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# REPORT ON DOCUMENTATION OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR WIFVES AMBASSADORS IN THE WESTERN REGION

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## Project Summary

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## Document Summary

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## **Executive summary**

This report outlines the details of peer-to-peer community engagements conducted in nine communities which are the focus areas of the WiFVEs project in the Western region. The communities are Akwidaa, Dixcove, Cape three points, Metika. Ellonyi, Ezinlinbo, Eikwe, Ankobrah and Asanta. The purpose of this community engagement was to introduce fisherfolks to the concept of WIFVES ambassadors, select ambassadors and document principles for selected ambassadors and focal point persons. To achieve this, a few processes should be optimized such as training the ambassadors on how to be good advocates of GBV in the communities and at the end of the year, the outstanding advocates will be rewarded.



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*Figure 1: Cross-section of participants from Asanta*

## Introduction

Fisheries provide cheap animal protein, contributes 15% and 3.5% to agricultural and total gross domestic product (GDP) respectively, and creates jobs for 2.7 million people as fishermen, fishmongers, fish processors and traders. The roles of women and men in Ghana's fishing industry is defined by traditional gendered roles – men undertake fishing expeditions while women comprise the large share of people responsible for fish processing and marketing. In addition, women are engaged in fishery-related activities close to the household and focus on small catches of highly nutritious fish for immediate household consumption. In spite of these predefined roles, some women own vessels and canoes and are financiers of fishing expeditions.

Although existing national legislation protect their rights, lack of knowledge about these laws inhibits women's ability to defend their rights and demand protection from duty bearers. The foregoing factors have predisposed and led many women in fisheries into violence abuse and discrimination.

The WiFVES project is a three-year project funded by the European Union (EU) with overall aim of advocating against GBV in the marine fisheries sector. The project intends to achieve Gender Equality within Ghana's



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fisheries sector by building capacities of fisher folks and their leaders to prevent and respond to GBV in focus communities supporting law enforcement against GBV while improving access to social services and livelihood opportunities by women at risk and survivors of GBV.

The purpose of the community engagement activity, was to create awareness about GBV the WiFVEs project and to identify and select WIFVES ambassadors for the project's nine focus communities within the Western region.



*Figure 2: Plenary discussion at Cape Three Points*

## GOAL

The aim of the community engagement was to establish a network of ambassadors from the WiFVEs project communities. These ambassadors would actively raise awareness about Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and the WiFVEs project within their respective communities. By serving as advocates against GBV, they would exemplify anti-GBV behaviors and inspire positive change within their communities. Additionally from among the ambassadors, a focal point person would be appointed to facilitate communication and collaboration between the community and relevant government agencies as DSW, DOVVSU and the court system

The objectives of the community engagements were to:

Introduce the concept of the WiFVEs ambassadors and the role of the focal point person to the fisherfolk community

Select suitable ambassadors who would actively contribute to efforts aimed at reducing GBV within their



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communities

Develop and document guiding principles for the ambassadors to follow in their roles within the communities

1. Present fisherfolks to the concept of WIFVES ambassadors and focal point person.
2. Select ambassadors as allies in curbing GBV in the communities.
3. Document guiding principles for ambassadors in the communities.

### Participants/Stakeholder Information

Series of community engagements were held at 9 marine fishing communities which are Akwidaa, Cape three points, Dixcove, Metika, Ezilinbo, Ellonyi, Asanta and Ankobra all in the Western region. The engagement attracted male and female fisherfolks such as processors, traders and, canoe owners, crew members and fishermen in these communities. The meetings were facilitated by staff of Hen Mpoano.



*Figure 3: Hen Mpoano staff facilitating discussion*

### Meeting/Activity Proceedings

All through, the discussions facilitated by the Hen Mpoano team. The discussions were held in both English, Fantse and Nzema. It highlighted on GBV; various forms of GBV as well as contributory factors of GBV in the fishing communities from the male and female perspectives. During the meeting, the fisherfolks were introduced to the concept using males as allies in curbing GBV in the communities. The meeting proceeded with also selecting WIFVES ambassadors and documenting guiding principles for the ambassadors.



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## Meeting/Activity Outcomes

During the plenary discussions, the fisher folks highlighted that GBV is on the increase within the marine fishing communities. They indicated that the depleted fish stocks and the closed season period leads To increased GBV cases in the coastal communities. They further indicated that both men and women were perpetrators of GBV in fisheries work and the home.



*Figure 4: Discussions on guiding principles at Ezinlinbo*

On the forms of GBV in fishing communities, the fisherfolks indicated that various forms of GBV take place among them. However, the dominant ones that are taking place are the physical abuse, sexual abuse, abuse in the line of work and verbal and psychological abuse. According to them, physical abuse is often perpetuated by the men and verbal and psychological abuse are often perpetuated by the females. The male fisherfolks also indicated that, even the women abuse them economically. They indicated that, the women often buy the fish on credit. When the women sell the fish at the market, they often make multiple profit yet also tell the men they run into losses. A male participant was of the view that, due to this economic abuse, most women even end up not paying the fish they buy on credit. Both males and females were of the view that poverty, social norms, decline in fish stocks and ignorance of the laws and sanctions on GBV. Participants indicated that, sometimes they are abused by law enforcers.

A female participant indicated that in recent times, there are a lot of fishermen dying at sea due to boat capsizing. She further highlighted that, the police always extort monies from them when these issues happen and are reported to the police. Another participant added that, it very heartbreaking when the police take

these monies from them, nothing is done by the police, they just give them the go ahead to bury the bodies. A male participant highlighted that, even when dead bodies are washed ashore by the waves and you call the police, they still insist on taking money before coming. Another participant buttressed that, when you don't pay the money, the police won't attend to the body.



*Figure 5: Male participant giving his inputs during discussions at Ankobrah*

Fisherfolks in the communities specified that GBV leads to more poverty, injuries, burden of care on family members and broken homes. They further added that the effects of GBV in communities, is even more detrimental for children and it leads to child labour and school dropouts. Participants from Ellembele district indicated that, due to GBV in homes, lots of children are pushed into the streets. A participant indicated, there are female children who are as young as 9-12 years who are pregnant. He highlighted that the unfortunate part of this is that, due to poverty, these young girls are pushed to go stay with the fathers of their babies and sometimes, these males are also as young as 17 and 18 years who have left home and are even struggling to fend for themselves.

In the course of the discussions, fisher folks indicated that it was difficult curbing GBV and victims were reluctant in reporting cases because it is expensive and due to the lapses in law enforcement by their leaders and formal institutions, victims did not often receive a positive outcome. Victims receive lots of stigmatization from community members even when they make efforts to report.



*Figure 6 Plenary discussion on-going at Ellonyi*

Some participants indicated that very often the communities reject changes and do not want to be restricted in their dealings. To buttress this point, a female participant indicated that, in the past when some communities members out of their free will stand against abuse and violence, they are ridiculed in the communities. It is even worse if you decide to help victims seek justice at the police station or in court; you become an enemy of the community. A male participant highlighted that being a WiFVEs ambassador or focal point person will be very challenging as most communities are resistant to change. He further indicated that, it is a good initiative and urged that, there should be regular sensitization on the work of the ambassadors in the community. He added that, if possible, some of the meetings should involve the police and the larger community members with the laws and sanction spelt out to the community. Most participant agreed that, when community members are educated on these issues, they will not resist change and would even join in putting an end to GBV. Participants present also pledged their unflinching support to the ambassadors in putting an end to GBV in the communities.

Participants indicated that they were very excited about the ambassadors and the focal point persons that are going to be trained under the WIFVEs project. A female participant indicated that, often, victims are not able to report because, they do not even know the right channels to report these issues to. Most participants indicated that, having ambassadors and focal point persons, are good initiatives. They further highlighted that, most of the communities are very far from these government agencies. For instance, for people in Cape three Points, they have to come all they way to Agona (the district capital) to report issues



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to the police or DSW. This according to them is cumbersome and sometimes very discouraging to do so. They further indicated that have ambassadors and focal point persons within their communities will even help mitigate issues before they are further escalated.



Figure 7: Female participant contributing to discussions at Akwidaa

## Guiding Principles for Ambassadors

### Ahanta West

DIXCOVE (Upper and Lower)	AKWIDAA	CAPE THREE POINTS
1. The person must be vocal	1. Must be humble and not puffed up.	1. Must be patient 2. Must be a person of integrity



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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Must have good rapport with the community members</li> <li>3. Must be a person of integrity</li> <li>4. Must not be biased and must be able to work with both males and females</li> <li>5. The ambassadors must be pacesetters and lead by examples.</li> <li>6. The ambassador must be able to dedicate time for his/her work as an ambassador or a focal point person.</li> <li>7. Must be knowledgeable to matters relating to GBV.</li> <li>8. Must be patient in dealing with community members</li> <li>9. Must not be a violent individual or an abuser.</li> <li>10. Must be bold and courageous individuals in dealing with GBV in the community.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Ambassadors and focal point persons must be easily approachable by community members.</li> <li>3. Must not be an abuser or a violent person.</li> <li>4. Must be truthful in his or her dealings</li> <li>5. Must be able to communicate</li> <li>6. Must be a person of integrity</li> <li>7. Must be able to lead by example.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. The individual must have time for his or her work as ambassador</li> <li>4. Must be knowledgeable on issues relating to GBV.</li> <li>5. Must be truthful and honest in all his dealings</li> <li>6. Must have endurance to overcome all ridicules community members may bring in the course of their work as ambassadors or focal point persons.</li> <li>7. Must be knowledgeable of the roles as WIFVES ambassadors.</li> </ol>
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### Ellembelle District

ANKOBRAH	ASANTA	EIKWEI
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Must be brave</li> <li>2. Must be resilient and not give up amidst ridicule from community members</li> <li>3. Must be compassionate</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. An ambassador must lead by example.</li> <li>11. He/she must be responsible at home or workplace.</li> <li>12. Must be knowledgeable on GBV issues and how to curb GBV.</li> </ol>	



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<p>towards people. Especially victims.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be trustworthy and honest in all of his/her dealings.</li> <li>Must stand for fairness and equity.</li> <li>Must not be biased in his or her dealings in the community.</li> <li>Must not be greedy and extort money from people.</li> <li>Must be willing to dedicate time</li> <li>Must lead by example</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be able to keep some issues confidential</li> <li>Must not stigmatise victims of GBV.</li> <li>Must be ready to stay committed and dedicated towards reducing GBV in the community.</li> <li>Must be patient.</li> <li>Must be morally upright.</li> <li>Must be tolerant.</li> <li>Must be able to teach others what he or she has learned regarding GBV.</li> </ol>	
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Figure 8: Plenary discussions ongoing at Ellonyi

### Jomorro District

ELLONYI	EZINLINBO	METIKA
1. Must be willing to dedicate extra time out of daily schedule	1. Ambassadors must be loving	1. An ambassador must be humble



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<p>for issues relating to GBV in the community.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Must be patient</li> <li>3. Must be a responsible person in secret and in public</li> <li>4. Must not be sharp tongued</li> <li>5. Must be willing to work with all groups of person.</li> <li>6. Must be able to practice confidentiality in their roles as ambassadors</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. They must be patient throughout their dealings</li> <li>3. Must lead by example as ambassadors</li> <li>4. Ambassadors have to be resilient in carrying out their tasks despite opposition from some community members.</li> <li>5. Ambassadors must be responsible men and women at home</li> <li>6. Must be humble and not puffed up as they have been selected as leaders.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. An ambassador must be respectful towards old and young in the community.</li> <li>3. Must be able to communicate effectively</li> <li>4. Must be a good example at home and outside home.</li> <li>5. An ambassador must be without blemish when it comes to GBV and other social vices.</li> <li>6. An ambassador must be dedicated</li> <li>7. Must exhibit moral uprightness and integrity</li> <li>8. Must be deeply knowledgeable and well informed about his or her roles.</li> </ol>
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Figure 9: During discussion at Metika

## Challenges and suggestions

With regards to measures to curb GBV in the communities, the fisherfolks suggested that the WiFVEs project should liaise with stakeholders such as Ghana Police services, DOVVSU, Ghana Health Service (GHS), Department of social welfare with advocacy in the communities.

Community durbars should be held to introduce ambassadors and focal point persons to the community leaders and the entire community members. From the fisherfolks' perspectives, this will go a long way to reduce the stigma from community members and make community members aware of this great initiative.

As children are mostly affected with the detrimental effects of GBV in the homes, children should also be included in the awareness about GBV in the community. Ambassadors and focal point person must also seek for the welfare of children who maybe at risk of GBV.

For most communities we went to, they had encountered one issue or the other on the sea. At Asanta, according to fisherfolks, a boat had capsized leading to serious injuries. At Ezinlinbo, three fisherfolks who



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went on expedition got drowned in the sea. Ankobrah, they complained a body was washed ashore by the sea. Akwidaa also complained of their boat capsizing leading to the death of one fisherfolk. This complains of death lead to the fisherfolks feeling sad and devastated. They also complained this has put them in fear because their job keeps getting riskier by the day.

The fisherfolks indicated that both women and men fall victims to GBV to be poverty and lack of empowerment and these factors increase the most due to low catch and sea closure. They requested trainings in alternative livelihood activities and for soft loans to support their businesses.

### **Next Steps**

- WiFVEs team to work with ambassadors to develop and implement action plans to curb GBV in their communities.