

**WOMECA MEDIA AND CHANGE (WOMECA)**

**2014**

**ANNUAL REPORT**



**P. O. BOX CT 10475  
CANTOMENTS, ACCRA  
29 GARDEN ROAD-EAST LEGON**

**Website: [www.womeca.org](http://www.womeca.org)**

**Email: [womeca@hotmail.com](mailto:womeca@hotmail.com)**

**DECEMBER, 2014**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Women Media and Change (WOMEC) is grateful to all participants who participated in the *Media Training Workshop on Gender-based Violence* organized by WOMEC in Accra on December 3, 2014.

The Network also recognizes the support and insightful presentations of the resource persons and the enthusiastic participation of the journalists who took time off their busy schedule to participate in the workshop.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

ACKNOWLEDMENT.....	2
OUR MISSION.....	4
OUR VISION.....	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	5
PROJECT/ACTIVITY.....	6
APPENDICES.....	15

## **VISION**

To bridge the gap between rhetoric and action in addressing issues on gender, and empowering women to gain public voice and visibility as well as to have control over their lives.

## **MISSION**

- To conduct research on media needs of women in Ghana.
- To carry out media skills and ICT training for women with leadership potentials, parliamentarians and mid-level career women.
- To build the capacity of media personnel to effectively report on gender and women's issues.
- To publish appropriate publications on women and gender
- To advocate for the rights of women

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 2014, WOMEC could not carry out a number of projects because of various factors including the lack of funding and this resulted in the organisation carrying out only one project to build the capacity of both female and male media practitioners as advocates against domestic violence.

Over the years, the incidence of domestic violence has seen a rise with women being the main victims. A lot has been done to curb the rising statistics, but WOMEC believes that in order to make more progress, both men and women must come together to fight against it, since domestic violence is a gender issue.

The media occupies a significant place in the economic, social, cultural and political development of every country, in the light of these, WOMEC therefore sees the empowerment of all journalists, both male and female, as crucial to sustain advocacy on domestic violence.

Hence, during the course of the year a meeting was organized to empower a group of media practitioners to keep up the fight against domestic violence.

**Charity Binka (Mrs)**

**Executive Director**

## ***PROJECT/ACTIVITY***

### **INTRODUCTION**

As part of the vision to emphasize the need to cut down on gender-based violence in society, WOMEC organized a media training workshop on Wednesday, December 3, 2014 at the National Insurance Commission in Accra to educate and build the capacity of journalists on gender-based issues such as rape, defilement, abuse etc.

The workshop brought together some 12 journalists and resource persons to deliberate on the way forward in handling gender-based violence in Ghana and Africa as a whole.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the meeting included the following:

- To step up advocacy around domestic violence, their prevention and control in Ghana and beyond
- To give greater visibility to gender-based violence through the media
- To strengthen collaboration between journalists and the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service

### **OPENING CEREMONY**

The meeting was opened with a welcoming address by Mr. James Addy, an Editor from the Ghanaian Times. He said it was worthy to note that the workshop was attended by both female and male journalists. This, he believes, will ensure that gender-based violence will not be seen as an issue that only concerns women.



In a short remark, Mrs. Charity Binka, WOMEC Executive Director, said the workshop was necessary because the media needed to pay more attention to gender-based issues, which has a direct bearing on people.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

Two presentations were made on Domestic Violence and Media Strategies:

### **Presentation 1:**

**Domestic Violence – Strategies for Prevention and Control: by ASP Lydia Osei Agyapong, DOVVSU, Ghana Police**

ASP Agyepong Osei Agyapong in her presentation said that violence against women in



Ghana is deeply rooted in a history of social, cultural and legal traditions that permitted men's abuse of women and children in family relationships.

According to ASP Agyapong, the plight of abused women and children has caught the attention of civil society particularly rights based NGOs who lobbied and advocated against the flagrant abuse of rights. A

national plan of action was drawn to implement affirmative action after Ghana participated in Beijing platform of action in 1995. As a result of this various interventions were put in place and the Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) was established in 1998. As part of the

action plan, the Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) later became DOVVSU to protect the rights of women and children while ensuring their welfare. In carrying out its duties, DOVVSU prevents, investigates and prosecute all cases involving domestic violence, gender-based violence and child abuse.

ASP Lydia said the campaign by DOVVSU had created the much-needed awareness but this should be sustained throughout the year to minimize violence directed at women and children.

She also called on men to get more involved in the campaign, as men are critical partners in the fight against the abuse of women and children. She stressed that gender-based violence was becoming more noticeable. All of us need to get involved in fighting abuse

On preventive measures she said "We must understand how our own attitudes and actions might promote sexism and violence. We must ensure that children are not exposed to inappropriate sexual and violent material.

She brought to light challenges DOVVSU faced both in handling domestic violence cases and the media in the cause of their duty. These she said were as follows:

#### **Challenges in Handling Domestic Violence**

- ▶ Delays in reporting the abuse
- ▶ Difficulty in getting evidence from witnesses to building a good case for prosecution
- ▶ Difficulty getting funds for medical treatment and reports
- ▶ Limitation of health care because there is no form to measure or record emotional abuse
- ▶

#### **Challenges with the media**

- ▶ Unhealthy media reportage of domestic violence cases which includes:
  - Rush to demand information from police on fresh case



- Showing of pictures of child victim or perpetrators
- Identification of victims relations
- Using of bad language
- Showing of pornographic materials to children
- Lack of knowledge on child rights laws pertaining to children

ASP Lydia Agyapong called on the media to partner with the police in the fight against domestic violence. She said emphatically that "Together we can make a difference because we strongly believe that somebody somewhere, somehow knows something about abuse."



Participants listening to the presentations

**Presentation 2: Gender Based-Violence by Mrs. Charity Binka, WOMEC Executive Director**



**Mrs. Charity Binka making her presentation**

Mrs. Binka who handled the topic asked the media to challenge militarism and end gender based-violence which were in the form of:

- ▣ Sexual Violence – Incest, Rape, Defilement, Sexual harassment
- ▣ Physical Violence – Assaults
- ▣ Cultural Violence – Child marriages, Child abduction, Forced marriages, Trokosi, Female Genital Mutilation, Widow Inheritance, Widowhood rites
- ▣ Religious practices – Branding women as witches, demon possessed, hitting women to cast out demons, pouring oil into nostrils of women

Mrs. Binka added that media headlines most often were not helpful. It was often based on the following assumptions:

- ▣ Victim of rape is responsible for the act
- ▣ Victim blamed for being at an inappropriate place
- ▣ Victim not being obedient
- ▣ Victim provoked the offender

- ▣ Victim not well dressed
- ▣ Victim did not take precautionary measures to prevent rape

She said media advocacy could play a massive role in educating people about this issue that was eating into our national fabric. According to her, this can be achieved by raising awareness within both the rural and urban population across communities in the country.

*She gave the breakdown of the previous years’ statistics for reported cases of domestic violence in the country as shown below:*

**REPORTED CASES**

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Defilement</b>	1,168	1,111	1,223
<b>Rape</b>	370	290	312
<b>Incest</b>	15	18	26
<b>Non-maintenance</b>	5,797	6,107	5,797
<b>Threatening</b>	1,474	120	1,097
<b>Assault</b>	5,382	747	2,795
<b>Abortion</b>	88	15	42
<b>Compulsion of marriage</b>	16	11	21

She however stressed that media can help check gender-based violence through the following strategies:

- ▣ Recognizing violence as a human rights issue
- ▣ Changing people’s mindset
- ▣ Creating awareness through investigations, follow-ups, news features, etc.
- ▣ Sustaining interest in gender-based violence
- ▣

**4.0 GROUP WORK**

The group work focused on “**Media strategy for curbing gender-based violence**”.



This session was opened by Mr. George Koomson. He started by explaining the way journalists package information as news.

The journalists were placed in three groups to critically examine some selected headlines of the presentations made at the workshop.

Participants were asked to list the new issues that had emerged from the presentations and how they were going to address them in their various media.



Participants in group discussions.

***Key issues from the group discussions included the following:***

- There is the need for more education to erode the deeply rooted “abusive” sexual cultures.
- Men must understand that women have authority over their own bodies and no one else.

- Educate victims of abuse (rape) to report in time and ensure key evidence is not eroded.
- The media must highlight the harm caused to victims to ensure that policy makers take a decision on the issue.
- In case of sex workers, men should not be spared. Just as women are arrested, their male patrons must also be arrested.
- Differentiate indecent assault from defilement.
- Media must avoid trying to preempt the courts when cases are still on trial.
- Censorship board must do its best to ensure that only wholesome programmes are televised.
- Stakeholders such as GIBA, GJA, Media Commission must get journalists sensitized to avoid sensationalizing or dramatizing domestic violence stories.
- The need to dialogue with Editors to give prominence to gender issues.
- Emphasis should be placed on educating the public on domestic violence.



**Group Picture**

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

## **5.1 Evaluation**

At the end of the workshop, participants gave their impressions and evaluations of the workshop:

*The issues included the following:*

- ▶ The workshop was effective in terms of presentations, interactions and participation
- ▶ WOMEC should include more male participants in workshops
- ▶ More journalists should be invited especially radio presenters for future workshops
- ▶ More time should be allocated to the resource person's presentations
- ▶ In response to an anonymous questionnaire at the end of the workshop participants rated the workshop as highly effective and successful

## **5.2 Wrap up and Closing**

In closing the workshop, Mrs. Binka urged the media practitioners not to keep the messages gathered at the workshop to themselves but use what they have learnt in their broadcast and writings to educate the public.

She advised on the need to train young journalists to take over from the older ones, in order to ensure that, the critical role played by the media in the advocating against gender-based violence is sustained.

APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix A - SELECTED ARTICLES

(a) Print Media

Graphic, Tuesdays December 9, 2014. Page 13

Daily Graphic, Tuesday, December 9, 2014. Visit www.graphic.com.gh

# Gender

## 'Give needed attention to domestic violence'

By Rubeneo Quacco-Duho, ACCORA

**A**N ASSISTANT Superintendent of Police (ASP), Mrs Lydia Osei Agyapong, has called on institutions working to promote the rights of women and the vulnerable to give attention to issues related to domestic violence.

Speaking at a media sensitization training organized by the Women, Media and Change (WOMEC) network, ASP Agyapong, who is also an Administrator and Staff Officer at the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service (GPS), commended the efforts of service providers for setting a course to handle such violence cases.

She, however, decried what she described as the rate at which cases were dropped at the court, indicating that there was the need for a speedy trial in such cases to serve as deterrent in other jurisdictions.

ASP Agyapong enumerated violence as including threatening acts that result in physical, economic, emotional and sexual abuse.

**Statistics**

She cited the Ghana Gender Studies and Human Rights Information Centre show that one in three women have been physically assaulted by a partner.

Another 37 per cent of women have also been sexually assaulted in their lifetime, while one in three women have been financially or touched against their will.

Also, for every 10 women, there find experience of sex was against their will with another three in 10 women forced by their male partners to have sex.

The training formed part of activities to mark this year's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence celebrated worldwide from November 25, to December 10 every year.

**Challenges**

Enumerating some challenges confronting the unit, ASP Agyapong said delay in reporting cases, difficulty in getting evidence from witnesses to build a good case for prosecution, difficulty in getting funds for maximal treatment and reports difficulty penetrating the walls of the family/community system as well as seeing issues of Ghanaian tradition as a greater matter, were some of the problems facing her outfit.

The unit, she said, had developed a five-year strategic plan, as well as opened 107 offices and gender desks across the country, indicating that the unit, with support from UNICEF, had formed a network against child abuse for some service providers.

It has also developed a training manual on sexual and reproductive right for the police training schools, as well as developed a standard Operating Procedure on child-friendly policing to be incorporated into police training school curriculum with the help of UNICEF Ghana.

**What can the media do?**

The Executive Director, WOMEC, Mrs Charity Rinka, decried the rate at which the media portrayed victims of domestic violence as the cause of their woes.

She called on the media to recognize domestic violence as a human rights issue and help to change the mind set of the general populace.

She called on the media to help in creating awareness on domestic violence through their investigative writings, follow-up stories, news features and documentaries.

\* Writer's email: rduho@graphic.com.gh

## **(b) Online Media Articles**

### **STORY 1**

#### **Stop human rights abuse in churches – DOVVSU**

By: Eugenia Tenkrong/citifmonline.com/Ghana

<http://www.citifmonline.com/2014/12/11/stop-human-rights-abuse-in-churches-dovvsu/>

The Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service has called on human rights activists and other stakeholders to fight abuses in churches.

Many religious leaders are alleged to be using all forms of violent acts, including hitting and pushing congregants under the guise of healing them miraculously

The move by DOVVSU was triggered by a recent video released where the beleaguered founder of the International God's Way Church, Daniel Obinim was seen stamping the stomach of what looked like a pregnant woman continuously, in a deliverance service.

Speaking to **Citi News** at the end of the gender-based violence training workshop, an assistant Staff Officer at the DOVVSU headquarters, Lydia Osei Agyapong, said the act captured in the video and several others that occur in churches daily "constitute human right violations".

"It's becoming rampant, from morning till evening they are on the TV trying to cast demons here and there, pouring oil into their nose and mouths, hitting their chests and hitting their heads", she said.

Madam Osei Agyepong however, said the issue is a difficult one to deal with currently because of the people's willingness to subject themselves to this abuse, adding that, "when you look at it, sometimes your heart is pumping but because they have gone there freely, on their own, you cannot do much." According to her, both religious leaders and their congregants might not be aware that such healing practices constitute human rights violations.

"Probably they don't know. The churches don't know or people who go there don't know so there is supposed to be a right approach". She opined that the gravity of the practices warrants pragmatic efforts from all stakeholders "so that all these religious abuses can be curtailed or stopped".

The workshop was organized by Women, Media and Change, WOMEC, a non-governmental organization.



Meanwhile, a lead advocacy agency on maternal health, The MamaYe Campaign and the Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights ARHR have condemned the action by Daniel Obinim and called on the Ghana Health Service and law enforcement agencies to protect unborn children and their mothers from practices which put their lives at risk.

In a statement, Vicky T. Okine, Executive Director of ARHR noted, “it is sad that in this day and age where organizations are working assiduously to reduce maternal and newborn deaths, but some religious leaders are worsening the plight of women in Ghana through unorthodox healthcare promises and practices.”

“This action is a sad reflection of how gullible we are as a community and, consequently, how susceptible we are to exploitation – both of which contribute negatively to maternal and newborn survival.

The statement called on the Christian Council and the Ghana Pentecostal Council to strengthen their monitoring processes to identify and rein in overzealous and exploitative leaders who prey on the lack of knowledge and vulnerability of the needy and lead them into situations that threaten their health and in this context, that of the unborn child.

The health system is already stretched and we must eschew practices that are inimical to safe pregnancies and deliveries.

## STORY 2

By Josephine Naaeke - GNA

### **DOVVSU Report Shows Increase In Domestic Violence**

<http://news.peacefmonline.com/pages/social/201412/224734.php>

Accra, December 4, GNA

A Report by the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service for August on gender-based domestic violence against women, reveals an increasing trend in cases of domestic violence. The Report said there was a total of 17, 708 cases on non maintenance from 2011 to 2013.

The Report showed that 5,797 cases on non-maintenance were recorded in 2011, 6107 in 2012 and 5797 in 2013. Total defilement cases stood at 4,488 from 2010 to 2013, which included 981 cases in 2010, 1,168 in 2011, 1,111 in 2012 and 1228 in 2013.



Assault had a high record of 5382 in 2011, which reduced to 746 in 2012 and went up to 2795 in 2013.

Mrs Charity Binka, Executive Director of Women, Media and Change, made these disclosures in a presentation at a day's workshop in Accra for media practitioners on the theme; "Let's Challenge Militarism and End Gender-Based Violence." Other reported cases included, rape, incest, abortion and forced marriage.

Mrs Binka appealed to the media to recognize violence as a human right issue, and attach importance to it, by exposing the perpetrators, adding that there was the need for Ghanaians to change their mind set, treat women with the dignity they deserve. She also called for investigative reports and follow ups, features and documentaries, which she said, would go a long way to create the needed awareness on domestic violence against women.

Mrs Lydia Osei Agyapong, DOVVSU Administrator, said the unit played a very important role in abuse prevention, adding that there was increase in the domestic violence cases due to the awareness that has been created over the years.

She, however said, challenges confronting the Unit include delays in reporting cases, difficulty in getting evidence, difficulty in getting funds for medical treatment, and reports and limitation of health care. She complained of some unhealthy media reportage of domestic violence cases, such as, showing pictures of child victims or perpetrators, identification of victim's relations, showing of pornography materials to children.

Mrs Agyemang said the Unit had adopted mechanisms to control domestic violence by

awareness creation and public education, apprehension and prosecution of offenders, and the enforcement of the relevant legislation to the letter.

### STORY 3

#### **Reckless Abuse Of People On The Increase In The Name Of Religion—DOVVSU**

By Jonas Nyabor, Broadcast Journalist Radio Uniners, Legon-Accra

<http://www.modernghana.com/news/585586/1/reckless-abuse-of-people-on-the-increase-in-the-na.html>



**The National Secretariat of the Domestic Violence and Victims' Support Unit (DOVVSU) has identified religious abuse as a fast growing trend in most Ghanaian churches.**

At a day's workshop on Gender-based violence for media practitioners on the theme;

“Let's Challenge Militarism and End Gender-Based Violence” in Accra, administrator at the National Secretariat of DOVVSU, ASP Lydia Osei Agyapong noted that some churches and

prayer camps in the country perpetuated sexual and physical abuse against congregants especially women and children under the guise of religious healing and deliverance.

According to her, some spiritual leaders harassed, humiliated and inflicted physical pain on congregants under the pretext of exorcising them. She said the practice had existed for several years however had been on the increase in recent times with most of them being broadcasted on TV.

“It is becoming rampant; from morning to evening you see them on TV trying to cast out demons. They hit them on the head, pour oil into their noses and mouths, hit their chests and so on. All these constitute human right violations,” ASP Osei Agyemang said.

She chastised the media for broadcasting such activities, adding that stakeholders must to develop strategies to address the menace since most of the victims of such abused seemed ignorant and voluntarily accepted such treatment.

She however noted that the Domestic Violence and Victim's and Support Unit had stepped up awareness creation on domestic violence and public education on the subject.

Executive Director of Women, Media and Change (WOMECE), organizers of the workshop, Mrs. Charity Binka revealed that a total of 17,708 cases on non-maintenance were reported at DOVVSU between 2011 and 2013. Total defilement cases between 2010 and 2013 stood at 4,488. Assault had a high record of 5382 in 2011, which reduced to 746 in 2012 and went up to 2795 in 2013.

Mrs. Binka called on the media to recognize violence as a human right issue, and attach importance to it, by exposing the perpetrators., adding that there was the need for Ghanaians to commit themselves to the fight against all forms on abuse in society.

## 6.2 Appendix B –Participants List

### RESOURCE PERSONS

NO	NAME	ORGANIZATION
1	ASP Lydia Osei Agyapong	DOVVSU – Ghana Police/HQ
2	Mr. George Koomson	Media Consultant
3	Mrs. Charity Binka	Executive Director - AMMREN

### JOURNALISTS

NO	NAME	ORGANIZATION
1	Bernice Bessey	Chronicle
2	James Dodoo Addy	Gh. Times
3	Eugenia Tenkorang	Citi FM
4	Issabella Ave	Adom FM
5	Anita Nyarko	Gh. Times
6	Joyce Gyekye	Radio GBC
7	Jonas Nyabor	Radio Universe
8	Josephine Naaeke	GNA
9	Gloria Anderson	Radio GBC
10	Rebecca Quaicoe	Graphic
11	Georgina Quaittoo	Spectator

### 6.3 Appendix C - Programme

**WOMEN, MEDIA AND CHANGE**

**WOMECE TRAINING WORKSHOP ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

**DECEMBER 5, 2014**

**VENUE: National Insurance Commission, Accra Independence Avenue**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
08.45–09.00am	Opening Prayer	James Addy
09.00 –09.15am	Welcome address	Charity Binka, WOMECE Executive Director
	<b>Presentations</b>	
09.15 -10.15am	<i>Topic</i> : Domestic Violence - Strategies for Prevention and Control.	<i>Rep. from Domestic Violence Unit, Ghana Police Service</i>
10.15 – 10. 45am	Discussions	
10.45 - 11.45am	Group work Media strategy for curbing gender-based violence	Charity Binka & George Koomson - Facilitators
11.45 – 12.15pm	Presentations & Discussions	Group reportage/ Facilitators
12.15 – 12.45pm	Wrap up	
1.00pm	<b>D E P A R T U R E</b>	