

SHARING EDUCATION AND LEARNING FOR LIFE (SELL) PROGRAMME GHANA



The meeting comprised of representatives from the Youth Wings of the main Political Parties, Justice and Peace Council, Representatives from the Local Churches, Representatives from the Catholic Church, Chief Imam, representatives from the Traditional Authority, Non- Political Youth Groups and other groups.



Sections of stakeholders at the engagement in Bunkpurugu

The engagement was aimed at looking at ways of ensuring that Bunkpurugu and Nakpanduri Constituency remains peaceful communities before, during and after the 2020 elections. The stakeholders agreed on action points which included a peace walk involving a larger group of people to raise the awareness among the general public on the need for peace. Peace messages from the leaders were taken recorded as jingles and being aired on Lom FM and Scarp FM in Bunkpurugu and Nakpanduri community radio stations respectively to raise the awareness of the people of Bunkpurugu and its environs on the need for peace beyond the 2020 elections.

Peace Signage Board:

At the end of the Forums in both Yendi and Bunkpurugu-Nakpanduri Communities, stakeholders were invited to sign the peace signage board as a way of showing their commitment to Peace in their communities during this election period.



Regional youth director and Overload of Tamale signing on the peace board during the peace campaign launch

Radio Awareness Campaign:

Stakeholders during the forums also shared their peace messages which were recorded, produced into jingles and currently being aired on 5 community-based radio stations - Kesmi Fm in Tamale, Quality FM in Garu, Lom Community Radio in Bunkpurugu, Scarp FM in Nakpanduri and Pad FM in Damongo. On 23rd November 2020, The SELL Resource Team and a team from the Catholic Relief Service as part of the radio awareness were on Pad FM in Damongo to had a discussion on the role of youth and stakeholders in ensuring peaceful election in Ghana.

Peace Walk:



There were 3 peace walks organised as part of the peace campaign. Participants included political parties representatives, youth groups, women groups, SELL volunteers, partners and other like-minded groups who made the walk successful.

Word on Street Exercise:

As part of the Peace Campaign, some of our SELL Programme Ghana volunteer organised word on street exercises in their communities to help raise awareness on the need for peace during this electoral period. They were supported with placards, COVID – 19 safety items (nose masks, hand sanitizers etc.), T-shirts and other necessities for the street awareness campaign. In Nandom Community in the Upper West region of Ghana, our volunteers organised word on street exercises in 13 communities. In collaboration with their Youth Chaplains, Justice and Peace Commission and the deanery youth leaders they were able to do effective awareness raising campaigns. In the Upper East region of Ghana, there were also word on street exercises organised by our Volunteer Facilitators in Bawku, Binduri, Navrongo, Garu and Wiaga communities all within the month of November.

It is heart-warming to see the commitment made by our volunteers to help in raising the awareness of their people on the need to collectively work towards sustaining peace. Some Youth Chaplains and Parish Priests from the Catholic Community joined our volunteers for the exercises showing their support to the course of promoting peace in their communities and Ghana as a whole. As a Team we are hopeful that the our efforts in carrying out these activities will go a long way to making a positive impact towards the promotion and sustenance of peace before, during and after Ghana's 2020 general elections on December 7.

SELL MAIDEN BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING (BOT):

On the 18th November 2020, the first Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting was held at SS. Peter and Paul conference Centre in Tamale. The Board members present were Bishop Peter Paul Angkyiel Yelsuome, the Board Chair and Bishop of Damongo diocese, Dr. Samson Abagale, Mr. Alatiga Joachim, Mr. Vincent Agyei (the secretary to the Board). Dr. Mark Mantey and Dr. Brian Jennings joined the meeting via zoom. Board members expressed their enthusiasm to be part of moving the SELL Programme Ghana forward and pledged their support to the programme.



Some board members during & after the board meeting

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MESSAGE FROM TEAM LEADER

I bring you greetings from the SELL family here in Ghana. The year 2020 has been challenging due to the outbreak of COVID -19 pandemic. Although challenging, we have learnt new ways of doing things and appreciating the now.

In March 2020, when Ghana recorded her first case of COVID-19, the Team closed the Resource Centre and worked from home. Our values of service, integrity, solidarity and respect for the dignity of each person in our hearts and mind guided us in responding to the needs of vulnerable people in the communities we work in. Together with our volunteers who showed highest levels of civic responsibility and care we reached out to community to create awareness on COVID-19 and the safety precautions to help prevent the spread. With the support and kindness of our benefactors and partners, we distributed relief items to vulnerable people in communities. As restrictions were eased here in Ghana, our team resumed work at the resource room and continued with our work in communities with volunteers. We held workshops on 'Rising from Resilient Roots' with the Catholic Relief Services in communities. The aim of the workshop was to help participants find inner balance and to provide new coping skills that will help them in their well-being and that of their communities in responding to day to day challenges.

The Team and our volunteers launched and held peace campaigns in 23 communities and flash points in Northern Ghana to create awareness on the need for peace before, during and after Ghana's election 2020. We engaged key stakeholders for the election and got them to commit to peace by signing our peace banner. We on the SELL Resource Team Ghana, our Volunteers and beneficiaries are grateful to all our benefactors and partners who support the work we do. Together we make impact by empowering young people to be key actors in the development of their communities. We look forward to a fruitful 2021 with you. Namaste!

Vincent Agyei
Executive Team Leader

ACTIVITIES

The Team began the year in a transition state of working to relocate the SELL Resource Centre to a more central position in the northern sector. The month of January was spent doing preparation for the relocation and restructuring of the SELL Programme.

On 17th and 18th of January 2020, Hagar and Fr Leo visited Yendi Zone in the Savannah region of Ghana for an official SELL introductory meeting. The team met with key stakeholders including the Diocesan Youth Chaplain, Fr. Abraham and an assembly of Priests, Religious and other community leaders on the 17th of January and introduced the programme to them. On the 18th of January, the team also met 32 young adults (the group consisted of young adults coming from both the Christian and Muslim Communities from different communities in the Yendi zone)

at the Pastoral Centre in Yendi and introduced the Programme to them. Both elders and young people were open and excited about having the programme run in their communities. The Team has made follow-ups with key stakeholders in the zone and have agreed that training of volunteers commence in the first quarter of the year 2021.

In February, the team with our Resource Persons Frs. Tommy Hayden and Leo Traynor had our first team building to review our strategic plan following the transition and the relocation. The exercise was facilitated by Sr. Olivia Umoh (DC). The team concluded on Plan for the year 2020 towards a new strategic plan afterwards.

The Team continued with our 3rd Volunteer Facilitators Training in Wa from the 20th – 23rd February 2020, following a successful 2nd Training and Mentoring of volunteer Facilitators in their communities. The Training focused on the Peace Building Unit of the SELL Programme which aimed at helping the young adults to come to live at peace with themselves; to look at ways of analyzing situations of conflict in their communities, and to become agents of peace. The unit also had the aim of helping young adults learn to do away with stereotypes, prejudice, assumptions and manage their anger. In participants sharing in our Closing Circle and evaluation, many shared that the training experience on Peace Building was a healing session for them.

From 28th February – 1st March 2020, the Resource Team responded to an invitation received from the Leadership of the Religious Formators in Northern Sector of Ghana, to facilitate a Leadership and Self Awareness workshop for 60 formadees from different Religious congregations at the Nazareth Community of the FMM in Tamale. The Participants were taken through different sessions from the Self-Awareness and Leadership Units which included; Know Myself, JOHARI'S Window, My Personal History, Leadership Styles, Role of Leaders in Caring for the Earth.

As part of enhancing the Team's capacity on Care for the Earth, the team on 18th March 2020, had a short workshop on recycling. The workshop was facilitated by Jeremiah Bassey a student of St. Patrick's Missionary Society who worked for a while with the SELL Resource Team back in Upper East region where the Resource Team was formerly located and supported the Team with Awareness Raising Exercises on Care for the Earth.

He shared his gift and skills on recycling materials with items such as used plastic bottles, plastic bags into beautiful items such as flowers and other items for aesthetic purposes. The capacity building was part of our preparation towards commemorating the celebration of World Earth Day which falls on the 22nd of April. The plan was to have the awareness-raising exercise in different schools and communities. Unfortunately, due to the outbreak of COVID -19 and with schools closing down, we had to put the Programme for the World Earth Day on hold. The team learnt new recycling ideas with the help of Jeremiah and we hope to transfer these skills and ideas to our volunteers.



SELL PROGRAMME GHANA RESPOND TO COVID-19 OUTBREAK:

In March 2020 when Ghana recorded her 1st cases of COVID-19, our values of service, integrity, solidarity and respect for the dignity of each person in our hearts and mind guided us in making little efforts in the best interest of our communities. We tailored our programmes towards creating awareness through our social media and other media platforms. The situation in the country affected our work in communities and the Team closed the Resource Room and work from home.

With support from our volunteers, through Word on the Street Campaign (Awareness Raising Campaign), we tried to make people aware of the recommended safety precautions and the need to adhere to the protocols. Our volunteers undertook campaigns in their communities, townships and markets while others stood by major streets with their placards reminding people of the safety precautions.

They were provided with nose masks, they had placards with the safety precautions posted on them. Volunteers were urged to adhere to the safety precautions as they did the campaign. As part of our hope to keep people well informed, we translated the safety precautions of the World Health Organisation and some Frequently Asked Questions about the virus into 8 local languages. This was done with the help of our volunteers. The translations were produced into jingles and have been airing in some radio stations in selected local communities. Below are the different languages and the radio stations airing the SELL COVID - 19 messages.

Volunteers in their feedback shared with us some of the needs they identified in the communities and some observations. The Resource Team responded to some of the needs identified by volunteers with support from Friends of Africa (FOA), Ireland and St. Patrick's Missionary Society (SPMS West Africa).



SELL Resource Team Members delivering relief items to some facilities

We supported the vulnerable in the communities identified by our volunteers with 1,500 locally produced reusable nose masks, 22 veronica buckets with 22 gallons of liquid soap for 8 selected communities with the needs for the items. We also gave some support to 3 local health centres (Immaculate Conception Clinic in Kongo, Garu Presby Health Center in Garu and Agatuse CHIPS Compound in Zebilla).

Our heartfelt gratitude to Friends of Africa (FOA), Ireland and St. Patrick Missionary Society (SPMS – West Africa) for the great support given to us. It is through their support we were able to reach our set targets for the Awareness Raising on COVID-19.

SELL COMMISSIONS VOLUNTEERS IN TAMALE AND NAVRONGO/BOLGATANGA ZONES:



Archbishop Philip Naameh with Commissioned SELL Volunteers Facilitators in Tamale Zone

On 1st July 2020 and 16th August 2020, volunteer facilitators in Tamale and Navrongo/Bolgatanga zones were commissioned respectively after going through three years of training, mentoring and capacity building. In Tamale zone, 35 volunteers were commissioned by the His Grace Philip Naameh, the Catholic Archbishop of Tamale Archdiocese.



Commissioned SELL Volunteer Facilitators in Navrongo-Bolgatanga Zone

35 volunteers were commissioned in Navrongo/Bolgatanga by the Catholic Youth Chaplain of the Navrongo/Bolgatanga diocese.

SELL RISING FROM RESILIENT ROOT TRAINING WITH CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICE:

The Sharing Education and Learning for Life (SELL) Programme Ghana with the support from the Catholic Relief Services (CRS, Ghana) carried out Rising from Resilient Roots (RRR) training workshops, a part of the Sahel Peace Initiative (SPI), to help young people find internal balance, strengthen their identity and learn new coping skills in order to increase hope and well-being in themselves and their communities.



Participants and SELL Resource Team in Yendi

The RRR training workshops within the period of July and September took place in five (5) communities/zones for 184 young adults in northern Ghana.



The beneficiary groups included Church and Community youth leaders, Muslim youth leaders and SELL volunteers in these zones. The Resource Team used the opportunity to identify young people with aptitude to be trained as volunteer facilitators in the Yendi Zone. In preparing for these workshops, the SELL Team had to strategically plan to ensure the safety of participants as the come for the workshops because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were encouraged to come with their nose masks (Those without nose mask were provided some) were taken through the safety precautions. Water and soap were available for them to wash their hands and the sitting arrangements were spaced appropriately.

The highlights of the evaluation and feedback from the participants across the various communities were mainly on how helpful the various sessions on of RRR workshop module has been to them. Participants mentioned "changing the channel, From Roots to Tree, Sharing on the tree of life, the grounding exercises and Vision of Peace" as very helpful and relevant. It is worth mentioning that the discussions after the "Vision of Peace" session led to talks of a possible Peace campaign project as we approach elections this year. For some of participants, it was an opportunity to meet other young people to understanding how they have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, to share how they were coping and to acquire of new coping skills. To others it was an addition to their tool box of coping and balancing skills.

For us on the SELL Resource Team, the RRR training workshops with young people in communities was an opportunity to reconnect with them. It provided support for participants by giving them opportunity to talk about how the pandemic has affect them, listen to the stories of others and together support and encourage one another. Through the workshop skills to help them find some inner balance were shared with participants. Together with the beneficiary groups SELL Resource Team is grateful to Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Ghana for trusting us to be implementers of this Rising from Resilient Roots (RRR) module which is in line with what we do. We hope that the joint efforts will go a long way to support vulnerable young people and empower them to actively participate in the development of their communities.

SELL ADVOCATES FOR PEACE IN A PEACE CAMPAIGN:

THE LAUNCH OF THE PEACE CAMPAIGN

On 21st of September, 2020, SELL Programme Ghana joined like-minded groups and organisations to commemorate the International Day of Peace (which doubles as Kwame Nkrumah's Memorial Day (Birthday) – 1st President of Ghana and one of Ghana's Independence Heroes) and launched a Campaign towards Ghana's 2020 General Election. The Campaign was dubbed "SELL/CRS Peace Campaign 2020" an initiative of SELL Ghana with support from Catholic Relief Service Ghana



Resource Team and some local youth at Peace Campaign launch

SELL volunteers together with other local youth groups who showed interest in the initiative joined the SELL Resource Team to go out on the streets with placards sending out the message on our role in sustaining a Peaceful Ghana during our election period. While the Street awareness campaign was ongoing, some volunteers (youth) went round to meet some key stakeholders to call on them to commit to promoting peace in their communities. Stakeholders gave their peace messages to the Youth (messages were captured, produced into jingles and has been airing on local radio stations) and then as a way of showing their commitment, signed onto the SELL Peace Signage Banner. The stakeholders included; the Over-Lord of Tamale, The Chief Imam, the secretary to the National Peace Council of the Northern Region, the Regional Police Commander, National Youth Authority-Northern Region and other Political and non- Political Youth Groups.

Following the launch of the Peace Campaign several activities were undertaken by the SELL Resource Team, our volunteers Partners and like-minded groups as below:

Stakeholders Engagement Meeting and Discussion Forums:

In Yendi, the Peace campaign activities were done in close collaboration with the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Yendi, Bishop Vincent Sowah Boi-Nai, who over the years has been instrumental in leading Peace Initiatives in Yendi during the Chieftaincy disputes in the area.



Bishop Vincent S. B. N. (SVD), Key Stakeholders, SELL Team and CRS Team during and after Stakeholders Engagement in Yendi

He chaired the forums organized in Yendi, inviting the stakeholders to identify what may cause possible election violence in Yendi and to look at practical steps they can undertake to prevent such from happening. In subsequent engagements, the Director of the Electoral Commission in Yendi and the Director of the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) were invited to engage the youth and stakeholders in some concerns highlighted in the previous meeting. Stakeholders present at the meeting included Catholic Bishop of Yendi (the chairperson), Yendi Chief Imam, a Representative of the Ya – Na (Traditional Authority), Justice and Peace Commission, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Political party representatives, Youth Groups, Civil Society Organisations, Yendi Peace Center and other interest groups.



Sections of stakeholders at the engagement in Yendi

In Bunkpurugu-Nakpanduri Constituency, we worked closely with the Parish Priest of Our Lady of Hope Parish, Fr. Amani (MAFr) and SELL Volunteers in both Bunkpurugu and Nakpanduri communities. Stakeholders Engagement meeting was held with the SELL Resource Team facilitating the discussions.