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# REPORT ON FACILITATION OF ACTION PLAN FOR WIFVES AMBASSADORS IN THE WESTERN REGION

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**Hen Mpoano**



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## Project Summary

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## Document Summary

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## **Executive Summary**

This report outlines the details of training of selected WIFVES ambassadors in the Western Region. The meeting was held successfully in the Ellembelle, Jomorro, and Ahanta West districts. The purpose of the meeting was to facilitate the documentation of action plans for WIFVES ambassadors in the Western region. To achieve this, a few processes should be optimized such as familiarization with fundamental gender concepts, assess the documented guiding principles for the ambassadors and formulate comprehensive action plans. This report provides a detailed overview of the meeting's objectives, proceedings, outcomes, and the proposed next steps.

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## **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 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 this meeting was to formulate comprehensive Action Plans for WIFVES community ambassadors for the project's nine focus communities within the Western region.



## Goals

The primary goal of the workshop was to empower selected WIFVES ambassadors by imparting essential knowledge about gender concepts, evaluating guiding principles, and collaboratively developing comprehensive action plans. The workshop aimed to create a supportive environment for learning, sharing experiences, and fostering gender equality throughout the discussions.

## Objectives

- Familiarize Participants with Fundamentals of Gender Concepts
- Examine and Assess Guiding Principles for WIFVES Community Ambassadors
- Formulate Comprehensive Action Plans for WIFVES Community Ambassadors

## Participants/Stakeholder Information

The workshop was held in three (3) districts. Jomorro which included communities such as Metika and Ellonyi. Ellembelle district which involved communities such as Ankobrah and Asanta. Ahanta West district which involved the participation of Akwidua, Cape three points, Lower and Upper

Dixcove all in the Western region. The engagement attracted male and female ambassadors with varied professions and roles such as chief fishermen, konkohemaas, assembly persons, fishermen and fish processors and trader. such as processors, traders and, canoe owners, crew members and fishermen in these communities. The meetings were facilitated by staff of Hen Mpoano.

### **MEETING PROCEEDINGS**

All through the workshop, discussions were facilitated by the Hen Mpoano team. The discussions were held in both English, Fantse and Nzema. The workshop commenced with an introductory session, followed by interactive presentations, group discussions, and case studies. Participants actively engaged in brainstorming sessions, sharing valuable insights on the concepts of sex and gender as well as perceptions about gender roles. The engagement further touched on the effects of GBV and mechanisms that can be used to address GBV in the fishing communities from the ambassadors' perspectives. The workshop led to ambassadors drafting actions plans that can facilitate their activities within the communities. Facilitators led practical sessions, with role play, use of videos, sharing of experiences and fostered a participatory learning environment.



## MEETING/ACTIVITY OUTCOMES

During the preliminary discussions before the presentation on gender concepts, some ambassadors were of the view that, there is no difference between sex and gender. Also, some participants indicated that, sex was intercourse between male and females and gender is an identity given to males and females. On gender stereotypes, a male participant indicated that, gender stereotypes are based on biological differences between males and females. To support this point, a female participant also indicated that, gender stereotypes are universally the same and are not community specific. Some participants were also of the view that, gender stereotypes are fixed and unchangeable. To buttress this point, some participants indicated that, their ancestors knew best and put these in place to check behaviours. On gender biases, some participant revealed that, it still exists and often when they hear of certain professions like engineering, they assume it is a male occupying such position.



After the preliminary discussions, participants were introduced to fundamental gender concepts. The presentation tackled concepts such as sex, gender, gender stereotypes and gender biases. Sex refers to the biological and physiological make that distinguish individuals as male or female.

These attributes include chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive anatomy. While sex on the other hand, refers to the societal gender roles and expectations can impact various aspects of life, including education, career opportunities, family dynamics, and social interactions. Gender stereotypes are widely held beliefs and expectations about the characteristics, traits, roles, and behaviors that are considered appropriate for men and women in a particular culture. Gender bias refers to the unfair treatment or perception of individuals based on their gender. It can occur when stereotypes influence decision-making processes, leading to unequal opportunities or discriminatory behavior.

During the plenary discussions, participants indicated that, gender stereotypes and biases exist especially within fishing communities. A male participant indicated that, an example is the fact that, a woman is expected to calm and caring and the man on the other hand is expected to be brave and ambitious. Another male participant indicated that, due to gender stereotypes, females are not expected to go fishing in the sea. A female participant also indicated that, females are expected to care for the home; taking care of children and the aged. Due to this, it is often seen as an abomination of a male is seen cooking or supporting his wife in the kitchen. A male participant indicated that, these stereotypes and biases are as a result of some traditional and cultural believes. These believes have been passed down from generation to generation and now accepted as the norm. A female participant highlighted that, in the past some professions were assumed to be solely for men. An example is construction or masonry work. However, over these days, there are females who are able to participate in construction work. A male participant added that even within the fisheries sector, in the past, fish processing was only limited to females. However, these days, there are a number of males who process fish and even do it better than females. Another participant highlighted that promoting the understanding of gender dynamics, equality, and inclusivity will go a long way to promote development. Other participant added that they have a role as ambassadors to educate the community members about some of these concepts so that both males and females can achieve their full potentials without barrier.

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 participants, physical abuse is often perpetuated by the men and verbal and psychological abuse

are often perpetuated by the females. They were also of the view that GBV can be curbed if community members are educated, enlightened on the laws and sanctions that come with perpetuating GBV. According to the ambassadors, often people are ignorant of the laws and perpetrators often go unpunished and this motivates others to continue with GBV.



The meeting advanced in content by taking participants through the existing guiding principles for WIFVES community ambassadors. The principles were critically examined and assessed. Participants engaged in discussions to identify strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement. Participants indicated that they are willing to abide by these guiding principles and would not partake in contrary expectations as ambassadors. A male ambassador indicated that, it is often not easy to fight for a good course in fishing communities. He indicated that often when you are given such roles, community members tend to backlash you and make your work difficult. Another participant indicated that, in order to prevent these hindrances, community durbar must be organized to introduce ambassadors to community leaders and the entire communities.

## Formulate Comprehensive Action Plans for WIFVES Community Ambassadors

Participants collaborated to develop action plans aimed at promoting gender equality, empowering women in fisheries, and creating sustainable, inclusive communities.

### DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION PLAN

#### Jomorro District

##### Metika

Activity	Timeline
1. Educating community on GBV	October (After outdoorings)
2. Outdoorings of ambassadors to the community	Last Thursday of the month of October
3. Using clean up exercise as a means to educate communities	First Thursday of the month
4. Have ambassadors meeting	Thursdays
5. Use diverse sporting activities to educate youths about GBV	Thursdays



#### Ezinlinbo

Activity	Timeline
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1. Use communal labour as a means to raise awareness about GBV	Monthly
2. Organise games with fisherfolks and raise awareness about GBV	Last Saturday of the month

## Ellonyi

Activity	Timeline
1. Organise games and use as a means to raise awareness about GBV	Monthly starting from November
2. Educate community members and fisherfolks about GBV	Twice a month
3. Meet with PTA to discuss GBV and how it can affect our children	October



## **Ellembelle District**

### **Ankobrah**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
1. Creating awareness and sensitization about GBV through fisherfolks meetings	Twice every month
2. Create awareness about GBV on community radios and information centres	Every two weeks
3. Organising games between adults and youth to educate the upcoming youths about GBV and its effects	Last Saturday of the month

### **Asanta**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
1. Create awareness about dangers of GBV in schools	Every three months
2. Educate teenagers about GBV and teenage pregnancies and how they can safe-guard themselves	November
3. Organise school outreach to educate both boys and girls about STIs	Will decide with school for convenient time
4. Educate fisherfolks about GBV	Monthly

## **Ahanta West District**

### **Upper Dixcove**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
1. Organize advocacy through football game	Every 3months
2. Community radio programme	Monthly
3. Visiting of schools to educate children during worship time	Monthly (Wednesdays or Friday)



### Lower Dixcove

Activity	Timeline
1. Use communal labour as a tool to educate community members about GBV	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month
2. Visit churches to educate church members about GBV	Last Sunday of the month
3. Educating fisherfolks about GBV	Tuesdays
4. Using local radio and information centre as a means to create awareness about GBV	



### Cape Three Points

Activity	Timeline
1. Educating community members about GV	Biweekly
2. Having discussions about GBV on community radio	biweekly
3. Create awareness about child's right in schools by advocating for kids to be in school instead of loitering at the beaches.	Daily
4. Organise football games as a means to create awareness about GBV	Every two months



## Akwidaa

Activity	Timeline
1. Educate community on sexual and gender-based violence	1 <sup>st</sup> week of every month
2. Use sports as a means to educate youths about effects of GBV such as rape, early child marriage, etc	Last Saturday of every month
3. Advocate for good living and happy family life in the community	Biweekly



At the end of the meeting, participants gained a deeper understanding of gender concepts, enabling them to identify and challenge gender stereotypes and biases prevalent in their specific communities. Also, their already documented guiding principles were evaluated, leading to beneficial discussions. They provided valuable feedback, contributing to the refinement of the guiding principles for WIFVES community ambassadors. Collaborative efforts among the various ambassadors for each community resulted in the development of comprehensive action plans. These plans encompass strategies and timelines to promote gender equality, provide skill development opportunities, using sports as a tool for advocacy about gender-based violence and enhance the participation and well-being of women and girls in their homes and communities as a whole.



whole.

## NEXT STEPS

- The formulated action plans to be implemented in collaboration with the ambassadors and the fisherfolk leaders.
- Ambassadors to go back to communities and set grounds ready for implementation of their activities
- Subsequent community engagement to include children and youth.
- Organize community durbar to introduce WIFVES ambassadors to communities.