

# GHANA PEARL



# MODEL GENDERED FAMILY/ HOUSEHOLD (MGF/H) - GHANA

**“The Model Gendered Family/Household empowers women and girls by breaking gender stereotypes at the household level”**

The Model Gendered Family/Household (MGF/H) is a strategy carried out at the community level. It is applied in all the communities where we, as Power to You(th). The MGF/H is about engaging households of a heterogeneous composition, most often in the form of one man, one woman, one boy, and one girl. The goal of the strategy is to enhance dialogue in the family and strengthen the children's voices. Since the household is a minor decision-making place, it is crucial to engage in the distribution of household tasks. It is often primarily women doing household chores, so the MGF/H is trying to divide those tasks using a gender-transformative approach.

Moreover, Southern leadership is an essential objective in the MGF/H program; one of the strategies the program coordinators are looking at is inclusive decision-making. Some mentors educate the people involved in the MGF/H on crucial issues that Power to You(th) stands for. Eventually, inclusive decision-making creates opportunities for children and adolescents in the household to get space to speak up and have a voice.

For families/households to get involved in the program, there are specific criteria for how the family has to live and behave throughout the program since you have to live an exemplary life. Eventually, participants of MGF/H

become ambassadors and can speak to other community members about the project, getting them involved too. The greatness of this project is that the household members are volunteers and come up with their action plans, which makes the program community-based, -owned, and -led.

The MGF/H program works in forty communities. To pick out a specific community, it first discussed where the issues are and where the intervention is most necessary. Other partners are also involved; these often are specialists in information about community needs. In terms of information spreading, people are taught this too, since information on sexual and reproductive education often is not correct. Considering that this kind of information is crucial to the MGF/H program, this must be done correctly.

## **What are the advocacy results of the initiative?**

In the communities, unhealthy practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or unintended pregnancies, were handled mainly by the community but were now reported to the police. As a result, people have moved from cutting to another tradition. Also, issues of child marriage are now frowned upon within the community as something that should be condemned. Moreover, the media have expressed interest in

and are following up on the project. A consequence of this was a case of possible child marriage. It looked like child marriage practice had stopped for some time when the MGF/H program was ongoing, but when a case of child marriage did happen, the media picked it up, and therefore, it was handed to the authorities.

The MGF/H program is widely accepted in the communities; most households are progressing in positive transformation. Households have reached different levels; families are working together and supporting each other. Some boys also said they believed in what he was doing instead of caring what others thought—also supported by community leaders. These pieces of evidence influenced GBV policy in Ghana; ambassadors influence the discussions even at the regional level.

For the last four years in the upper east and north, we've reached 2000 households directly; the previous year, we reached 200 households. So 150 communities have been in the implementation process. There is a gap in tracking other households that have been influenced by the model households that voluntarily come around.

Eight hundred legal volunteers are supporting our program.

## **Why is this the way to go, and what is your vision?**



“ This concept is very crucial because, in our society, we have a system of patriarchy, where the community does not see the voice of an adolescent as significant; MGF/H helps the significance of the voice, issues such as teenage pregnancies, most of the cases go unreported because girls are afraid to talk about this. Give room to girls to speak, and let them make decisions freely. Break down the household gendered stereotypes.

Now the girls have space in the agenda. It is a flexible model; it can be done in many different areas, a model that can be used on every behaviour-changing program, not only on SGBV. We engage men and boys and promote positive masculinity.

The MGH concept empowers women and girls by breaking gender stereotypes at the household level. The MGH concept breaks with patriarchy and promotes the adoption of progressive norms.

**Nancy Yeri**

