

# Documenting SRHR best practices

## Scaling up CSE through Advocacy - Leading from Behind

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### Introduction

In 2019, public outcry about the provision of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) resulted in the Ministry of Education of Ghana to remove CSE from the school curriculum. The Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG) offers a strong peer-delivered gender-transformative CSE programme in the communities that it operates. But it recognized more is needed to guarantee sustainable access for all young people in Ghana. Through the GAC funded IPPF Centres of Excellence (CoE) programme, PPAG came up with an innovative advocacy approach – Leading from Behind - to prevent future opposition and to build the motivation, ownership and capacity of key government actors to ensure the delivery of Reproductive Health Education (RHE) through the school system.

### Ghanaian CSE context

Ghana was considered to be a progressive country in terms of Sexual and reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) policy environment. However, in 2019, some sections in society released public statements against the provision of CSE to young people. This resulted in the Ministry of Education to withdraw the National Guidelines for delivery of CSE as part of the school curriculum. CSE is now only offered by civil society organizations through a myriad of temporary small-scale donor-funded projects. This situation, compounded by the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, led to a spike in bad SRHR outcomes among young people in the country, including teenage pregnancy and HIV.

### Developing a CSE scale up vision and strategy

Since the rise of opposition and controversy around CSE, many civil society organizations have been evaluating the triggers and developing ways to prevent and respond to opposition. Embracing the findings of the Centres of Excellence research - [Scaling Up Sexuality Education: Lessons learned and considerations for civil society organizations](#) - PPAG recognized that developing a scaling roadmap is the best way to address these challenges and move to universal access to accurate SRHR information for the majority of young people. Because RHE is only sustainably going to be delivered at the scale that is needed in Ghana by it becoming part of the healthcare or education system. When motivated and capacitated, state institutions are better placed to understand the SRHR challenges in the country and to coordinate and fund sustainable interventions to solve them.

### Motivating and capacitating key institutions through Leading from behind

Through the CoE programme, PPAG came up with an innovative approach called “Leading from Behind”. Leading from behind aims to engage, motivate and support critical and influential public agencies, academic institutions, individuals and other influencers from behind the scenes without taking the spotlight. Champions from within key state institutions are supported to lead conversations and policy formulation/implementation to address SRHR challenges facing young people in Ghana. PPAG is deliberately shifting responsibility, ownership and visibility (but also the credits for success) of RHE programs to state institutions to ensure sustainability and trigger state financing and action towards these programs.

### Main factors of success

This advocacy approach has proven to be successful through discussing with the top leadership of these agencies and institutions the implications of inaction towards opposition on national development, particularly emphasizing the possible gains in non-sensitive issues with high political and public priority such as reducing unwanted adolescent



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pregnancy, HIV and STI infections and gender-based violence. In addition to building motivation and ownership of policymakers and civil servants for the scale-up of RHE, PPAG is taking away any misconceptions and capacitating them to counter misinformation.

### Implementing key components of the Leading from Behind approach

- **Leaders from within key institutions prioritize RHE to address social and economic development:** PPAG reached out to a distinguished and credible management and public administration training institute in Ghana for it to design and deliver a certified executive course. The course has been delivered to a first cohort of influential persons drawn strategically from varied fields that could influence decision-making, public opinion and the formulation and implementation of SRHR policies including parliamentarians, directors of ministries, recognized journalists and other public figures. The course increased participants' understanding about the impact of SRHR challenges on national health and social and economic development while allowing time for collective brainstorming for solutions they could apply in their work.
- **Civil servants are capacitated and supported from behind the scenes to lead national RHE consultations:** The National Youth Authority of Ghana, is the government's Policy Agency on Youth that PPAG engaged and motivated to take action as part of the leading from behind initiative. Together PPAG and the authority made a plan to solicit support for RHE from key stakeholder groups. Logistically PPAG then supported the authority from behind the scenes to coordinate national-level stakeholder consultations across the country to educate, inform and solicit support for RHE. Stakeholder groups that attended include chiefs, priests, parent associations, teacher associations, civil society, young people, media, and health workers. At the most recent forum, different stakeholder groups – some of which were opposing the concepts of CSE before – now voiced their commitment to re-introduce RHE into schools.
- **Media personnel positively shapes public opinion and counters mis-information on RHE:** PPAG recognises the media as a key partner for agenda-setting and opinion-building in Ghana. PPAG has therefore undertaken several strategic efforts to build the capacity of media personnel including news editors, and television and radio hosts who visibly drive conversations in the country. The aim of this effort is for PPAG not to take a visible role but to create a media space that understands sexual and reproductive health issues and can better question state institutions and lead conversations that shape progressive thinking.
- **Traditional and religious leaders demand action towards RHE:** PPAG continued to strengthen partnerships with traditional and religious leaders. After finding common ground about the realities and needs of youth in their communities through dialogues on teenage pregnancy and Child marriage, many of them who were previously against CSE are now supporting and demanding government to provide RHE for young people to secure their future. For Instance, PPAG is working across project sites in Ghana, with traditional leaders towards eradicating Child Marriage. PPAG interventions involves capacity building for community leaders on gendered-based violence, the rights of married and unmarried adolescents, and ensuring that girls know about their sexual and reproductive health. As a result of this joint intervention, there have not been any cases of early and forced child marriages in Tamale over the past year.
- **RHE Costing evaluation helped shape a scalable cost-efficient RHE reference programme:** Costing evaluations of existing CSE programmes indicates that the cost per student of many programmes is too high. At such rates, scaling them up to reach all youth is impossible even when taking into consideration economies of scale and leveraging existing school system resources such as teacher salaries and other human and physical infrastructure. Using a CSE costing tool, developed by PPAG and Rutgers under the CoE programme, PPAG identified steps to make its RHE programme less costly per student while maintaining its impact. The tool also allowed PPAG to draft detailed

advocacy messages and negotiation tactics informed by data about the additional costs for the ministry of education and external donors if they were to agree on a collaborative scale-up of RHE.

#### What it means for IPPF Member Associations and other CoE partners

The CoEs supported national CSE scale-up assessments in several countries in 2022 and are offering the methodology and support to replicate it to interested organizations. The excel based costing tool will be launched by PPAG and Rutgers in 2023 and be made available for all IPPF Member Associations and youth focused organizations to strengthen CSE advocacy and cost-efficiency of CSE delivery. The tool will also be included in the updated Deliver + Enable toolkit. CSE scale up will be integrated in the objectives and support offer of the four CoEs – PPAG, Rutgers, Profamilia and ATBEF - to IPPF Member Associations with future CoE funding in 2023 and beyond. A resource mobilisation reference proposal developed by PPAG together with 6 other African IPPF Member Associations includes the advocacy approach - leading from behind as to generate additional funding for this innovative work.



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