

Canadian Funded UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme Benefits Adolescents in the Central region



Priscilla deGraft Nyarko is 18 years old. She has a 2-year old child named Mildred. Little Mildred lives with her father's family. Priscilla went back to school after giving birth. Today, she has completed Junior High School and looks forward to continuing her education to become a journalist.

Priscilla is one of 30 girls on the Girls' Iron-Folate Tablets Supplementation (GIFTS) programme being implemented for out-of-school girls at the Komenda Health Center. The programme is being implemented under the Canadian Government supported UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR). The GIFTS programme seeks to address the nutritional needs of girls in the area. Additionally, under the UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme, service providers at the center have been supported to deliver quality, gender-responsive sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services. Today, Priscilla, like many of her peers who visit the facility, takes her reproductive health seriously. She has been introduced to family planning and is empowered to be well informed about her reproductive rights and wellbeing. Asked what she knew about pregnancy and reproductive health prior to her pregnancy, Priscilla noted: "I thought I knew it all. I was following my friends and I was not listening to anyone. Today, I can confidently say, I know what I need to do to avoid being pregnant. All I want now is to further my education".



Some adolescent mothers at the Komenda Health Centre (L); A nurse taking an adolescent through nutritional needs (R)

clubs of girls, boys and mixed groups to gain a better understanding of how these clubs work. In the clubs, the adolescents discussed issues related to teenage pregnancy, STIs, nutrition and menstrual hygiene. Madam Gifty Botchway, adolescent health focal person in Komenda was happy to receive the visiting team. She mentioned that the health club meets every two weeks to discuss adolescent development and wellbeing.

The visiting team made a stop at the Komenda M/A school to observe GIFTS implementation in the school. The team was received by the headmaster of the school, Mr. Albert Kwofie. He briefed the visiting team on the implementation of GIFTS in the school and handed over the team to the Girl Child Coordinators to facilitate the administering of the supplements to the girls.

To close the day, the steering committee travelled to Ntranoa community in Elmina to observe a training on empowering Junior High Schools (JHS) student leaders. This intervention was led by the Ghana Education Service. The visiting team interacted with the students and heard from their perspective on how teenage pregnancies can be prevented in schools and through the school health clubs.



Priscilla deGraft Nyarko attending a session at the Komenda Health Centre

The UNFPA Representative, Mr. Niyi Ojuolape encouraged the nurses to continue to share information of adolescent sexual health with out-of-school adolescents in the community. He cited 'Time with Grandma', a programme which follows the old folklore where children gather around an elder in the community at sunset to listen to tales that convey information on life's lessons and on adolescents.

Under 'Time with Grandma', an elderly woman in this case, is trained to share adolescent sexual health information with girls in the community and link them up with a health facility.

At GHASEL M/A Primary School in the Central region, the visiting team of Steering Committee members observed an interactive session of adolescent school health



School Health Clubs for girls and boys in session at Ghasel MA Primary School.