunity to provide information and education on SRH issues, family planning, STIs. All interested participants, particularly adolescents, were offered STI treatment (48), voluntary HIV and Hepatitis B testing (110) and family planning methods (61).



An adolescent receiving a free health screening



An adolescent health nurse, Madam Ophelia Palm, offering counseling in family planning and sexually transmitted illnesses



A group of Kayaye (female head porters) listening to a talk on Sexual and Reproductive Health issues



Mr. Niyi Ojuolape presenting a set of Dignity Kits to the Medical Director and the Head of the Public Health Nurses Division of Ussher Polyclinic- The polyclinic that serves the community

Support to Ussher Polyclinic

In 2018, UNFPA established a working relationship with the Ussher Polyclinic in order to enhance the delivery of SRH education and services to adolescents in the community. As part of the UNFPA's support, the facility's Adolescent Health Unit received a much-needed facelift, as well as the provision of a computer, electronic supplies and other accessories. These improvements helped to ensure the efficient execution of health services to adolescents in the community and the surrounding area.

The restorative project also included the refurbishment of the Sewing and Nutrition Units. The Sewing Unit was established in order to train adolescent girls who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy. The girls learn sewing as an income-generating skill. The Nutrition Unit provides support and counselling to mothers, especially adolescents, who visit the Polyclinic and the Sewing Unit. The UNFPA's support also contributes to the Early Childhood Development/ Nurturing Care Framework in Ghana.



*The Adolescent Health Unit: Before
Photo credit: Claudia Donkor*



*The Adolescent Health Unit: After
Photo credit: Claudia Donkor*



Floor of the Adolescent Health Unit: Before
Photo credit: Claudia Donkor



Floor of the Adolescent Health Unit: After
Photo credit: Claudia Donkor



The Sewing and Nutrition Units after the renovation
Photo credit: Claudia Donkor

OLD FADAMA

Old Fadama is an impoverished settlement in Accra. It is home to an estimated eighty thousand people who live in slum conditions marked by dilapidated housing, overcrowding, and social depravity, including rape and defilement. For most residents, it is a daily struggle to meet their health needs due to the inability to afford healthcare and the scarcity of services.



The PPAG clinic providing HIV and hepatitis B testing

As part of initiatives by the UNFPA country office to improve the culture of primary healthcare services and increase access to primary healthcare services such as HIV Testing Services, Family Planning and Hepatitis B testing services, the Youth Leaders (YoLe) Fellows (a group of 16 young people undergoing training under UNFPA's fellowship programme) designed and implemented a Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and Rights (SRHR) outreach to Old Fadama. The design of the outreach involved preliminary visits to the community, where the young people, together with the Representative of UNFPA, engaged the community leaders in conversations on what the reproductive health and rights needs of the residents were. Some community focal persons, the youth action movement of the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana and doctors from the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, were then engaged in the process of designing the intervention and the implementation of it.

On 12th December, 2018, this coalition embarked on the community outreach that provided information through a peer to peer information delivery module and services in the heart of Old Fadama, through the PPAG Family Health Clinic. As the testing and counselling services took place, the fellows, together with volunteers from the Youth Action Movement and doctors from Korle Bu, broke up into 10 groups and went into different parts of the community. Five groups

went into the residential parts of Old Fadama, moving from house to house and engaging members of the community on SRH and SRHR information. The other half of the group went into the market areas providing the same information to market folks.

The volunteers and fellows employed the information-based behaviour change communication modules to inform people about SRHR, whilst debunking myths and misconceptions about the subject. Having one-on-one engagements with people in the community had a positive impact on the number of people that turned up for the testing services, which was stationed at the market's truck parking station, as some of the adults and young people who were engaged in the discussions in their homes and shops followed the volunteers to the testing and counselling venue. The engagements also allowed for private and intimate discussions with the community members and for easy referrals to neighbouring clinics.

The initiative reached over eight hundred residents with SRH services and information, including family planning. Two hundred and fifty-five residents participated in voluntary HIV and Hepatitis B testing. Other achievements included the establishment of links to healthcare outside the community; creating awareness of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) issues; and basic health and hygiene education.

AGBOGBLOSHIE

Agbogbloshie is a large, active slum in the capital city of Accra. It is heavily populated by locals, immigrants and citizens from other parts of Ghana, including many Kayayeei. The poor inhabitants of this densely populated area have limited access to health facilities and quality education.

To support the Kayayeei, The National Association for the Kayayeei established a school to educate the children whilst their mothers are out working. Unfortunately, the school deteriorated into a deplorable condition. Over two hundred and fifty children were receiving their education in a dilapidated structure with poor sanitary, ventilation and lighting conditions, as well as having limited learning materials. As part of UNFPA's support to the Kayayeei in Agbogbloshie, the Kayayeei Children's School received extensive refurbishment, to enable it to provide efficient, functional services to this vulnerable population.

Over the years, UNFPA Ghana has been working in Agbogbloshie and the surrounding areas, providing services to at-risk adolescent girls, including the Kayayeei, to ensure that they have access to SRH information and services. Information on family planning and issues of SGBV and child marriage are repeatedly addressed. Strategic partnerships with GHS, PAYDP, PPAG, DOVVSU, and others, have resulted in improvements in the lives of many adolescents and Kayayeei in these communities.



State of the Kayayeei Children's School before refurbishment



State of the Kayayeei Children's School after refurbishment



State of the Kayayei Children's School after refurbishment

UN YOUTH ENVOY'S VISIT

United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth visits the Kayayei girls in the Agbogbloshie market, commends UNFPA intervention efforts

On February 7, 2018, Jayathma Wickramanayake, the UN Youth Envoy, visited Ghana as part of her five-country Africa Mission. She paid a visit to the Kayayei girls in the Agbogbloshie market, as well as the Kayayei Children's School- a UNFPA-supported project.

Following her courtesy visit to the Canadian High Commission in Accra, the Envoy made her way to the Agbogbloshie Market, where she was received by the High Commissioner, Ms. Heather Cameron. Ms. Cameron praised the Envoy's Africa Mission, noting that she had "an extraordinary opportunity to make a difference," and assured her that the Government of Canada would provide total support.

Ms. Wickramanayake also held a bilateral meeting with Mr. Isaac Asiamah, the Minister of Youth and Sports for Ghana. The Minister welcomed the Youth Envoy, noting that her visit was a "demonstration of her commitment to young people in Africa." The Envoy expressed delight about her visit, especially as it afforded her the rare opportunity to be "on the ground" to learn about the challenges facing young people.



The UN Youth Envoy in the company of the Kayayei girls as she walks through the Agbogbloshie Market.
Photo: Sarah Kenyi

UNFPA welcomes the UN Youth Envoy on her visit to Ghana



Crowds of excited young women greeted the Envoy's visit to the Kayayei girls in the Agbogbloshie Market. The Kayayei, groups mostly comprised of young teenage girls, are scattered across cities and markets throughout Ghana. Their primary occupation is transporting goods for people from the point of purchase to their cars or to points of departure from the market. These adolescents face many challenges, such as poverty, the burden of adult responsibilities, lack of education regarding SRH, an inability to navigate sexual relations, and rape. While commending the UNFPA's efforts, the Youth Envoy impressed upon the girls that "it is important that you get an education and even more important that you are able to keep your children in school."

The Youth Envoy met the children in the Kayayei Children's School, a day-care center, where the Kayayei mothers drop off their children before heading out to work. Largely supported by UNFPA Ghana, the center has approximately three teachers who care for the children. A second center, also assisted by the UNFPA, is used for teaching comprehensive sex education and skills acquisition.

The UN Youth Envoy and the Minister of Youth and Sports for Ghana, Mr. Isaac Asiamah, discussing the plight of young people in Ghana. Photo: Sarah Kenyi



The UN Youth Envoy greets one of the school teachers of the Kayayei Children's School Photo: Sarah Kenyi



The UN Youth Envoy greets pupils of the Kayayei Children's School. Photo: Sarah Kenyi

TEMA

Tema, a harbor city, located east of the capital city of Accra, consists of small communities and peri-urban slums. The city is challenged by issues of teenage pregnancy, unsafe abortions, and HIV infections.

In 2015, there were five hundred and sixty two (562) reported cases of teenage pregnancies, which increased marginally in 2016 and reduced to four hundred and seventy five (475) in 2017. Seventeen (17) young people tested positive for HIV in 2015, with the number rising to twenty one (21) and one hundred and thirty nine (139) in 2016 and 2017, respectively. The directorate also recorded ninety five (95) cases of abortions amongst adolescent girls in 2015; forty four (44) cases in 2016 and sixty four (64) in 2017.

To address these challenges, UNFPA played a leading role in forming a joint planning committee, made up of community, traditional, health and political leaders. The committee developed strategies and identified SRHR/FP information and services that should be provided to reduce sexual risk behaviour among adolescents in this area. Consequently, in April 2018 UNFPA, in collaboration with the GHS and other partners, held the Adolescent health community club outreach programme, which targeted the vulnerable out-of-school adolescents and youth living in peri-urban slum fishing communities in Tema.

At the ceremony, the Assemblyman, Hon. Alhassan Issah, applauded the working relationship between UNFPA and GHS, particularly in the organisation of the SRH outreach. He encouraged the uptake of services provided to adolescents, as well as their full participation in the established Adolescent Health Club in the community. The Metro Director of Ghana Health Services, Dr. John B.K Yabani, commended the institution of the Adolescent Health Club in the community, which serves as a platform for adolescents to exercise their rights to SRH information and services.

The Regional Adolescent Health Coordinator, Ms. Diana Bona, spoke of the alarming teenage pregnancy statistics and told the youth about the biological and social consequences of teenage pregnancies, advocating for abstinence from early sexual activity or seek family planning. A representative from the Department of Social Welfare (DOVVSU) also educated the young people on child and sexual abuse, advising that incidence of these inappropriate actions should be reported to the police. Participants had the opportunity of asking questions pertaining to their SRH needs, which were addressed by a community nurse. UNFPA donated hygiene kits and T-shirts to the participants, whilst encouraging abstinence from early sex, the uptake of family planning methods and avoidance of SGBV among the youth.

SRHR/FP Services

Various SRH and family planning information and services were provided during the outreach. In addition, health practitioners provided breast examination, malaria and TB screenings. A total number of 476 people participated in the outreach, of which 371 were adolescents and 105 were adults. Over 170 young people received individual counselling in various topics including abstinence, menstrual care, family planning, HIV/AIDS, among others. At the event, 319 male condoms and 111 female condoms were distributed, along with counselling on their usage and other associated social and behavioral change communication. A total of twenty-eight participants immediately commenced an oral or injectable family planning method. Over 300 women and girls also had their breasts examined, out of which 15 were referred for further assessment in the nearest health centre. One hundred and fifty-nine participants undertook voluntary counselling and testing for HIV.



Adolescents listening to a talk on family planning



Counseling services offered at the Tema outreach event

EMPOWERING ADOLESCENTS IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

As part of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme, funded by the Canadian Government, UNFPA collaborated with UNHCR to empower 264 refugee, adolescent girls, ages 10-19, with information on SRHR and SGBV. Girls between the ages of twenty and twenty-four also participated. Additionally, 28 parents of adolescent girls received education on the importance of effective communication when discussing SRH issues with their children.

Three hundred and thirty-two participants attended meetings in Egyeikrom, Ampain, Krisan, and Fetentaa Refugee Camps in the Central, Western, and Brong Ahafo regions, respectively; as well as Accra (for urban refugees). Attendees received education on the male and female reproductive systems, the menstrual cycle, puberty changes, sexual intercourse (and the repercussions of unprotected intercourse, namely pregnancy and STIs) and family planning. Demonstrations included how to use a sanitary pad and proper use of male and female condoms. They also received education about the Ghanaian legal framework with regards to SGBV. The training

modalities included presentations, group work, Q &A sessions, demonstrations and skits. The adolescent girls expressed their wish that other sensitive topics, such as abortion and drug abuse, are included in subsequent training sessions.

In the adult session, a pre-training survey was conducted to determine parents' opinion on the ideal ages of their wards at which discussion on sexuality and reproduction is ideal. Majority expressed ten as an appropriate age for such discussions. The facilitator educated the parents on how to effectively communicate SRH issues with their wards, in an age-appropriate manner.

Various kits were distributed to the adolescent girls during each training session. They consisted of T-shirts, exercise books, bags, pens and info-pack books on adolescent health (this had been translated into French and distributed to French-speaking participants in each site, where applicable).





Adolescent girls and parents attending their respective sessions



Post training pictures in two different locations

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**Delivering a world where
every pregnancy is wanted,
every childbirth is safe, and
every young person's
potential is fulfilled.**

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