

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES INITIATIVES GHANA (RRIG)



**ANNUAL REPORT ON THE SHE LEADS PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IN THE
BOSOMTWE DISTRICT IN THE ASHANTI REGION**

REPORTING PERIOD: APRIL - DECEMBER, 2021

DECEMBER 20, 2021

INTRODUCTION

Rights and Responsibilities Initiatives Ghana (RRIG) worked in the Bosomtwe District in the Ashanti Region to implement the She Leads Alliance Project funded by the Defence for Children International (DCI) Ghana. The main objective of the She Leads project is to increase sustained influence of girls and young women (GYW) on decision-making and the transformation of gender norms in formal and informal institutions. The consortium envisages achieving this objective by working through three interrelated domains:

1. Social and Cultural Domain: Support by increased acceptance of positive social gender norms
2. Civil Society Domain: Enhancement of collective action of girls and young women in a gender-responsive civil society.
3. Institutional Domain: Enabling meaningful participation of girls and young women in decision-making by political institutions.

This report covers the activities undertaken by RRIG under the She Leads Project in the Bosomtwe District from April-December, 2021.

During the period under review, eight (8) activities were undertaken in the district:

1. Launch of She Leads Project (Social Cultural Domain-Project Launch)
2. Training of GYW groups/ organizations on the She Leads Project (Civil Society Domain-Fund and support girls and youth led-organizations)
3. Five (5) Engagement with communities on negative Socio-Cultural norms that limit GYW participation in leadership and decision making) with reference to the Children's Rights 1998 (Act 560), Child and Family Welfare policy and National Gender Policy (Social Cultural Domain- Mobilizing communities and role models)
4. Two (2) Girls space forum for Girls-Led Organizations and Girls Groups to collect time diaries on time use by GYW on their male counterparts: Gender Norms and Roles: Boys and Girls roles analysis at home and the community (Civil Society Domain-Fund and support girls and youth led-organizations)
5. Five (5) Consultative Meeting with Community Leaders (Religious leaders, Traditional leaders, opinion leaders, District Assembly and Unit Committee): Presentation of evidence from time diaries on harmful norms that limit GYW participation in leadership and decision making (Institutional Domain-Lobby formal and informal institutions)
6. International Day of the Girl Child to present finding from the time diaries to duty bearers and promote girls inclusion in digital world (institutional domain)
7. Five (5) Meetings with institutional community leaders: presentation of evidence from time diaries on harmful norms that limit GYW participation in leadership and decision making in the 10 project communities (institutional domain)
8. Three (3) Data collection about girls leadership

A total of 591 participants were reached; 344 were female and 247 were male.

The COVID 19 public health and safety protocols were followed throughout the activities;

1. Physical distancing or 1-2 meters apart
2. Washing of hand with soap under running water for 30 seconds
3. Intermitted use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers
4. Wearing of face mask

DETAIL OF ACTIVITIES

1. LAUNCH OF THE SHE LEADS ALLIANCE PROJECT IN THE BOSOMTWE DISTRICT

Rights and Responsibilities Initiatives Ghana (RRIG) in collaboration with Defence for Children International Ghana launched the She Leads Alliance Project in the Bosomtwe District on May 7, 2021. The programme was held at the Bosomtwe District Assembly Hall in Kuntense. The participants included; the District Chief Executive, Assistant Director, Duty Bearers; representatives from the Department of Social Welfare, National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE), Information Service Department (ISD), Ghana Education Service (GES), Ghana Health Service (GHS), the Girl-child Coordinator, National Youth Authority, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Media, Traditional Leaders and Religious leaders and selected Assembly and Unit Committee Members. It should be noted that the Assembly and Unit Committee members. Find below a summary list of participants who attended the official launch of the project.

S/N	Stakeholder	No. of participants
1.	Girls and Young Women	2
2.	Traditional and Religious Leaders	2
4.	Duty Bearers	12
5.	Media	1
6.	Assembly Members and Unit Committee	6
	Total	23

The She Leads Project was officially launched in the Bosomtwe District by Hon. Joseph Kwasi Assuming (Esq), DCE. He was supported on the podium by the Duty Bearers responsible for child/ social protection in the district and Madam Aba Oppong, the Executive Director of RRIG.

Madam Aba Oppong, the Executive Director of Rights and Responsibilities Initiatives Ghana (RRIG) reiterated that project efficiency and effectiveness can only be achieved when the GYW, the Duty Bearers, Media, Parents/ Guardians, Assembly Members, Religious and Traditional leaders and the general public play their strategic roles to promote the goal and objectives of the project. The new report on the programme can be found on: (<https://www.gna.org.gh/1.20886545>)

2. IDENTIFICATION AND TRAINING OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN THE BOSOMTWE DISTRICT

RRIG collaborated with the Department of Social Welfare and Assembly Members in Petransa, Toanfom, Abono, Abrankese and Kuntanase to identify and mobilize GYW organizations and groups as advocates for the She Leads project in the Bosomtwe District. Three (3) She Leads GYW advocate groups were formed in the District.

The training began with the introduction of the project team to the GYWs. This was followed by a self-introduction by the participants. Hon. Joseph Kwasi Assuming, the DCE of Bosomtwe District called on the GYW present to be disciplined and focus on their education and vocational skills, to become economically independent to fend for themselves and their families.

Madam Aba Oppong, Executive Director for RRIG facilitated the session. The GYW were trained on the basic principles of good governance which included social accountability, transparency, fairness, justice, honesty, integrity, and definition of rights, types of rights (individual, group, and community). It is anticipated that the GYW trained will be able to be youth advocates on the ideals of the She Leads Project. A WhatsApp platform was created to facilitate communication and continuous study of the objectives of the She Leads Project to the GYW. The GYWs will be engaged to understand their roles to facilitate their engagement with their peers and duty bearers.

3. ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITIES ON CHILD PROTECTION FLASHBACKS

RRIG organized community engagement with boys/ men, parents/ caregivers and community leaders in 5 She Leads project communities on Child Protection Flashbacks, that is, negative socio-cultural norms that limit GYW participation in leadership and decision making. The communities were; Abono, Abrankese, Kuntanase, Petransa and Toanfom. A total of 172 participants were reached; 122 were female and 50 were male as shown in the table below;

S/N	Name Of Community	Male	Female	Total
1.	Abono	16	41	57
2.	Kuntanase	4	21	25
3.	Abrankese	9	18	27
4.	Toanfom	11	18	29
5.	Petransa	10	24	34
	<i>Total</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>122</i>	<i>172</i>

On the key issues of GYW participation in formal and informal decision making institutions, it was unanimously reiterated that GYW who wish to stand for public officer at all levels should be above reproach, they should be of high moral standing. In addition they should pursue formal and informal, professions, skills and aptitude to be able to function in the leadership position when they are elected.

Micro media (community radio/information centres) was used in some communities to reach out to community members who could not participate in the meeting. However, those with contributions and/or questions came to the information centre where the education was ongoing to contribute to the discussion or ask their questions.

4. GIRLS SPACE FORUM FOR GIRLS LED ORGANIZATIONS AND GIRLS GROUPS TO COLLECT TIME DIARIES ON TIME USE BY GYW ON THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS

Rights and Responsibilities Initiatives Ghana (RRIG) organized 2 girls' space forum to collect time diaries on the time used by GYW on their male counterparts from in-school and out-of-school boys and young men (BYM) and girls and young women (GYW) in the five (5) project communities in the Bosomtwe District. The communities include; Abrankese, Kuntense, Petrensa, Toanfom and Abono. A total of 100 respondents were reached with the time diaries card/questionnaire where 50 were GYW and 50 BYM. Twenty (20) respondents were selected from each of the 5 project communities. The respondents were selected from the following GYW groups and communities;

1. Connie Nice Fashion, Kuntense
2. Abrankese Girls and Young Women's Group.
3. Petrensa Girls and Young Women's Group.
4. Toanfom Girls and Young Women's Group.
5. Abono Girls and Young Women's Group.
6. Boys and Young men in the five project communities

The finding revealed that, GYW spend majority of their time doing house work. This makes them tired and ends up performing poorly in school and in their apprenticeship training. It was recommended that house work should be a shared responsibility in the home: for the mother, the father and the brother. The results from the time diaries also revealed that, there is low interest of GYW in social and cultural activities in the communities. RRIG will reinforce the objectives of the She Leads Project to empower GYW to participate in leadership and decision making process through their engagement in social and cultural activities in the communities and district.

5. DATA COLLECTION ABOUT GIRLS LEADERSHIP SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE BOSOMTWE DISTRICT

RRIG undertook a data collection on girls' leadership in the 3 Senior High Schools in the Bosomtwe District from July – November, 2021. The schools were: Jachie Pramso Senior High School, St. Georges Senior High School and Beपोso Senior High School. The main objective of this activity was to find out about girls' leadership in selected senior High schools and use evidence to advocate and encourage girls' leadership in Senior High Schools in Ashanti Region and Ghana at large. The data was collected on positions held by girls over the period of 4 years, starting from 2018 to 2021.

The methodologies used during the data collection were;

1. Face-to-face Interview
2. Questionnaire
3. Secondary data from school administration

The findings revealed that, there was an equal representation of girls and boys leadership for senior prefect positions in the school. However, in some positions the girls only contested for assistant positions to support the boys who vied for the main positions. Examples are the Protocol Prefect Assistant 1 and 2 positions, the Library Prefect position and the Cadet Prefect position. Again, most of the positions were vacant thus no representation for both boys and girls.

There was low representation of girls for the Students’ Representative Committee (SRC) position which is the main students’ decision making body in the schools. There were about 11.63%-40% increase of boys’ representation over girls’ representation for this position in all the 3 schools where the data was collected. This can influence decision making process in the school. Hence girls’ are encouraged to actively participate in all leadership positions in the school, community and district to secure a platform where girls’ rights and welfare can be promoted for social and economic development of GYW. It was concluded that, girls should be sensitized on the importance of taking up lead roles when vying for leadership position in the school, community and district. That, civic spaces should be created for girls who are ready to take up leadership roles, to participate effectively in decision making process in the school, community and district where they live.

6. CONSULTATIVE MEETING WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS: PRESENTATION OF EVIDENCE FROM TIME DIARIES ON HARMFUL NORMS THAT LIMIT GYW PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING IN THE 5 PROJECT COMMUNITIES

Rights and Responsibilities Initiatives Ghana (RRIG) organized five (5) consultative meetings with Community Leaders in the 5 She Leads project communities in the Bosomtwe District. The purpose of the meetings was to present evidence from time diaries on harmful norms that limit GYW participation in leadership and decision making, to advocate for the creation of civic spaces for GYW. Participants include; Religious Leaders, Traditional Leaders, District Assembly and Unit Committee and Opinion Leaders. The meeting was held from August 27 – 31, 2021. A total of 77 participants were reached; 41 were male and 36 were female. Participants were present. Find below the sex disaggregation of participants;

S/N	Community	Male	Female	Total
1.	Abono	8	7	15
2.	Abrankese	5	5	10
3.	Kuntense	9	12	21
4.	Petransa	7	8	15
5.	Toafom	12	4	16
	Total	41	36	77

Objectives

1. To lobby community leaders to develop and sign commitments to facilitate the creation of civic spaces for GYWs.
2. To lobby community Leaders to allocate space for the inclusion of GYW in the Assembly and local level committees including Unit Committees.

Nana Osei Kwabena, a Traditional Leader from Petransa showed appreciation to RRIG and the She Leads Alliance team on their effort to advocate and promote the girls and women’s empowerment and participation in governance. He encouraged parents to support the lifelong education of their children and/ or learn a profession, vocation or trade. This will guarantee them economic independence and high socio-economic standing in their adult years. In addressing the

issue of child labour, he explained that child labour affects the health, education, survival and total development of the child therefore child labour should be eradicated from the community.

Hon. Richard Agyemang, Assembly Member for Abrankese/ Kokodei showed appreciation to RRIG and the She Leads Alliance team for developing the She Leads initiatives in promoting GYW rights and participation in leadership and decision making. He reiterated that, the project will build the capacity of GYW to demonstrate the principles of good governance; transparency, accountability, integrity, fairness and justice and shape them into role models. Hence he made a commitment to support the ideals of the she leads project.

Madam Beatrice Quansah from Abrankese made a commitment to support of the project. She stated that, being the Women's Leader in her church, she will help promote the ideals of the She Leads project by mentoring the GYW to take up leadership roles in the community and district. That, she will also encourage teenage mothers to retain to school to complete the secondary education as per the re-entry policy of the Ghana Education Service and the SDG 4.

The consultative meetings in the 5 communities were successful. Participants showed a high level of understanding from the topics discussed and contributed effectively to the discussions. Community Leaders have a deeper understanding of the ideals of the She Leads project and are willing to support the desired goals for GYW.

7. 2021 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD

The 2021 International Day of the Girl Child (IDGC) was held on Thursday, October 21 at the St. Georges Catholic Church in Kuntense. The purpose of the celebration was focus attention on the need to address the challenges girls face in the digital world and to promote girls empowerment and the fulfillment of their human rights. The celebration organized by RRIG reiterated the theme "GIRLS NEED DIGITAL EDUCATION TO LEARN, TO EARN AND TO DEVELOP". The programme was attended by seventy (84) participants including Duty Bearers, Assembly Members, Unit Committee Members, Traditional Leaders, Religious Leaders, Champions of Change members, Girls and Young Women Advocates, Boys' Groups, School Children from the Basic, Junior High Schools and Senior High School in Kuntense, Apprentice, CSO's, Parents and Guardian and other influential persons in the community.

Madam Aba Oppong, the Executive Director of RRIG stated the purpose of the celebration which she mentioned that, the "She Lead Programme" is geared towards the improvement and empowerment of the girl child to realized her dreams and full potentials. She reiterated that the celebration of the international day of the girl child is to focus attention on the girl child to reimagining a world that the adolescent girl can seize the opportunity to use the digital device being it computer, laptop, phones and all the electronic devices to learn, to earn and also to develop. She encouraged stakeholders to fully do their best to ensure that children, girls and young women seized the opportunity to use the internet for their personal development. She enumerated the challenges facing the girl in this digital generation and urged parents, teachers, law makers and all stakeholders to help enable the dreams and potentials of the girl child come to realization. Madam Aba Oppong also presented a data which was collated on time diaries of boys and girls activities on 24 hours to participants. The results shows that girls do a lot of house activities than boys and this has a negative effect on the performance of the girls in school. She

therefore urged parents to reduce the work load on the girl child so that she can have ample time to study and rest to improve on her academics.

8. MEETING WITH INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNITY LEADERS: PRESENTATION OF EVIDENCE FROM TIME DIARIES ON HARMFUL NORMS THAT LIMIT GYW PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING IN THE 5 PROJECT COMMUNITIES: ABONO, JACHIE, TOANFOM, KUNTENASE AND PETRANSA

Introduction

RRIG organized 5 meetings with institutional Community Leaders to discuss the evidence from the time diaries on harmful norms that limit GYW participation in leadership and decision making. The meetings were held on November 15 to December 18, 2021 in Abono, Jachie Toanfom, Kuntense and Petransa communities. A total of 118 participants were present: 61 were female and 57 were male. Among the participants were; Family Heads (Abusuapanin), Assembly Members, Unit Committee Members, Religious, Opinion Leaders, Religious Leaders, Women’s Group Leaders and Trade Organization Leaders.

Community	Male	Female	Total
Kuntense	5	13	18
Petransa	11	9	20
Toanfom	9	11	20
Abono	10	9	19
Jachie	22	19	41
Total	57	61	118

The findings from the data collection on girls’ leadership in the Jachie Pramso SHS and St. George’s SHS and the Time Diaries conducted in the 5 project communities were presented to the community leaders. The key barriers to GYW involvement in leadership and decision making were highlighted which includes;

1. Patriarchy or male dominance
2. Structural barriers both at the school, home and the community
3. Institutional mindset including various types of gender bias and stereotyping
4. Individual mindsets (low self-esteem)

RRIG called on community leaders including Traditional and Religious leaders, Opinion Leaders, District Assembly and Unit Committee to create civic spaces for girls and young women to participate in the leadership and decision making in schools, in the community and the district. It was reiterated that, Women participation in decision making is not just a right, but also key to sustainable development. Strong female leadership improves the status of families and communities, improves employee productivity and increases corporate profitability. Our goal is to promote behavioural change by emphasizing positive masculinities and promoting gender

equality norms in the school, home, the community and Ghana at large and to promote women's involvement and participation in local governance.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. On the key issues of GYW participation in formal and informal decision making institutions, it was unanimously reiterated that GYW who wish to stand for public officer at all levels should be above reproach, they should be of high moral standing. In addition they should pursue formal and informal, professions, skills and aptitude to be able to function in the leadership position when they are elected
2. The project efficiency and effectiveness can only be achieved when the GYW, the Duty Bearers, Media, Parents/ Guardians, Assembly Members, Religious and Traditional leaders and the general public play their strategic roles to promote the goal and objectives of the project.

NEWS PUBLICATION

News report of the launch of the She Leads project in the Bosomtwe District
<https://www.gna.org.gh/1.20886545>

RECOMMENDATION

During the training session with the GYW groups, it was realized that the mark for defining a leader does not include young girls' leadership. Sensitization on the benefit of GYW leadership for an inclusive sustainable development should be appreciated and sustained for a desired change for the She Leads project ideals: enhancement of collective action of girls and young women in a gender-responsive civil society (civil society domain), support by increased acceptance of positive social gender norms (socio-cultural domain) and by enabling meaningful participation of girls and young women in decision-making by political institutions (institutional domain)