



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**GHANA**

# CASE STUDY

## Sara Helps Youth Confront Issues

**A fictional role model helps girls face adolescence with courage and pride**



Sara club members from the Immaculate Conception Catholic Junior Secondary School in Kpando, in Ghana's Volta Region.

***“Now, I freely share ideas and problems with my parents and teachers who are my trusted friends,” says Dela, a member of a Sara club in Kpando.***

Telling Our Story  
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### Challenge

Esi is a teenager attending school in Ghana. She faces many challenges as she struggles to complete her basic education. She feels shy asking or answering questions in class, and she is threatened by sexual exploitation by peers and adult males which could result in pregnancy and/or HIV infection. Many Ghanaian girls like Esi face similar problems that affect their school performance and sometimes stop them from completing basic education.

### Initiative

To help girls stay focused on school and effectively handle sexuality issues, USAID supported an expansion of Sara, a UNICEF project. Sara is a fictional adolescent role model, popular among youth and educators, who promotes safe and healthy behavior. In 2002, USAID helped train educators to use Sara clubs

to address issues like sexual harassment, teen pregnancy, and HIV/AIDS. The clubs were created in schools, and girls and boys discussed together how Sara and her friends handled challenges and never gave up even when difficulties arose. The clubs turned Sara's stories into plays, told the stories in local languages, and used her adventures in puppet shows. Club kits, including books, posters, videos, and games were produced to stimulate discussion and promote safe behavior.

### Results

Sara clubs have raised awareness among youth, especially girls, about sexual relations and HIV/AIDS prevention. Girls freely share ideas and problems with their parents and female teachers, and report sexual harassment. In addition, girls are now confident in asking and answering questions in class. Parents and teachers say the Sara slogan “I know my goal” has renewed girls' interest in learning. Girls are now more focused on their education and some of them top boys in academic performance. Sara is helping girls stay in school and the approach is helping to keep teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS rates low.

Photo: USAID