

The United Nations Population Fund Ghana  
Youth Leaders (YoLe) Fellowship



**Annual Programme Report**  
2018-2019



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Publication design and production:

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Phoenix Design Aid A/S, Denmark



The United Nations Population Fund Ghana

## Youth Leaders (YoLe) Fellowship

# Annual Programme Report

## 2018-2019



# Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the contributions of the entire staff of the Ghana Country Office of UNFPA towards the successful establishment of the Youth Leaders (YoLe) Fellowship Program.

To begin with, the vision and operationalization of the YoLe Fellowship would not have been possible but for the worthy and inspiring leadership of Dr. Natalia Kanem, the UNFPA Executive Director (ED), who provided an enabling environment for the innovation and experimentation through which this Program came about.

We also recognize the role of Senior Management for the visioning which seeks to give young people equal opportunity when it comes to decision-making and effective participation in development processes both at country and international level.

Special thanks go to Ms. Erika Goldson, the then Deputy Representative, as well as Ms. Tracy Igberaese, the pioneer Coordinator of the YoLe Fellowship, for ensuring the success of the initiative's take off, and for the various roles they played to enable it progress steadily to cruise.

We also acknowledge the contributions of the following for the various roles played:

Agnes Ntibanyurwa, Doris Mawuse Aglobitse, Micheal Ige, M. Bawa Amadu, Ismail Ndifuna, Esi Awotwi, Robert Mensah, Mammah Tenii, Eric Okrah, Selina Owusu, Dela Gle, Claudia Donkor, Adjoa Yeniyi, Jude Domosie, Mutaru Goro Iddrisu, Vitus Atanga, Faisal Bawa, Irene Danquah, Brian Ahanotu, Nessere N'dou, Konan Armel.

Operations Support: Daisy Gaye, Norine Quaye, Godwin Adzaku, Abdallah Iddrisu, Jonathan Nusetor, Amanda Odame, Emmanuel Adare, Mercy Love Alfa, Florence Beweleyir, Kingsley Morcher, Moses Tetteh-Odjeablah, Mustapha Osman Bagonluri, Abdulai Marco, Samuel Mantey, Nasir Issahaque.

We applaud the genius, energy and zest of the first cohort of YoLe Fellows who availed themselves of the programme and who were genuinely interested in taking on suggestions; open to constructive criticism and always eager to learn and test new ideas presented to them.

These are: Akosua Agyepong, Abigail Ashun-Sarpy, Derrick Botchway, Dorcas Attah, Bisola Olapade, Naa-Amy Wayne, Michael Blankson, Theodora Yeboah, Samira Osman, Farida Latif, Rafsanjani Adams, Sika Barbara Kudjawu, Evans Heddo, Patricia Iniworikabo, Jean-Philip Lawson, Sarah Nuamah Boateng, as well as, Sherifa Awudu who joined at the latter stage.

Very importantly, we wish to acknowledge, the following UN Agencies, Organizations, Groups and individuals who offered support to the YoLe Fellowship Program in various ways and at various stages: UNHCR, WFP, UNDP, UNESCO, WHO, IOM, UN University, UNIDO, ILO, UNOPS, Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), MTN, Ecobank, UBA, Mr. Mabingue Ngom (Regional Director, UNFPA WCARO), Dr. Mamadou Kante (Deputy Regional Director, UNFPA WCARO), who joined the UNFPA ED to inaugurate the 'Orange Loft', Mr. Kunle Adeniyi (Representative, UNFPA The Gambia), Ms. Josiane Yaguibou (Representative, UNFPA Togo), Ms. Barbara Laurenceau (Representative, UNFPA Benin), Ms. Sylvia Lopez-Ekra (Former Chief of Mission, IOM Ghana), Ms. Rukia Yacoub (Representative, WFP Ghana), Ms. Gita Welch (Former Representative, UNDP Ghana), H.E. Christoph Retzlaff (German Ambassador to Ghana), H. E. Andrew Barnes (Former Australian High Commissioner to Ghana), Anne-Claire Dufay (UNICEF Country Representative), Angela Trenton-Mbonde (UNAIDS Country Director), Mr. Dan Sackey (MD, Ecobank Ghana Ltd), Dr. Uwemedimo Esiet (Action Health Inc.), Emily Sheldon of African Health Innovation Centre (AHIC), Isobel Acquah (Aladyis Foundation), Hannah Acquah and Isaac Newton Acquah of TKC Africa.



**Niyi Ojuolape**

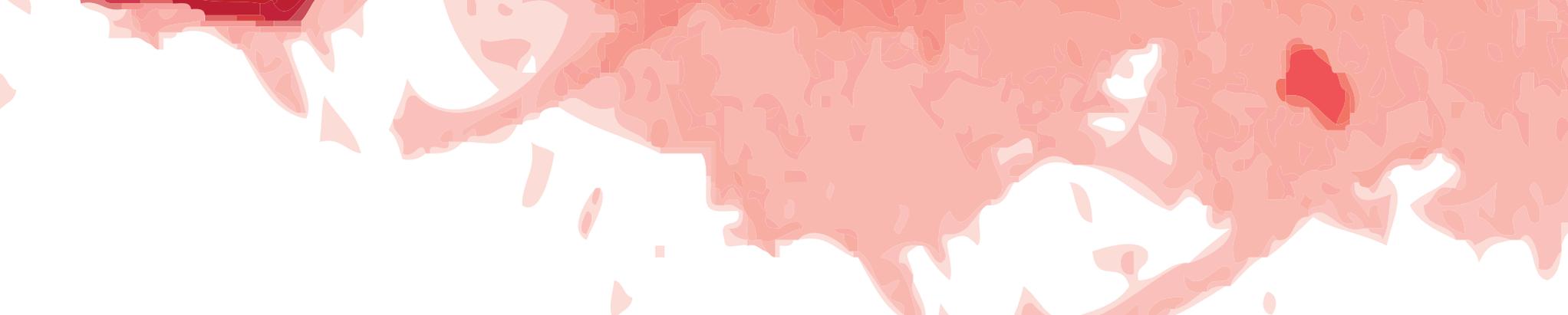
*Country Representative*

*UNFPA Ghana*

## Foreword

The world today is witnessing the largest number of young people alive at a particular time. Some 1.8 billion people are between ages 10 and 24. Most of them live in developing countries including Ghana, often comprising a huge proportion of the population. How well they navigate adolescence will determine not only the course of their own lives, but that of the world. Yet, too many youths are unable to participate fully in society. They are often excluded by decision makers even when the decisions are about them.

At UNFPA Ghana, we give them a seat at the table because we believe that when young people are empowered and given the right opportunities, they become effective drivers of change. So, we partner with young people, helping them participate in decisions affecting them, and strengthening their ability to advance human rights and development issues such as health, education and employment.



UNFPA aims to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and where every young person's potential is fulfilled. In line with this global agenda which we refer to as the 3 Zeros: the demographics for whom they are centered are without doubt, young people. It is in this knowledge that we decided to focus on young people from program design to implementation. This was to be achieved by developing them; imparting them with knowledge and by that, changing their world.

This is what inspired us in Ghana to walk the talk by establishing the Youth Leaders (YoLe) Fellowship Program in 2018. We established this against the backdrop of global instruments including the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population & Development (ICPD), the Africa Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 and the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals. It is intended to build the skills of young leaders, involve young people in designing innovative solutions for societal problems and guiding youth-led organizations in policy-making and programming. It is equally placed

to support independent, effective and sustainable organizations led by young people, especially marginalized adolescents, to advocate for their human rights and development priorities.

Within 365 days of intensive investment in sixteen (16) young people, the results attained are testament of the value it has delivered. We use this opportunity to encourage everyone to pay a bit more of attention to investing in young people for a brighter future.

The implementation of the YoLe Fellowship Program also served as an entry point for achieving gender parity, as well as, ensuring a significant inclusion and participation of young people in the affairs of the Country Office (CO). By so doing, the CO got the necessary dose of youthful exuberance, dynamism and innovation.



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Young people are Ghana's greatest asset. However, for the country to reap the benefits of its youthful population, it must nurture their skills and abilities and help them bring those talents to bear in promoting sustainable development and prosperity.

Unfortunately, it is no news that the average Ghanaian young person faces a myriad of socioeconomic challenges that deters him or her from achieving his or her full potential. On 5 November 2018, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Ghana launched the Youth Leaders (YoLe) Fellowship Programme. First of its kind in the United Nations system, the fellowship attracts young, talented future leaders to work for a year with the UNFPA Ghana office while providing them with training and learning opportunities that will enhance their future prospects and plans.

The fellowship's inaugural cohort comprised 16 fellows from diverse backgrounds. During their time with the Country Office (CO), they

undertook various initiatives and gained valuable knowledge from carefully designed sessions delivered by professionals and experts.

This report highlights three aspects of the program: the journey of these 16 fellows through the fellowship; the basis upon which the fellowship was designed and created; and a brief overview of the fellowship. It then articulates the selection process as well as the administration and management of the fellowship, contents and modules of the programme and the achievements.

The YoLe Fellowship Programme has demonstrated that investments in young people can yield amazing results, and there is a need to intensify efforts in empowering young people and ensuring that they achieve their full potential as prescribed by the United Nations Youth Strategy.



# BACKGROUND

■ Ghana's population is growing at a rapid rate, and this has resulted in a youthful population.<sup>1</sup> According to the 2010 population and housing census, the population of children younger than 10 years of age has increased in size which is indicative of a high-dependency ratio in-country.

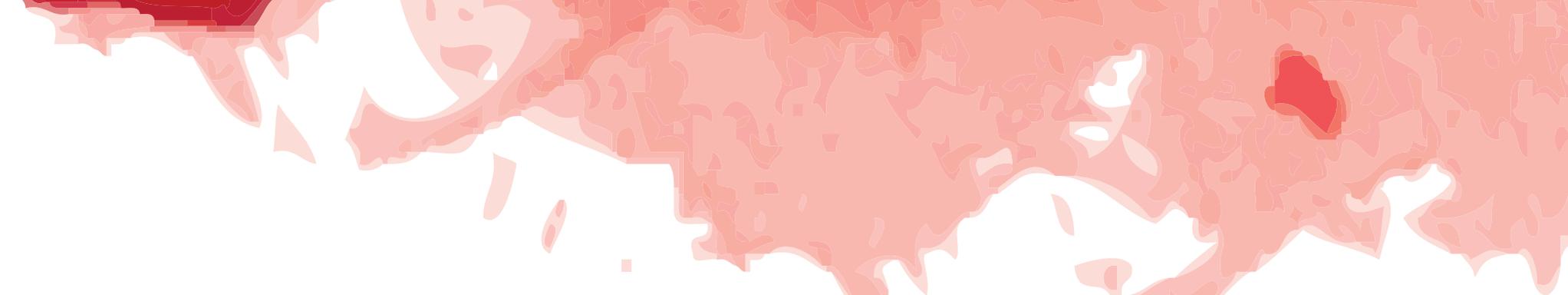
Although a youthful population could one day yield positive socioeconomic outcomes for the country, that will not happen without a sustained effort to nurture and develop the full human potential of the young.

As a consequence, the high-dependency ratio in the country continues to negatively impact resource and wealth accumulation and also investments at the individual and household levels, which overwhelmingly affect poverty rates.

Consequently, children, adolescents and youth are exposed to physical, social and reproductive health risks and challenges. Many young

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<sup>1</sup> "2010 Population and Housing Census Final Results." 2012. Ghana Statistical Service 31 St.



people are affected by poverty, social exclusion, economic marginalization and unemployment. Recognizing that the youth are a valuable resource for the advancement of the Ghanaian society, the African continent and the world at large, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Ghana designed and set in motion the Youth Leaders (YoLe) Fellowship Programme, a youth fellowship programme that aims to assist in addressing crucial challenges affecting young people. The fellowship employs a rights and skills-based programming that allows young people to learn certain soft and hard skills. These include sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) advocacy, information and communication technology (ICT) skills, networking and interviewing skills among other things, while contributing meaningfully to the work and overall output of the Country Office (CO).

In line with the Youth 2030: The United Nations Youth Strategy, launched in 2018, which calls to “...facilitate increased impact and expanded global, regional and country-level action to address the needs, build the agency and advance the rights of young people...”<sup>2</sup> the fellowship

aims to empower young people to act as change agents and innovators driven by passion to pursue their own career and life goals.

Predicated on advancing the National Youth Policy of Ghana, the fellowship prioritizes certain socioeconomic areas as highlighted in that document<sup>3</sup>; education and skills training, ICT, mentoring, youth and employment, entrepreneurial development, gender mainstreaming, health; HIV/AIDS, networking and partnership, and adolescent health and rights, all of which are closely aligned with the UNFPA Country Office’s aspirations for young people in Ghana.

Closely aligning the fellowship to national policy on youth and the United Nations Youth Strategy allows it to be locally and internationally relevant.

In November 2018, the fellowship received its first cohort of 16 fellows drawn from diverse backgrounds.

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2 “UNITED NATIONS YOUTH STRATEGY,” n.d., [https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/18-00080\\_UN-Youth-Strategy\\_Web.pdf](https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/18-00080_UN-Youth-Strategy_Web.pdf).

3 Ghana Ministry of Youth and Sports. 2010. “Ghana National Youth Policy,” p. 3.

## Overview:

# The Youth Leaders (YoLe) Fellowship

The YoLe Fellowship identifies and attracts young, innovative change-makers who are recent graduates of Ghanaian tertiary institutions and who positively impact their communities. These identified change-makers are then taken through a year of learning and skills-building after which they exit the fellowship and take up various academic, entrepreneurial and professional ventures.

During the 12-month fellowship, fellows are expected to provide insight and contribute ideas and effort to support the CO's effort to become even more responsive to youth-related issues within Ghana. As such, these selected young people work from the UNFPA Ghana CO's Orange Loft- a specially designed, youth-friendly space that provides the needed flexibility for young people to work and collaborate, while supporting them to leverage existing modern technologies to innovate solutions that will improve reproductive health outcomes among other things.

### Key objectives

The objectives of the fellowship are to:

- ▲ create opportunities within UNFPA Ghana and its various technical teams to engage young people in innovation, policy development, programming and management.
- ▲ create opportunities within UNFPA Ghana and its various technical teams to find innovative and efficient ways to accelerate the achievement of the Three Transformative Goals of UNFPA – zero preventable maternal mortality; zero unmet needs for family planning; and zero sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices.
- ▲ help young leaders hone their skills in innovation and leadership.

- ▶ provide young leaders with the skills needed to become successful in the job market or as entrepreneurs.
- ▶ engage and empower young people to be gender-sensitive in their approaches to decision-making, while targeting sustainable development.
- ▶ demonstrate a commitment to youth-centred programming by UNFPA.



# Launching the fellowship

On 5 November 2018, the fellowship was inaugurated on the sidelines of the Second African Youth Sustainable Development Goals (AYDSDGs) Summit, held at the Accra International Conference Centre. At the event, the inaugural cohort – comprising 16 fellows – was publicly presented for the first time.

The group – 11 women and 5 men – were chosen from among 42 applicants and were selected to take part in the inaugural YoLe cohort from November 2018 to October 2019. Aged 18 to 26 years, they came from diverse thematic backgrounds (including health, gender, communications), different parts of Ghana and neighbouring countries, and had diverse levels of exposure to professional environments. For UNFPA, this diversity served to deepen its appreciation of youth experiences and capacities as well as to enhance fellows' opportunities to learn from one another as peers.



# The 2<sup>nd</sup> AFRICAN YOUTH SDGs SUMMIT



YOUTH2030  
WAKALA WAKALA WAKALA WAKALA  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS  
PA G...



# Selection and orientation

The 16 fellows were selected through a four-step process that encompassed an advertisement, a job knowledge test, a case study assessment and an interview process.

## ▲ Advertising the fellowship

A call for applications was published on the UNFPA Ghana website on 17 August 2018. The call listed the criteria for eligibility and called on applicants to submit a one-page statement explaining their professional goals and ambitions.<sup>4</sup> The submitted applications were collected and then assessed based on established predetermined criteria.

## ▲ The YoLe Fellowship job knowledge test

After the first assessment of applications, a long list of 40 applicants was identified to take a job knowledge test. This test comprised 40 multiple choice questions on the work of the UN and UNFPA, among other pertinent subject areas. The aim of the test was to identify those applicants who understood the type of work performed by UNFPA and who were comfortable in working in those areas. The test lasted for one hour.

## ▲ A case study assessment

Applicants who attained the pass mark for the test were short-listed and invited to participate in a case study assessment. Twenty shortlisted applicants were put into groups of four or five and asked to identify solutions to a sexual and reproductive health-related problem, guided by specific questions and guidelines related to topics under the purview of UNFPA. Applicants worked in these groups for about 20 minutes, and then each group gave a presentation of 5-10 minutes in length outlining their solutions to the identified problem.

## ▲ Interviews and final selections

Short-listed applicants were again invited for personal interviews with a three-member panel. The interviews were conducted over two days by staff members who served as panellists. After careful deliberation, 16 applicants were selected for the programme, and they were notified of their selection via email on 29 October 2018.

The selection process for the fellowship is designed to be rigorous and thorough, which ensures that the best young innovators are identified

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4 "Youth Leaders (YoLe) Fellowship Program," UNFPA Ghana. 31 July 31 2018. <https://ghana.unfpa.org/en/vacancies/youth-leaders-yole-fellowship-program>.

and duly selected to participate in the fellowship. The rigorous nature also does well to eliminate all sorts of biases and allows for transparency.

After selection and the communication of results to successful applicants, the fellows were invited to attend an orientation designed to enable them to understand the fellowship, their responsibilities and the work of UNFPA. The orientation provided the perfect opportunity for fellows to get to know staff at UNFPA and become acquainted and knowledgeable with the structure and workings of the office.

# Administration and management of the fellowship

Within the country office, the fellowship sits within the responsibility and scope of the Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) Unit. As such, the overall administration of the fellowship is carried out by the head of the ASRH unit. However, the day-to-day management of the fellowship is carried out by a project manager, who reports to the head of the ASRH unit and receives technical guidance from the programme analyst on youth in the same unit.

The project manager works with teams among the fellows for effective management of programme activities. The teams provide a level of responsibility to fellows for the successful execution and management of the fellowship. To facilitate this, a leader is chosen by the fellows themselves and serves as the linkage between the fellows and the manager. The leader of the fellows also sees to it that the in-house established teams, the outreach team, the management team and the communications team, are all up to task and are able to carry out their unique tasks efficiently and on time.

## ▲ The outreach team

This team is responsible for designing and implementing community-based interventions especially community outreaches, spearheaded primarily by the fellows. This team works to ensure that fellows are able to actualize their ideas at the community level in terms of advancing and promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights in deprived and under-resourced communities. The leader of this team reports to the leader of the fellows who, in turn, relays the plans and ambitions of the team to the project manager for necessary actions.

## ▲ The management team

The management team is primarily responsible for all logistical arrangements as it concerns the fellowship and fellows. This team coordinates all activities that fellows would want to implement and then ensures that all logistical arrangements are completed. Just like the outreach team, this team also reports to the identified leader who, in turn, relays the plans and needs of the team to the project manager.

### ▲ The communications team

This team works to ensure that the activities of fellows are appropriately publicized. Additionally, they are responsible for designing publications and content to be used on the various social media pages of the CO. The reporting mechanism for this team is also the same as the last two.

All of these teams have Terms of References (ToRs), developed by the fellows themselves and approved by the project manager and unit head. The teams work in conformity to these ToRs.

## Content and modules:

# Design, execution and experiences



The fellowship is designed to deliver carefully curated contents that are locally relevant and pertinent to solving global and regional challenges as they relate primarily to sexual and reproductive health and issues of population. In terms of content and information delivery, the

fellowship has six modules including innovation labs, career development, job and academic preparedness, special lectures and talks, interaction with the UN country team and diplomatic community and, finally, learning about UNFPA. All 16 fellows were taken through all six modules.

### **Innovation labs**

The innovation module allows fellows to take advantage of existing resources to innovate and solve social and health challenges. UNFPA partnered with Impact Hub Accra's Health Innovation Arm (Now African Health Innovation Center - AHIC) to deliver weekly programming engaging fellows in hands-on activities that enabled them to think outside the box. Fellows participated in:

**Health innovation sessions:** The primary goal of these sessions was to enable fellows to gain an understanding of the sexual and reproductive health and rights landscape at home and abroad, identify interlinkages and understand how to innovate to improve sexual and reproductive

health outcomes. These sessions enabled the fellows to understand the meaning of innovation and come to terms with how to innovate in a way that is useful, simple and cost-effective. These sessions were often delivered using interactive means that allowed fellows to work in small teams and in large groups. Although the sessions focused on health innovation, by working in teams and often presenting among their peers, fellows also picked up lessons in public speaking, presenting with impact and working successfully as leaders and members of teams.

**Business for social change:** Another core component of the Innovation Labs was the Business for Social Change sessions, that allowed fellows to learn about entrepreneurship that is socially centred. Fellows were taken through lessons in using the business model canvas template, financial management, resource mobilization and, most importantly, how to establish socially and environmentally responsible and socially centred businesses that are sustainable and scalable. Fellows who enjoyed these sessions were those with interests in entrepreneurship; however, those without such an interest still learned new things and gained a better understanding of how to ensure that social ventures are structured efficiently for sustainability.

The Health Innovation team at Impact Hub Accra (IHA) delivered this module using diverse settings and venues. While some of the sessions were held at their co-working space at Impact Hub, others were held





at The Shop Accra, an environmentally friendly space that allowed fellows to work in different teams and ways. The setting gave a casual feel that allowed the young people to feel comfortable, unpressured and able to deliver countless, mind-blowing propositions to solve Ghanaian-centred challenges as they pertain to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

**Human-centred design (HCD):** The IHA team introduced the concept of human-centred design (HCD) to fellows. HCD is an approach to problem solving that is focused on integrating human perspectives and experiences into developing innovative solutions. This approach is useful in the context of development and design frameworks for projects. The components of HCD include:

- ▲ inspiration, including research
- ▲ ideation, including the creation of a “persona profile” identifying their journey, prototyping projects
- ▲ implementation, including iteration, prototyping and piloting projects)

Fellows were assigned to specific group tasks and, over the course of a month, they worked on creating persona profiles and devised solutions for addressing health and development challenges. As part of a

follow-up exercise, the fellows were tasked to undertake HCD research activities beyond the innovation session periods. The fellows were heavily engaged during this session and had an opportunity to identify issues, inspired by HCD, that they felt passionate about and for which they understood the importance of applying the HCD approach.

**Public speaking and pitching:** The fellows were treated to a full session on public speaking and pitching. The components of the session included:

- ▶ definitions and contexts for public speaking and pitching
- ▶ elements of public speaking
- ▶ types of pitches

This public speaking session varied from previous sessions taught by other experts in two ways. First, it gave a high level of specific information (where to put hands, how long to maintain eye contact, where and when to move when speaking). Second, it focused on how pitching and public speaking best practices vary depending on the target audience. For example, a speaker would address an impact investor differently than a representative from a community-based non-governmental organization. The fellows practiced describing the same scenario to different types of stakeholders, varying their manner, rhythm of speech and content.



Following the session, the fellows were engaged in an off-site community event. They participated in supporting and coaching teenage girls who were preparing to pitch their ideas for solving diverse social problems in their communities in a community-centered competition. The event was part of a local community empowerment programme organized by Achievers Ghana for teenage girls in Maamobi, a suburb of Accra. The fellows worked with a total of 30 young girls to prepare for the competition. This created the opportunity for fellows to practice hands-on lessons from the innovation session.

Having the opportunity to practice their lessons from the session on public speaking and pitching was critical to helping the fellows internalize their knowledge. Furthermore, having the opportunity to coach young women gave the fellows confidence in their own leadership and coaching abilities.

**Human rights-based approach to development:** This session series focused on the rights-based approach to development. The fellows had the opportunity to learn about the United Nations system and human rights practices that are integrated into the general framework of the United Nations agencies globally. It also took a deep dive into the United Nations human rights monitoring frameworks including:

- ▲ the Universal Periodic Review

- ▲ the human rights treaty bodies and the nine core, international human rights instruments (including the Human Rights Committee's assessment of member countries under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights)
- ▲ the human rights mandates of national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations
- ▲ human rights transnational advocacy engagement with an emphasis on the "boomerang effect" and how that influences a national response to international human rights best practice standards by member states of the United Nations. It also provided a specific focus on the prevailing African and Ghanaian human rights systems that support development-related work. The role of The Commission on Human Rights Institutions and the work of international human rights and non-governmental organizations in development innovations and their response to the protection of human rights was emphasized.

Fellows were engrossed in the sessions and identified with particular development challenges being addressed by the United Nations agencies in which they served as interns and which they saw as being addressed within their scope of work. They practiced how to integrate a rights-based response to health innovation projects focusing on, inter alia, female genital mutilation, sanitation, and adolescent reproductive health.

**Customer service design thinking (SDT):** The fellows were treated to a session on customer service design thinking. This was aimed at helping them incorporate the approach to project design and management, especially focusing on beneficiary needs and how best to reach them with project interventions. Elements of the customer design thinking included understanding a customer's journey and a user's experience

Fellows have continued to utilize the customer service journey throughout the last few months of their programme, tying it to work being completed at UNFPA, referencing it during review games, and implementing it during a design-thinking session at a Jhpiego Accelerating Nursing and Midwifery through Innovation Workshop. Fellows worked in groups and practiced the customer journey for products and services they devised during group work. This allowed them to utilize their knowledge of the said approach in real time and to better internalize it for application in the future.

**Professional and industry-readiness assessment (PIA) and end-of-fellowship assessment of innovation sessions:** As the fellowship entered the final quarter, fellows were taken through professional coaching sessions to help them align the benefits of the fellowship to future professional and personal goals. This also provided the opportunity for conversations around their transition plans and to outline the role of the African Health Innovation Centre (AHIC) and the role





that the innovation sessions could play in their transitions. Examples of the sessions included learning to write a cover letter, resume and curriculum vitae (CV), how to interview for a job and the job application process. Fellows also conducted SWOT analyses on themselves and had discussions about key tools to employ in team building and development. To assess the progress of the YoLe Fellows, AHIC conducted assessment games covering topics from the beginning of the sessions in November 2019. The fellows did well, demonstrating a true understanding of the materials.

**Re:publica:** In December 2018, the Health Innovation Team of Impact Hub Accra collaborated with Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation to host Re:publica, an internet and society conference. The gathering is usually held in Europe, but in this instance was instead held in Accra, Ghana. The YoLe Fellows

participated in this conference, executing various responsibilities given to them by the Health Innovation Team. The YoLe Fellows were privileged to participate in the conference as volunteers at IHA's e-Health Lounge. At the e-Health Lounge, the fellows had the opportunity to put their collaborative skills into action during the set-up of the various lounge areas. This included a stage set up for presentations and panel discussions, a booth for HIV and hepatitis B testing, a food stand, a relaxation area and a maternal and neonatal healthcare simulation room.

When the booth opened up to delegates, fellows assisted the lounge's visitors and participated in all sessions including UNFPA Ghana's session, which centred around reproductive health, contraception and obstetric fistula, and was delivered using the Davos style.



One of the fellows, Akosua Agyepong, moderated a session at the e-lounge. The session brought together young people to have community conversations on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Throughout this two-day conference, the fellows were exposed to interesting topics, discussions and presentations on health innovation.

### **Career development, job and academic preparedness**

This module is centred on professional development and provides fellows with the right tools to navigate their next steps after the fellowship, which could include joining the workforce, pursuing graduate studies or starting their own business ventures. UNFPA partnered with ALadyIs Foundation, an organization that focuses on building the capacity of young people to prepare them for various careers and



academic institutions, to deliver a rich module that enabled the fellows to learn about a variety of relevant topics.

**Interviewing with a difference and resume building:** Recognizing that all of the fellows were recent graduates from institutions of higher education, with little or no work experience, the ALadyIs team sought to work with all 16 fellows to build impressive CVs and enhance their job and academic interviewing skills. These sessions were hands-on meetings, in which fellows practiced interviewing for jobs, school slots or scholarships. Fellows also brought to the sessions their resumes, which were assessed and evaluated by the team members who then gave them pointers on how to improve the structure and contents of their resumes.



**Academic advancements:** Among the first cohort of fellows, many expressed an interest in furthering their education after the fellowship. As a consequence of this interest, the team held various sessions tailored to this topic in particular. Fellows were taught how to scout for academic opportunities, assemble relevant application materials and write statements of purpose, among other things.

**Professional etiquette and networking skills:** As part of this module, fellows were taken through sessions in which they learned about professional etiquette in the world of work. Additionally, they learned about the essentials of networking and how to network in various places and situations. These sessions built their confidence in speaking with high-profile people with whom they came into contact and fostered their understanding of the demands of the corporate and professional worlds.

**Commercial awareness:** Fellows were taught about the different types of risks such as commercial, stakeholder, financial, as well as given a framework *PESTLE* (*Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental*) to consider when accounting for the different risks that can occur and change over time. Examples were used for the fellows to try out their newly acquired knowledge. They were then split into teams to analyze different scenarios that they then presented back to the group after having analyzed the different risks that potentially could arise. Each team had time to plan its presentation and then

present to their peers. The facilitators and peers then provided constructive feedback. The fellows were passionate about identifying issues and debating them in a constructive forum and learned how to construct views that took into account broad global issues.

### Special lectures and interactions

This module allows fellows to interact with high-profile personalities and organizations on diverse topics central to the objectives and goals of the fellowship.

**Lectures:** The 2019 cohort had the opportunity to participate in lectures delivered by Mr. Daniel Amoako Antwi, co-founder and executive director of Africa Skills Hub (formerly Africa Internship Academy), Mr. Kunle Kaden Adeniyi, country representative for UNFPA The Gambia, and Mr. Kwasi Appiah Okrah, founder of the Adehye Programme. These lectures enabled the fellows to interact with people working in specific fields that are of interest to them.

#### ▲ Lecture on the Sustainable Development Goals

The lecture by Mr. Antwi, of Africa Skills Hub, focused mainly on the SDGs; specifically, what they are about, how they were developed, how they differ from the Millennium Development Goals and why they are important to development. He challenged the fellows to think about how to contribute to the attainment of the goals, bearing in mind the intersectionality of all the SDGs.



#### ▲ Lecture on the United Nations system and self-actualization

Mr. Adeniyi shared his personal journey within the United Nations system, emphasizing that there is a need for every kind of skill and expertise within the system. His lecture focused on how to realize personal goals and dreams, be it within the United Nations system or outside of it. Fellows were very much impressed with the insights he shared, and the session generated good discussions among the fellows.

#### ▲ Lecture on establishing and marketing businesses

Mr. Okrah, from the Adehye Programme, used his lecture to encourage the fellows to develop an interest in entrepreneurship and in entrepreneurial activities. His lecture focused on establishing businesses that put the African continent on the map and allow the country of Ghana to become largely self-sufficient. He bemoaned the status quo, in which the country thrives on imported goods, and admonished the fellows to become change-makers working to ensure sustainable development in-country.

Over a period of 12 months all 16 fellows benefitted from:

- ▲ approximately 420 hours of health innovation training
- ▲ approximately 120 hours of professional development training from the ALadyIs Foundation
- ▲ approximately 18 hours of photography and videography training



*Fellows with the German Ambassador, H.E. Christoph Retzlaff*

## **Interactions with the United Nations country team and diplomatic missions**

Meeting with members of the diplomatic community and those of the UNCT is, indeed an important part of the fellowship. This is because in meeting and interacting with the organizations, embassies, agencies and individuals who work in these spaces, fellows are better able to deepen their understanding of the world and the interactions among politics, governance, diplomacy, development and how they impact local and national decisions, policies and actions. Again, they are better able to understand the United Nations as a system, with various

agencies and organizations working in defined areas for the achievement of sustainable development.

The fellows visited four United Nations agencies including United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS); International Organization for Migration (IOM); and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In each interaction, they met with the country representatives or directors and, in some cases, some of their staff to discuss a range of issues including reproductive health and HIV, child protection, illegal migration and the SDGs.



*Fellows with the Australian High Commissioner, H.E. Andrew Barnes*

Fellows were able to ask questions about the mandates of the respective agencies and organizations and learned a great deal from these interactions.

The Australian High Commission and the German Embassy opened their doors to receive the fellows. Interacting with High Commissioner, H.E. Andrew Barnes, and Ambassador, H.E. Christoph Retzlaff, allowed fellows to gain insights into the world of donors and diplomacy. As some of the fellows hoped to continue pursuing higher education, they were keen to learn about the academic opportunities available to

them. These sessions were highly interactive and provided an opportunity to learn.

# YoLe training on UNFPA programming processes

The module on programming processes of UNFPA is aimed at positioning the UNFPA YoLe Fellows as change agents for comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health service delivery. The training is aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of the YoLe Fellows on UNFPA programming strategies within the broad project management context.

The training, which was delivered in a space of three days, began with an opening remark by the facilitator, Esi Awotwi. She laid out her ground rules and asked fellows to set their own rules and expectations for the training programme. All training participants were asked to take a pre-training assessment. The training was delivered over a period of three days, and it began with a presentation on funds utilization within UNFPA. This covered issues such as cash transfer modalities, daily subsistence allowance payments, selecting implementing partners, understanding vendor processes, micro-assessments conducted by independent auditing firms, and the use of

Atlas, a software program that helps to review and approve purchase orders, vouchers, and travel and expense documents, among others.

Over the days, fellows also had various opportunities to learn about development aid architecture. They delved into the Paris Declaration and what it had to say on the principles of aid effectiveness, UNFPA Ghana's Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Unit, the Gender Unit and its areas of work and activities of the Population and Development Unit, as well as that of the Maternal and Reproductive Health Unit. They also learned about gender mainstreaming, midwifery regulations in Ghana especially as they pertain to Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC) and Family Planning.

It is worth mentioning that fellows also received hands-on training in project management during which they were taught how to use the GANTT chart for scheduling projects. After this lesson, they were tasked with designing a project to address an SRHR-related problem

in society, outlining an implementation plan, and then making use of the GANTT chart.

Using their imagination and sense of innovation, the fellows, who were put into four teams, came up with four distinct and innovative projects to tackle the issues of poor access to health care among the vulnerable, unsafe delivery and motherhood, and poor access to family planning.

All presentations and sessions were delivered by UNFPA Ghana staff, who made it a point to ensure that fellows were equipped with information and knowledge that would improve the work output and understanding of the work and processes of UNFPA.

At the end of the training, the fellows took a post-test to evaluate whether they had successfully learned and understood the issues presented and discussed.



# The YoLe Fellows' initiatives

The fellowship is crafted to provide young people with unique opportunities to conceptualize, design, execute and lead initiatives, with support and guidance from the UNFPA CO. The first cohort of fellows demonstrated the ability to apply what they learned to real-life situations, which strengthens the call for investment in young people.

## **Commemorating 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence**

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is commemorated every year from 25 November to 10 December. In view of the fact that ending sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and harmful practices is one of three transformative goals of UNFPA, this period of advocacy is pursued with a keen focus.

After 15 days of a strategized social media campaign against SGBV and harmful practices, which involved the use of targeted messages to reach a diverse audience across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram,

the fellows embarked on a night vigil. During the vigil, they marched through the streets of Accra with placards articulating very important messages related to SGBV and harmful practices. This engagement gained a lot of support from the community in which it was held and began conversations on issues related to SGBV and harmful practices.

### **Celebrating 2018 World AIDS Day**

Addressing HIV and AIDS is integral to UNFPA's mission to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health care and realizing human rights and gender equality. In light of this, and to commemorate World AIDS Day on 1 December 2018, the YoLe Fellows spearheaded a float in collaboration with the Ghana Philanthropy Forum (GPF) to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this global health campaign. The float was themed "Know your status." The fellows moved through the main streets of Accra distributing condoms and fliers highlighting various HIV facts and methods of prevention. The float stopped at Independence Square for an event to mark the first day of Philanthropy Week by the GPF. This event helped UNFPA Ghana YoLe Fellows contribute to the achievement of developmental milestones to move Ghana closer to the achievement of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **Leaving no one behind: Peer-to-peer outreach**

Quality health care is a right for everyone, everywhere. Thus, access to comprehensive, quality health care is paramount to improving the well-being of any given populace.





The youth fellows exemplified their commitment to achieving the SDGs, especially Goal 3 on Good Health and Well-being, by designing and implementing a community outreach to one of Ghana's deprived communities - Old Fadama. Old Fadama is a slum, housing an estimated 80,000 people some of whom are foreign nationals from Togo, Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali. Accessing health care, especially sexual and reproductive health care, is often a challenge for members of this community and negative reproductive health and rights outcomes such as teenage pregnancy, rape and defilement is rife. The fellows were able to engage with other young people in this community on a one-on-one basis, discussing a range of reproductive health issues, while HIV testing services were also ongoing.

Approximately 265 people, including people with disabilities, were screened and counselled. Over 800 people were reached with information on SRHR.

### **2019 International Women's Day commemoration (IWD)**

In March 2019, the YoLe Fellows engaged 147 adolescents from a local community school - Extra 'O' Preparatory School, in Chorkor, a deprived community in the capital, Accra - to create awareness on the IWD theme. Engagements were in the form of discussions centred around gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights. Mrs. Claudia Lumor, of Glitz Magazine and UNFPA Ghana honorary ambassador, joined fellows at the outreach to interact and provide mentorship to the children present.

In order for the fellows to demonstrate equity and equality, they engaged adolescents in games. Football is often seen as a sport for men, while cooking is a chore usually reserved for women and girls. The fellows wanted to explain and demonstrate equality and help the adolescents understand that roles traditionally reserved for the different sexes are purely socially ascribed and are not a reflection of who they are or what they are capable of doing. As such, adolescent girls engaged in a football match with their friends as spectators, and then adolescent boys took part in a cooking competition in which the girls were allowed to judge the best dish.

This inspiring event demonstrated the innovativeness and leadership of the fellows.

### **The youth-led State of the World Population report launch**

The State of World Population (SWOP) report is the flagship report of UNFPA, which is produced annually and discusses pertinent population-related issues. In 2019, YoLe Fellows led the first-ever youth-led SWOP launch in the country. The event featured youth conversations

on the theme of the 2019 report— “The Unfinished Business: The Pursuit of Rights & Choices for All”— and brought together young people from diverse backgrounds and attracted personalities from the private, government and diplomatic sectors. Fellows delivered presentations, speeches, addresses and participated in the panel discussions. The success of the programme was a result of good planning and execution skills and the immense amount of knowledge acquired on the subject matter.





## The Youth4Youth Conference

The Government of Ghana, through the Ministry of Planning and the National Population Council with support from UNFPA, hosted the 3rd China - Africa Conference on Population and Development from 23 - 26 June 2019 in Accra, Ghana. For the first time, a youth forum was convened as part of the conference and was held on 26 June 2019. It encouraged knowledge-sharing and promoted networking between African and Chinese youth who are the next generation of leaders.

The CACPD-Youth4Youth Forum attracted the participation of young leaders from over 30 different countries who led discussions on how to improve social and health outcomes for young people in Africa and China.

Youth fellows worked as a team with guidance from staff and in collaboration with young people in China and the UNFPA Country Office in China to convene an amazing programme that featured an innovation exhibition, breakout sessions, speeches and various conversations about young people and their well-being.

## Community clean-up exercise

As part of the activities to conclude the inaugural cohort of the Youth Fellowship Programme, and in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 11 that seeks to promote cleaner cities, the YoLe Fellows in collaboration with Zoomlion Ghana organised a community sanitation exercise.

The exercise - which saw the participation of other youth groups such as the Youth Action Movement, SCORA, among others - was held on the 18 October 2019 alongside the Police Headquarters and Police Hospital premises in the Cantonments suburb. With support and donations - rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows, axes, cutlass, hand gloves, nose masks and other items donated by Zoomlion Ghana, the fellows were able to conduct a thorough clean-up of the environs around the Country Office, the Police Headquarters and the Police Hospital. The exercise ended with a donation of support items to the Mercy Home for Girls, Adabraka.



## Creating memories and building experiences:

# YoLe Fellows at conferences, meetings, summits and workshops

Conferences and summits remain a huge part of the United Nations, as they have been instrumental in many different ways to the work of the United Nations and, of course, to UNFPA. As such, there are so many national, regional and international conferences that UNFPA convenes and/or participates in, thus the fellows could not be left out.

Apart from participating and volunteering in numerous conferences, summits, workshops and meetings including the 2019 Women Deliver Conference in Canada, the ECOSOC Youth Forum in New York, and the Third Pan African Youth Conference in The Gambia, some fellows also were given the opportunity to speak and deliver presentations at some of these gatherings.

### **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Ghana**

The fellows joined the well-attended **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** organized by the UN University-Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-IRA). They had been invited by UNU-IRA Director Fatima Denton. The event, themed “Nature Speaks,” focused on the dissemination of the IPCC Special Report *Global Warming of 1.5 °C: Significance and Implications for Africa*.

The conference, which took place at the University of Ghana, hosted speakers such as Dr. Youba Sokona (IPCC Vice Chair), Fatima Denton (Director UNU-IRA) and Professor Alexander Adum Kwapong (University of Ghana), who covered basic information on climate change as a way of building momentum towards the delivery of the special

report on the impacts of global warming above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways.

In the special report, the speakers shared details of IPCC's role in global warming, pointing to the need to strengthen global response to climate change, sustainable development and poverty eradication.

The largely informative event presented details on diverse aspects of climate change as well as recommendations to boost global response to climate change.

**Dorcac Attah**, one of UNFPA's youth fellows, was given the opportunity to deliver a presentation on the need to break down artificial barriers between academic specialists, policymakers and industry leaders to help address the knowledge deficits of young people on the subject of climate action. She further highlighted the absence and lack of consideration of youth involvement on the subject and the important role young people have to play to ensure a sustainable climate. In addition, Dorcas spoke about the need for young people to get all the necessary information to develop an in-built lasting socio-cultural change focused on taking conscious steps to protect our environment and save the planet. Finally, she underscored the need for young people to take strategic steps to curb their "addiction" to fossil fuels consumption and called for an increase in youth influence



on international conversations around the climate, specifically processes and decisions relating to Ghana to ensure we can limit global warming to 1.5°C.

### **5<sup>th</sup> African Health Economics and Policy Association Biennial Scientific Conference, Ghana**

In March, the YoLe Fellows participated in the 5<sup>th</sup> African Health Economics and Policy Association Biennial Scientific Conference, at Kempinski Gold Coast Hotel, on the theme "Securing PHC for All: The foundation for making progress on UHC in Africa." The conference brought together health economists, United Nations agencies, health

Health & in collaboration  
University of Ghana

5<sup>TH</sup>  
AfHEA B

THEME: Securing PHC



professionals, and civil societies among others to discuss various issues related to the promotion of universal health care in Africa. UNFPA was heavily involved in the conference, as the agency organized and led three sessions and also financially supported the conference. In the lead-up to the conference, UNFPA Ghana organized a pre-conference workshop. It focused on helping young people increase their understanding of sexual and reproductive health and rights and learn how they, as youth, could be affected by unhealthy sexual behaviours, decisions and encounters. The fellows were tasked with aiding the facilitation of the session and contributed by preparing registration sheets and facilitating group engagements at the pre-conference.

**Akosua Adubea Agyepong**, delivered the youth pre-conference outcome statement to the main conference. The statement articulated the need for the deliberations at the main conference to centre around young people in all of their diversity. It also called on African governments, health economists, ministers, civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector to prioritize funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights and explore innovation in various aspects of their jobs and interaction with the subject of health financing.

### Tech4Youth, Burkina Faso

On 19 December 2018, the UNFPA country offices of Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Togo, with the support of the Information Technology Solution Office (ITSO) from UNFPA headquarters, met in Cotonou, Benin, to:

- ▲ share “tech for youth” experiences
- ▲ assess needs of young people
- ▲ strategize on how technology can add value to UNFPA strategic plan objectives and harnessing the demographic dividend (dd)
- ▲ assess successes and challenges in implementing health initiatives and, most importantly, identify common key priorities and

strategic objectives in using technology to accelerate results of the UNFPA adolescents and youth programme.

This meeting resulted in an agreement that participating countries will join efforts and draw up a common agenda on Tech4Youth to create additional value and improve services towards adolescents and youth. As such, a second Tech4Youth Meeting was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, as a follow-up to the meeting held in Cotonou in December.

The meeting began on the evening of 24 April 2019 and continued the whole day of 25 April 2019, with the primary objective of developing a two-year action for a joint project to be resourced by the Innovation Fund at UNFPA headquarters. Two youth fellows attended the meeting and delivered two different presentations, one on the YoLe Fellowship and the other on the augmented reality technology that fellows innovatively incorporated into the COs 2019 Annual Report.

**Abigail Ashun-Sarpy**, delivered a presentation on the inaugural YoLe Fellowship Programme of UNFPA Ghana as an innovation worth replicating. She highlighted the capacity-building components of the programme to include training sessions on health innovation and professional development, and the experiential learning that the fellows were being taken through.



**Derrick Botchway**, delivered a presentation on augmented reality, highlighting the efficiency in using the technology to tell the stories of COs around the world, especially in their documentations of various activities, projects and programmes.





## The International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Africa (ICASA), Rwanda

The International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Africa (ICASA) is a major bilingual international AIDS conference that takes place in Africa. Its current biennial hosting alternates between Anglophone and Francophone African countries. The 2019 ICASA was held in Rwanda. The convening of the conference at the Kigali Convention Centre, Rwanda, in December 2019 presented a tremendous opportunity to highlight the diverse nature of the African region's HIV epidemic and the unique response to it.

During this conference, **Naa-Amy K. Wayne**, a youth fellow, made a poster presentation that highlighted the language barrier in accessing sexual and reproductive health and information in hard-to-reach communities, specifically Dzita community, in Southern Ghana.

## UNFPA Ending Unmet Need for Family Planning Bootcamp, Germany

In 2019, UNFPA redesigned its global innovation pipeline and opened a call for new solutions to ensure rights and choices, especially to end the unmet need for family planning. Among 74 concepts that were submitted from country offices around the world, eight country office teams were selected to participate in an innovation boot camp hosted at the WFP Innovation Accelerator. The UNFPA Ghana team - comprising Deputy Representative Erika Goldson, National Program Analyst for Reproductive Health Commodities Security Dela Gle and youth fellow **Akosua Agyepong** - was among the teams selected.

The innovation boot camp was an intense week of capacity building and learning to apply innovative approaches, such as human-centred design (HCD) and lean start-up approaches, in order to refine our concepts, rapidly test our ideas, and craft a value proposition to engage new partners. This boot camp is part of the UNFPA Innovation Pipeline's "design sprint" stage, during which country teams develop and rapidly test their "proof of concept" through December 2019.



During the bootcamp, Akosua Agyepong prepared and pitched the CO's idea for the innovation Wawa Aba.

### **The Nairobi Summit**

From 12-14 November 2019, the governments of Kenya and Denmark along with UNFPA co-convened the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25, a high-level conference to mobilize the political will and financial commitments urgently needed to finally and fully implement the ICPD Programme of Action. These commitments were centred around achieving zero unmet need for family planning information and services, zero preventable maternal deaths, and zero sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices against women and girls. The summit brought everyone together: heads of state; ministers; parliamentarians; thought-leaders; technical experts; civil society organizations; grassroots organizations; young people; business and community leaders; faith-based organizations; indigenous peoples; international financial institutions; people with disabilities; academics; and many others interested in the pursuit of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

**Naa-Amy K. Wayne** was privileged to be a speaker at the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25. She discussed how technology is being leveraged to reach young people with the theme, “ICPD in the Digital Age - Technology as a Game-Changer.” She addressed international delegates on some technological devices being utilized in Ghana and the country office such as the Wawa Aba platform and the YMK App among others, a crowd-sourced platform and mobile app respectively, designed to provide young people with accurate information on all Ghana Health Service-approved, youth-friendly facilities, counselling centres and pharmacies available, especially in close proximity to users.





## **20th International Conference on AIDS and STIs (ICASA) in Africa, Kigali Rwanda**

Jean-Philip Lawson delivered a presentation on the “Integration of SRHR and HIV with a Focus on Young People” at a session hosted by UNFPA Ghana at ICASA 2019 at a UNFPA-Ghana led side-event.

The panel consisted of two country representatives and an SRHR researcher, and it was moderated by the National Programme Analyst for Reproductive Health and Humanitarian Assistance in UNFPA Ghana, Dr. Claudia Donkor.

The session was titled, “The Case for Scaling Up Provision of Comprehensive SRHR Services for the 2030 Agenda.” There were preliminary presentations by all speakers, followed by discussions of the various subject areas under the topics as well as a question-and-answer session. An opportunity was also allowed for contributions by the audience in the hall.

# Working with UNFPA Ghana

Fellows' immersion into UNFPA Ghana began with several weeks of orientation during which they received presentations from the unit heads of all of the country offices, who outlined the work of UNFPA and provided insights into its day-to-day operations. Several fellows reported that these sessions helped them assess where they would best fit in the organization as well as which units best captured their interests. After the annual retreat in February 2019, fellows were assigned to the various country office units where they performed routine administrative tasks as well as more intensive operational tasks that enhanced their capacities in planning, knowledge management, leadership, networking and public engagement, and much more.

The fellows completed a survey on where they were best fit to work and why, and they ranked their three top unit choices. Heads of these units completed a similar survey in which they indicated which fellows they wanted to work in their units. At the end of this exercise, the project manager matched the fellows to units. The assignments were then reviewed by senior management and approved. From February 2019 until September 2019, all fellows remained in their assigned units, working and contributing not just as fellows but as members of those units.

Fellows were assigned to the following units:

## **The Office of the Country Representative**

Fellows assigned to the Office of the Country Representative provided support to the country representative and his personal assistant. From scheduling meetings, preparing talking points and project briefs to implementing the representative's initiatives, fellows were engaged in various tasks that enabled them to understand the administration and management of the CO while contributing immensely to work output.

## **The Office of the Deputy Country Representative**

At the Office of the Deputy Country Representative, fellows in this unit had a unique chance to work with the deputy representative.

## **The Communications Unit**

Fellows in this unit performed media monitoring of traditional and on-line platforms for news on UNFPA and other related matters. Their responsibilities included lobbying for media slots on television and radio and mobilizing journalists for UNFPA media coverage. All fellows in the unit were trained on how to write news stories, a skill they then

used in writing and publishing articles on UNFPA activities on UNFPA Ghana's website.

Some of the fellows were given the responsibility of managing the CO's social media handles including handles of special projects such as the second lady of Ghana's project, the Coalition of Persons Against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Harmful Practices (COPASH). Fellows were able to increase social media followers across all social media pages and allowed for the CO to put out more articles and stories than it previously did. Fellows were also trained in photography and employed this skill in taking and editing pictures and videos for the CO.

### **The Finance Unit**

At the Finance Unit, assigned fellows were mostly tasked with following up on cheques at the UNDP to make sure they were signed and submitting requests to the bank for the payments of transport allocations to participants and other programs and services. Fellows in this unit were taught how to keep financial records and were given record-keeping responsibilities, as well.

### **The Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Unit**

In this unit, fellows mainly assisted programme officers in delivering a range of interventions, projects and programmes targeting young people. Fellows had opportunities to lead certain activities, and plan and manage certain aspects of programmes and projects.

### **The Human Resource Unit**

Fellows assigned to the human resource unit assisted with a range of administrative tasks, including updating staff information for the country office, electronic filing of documents, drafting and editing of contracts and creating an induction plan for new staff. Assigned fellows also compiled a list of international holidays and an indicative annual leave plan, which were used to manage the country office annual leave plan.

### **The Population and Development Unit**

Fellows serving in the Population and Development Unit were tasked with finalizing work plans for the year, which deepened their appreciation of the need for long-term planning. This responsibility enabled them to master certain concepts such as demographic dividends, criteria need to draft youth development indices, key populations and the tenets in census execution. They were also tasked with preparing a resource mobilization plan that required them to research existing and future partners of UNFPA. They also helped compile the work plans of all UNFPA implementing partners, which helped them to understand the nature of their programs and appreciate the role of key stakeholders in achieving the institution's strategic objectives.

### **The Gender Unit**

As part of the Gender Unit Activities, fellows within the unit provided administrative assistance and logistical support to the Technical

Planning Committee of the International Conference on Population and Development and UNFPA@50. Fellows participated in an inter-school debate organized by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to commemorate International Women's Day. Finally, they helped to plan and implement an advocacy and sensitization session on female genital mutilation organized in Nima, in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, by the Gender Unit in collaboration with the Ghanaian Association for Women's Welfare, under the theme, "Supporting Concrete Actions at the Grassroots to Achieve Zero Tolerance for FGM by 2030."

### **Monitoring and Evaluation Unit**

Fellows in the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit received training on Strategic Information Systems (SIS). They also learned about the 2020 population census from the unit head and gained insight on how

surveys are conducted. They were taught about the trial census and the Geo-Referenced Infrastructure and Demographic Data for Development (GRID 3)- a population modelling system that facilitates population censuses - and learned how to gather data on maternal health and adolescents in Ghana.

### **The Operations Unit**

In the Operations Unit, fellows supported their supervisor with the day-to-day running of the unit. They worked closely with the procurement side of the unit to ensure smooth procurement processes. Their tasks included various administrative duties and serving as the communication liaison between the other fellows and the entire office. They collated fellows' monthly activity reports, informed management of upcoming activities by the fellows and coordinated meetings and training sessions.

# Internships with other United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations and implementing partners

The fellowship is designed so that fellows gain an understanding of the United Nations system not only from the perspective of an outsider but also from the perspective of someone working inside the system; each fellow had an opportunity to serve a two-week internship with other United Nations organizations in Ghana where they were assigned varied responsibilities. The fellows reported, in particular, how the internship had broadened their knowledge and enhanced

their ability to interact with higher-level policymakers and the United Nations system. Fellows interned with UNICEF, World Food Program (WFP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNU-IRA, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) and the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) among others.



# Graduating from the Youth Leaders (YoLe) Fellowship

The graduation ceremony of the inaugural cohort of the YoLe Fellowship Programme took place on 20 December 2019 at the Swiss Spirit Alisa Hotel, Accra. The graduation was a side event to the cocktail reception that was held in conjunction with a conference examining innovative approaches to population and development issues organized by UNFPA Ghana and called, "Parliamentary Dialogue with Afro-Descendants in the Diaspora on the Margins of the 'Year of Return'" 2019.

UNFPA Ghana's Country Representative Niyi Ojuolape gave the welcome address, and there were brief opening remarks by Harold Robinson Davis, UNFPA LACRO regional director. A short video documentary

about the YoLe Fellowship was played to the guest. Afterwards, the fellows were introduced and Dr. Gifty Addico, from UNFPA headquarters, presented their certificates.

The event was also witnessed by members of the Parliamentary Committee and Caucus on Health, Finance, Population and Development of Ghana, members of the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development Ghana, Parliamentarians of African Descent across Europe, the Caribbean, North and South America and other donor countries. Experts from UNFPA and other civil society organizations were also in attendance.

# What's next?

The goals and objectives of the YoLe Fellowship are ambitious yet achievable, and the first cohort of fellows has already shown that with the required training, capacity building and experience they can become empowered to do amazing things.

After the exit of the fellowship programme, four of the fellows – Naa-Amy Wayne, Abigail Ashun-Sarpy, Jean-Philip Lawson and Bisola Olapade – were retained by the UNFPA Ghana Country Office as consultants providing assistance, direction and guidance to various units within UNFPA.

As a good number of them wanted to pursue graduate programmes after the scholarship, five successfully enrolled in various programmes and universities. Akosua Agyepong won a full scholarship to pursue a master's degree at Peking University in Beijing, China; Farida Latif gained a Commonwealth Scholarship to pursue her degree at the University of Bath in the United Kingdom; Samira Osman will pursue a graduate degree at the University of Ghana; Theodora Nyamekye Yeboah gained admission to the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration; and Sarah Boateng is now studying at the Ghana Institute of Journalism.





Derrick Botchway joined World Food Programme Ghana after a request was made by WFP to retain him when he finished his two-week internship, and Barbara Sika Kudjawu has been employed by UNFPA Togo.



Michael Blankson now works with The African Health Innovation Center (AHIC), Evans Dodzi Hedo works for Franklin Medical Center and Rafsanjani Adams has been gainfully employed by Essense Fest.

Finally, Dorcas Attah and Patricia Iduasam Iniworikabo returned to Nigeria to serve their country under the National Youth Service Corps.

UNFPA Ghana is, indeed, proud of the achievements that the first cohort has made and is inspired to work even harder to ensure that every young person fulfils his or her full potential.



# LESSONS LEARNED

## **Ownership**

In implementing such a programme, cultivating ownership is essential. Ownership was cultivated at several levels. Among staff, UNFPA Ghana inspired buy-in by using a participatory approach in developing the fellowship. After the initial concept note was drafted, it was shared among all other staff who made suggestions that were integrated into what became the conceptual framework. All members of staff participated in the selection and orientation processes and had opportunities to work closely with fellows. Documents related to the fellowship were stored in a drive that staff could access.

## **Community mobilization and engagement**

UNFPA Ghana promoted interest in and awareness of YoLe by building alliances with strategic partners in civil society, government, diplomacy and private business within and outside of Ghana. UNFPA Ghana creatively used aggressive social media marketing and engagement to engage these partners as well as prospective fellows. This was an important step towards institutionalizing policies and practices to ensure the sustainability of the fellowship.

## **Documentation**

In recognition of the importance of building knowledge about the fellowship, particularly given that it is the first of its kind in the United Nations system globally, the YoLe management team prioritized the comprehensive documentation of all aspects of the fellowship. As a matter of institutional imperative, everyone who played a role in implementation contributed to this process by writing reports and blog articles, taking photographs and sharing information via social media.

## **Leadership and participation**

As previously mentioned, fellows were initially assigned to various units within UNFPA based on their responses to a questionnaire about their preferences. The purpose of this was “to give them the opportunity to put into practice what they learnt during their trainings and better understand the UN system and its mode of engagement.”

## **Innovation**

Innovation is one of the main principles and objectives of the fellowship. Having so many young people in a United Nations organization was a major innovation in itself. In addition to nurturing a culture of

critical thinking among fellows and encouraging them to use new technologies for advocacy, UNFPA Ghana worked with Space Ghana to renovate an old store-room into an innovation hub that functioned as a creative workspace-cum-recreational facility that allowed for individual inspiration as well as collaborative work. Fellows were also encouraged to create, innovate and lead their own initiatives which yielded some of the projects outlined earlier in this report.

### **Learning by doing and experiential learning**

This principle of the fellowship was implemented and had separate but intersecting implications for fellows and UNFPA. On one hand, fellows were allowed to take responsibility for important tasks rather than just menial work. In this way, they learned on the job. For their part, the managers of YoLe implemented the pilot cohort through an iterative process during which they made adjustments as the fellowship progressed to accommodate fellows' feedback.

### **Goal planning and expectation management**

In one training session with ALadyIs Foundation, fellows prepared vision boards that encapsulated their short- and long-term professional

goals. Fellows used the targets that they set for themselves to measure their progress at monthly and quarterly intervals. This helped them to ground their learning and determine how well their goals had been met at various stages.

### **Sustainability consciousness and planning**

UNFPA-Ghana's long-term goal is to institutionalize the YoLe Fellowship and expand youth access to the United Nations system in Ghana by inspiring sister organizations to become more involved or duplicate this innovation. Owing to the vast scope of projected activities, the fellowship is resource-intensive and has demanded creative and progressive thinking about sustainability from management. In various ways, all of the preceding good practices are reflective of and have contributed towards the sustainability of the fellowship. With future cohorts, UNFPA-Ghana has initiated discussions with potential partners regarding innovative and cost-efficient alliances and arrangements for cost-sharing and material, as well as in-kind support, to enable as many young people in Ghana to benefit from the fellowship as possible.

# MEET THE 2019 YoLe FELLOWS



## **Abigail ASHUN-SARPY**

She graduated from the University of Ghana in Legon with a bachelor's degree in French and linguistics. She is also a member of the France-Ghana Alumni Association due to a year of language immersion at the University

of Poitiers in France. She solidified her fluency in French by serving as an administrative assistant at both Campus France-Ghana and the French Embassy in Ghana.

Abigail has held leadership positions throughout her academic journey. She volunteered to lead various committees, planning many Campus France-Ghana events such as open day sessions and seminars. She is the recipient of the 2016-2017 French Embassy Award for Best Graduating Student in French and the Société Générale Award for Best Graduating Female Student in French. These opportunities and experiences have shaped Abigail into an emerging young leader with invaluable organizational and collaborative competencies.





## **Akosua Adubea AGYEPONG**

She holds a bachelor's degree in family and consumer science from the University of Ghana, Legon. She is also a fellow of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and the prestigious Hansen Summer Institute on Leadership and International Cooperation.

Akosua is currently the National Treasurer for Youth Action Movement, Ghana, the youth-led and youth-focused volunteer wing of the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana



(PPAG). Akosua also serves on the council of PPAG as the youth representative. She is a member of the management team of ALadyIs Foundation where she manages the foundation's flagship project "The Pearl Safe Haven." Through the Avid Youthbuild Foundation, she mentors junior high school students from her hometown of Apam.

Akosua has served as a volunteer for several organizations such as the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana, UNESCO,

Curious Minds, HFFG, and UNFPA. These experiences have fuelled her passion to see a world in which young people, especially girls and young women, are provided an opportunity to access better reproductive health services and there are no restrictions on their rights and freedoms.



## Barbara Sika KUDJAWU

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in French and linguistics from the University of Ghana. While pursuing her undergraduate degree, Barbara had several internships, gaining work experience with Khrysalis Afrique Coaching and Consulting Accra, Ghana, and the Ministry of Justice in Cotonou, Benin, among others. These experiences allowed her to develop attributes such as building good interpersonal rapport with others, adaptability and problem-solving skills. Her enthusiasm for people and cultures



accounts for her speaking five languages: English, French, Ewe, Twi and Spanish. Passionate about community service, Sika served as a volunteer for the Rural Development and Educational Program (RUDEP). This initiative provided her with the opportunity to teach in a rural community. She considers her introduction to the United Nations system, through the UNFPA YoLe Fellowship Program, as an opportunity to fulfil her eagerness to provide community service and to receive valuable mentorship that will help her develop into a global leader.





### **Bisola Oyindamola OLAPADE**

She holds a bachelor's degree in human resource management from Zenith University College, Accra. As a member of the university's Welfare Committee of the Student Representative Council, she has participated in many extracurricular activities and served two tenures as a hostel president at her university residence. These roles have helped her hone interpersonal and professional skills.



Similar to the experiences of other YoLe Fellows, Bisola has continued to develop hands-on experience by participating in the Country Office's programmes and events as well as organizing and participating in different field activities and outreaches.





### **Derrick BOTCHWAY**

He is a graduate of the University of Ghana, Legon, where he studied geography and psychology. He is also an alumnus of Accra Academy.

Derrick is passionate about Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and a strong advocate of gender equality. He has volunteered for several organizations; he is presently the chairperson and the Southern Zonal Treasurer of the Youth Action



Movement (YAM), which is the youth wing of the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG). He is also a social media enthusiast and a graphic designer who believes in the functionality of art in advocacy.

Derrick is convinced that the experiential learning environment he benefitted from as a youth leader with UNFPA Ghana will help him develop capabilities to use as a springboard to deeper humanitarian engagements, adding greater value to humanity.





**Dorcas ATTAH**

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in human resource management from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana.



As a student, she served as a member and also as the welfare officer of the International Students Association, Zenith Chapter. Dorcas' devotion to volunteering led her to the WHO, donating her time and energy in the fight against poliomyelitis in Nigeria.





### Evans Dodzi HEDO

He is a graduate of Zenith University College with a Bachelor of Arts in human resource management.

Prior to his induction into UNFPA's YoLe Fellowship Programme, Evans served as a National Service Person at the UNFPA Ghana Country Office. During his time there, he assisted in organizing programmes and projects such as a Pre-Youth Consultation on Primary



Health Care in October 2018 that was hosted by the UNFPA and UNICEF.

Evans is convinced the one-year fellowship programme will increase his experience in organizational leadership and deepen his knowledge of the United Nations systems and processes. Through the numerous outreaches organized by the Country Office, he will be involved in helping to fill the unmet needs in various Ghanaian communities.





### **Farida LATIF**

She holds a Bachelor of Arts in political studies from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. She also holds a Certificate in International Development Studies, with a specialization in community development, from Trent University in Canada.



Prior to the fellowship, Farida undertook an internship with the Mennonite Economic Development Associates in Tamale, Ghana. Outside of her professional ambitions, she has a personal interest in volunteering and has engaged in different projects in the areas of youth activism and women's empowerment.





**Patricia Iduasam INIWORIKABO**

She holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Zenith University College, Ghana.



During her time at Zenith University College, Iduasam served as the assistant secretary for the International Students Association (ISA). At the ISA, she coordinated the affairs of international students on campus, helping them secure their resident permits and health insurance cards. She considers this a crucial period for gaining experience in an administrative leadership role as well as in a managerial role.





### Jean-Philip LAWSON

He graduated from the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) with a Bachelor of Arts in communication studies. He served as the communications director at the Foundation for Leadership Excellence (FLEX), a club at St. John's Grammar School. He also served as a representative to the General Assembly as part of the Students' Representative Council (SRC) of GIJ for four consecutive years and as the chairman of the Appointments Committee of the GIJ-SRC. He is an inaugural fellow of the UNFPA's YoLe Fellowship Program.



In 2018, Jean-Philip won first prize in the maiden Professor Babatunde Osotimehin Annual Essay Competition organized by UNFPA Ghana. He is the author of a novel, *The Hard Decision*. Jean-Philip considers the Fellowship Programme a great opportunity to cultivate the values of teamwork, receive mentoring in the systems, processes and activities of the United Nations, and develop the skills necessary for adapting to an ever-changing world.





## Michael Nana BLANKSON

He holds a Bachelor of Arts in development studies from Valley View University, Ghana, and is an inaugural fellow of the UNFPA's YoLe Fellowship Programme. Prior to joining the UNFPA, Michael won best delegate for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Committee of the 2015 Ghana International Model United Nations (GI-MUN). He also served as both vice president of Committee Session and head of protocol of GIMUN. In November 2017, he participated



in a Sustainable Development Goals and Human Rights Conference in India.





### **Naa-Amy K. WAYNE**

She holds a Bachelor of Science in biochemistry, cell and molecular biology from the University of Ghana. She has more than five years of experience in community development and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) advocacy.

As an individual with a passion for SRHR advocacy, Naa-Amy founded the group Faith, Hope, and Love (FHL), a non-profit public health organization. Reaching over 2,000



people, the group's primary focus is sexual and reproductive health education and breast cancer awareness. She also serves as the director of the ALadyIs Foundation programmes that have reached over 250 ladies in less than two years with education on commercial awareness and job readiness. In 2017, Naa-Amy was selected along with 120 future leaders to attend the Young African Leaders' Initiative, a five-week intensive leadership immersion programme in Accra, Ghana.



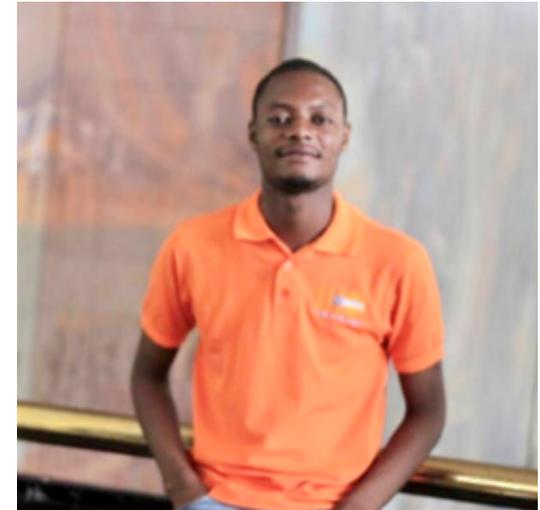


## Rafsanjani ADAMS

He holds a degree in communication studies from the Islamic University College in Ghana.



Prior to joining the fellowship programme, he completed his national service in the communications unit of the UNFPA Ghana Country Office during the 2017-2018 service year. This role saw him participating and providing assistance in the implementation of such things as youth outreach programmes as well as developing post-programme articles and reports.





## Sarah Nuamah BOATENG

She is a trained radio broadcast journalist with the Radio Broadcast Development Foundation. She holds a diploma in communication studies from the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

With a huge zeal for volunteering, Sarah led a school outreach project organized by the New Ark Foundation based in Northampton, United Kingdom. The focus of her comprehensive report was health and well-being



issues for school development in Ghana as they relate to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. She is also a member of the Ahaban Green Leaf Foundation (GLF), a humanitarian, non-profit organization working to promote education, eradicate poverty, and develop the full potential of children and youth through holistic outreach programmes.





## Samira OSMAN

She is a graduate of the University of Ghana with a bachelor's degree in political science. She undertook her national service at Frontier Oil Ghana Limited where she handled both operational and marketing responsibilities. Through her duties, she received an introduction to market research, public relations and adherence to safety regulations.

Through the fellowship and off-the-field experiences with Impact Hub Accra, Samira



expects to gain increased insight into entrepreneurship and health innovations. She anticipates the sharpening of her leadership and communication skills, achieving greater exposure to invaluable professional networks, and engaging in challenging, varied, and interesting work. She also seeks to acquaint herself with relevant issues affecting women and children in society and becoming a change-maker in addressing these issues.





### **Theodora Nyamekye YEBOAH**

She holds a Bachelor of Arts in social work and sociology from the University of Ghana, where she graduated with First Class Honours.

Theodora is passionate about working with and for people in distressing situations. She has served as a volunteer at the Accra Rehabilitation Centre, working with persons with disabilities and helping people learn basic English and mathematics. This experience



has increased her understanding of the severity of unmet needs among young and vulnerable people in society and the commitment required by the government, individuals and organizations to close this gap.





# CONCLUSION

The inaugural YoLe cohort has, indeed, shown us that investments in young people are the key to ensuring that their potential is fulfilled, and, once fulfilled, they are able to contribute meaningfully to the improvement of their societies.

Indeed, the fellowship is not just an opportunity to enhance the capabilities of young people, it also is more of an exchange in which young people can contribute to the overall output of the Country Office while also receiving capacity-building opportunities in various forms and in diverse areas.

The fellows improved the presence of UNFPA Ghana on social media, assisted in resource mobilization efforts, increased UNFPA Ghana's community engagements and direct community interventions and supported various units in the CO to implement various projects, programmes and activities.

In January 2020, the CO was excited to select and receive the next cohort of fellows, eager to exchange ideas and build their capacities.





