



# Impact Report



# Overview

Over the past several months, we've asked our talented Program Administrator, Francoise, to begin what we're calling the "Impact Report". She conducted interviews with S H E students, parents, local teachers, and school administrators to better understand the impact S H E is creating in the lives of girls. We believe in this program, but it's not until hearing our girls talk about S H E that we truly understand how important this work is. They say it better than we ever could, so this report is a series of quotes from our growing community in Togo. Names have been changed to protect the identity of our students, and their words have been translated from French.

## Interview with S H E students

### *How has your life been impacted by S H E?*

S H E changed my life positively. First, S H E taught me good manners, respect for others, the notion of time, and living together. Thanks to my role as ambassador, I can stand in front of children and people to talk. S H E gives us hope for the future and encourages us to learn to become autonomous women in the future (Ellie, 18 years old)

My life has changed since I arrived at S H E. First, before discovering S H E, I have a lot of problems. My father wanted to take me out of school by giving the argument that he has no way to pay for my schooling. Sometimes he threatens to give me a wedding but since I arrived at S H E my life has changed completely. S H E supports my schooling and sews school uniforms.



Our manager gives us enough advice about good behavior. S H E hired a midwife to talk about personal hygiene, including menstrual periods, about the woman's sex life, and tips for not falling into the traps of men. In addition, S H E hired an English teacher to introduce us to the subject. In addition there are tutors of all the girls of the primary school. The various tips of Madam also help me a lot. I am proud to represent S H E. That's why I can talk in public, and drive the smaller ones. Thanks to S H E I have the courage to continue my studies despite the threat of my father to remove me from school (Sara, 16)

Before becoming aware of the existence of S H E, my parents have difficulty paying my school fees. I am often dismissed from school because of non-payment of the fees and it penalizes me enough because when I return to class, the material remains incomprehensible. I miss some questions because of that. Today I thank S H E for paying my schooling. I am no longer sent home from school. (Francoise, 14 years old).

S H E has positively changed my life because before I had the difficulty of social integration but now, it is very easy for me to approach people. I did not have any notion about sewing but now I can sew my torn clothes and make menstrual pads. In addition, my parents had difficulty paying my school fees and sewing school uniforms, but now I feel very comfortable since S H E took care of me. (N'tasha, 14 years old).

S H E has changed my life considerably because it is thanks to her help that I have had the courage to continue school even if my parents are poor. (Alia, 22 years old).

Thanks to S H E I continue my studies. In addition, my parents do not worry about school uniforms and school fees because of what S H E provides me. I now manage to hold myself high in front of the public because before I was ashamed. I acquired more confidence thanks to the advice of Mrs. MANOU (Program Director). Thanks to the after-school program initiated by S H E, I quickly understand the course of Earth and Life Sciences, and now I tinker in English. (Elodie, 14 years old).

The S H E-initiated schooling payment changed my life and that of my parents. Expenses have decreased at my level. School uniforms are offered to me free of charge. In addition to this, S H E has also provided us with the after-school program to teach us things like, English and courses on health, reproduction (Marina 15 years)

I salute the work of S H E in Notsè because it is thanks to this that I continue today the school. Before I'm admitted to this program, I am often sent back home because of the non-payment of school fees where I can stay up to a week at home. But now I continue my studies easily. (Darina, 20 years old)

The help that S H E gives me is an asset not only for me but also for my parents since they have no financial means to take care of us children. We suffer because of lack of means but when S H E took care of me, I am no longer dismissed from school because of the non-payment of schooling. (Chilalo, 18 years old)

I never stop thanking S H E for all these things. Thanks to S H E my parents do not take care of only my brothers. Because it is very difficult for them to take care of us all, I am usually the first to be dismissed from school because of the non-payment of the school fees. Today, I benefit from schooling, school uniforms, and advice (Emilie, 17 years old)





## *How have you grown since joining S H E?*

At S H E I have enough knowledge to know about sewing, knowing how to live in community, speaking in groups, leadership. I am very proud to be at S H E and to have a relationship with other girls from different cultures. (Ellie, 18 years old)

Since I arrived at S H E, my behavior has changed positively because before, I'm ashamed to speak in a crowd, I underestimated myself, and I'm hard on myself but now, I'm smart thanks to some conversations that Madame has with us when she sees us sad or too calm. (Sara, 16 years old)

Before my arrival at S H E, I find it very difficult to go to school because of the lack of means of my parents but now, I am comfortable with what S H E took care of me. I was very shy but since I set foot in S H E, my life has changed. (Moneli, 13).

I learned sewing skills, which helped me a lot in my review of last year. I also get good advice from Ms. MANOU. I've learned a lot about health and hygiene from our nurse. (N'tasha, 14 years old)

Thanks to S H E, I evolve in my studies. S H E gives me hope to continue my studies. Thanks to the midwife that S H E recruited us, I can read my menstrual cycles. I also benefited from the menstrual pads S H E provided when I arrived. (Alia, 22 years old).

I am very proud and I am very grateful for how much I've grown from S H E. Now, I can live with others. I am able to integrate easily into a social group. I learned the seam that allows me to repair my clothes when they tear and put the buttons when they fall off. I learned how to live in community. (Elodie, 14 years old).

I do not know how to thank S H E for everything she does in my life. Before I get to S H E, I'm wondering if I can succeed like other girls? I ask myself this question because I have no one to help me. At each school year, I think about how to pay for my schooling. But the arrival of S H E has completely changed my life. S H E took charge of my schooling. S H E makes me a school uniform gift every year (Donela, 20 years old).

## *How would you change the program in the future?*

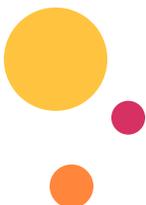
I want S H E to continue to help me after my high school degree to continue to the university since the expenses of the university are enormous according to the sayings of our elders. I also want S H E to work in other regions so all the girls who face difficulties can benefit (Ellie, 18 years).

In the future, I would like S H E to accompany us to university. I would like for their to be an opportunity at the university for S H E to provide us accommodation to facilitate our studies.

I would also like S H E to help us find work after our studies. I want S H E to take care of our health problems too, for example, I miss school when I get sick and I am sure that many girls are in the same condition (Sara, 16 years old)

I am proud of the gifts that S H E makes for me and I would appreciate support after I get my high school diploma. I would like S H E to support me at the campus (Elodie, 14 years old)

I wish that this program would be available elsewhere so that other girls deprived also benefit. I also want S H E to take care of me after my bachelor's degree. (Chilalo, 18 years old)







## *What would you like to change about your school to make it a better learning environment?*

I think that we must find a solution by reducing this plethoric number of students. School classrooms need to be multiplied to allow students to be comfortable. In addition, teachers must be able to control the classes and ensure that there is calm for a better lesson instead of the teacher getting angry and leaving the class unfinished (Sara, 16 years).

What may be different for us to have a better working environment: if the classrooms are well ventilated, and the classes are well explained by the teachers, the number of successes will be good (Ellie, 18 years old).

Classes need to be more airy with less students. Students should avoid chatter to better follow the lessons. We also need to have a study room or lounges in the school yard so that we can use it to read (Sara 16).

We need to have less students in the classrooms because the numbers are very high. Thus we can better understand the courses and ask questions (N'tasha, 14 years old).

I think that schools should be reforested so that students can stay under the trees, breathe fresh air and study better. Some institutions have classrooms covered in straw and when it rains, wind takes the straw away and the students' things get wet. I would have like these classrooms to be covered with sheets to protect the students' learning environment. (Alia, 22)

The school yard must be clean and garbage must be removed from school. It is in this that one can have a pure and healthy environment (Elodie, 14 years)

We lack any toilets at our school. I propose that each school has a well-adapted latrine (bathroom) separated according to the kind of students so that the students do not do their business around the school buildings. (Marina 15 years old)

I propose that the classrooms be ventilated so that students can breathe good air especially in the afternoons to better retain classes taught by teachers. We are often suffocated in the afternoons (Emilie, 17 years old).



# *Interview with S H E parents*

## *How do local parents view girls' education?*

“In the past, some parents who are illiterate or have little schooling have a certain social representation of the school, which is not likely to favor the schooling of girls. Those who believe that the purpose of the school is the acquisition of a paid job and therefore have enough money. But you can have the money without having gone to school, doing other things. Based on their perception of school, these people are resistant to girls' schooling. The number of years of school attendance is therefore seen as a waste of time. A beneficiary's mother supports this claim by saying that “in our (Muslim) ethnic group, some believe that the purpose of the school is to allow children to have a well-paid job later on. However, the number of years a child goes to school before graduating and having a job is considered a waste of time because the child can learn a trade or when girls, parents think they can trade to have money or to marry later with someone “(mother, 50 years old).

Today, parents are positive about girls' education because, according to them, girls can become tomorrow's leaders and can contribute to the development of not only their families, their villages but their countries.

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As a force for change, education helps women to overcome social prejudices, to take control of their own lives and to ensure their status and identity. And I mean identity of ourselves beyond our reproductive roles within the home. This vision has allowed people to become aware of the situation of women for their fulfillment through their basic schooling.

- Dyna Manou, mother of S H E student

## *How has S H E impacted your family?*

The parents of Moneli confirm that S H E arrived at the right moment in their locality because there was a time, they could not pay the schooling of their daughter and she is sent back every time she returns to class. They were often indebted to pay for her schooling but the arrival of S H E and its decision pay for their daughter put an end to this nightmare.

According to Ellie's parents, S H E contributes enormously to the good education of the beneficiary girls and especially their daughter. According to them, in the past, they could not pay for their children's schooling because of a lack of financial means, since there are four children to go to school, including Ellie, the only girl. After making an effort to pay for the schooling of all four children they can not make ends meet, but since S H E took charge of their lives, they have changed positively. They say that it allowed them to cope with the schooling of the other 3 remaining children. In addition, the help that S H E gives her as ambassador, allows her to be fulfilled financially and to save for some of these needs. The parents confirm that they are very satisfied with the goods made of S H E in the place of their daughter and thank the donors and S H E partners enormously and encourage them to continue their humanitarian work.

The mother of Sara thanks S H E and those who put this beautiful idea to work for the development of girls and women in this environment. It is not easy to educate a girl. S H E contributes and continues to contribute to the well being of my daughter and me. This work relieves me financially because the burden was resting on me alone. Thanks to S H E, the future of my child is assured. I encourage these generous donors not to give up because our wishes are to see our girls succeed to save us one day from our precarious situations.



Alia's mother said "I appreciate the work of S H E because it's been a long time since my husband left me the charge of our children, and I have no source of income except the porridge I sell by side of the road. I am married to a polygamous man and I have difficulty bearing the burden of our children. The admission to S H E of my daughter greatly relieved me by the fact that her schooling is now assured."

Marina's parents welcome S H E's help with their daughter. For them it is a great financial relief because it is difficult for them to pay for their daughter's schooling especially to buy school uniforms and supplies. The family says a big thank you to S H E.

According to Chilalo's parents, S H E came at the right time to reduce their concern and pain with regard to the financial support SHE gives to their daughters. They say that it contributes enormously to their own daughter's self-fulfillment.

Emilie's parents say they are very happy that S H E is reducing their burdens by paying for their daughter's schooling. It is true that thanks to S H E we do not worry anymore when the new school year is approaching. We are happy especially when our daughter tells us that S H E has hired tutors for them and especially a midwife to talk about their health.

Elodie's mother expresses her joy by saying that thanks to S H E, her child continues school without difficulty because in the past, she is often dismissed because of schooling and God only knows how we manage to pay so she can access the course.



## *Interview with Teachers*

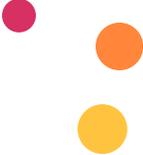
According to research that has been done in schools concerning girls' education, it has been found that several causes are at the root of girls' out-of-schooling. But poverty is the major cause. When the populations surveyed are asked to give the reasons for the non-enrollment in school, especially girls, they refer first of all to the economic and financial problems. Parents' poverty is considered by the local education authorities and the communities surveyed as the main obstacle to girls' non-enrollment and dropouts in HAHO prefecture (region of Togo where S H E is located).

Families have to deal with the purchase of supplies, School Management Committee fees for school maintenance, school uniforms and other daily expenses of school children. However, agriculture, which is the main activity of the region, according to the communities, is characterized by a number of difficulties, including the low purchase prices of soybeans and cotton. "Agriculture is the main activity of the people living in the HAHO prefecture. Cotton and soy are the main cash crops grown.

However, according to the populations, the purchase prices of these products are low and are not respected by the buyers even when they are fixed by the government. Because access roads to agricultural fields are not easy to access, people believe that they are forced to sell off their production and most of the weather causes rot in the fields. “Cotton is a crop that could allow farmers to have enough financial means. But the purchase price is also low”(a parent of a student).

In the context of poverty, many parents consider that girls can carry out income-generating activities to financially support the family. Thus, they are put into childhood labor at the expense of school to bring back financial resources to the family. And often in these conditions, girls who are in school, lacking enough support, drop out of school earlier. They are also concerned and cannot work well in class. For lack of financial means to buy what they need, it is left to men and finally, it is the unwanted pregnancy that slows progress for girls’ schooling.

## *About domestic work and rural pressures on girls*



Domestic and rural work is seen by educators as a major obstacle to schooling and keeping girls in primary school. The director of the Kpota school declares that during an investigation made by the Ministry of Secondary Education, it appears that parents believe that the control of domestic and rural work by children and especially by girls is the basis of their social integration. Therefore, girls must learn them and master them. “Rural and domestic work is seen as an apprenticeship for girls as they are expected to marry in the near future. This situation means that many girls are out of school and those who are in school are often removed from school during school hours to go to the field or clean. Other girls are often taken to the capital or neighboring countries for paid domestic work during the school year. And it should be noted that most students live in rural areas where the main activity is agriculture. Some girls help their mothers in the field work and are deprived of school, especially in the surrounding areas and farms of Notsè.

In the area, some groups place pride in girls bearing responsibility for domestic activities. They consider that the main role of the woman is to perform household activities and that the control of domestic activities by the female population, even the educated one, is therefore considered a necessity. In general, women feel that these activities are important learning for any girl who is expected to marry as an adult. However, it should be noted that it is often difficult for some girls to reconcile these domestic activities with school attendance. It is obvious that the importance given by some parents to domestic work at the expense of school is a source of under-schooling and out of school for girls.

## *On girls' education and S H E students' progress*

From a strictly educational point of view, it can be considered that groups living in rural areas, especially girls, experience greatly increased limitations in the exercise and enjoyment of the right to education. Despite the educational policies adopted in most countries to ensure equality between the two sexes, girls are still in a worse position than boys at all levels of education, and this difference increases as students move to a higher level in school. With this in mind, Mrs. ANANTE Louise, teacher at the high school and Kpota college of Notsè said that: “in the 6th grade, the number of girls is proportional to that of boys in our school, but this number decreases each time the year changes and we lose more and more girls” In addition, the girls who come from the remote farms are dropout more rapidly than girls from the city because they come from very poor families who do not even have the possibility to pay their school fees or the outfits and school kits. When we send them back for the non-payment of their tuition, some do not come back anymore.

Girls who are admitted to the S H E program are making tremendous progress in seeing their classroom responses and quarterly averages. It is true that some are shy and do not respond well in class, but we help them to enter the discussion.

In the same vein, Dyna Manou, a teacher at Soke de Notsè Private School, said: “In the past, people think that girls are made to help their mum in domestic and commercial work. They think that girls are subordinate and they are made to be housewives; but nowadays, this theory no longer holds true as things have evolved and women too occupy positions of responsibility. The parents quickly understood and schooled their daughters. This means that at the different schools in Notsè, girls are becoming more outperforming boys because the first ranks are occupied by girls and some girls in the S H E program are among them. As an illustration, we can quote ZANOUE Edith, a girl who was admitted to S H E that by this year, still occupies the first rank.

In the 6th grade we have 50% of girls and 50% of boys. We can say that parity is reached in our school at KPOTA but the observation is that in the upper grades from third to high school or in exam classes, the number of girls decreases. And if we do surveys, we see that these girls who give up are girls who come to remote farms and have no support and no means to pay for their schooling. Other investigations reveal to us early pregnancies. But we have seen an improvement in the girls who are admitted to S H E's help programs. Their living conditions have improved in the school field. And since their parents also do not spend more for their schooling, they are more or less fulfilled.

