



GLOBAL MEDIA
FOUNDATION



Ghana
Sunyani

Foundation Botnar initiative

ADOLESCENT PARLIAMENT GUIDE

Operational Guide For
Adolescent Parliament

RCA ||Resilient City for Adolescent || April 2023

ECORYS



Table of Contents



List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Form
RCA	Resilient City for Adolescents
HCA	Healthy Cities for Adolescents
GLOMEF	Global Media Foundation
UK	United Kingdom
NGO	NonGovernmental Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
UN	United Nations
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
ICT	Information and Communication T
GHS	Ghana Health Service
MoH	Ministry of Health
CWG	Citizens Watch Ghana
IWEN	Indigenous Women Empowerment
TA	Traditional Authority
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF ADOLESCENT PARLIAMENT

1.1 Introduction

The Adolescent Parliament (AP) is a participatory governance platform established to provide adolescents with a structured opportunity to engage in dialogue, leadership, and advocacy on issues affecting their lives. In Ghana, the model draws inspiration from the national Parliament and is designed to nurture civic responsibility, accountability, and leadership among young people.

The AP is the municipal-level forum for adolescents in Sunyani Municipality. It seeks to amplify adolescent voices, promote civic engagement, and influence policies and Programmes that directly impact their wellbeing.

The Adolescent Parliament was established under the Resilient City for Adolescents (RCA) Project, part of the broader Healthy Cities for Adolescents (HCA-II) Programme funded by Fondation Botnar through Ecorys UK. It represents a bold innovation in participatory governance, designed to bridge the gap between young people and city-level decision-making.

In many urban communities, adolescents have historically been excluded from governance processes despite making up a significant share of the population. Their perspectives on issues such as education, health, employment, recreation, and digital inclusion are often overlooked in planning and policy. The Adolescent Parliament directly responds to this gap by providing a structured, representative, and institutionalized platform for adolescents to articulate their priorities, influence policies, and engage with stakeholders.

The initiative also draws from Ghana's Local Governance Act (Act 936), which emphasizes citizen participation and accountability in municipal development planning. By mirroring aspects of parliamentary practice, the Adolescent Parliament introduces young people to democratic processes, civic responsibility, and evidence-based advocacy from an early age.

1.2 Purpose of the Manual

This manual serves as a comprehensive guide to:

- Provide clarity on the vision, mission, values, and objectives of SAP.
- Define structures, roles, and rules of operation.
- Offer guidance on membership, capacity building, and stakeholder engagement.
- Provide practical tools, templates, and annexes for daily operations.

1.3 Target Users

This manual is intended for:

- Adolescent parliamentarians (members).
- Adolescent Parliament leaders and committees.
- Facilitators, mentors, and patrons.
- Partners such as schools, CSOs, media, and the Sunyani Municipal Assembly.

1.4 Vision, Mission, and Core Values

1.4.1 Vision

- A vibrant platform where adolescents in Sunyani actively participate in decision-making processes that shape their future.

1.4.2 Mission

- To empower adolescents to engage meaningfully in civic, social, and developmental issues through democratic dialogue, advocacy, and leadership.

1.4.3 Core Values

- Participation – Every adolescent voice counts.
- Accountability – Transparent and responsible leadership.
- Respect – Embracing diversity and treating all fairly
- Gender Equality – Equal opportunities for girls and boys.
- Inclusivity – Ensuring participation of marginalized groups.
- Integrity – Upholding honesty and fairness.
- Volunteerism – Serving the community selflessly.
- Leadership – Building future leaders.

1.5 Objectives Of Adolescent Parliament

- Promote adolescent participation in governance and community decision-making.
- Build leadership, civic, and advocacy skills among adolescents.
- Provide a democratic platform for adolescents to raise issues affecting education, health, rights, and wellbeing.
- Influence local government policies and Programmes in favor of adolescents.
- Strengthen collaboration between adolescents and duty-bearers (government, traditional authorities, and development partners).

1.6 Concept of the Adolescent Parliament:

The Adolescent Parliament is one of the most transformative innovations introduced under the Resilient City for Adolescents (RCA) Project. Rooted in the belief that young people are not just passive beneficiaries of development but powerful agents of change, the Parliament is established to amplify adolescent voices in city governance and development planning in Sunyani.

The concept of the Parliament emerged during the project development phase of the RCA project in 2023 through a series of stakeholder engagements, community forums, and consultations held across the city, varying expectations and aspirations of adolescents and stakeholders within the city.

After careful consideration of the expectations and alignment of the Health City Program that focused on key areas of empowerment and inclusion in decision making, the Adolescent Parliament a strong option especially fitting best into the local government and decentralization Act that priorities citizens participation and inclusion in decision making at the local level.

This became a reality after key lessons drawn from the national parliament model, that consist of representative of constituencies and the people, highlighting representation of the people and leads in key legislative and policy decisions. After all the engagements within the 19 zoned communities, a consistent message from adolescents became clear: they desired a formal space to express their views, engage with leadership, and contribute to decisions affecting their lives, aligned with pillar 1 of the theory of change.

These forums, which reached hundreds of young people, revealed the deep gap between adolescent realities and policy-making processes. Issues ranging from inadequate recreational spaces and limited access to sexual and reproductive health services, to digital exclusion and lack of participation in community decisions, pointed to the need for a structured, representative adolescent-led platform.

In response, the RCA consortium comprising Global Media Foundation (lead), Citizens Watch Ghana, and Indigenous Women Empowerment Network established the Adolescent Parliament as a participatory civic institution embedded within the project's first pillar: Engagement with City-wide Stakeholders that sort to achieve Increased City level engagements and participation of young adolescents in decision making and planning processes within the city. Under this Pillar, and objective, the adolescent parliament became a reality with other key supportive interventions included the Intermediary city ecosystem Platform (ICEP), the Policy Hearing Platform and the integration of the adolescent journalist amplifying voices of young people and leading key advocacy activities.

1.7 The Formation of the Adolescent Parliament

The formation of the Parliament followed a city-wide, constituency-based electoral process designed to be inclusive, transparent, and participatory:

- 19 zonal forums were conducted to mobilize adolescents across Sunyani, each representing a constituency.
- Through democratic elections, one Adolescent Member of Parliament (MP) was elected from each constituency. These MPs serve as the voice of their peers in city-wide adolescent forums and governance platforms.
- In each constituency, adolescents also elected constituency executives who support the MP and coordinate local adolescent-led initiatives as part of the zonal adolescent movement.
- After the elections, the 19 MPs were brought together for a five-day intensive training on parliamentary procedures, leadership, public speaking, evidence generation, and stakeholder engagement. The training was supported by subject experts, local officials, and youth mentors.
- To ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the Adolescent Parliament, regular refresher training courses are organized for all its members to deepen their understanding of parliamentary procedures, enhance their leadership and public speaking skills, and familiarize themselves with the latest developments in civic engagement and youth advocacy.
- Through interactive workshops, mentorship from experienced facilitators, and peer-to-peer learning, adolescents are equipped not only to fulfill their legislative responsibilities, but also to adapt to emerging challenges and confidently represent their constituencies. This commitment to continuous learning fosters a vibrant culture of growth, accountability, and innovation within the Parliament, ensuring that its work remains relevant and impactful for the youth of Sunyani.

- In addition to the 19 Adolescent Members of Parliament (AMPs) elected from the constituencies, four additional positions were filled during the in-parliament elections. These included the Speaker of Parliament, two Parliamentary Clerks, and a Parliamentary Marshal. All four were elected competitively from among the constituency executives, bringing the total membership of the Adolescent Parliament to 24.

Following their induction, the MPs elected a Speaker of the Adolescent Parliament, along with deputy speakers and committee heads, leadership (Majority & Minority), establishing a fully functional and structured adolescent parliament with legislative-style operations.

The Parliament holds routine (Quarterly) plenary sittings, committee sessions, and constituency engagements. It also actively participates in the Intermediary City Ecosystem Platform (ICEP), collaborates in Bi-Annual Policy Hearings, and contributes to city planning dialogues, providing evidence and recommendations from adolescents themselves.

Presently, the Parliament stands as a pioneering model of adolescent-led governance in Ghana. It is both a learning space and a leadership engine, helping adolescents gain confidence, contribute to community development, and hold duty bearers accountable.

1.8 Rationale and Link to the Evidence to Action (E2A) Framework:

The establishment of the Adolescent Parliament responds to a fundamental challenge in urban development: the systemic exclusion of adolescents from civic participation and governance processes. Despite forming a significant portion of the population in cities like Sunyani, adolescents are often excluded in policymaking and development programming. Their unique needs, aspirations, and lived experiences are rarely considered in the design and implementation of city-level interventions.

The adolescent Parliament was therefore created to institutionalize adolescent engagement, ensuring that young people have a structured, legitimate platform to contribute meaningfully to the decisions that shape their environments and wellbeing. The platform supports adolescents to not only voice their concerns but also to influence outcomes and hold local authorities accountable.

Importantly, the Adolescent Parliament is designed in alignment with the Evidence to Action (E2A) Framework, which is a core component of the RCA Project's monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system. The E2A Framework provides a participatory learning structure that empowers adolescents to:

- Generate evidence based on their own experiences,
- Engage with stakeholders through structured dialogues,
- Translate lived experiences into knowledge products and advocacy tools, and
- Inform public discourse, research, and policy planning.

Through this model, adolescent MPs act as knowledge producers and influencers, facilitating the flow of evidence from communities to institutions. The Parliament becomes both a decision-shaping platform and a mechanism for deepening accountability and responsiveness across the city.

1.9 Strategic Engagement Platforms for Adolescent Participation:

As part of the adolescent Parliament's (design, dedicated platforms integrated to ensure that adolescent MPs and youth leaders are strategically positioned to engage with municipal and city-level decision-makers. Two flagship platforms were introduced:

1. The Intermediary City Ecosystem Platform (ICEP): A multi-stakeholder dialogue forum that brings together adolescents, city authorities, traditional leaders, service providers, and civil society to discuss issues affecting youth wellbeing in Sunyani. ICEP provides a recurring, structured opportunity for adolescents to contribute insights and advocate for change.

2. The Bi-Annual Policy Hearing:

A formal accountability platform through which adolescent MPs present evidence, policy asks, and constituency updates to the Municipal Assembly and other key duty bearers. These hearings promote transparency, foster responsiveness, and create channels for sustained collaboration between adolescents and policymakers.

Both platforms are aligned with Ghana's Local Government and Decentralization Policy, which mandates participatory planning and inclusive development at the district and municipal levels. Through their active participation in ICEP and the Policy Hearing, adolescent MPs contribute to making Sunyani a more inclusive and accountable city one that reflects the aspirations and needs of its youth.

CHAPTER 2

Structure and Governance of the Adolescent Parliament

2.1 Composition of the Parliament:

The Adolescent Parliament is composed of elected adolescent representatives from each of the 19 zoned communities (referred to as constituencies) within Sunyani. These representatives formally titled Adolescent Members of Parliament (AMPs) serve as the voice of their peers at the city level, championing adolescent development priorities through structured engagement with stakeholders and civic institutions.

Each AMP is democratically elected by fellow adolescents in their respective constituencies during community forums organized under the RCA Project. The process ensured equitable participation across gender, school and out-of-school youth, and people with disabilities.

The full composition of the Parliament includes:

- 19 Adolescent Members of Parliament (AMPs): One from each constituency in Sunyani.
- Parliamentary Leadership: Elected internally by AMPs and includes:
 - ✓ Speaker of Parliament
 - ✓ First and Second Deputy Speakers
 - ✓ Majority and Minority Leaders
 - ✓ Parliamentary Whips
- Parliamentary Committees: The Parliament operates through a set of thematic committees aligned with priority areas such as Health and Wellbeing, Education, Digital Inclusion, Environment and Green Economy, Gender and Protection, and Governance and Accountability

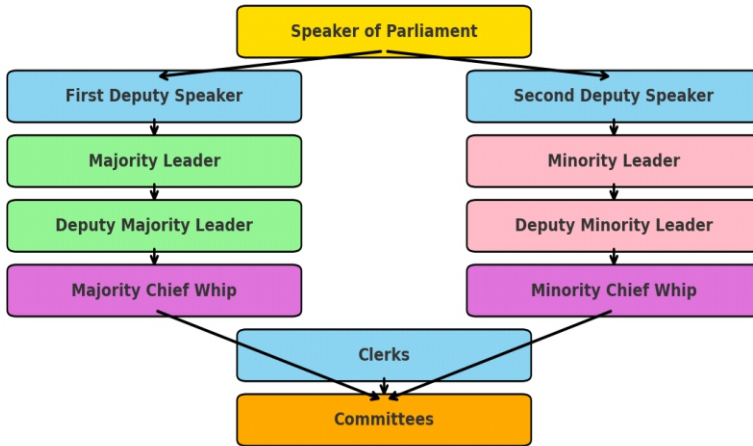
- **Constituency Executives:** In each constituency, AMPs are supported by elected executives, including a Chairperson, Vice Chair, and Organizing Secretary, who help coordinate outreach, mobilization, and community-level advocacy working closely with AMP and project Adolescent Coordinators.
- The Parliament is gender-balanced and inclusive, ensuring representation of all social categories and prioritizing the voices of vulnerable and marginalized adolescents. Youth with disabilities and those from minority backgrounds are also encouraged to stand for election and participate in leadership.
- This representative structure forms the foundation for meaningful, inclusive adolescent engagement in city governance.

2.2 Structure of the adolescent Parliament:

1. Speaker
2. First Deputy Speaker (Majority)
3. Second Deputy Speaker (Minority)
4. Majority Leader
5. Minority Leader
6. Deputy Majority Leader
7. Deputy Minority Leader
8. Majority Chief Whip
9. Minority Chief Whip
10. Clerks
11. Committees – Mobilization & Public Relations, Business & Research, Documentation & Communique.

Figure 1.1 Adolescent Parliament Structure:

Adolescent Parliament Structure (Enhanced Arrows)



2.3 Leadership Structure and Roles:

- The leadership structure of the Adolescent Parliament is designed to mirror parliamentary systems, providing adolescents with practical experience in democratic processes, leadership, and civic responsibility. This structure enhances internal coordination and accountability while equipping adolescent leaders with skills essential for governance and advocacy.
- Parliament elects its leadership from among the 19 Adolescent Members of Parliament (AMPs), ensuring democratic legitimacy and peer accountability. The roles and responsibilities of the leadership are as follows:

2.3.1 Speaker of Parliament:

- Presides over all parliamentary sittings and ensures adherence to parliamentary procedures.
- Represents the Parliament in official functions and stakeholder meetings.
- Guides debates and facilitates consensus on resolutions and policy recommendations.

2.3.2 Deputy Speakers (First and Second):

- Support the Speaker in managing the affairs of Parliament.
- Stand in for the Speaker in their absence or as delegated.
- Assist with internal coordination and committee oversight.

2.3.3 Majority and Minority Leaders:

- Lead the majority and minority sides of Parliament, respectively, based on zones of representation or thematic positions.
- Coordinate deliberations and presentations from their respective sides.
- Lead consultations on draft policy proposals and advocacy statements.

2.3.4 Parliamentary Whips:

- Ensure discipline and effective communication among AMPs.
- Monitor participation and encourage active involvement in parliamentary proceedings.
- Liaise between the leadership and constituency executives.

2.3.5 Committee Chairpersons:

- Each thematic committee within the Parliament elects a chairperson to lead its activities.
- Chairpersons are responsible for guiding research, developing position papers, and organizing committee meetings.
- They also represent their committees during plenary sessions.

2.3.6 Secretary to the Parliament:

- Appointed to document proceedings, resolutions, and committee reports.
- Responsible for record-keeping and correspondence.
- The leadership team operates under a shared commitment to uphold the values of integrity, inclusivity, transparency, and accountability. Their work is supported by mentors and resource persons who provide technical support and capacity building.

2.3.7 Parliamentary Committees:

- To enhance the depth and focus of adolescent engagement in city development, the Adolescent Parliament operates through a set of **thematic committees**. These committees allow Members of Parliament (AMPs) to concentrate on specific development issues affecting adolescents in Sunyani, providing a platform for evidence generation, analysis, advocacy, and targeted action.
- Each committee is composed of selected AMPs with interest or experience in a particular thematic area and is supported by mentors and resource persons from partner organizations or relevant government departments.
- The main parliamentary committees include:

2.3.8 Health and Wellbeing Committee

- Focuses on adolescent sexual and reproductive health, mental health, nutrition, access to healthcare services, and the promotion of healthy behaviors.
- Engages stakeholders like the Ghana Health Service and other health-based NGOs to advocate for youth-friendly services and information access.

2.3.9 Education and Skills Development Committee

- Promotes access to quality education and practical skills training for all adolescents, including girls and out-of-school youth.
- Works with local education directorates to track issues like school dropout, learning gaps, and access to digital learning tools.

2.3.10 Digital Inclusion and Innovation Committee

- Advocates for the digital rights of adolescents and works to bridge the digital divide in underserved communities.
- Champions initiatives that promote digital literacy, safe internet use, and access to technology for learning and advocacy.

2.3.11 Environment and Green Economy Committee

- Focuses on issues of environmental sustainability, waste management, green spaces, and climate resilience.
- Supports city-wide campaigns on clean-up exercises, tree planting, and youth-led eco-entrepreneurship.

2.3.12 Gender, Equity, and Protection Committee

- Addresses issues related to gender-based violence, child protection, harmful social norms, and inclusion of marginalized groups (e.g., adolescents with disabilities).
- Collaborates with protection stakeholders to ensure adolescent-friendly protection services and safe spaces.

2.3.13 Governance, Accountability, and Participation Committee

- Supports the core mission of the Parliament in strengthening adolescent participation in local governance.
- Engages with city authorities, monitors public service delivery, and advocates for transparency and responsiveness in decision-making.
- Each committee:
 - Develops annual work plans based on community priorities and feedback,
 - Collects and presents evidence during Policy Hearings and ICEP forums,
 - Produces advocacy briefs and position papers, and
 - Leads peer education and community mobilization activities on their respective themes.
- The committee structure ensures a more targeted, informed, and sustained engagement of the Adolescent Parliament in shaping policies and programs that affect young people in Sunyani.

2.4 Electoral Process and Term of Office

The Adolescent Parliament is built on democratic principles that reflect the core values of inclusion, representation, and accountability. The electoral process and term of office are designed to ensure that all adolescents, regardless of background or status, have a fair opportunity to participate in leadership and governance.

2.4.1 ELECTORAL PROCESS

The election of Adolescent Members of Parliament (AMPs) and their supporting constituency executives is conducted through a community-based electoral process. The steps include:

2.4.2 ZONAL MOBILIZATION:

- ✓ Sunyani is divided into 19 electoral zones or “constituencies,” each with its unique identity and demographic representation.
- ✓ Adolescents in each zone are mobilized through schools, community groups, faith-based organizations, and local media.

2.4.3 COMMUNITY FORUMS AND NOMINATIONS:

- ✓ Electoral forums are convened in each zone, allowing adolescents to discuss their challenges and nominate candidates for the AMP position.
- ✓ Candidates must meet basic criteria (e.g., age range, residency, willingness to serve, etc.) and demonstrate commitment to adolescent well-being.

2.3.4 VOTING AND SELECTION:

- ✓ Elections are organized by the project team and held publicly during the forums, using democratic and transparent processes such as show-of-hands, ballot voting, or consensus (depending on context).
- ✓ Each zone elects one AMP and a team of Constituency Executives including a Chairperson, Vice Chair, and Organizing Secretary.

2.4.5 VALIDATION AND INDUCTION:

- ✓ Results are validated by the RCA Project team and community stakeholders.
- ✓ Elected AMPs undergo induction and are introduced formally to local authorities and institutions.

2.4.6 TERM OF OFFICE

- AMPs and Constituency Executives serve for a term of four years, after which new elections are held.
- During the term, adolescent MPs are expected to remain active, participate in parliamentary activities, and maintain strong engagement with their constituencies.
- A mid-term review is conducted to assess performance, offer additional capacity support, and adjust where necessary.
- At the end of each term, outgoing MPs are encouraged to serve as **mentors** for new MPs and remain active in youth networks.
- This electoral structure reinforces participatory governance, promotes continuity, and ensures the Parliament evolves to reflect the voices and aspirations of new generations of adolescents in Sunyani.

2.4.7 BI-ELECTIONS:

- A bi-election shall be conducted when a seat of an Adolescent Member of Parliament (AMP) or a Constituency Executive becomes vacant before the completion of their four-year term.

Conditions that may necessitate a bi-election include:

- Voluntary resignation of an AMP or Executive.
- Loss of eligibility due to relocation, withdrawal from school/community, or disciplinary action.
- Continuous non-performance or absenteeism as determined through a formal review by the Parliamentary Coordinators in consultation with the Constituency Executives.

- Death or incapacitation of a serving AMP or Executive.
- The bi-election shall follow the same procedures as the initial constituency election, ensuring fairness, transparency, and participation by eligible adolescents in the affected constituency.
- Elected members through bi-elections shall serve the **remaining term** of the outgoing member, after which they may stand again during the next general adolescent parliamentary elections.

CHAPTER 3

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The effectiveness of the Adolescent Parliament depends on clear and accountable roles for its members, leadership, and supporting bodies. This chapter outlines the responsibilities of the Adolescent Members of Parliament (AMPs), Constituency Executives, the Parliamentary Leadership, and other key actors within the RCA structure who support the Parliament's functioning and impact.

3.2 ROLES OF ADOLESCENT MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (AMPS)

Adolescent MPs are the central actors in Parliament. They serve as representatives, advocates, and change agents for their peers and communities. Their key responsibilities include:

3.2.1 Constituency Representation:

- ◆ Engage regularly with adolescents in their respective zones to understand and document their needs, concerns, and aspirations.
- ◆ Serve as a bridge between their constituency and city authorities, ensuring issues raised are discussed and addressed at the city level.

3.2.2 Parliamentary Participation:

- ◆ Attend all parliamentary sittings, committee meetings, trainings, and special forums such as ICEP sessions and Policy Hearings.
- ◆ Contribute meaningfully to debates, discussions, and the drafting of recommendations and resolutions.

3.2.3 Evidence Collection and Advocacy:

- ◆ Participate in the RCA's participatory learning activities under the Evidence to Action (E2A) framework.
- ◆ Gather community-based data, personal stories, and evidence to support advocacy and inform urban policies affecting adolescents.

3.2.4 Outreach and Peer Engagement:

- ◆ Organize community-based meetings and forums with constituency executives and other youth.
- ◆ Mobilize adolescent participation in public events, health campaigns, and community development initiatives.

3.2.5 Accountability and Ethics:

- ◆ Uphold transparency, honesty, and inclusiveness in all activities.
- ◆ Serve as role models and adhere to a code of conduct established by Parliament.

Each AMP plays a vital role in ensuring the Parliament reflects the diversity of Sunyani's youth population and acts as a credible, respected body within the city governance system.

3.3 Roles of Constituency Executives

Each zonal constituency supporting the Adolescent Parliament is led by a team of Constituency Executives, elected alongside the AMP. These executives play an essential role in grassroots mobilization, information dissemination, and constituency-level coordination. The core team typically includes a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and an Organizing Secretary.

Their responsibilities include:

3.3.1 Community Mobilization And Coordination:

- ◆ Organize community meetings and forums to gather adolescent views and share parliamentary updates.
- ◆ Support constituency outreach activities such as advocacy campaigns, education sessions, and clean-up exercises.

3.3.2 Support To AMP:

- ◆ Assist the AMP in collecting data, writing reports, and preparing for parliamentary discussions and hearings.
- ◆ Act as a liaison between the AMP and community groups, including schools, faith-based groups, and local leaders.

3.3.3 Peer Engagement And Leadership:

- ◆ Encourage greater adolescent participation in the RCA Project activities and promote youth civic responsibility.
- ◆ Identify and support emerging youth leaders within the community.

3.3.4 Monitoring And Feedback:

- ◆ Report constituency issues and emerging challenges to the AMP and Adolescent Coordinator for timely redress.
- ◆ Participate in quarterly performance reviews and learning exchanges organized by the RCA project team.

The executive team forms the leadership nucleus of each constituency, playing a critical role in ensuring the Parliament remains grounded, responsive, and accountable to the young people it represents.

3.4 Roles of Adolescent Coordinators

The Adolescent Coordinators serve as administrative and technical support staff appointed under the RCA Project. They are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the Adolescent Parliament, ensuring that all processes and engagements are smoothly executed and properly documented.

Key responsibilities include:

3.4.1 ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION:

- ◆ Schedule and manage logistics for parliamentary sessions, committee meetings, and official engagements.
- ◆ Ensure timely communication between AMPs, constituency executives, project staff, and stakeholders.
- ◆ Maintain up-to-date attendance, activity logs, and documentation for all parliamentary processes.

3.4.2 PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT:

- ◆ Provide support to the Speaker and committee chairs in conducting orderly and productive sessions.
- ◆ Assist in the preparation of session materials, resolutions, and follow-up correspondence.
- ◆ Document parliamentary proceedings and ensure archiving of records for institutional memory.

3.4.3 MENTORSHIP AND CAPACITY SUPPORT:

- ◆ Provide orientation and ongoing guidance to newly elected AMPs and constituency executives.
- ◆ Serve as peer mentors, encouraging leadership development and effective participation.
- ◆ Facilitate learning sessions and support adolescent-led innovations within Parliament.

3.4.4 MONITORING AND REPORTING:

- ◆ Track performance indicators, AMP participation, and constituency-level engagement.
- ◆ Compile quarterly activity reports and success stories for submission to the RCA Project team.
- ◆ Support implementation of the E2A framework, including evidence gathering and learning documentation.

3.4.5 STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION:

- ◆ Link adolescents with city authorities, service providers, and media platforms during stakeholder events.
- ◆ Coordinate adolescent participation in ICEP and Policy Hearing platforms.

Through their multifaceted roles, Adolescent Coordinators ensure that the Adolescent Parliament is not only youth-led but also professionally supported, helping translate adolescent priorities into structured action within the city governance framework.

CHAPTER 4

PARLIAMENTARY PROCESSES AND FUNCTIONS

This chapter outlines the core operational procedures that govern the functioning of the Adolescent Parliament. It defines how the Parliament meets, makes decisions, upholds discipline, and maintains records. These procedures ensure consistency, transparency, and efficiency in parliamentary activities while encouraging adolescent ownership and participation.

4.1 Meeting Types and Frequency

The Adolescent Parliament operates through various structured meetings, each serving a distinct purpose:

4.1.1 Plenary Sessions:

- ❖ Held **quarterly**, plenary sessions bring all Adolescent Members of Parliament (AMPs) together.
- ❖ Chaired by the Speaker of Parliament, plenary meetings provide a platform for reviewing community issues, debating motions, and formulating resolutions.

4.1.2 Committee Meetings:

- ❖ AMPs are assigned to thematic committees (e.g., Health & Wellbeing, Education, Environment, Gender & Rights).
- ❖ Committees meet bi-monthly or as needed to analyze specific issues, conduct research, and develop policy recommendations.

4.1.3 Constituency Forums:

- ❖ These forums are held bi-annually in each of the 19 constituencies.
- ❖ Led by AMPs and constituency executives, the forums serve as feedback and consultation spaces to gather input from adolescents and share updates on parliamentary proceedings.

4.1.4 Rules Of Procedure And Conduct

To ensure orderly and respectful engagements, the Parliament adopts a simplified code of conduct and operational rules:

- Members must speak through the Speaker and raise their hands to contribute.
- No interruptions or offensive language is tolerated during debates.
- Decisions are made through consensus or majority vote.
- Members are expected to be punctual, respectful, and well prepared.
- Violations of conduct may result in verbal warnings, temporary suspension from activities, or removal after peer review.

This code fosters respect, discipline, and maturity among adolescent MPs while preparing them for civic participation.

4.2 DECISION-MAKING AND VOTING

Parliament embraces inclusive and democratic decision-making approaches:

- **Consensus** is the preferred mode for passing motions, particularly in committee recommendations and minor administrative decisions.
- **Voting** is applied for major decisions such as adoption of resolutions, amendments to procedures, or leadership changes.
- A simple majority is sufficient unless otherwise stated by the Speaker or agreed upon by members.
- Voting methods may include show of hands, secret ballot, or voice vote based on context.

4.3 Record Keeping And Documentation

Accurate documentation is critical for transparency, learning, and accountability:

- Adolescent Coordinators are responsible for compiling minutes of all parliamentary and committee sessions.
- Records include attendance, key motions discussed, decisions taken, and follow-up actions.
- Digital and hardcopy archives are maintained at the RCA Project office and shared with stakeholders periodically.
- Reports and resolutions are also shared with the Sunyani Municipal Assembly and other city actors to influence planning and service delivery

4.4 Parliamentary Calendar And Activity Plan:

At the start of every calendar year, the Parliament adopts a Parliamentary Calendar developed collaboratively by the Project team, the Speaker, and Coordinators. It outlines:

- Dates for plenary sessions, committee work, constituency forums, and joint stakeholder events.
- Special observance days (e.g., International Youth Day, World Health Day) where adolescent voices are spotlighted.
- Deadlines for submitting reports, launching initiatives, and conducting assessments.

This calendar serves as a guiding tool for operational planning, resource mobilization, and stakeholder alignment.

4.5 Operations Of The Adolescent Parliament

The Adolescent Parliament operates in a structured and formal manner, drawing inspiration from national parliamentary systems while adapting procedures to suit the developmental and learning needs of adolescents. The conduct of sittings, adherence to parliamentary procedures, and observance of ceremonial practices reinforce discipline, order, and a sense of purpose among Members of Parliament (Mps).

4.6 Place Of Sitings

Parliamentary sittings may be convened in a variety of settings to promote accessibility, visibility, and effective engagement:

- **Community-Based Sitings:** Regular sittings may be held during community forums within constituencies. These sittings are organized on a rotational and quarterly basis, ensuring equitable participation and ownership across all constituencies.
- **Public Sitings Linked to RCA Platforms:** Structured sittings may be convened alongside platforms such as the Intermediary City Ecosystem Platform (ICEP) and Policy Hearings. These sittings serve as public hearings, enabling duty bearers and stakeholders to observe parliamentary debates. The Speaker may also summon duty bearers to appear before Parliament and respond to issues raised by adolescents.
- **Emergency Sitings:** In cases of urgency, sittings may be organized in enclosed venues such as conference halls or, where appropriate, in open spaces within the city. These sittings are designed to provide a flexible and responsive mechanism for addressing emerging adolescent issues.

This flexibility in the place of sittings ensures that the Adolescent Parliament remains accessible, inclusive, and responsive, while strengthening its role as a credible forum for adolescent-led governance.

4.6.1 *Sittings of Parliament:*

Parliamentary sittings are scheduled as part of the engagement platforms and are convened in plenary sessions. These sittings serve as the central platform where Members of Parliament (MPs) debate motions, present constituency issues, review committee reports, and pass resolutions. Special seats may be called to address urgent matters or to host visiting stakeholders.

The Speaker plays a central role in convening parliamentary sittings, working in close coordination with the Clerks of Parliament and the Adolescent Coordinators. Together, they ensure that sittings are organized in line with the Parliament's procedures and in response to pressing matters emerging from the committees or the wider community.

Importantly, some sittings are strategically linked to the Intermediary City Ecosystem Platform (ICEP) and Bi-Annual Policy Hearing sessions under the RCA Project. These high-level platforms provide opportunities for city-wide stakeholders including municipal authorities, traditional leaders, civil society, and development partners to observe parliamentary debates in real time. This exposure helps stakeholders and duty bearers to better appreciate the confidence, knowledge, and civic interest of adolescents, and to understand how development issues discussed in Parliament directly affect their wellbeing.

The process of convening a sitting begins with the Speaker, in consultation with the Parliamentary Committees, identifying key issues and motions that have been submitted for deliberation. These are often derived from committee reports, constituency feedback, or emerging city-level priorities. The Clerks and Adolescent Coordinators then prepare the Order Paper, coordinate logistical arrangements, and communicate the session's agenda to MPs and relevant stakeholders. On the day of the sitting, the Speaker presides over proceedings, ensuring debates are orderly, inclusive, and aligned with the Parliament's mandate.

4.6.2 Parliamentary Procedures:

The Adolescent Parliament operates in accordance with clearly defined parliamentary procedures that guide its deliberations, maintain order, and ensure transparency. These procedures are modeled on conventional parliamentary practices but adapted to suit the participatory and learning-oriented nature of the Adolescent Parliament.

4.6.3 Role of the Speaker and Clerks:

The Speaker presides over all sittings, ensuring that proceedings are conducted in a fair, impartial, and orderly manner. The Clerks of Parliament provide administrative and procedural support, including preparing the Order Paper, recording proceedings, and advising the Speaker on rules of order

4.6.4 Order Paper:

Each sitting is guided by an Order Paper, which lists the business to be considered during the session. The Order Paper is developed by the Clerks in collaboration with the Parliamentary Committees and the Adolescent Coordinators. It includes:

- Ø Prayers and Opening Formalities
- Ø Reading and Confirmation of Minutes
- Ø Committee Reports
- Ø Motions and Resolutions
- Ø Any Other Business (AOB)

4.6.5 Parliamentary Prayers:

All sittings begin with the Parliamentary Prayers, which serve to inspire a spirit of unity, service, and dedication to the wellbeing of adolescents and the broader community. The prayers also reinforce the values of respect, inclusivity, and constructive dialogue.

4.6.6 Debate Process:

Once the business day is announced, MPs debate motions in accordance with rules of procedure. Members speak in turn, addressing the Speaker, and all contributions must be relevant to the motion under discussion. The Speaker has the authority to call members to order if they deviate from the rules or engage in disruptive behavior.

4.6.7 Committee Reports and Questions:

Standing and ad hoc committees present reports during plenary sittings, followed by an open floor for questions and clarifications. This process allows MPs to scrutinize the work of committees, hold them accountable, and ensure recommendations are well-informed.

4.6.8 Voting and Decision-Making:

Decisions are made through voting, which may be conducted by a show of hands or, in special cases, by secret ballot. The Speaker declares the outcome and ensures that resolutions are formally recorded.

4.6.9 Record Keeping:

All proceedings are documented in the official Parliamentary Hansard or minutes, which are maintained by the Clerks and archived for reference. This ensures institutional memory and continuity between parliamentary sessions. By adhering to these procedures, the Adolescent Parliament ensures that its operations are inclusive, transparent, and credible, while also equipping adolescent MPs with firsthand experience in democratic governance.

4.6.10 Order Paper and Agenda Development:

The Order Paper is the official document that sets out the business of each sitting of the Adolescent Parliament. It serves as a roadmap for proceedings and ensures that deliberations are focused, organized, and time-bound.

Preparation Process.

4.6.11 Issue Identification:

- Ø Constituency MPs gather issues from their respective communities through constituency forums, committee work, and direct engagements with peers.
- Ø Committees of Parliament also identify matters requiring plenary discussion based on their research and reports.

4.6.12 Collaboration with Adolescent Coordinators:

- Ø Identified issues are submitted to the Adolescent Coordinators, who review them for relevance, urgency, and alignment with the Parliament's advocacy priorities under the RCA Project.
- Ø Coordinators work closely with the Parliamentary Committees and Clerks to refine the topics and determine the order of business.

4.6.13 Consultation With The Speaker:

- Ø The draft Order Paper is presented to the Speaker for review and approval. The Speaker ensures that all key issues—including those aligned with the RCA platforms such as the Intermediary City Ecosystem Platform (ICEP) and Policy Hearings—are prioritized.
- Ø The Speaker also considers stakeholder participation opportunities, scheduling sittings that coincide with city-wide engagement platforms to maximize visibility and impact.

4.6.14 Finalization And Distribution:

- Ø Once approved, the final Order Paper is printed and distributed to all MPs and relevant stakeholders ahead of the sitting. Copies are also made available to observers and guests.

4.7 Structure Of The Order Paper:

The Order Paper Includes:

- Ø Opening Prayers
- Ø Roll Call of Members
- Ø Confirmation of Previous Minutes
- Ø Announcements and Communications from the Speaker
- Ø Committee Reports
- Ø Motions and Resolutions
- Ø Questions and Answers
- Ø Any Other Business (AOB)
- Ø Closing

4.8 Strategic Value:

The Order Paper ensures the Parliament remains issue-focused and responsive to the needs of adolescents. It also serves as a public record of planned business, enhancing transparency and accountability. By linking agenda items with city-wide advocacy platforms, the Parliament strengthens its influence on local governance and policymaking.

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building forms a cornerstone of the Adolescent Parliament's effectiveness and sustainability. As a participatory governance mechanism, the Parliament is not merely a platform for representation, it is also a dynamic learning hub that equips adolescents with the competencies, confidence, and tools required to engage meaningfully in civic and development processes.

The capacity-building agenda is deliberately designed to ensure that adolescent MPs develop a broad range of skills, from public speaking and leadership to policy analysis and evidence generation. This holistic approach recognizes that the ability of adolescents to influence change depends not only on their access to decision-making spaces but also on their preparedness to engage in those spaces with clarity, credibility, and purpose.

The Adolescent Parliament integrates structured and continuous capacity development interventions throughout its operations, including:

- ◆ Foundational and refresher trainings to orient and update MPs on parliamentary conduct, governance frameworks, and thematic development issues.
- ◆ Mentorship programmes pairing experienced MPs and external professionals with newer members to foster peer learning, career guidance, and leadership growth.
- ◆ Public speaking and advocacy skills training to strengthen MPs' ability to articulate issues, mobilize support, and influence decision-makers.
- ◆ Policy engagement and evidence generation modules to enhance MPs' capacity to use data, community insights, and research findings in advocacy and policy dialogue.

- ◆ Digital literacy and technology use for civic engagement, storytelling, and amplifying adolescent voices across diverse platforms.

By embedding these learning processes within its core operations, the Adolescent Parliament ensures that its members are not only active participants but also informed leaders capable of initiating, influencing, and sustaining positive change in their communities and the city at large. This deliberate investment in skills development strengthens the Parliament's institutional credibility and ensures its alignment with the broader goals of the RCA Project and the Healthy Cities for Adolescents (HCA-II) programme.

5.1 Orientation and Induction for New MPs:

Newly elected MPs undergo a structured orientation and induction programme designed to familiarize them with parliamentary structures, rules of procedure, advocacy priorities, and the broader objectives of the RCA Project. This process ensures smooth integration into the Parliament's operations and sets expectations for conduct, participation, and leadership.

5.2 Skills Development Modules

The Parliament offers thematic training modules on key competencies essential for adolescent leadership and advocacy, including:

- ◆ Advocacy and policy influence
- ◆ Public speaking and effective communication
- ◆ Leadership and team management
- ◆ Digital literacy and online engagement

These modules are delivered through interactive workshops, simulations, and real-life engagement exercises.

5.3 Peer-to-Peer Learning and Mentorship

Mentorship is embedded into the Parliament's learning structure, with senior MPs or external professionals guiding newer members. This peer-to-peer model encourages experience sharing, joint problem-solving, and skill transfer, creating a culture of collective growth and mutual support.

5.4 Knowledge Exchange with Other Youth Parliaments:

Although formal exchange activities have not yet taken place under the RCA Project, **knowledge exchange remains a strategic requirement** for building the confidence and competencies of adolescent leaders. Cross-learning opportunities are essential for broadening perspectives, strengthening networks, and equipping adolescents with new experiences that can be applied within their own parliamentary operations.

5.5 Community-Based Learning Sessions:

Community-based learning sessions are one of the most important activities of the Adolescent Parliament. They give adolescent MPs the opportunity to meet directly with their constituencies, share information, gather feedback, and strengthen the link between the Parliament and the wider adolescent population.

These sessions are held mainly through the Community Forum approach, which brings together adolescents at the grassroots, parents, opinion leaders, Assembly Members, and other key actors in the local government system. They are organized in collaboration with the RCA project team, community stakeholders, and traditional and civic leaders, creating a shared vision for engagement and development.

The Community Forum is designed as a practical way to produce and assess evidence about issues raised by adolescents. It provides a space for the community to agree on the problems that need to be addressed, discuss the causes, and agree on the best actions to take. This process ensures that decisions are based on real experiences and that the priorities identified are relevant and achievable.

By working in this way, the Adolescent Parliament builds trust with the community, promotes inclusive decision-making, and helps create practical solutions to challenges affecting adolescents in Sunyani.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The Adolescent Parliament under the Resilient City for Adolescents (RCA) Project stands as a groundbreaking model of youth engagement in city governance, rooted in the principles of participation, inclusivity, and evidence-based advocacy. From its inception, the Parliament has provided adolescents with a platform not only to voice their concerns but also to directly influence decision-making processes that shape their communities.

Comprehensive structure and operational frameworks such as the parliamentary oath, order paper, and ceremonial prayers instill a sense of responsibility, discipline, and identity among Members of Parliament (MPs). These foundational elements strengthen the Parliament's institutional culture and enhance its legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders, including municipal authorities, traditional leaders, schools, and community members.

Training and capacity-building activities, including the group tasks and simulation exercises documented during the initial MP training, have equipped members with essential leadership, public speaking, and advocacy skills. The integration of strategic engagement platforms like the Intermediary City Ecosystem Platform (ICEP) and the Bi-Annual Policy Hearing ensures that adolescent voices are represented in formal governance systems. The Parliament has also embraced innovative approaches to evidence generation and public engagement, including collaboration with adolescent journalists and the use of the “My Future” radio program to promote accountability and inspire civic action.

The operational and ceremonial procedures captured in the Parliament's guiding documents, combined with its strong governance structure, provide a blueprint that can be adapted and replicated in other cities. Moreover, the Parliament's alignment with the Evidence to Action (E2A) Framework guarantees that its advocacy efforts remain grounded in real community needs and informed by local data.

As the Parliament moves forward, its sustainability will depend on continuous stakeholder collaboration, integration into local governance frameworks, and the cultivation of new leaders through succession planning and mentorship. With the sustained commitment of Global Media Foundation, the Sunyani Municipal Assembly, the Traditional Council, schools, and other partners, the Adolescent Parliament is well-positioned to become a lasting institution that shapes the future of adolescent wellbeing in Sunyani and beyond.

In essence, the Adolescent Parliament is more than a project output it is a living, evolving institution that reflects the aspirations of young people, demonstrates the power of youth-led governance, and serves as a catalyst for building resilient, inclusive, and healthy cities for adolescents.

ANNEX

- Annex 1: Sample Constitution of the Adolescent Parliament
- Annex 2: Parliamentary Oath and Code of Conduct
- Annex 3: Committee Terms of Reference
- Annex 4: Reporting Templates
- Annex 5: List of Constituencies and Mps