

**A tribute to a courageous woman and tireless advocate for peace and equality:  
Remembering Rosaline Baatuolkuu Obeng-Ofori**

On October 27, 2016, Mrs. Rosaline Baatuolkuu Obeng-Ofori, West Africa Program Manager, and the Purdue Peace Project's beloved Auntie Rosa, passed away of heart failure. She is mourned by the hundreds and thousands of lives she touched during her time on this earth.

We at the Purdue Peace Project (PPP) are devastated by the loss of our beloved Rosaline. She was our friend, our mentor, our hero, our conscience, and our inspiration. She inspired each one of us, indeed, everyone who ever met her, with her fearless, tireless quest for peace, development, and gender equality. We stand in awe of all that Rosaline accomplished in her life, a life that has ended far too early. We have countless memories of her standing up for the voices of women and other underrepresented groups, and fearlessly questioning the status quo, all to advocate for the betterment of the communities of which she was a part both in Ghana and beyond. She was relentless in her pursuit of peace, unwilling to accept the alternative no matter how complicated or protracted the conflict. She inspired women all over the world and in her own beloved Ghana to stand up for their rights and to be independent. She was a leader in the true sense of the word.

Prior to joining the PPP, Rosaline had already had an impressive and expansive career in development work, focusing primarily on human rights, gender equality, peacebuilding and pro-poor development work. This work included stints as West Africa Regional Coordinator and later as the Africa Human Resources Administrator for CUSO, as the Women Development Officer for the African Confederation of Savings and Credit Associations, as the National Women's Rights Coordinator for ActionAid Ghana, as the National Women Development Officer for the Credit Union Associations of Ghana, and as the Deputy Country Director for the Canadian International Development Agency, among numerous other positions and affiliations. She also served as the first female director of cabinet (chief of staff) for the ECOWAS Commission in Abuja, Nigeria, and was one of a handful of women who served as high-level mediators appointed by UN Women in West Africa.

Rosaline joined the PPP as one of its founding members in January 2012. From the very beginning, Rosaline believed that shifting peacebuilding from a "top-down" to a "bottom-up" approach would help more communities to live in peace. Through her tireless efforts, the Berekum Peace Committee (BPC) emerged out of an actor meeting which was possible only due to the countless hours she put in to organize it. With her encouragement and advice, the BPC went on to become community leaders and local peacebuilders themselves, helping in the prevention of violence in Berekum. Since then, she spearheaded the launch of several new projects across Ghana, bringing her light, vigor, and vision to several communities. Through her efforts, local peace committees emerged in Nandom, Kato, and most recently in Tuobodom, and have been strategizing and implementing tactics for peace in their

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respective communities. These individuals and communities join us in mourning this incredible woman.

To those of us who had the privilege of spending any time with Rosaline, her commitment to make this world a better place showed through. She believed strongly in her heart that women's empowerment was key to a nation's development, and she put this belief into practice every moment she could. Whether it was encouraging micro-financing for women in her hometown of Nandom, or reprimanding a man who dared to attempt to silence a woman in front of her, when it came to women's issues, Rosaline saw no rank or status; she saw an opportunity to improve women's lives. She even put her passion into words, penning published stories about women's resilience and speaking out regularly through media programs, and action, playing a key role in the passage of the Domestic Violence Act in Ghana and to the development of the Women's Manifesto for Ghana to ensure that state and non-state actors mainstream gender in their activities. Her efforts on behalf of her country led to her appointment by the president of Ghana as a commissioner for the National Development Planning Commission.

But what we here at the PPP will miss most about our dearest Rosaline is her never-ending belief in the good of people, her love for humankind. With every setback, every roadblock in our way, she would never give up and just soldier on, secure in the knowledge that the work was worth doing.

We are still coming to terms with losing our beloved Rosaline. That upon exiting Kotoka Airport in Accra we will never again be enveloped in a huge Rosaline hug. That we will never again hear her hearty "Hellooooo" over the phone or Skype. That we will never again see her silence patriarchy with a glance. That we will never again sit in awe watching her command a room to advocate for peace. That we will never again hear about her stories of travel, of which she had many, many hilarious ones. But we are so very grateful that we had the chance to spend time with this courageous woman, our fellow Purdue "Boilermaker," an individual who inspired us in so many ways. She has been taken far too soon, when she had so much more to do. But the good she did do in her time in this world, the lives she touched through her work are testament to a life well lived.

In mourning her, we celebrate her, and endeavor to honor her memory in the only way we know how - by continuing her life's work and fighting for peace, justice, and gender equality.

Until we meet again, dearest Rosaline...Big hugs.