

# FINAL REPORT

## ON

### FEMALE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND LIVELIHOOD ADVOCACY (F-YELA) COMPONENT OF THE COMMUNITY DRIVEN GENDER ADVOCACY PROJECT (CODRIGAP)

(MAY 2008 - APRIL 2009)

Compiled by:

Ms Dorothy Aawulanaa

Mr. Samuel A. Akarikiya

# CENSUDI

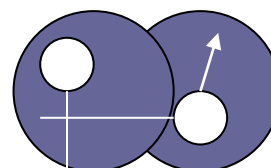
*Centre for Sustainable Development Initiatives*

TUC Building, Commercial Street P.O. Box 134

Bolgatanga, UER, Ghana

Tel/Fax: (233-72) 22249

Email: [censudi@africaonline.com.gh](mailto:censudi@africaonline.com.gh)



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Since 2005, CENSUDI has been implementing the Community Driven Gender Advocacy Project (CODRIGAP). CODRIGAP is an innovative response to pervasive and entrenched problems of poverty and vulnerability in the Upper East Region (UER) of Ghana. Within a Community Action Planning (CAP) framework, communities are encouraged and enabled to hold frank discussions about traditional policies and practices that discriminate negatively against women and children particularly girls (TRAPPDAW).

One of the key challenges of the Community Driven Gender Advocacy Project (CODRIGAP) identified over the years was the low interest and involvement of the youth, especially female youth in the project. Further dialogue and analytic sessions with communities in 2008 highlighted the following reasons among others:

- While some youth had some knowledge about development projects in their communities, others did not. Even those who had knowledge of these projects were not actively involved in taking decisions about them as tradition does not allow the youth, especially girls, to sit among elders in taking decisions on such issues.
- Girls are more involved in household chores such as cooking as well as livelihood activities than boys and therefore have less time to participate in various meetings
- The project's focus on intangible but strategic benefits is not very attractive to unemployed youth who need quick results
- More girls migrate to the urban areas to work as porters and do other menial jobs than boys

Following the above-mentioned challenges that evolved from getting the youth, especially females, to participate in the CODRIGA Project, a proposal was developed to source funding for the implementation of a component of CODRIGAP that addresses these constraints while attracting and sustaining especially female youth interests.

Apart from the promotion of tangible livelihood economic development initiatives with immediate benefits, F-YELA supports the formation/strengthening of female youth associations as well as strengthens their voices.

This report covers the period of **May 2008 to April 2009**. During this period, the following activities were undertaken.

## **2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF F-YELA**

- Facilitate the formation of female youth groups in ten (10) CODRIGA communities.
- Strengthen the voices of female youth to engage in and support issues that are of concern to them
- Strengthen the income generation and livelihood capacities of female youth.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

Methods employed during sessions included questions, input and focus group discussions. All sessions were participatory as participants made inputs where necessary and answered questions freely.

### **4. ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE PERIOD**

During the period under review, various strategies and activities have been carried out with the youth from ten communities especially the female youth. Activities carried out during the period include:

- Sensitize and facilitate the formation of female youth groups in ten (10) CODRIGA communities
- Registration of female youth groups
- Inauguration of female groups/associations in ten (10) communities
- Assess individual and group needs
- Strengthen the organizational capacity and dynamics of female youth

#### **4.1 SENSITISE AND FACILITATE THE FORMATION AND REGISTRATION OF FEMALE YOUTH GROUPS**

The first stage of implementation of the F-YELA was the identification and sensitization of females to form socio-economic and livelihood groups.

All sessions began with normal community entry procedures of exchanging pleasantries and observing protocols. Each session was also facilitated by two to three (2-3) people. The introductory aspect of every session tested the participants' knowledge of the facilitating teams' organization (CENSUDI) and what it has been doing in their various communities by asking questions like:

- Where are we from?
- How long have we been working in your community?
- What messages have we been sharing with each other since we met?
- What are some of the messages you shared with us concerning young men and women?
- How have you young men and women participated in the CODRIGAP project?
- How will you describe the development status of your community?
- What are some of the reasons your community is at this level of development?
- Can an individual solve all the problems of development you have in this village?
- What role can youth play in developing this community?
- Have the male and female youth been playing this role effectively?
- If not why?

Age and sex differentiated focus group discussions were used at appropriate times to break ice, make the conversations more interesting and to tease out more details.

#### **4.1.1 Outputs from This Sensitisation Programme Are As Follows**

- 547 youth in ten (10) communities have been sensitized on importance and need to actively engage in development activities
- The F-YELA objectives were shared with 377 female youth between the ages of 15-30 years. Though some of the communities visited had formed groups, these were dormant groups. They were then sensitized on their roles and they came to a realization of the benefits of group formation to the individuals and communities at large as this would enable them to contribute responsibly and actively in their respective communities as youth. This will make them responsible citizens when they grow into adults.
- 232 female youth energized to form groups
- Between two (2) and three (3) groups have been formed and restructured in each community, with a membership of between 15 and 37 per group. The age ranges of the youth groups are 15-30 years

#### **4.2 REGISTRATION AND INAUGURATION OF FEMALE YOUTH GROUPS**

The National Youth Council (NYC) is the government body responsible for working with youth. CENSUDI facilitated communities to invite the NYC to their communities to facilitate the elections of leaders, registration and the inauguration of their female youth groups.

The communities were first guided to write to their respective district offices of NYC introducing the groups and requesting for assistance in registering and inaugurating them. As a result, two (2) officers were assigned by each assembly (Bolgatanga Municipality and Tanlensi-Nabdam district) to assist the groups elect their group executives (Presidents, Secretaries, Treasurers and Organizers), inaugurate and register with the NYC. Attached are the female youth lists compiled in a form designed by CENSUDI (*Appendix 1*).

##### **4.2.1 Outputs from Registration and Inauguration of Female Youth Groups**

- Group members appreciate the need for elective office and nominated and elected their executives for the day-to-day running of the groups.
- Female youth lists for twenty (20) groups have been compiled and registered under the NYC in 10 communities.
- These groups serve as platforms in promoting the participation and public life advocacy of the female youth.

#### **4.3 NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF FEMALE YOUTH GROUPS**

Dialogue and sensitization sessions with all the 10 communities have highlighted some of the capacity needs of these groups. For example, the fact that female youth groups have not been active members of groups' formation in their communities means that they need some help with group dynamics and management, leadership and public speaking skills. Some

preliminary needs have therefore been compiled from interactions with all ten (10) communities.

#### **4.3.1 Outputs from the Need Assessment of Female Youth Groups**

- The assessment revealed that many of the female youth are illiterates. Thus, they are either drop outs, as a result of teenage pregnancy or the inability of parents to take care of them, or have never been to school.
- The drop outs need some form of education, at least non-formal education, to help them for instance in book keeping and deal with financial institutions. Some of the drop outs need some assistance with getting back to school and obtaining their certificates while others need vocational/ technical training.
- Some of the drop outs are young mothers and need help with just being “*good mothers and wives*”. All of them need some gender training.
- There are some members of the groups who are currently in school and advocate to be enlightened more on the importance of education, counseling in career choices and opportunities in relation to course of study, and morality.
- The assessment also revealed that quite a number of the female youth need to go into some form of income generating activities (trading).
- Likewise, others equally advocate the need for the construction of dams to enable them go into dry season farming which could help sustain them and minimize the economic hardships they go through during the lean season.
- There is also the need to educate parents on their roles and responsibilities in a child up bringing. Parents therefore need to be further encouraged to apply the gender knowledge they have acquired from CODRIGAP in the upbringing of particularly their female children.

#### **4.4 IDENTIFY, MOBILIZE AND EFFECT PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN FEMALE YOUTH GROUPS AND HIV/AIDS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS**

Forty (40) female youth executives comprising the President, the Secretary, the Treasurer and the Organizer from ten (10) female youth groups participated in a two-day HIV/AIDS sensitisation workshop. Participants are expected to play the role of peer educators in the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS in project communities.

#### **4.5 CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CIDA) MONITORING VISIT**

The desire of funding partners of the Community Driven Gender Advocacy Project (CODRIGAP) to see quick results and immediate impact of the project activities led to a series of monitoring visits by partners in the projects’ first phase of implementation. The latest of such visits during the period of reporting was a team from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), a major contributor of MATCH INTERNATIONAL CENTRE-Canada. Outputs from this monitoring session are as follows:

- Interaction with beneficiary communities coupled with briefing and debriefing sessions made CIDA visiting team to understand CODRIGAP concepts and for that matter the F-YELA component

- The team expressed satisfaction for the commitment with which the beneficiaries showed in addressing the traditional policies and practices that discriminate against women and girls. They equally expressed satisfaction in the manner in which CENSUDI has been facilitating communities in the project implementation.
- The monitoring visit also gave CENSUDI the opportunity to appreciate the role CIDA as an indirect partner play in the funding of CODRIGAP.

## **5. CHALLENGES**

- Some planned activities such as development of training materials and organisation of skills training workshop for the female youth's groups could not be carried out due to frequent interruptions from unplanned programmes. Two unplanned Ghana Community Radio Network workshops (lasting for 6 and 10 working days respectively) were attended by the CODRIGAP Field Officers during which times CODRIGAP, including F-YELA, implementation was stalled.
- Delay in submission of the report is partly as a result of intermittent power outage within the establishment coupled with frequent infestation of the office computer by viruses. There have also been intermittent failures in internet connections and partly delays our quick response to donor correspondence.

## **6. LESSONS LEARNT / WAY FORWARD**

- Following the needs assessment, we are encouraging the youth to form groups according to their literacy, educational and age groups.
- There is the need to factor in counseling sessions and other programmes for adolescent girls and boys on reproductive health, effects of alcoholism and substance abuse, etc.

## **7. OUTSTANDING ACTIVITIES**

- Develop Training materials
- Train female youth's groups in organizational development skills - group organization and management, leadership skills, records keeping, etc