Adolescent Girls Rally
22 January, 2014
Betio Sports Complex

Background

In 2010, a UN Joint Statement on Accelerating Efforts to Advance the Rights of Adolescent Girls was signed by the executive heads of the United Nations agencies and programmes, committing the agencies to step up their support to developing countries for advancing key policies and programmes that empower the hardest to reach adolescent girls in the next five years. Since then, joint UN initiatives and programmes for the empowerment of adolescent girls have begun in Guatemala, Liberia, Malawi and Ethiopia, with promising beginnings in others. In 2011, an additional 18 countries have been identified as ‘champion countries’ in this initiative. The initiative is led by the UN Adolescent Girls Task Force (UN AGTF), co-chaired by UNFPA and UNICEF, in partnership with ILO, UNESCO, UNHCR, UN Women and WHO. The Task Force was established to reorient youth programmes to better reach marginalised adolescent girls.

In the Pacific Region, besides PNG, Kiribati has been selected as one of the UN Champion countries for the global Adolescent Girls Initiative. A ‘champion country’ is one that will leverage the power of the UN to support the realization of adolescent girls’ rights, especially the most marginalized, through comprehensive policies, programmes, initiatives and partnerships. A champion country will demonstrate a willingness to innovate, create, advocates for and sustain multi-sectoral models that will lead to long-lasting impact for adolescent girls. It aims to implement programmes that address the five strategic areas outlined in the UN Joint Statement on Adolescent Girls:

1) Educate adolescent girls, focusing on the transition from primary to post-primary education
2) Improve adolescent girls’ health, including access to age-appropriate, life skills-based sexuality education, HIV prevention and Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH).
3) Keep adolescent girls free from violence
4) Promote adolescent girls leaders
5) Count adolescent girls
Experience and evidence have proven that single sector responses are insufficient to address the numerous issues vulnerable girls face during adolescence. These five areas taken together will build up their resilience and capacities to safely navigate adolescence and achieve their full potential.

In Kiribati, UNICEF, WHO, UN Women and UNDP together with support from UNFPA, have formed strong partnership with the Government Ministries, NGOs and adolescents. The newly formed in 2014, Ministry of Women Youth and Social Affairs is the lead Government Ministry in this initiative.

Since January 2012, consultation between Government and UN agencies in Kiribati have been on-going and on the 18th April 2012 during the visit of the UNICEF Regional Director Daniel Toole in a meeting and media conference with Madam Meme Tong, the meeting firmed Madam Tong’s role as Patron in championing the AGI.

Purpose
The purpose of the Adolescent Girls Rally (AGI) is to identify interested adolescents (10-19 years) in AGI thematic areas to be future advocates and champions in AGI. The rally was an opportunity to engage adolescents on South Tarawa in developmental exercises of a fun, entertaining and learning event. To generate the feeling of becoming a responsible citizen, to make known to them surrounding issues of AGI and what roles they can learn and achieve for their development and contribution to a better nation. The organized event also contributes to the state’s activity for the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The Adolescent Initiative Rally is the first activity of its kind to be conducted.

AGI Rally Organizers
The AGI Taskforce held numerous meeting and preparatory work for the event to take place. The taskforce comprised of Government Ministries, an NGO, adolescent representatives and UN agencies which includes the Ministry of Women, Youth & Social Affairs, Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Kiribati Police Service, Kiribati Family Health Association (KFHA), 3 adolescent representatives and UN Joint Presence (UNICEF, UN Women, UNDP & UNFPA) and WHO.

Selection of Participants:
The AGI rally was opened to all adolescent girls and boys on South Tarawa. The registration process began in the last quarter of 2013 with school visits to most schools on South Tarawa (primary to secondary) as well as those who register with the Women and Youth Division. Over 500 adolescents registered. The event was opened to all adolescents and on the actual event day, 300 adolescent showed up for the AGI rally from Buota in North Tarawa, South Tarawa and Betio.
**AGI Rally Programme:**

The one day event began with registration, followed by the official opening including the welcoming dance and entertainment by the young people. The guest speaker for the rally was the First Lady, Madam Meme Tong who is also the patron of the Adolescent Girls Initiative. Other invited guests include the Australian High Commissioner, Chief of Field Office/UN Joint Presence, some Church Leaders, Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and Secretary of the host ministry, Ministry of Women, Youth and Social Affairs.

The adolescent representatives who were also members of the taskforce presented on the thematic areas as follows; AGI 2.0 Improve adolescent girls health presented by Tiiranga; AGI 3.0 Keep adolescent girls free from violence presented by Floreen Tikau; and AGI 4.0 Promote adolescent girl leaders was presented by Tavita Tebania. Additionally the trio also played a role each in doing the opening prayer, gave welcome remarks and the closing prayers at the end of the day.

The formal opening was followed by the ice breaker, the AGI danceathon, in-door games, refreshment and lunch before the adolescents dispersed to their respective thematic area of interest booth session.

After spending approximately an hour and a half at each booth session on improve girls health; free girls from violence; and promote girl leaders, the adolescents reassembled in the gym for the closing and organization of their return transport.
Young Adolescents anxiously waiting to perform. AGI Patron Madam Meme Tong.

Adolescents Organizers of AGI Rally L-R: Committee members Tiranga, Floreen & Tavita

Listening attentively

AGI Danceathon Instructors
**Thematic Area booth session**

**AGI 2.0 Improve Adolescent Girls Health**

Total number of youths and children (excluding under age of 10yrs) is 97. There were also some under 10 years from Betio who attended the session including adult audiences who care takers, securities and others. The following health topics were delivered by the staff of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and the Kiribati Family Health Association (KFHA).

1. Dental care for healthy smile was delivered by Dr. Tabuaka Nauan. Tooth brushes & Colgate were distributed to all participants (youth and children) and followed by a demonstration of “how to brush your teeth, the right & correct way”. Displayed of mouth ulcers/cancer posters as per caused by “kouben”.
2. Nutrition as healthy diet was shared by Ms. Ereti Timeon and demonstration of right amount of foods to eat. Children were also involved in Quiz questions: What types of foods can cause tooth decay? Variety of foods and types per right proportion and serve were displayed for children to learn and understand importance of eating the right type, right amount per one meal to avoid obese and overweight. BMI (Body Mass Index) was initiated to some participants due to limited time.
3. Alcohol, kouben & tobacco session was to eliminate the use of as per stated by Mr. Enoka Arabua. Mr. Arabua explained to youths that there a lot of youths have been using “kouben” and the Ministry of Health has reported that they have received cases of youths presented with mouth ulcers/sores that can also leads to mouth cancers.
4. WASH – hand hygiene where it was delivered by Ms. Agnes Bauro (RH coordinator) where hand wash was demonstrated and all children participated to do it right. The Simple hand wash: Water & Soap 20 seconds duration demonstration. Hand hygiene emphasis that it is the prevention to illness/diseases. The quiz question on “What is the proper right time to do hand wash? Children shouted out loudly “before eating a meal,
after going to toilet, after touching animals” but they also mentioned that most of time, they did not use soap!! Only water.

(5) Family planning & condom use – Ms Bereti Terawea from Health Promotion Unit fully explained to the youths that their body and mind is not ready for “sex or marriage or get pregnant” until they reach the age of 25yrs – 30 yrs. Effects of alcohol also can lead to unwanted pregnancy. Youths, especially young girls need to be more open to discuss and share own individual problems so that can they can enjoy their young youth life and be more sensitive to “NO SEX” ideas. Youths are encouraged to get help and assistance from health clinics and KFHA.

(6) STI/HIV – information was delivered by Red Cross drama: youths are vulnerable to STIs due to peer pressure, social attitudes and behaviour and change in lifestyle where nowadays young girls/youths are more sociable and high consumption of alcohol. They are encouraged to recognise/feel bad behaviours received from any person(s) (within family, others) and be able to report to police. Signs and symptoms of STIs were also shared and youths are encouraged to report themselves to the nearest clinic for medical help to get proper examination, testing and treatment.

(7) KFHA Drama – healthy family concept was delivered through drama where it demonstrates all different types of family planning methods available in Kiribati. Services can be provided by KFHA staff and at health clinics. Young girls were encourage to avoid teenage, unwanted pregnancy while youth boys to wear condoms to avoid STIs.

(8) WATER information was introduced by Ms. Nnakina Ioteba (WHO officer) on its very importance to our body. Session involved youths to calculate the amount of water needed or required by their body. Given formula to workout, all enjoyed their mathematics and shouted out different answers according to own body weight. They were also taught on basic human science where Water can also help to reduce pain in the body and all are encourage to practice or drink water first when they are in pain before taking “panadol tablets”

Health Participants
Promoting Clean Healthy Teeth

Team managed to provide all with give away token of appreciation for their participations a tooth brush, tooth paste, excerise books and ball-pens for all adolescences, and other adult audiences.

Managed to ask a few adolescents about the event and they expressed themselves; Is there another one like this? It is fun and enjoyable as we meet a lot of youth and get give away gifts and health information while some were regretting that they should have gone to Violence booth so that they can also get “bags & caps”!

AGI 3.0 Keep adolescent girls free from violence

The organizing team responsible for this thematic area comprised of the Ministry of Women, Youth and Social Affairs (through the Women’s Development Division, the Eliminating Sexual and Gender Based Violence Project and the SPC RRRT Project), Kiribati Police Service through the Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences Unit, UNICEF and UN Women. The total number of youths participated in the Free from Violence booth was over a hundred and fifty adolescents and the majority were boys.

How the message was shared to the participants was focus on a participatory method; both facilitators and participants have to involve or participate in the activities (this was fun). The first presentation was on the Kiribati Family Health and Support Study Findings. The findings were introduced and shared to the participants. In order to make this practical, the team hired a group of young boys called USO Boys to perform a modern dance and drama that focuses on Human Rights and Healthy Relationships. In addition, the team also invited the participants to define and give examples of different types of violence. It was evident that the participants understand the difference between Physical violence, Emotional violence and Sexual Violence.
Furthermore, the DVSO gave a presentation on their work and Domestic Violence and some offences that were common among the youths. They also defined further the different types of violence.

At the conclusion of the activities, two young people (girl and boy) performed a loved dance called Lam bada to signify a healthy relationship.

**AGI.40 Promote Girl Leaders**

Thirty three adolescents (24 girls and 9 boys) attended the leadership participatory approach session. The adolescent were grouped into three groups and were given a question each to discuss and report back on. The facilitator explained that the idea to promote leaders in adolescent and girls begins in their young age, in the family, school and community and that it is not only about being a leader when they become adults as in politicians. The group work questions includes; “What is a leader?”, “What are the characteristics of a leader”, How can we achieve a good leader? They also had a chance to do some ice-breaker and little games and lastly did the evaluation.

Some definitions as defined by the adolescents includes:

A leader is a chairperson, power man, busy minded, the boss, a person who guides people to reach the target/goal, cheerleader, not shy and is capable.

Characteristics of leader is:- friendly to everyone whether it is a kid or an adult, strong in whatever you’re leading and prove that you are always right, understand and respect others, know how to teach, knowledgeable, speak good lessons, can talk well and confidently to the people, can make people understand about what you really mean, person that can attract people to following his rule, people who can look after his/her people, good actors, trust their own self, know how to speak to the people, she/he should, she/he should know the right of how to speak to her/his people or himself/herself and let others understand too, teach his people from what wrong or right, teach his people how to love and respect each other, fight for his people, trust each other.

To a achieve a good leader:- Have understanding of the people, like your work of leadership, to make sure that all things have been done at the right time, respect their ideas to help lighten the
work, you should know your own responsibility, have self-confident in raising your voices, accept the ability of helping the people you are leading, getting to value your role as a leader.

**General Feedbacks/Evaluation from Adolescents**

The evaluation of the session posed four questions with the following feedbacks:-

1) What do you think of this event/AGI rally from morning till now?
2) What did you learn/achieve today?
3) What are the good things about the event?
4) What do you think will improve the lessons of AGI rally?

The general feedbacks was that it was a fun, enjoyable successful event. Provided opportunities to know other children and become their friends. Understand more about protecting girls. Food and games were good. More knowledge about AGI and leadership skills. Should repeat the programme. Adolescents were occupied. Had understanding on how to protect self from abuse. Learnt that the AGI was supported by Government. Learn the meaning of leadership and to accept the role of a leader when chosen to lead. Encourage children who are not attending school the importance of attending school. Males should respect females. Have own rights. Females/Women are important. Can be leaders at home and in community. What a leader should do. Explanations were good. Youth are important as they will be leaders in future. Leading me to the future, self-respect. Laughing, provide opportunity to communicate well with others, encouragement to do good moral values, teach role on how to be a leader. More activities to attract kids. Need more time for explanations on topics. Such events to be repeated.

We observed that most of the young people were shy but they all made an effect to speak and share their views. It was also clear from the adolescent feedback that a leader is an adult mature person in the eyes of many young people, a few understood that leadership role can be from a young age if given the opportunity and accepting such responsibilities in the family, school and community.

![Participatory Approach for leadership session](Image)

**Lessons Learnt:**

- The AGI rally was a fun learning event that the adolescent enjoyed, more so with the good lunch and give away gifts.
- Adolescents have their take home messages and understanding of the different thematic areas on health, violence and leadership.
Recommendations:
- Ministry to Education to be encouraged to participate in the AGI Taskforce and future organized events
- To repeat such activities at least every 2 years to monitor the progress of the adolescence
- More creative leadership interaction and training needed.
- To identify interested adolescents from the rally and others who are interested to champion the AGI.