



**RIGHT TO
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COMMISSION**
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NEWSLETTER



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**TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR INFORMATION
OFFICERS & CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS**



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JOIN US FOR RTI MONTH!



As we prepare to celebrate RTI Month, we are excited to announce a series of activities aimed at promoting the right to information and raising awareness about its importance. Here is a brief overview of the events lined up for this special month:

Media Engagements

Our media engagements will kick off RTI Month with a press release and series of media interviews. These will provide a platform to discuss the significance of Access to Information, highlight success stories, International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI), decisions and address challenges faced in the Implementation of the RTI Act (989).

Church and Mosque Sensitization

Understanding the pivotal role that religious institutions play in community life, eighty-eight (88) churches and twelve (12) mosques have been identified for sensitization in Greater Accra, Ashanti and Bono regions respectively. These sessions aim to educate congregants about their right to access information and the benefits it brings to society, encouraging them to be advocates for transparency and accountability.

International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI)

The International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI), observed on September 28 each year, serves as a vital platform for global stakeholders to engage in discussions

about information access policies in the digital era. This observance empowers individuals, facilitates informed decision-making, drives innovation, and promotes inclusivity and social progress. This year's conference, themed "Mainstreaming Access to Information and Participation in the Public Sector," will be held in Ghana on October 1st and 2nd, 2024. It will gather Information Commissioners, Civil Society Representatives, and other key Stakeholders from around the world to address issues related to the right to access information. We invite everyone to participate in these activities and support our efforts to enhance transparency, accountability, and informed citizenry. Together, let's make RTI Month a resounding success!



TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR INFORMATION OFFICERS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

The Right to Information Commission (the Commission) in partnership with the International Republican Institute (IRI) and with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) undertook a 2-day training workshop under the Political Accountability Activity programme of the USAID for Civil Society Organizations and Information Officers. Representatives from twenty-four (24) Civil Society Organizations and twenty-four (24) Information Officers were selected from regions of the country where there was very low usage of Act 989 to access information as recorded in the 2022 RTI Annual Report. The training workshop was also hinged on a research titled 'An Assessment of the Implementation of the RTI Law in Ghana' developed for the IRI. The training workshop was scheduled for the 25th and 26th of

July, 2024 in Kumasi. Representatives from the RTI Coalition in the persons of Sammy Obeng and Mina Mensah also played a significant role in the training workshop.

The training workshop was intended to enhance the effective implementation of the right to information law by training Information Officers and Civil Society Organizations in the regions where there are very low applications for information. Speakers at the training workshop included the representatives of the International Republican Institute in the person of Sunday Afolabi Olao, Sammy Obeng from the RTI Coalition, Kofi Amoah Sarpong from the Right to Information Commission.

The Facilitators from the Right to Information Commission took turns to train participants on the tenets of Act 989.

The General Manager for the Legal, Governance, Regulatory and Research

Department of the Commission highlighted the specific activities undertaken by the Commission in the implementation of the right to information law. He outlined the challenges which have confronted the operationalisation of Act 989 and the many successes the Commission



Mr. Kofi Amoah Sarpong of the Commission making a presentation.



Stephen Owusu Esq. of the Commission training participants on the implementation of the RTI Law

has also achieved in the face of the challenges. Notable successes cited included the preparation of the Regulations for the RTI Law which has gone through the pre-laying processes with the Committee on Subsidiary Legislation, the preparation and launch of the five-year strategic plan dubbed the “Pathway to Open and Transparent Governance: A Five Year Strategy for the Right to Information Commission of Ghana,” opening of offices in the Bono and Ashanti Regions, as well as a successful completion of regional sensitization tours of all the sixteen (16) regional capitals of Ghana.

Following the presentation by Stephen Owusu Esq., Jennifer Owusu Nyarko from the Enforcement, Investigations and Compliance Department trained the participants on the following topics: Right to Access Information, Responsibility of Public Institution in respect of Access, and Accessing Information.

Emmanuel Asmah of the Legal, Governance, Regulatory and Research Department of the Commission also trained participants on the following topics: Exempt Information, Disclosure for the Protection of Public Interest, and Offences.

Elizabeth Segbefia of the Enforcement, Investigations and Compliance Department trained participants on the following topics: Application for Internal Review, Decision on Internal Review, Application for Review at the Commission, Annual Reports by public institutions and, Fees and Charges.

Michael Duodu-Sakyiama from the Policy Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation Department trained the participants on the Manner of Access and Transfer of Applications, the Commission as a Regulator, the Functions of the Commission, the Object of the Commission, Promotion of Right to Information, Monitoring Powers of the Commission, Orders, Decisions and Directives of the Commission, as well as Research and Law Reform.

All the training sessions were followed by questions and answers to provide better clarity to aspects of the presentations that the participants did not have a better understanding of. The novelty about this training workshop was that all the key actors in the access to information value chain, which are the Civil Society Organizations representing the demand side, the Information Officers

representing the supply side and the Commission being the regulator, had the opportunity to have direct interactions which helped to address concerns on the part of each party as well as share experiences that can help improve the status quo. Feedback from all participants shows that the programme largely was successful in achieving its objective of enhancing the capacity of stakeholders on the demand and supply side on the implementation of the right to information law.



Michael Duodu-Sakyiama of the Commission making his presentation during the training



Elizabeth Segbefia of the Commission making her presentation during the training session



Emmanuel Asmah Anyimah of the Commission making his presentation



Jennifer Owusu Nyarko of the Commission making a presentation



Participants discussing determinations made by the Commission during the breakout session



SENSITIZATION OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

The Right to Information Commission (RTIC) has embarked on a series of awareness campaigns to enhance the understanding and implementation of the Right to Information Act, 2019 (Act 989) across various public institutions. From July 2nd to July 18th, RTIC representatives from the Accra office visited numerous institutions including the Awutu Senya District

Assembly, Ghana India Kofi Annan Center of Excellence, Ghana Prison Service, Ghana Water Company Ltd., Nuclear Regulatory Authority, Ghana Post Office, GIHOC Distilleries Company Ghana Ltd., Airport Company Ltd., Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, Ghana Maritime Authority, Fisheries Commission, Premix, and the National Media Authority.

On July 2 and July 24, 2024, virtual presentations were conducted for the Ahafo Ano South East and Afigya Kwabre District Assemblies. Subsequently, on July 3 and 19, in-person sessions were organized for students at the College of Science, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Prempeh College SHS and KNUST SHS, all located in Kumasi, Ashanti Region.



RTIC staff with sensitized staff of The Ghana Maritime Authority, Accra

On July 23, representatives from the Bono Region RTI Commission engaged in an informative and interactive session with the management and staff of the Health Facility and Regulatory Agency (HeFRA) in the Bono Region.

The sensitization sessions were meticulously crafted to educate participants with a comprehensive understanding of the RTI Act. These sessions delved into the historical context of the Act, application processes, and the offences outlined within the Act. Officers explained the exemptions to information

disclosure, the powers and functions of the Commission, and the importance of compiling and publishing information manuals.

Furthermore, they also addressed the procedures for internal reviews and appeals and highlighted the significance of preserving the integrity of personal information. Critical questions about the Act's application and exemptions were addressed during these sessions, helping to clarify the responsibilities and obligations of public institutions under the law.

The sensitization conducted in July were instrumental in fostering a culture of transparency and accountability within public institutions. The Commission's diligent efforts in these initiatives, as mandated by law, are essential in ensuring compliance



Officers of the Commission sensitizing Management and Staff of HeFRA, Bono

with the Right to Information Act 2019 (Act 989) across various sectors of governance. This commitment to education and advocacy plays a pivotal role in

empowering public institutions to uphold the principles of transparency and accountability, ultimately benefiting the public and strengthening governance in Ghana.



RTIC Officers with Students of Prempeh College SHS, Kumasi



Vincent Appau, RTIC, sharing flyers to students of KNUST SHS, Kumasi



RTIC Officers with the Students of College of Science KNUST, Kumasi



MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN THE GREATER ACCRA REGION

As part of its mandate to ensure compliance with the Right to Information Act 2019 (Act 989), the Right to Information Commission (RTIC) has been actively conducting monitoring exercises at various public and private institutions. The purpose of this exercise was to ensure compliance with the RTIC's mandate of monitoring all public institutions and relevant private bodies regarding their adherence to the Right to Information framework.

From July 22 to 25, 2024, our team conducted a series of monitoring and compliance assessments at various public institutions, including the University of Ghana Medical Centre, the National Communication Authority, the Ghana Book Development Council, the Right to Information Commission, Nuclear Regulatory Authority, Tema General Hospital, National Blood Service, and the

University of Ghana, Regional Maritime University, TDC Ghana LTD, National Identification Authority, Pantang Hospital, PSC Tema Shipyard, and National Biosafety Authority, Rent Control Department, Internal Audit Agency, National Lottery Authority, and Public Works Department, National Ambulance Service, Judicial Service, Ministry of Information, Pharmacy Council, State Housing Company Ltd., Medical and Dental Council, Intercity STC Coaches Ltd. and New Times Corporation.

The Commission's continuous monitoring initiatives are crucial in ensuring that public and private institutions comply with the Right to Information Act 2019 (Act 989). These initiatives contribute to the effective implementation of the RTI framework across various sectors by evaluating adherence to the law and offering necessary guidance. This ensures that the legal requirements are met and the RTI framework operates smoothly.



RTIC Officers conducting series of monitoring and compliance exercises in various institutions



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