

TuWezeshe Global
My Rights My Freedom



FORWARD

actionaid



TuWezeshe
Akina Dada

Young Women's Feminist Leadership Programme

2025 Northern Ghana Training

Acknowledgement

"When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion" This Ethiopian proverb sums up the spirit of collaboration and partnership that has resulted in the implementation of the TuWezeshe Ghana Young Women's Leadership Training. A huge thank you to John Nkaw, Country Director, ActionAid Ghana, Naana Otoo- Oyortey, Executive Director, FORWARD and Adwoa Kwateng- Kluvitse, Co- Founder, TuWezeshe Global for their active involvement at every stage of this initiative.

We are extremely grateful to the following funders who made this work possible. Firstly to ActionAid Ghana, Comic Relief UK, Schwab Charitable Foundation and Action for Women's Health.

A huge thank you to the following who were behind the delivery and facilitation of the leadership training in Tamale.

They include Naana Otoo-Oyortey from FORWARD, Adwoa Kwateng Kluvitse from TuWezeshe Global and from ActionAid Ghana, Esther Boateng, Beatrice Biiye, Alia Mumuni and Jacqueline Pardikie Parditey.

Finally, to the amazing Mentors who gave their time, insights and technical support to the TuWezeshe Fellows in delivery of their social action projects- you made the activism a reality for the Fellows.

Mentors names: Mariam Bonah, Bomison Lester, Ihlass Issah, Vicentia Aboagye, Salatu Abubakar, Ikilimah Abubakari, Bushira Alhassan and Mariama Mahama.

To the 21 TuWezeshe Fellows, congratulations, your participation, sisterhood and successful delivery of your social action projects has made this publication a reality.

“ Violence Against Women and Girls must End Today ”

A Poem by a TuWezeshe Fellow

**So let us rise, let us stand, let us fight
For a world where women can shine with
all their might**

**Let us break the silence, let us
shatter the glass
Let us create a world where women
can live at last**

**Free from violence, free from fear
Free to be themselves without a single tear
Free to live their lives with dignity and pride
Free to be the women they were meant to be.**

Razika Yakubu (TuWezeshe Fellow 2025)



The Partners

FORWARD is an African women-led organisation set up in 1985. FORWARD works to end violence against women and girls in the UK and Africa. From female genital mutilation and child marriage to domestic and sexual violence, they tackle abuse and discrimination – enabling African women and girls to achieve the dignity and equality they deserve.

FORWARD's vision is for African women & girls everywhere to live in dignity, be healthy and thrive free of violence

FORWARD's mission is to transform responses to violence against African women and girls through delivery of specialist support services, research evidence and partnerships to develop young women leaders, community champions and community interventions.

ActionAid Ghana Founded in 1990 as ActionAid International Ghana and achieving Affiliate status in 2007, ActionAid Ghana stands as a leading force for social change, actively working in 11 of Ghana's 16 regions: Upper East, Upper West, Northern, Savannah, North-East, Bono, Bono East, Ahafo, Volta, Oti, and Greater Accra regions. With a mission to create a just and sustainable world, ActionAid Ghana empowers communities to live with dignity, free from poverty and oppression, by championing the voices of the marginalised, driving collective action towards a just, equitable and sustainable future.

Tuwezeshe Global is a newly registered international NGO based in Ghana but with the long-term intention of working all over Africa. TG was registered in 2023 and the 2025 TuWezeshe Akina Dada Leadership Training in Tamale was its inaugural programme. TG has as its mission specifically building the leadership skills of young African women.

The Partnership

Over 3 years, FORWARD, TuWezeshe Global and ActionAid Ghana have agreed to work together to build the leadership capacity of 60 young women. Each partner recognises the expertise of the other and works within a feminist paradigm to value the unique contributions of each partner.

The TuWezeshe Akina Dada Leadership Programme is the first joint partnership between these 3 partners. A partnership built on the feminist principles of shared values to promote bodily autonomy and freedom from violence, achieving gender equality by transforming power dynamics, fostering intersectionality that recognises interconnected identities and differences, and ensuring representation, dignity and safety for all.

These values are actualised through an accountable collaboration, sharing power especially the responsible and transparent use of power. The partners committed to work in a way that modelled these principles – partners recognising the varied skills and added value that each partner brought to the table. This made the partnership especially effective and impactful. The reflection meetings indicated that that was the most sustainable and challenge free way to work as well as being the most enjoyable. We look forward to many more years of positive partnership working to build a movement of young women change makers.

Why We Believe in Young Women's Leadership

As partners implementing the leadership programme we recognise that it is impossible to create a more equitable world unless and until all women and girls everywhere are empowered and able to take their rightful place in all aspects of life in their societies.

We also recognise that patriarchy underpins all societal norms, it is important to ensure that building and supporting young women in their leadership journeys become the foundation for transforming societies and lives of women and girls in our communities.

Our Young Women's Feminist Leadership Programme

In January 2025, a cohort of 21 young women took part in the first TuWezeshe Akina Dada Young Women's training in Tamale, Ghana. TuWezeshe Akina Dada is Swahili term for 'empowering our sisters'.

This is a feminist leadership training programme that aims to inspire a generation of young African women to engage in both civil and political spaces and take collective action to tackle violence against women and girls and gender inequality.

TuWezeshe Akina Dada is a one-year fellowship programme, where young women Fellows develop core leadership skills, are mentored by female leaders and receive mini grants to initiate their own Social Action Projects.

TuWezeshe Fellows learn how to shape and influence local policy agenda on VAWG, build solidarity with other young women activists and amplify their concerns and demands through activism and change makers at local and national platforms.

How TuWezeshe Works

#1

Leadership training

Young women take part in a residential feminist leadership training. The training teaches practical feminist leadership skills, improves knowledge of women's rights, gender based violence and builds confidence and resilience to become effective leaders and change makers.

#2

TuWezeshe sisterhood

Fellows become members of country-specific fellowship networks. The networks provide them with opportunities to develop their ideas, to receive inspiration from one another, and to work collaboratively to combat challenges they face and strengthen solidarity.

#3

Self Care

Taking care of you as a leader is central to being able to show up and lead effectively. The training promotes leaders to take care of themselves, building their resilience and wellbeing

#4

Social action projects

Once Fellows complete the feminist leadership training, they are provided with a sub-grant, tasking them to initiate their own Social Action Project and apply the skills and new knowledge that they have acquired.

#5

Mentorship

Each Fellow is paired with a mentor to guide her through her fellowship journey. Supported by experienced female leaders, Fellows thus have access to role models who provide them with coaching, and networking opportunities that shape their personal development.



TuWezeshe Mentors

One of the key pillars of the TuWezeshe journey is feminist mentorship. This means Mentors who are committed to a mentoring relationship that is linked to feminist principles. These ideals distinguish feminist mentoring from traditional mentoring, creating a more sustained impact based on empowerment, growth and partnership. A key element is the recognition that both Mentors and Mentees have been and are being affected by societies' unequal patriarchal norms. This basic understanding ensures that Mentors and Mentees approach the relationship with a sense of equality – knowing that systems /oppressions exist that they are both battling; wanting to

challenge and change. The vision that they both have is that they have to do something - to change something. One Mentor expressed feeling 'proud when my Fellow came to the office for the first time'. Another stated that 'the experience helped me learn. I learned to research ahead of time, so I could support my Fellows'. 'I learned to empathise and appreciate my Fellows and work with them to achieve the SAP'. Another Mentor appreciated the experience stating that what made the experience different was 'the mentoring guide shared before, which made for increased understanding on how to engage with Fellows meaningfully'.

The Amazing Mentors



Social Action Project

BACKGROUND

3 TuWezeshe Fellows came together to execute a Social Action Project (SAP) that addressed barriers to accessing accurate information and support regarding health and personal development in their communities.

OBJECTIVES

This SAP was designed to:

1. Empower 15 adolescent girls with accurate knowledge, life skills and to

Empowering adolescents for a healthier future

Fellows - Asantewah Yeboah; Ibitsan Saulisau; Sandra Tei. **Mentor:** Mad. Miriam Bonah

2. Dismantle the community stigma and silence and normalise conversations on adolescent girls' health through youth platforms (including radio discussions)
3. Nurture 6 adolescent girls as 'youth champions' to extend the impact of the SAP beyond the project duration.

increase their confidence to make informed and better decisions.

EXECUTION

Fellows used a 2-phase strategy, starting with an interactive learning and peer-led workshop specifically aimed at equipping young adolescents with the knowledge as well as the confidence to apply that knowledge in their daily lives.

The workshop dealt with 3 linked issues of menstrual and personal hygiene, sexual health

and decision making and finally building health relationships.

Two radio discussions were facilitated by 6 youth champions from the workshop to advance and disseminate their acquired knowledge/awareness on girls health and rights to a wider audience.



KEY OUTCOMES

- Equipped 15 participants with the knowledge and confidence to challenge myths and misinformation on menstrual health, sexual health and healthy relationships. The public advocacy on the radio was extremely impactful, reaching 500 community members who called in to share their views, making the two programmes very interactive and enlightening.

The radio programmes positioned the youth champions as articulate, informed and self-assured young advocates who had a positive role to play in their community.

Anti-Violence Diplomats

Fellows – Adamu Fuseini; Asana Alhassan; Hajara Osman; Salma Fuseini

Mentor: Mad. Ihlass Issah

BACKGROUND

Fellows had identified multiple issues relating to gender-based violence, the first of which was that many victims of violence did not even recognise their experience as violence but as a cultural practice. This is also compounded by the lack of knowledge of where to go to seek support and services.

OBJECTIVES

This SAP was designed to:

1. Raise awareness of VAWG
2. Create safe spaces for victims of violence and ensure referral pathways were publicised.
3. Meet with key stakeholders to agree collective actions to end VAWG.

IMPLEMENTATION

30 girls, aged 10-15 years and their parents were selected to take part in the SAP. Fellows planned to reach 300 community members through a community durbar to build consensus to combat VAWG. Fellows reached over 4000 community members through 4 radio programmes and 2000 through their social media outreach.

After an initial Focus Group Discussion the

Fellows met the adolescents weekly for 5 weeks to discuss issues of VAW, their personal experiences, views of violence and referral pathways.

In the 2 community sensitisation activities and 4 radio engagements, the Fellows engaged community members on a wide range of forms of violence that affect women & girls, means to prevent and report this violence, and to support victims when in the aftermath of it.



OUTCOMES

- The adopting of a 'girls' safe space' as a longer-term structure to maintain the gains made by the SAP into the future. The Fellows and the Club Mentor have committed to support the club and adolescents beyond the project duration.
- The durbar proved popular, with the first attracting 100 people (mostly women) and the second attracting more attendees, including men, through word-of-mouth.
- Forms of violence that had not been considered 'violence' by communities were exposed as such.

Promoting Positive Attitudes Towards Girl Child Education

Fellows – Amina Sayibu; Fusheina Marshall **Mentor:** Mad. Bomison Memuna Lester

BACKGROUND

The Fellows of this SAP noted poor school attendance by some girls in their community.

Conversations with teachers and parents indicated that child marriage, domestic responsibilities and lack of educated female role models were contributing factors to truancy.

OBJECTIVES

This SAP was designed to address the challenges that hinder girls from accessing and completing their education in Cheshegu community (Kumbungu District).

EXECUTION

17 girls, aged 12-18 years who were at risk of dropping out of school and their parents were selected to take part in the SAP.

The Fellows first held a Focus Group Discussion with the 17 girls to foster rapport-building amongst the girls and between the girls and the Fellows. This was followed by a session with the girls to delve

into the reasons for their inability or disinterest in continuing with education. Their feedback indicated extenuating circumstances including poverty and domestic labour.

A midwife was invited to share her knowledge and practical tips on managing menstrual hygiene as well as her personal education journey to encourage the girls to persist with their education.



OUTCOMES

- The girls gained role models in the community midwife and the Fellows, who volunteered to visit the girls' parents to reinforce the importance of girls' uninterrupted access to education
- The girls were provided with a space to express their views
- The positive aspects of girls acquiring a good education

Fellows – Ayisha Abdul-Somed **Mentor:** Mad. Vincentia Aboagye

BACKGROUND

This SAP focused on sexual harassment in higher education – specifically in the University of Development Studies, Tamale. The Fellow noted that research and anecdotal reports indicate a significant underreporting of harassment, a lack of awareness of policies/protections and a fear of retaliation in victims.

OBJECTIVES

This SAP was designed to empower students with knowledge of their rights, the University's existing policy and its support systems, thus breaking the cycle of silence and exploitation.

EXECUTION

The SAP targeted 50 first year students who are more vulnerable and don't know institutional support systems.

The SAP's multi-pronged approach used awareness campaigns, training sessions and finally, distributed 400 copies of UDS Anti-Sexual harassment policy. The awareness campaign included posters and flyers, supported by

social media to reinforce the messages and sustain the engagement and issues. She ran 2 in-person training sessions using presentations, case discussions and questions to clarify issues, the University's policy and its reporting mechanisms.

The SAP provided simplified printed and digital copies of the University policy itself.

OUTCOMES

- Post-training feedback indicated an increase in knowledge about harassment the concerns about confidentiality high, indicating a need for continued sensitisation and assurance of anonymity protections to combat distrust.
- The openness of the male students to act as peer educators was encouraging and was extremely positive suggesting that there are opportunities for inclusive and gender-transformative approaches to change social norms.
- Students requested the Fellow organise more sessions.



Girls Speak Up

Fellows – Ridwanatu Abdul-Rauf

Mentor: Mad. Salatu Abubakar

BACKGROUND

The TuWezeshe Fellow's experience was that in the target community, young people (especially girls) often suffered in silence due to cultural norms where young people have no voice.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this SAP was to raise awareness of VAWG in young girls aged 10 -15 years, so that they are able to speak up, seek support and take action when they encounter any form of violence

EXECUTION

The SAP was implemented in 2 schools where the Fellow had informal reports of emotional and verbal abuse meted out to girls. The school authorities were open and willing to participate in the SAP. As was the local Assembly woman who played an active role to facilitate the SAP implementation

24 young girls, 10-15 years were targeted together with 10 teachers and 2 community leaders, using posters, short videos, story-telling, role play and open dialogue, the girls were engaged on the issue of VAWG. In two sessions, the girls were exposed to the different forms of violence as well as the state support systems and services. Included in the sessions were elements of building the self-confidence of the targeted girls.



KEY OUTCOMES

- With the support of 4 peer educators, the Fellow and her team reported girls became very confident even after just one session. Their questions and contributions showed a deep understanding of the issues and an eagerness to stand up for themselves.
- As a result of the changes seen in the girls, the teachers in the schools have requested that the Fellow and her peer educators return and hold sessions on the issue of 'consent'.

Fellows – Sahada Hamidu; Samaha Abass. **Mentor:** Mad. Ikilimah Abubakari

BACKGROUND

The Fellows aimed to empower a group of secondary school students through confidence building, leadership development and the promotion of critical thinking skills.

OBJECTIVES

The goal of the SAP was to increase young women's self-awareness and provide them with the skills to navigate challenges, make informed choices and embrace their potential as leaders.

EXECUTION

Over the course of the 8-week programme, the Fellows worked with 30 young female students attending Pong Tamale Senior High School, aged 17-21 years.

Through group discussions, facilitation, journaling, roleplaying, debates and leadership tasks, the students engaged with key topics

such as the power of education, discovering identity, building self-confidence, communication and assertiveness.

They also explored leadership and teamwork, as well as developing action plans beyond the SAP.

KEY OUTCOMES



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- The 30 young women reported that the SAP did increase their self-confidence, improve their communication skills and their self-awareness.
- They also reported developing leadership and team working abilities and they committed to continuing their personal empowerment journeys.
- The Fellows also shared their learnings the first of which was the fact that peer sharing fostered a sense of solidarity and mutual support among the young women.

Social Action Project

Apprentices Rights at Work 'Tumani Zalkpana kpangsiбу'

Fellows – Ayisha Mohammed and Balkisu Yakubu. **Mentor:** Mad. Mariama Mahama

BACKGROUND

The fellows developed their SAP to explore the life violence faced by local apprentices and to address exploitation and abuse of apprentices working with seamstresses. These young women often face unsafe working conditions, sexual harassment, and are often assigned tasks unrelated to their apprenticeship work.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the SAP was to provide education and empowerment sessions to apprentices and engage local leaders and experts on the problem

EXECUTION

Fellows worked with 20 female apprentices 16-25 years; 10 female master artisans 18-30 years and local zonal leaders.

They run six facilitated sessions to explore apprentices' rights, safe working conditions (including handling machines, keeping work environment clean and safe, and sharing the existing national policy on apprentices rights;

They worked with local leaders, SWIDA Ghana, Gender Dept, the Dabokpa Technical Institute and GTVET. They discussed gender issues including a new App that SWIDA Ghana had launched to report any violence against women and girls; and finally, how apprentices can speak out against abuse.



KEY OUTCOMES

- The apprentices reported and demonstrated increased confidence in understanding and asserting their rights.
- An unexpected finding of this SAP was that the majority of the harassment experienced by apprentices comes not from the

master artisans as had been expected but from senior apprentices they worked with.

- This new information indicates a new and wider focus to include the senior apprentices in changing their knowledge and practice.
- This SAP provided a safe space for participants to discuss difficult issues without the risk of being penalised. It brought together key players in the sector with a shared objective.

Social Action Project

Empowering Girls Through Education

Fellows – Hafsat Zakria; Abibata Salifu; Ajara Issah. **Mentor:** Mad. Bomison Memuna Lester

BACKGROUND

This SAP emerged from the context of challenges to girls' education as a result of poverty, child marriage, child motherhood, lack of self-belief, gender-based violence and lack of menstrual hygiene support.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this SAP was to use education as a means of empowerment for girls in the Naton Zuo and Gbabshee communities in the Tamale Metro district.

EXECUTION

Creating a 'community adolescent safe space' for the 35 young women recruited for this SAP where sensitive topics could be discussed, the Fellows delivered 3 workshops with a focus on education, reproductive health and public speaking and advocacy capacity building.

The Fellows also engaged 65 parents and caregivers of the girls through a community stakeholder engagement where the SAP was introduced and the need for girls' education was reinforced.

Also discussed with community members was the issue of menstrual health and hygiene and why this was an issue of concern.



OUTCOMES

- The girls acquired public speaking and advocacy building capacity
- The girls were able to voice their views on education and the challenges to staying in school in a supportive forum
- Beyond the success of the workshops and community stakeholder meetings, 15 teachers and head teachers committed to being friendly adults to the young women in school should they need support on the issues discussed or other issues.

BACKGROUND

The Fellows observed the various oppressions of women including the burden of the bulk of unpaid care work and the lack of educational opportunities for girls resulting in increased responsibilities with reduced resources.

OBJECTIVES

This SAP was designed to address the economic inequality women face as a result of unwaged housework and/or limited educational opportunities by building the economic independence of women thus reducing their vulnerability to violence.

EXECUTION

The Fellows identified vulnerable rural women aged 18-35, in the Vittin area of Tamale Metro and provided them with practical skills training. In addition to this training the Fellows strategically included sensitisation on VAW linked to the economic empowerment.

The 15 women selected for the SAP started with a one-day session on VAW. The initial 15 women were joined by another 10 women (due to high demand) for the skills training, which included soap-making and cosmetic-making as well as financial literacy training.

OUTCOMES

- Within 2 months, 8 of the 15 women who undertook the violence training had already begun to share knowledge gained with other women's groups and community members. Some reported positive feedback from family members who had noticed their new leadership in promoting non-violent relationships.
- The women who went through the skills and finance training are producing products that have been so popular that they are now being supported to be certified by the Food and Drugs Authority and the Standards Board



BACKGROUND

At Kumbungu Senior High School sexual harassment is rife, but there is a lack of awareness, knowledge and confidence to report incidents. This status quo negatively affects students' academic performance, social interactions and overall wellbeing.

OBJECTIVES

This SAP was designed to address the economic inequality women face as a result of unwaged housework and/or limited educational opportunities by building the economic independence of women thus reducing their vulnerability to violence.

EXECUTION

The SAP implemented a multi-pronged strategy over several months that combined awareness campaigns, interactive training sessions, policy distribution and student engagement to ensure comprehensive coverage and maximum impact. Campaign materials also included simplified versions of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy and reporting procedures.

The Fellow collaborated closely with school authorities to facilitate logistics, maintain order and ensure adherence to school policies.

Administrative staff and teachers provided support during sessions, addressing student concerns and reinforcing reporting mechanisms.

OUTCOMES

- Post-training feedback showed improved awareness on sexual harassment, and channels for reporting and support systems available to students.
- 100 students attended the sessions and 11 joined a follow up online discussion
- Some male students participated as peer educators, helping to normalise gender-inclusive conversations and challenge harmful norms.
- Students requested more frequent sessions and ongoing discussions about power dynamics, consent and gender equality.







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