



---

# EMPOWERING 50 TEENAGE MOTHERS

---

Community Entry and Selection of Beneficiaries



JULY 14, 2021  
LIFEAGAIN  
Wa - Inner West Region

# Introduction

## Statement of Need

Teenage pregnancy is a global problem that affects the growth and development of girls. According to the World Health Organization, 17 million teenage girls give birth every year globally with about 95% from low and middle-income countries. Also, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 20,000 teenage girls give birth every day in developing countries, translating to 7.3 million teenage births in a year.

In Northern Ghana, when a girl becomes pregnant, she is forced to go through a vicious cycle that puts her health, education, earning potential and her entire future in jeopardy. She is forced to drop out of school to marry the man responsible for her pregnancy to take away the “shame” she brought to her family for becoming pregnant. After giving birth, she does not get the chance to go back to school or do anything meaningful with her life; she rather stays at home, does house chores, has more babies and frequently gets abused by her partner. This eventually traps her in a lifetime of poverty, exclusion and powerlessness. The unfortunate thing is, this cycle does not end with that girl but can be extended to her daughters since research indicates that the daughters of teenage mothers are more likely to become teenage mothers themselves if nothing is done. Thus teenage pregnancy does not only affect a teenage girl but can affect an entire generation of girls.

## Organizational Overview

LifeAgain is an initiative that seeks to give hope, purpose and empowerment to vulnerable teenage mothers through career development. We do this by identifying teenage mothers from remote communities in Northern Ghana who are likely to be married off and provide them with mentoring, sex education and financial aid to either go back to school to attain higher education or to learn a vocation of their choice from which they can build careers and become financially independent women. The ultimate goal of LifeAgain is to ensure that teenage mothers are empowered to be able to empower their children, especially their daughters, and to stop generational teenage pregnancy, ensuring that teenage pregnancy ends with that girl.

LifeAgain has supported twenty (20) teenage mothers in the Upper West region so far. We have enrolled ten (10) teenage mothers back to school and ten (10) into skills training; seven (7) are enrolled onto a 3 years apprenticeship course in tailoring and three (3) are enrolled onto a 3 years apprenticeship course in weaving. We have also provided comprehensive sex education and contraceptive use to all twenty (20) beneficiaries to ensure that subsequent unwanted pregnancies are avoided. In addition, we have recruited 6 mentors (ladies who were once teenage mothers but have been able to rise above the situation and have successfully built their careers) to share their stories and experiences with our beneficiaries and to motivate and inspire them through their journey. They will guide our beneficiaries as they go through the program. We have also signed contracts with the guardians of our beneficiaries which forbids them from forcing our beneficiaries into marriage.

## Project Background

In 2020, the world experienced the deadly Corona Virus pandemic which resulted in closure of schools across the globe. In Ghana, schools were closed in early 2020 resulting in lots of school going girls staying home and being exposed to all sorts of dangers, one of which is teenage pregnancy. According to the Ghana Health Service, about 110,000 girls between the ages of 10-19 years became pregnant in 2020 during the lockdown of schools.

As a measure to reduce this damage caused to girls' education in the country, we at LifeAgain launched the #Empower50TeenMothers2021 campaign in March 2021 to empower at least 50 teenage mothers by supporting them to either go back to school or to learn a skill to aid them get their lives back. We launched this campaign without any funds to implement it. All we had was our passion and faith to create change in the lives of these girls. However through your donation and that of many others through Global Giving, we raised enough funds to implement our campaign.

## Project Update

The team after deliberation decided to reach out to six (6) communities in two districts in the Upper West region. These two districts are the Wa West district and Daffiama Bussie Issa (DBI) district. In the Wa West district, two communities were selected which are Dorimon and Dabo while four communities were selected in DBI which include Fian, Bussie, Wogu and Issa.

## Community Entry

Community entry is the first thing we do in our program. This is when we visit the selected communities and meet up with the leaders of the communities including the Assembly men/women, chiefs, Unit Committee members, etc to introduce our program, get to know more about the community from them and start building a relationship that will make our work easier when we start. We also visit the health center of each community to gather data on teenage pregnancy cases in the community to ascertain the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in the community. We started our community entry on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and ended on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Below are pictures from our Community Entries.



The LifeAgain team with the Assembly man of Fian



The LifeAgain team with the Assembly man of Issa



**The LifeAgain team with Dabo Unit Committee members**



**The LifeAgain team with the Assembly man of Bussie**



**The LifeAgain team with the Assembly man of Wogu**



**The LifeAgain Team with the Assembly man, Chief, elders and Women leaders of Dorimon**



## Selection of Beneficiaries

This is the next thing we do after our community entry. It usually takes place a week after the community entry. The period of one week is given to the community leaders to inform the community about LifeAgain and put together girls in the community who need our support. During the selection day, we meet up with the girls, introduce the program to them again and then start conducting one-on-one interviews with them to get to know them more and how we can help them. During the interview, we get to know their stories, what they want to do with their lives; if they want to go back to school or learn a skill. After the interviews are over, we select the girls who meet our selection criteria.

We started our selections on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and ended on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021. We reached out to a total of 80 pregnant girls and teenage mothers. Twenty (20) of them want to go back to school; 15 to Primary and Junior High School and 5 to Senior High School. These girls will be provided with scholarships to enable them return to school to continue with their studies. Ten (10) of them have already completed Senior High School and want to continue to the Tertiary level but we currently do not have the funds to support them at that level. However, we informed them that we will be looking for other opportunities for them. The remaining 50 girls cannot go back to school mostly because they do not have someone to support them with the taking care of their babies thus, they opted for skills training. These 50 girls will be taken through a one-week training on soap making including bar soap, liquid soap, shower gel and powdered soap. After the training, we will give them items to enable them start up their own businesses. We will also give them entrepreneurship training to help them run the businesses well. The soap making trainings are set to begin on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021. We will give you updates on the training and other activities by the end of August.



**selected girls in Dabo**



**Girls at Dabo waiting to be interviewed**



**One-on-one interview in Wogu**



**selected girls in Wogu**



**One-on-one interview in Fian**



**selected girls in Fian**





selected girls in Issa



selected girls in Dorimon



One-on-one interview in Bussie



selected girls in Bussie

## Story of one of the Selected Girls

### **Doris**



This is Doris from Bussie. She is 17 years old. She dropped out from school when she was in JHS 1 due to pregnancy. She could not get anyone to take care of her in school because her parents were both paralyzed in the house. She had to fend for herself after her uncle died. She got involved with a man who promised to support her in school but ended up taking advantage of the situation and got her pregnant in the process. She faced rejection from the man who impregnated her, her friends and society. She has been trying to fend for herself, her parents and the baby through petty trading but it is her dream to go back to school so she can become the nurse she has always dreamt of becoming in order to support her parents and child.

Dori's story is similar to most of the girls we have selected onto the program to support this year. Without your support and without our work, lots of girls like Doris will have their lives destroyed forever.

## Conclusion

The community entry and selection were a success. With the number of girls we have reached out to, we are excited to say we will exceed our campaign promise of supporting 50 teenage mothers. All this was possible because of your generous donation and we will be sharing their exciting progress in the months to come.