



**WOMEN'S VOICE  
AND LEADERSHIP  
IN GHANA**

**WOMEN KNOW WHAT'S BEST  
FOR WOMEN IN GHANA**



Sakina, 21, and her apprentices cutting soap into bars

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# WOMEN'S VOICE AND LEADERSHIP



**83 GRANTS**  
have been made to  
**72 WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS**  
so far, because of your generosity, including:

**21**  
gender-transformative  
program grants

**14**  
COVID-19  
response grants

**2**  
organizational  
development grants

**46**  
flexible  
project grants

# WOMEN ASSERT THEIR INFLUENCE

We'd like to take a moment to share how the Women's Voice and Leadership in Ghana project is working with women's rights organizations to expand their capacities.

**THANKS TO YOU**, more women can access justice, Ghana's Queen Mothers are changing norms and our local partners are building a national platform for women to have their say. These are just a few of the stories that highlight how your support for the Women's Voice and Leadership program is making a difference in Ghana.

Local organizations are already doing great work for women's rights, but they need more resources and training to achieve their goals. We're bringing our expertise and funds to better equip them so they can make the meaningful change that has become their mission.

**During the first three years of this five-year project, we focused on these four key goals for local women's rights organizations:**

- Build local leadership to improve management, increase technical capacity and strengthen the sustainability of organizations
- Enhance the delivery of services and programming by mentoring, coaching and training staff members
- Increase membership bases and strengthen collaboration between more than 300 women's rights organizations connected via national networks
- Root all projects in African feminist principles and create safe spaces where young feminists can further build their advocacy skills



**THANK YOU** for believing in the power of women to change their lives and achieve their ambitions!



Hafsaf (left), 21, weaves cloth that will be sold at the local market



# THE SCENE

The Republic of Ghana is a leading nation in West Africa. Located just north of the equator, the country has beautiful beaches that stretch along the Gulf of Guinea before meeting grasslands and rich forests.

**IN 1957**, the country was the first British colony in Africa to become independent. Ghana's 32 million people have vibrant and diverse cultures and a rich history, yet the country's record of addressing inequality is not as advanced. In 2007, the government

passed the Domestic Violence Act to give women legal recourse against physical, sexual, economic or psychological violence from their partners. Much work remains, however, for Ghanaian women's rights to be recognized and upheld.



## WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE CHARTER OF AFRICAN FEMINIST PRINCIPLES?

**To end patriarchal oppression.**

In November 2006, 100 activists met at the African Feminist Forum in Accra, Ghana. Their mission was to create a Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists. “Our feminist identity is not qualified with ‘Ifs,’ ‘Buts’ or ‘Howevers’. We are feminists. Full stop,” they write in the charter. The principles chart the changes they’d like to see in their communities and outline who is responsible for making them happen.

This tool kit is provided to women’s organizations to help guide their services. “Our focus is fighting against patriarchy as a system rather than fighting individual men or women,” the charter continues.

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**“Therefore, as feminists, we define our work as investing individual and institutional energies in the struggle against all forms of patriarchal oppression and exploitation.”**

- Ghana ranks 23rd out of 35 nations in Sub-Saharan Africa on the Gender Development Index.
- One in three Ghanaian women has experienced at least one form of domestic violence.
- Women and girls are likely to experience up to 3.7 times more domestic violence in crisis situations such as a health pandemic. Over 4,000 cases of domestic violence were logged and reported to Ghana’s Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit between March and May 2020.
- More than 38% of women in Ghana reported having experienced at least one act of sexual violence.

# THE RUNDOWN

2019  
–  
2022

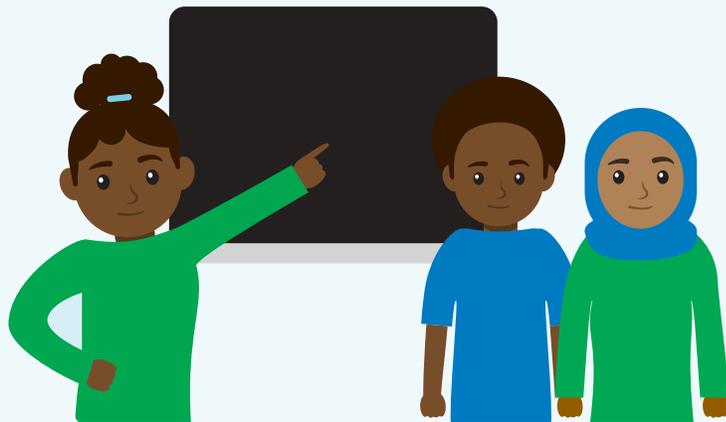
Your support is helping strengthen women's rights organizations so they can have a cascade effect on women's rights in Ghana.

Here are some outstanding achievements that you have made possible so far in the first three years of the Women's Voice and Leadership in Ghana project.

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## 25 STAFF MEMBERS OF THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

(so far) have received training on communications and media engagement, one of six capacity building areas to improve their services.



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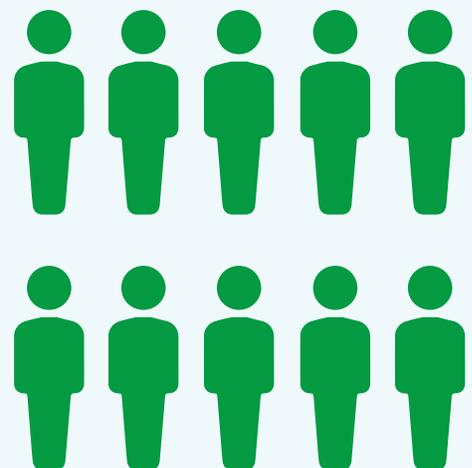
## 72 WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS & NETWORKS

received critical funding to build their organizational capacity, improve their services and work with more women's rights partners.

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## 30% INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP

of the Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT), one of the project's key partners working to strengthen women's voices at local, regional, national and global levels.



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## 21 WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

improved the quality of their programming delivered in support of women and children.



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## 9,665 PEOPLE

participated in women's rights organizations programming.



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## 18 SCHOOLS ARE WORKING WITH 4 PROJECT PARTNERS

and the Ghana Education Service to teach their students about women's and girls' rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights and the prevention of gender-based violence.



# STRENGTHENING GROUPS THAT SUPPORT WOMEN

Group expands efforts to help women access justice.



**WHEN BETTY AYAGIBA WORKED AS A NURSE**, she saw that many of those who could not afford to pay for their medical bills were women who had been widowed and children who had lost their parents. She, too, had been widowed – so she wanted to offer emotional and financial support to other affected people. In 1993, she founded Widows and Orphans Movement (WOM) in Bolgatanga, in the Upper East Region of Ghana.

“We educate women to know their human rights so they can claim them and teach them to their children,” Ayagiba explains. What started out as a small group of widows quickly became a national NGO. With added support, the organization continues to grow its

advocacy efforts and expand its mission. In many communities in Ghana (as well as many other parts of the world, including Canada), patriarchal norms often mean that sexual assault and domestic violence go unreported. WOM is working to change this.

**By introducing microcredit programs, educational opportunities and human rights advocacy, WOM has improved the lives of more than 8,000 women who have been widowed and children who have lost their parents.**

WOM is working with Ghana’s Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) to raise

community awareness about the fact that all violence – especially violence against women – is a crime.

“We are teaching community leaders that [sexual assault], forced marriage and physical assault are second-degree felonies and should not be settled at home or at the community level,” says Beatrice Azekarua, an officer with the Women’s Voice and Leadership project, who works with WOM.

With the support of Women’s Voice and Leadership, WOM is making justice for women more equitable in Ghana. “We are working to create environments for survivors of gender-based violence to seek redress,” says Bayimahime.

# PALACE PRESENCE

Queen Mothers amplify  
their community influence.



A village in Ghana  
(source: *Unsplash*)

**ONE OF THE CORE FEMINIST PRINCIPLES** of Women's Voice and Leadership in Ghana is that Ghana's women know what's best for Ghana's women. That's why Plan International and our partners are reaching out to Ghana's Queen Mothers.

## → **There are more than 10,000 Queen Mothers in Ghana**

Royal families are made up of the first settlers of an area, and Queen Mothers are selected from the royal family of each town or village. These important female leaders work alongside chiefs to care for communities.

While their influence was weakened during colonial times, Queen Mothers are reclaiming their place, modernizing their roles and empowering themselves

and other women. "With no Queen Mothers, women's voices at the palace were totally absent," says one Queen Mother from Ahomakurombua. "Women were relegated to the background. "How, then, would the interests of women be represented and their development be advocated for? Who would do it, and where?"

Plan International and our partners supported education programs for male chiefs and elders in the region to learn about the importance of women's representation at all levels of community decision-making.

**As a result, the chiefs mandated that all clans in the area should restore Queen Mothers as part of their traditional councils.**



# THANK YOU!

**We are incredibly grateful  
for your generosity.**

You are enabling women to support one another and claim their rights. On behalf of the thousands of women in Ghana whom your support has helped, **thank you!**

A shot of Accra, Ghana's capital city (source: Unsplash)



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