



Gender Studies & Human Rights Documentation Centre

## **END OF PROGRAMME EVALUATION**

**Title:**

### **TRANSFORMING GENDER SOCIAL NORMS AND ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN GHANA**

**FINAL REPORT**

**SUBMITTED BY**

**MICHAEL KODOM, PhD.**

(Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, ISSER)

**ALEXANDER NII ADJEI SOWAH, PhD.**

(Department of Social Studies Education, University of Education)

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### **Abbreviations**

|                     |                                                                 |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| CBO –               | Community Based Organizations                                   |
| CHRAJ               | Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice           |
| COMBAT              | Community Based Action Team                                     |
| CSO –               | Civil Society Organizations                                     |
| DOVVSU              | Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit, Ghana Police Service |
| GBV                 | Gender Based Violence                                           |
| GSHRDC -<br>Centre) | Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre (Gender    |
| NGO –               | Non-Governmental Organizations                                  |
| HIV –               | Human Immune Virus                                              |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

The Community Based Action Teams (COMBAT) initiative used as the main vehicle for the implementation of the “*Transforming gender social norms and ending Violence against Women and Girls in rural communities in Ghana*” programme since 2021 has had transformative influence on traditional norms and practices especially in relation to gender relations and Gender Based Violence (GBVs). The expansion of the COMBATs to ten (10) communities in the Okere District and the Akwapim North Municipal of the Eastern Region of Ghana was based on its effectiveness in reducing physical, sexual and intimate partner violence when it was first piloted in 2002. The COMBATs through their activities raised awareness of people within implementing communities leading to significant changes in discriminatory social norms, attitudes and practices that sustain violence against women and girls. Enhancing knowledge on rights and avenues to enforce or claim of rights have been an eye opener to many. The evaluation of the programme was therefore meant to assess milestones achieved and the progress made. The evaluation was based on indicators and key performance framework of the project. Particular attention was paid to project efficiency and effectiveness, impact achieved, sustainability in the current political, social and economic context in Ghana, partnership, lessons learnt and made recommendations for future interventions.

### Methods

A mixed methods approach was used to undertake the evaluation, qualitative and quantitative approaches to enhance the robustness of the evaluation. The Complementary use of quantitative and qualitative approaches was considered the most appropriate in collecting information that can be triangulated to enhance the quality of the findings. Data was collected using a community survey, focus group discussions, stakeholder engagements and key informant interviews. A total of 863 respondents were sampled for the community survey constituting 192 males and 671 females. Key informant interviews were conducted with officials of CHRAJ, DOVVSU and the Social Welfare Department as well as 29 COMBAT members across the 10 communities. This was complemented with 20 focus group discussions and 10 stakeholder engagements in the communities. The quantitative data was analyzed using STATA version 17. Quantitative results were analysed using tables and figures. The qualitative data was analyzed with NVIVO using themes. Verbatim quotations were used to present the data.

### Main Findings

#### Girls’ awareness of rights and ability to exercise rights

Education on gender rights especially sensitizing women and girls on their rights have largely aroused a desire to know their rights and to a large extent claim such rights. The knowledge that women and girls are not dissimilar from men and boys in terms of intellectual capacity has transformed female self-perception across the communities. It was found that 88.1% of women and girls are aware of their rights. The high levels of awareness was confirmed at the focus group discussions across all communities. Despite the high level of awareness of rights



and knowledge on equal rights and privilege as boys, the proportion of respondents demanding their rights are generally low (20.1%).

### ***Transforming Discriminating Social Norms and Practices***

Norms and practices that hinder the progress of women and girls in the communities have undergone significant changes. These changes are largely attributed to the implementation of the programme to transform cultural norms and practices that hinder the progress of women and girls through the instrumentality of the Community Action Teams (COMBAT). Though the pace of transformation is slow, effects of the programmes and education are leading to attitudinal change. Discriminatory social norms and practices such as widowhood rites, child pawning, forced and under age marriages and wife battery alongside other forms of domestic abuses have largely been reduced to the barest minimum if not totally eliminated in some of the communities. Sensitization on the need to prepare wills or have a clear plan of inheritance or distribution of properties have helped to limit abuse of wives and children after the death of husbands.

### ***Prevalence and Incidence of Violence against women***

Five violence types were assessed. This includes, physical, sexual, psychological, economic and traditional violence. It was found that overwhelming majority of respondents consider all the measures used to assess the violent types as abuses. All violent types have been experienced by majority of young girls and women throughout their life time up to 2021. A noteworthy fact was that while few had experienced most of this violence while they were young, physical violent was experience by most young girls and women when they were children, that is, before the age of 15 years. Perpetrators of violence were largely close relative and household members. Results of experience of the five types of violence over the last 12 months showed a significant drop in proportions of girls and women experiencing violence. The case however is that close relatives and household member were the dominant perpetrators despite the reduced incidence.

### ***Victim report of abuse and state institution of response***

It was found that the rate of reporting abuses was low with less than a third of all persons experiencing abuses reporting. This was found to be because of the fact that most perpetrators of abuses were relatives therefore most abuses were settled at home or victims choose not to discuss the issue with anyone. Of the few who reported abuses, many of them reported to non-state actors. Only a few of the victims reported it to state actors. Among the non-state actors, the majority of the victims reported their cases to family and relatives. Only a few people reported it to COMBAT. Participants reiterated that they do not trust the institutions. Regarding the level of satisfaction with the way issues reported were handled, many of the victims expressed satisfaction (very satisfied or satisfied) with the way those they reported their cases to handled them and the outcome

### ***Effectiveness of partnership***

The programme had very strong and reliable connections with traditional leaders, religions leaders, community-based organization and state institutions. State institutional partners who worked actively and closely with the programme and COMBATs include the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service (DOVVSU), the Social Welfare Department and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice

(CHRAJ). Besides the state institutions, religious and traditional leaders provided support within the communities in the organization of public education and sensitization by COMBATs. The structure of the programme allowed for programme activities to be implemented through referral systems.

### ***General impact of the project***

The project has generally increased the knowledge and awareness about abuse and related issues, reduced the prevalence of harmful bad cultural practices, increased community knowledge on reporting channels, and reduced the incidence of abuses. It has also enhanced behavioural change especially among the youth who used to knowingly or unknowingly abuse young girls, changed gendered norms and practices that perpetrate violence against women and led to responsible parenting.

### **Lessons Learnt**

The programme has achieved significant success in the community. Sensitization has influenced behaviours leading to transformations in strongly held cultural norms and practices. The achievement of these was strongly linked to the approach used in the implementation of the programme. The use of community-based systems facilitated community buy-in at the on-set of the programme. The implementation structure encouraged deep community participation and ownership. Ceding of control and organization largely to community leaders and COMBATs ensured that the project was viewed as a system to keep and sustain. This is more especially with the engagement of traditional and community leaders in sensitization and education programme.

The built-in facilitation approach in the implementation of the project represented an excellent exit strategy integrated into the formulation of the project from its on-set. Channeling resources to building capacity and keeping a thin project staff conferred enormous responsibilities on all beneficiary groups especially the COMBATs, community stakeholders and state institutions to ensure that the project does not fail. A clear outcome is a built-in sustainability structure to keep the initiative going far beyond the close-out of the project. The COMBATs have become a legacy with the potential of self-sustain themselves through community fund raising, mobilization to renew its membership and identification of potential threat to eliminate rapidly.

Selecting COMBATs based on full community consent and choice helps to achieve two important goals. A sense of deep involvement in the entire process by the communities and a latent function of inducing commitment and responsibility from members of the communities to ensure that selected COMBATs succeed. The constant desire to see them succeed creates an environment of support and good will. This also places enormous responsibility on selected COMBATs to walk the fine line as a means of justifying the confidence/responsibility reposed in them as well as the respect accorded them.

In spite of the positives this approach offers, the loss of trust in COMBATs for whatever reason can have a serious implication for sustainability. This was observed in the hesitation of some community member to use the services of the COMBATs especially regarding very personal and sensitive matter due to fear of exposure which may result in public ridicule.

Increased awareness through community-based education and sensitization results in heightened sensitivity to abuse as shown in the high proportions of respondents viewing largely overlooked actions as abuse. The collective sensitivity of abuse ensures that people generally reconsider their action and thus refrain from action/behaviours that may result in physical or emotional injury.

The collaborative link with state institutions such as the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service, the Social Welfare Department, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice constitute a formidable community-state collaboration that confers strong credibility on the projects as well as the COMBATs in the communities. The close linkage with state institutions and agencies provides a bridge through referrals to strengthen state-community engagement. This linkage must however manage carefully to avoid non-cooperative actions such as attempts to usurp the authority of the institutions in dealing with some cases which may threaten the entire structure.

### **Recommendations**

Recommendations are made based on findings and observations made:

First, the COMBAT's potential to cumulatively eradicate Gender Based Violence and abuses in communities [both rural and urban] is enormous. This has to be fully taken advantage of by ensuring its sustainability. Two key stems are needed to accomplish this:

1. A deliberate action to finance and resource the work and operations of the COMBATs in the communities. The means to achieve this are varied. As suggested by respondents and participants of the evaluations, traditional leaders and religious organization must take the first step. Establishing clear lines for the flow of resources such as community contributions and offerings during religious gathering can help provide the needed funds to pay for logistics for sensitization and educations. Additionally, establish a fund through which periodic donations can be made to motivate their activities. The management of such funds can be discussed and firmed at the community and local authority level to enhance accountability. Prominent citizens of communities can be encouraged to make donations into the funds.
2. Periodic recruiting and training new persons to fill vacant places when old member leave or become inactive. The availability of willing and profoundly energetic people to continue doing the work will foster continuity and growth as well as sustained sensitization and education.

Periodic refresher training programmes are required to ensure that COMBAT update their knowledge as well as emphasizing the importance of the partnerships with the state institutions. This will ensure that potential conflict of interest cases and overreaching of their authority are avoided.

Due to the diversity of groups in the communities, it is imperative that the composition of COMBAT in every community should be representatives of the major differences in the community. For instance, in a religious diverse community, the selection of the COMBAT officers should ensure that there is a representation of Moslems, Christians and Traditionality in the COMBAT. This will enable different groups to approach the COMBAT with their issues.

The concept of gender includes both men and women. In the case of GBV, men are the major perpetrators and hence, there is the need to ensure that programme activities target them. Changing negative sociocultural norms and practices requires a re-orientation of the perceptions of men. Some of the awareness creation activities should be organized mainly for only men.

Equally important is for the programme to devise strategies to ensure that young girls, who are the most vulnerable group to many of the abuses are reached with the programme. This may require selecting some interested and influential youth into the COMBAT. A youth COMBAT team can be established to be responsible for advancing the cause of reaching out to the youth.

Transforming gender social norms and ending violence against women and girls in rural communities in Ghana is a complex task that requires a coordinated effort from all relevant stakeholders including government, CSOs, NGOs as well as community leaders and influencers. Even though the COMBAT model is a robust intervention for addressing GBV in rural communities, it may not be adequate due to the entrenched sociocultural and religious beliefs that continue to relegate women to the background. Transforming gender social norms and ending GBV demands time, hence, the period for the implementation of this project is not adequate to significantly achieve the intended targets. Extending the project life and expanding the scope to include other districts and communities is highly recommended.

## SECTION ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

The Community Based Action Teams (COMBAT) initiative instituted as the main vehicle for the implementation of the “*Transforming gender social norms and ending Violence against Women and Girls in rural communities in Ghana*” programme since 2021 has influenced community norms and actions regarding Gender Based Violence (GBVs). The expansion of the COMBATs to ten (10) communities in the Okere District and the Akwapim North Municipal of the Eastern Region of Ghana was based on its effectiveness in reducing physical, sexual and intimate partner violence when it was first piloted in 2002.

The programme for transforming gender social norms and ending Violence against Women and Girls in rural communities in Ghana sought to bring about changes in discriminatory social norms, attitudes and practices that sustain violence against women and girls. The goal was thus to drive a reduction in the incidence of violence against women and girls in the selected communities with a ripple effect on neighbouring communities. The programme mainly targeted women and Traditional / religious leaders, opinion leaders, and the community at large were the secondary focus of the programme. State agencies and Civil Society Organizations and others constituted the key partners of the programme.

Evaluating the interventions and programmes was therefore meant to assess how the intervention influenced outcomes. It provides information about the impacts produced by the COMBAT - positive and negative, as well as determining whether the observed effects are intended or unintended. Information obtained therefore provided the foundations for lessons learned. The process is an accountability exercise to determine if and how well the program and its implementation approach worked.

The evaluation of the programme on transforming gender social norms and ending violence against Women and Girls in rural communities in Ghana assessed milestones achieved and the progress made based on indicators and key performance framework for the project. The evaluation paid attention to project efficiency and effectiveness, impact achieved, sustainability in the current political, social and economic context in Ghana, partnership, lessons learnt and made recommendations for future interventions.

## **1.2 Project Objective**

The evaluation was intended to establish and analyze the results that have been achieved in the last two years (January 2021 – December 2022) of implementation; the resultant impact (both intended and unintended changes) on the target beneficiaries; how observed impacts can be sustained once funding ends and identify lessons that can be learnt.

The evaluation specifically sought to address the following issues and provide specific, actionable and practical recommendations for future programming:

1. Assess the project objectives and outcomes by measuring performance against each performance outcome indicator under each result area.
2. Analyze key determinants that, positively or negatively, were critical for obtaining these results.
3. Provide recommendations on future project design.
4. Assess the level of sustainability (financial, institutional and social) of the project components, and identify critical areas that may affect sustainability.

On the whole, it is expected that the final evaluation will contribute to determining:

- a. The efficiency of the management of resources within the project as part of the project processes to achieve the expected outcomes
- b. Results achieved under the project
- c. The sustainability of the project
- d. The innovative aspects of the project
- e. Lessons learned on the project

## **1.3 Structure of the Report**

The rest of the report is structured as follows: Section Two presents the methods for data collection and analysis. Section three details a description of the project, its design and effectiveness. Section four presents the results on the project indicators and objectives. The final section presents the lessons, conclusions and recommendations. A summary indicator table on key variables have been added.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **METHODS**

#### **2.1 Overview of the Approach**

To enhance the robustness of the evaluation study a mixed methods approach was used in the design, sampling and selection of respondents and participants, design of data collection instruments, collection of data and analyses of data. The use of mixed method (i.e., quantitative and qualitative methods complementing each other) was considered the most appropriate in collecting information that can be triangulated to enhance the quality of the findings. The quantitative segment involved the use of a survey method to gather data from community members. The qualitative segment provided in-depth information on the data-to-day life of people in the communities and how communal norms and values shape behaviours, especially related to gender based violence and abuse. The qualitative methods comprised of focus group discussions with community members comprising women, girls, and men/boys, stakeholder engagement with community leaders, and key informant interviews with key state officials at the district-level. The state institutions of focus were the Domestic Violence and Victim Support unit of the Ghana Police Service (DOVVSU), the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and the Social Welfare Department. The evaluation study was conducted in all the 10 communities in the Akuapim North Municipal and Okere District in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

##### **2.1.1 Quantitative Approach**

The survey gathered information on the key indicators of the project. These include:

- Number of women and girl-victims/survivors accessing support services (legal, medical, psychosocial etc.) they need.
- Number of women and girls expressing satisfaction at response received from state institutions.
- Number of community members supporting women and girls to report cases of abuse.
- Number of social norms and practices changed.
- Number of key influencers of public opinion making statements against violence against women and girls.

The survey gathered data from women, girls and males at the household level. In each of the three communities, the study randomly selected a minimum of 80 respondents. The sample was taken at random. The selection began with the identification of the community centre.

Once the centre of the community has been identified, the community is divided into a quadrant. The enumerators canvassed the length and breadth of the quadrant to estimate the number of structures [*buildings*]. This enabled them to determine the sampling interval (systematic sampling of structures). In each quadrant, 20 households were randomly selected, to comprise of 15 females (girls and women) and 5 males. The sample was selected in such a way that no two respondents were selected from the same household. Each respondent was selected from a unique household. Thus, if a girl was randomly selected from a household, a woman or a male respondent could not be selected from that same household. This was to ensure the representation of different households in the sample. At the end of the data collection, a total of 863 households/people were interviewed, comprising 192 males, 331 girls and 340 women. Of the total sample, 610 were taken from Okere district while the remaining 253 were selected from Akuapim North Municipality as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Sample for Quantitative Survey**

| <b>District</b> | <b>Community</b> | <b>Male</b> | <b>Girls</b> | <b>Women</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Okere           | Onyamebekyere    | 20          | 24           | 28           | 72           |
|                 | Nsutam           | 25          | 35           | 29           | 89           |
|                 | Okrakwadjo       | 21          | 36           | 34           | 91           |
|                 | Apirede          | 24          | 38           | 40           | 102          |
|                 | Aseseeso         | 22          | 35           | 33           | 90           |
|                 | Awukugua         | 11          | 35           | 40           | 86           |
|                 | Abiriw           | 10          | 35           | 35           | 80           |
|                 | Larteh Ahenease  | 20          | 36           | 37           | 93           |
| Akuapim North   | Larteh Kubease   | 21          | 25           | 30           | 76           |
|                 | Konko            | 18          | 32           | 34           | 84           |
| <b>Total</b>    |                  | <b>192</b>  | <b>331</b>   | <b>340</b>   | <b>863</b>   |

## 2.1.2 Qualitative Approach

As noted earlier, the qualitative approach comprised focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

### 2.1.2.1 Focus Group Discussion

In each of the 10 communities, two focus group discussions were conducted: women and girls between the 18-35 years and adults [females and males combined]. This translates into a total of 20 FGD across all the 10 communities. Each of the focus group discussions comprised at most 12 people. The focus group discussions were conducted by two people: a moderator and a note taker.



### **2.1.2.2 Stakeholder Meeting with community leaders**

One stakeholder meeting was conducted in each community for all the relevant community leaders. The meeting comprised of at least two traditional leaders (preferably chief and queen mother), two religious' leaders (preferably a Christian and Muslim leader), the Assembly of the community and other opinion leaders/unit committee persons in the community. A total of 10 stakeholder meetings were organised across the 10 communities.

### **2.1.2.3 Key Informant Interviews**

In addition to the community level engagement, data was collected from key institutions in the district. These institutions are: DOVVSU, CHRAJ, and the Department of Social Welfare. It was discovered that the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the police has only one office that serve both the Akuapim North Municipal and the Okere District.

In addition to the institutional interviews, one-on-one interactions were held with members of the COMBAT in each of the 10 communities. Apart from Awukugua where only two COMBAT members were available for interviews, 3 COMBAT members were selected in each community. In total 29 COMBATs were interviewed for the evaluation.

Information was also gleaned from the review of monitoring reports of the project to assess the level of efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of the project. Full details of the numbers engaged in the qualitative approach are provided in Table 2

**Table 2: FGDs, In-depth-Interviews and Key Informant Interviews**

| <b>Method</b>                                   | <b>Akuapim North</b> | <b>Okere</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>A. Focus Group Discussion</b>                |                      |              |              |
| Young Females                                   | 3                    | 7            | 10           |
| Community, Religious and Traditional Leaders    | 3                    | 7            | 10           |
| Stakeholder engagement                          |                      |              |              |
| Community Members [Male-Female Adults]          | 3                    | 7            | 10           |
| <b>B. Key Informant and In-depth Interviews</b> |                      |              |              |
| COMBATS                                         | 9                    | 20           | 29           |
| CHRAJ                                           | 1                    | 1            | 2            |
| DOVVSU                                          | 1                    | 0            | 1            |
| Social Welfare                                  | 1                    | 1            | 2            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                    | <b>20</b>            | <b>44</b>    | <b>64</b>    |

## **2.2 Description of Proposed Field Work Operations for the Quantitative Survey**

The survey data was collected through Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) system. The CAPI allowed interviewers to conduct face-to-face interviews using the

computer. CAPI has a number of advantages including eliminating the need for a separate data entry step. We relied on the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER's) Measurement, Learning and Evaluation (MLE) Unit to provide the operational services relating to the CAPI data collection and storage process.

### **2.2.1 Recruitment of Fieldworkers**

The fieldwork was undertaken by a number of experienced enumerators who have had past experience in conducting national surveys. ISSER has a vast pool of highly-motivated enumerators across all the regions in Ghana, who are well versed in all the local languages and able to engage respondents on the field effectively. Since the same team of enumerators collected both the qualitative and quantitative data, we particularly selected experienced enumerators who were familiar with the local languages of the study areas from the pool of field workers at ISSER. Field staff were trained on the data collection tools, general interviewing techniques and field protocols.

Two categories of field staff, comprising of supervisors and enumerators were selected for the study. The supervisors were responsible for the coordination of the activities of their teams, including assigning respondents to the interviewers, reviewing of completed daily data files and sending of completed data files to the data center.

In-person training of the field staff was done while observing social distancing protocols in addition to the wearing of approved WHO nose masks and adhering to other safety measures including regular washing of hands or using hand sanitizer. The entire field team was trained to understand the project's background and objectives as well as the data collection instruments. This was done so that any potential issues were identified and dealt with before the fieldwork begun.

Interviewers were trained on how best they can administer the instruments without losing the meaning of the questions and also administer the instrument according to a standardized protocol. A 3-day long training session for interviewers and supervisors was conducted to enable everyone to be able to work with the study instruments. The training was conducted in two main phases. The first phase introduced the enumerators and supervisors to the qualitative instruments and data collection approach. Day two of the training took participants through the quantitative segment and other reporting issues. Field officers were trained in the use of the CAPI for data capture on the second day. The last day was used for role-plays (in the local dialect of the study areas selected) in order to ensure that participants

mimic field data collection. Team composition and logistical issues were addressed on the third day.

### **2.2.2 Data Collection Approach**

Before commencing any interview (i.e. the survey), enumerators were required to read out the purpose of the study to the respondents and seek their consent to continue the survey. Verbal consent were sought from the individual/group before the commencement of questionnaire administration interviews or focus group discussions. The data collection was done in-person. During the data collection, the enumerators ensured that all the COVID-19 protocols before and during the data collection process were observed. Participants at the FGD were socially distanced. Where such arrangement was not possible, each participant was given a disposable nose mask, which was worn throughout the discussions. Similarly, enumerators ensured that the participants wear their nose mask before an interview session begun. Each field staff was given logistics including internet data, tablet, pens, notepad, nose mask and hand sanitizers.

For the FGD and interview sessions, permission of the participant(s) were sought to record and take pictures during the interview session. Arrangements were also made to have note takers present in all focus group discussions.

## **2.3 Data Analysis**

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in the analysis of the data.

### **2.3.1 Quantitative Data Analysis**

As mentioned earlier, CAPI was used in conducting the quantitative surveys. Collated and converted datasets was analyzed with STATA 17. The quantitative data obtained from the field was first cleaned with the aid of the STATA statistical software, recording all editing work in STATA “do-files”. All data was analyzed using well-established quantitative statistical tools/methods and computer software to compute descriptive statistics such as frequency, counts, scores, percentages, and arithmetic means and cross tabulations.

### **2.3.2 Qualitative Data Analysis**

An excel template was developed for field officers to capture key responses from the in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Review of all responses was undertaken in tandem with audios and transcripts as the data was coded. For the qualitative analysis, the NVIVO 10 software was used to code the responses into themes to allow for the drawing of effective and meaningful patterns. Direct quotations were used to support the analysis.



## **SECTION THREE**

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

#### **3.0 Project Description**

Despite the guarantee and protection of the rights of all persons regardless of creed, abilities and gender by the constitution of Ghana, discrimination based on abilities, creed and gender persist. Gender based discriminations founded within cultural norms, beliefs and practices as well as religious edicts have led to the exposure of women and girls to disproportionate levels of violence of all forms within the domestic and broader social spaces. While national and community based efforts have been undertaken to curtail the incidence of Violence Against Women (VAG) through policies and constitutional instruments such as the Domestic Violence Act 2007 (Act 732), and collaborative civil society and non-governmental programmes/actions like “the Cell phones against sexual violence: Using Mobile technology to promote safer schools” among others, significant work remains to be done. Community based efforts have thus been identified as one of the surest means through which strategic normative transformations can be achieved.

The Gender Studies and Human rights Documentation Centre (Gender Centre) whose work since 1998 has focused largely on issues relating to violence against women and girls in Ghana have applied different community-led approaches to achieve their goal of eliminating violence against women and girls. In this regards, the Gender Centre have sought to use the Community Based Action Teams (COMBATs) as its core strategy to prevent such forms of violence among other things within communities it has worked with since 2002 to support the work of state institutions. The COMBAT have thus been found to be significantly effective in reducing physical, sexual and intimate partner violence.

The success of the COMBAT initiative led to its expansion to ten (10) communities in the Okere District and the Akuapim North Municipal of the Eastern Region of Ghana under the auspices of the “A programme on transforming gender social norms and ending Violence Against Women and Girls in rural communities in Ghana”. The programme sought to bring about changes in discriminatory social norms, attitudes and practices that sustain violence against women and girls resulting in the reduction in the incidence of violence against women and girls. The programme mainly targeted women and girls. Men, traditional / religious leaders, opinion leaders, and the community at large were the secondary focus of the

programme. State agencies and Civil Society Organizations and others constituted the key partners of the programme.

The Community Based Action Teams (COMBATs) were constituted by selecting people from the project communities and trained on gender, violence, five selected family laws, counselling and mediation to undertake awareness raising and sensitisation programmes in their various communities to educate community members on violence, adolescent sexual reproductive health rights issues, family laws that sanction GBV. The COMBATs also provide counselling and mediation and support victims to access justice and other services in collaboration with the state agencies the project worked with.

In each implementation community, the COMBAT was composed of six (6) members with 3 males and 3 females. Through the process of the implementation of the programme some of the COMBAT members became inactive due to a number of reasons.

The activities of the COMBATs such as community education and sensitization have reached a large number of people in implementing communities. The COMBATs through their community based activities reached a total of 3,851 people through personal contacts and education. Additionally, public education through the community information centres reached an estimated listenership of 14,629 people. The use of information centres for sensitisation enhanced the ability of COMBATs to reach a wider segment of their communities compared to one-on-one engagement and gatherings. The reach of the information centres sometimes extended to neighbouring communities ensuring that sensitization activities reaches more people.

The empowerment education of the COMBATs have improved access to knowledge and use of the knowledge to seek support and assistance when the need arises. Overall, the COMBATs have offered counselling and mediatory services to a total of 62 individual across the communities of implementation. The abilities to overcome social and cultural prohibitions and seek such support is indicative of growing empowerment of people in the communities to claim their rights. Additionally, a total of 22 cases have been referred to state agencies through the work of COMBATs in the communities. These include 14 cases to DOVVSU, 5 to the Department Social Welfare and 3 cases to the courts.

### 3.1 Project Design and Relevance

Gender Based Violence fostered by context specific norms and practices continue to take place globally, more so in Ghana. Due to its pervasive and incipient nature GVB which could manifest in physical, sexual, economic, psychological and traditional abuse or violence could take place in the privacy of the domestic space, open or isolated community spaces as well as in the work place. There is thus the need for tact, inventiveness and innovativeness to sense, identify and address them. As such any effort or intervention planned to address ought to be designed and planned with the goal of whipping up community interest and engendering deep community buy-in and participation of all stakeholders and interested parties. The design and the implementation of the program on transforming gender social norms and ending violence against women and girls in rural communities in Ghana clearly indicated a structural focus to use existing systems at the state and community levels in addition to innovative introduction of project specific structures to catalyze the achievement of the project objective.

The use of community systems such as the traditional governance systems through the chieftaincy system, religious leaders, family heads and state institutions/agencies guarantee permanence to the innovative introduction of the COMBATs which has been perfected over time. This constitutes an excellent exit strategy established from the onset of the project.

The facilitation approach adopted in the implementation of the project encouraged deep participation and community ownership of innovations introduced. To implement them ensures that members of the community will view such persons as part of them and open up should they have any issues they may want to bring to their attention.

The democratic and community led process used in selecting members of COMBATs ensure that the Gender Centre does not take a center stage in the process of appointment. They only outline the modalities and allow the communities to select those they deem fit to serve as a COMBAT member. A COMBAT member summarized the process thus:

*They (Gender Centre) made an announcement when the gender people came, and they said they wanted 3 males and 3 females to be COMBAT members for this town, so we were more than 6, so the community members had to vote and I was selected to be a member [Combat member, Aseseeso]*

The process fosters acceptance and appreciation of the work of the COMBATs by communities:

*They are doing a great job in this community and they are helping us a lot, we the members of this community also accept and receive them when they visit us in our homes, when they call for meetings we go there on time to listen to their teachings. We have good rapport with them and we feel free to approach them to talk to them about our issues, especially one of them who is always smiling whenever he sees you [FGD Member, Onyamebekyere].*

The COMBATs working with the community stakeholders (Traditional/Religious Leaders) are hugely important for the realization of the goals of the programme as they play an intermediary role between communities and state institution through referrals and recommendations.

*COMBATs serve as intermediary between the community, the Police, CHRAJ, Social Welfare and others. People who used to hide their cases because they thought there was nobody to help them, started to report their cases to us and opened up on some of the abuses done to them. So we were able to resolve some of them and the ones we are not able to resolve, we refer them to the appropriate places to be dealt with. [Community Stakeholder, Awukugua]*

The COMBATs and their collaboration with state institutions and other community based systems and organizations constituted a sound basis for social reproduction of activists to champion rights-based causes. This facilitates an easy transformation of project structures into strong communal systems to consolidate gains made by the project.

The built in exit strategy was excellent especially as it engenders a sound community based implementation strategies which promote sustainability through ownership of project structures by all parties.

### **3.2 Effectiveness of the COMBAT Project Implementation**

The effectiveness of the COMBAT programme was assessed using five dimensions: reducing GBV, transforming gender norms and values, empowering girls/women to know their rights, empowering women to demand for their rights, and assisting people to report cases of GBV/seek justice. Across the two districts, many of the respondents rated the COMBAT programme as either highly effective or effective. About a fifth of the respondents also rated the programme as moderately effective as shown in Table 3. Thus, the programme has been effective in addressing gender-based violence through increasing awareness and empowering women to seek justice.



**Table 3: Effectiveness of the Programme across the Districts**

| District      | Effectiveness        | Reducing GBV in this community | Transforming Gender norms and values | Empowering Girls/Women to know their rights | Empowering women to demand for their rights | Assisting people to report cases of GBV/seek justice |
|---------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Okere         | Highly Effective     | 22.49                          | 17.72                                | 26.98                                       | 23.02                                       | 26.72                                                |
|               | Effective            | 41.53                          | 40.21                                | 38.89                                       | 40.48                                       | 39.95                                                |
|               | Moderately Effective | 21.69                          | 24.87                                | 20.9                                        | 22.75                                       | 19.84                                                |
|               | Ineffective          | 4.5                            | 6.88                                 | 5.03                                        | 5.82                                        | 6.08                                                 |
|               | Highly Ineffective   | 0.53                           | 1.32                                 | 0.53                                        | 0.26                                        | 0.26                                                 |
|               | Don't Know           | 9.26                           | 8.99                                 | 7.67                                        | 7.67                                        | 7.14                                                 |
| Akuapim North | Highly Effective     | 24.3                           | 21.03                                | 25.23                                       | 22.9                                        | 38.79                                                |
|               | Effective            | 46.26                          | 45.33                                | 44.86                                       | 42.99                                       | 43.46                                                |
|               | Moderately Effective | 25.23                          | 26.64                                | 25.23                                       | 28.5                                        | 14.49                                                |
|               | Ineffective          | 2.34                           | 5.61                                 | 3.74                                        | 4.21                                        | 0.93                                                 |
|               | Highly Ineffective   | 0                              | 0.47                                 | 0                                           | 0                                           | 0                                                    |
|               | Don't Know           | 1.87                           | 0.93                                 | 0.93                                        | 1.4                                         | 2.34                                                 |

### 3.3 Level of Awareness of the COMBAT Programme in the Communities

Many of the respondents (65.8%) indicated that they have heard of the Gender Centre COMBAT program on transforming gender social norms and ending violence against women and girls in rural communities. Approximately half of the respondents (49.6%) have ever received training or knowledge through the Gender Centre COMBAT programme. The proportion of people in Akuapim North who are aware of the programme and have received some kind of knowledge from the programme is slightly higher than the respondents from Okere district.

The areas many of them acquired knowledge on are on violence/Abuse against women (91.5%), marriage (77.9%) and inheritance (53.4%). As high as 95% consider the knowledge they acquired as very useful or useful. Only about 2% of the respondents considered the knowledge as less useful. The results further show that 58.7% indicated their ability to share their knowledge with others.

Notwithstanding the usefulness of the knowledge acquired, only 12% ever accessed COMBAT services/help. Many of the few who sought the help of the COMBAT team reported a case to them (60%) while other received the support of COMBAT to report a case. Others received education on girls/women rights from the COMBAT team. Many of them were very satisfied with the support they received from the COMBAT. Many of the

respondents (84.3%) indicated that the activities of COMBAT have reduced GBV in their communities.

**Table 4: Awareness of Gender Centre Programme**

| <b>Variables</b>                                   | <b>Okere</b> | <b>Akuapim North</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| <b>Awareness of the Programme</b>                  | 64.92        | 67.98                | 65.82        |
| <b>Received any training/ knowledge</b>            | 47.98        | 53.18                | 49.56        |
| <i><b>Areas of knowledge Acquisition</b></i>       |              |                      |              |
| Violence/Abuse against women                       | 96.32        | 81.32                | 91.46        |
| Inheritance                                        | 54.74        | 50.55                | 53.38        |
| Marriage                                           | 82.63        | 68.13                | 77.94        |
| Other (specify)                                    | 16.84        | 1.1                  | 11.74        |
| <i><b>Usefulness of new knowledge acquired</b></i> |              |                      |              |
| Very Useful                                        | 62.63        | 73.63                | 66.19        |
| Useful                                             | 31.58        | 23.08                | 28.83        |
| Somehow useful                                     | 4.21         | 3.3                  | 3.9          |
| Less Useful                                        | 1.58         | 0                    | 1.07         |
| <b>Able to share knowledge</b>                     | 57.37        | 61.54                | 58.72        |
| <b>Ever used COMBAT services/help</b>              | 12.43        | 10.75                | 11.82        |
| <i><b>Services Accessed from COMBAT</b></i>        |              |                      |              |
| Educated me on GBV                                 | 34.04        | 17.39                | 28.57        |
| Educated me on Girls /Women right                  | 36.17        | 34.78                | 35.71        |
| Reported a case to them                            | 57.45        | 65.22                | 60           |
| Assisted me to report a case                       | 29.79        | 47.83                | 35.71        |
| Assisted me to access support services             | 2.13         | 21.74                | 8.57         |
| Other                                              | 6.38         | 4.35                 | 5.71         |
| <i><b>Satisfaction with COMBAT</b></i>             |              |                      |              |
| Very Satisfied                                     | 51.06        | 52.17                | 51.43        |
| Satisfied                                          | 29.79        | 34.78                | 31.43        |
| Not Sure                                           | 6.38         | 0                    | 4.29         |
| Dissatisfied                                       | 12.77        | 4.35                 | 10           |
| Very dissatisfied                                  | 0            | 8.7                  | 2.86         |
| <i><b>COMBAT influence on GBV in community</b></i> |              |                      |              |
| No influenced                                      | 8.51         | 8.7                  | 8.57         |
| Reduced it                                         | 82.98        | 86.96                | 84.29        |
| Eradicated it                                      | 8.51         | 4.35                 | 7.14         |

## SECTION FOUR

### RESULTS ON KEY PROJECT OBJECTIVES

#### 4.0 Introduction

This section presents the results on the key project objectives. It begins with a brief description of the households and respondents. The rest of the information thematically represents the results for the key project objectives.

#### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Households and Respondents

##### 4.1.1 Households Characteristics

The average household size of the two districts is 3 even though Akuapim North has a higher household size (4 members) than Okere (3 members). Half of all the household were headed by men while the remaining half were headed by women. Across the districts, the majority of the households in Okere were headed by females (51.5%) but the reverse was the case in Akuapim North (52.2% males). Many of the household members were however females (57.3%) and this is similar across the two districts. The average age of the household heads is 48 years while the average age of the household members is 32 years. Thus, a third of the household members (35.5%) were within the youthful age bracket (15 – 35 years). A large proportion of the household heads are monogamously married (36.4%). A large proportion of the households in Akuapim North are in the poor wealth tercile (43.1%) but those in Okere are within the middle to rich wealth tercile (see Table 5). This may be reflective of the fact that those in Okere are engaged in better economic activities than those in Akuapim.

**Table 5: Household Demographic Characteristics**

| Variables        | District |               | Total |
|------------------|----------|---------------|-------|
|                  | Okere    | Akuapim North |       |
| No. of Household | 610      | 253           | 863   |
| Household size   | 3.1      | 3.6           | 3.2   |

|                                                |       |       |       |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b><i>Gender of Household Head</i></b>         |       |       |       |
| Male                                           | 48.52 | 52.17 | 49.59 |
| Female                                         | 51.48 | 47.83 | 50.41 |
| <b><i>Gender of Household Member</i></b>       |       |       |       |
| Male                                           | 41.36 | 45.62 | 42.75 |
| Female                                         | 58.64 | 54.38 | 57.25 |
| <b><i>Average Age</i></b>                      |       |       |       |
| Household Head                                 | 48.38 | 49.24 | 48.24 |
| Household Members                              | 30.69 | 32.65 | 31.85 |
| <b><i>Age Categories</i></b>                   |       |       |       |
| Children (<15 years)                           | 29.05 | 21.20 | 26.48 |
| Youth (15-35 years)                            | 34.56 | 37.29 | 35.45 |
| Adult (36-60 years)                            | 25.32 | 30.19 | 26.92 |
| Aged (> 60 years)                              | 11.07 | 11.32 | 11.15 |
| <b><i>Marital Status of Household head</i></b> |       |       |       |
| Single                                         | 16.39 | 14.23 | 15.76 |
| Monogamous married                             | 33.11 | 44.27 | 36.38 |
| Polygamous Married                             | 1.48  | 1.19  | 1.39  |
| Divorced                                       | 9.18  | 9.49  | 9.27  |
| Widowed                                        | 18.85 | 15.02 | 17.73 |
| Separated                                      | 4.92  | 7.91  | 5.79  |
| Cohabitation                                   | 16.07 | 7.91  | 13.67 |
| <b><i>Wealth Index</i></b>                     |       |       |       |
| Poor                                           | 29.06 | 43.08 | 33.18 |
| Middle                                         | 34.65 | 30.43 | 33.41 |
| Richest                                        | 36.29 | 26.48 | 33.41 |

#### 4.1.1 Respondents Characteristics

The majority of the respondents were females (67.8%) and a large proportion are youth (15-35 years) (35.45%). About half of them were either single or married (50.3%). A large proportion of them (48%) have attained only basic or middle school education. About three in every 10 (31.7%) have no formal education or only reached pre-school level. While 54% of them can read, only 34.6% of them can write (see Table 6). Thus, the literate rate is relatively low.

**Table 6: Respondent Characteristics**

| Variables                   | District |               | Total |
|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|-------|
|                             | Okere    | Akuapim North |       |
| <i>Gender of Respondent</i> |          |               |       |
| Male                        | 32.31    | 31.88         | 32.18 |
| Female                      | 67.69    | 68.12         | 67.82 |
| <i>Age Categories</i>       |          |               |       |
| Girl/Youth                  | 48.69    | 49.01         | 48.78 |

|                                 |       |       |       |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Adult                           | 51.31 | 50.99 | 51.22 |
| <b><i>Marital Status</i></b>    |       |       |       |
| Single                          | 26.46 | 23.19 | 25.49 |
| Monogamous married              | 19.38 | 35.51 | 24.19 |
| Polygamous Married              | 0.92  | 0     | 0.65  |
| Divorced                        | 11.69 | 8.7   | 10.8  |
| Widowed                         | 18.46 | 18.12 | 18.36 |
| Separated                       | 8.31  | 11.59 | 9.29  |
| Cohabitation                    | 14.77 | 2.9   | 11.23 |
| <b><i>Educational Level</i></b> |       |       |       |
| None                            | 17.85 | 13.04 | 16.41 |
| Pre-school                      | 15.38 | 15.22 | 15.33 |
| JSS/JHS/Middle                  | 47.69 | 48.55 | 47.95 |
| Secondary/A Level               | 16    | 18.84 | 16.95 |
| Tertiary                        | 2.77  | 4.35  | 3.24  |
| Other (specify)                 | 0.31  | 0     | 0.22  |
| <b><i>Literacy Rate</i></b>     |       |       |       |
| % that can read                 | 52.62 | 57.25 | 54    |
| % that can write                | 34.46 | 34.78 | 34.56 |

## 4.2 Girls awareness of their rights and able to exercise the rights

The work of COMBAT has made significant impacts in the communities especially regarding community education and sensitizations. The education on gender rights, especially, sensitizing women and girls on their rights have largely aroused the desire to know their rights and to a large extent claim such rights. The knowledge that women and girls are not dissimilar from men and boys in terms of intellectual capacity has transformed female self-perception across the communities.

**Table 7: Awareness of rights**

| <b>Statement</b>                                                                 | <b>Girls</b> | <b>Adults</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| I know my right as woman/girl                                                    | 90.63        | 85.59         | 88.08        |
| I know that I have equal right and privileges as boys/girls                      | 70.09        | 63.24         | 66.62        |
| <b><i>How often women demand their rights to be treated equally like men</i></b> |              |               |              |
| Always                                                                           | 21.75        | 18.53         | 20.12        |
| Most often                                                                       | 21.75        | 29.41         | 25.63        |
| Sometimes                                                                        | 41.09        | 33.24         | 37.11        |
| Not too often                                                                    | 12.08        | 16.18         | 14.16        |

|                                                                                                          |       |       |       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Never                                                                                                    | 3.32  | 2.65  | 2.98  |
| <b><i>How often people in influential positions make public statement to promote gender equality</i></b> |       |       |       |
| Always                                                                                                   | 12.39 | 13.82 | 13.11 |
| Most often                                                                                               | 30.51 | 33.82 | 32.12 |
| Sometimes                                                                                                | 34.74 | 32.06 | 33.38 |
| Not too often                                                                                            | 17.22 | 15.88 | 16.54 |
| Never                                                                                                    | 5.14  | 4.41  | 4.77  |

Source: Community Survey, 2022

Table 7 shows that 88.08% of women and girls are aware of their rights. These high levels of awareness was confirmed at the focus group discussion across all communities. It was noted that the work undertaken by the COMBAT has helped to enhance knowledge on rights of women and girls in the communities. The data therefore shows this clearly as the proportion of young girls aware of their rights was recorded as 90.6% with the proportion of women aware of their rights standing at 85.59%. A poignant statement by a member of a focus group discussion sums up how increased awareness can shape thinking. She noted:

*Personally things I was doing that I never considered as abuses, I have become aware of them. Now I'm more careful the way I treat other people because I would not like them to treat me that way.... People have become aware of the abuses and who to report to. [Female FGD Member, Okrakwadjo, Okere District]*

Furthermore, more than 66% of women and girls indicated their awareness of the fact that, they know they have equal rights and privileges as boys. Of this proportions, 70.09% of girls have this knowledge and 63.24% of women have this knowledge. As noted by a COMBAT member at Larteh Ahenease, the knowledge that women and girls have the same rights as men and boys have empowered them to claim their rights, especially their rights to inherit. In his words,

*“... Women now understand they have right to inheritance and they claim it. A woman who was neglected when her husband passed away has now gotten her share of the husband's properties because she pushed for it.”*

Despite the high level of awareness of rights and knowledge on equal rights and privilege as boys, the proportion of respondents demanding their rights are generally low. The total proportion of women and girls who always demand their rights was 20.12%. Of this proportion, 21.755 were girls/youth and 18.53% were women. These results are further seen in the proportion of influential people speaking publicly to promote gender equality. Results indicate that influential people speaking to promote gender equality at every opportunity they

get is 13.11%, with those doing this most often representing 32.11%. Table 7 provide more information on this.

### **4.3 Transforming Discriminatory Social norms and practices that perpetuate violence against women**

Norms and practices that hinder the progress of women and girls in communities have undergone significant changes. These changes are largely attributed to the implementation of the programme to transform cultural norms and practices that hinder the progress of women and girls through the instrumentality of the Community Action Teams (COMBAT). An important transformation is the gradual shift from cohabitation which result in unplanned pregnancies and child neglect. Though the pace of transformation is slow, effects of the practice and education is leading to attitudinal change.

*Some of us were staying with our men, we gave birth with and most of us had about 2 to 3 children and we were not married legally, even though we were staying with these men, but because of the teachings of COMBAT, now some of us have been wedded and our marriages have been registered. [Community member, Larteh Konko]*

Discriminatory social norms and practices such as widowhood rites, child pawning, forced and under age marriages and wife battery alongside other forms of domestic abuses have largely been reduced to the barest minimum if not totally eliminated in some of the communities. As noted by a community leader in Apirede:

*Some of the women were forced to perform widowhood rites and also properties taken from them because the families thought, the women killed the husband, so after a year they sacked the woman from the husband's house, but since COMBAT came those things have reduced drastically and the widows now rightfully inherit properties due them.*

Sensitization on the need to prepare wills or have a clear plan of inheritance or distribution of properties have helped to limit abuse of wives and children after the death of a man.

*The activities of COMBAT have helped the community a lot, it has helped to reduce abuses and also, we know the importance of preparing wills and some of the people have started preparing wills [Male FGD member, Nsutam].*

The work of COMBATs is shaping perceptions of all the members of the community. Leaders have thus become champions of cultural transformations resulting in sweeping transformation of inimical cultural norms and practices.

A key example of such perceptions is on the conditions under which a husband can hit his spouse/partner/wife. Table 8 show that in almost all the scenarios provided an overwhelming majority of people expressed the opinion that wife battery is “bad”, and that no situation can justify such actions. This view was expressed by even men who acknowledge physical abuse of their partners or spouses. Across all the conditions presented, not a single item had more than 8% of respondents, either male or female, agreeing on a justification for abuse.

**Table 8: Gendered Perception on reasons for a partner to hit his wife/ girlfriend**

| Statement                                                    | Male | Female | Total |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------|-------|
| She does not complete her household work to his satisfaction | 1.04 | 3.13   | 2.67  |
| She disobeys him                                             | 3.13 | 5.07   | 4.63  |
| She refuses to have sex with him                             | 1.04 | 1.94   | 1.74  |
| She asks him whether he has other girlfriends                | 1.56 | 1.04   | 1.16  |
| He suspects that she is unfaithful                           | 3.65 | 4.02   | 3.94  |
| He finds out that she has been unfaithful                    | 7.81 | 7.00   | 7.18  |
| She contracts a sexually transmitted disease                 | 2.60 | 1.49   | 1.74  |
| She goes out without telling him                             | 3.65 | 4.02   | 3.94  |
| She neglects the children                                    | 6.25 | 5.22   | 5.45  |
| She argues with him                                          | 6.77 | 6.11   | 6.26  |
| She burns the food                                           | 1.04 | 1.64   | 1.51  |

Source: Community Survey, 2022

Due to the unfavourable view of wife beating and other forms of domestic abuse normative transformations are taking place. Whereas in the past certain abuses were accepted and accommodated such actions garner negative reinforcements.

*Some of the men who used to beat their wives have stopped, even though, it has not been totally eradicated, I can say that due to the advent of COMBAT and the education, it has reduced drastically.*

*Most of the guys who used to beat their wives most of the times, though women may be at fault we make the men aware that, beating your wife is unacceptable. Furthermore, traditional violence which were mostly done to widows by the Ayigbes among us, where the widower is sometimes made to undergo some unfair treatments have also reduced. [Male FGD member, Abiriw].*

Another added:

*Domestic violence such as beating of wife and abusing young ladies verbally has reduced drastically not fully*



Understanding women's ability and freedom to control and manage access to their bodies regarding sexual activities can inform the transformation of norms and therefore curtail the incidence of certain forms of abuses. Respondents were thus asked to express their opinions on the conditions under which a woman can/will be permitted/may be understood if she refuses her partner/spouse/husband sex.

As shown in Table 9, it is remarkable that apart from two items, "He does not want to use a condom/contraceptive" and "She finds out that he has a girlfriend", more than 50% of respondents believed a woman can deny or refuse a man sex under those considerations or circumstances. Indeed, it has to be noted that some of those scenarios are considered sound cultural basis to abstain from sex, such as periods of menstruation or when sick. The high level of agreement with most of the statement is indicative of normative transformations. This is indicative of the potential for the elimination of cultural practices inimical to the progress and self-determination of women girls.

**Table 9: Gendered perception on conditions a married woman can refuse to have sex with her husband**

| Statement                                      | Male  | Female | Total |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| She doesn't want to                            | 53.65 | 58.12  | 57.13 |
| He is drunk                                    | 67.71 | 70.64  | 69.99 |
| She is sick                                    | 91.67 | 91.51  | 91.54 |
| He mistreats her                               | 79.69 | 72.58  | 74.16 |
| She is menstruating                            | 93.23 | 93.59  | 93.51 |
| He does not want to use a condom/contraception | 32.81 | 38.00  | 36.85 |
| She finds out that he has girlfriends          | 42.71 | 47.54  | 46.47 |

**Source:** Community Survey, 2022

*"An important measure of changes in communities is the degree to which people in the community show respect to each other without regard to gender, creed and orientation"* [Community Leader, Awukugua].

This was an apt statement made by a chief to demonstrate the degree to which the society is transforming. While the transformation may not be rapid or overnight, small and little steps help to measure progress made.

Another observation made was thus:

*COMBAT has strengthened the work of the communities and made the norms and values more humane. Through the education, the good norms and values are observed, also things that threatens people's rights have been curtailed [Queen mother, Awukugua].*

A clear sign of transformation is the gradual collapse of strict gender roles and expectations. Viewing each other as equal partners and supporting each other fosters progress for the household and the community at large. Most of the FGDs noted that: *now some of the women support their husbands to pay the fees and bills of their children and even some of them provide chop money to support their husbands.*

**Table 10: Community view on gender relations and status**

| Statement                                                                                                   | Male  | Female | Total |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| Both men and women treat each other with respect as equal counterparts                                      | 53.13 | 48.58  | 49.59 |
| Men are generally seen to be superior to women                                                              | 67.19 | 62.44  | 63.50 |
| Women are involved in decision making in households/family                                                  | 84.38 | 86.74  | 86.21 |
| Women are involved in decision making at the community level                                                | 84.90 | 85.69  | 85.52 |
| Women and men have equal access to land and other resources (including farm tools and inputs)               | 73.44 | 70.64  | 71.26 |
| Women and men have equal control over the use of land and other resources (including farm tools and inputs) | 69.79 | 67.81  | 68.25 |
| Women and men equally inherit their spouses and parents properties                                          | 65.10 | 61.85  | 62.57 |

Source: Evaluation Survey, 2022

Table 10 shows that gender perceptions on the value placed on men and women as well as the collective view of the status of men and women. The results suggest that there is quite a balance view of men and women. This is confirmed with the desire of partners to support each other in running and provision for their households. An instructive account is provided

*I have seen that, most of the men have had a change in their mindset on these gender relations and they are willing to support their wives especially in doing the house chores, but I know that their only fear is that, other people may laugh at them and also tag them as fools or their wives are controlling them [FGD Member, Larteh Kubease].*

The collapse of strict gendered roles and the uncompelled willingness of men to support their spouse in doing household chores showed a true transformation in cultural norms and practices. In spite of the hesitation on the part of some men due to the fear of public ridicule, a community wide transformation is not farfetched.

A further statement to support the positive transformation is provided:

*I know of one man in my neighbourhood who wasn't supporting his wife in doing the house chores, the woman would have to do everything all by self and it was always causing fights and quarrels among them, but after the teachings of COMBAT, I have seen some changes, whereby the man even wakes up at dawn to do the sweeping and sometimes the washing and even preparing the kids for school so by the time woman wakes up, the house chores will be almost done by the husband who was not doing it [Female FGD member, Abiriw].*

The influence of COMBAT has not only changed or transformed norms and practices in the communities and inhabitants. The impact has also been truly felt by the COMBATs themselves. A COMBAT in Larteh Ahenease noted thus:

*Firstly, I thought violence was only about threatening someone with either knife or gun or other threats but I have realised that even in our marriages we have violence. I have also come to realise that we should all be engaged in decision making. Taking care of the kids is not only the role of the man. I have to take very good care of my kids, their dressing, home works, etc. Again marriage ceremony shouldn't always be flashy according to the COMBATs, we teach them that they can do simple wedding and after that, they send it to court to have it registered. So my husband and I after staying for a long time, we had a simple wedding and after that we went to court to register it. So I can say that out of COMBAT, we learnt about simple weddings and I had as such.*

#### **4.5 Prevalence and incidence of violence against women and girls**

In assessing the prevalence of domestic violence, this study adopted the conceptual definitions of four forms of violence (physical, sexual, psychological and economic) used by Institute of Development Studies (IDS) et al (2016) in their study of Domestic Violence in Ghana. These conceptualizations are premised on the national 2007 Domestic Violence Act (Act 732). Each violence is a composite measure of different types of abuses as shown below:

- **Physical Violence** – slapping, pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, dragging or throwing objects at someone; choking, strangling or burning someone; using a weapon, hazardous chemicals or substances against someone; or kicking or pulling someone's external genitalia (for male respondents only);

- ***Sexual Violence*** – acts of unwanted sexual comments or physical contact; rape by physical force, or otherwise forced sex (for instance, by blackmail or threats); denial of using protection during sex; a sexual partner hiding their HIV status; sexual acts or intercourse that were performed on the basis of feeling there was no option; or penetration with an object against someone's will;
- ***Psychological Violence*** – insults, belittling or humiliation in private or in front of others; threats of abandonment; being ignored or treated indifferently; intimidations and acts aimed at scaring someone; threats of using weapons against someone; or threats of hurting someone or someone one cares about; and
- ***Economic Violence*** – denial of household money for expenses (*chop money*) even if enough financial means are available; unsolicited taking of money; control of belongings and spending decisions; damage to or destruction of someone's property; denial of the right to work; forcing someone to work against their will; or denial of food and other basic needs.

The fifth violence which was added to the abuses in the Act 732 is:

- ***Traditional Violence*** – comprise traditional practices such as being forced to marry someone she is not interested in; family pushed her into marriage before 18 years; engaged in hazardous form of labour that can hurt her; sent to serve a shrine as slave (Trokosi); forced/insisted to perform widowhood rites; denied rightful inheritance because she is a woman / girl; spouse and children were denied personal properties of the deceased husband; or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The survey asked detailed questions about girls' and women's experiences of any of these five broad categories of violence over the individual's lifetime up to 2021 (prior to the commencement of the COMBAT programme), and in the 12 months prior to the survey. This allowed the study to capture both current incidence levels of overall levels of (domestic and non-domestic) violence and the lifetime accumulation of experiences of overall violence among girls and women.

## 4.6 Women and Girls experienced Violence over their lifetime up to 2021

### 4.6.1 Physical Abuse

**Consider as Abuse:** Nine actions were used to measure physical abuse: slapped or thrown somethings at her, pushed or shoved her, hit or kicked her, dragged or beaten her, choked or strangled her, burnt her, attacked her with a weapon, poured hazardous chemicals on her, and pulled her genitalia. The majority of the females considered each of these actions as a form of physical abuse (94.8%).

**Experience of Abuse:** The first four abuses (i.e. slapped or thrown somethings at her, pushed or shoved her, hit or kicked her, and dragged or beaten her) can be considered mild abuses while the remaining five abuses can be considered severe abuses. The results show that many of the young girls and women (at least 81%) have ever experienced any of the mild physical abuses over their lifetime up to 2021. However, not many women have experienced any of the severe physical abuses over their lifetime up to 2021. For instance, 45.7% have ever been choked or strangled, 30.6% have ever been attacked with a weapon but only 26.4% of them have had their genitalia pulled before and 20.3% have been burnt over their lifetime up to 2021. Hazardous chemicals have been poured only 1% of the young girls over their lifetime. The results further show that many of the girls and women sometimes or often experienced the mild physical abuses but they rarely experienced the severe physical abuses as shown in Table 11.

**Experience before 15 years (Child Abuse):** The results show that about a third of the victims (33.8%) have experienced a form of physical abuse while they were children (before 15 years). Many girls and women (about 6 in every 10 girls or women) experienced the following abuses before 15 years: slapped or thrown things at her, pushed or shoved her, hit or kicked her, and dragged or beat her up.

**Perpetrators of Abuse:** A large proportion of the perpetrators were non-relative. However, it was other relative who burnt a large proportion of the girls/women.

**Table 11: Percentage of women who have experienced Physical violence over their lifetime up to 2021**

| Variables                                      | Slapped or<br>thrown<br>things at | Pushed<br>or<br>shoved | Hit   | Kicked,<br>dragged or<br>beaten up | Choked or<br>strangled | Burnt | Attacked<br>with<br>weapon | Hazardous<br>chemicals | Pulled<br>your<br>genitalia | Any<br>physical<br>violence |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i><b>Consider as an abuse</b></i>             |                                   |                        |       |                                    |                        |       |                            |                        |                             |                             |
| Youth                                          | 97.58                             | 90.00                  | 97.88 | 98.18                              | 95.45                  | 95.15 | 95.45                      | 95.15                  | 94.85                       | 95.52                       |
| Adult                                          | 98.24                             | 88.24                  | 97.35 | 96.47                              | 92.65                  | 90.29 | 95.59                      | 95.88                  | 92.94                       | 94.18                       |
| Total                                          | 97.91                             | 89.10                  | 97.61 | 97.31                              | 94.03                  | 92.69 | 95.52                      | 95.52                  | 93.88                       | 94.84                       |
| <i><b>Lifetime experience to 2021</b></i>      |                                   |                        |       |                                    |                        |       |                            |                        |                             |                             |
| Youth                                          | 93.03                             | 91.21                  | 82.73 | 82.73                              | 47.58                  | 20.91 | 32.73                      | 1.21                   | 28.18                       | 53.37                       |
| Adult                                          | 92.06                             | 90.00                  | 86.76 | 79.71                              | 43.82                  | 19.71 | 28.53                      | 0.88                   | 24.71                       | 51.80                       |
| Total                                          | 92.54                             | 90.60                  | 84.78 | 81.19                              | 45.67                  | 20.30 | 30.60                      | 1.04                   | 26.42                       | 52.57                       |
| <i><b>Frequency of occurrence</b></i>          |                                   |                        |       |                                    |                        |       |                            |                        |                             |                             |
| Rarely (1-2 times)                             | 35.81                             | 24.05                  | 27.64 | 25.92                              | 39.22                  | 64.71 | 55.61                      | 71.43                  | 51.98                       | 34.23                       |
| Sometimes (3-5 times)                          | 30.16                             | 30.64                  | 36.09 | 31.43                              | 33.66                  | 25.74 | 23.90                      | 28.57                  | 31.07                       | 31.32                       |
| Often (5+ times)                               | 34.03                             | 45.30                  | 36.27 | 42.65                              | 27.12                  | 9.56  | 20.49                      |                        | 16.95                       | 34.45                       |
| <i><b>Experience abuse before 15 years</b></i> |                                   |                        |       |                                    |                        |       |                            |                        |                             |                             |
| Youth                                          | 57.88                             | 64.85                  | 57.58 | 56.36                              | 31.21                  | 16.67 | 16.06                      | 0.61                   | 18.78                       | 34.50                       |
| Adult                                          | 60.29                             | 63.53                  | 55.88 | 57.06                              | 29.41                  | 15.00 | 9.12                       | 0.59                   | 17.65                       | 33.18                       |
| Total                                          | 59.10                             | 64.18                  | 56.72 | 56.72                              | 30.30                  | 15.82 | 12.54                      | 0.6                    | 18.21                       | 33.83                       |
| <i><b>Perpetrators of abuse</b></i>            |                                   |                        |       |                                    |                        |       |                            |                        |                             |                             |
| Intimate partner                               | 15.65                             | 8.40                   | 13.73 | 14.52                              | 17.65                  | 2.21  | 22.44                      | 14.29                  | 14.69                       | 13.72                       |
| HH member                                      | 16.29                             | 8.24                   | 10.74 | 15.44                              | 6.86                   | 29.41 | 18.05                      | 57.14                  | 0.56                        | 12.59                       |
| Other relative                                 | 21.94                             | 9.23                   | 19.19 | 20.04                              | 16.01                  | 44.85 | 17.07                      | 14.29                  | 7.91                        | 17.98                       |
| Non-relative                                   | 29.35                             | 52.06                  | 38.91 | 32.72                              | 44.77                  | 20.59 | 35.12                      | 14.29                  | 68.93                       | 39.65                       |
| Non household member                           | 16.77                             | 22.08                  | 17.43 | 17.28                              | 14.71                  | 2.94  | 7.32                       |                        | 7.91                        | 16.06                       |

**Source:** Evaluation Survey, 2022

#### 4.6.2 Sexual Abuse

***Consider as Abuse:*** Nine actions were used to measure sexual abuse: making inappropriate sexual comment, inappropriate sexual touch, physically forced to have sex, otherwise forced to have sex (through blackmail, threat or scare), sex without consent, sex without protection even on request, a sexual partner not revealing he has HIV when he knew about it, had sex because she had no choice, and penetrated her with an object. The majority of the females considered each of these actions as a form of sexual abuse (90.2%).

***Experience of Abuse:*** With the exception of two abuses (i.e. a sexual partner not revealing he has HIV when he knew about it, and penetration with an object), many of the girls and women have experienced all the other forms of abuses over their lifetime up to 2021. The highest proportion of girls or women (9 in every 10 girls or women) have received inappropriate sexual comment or has been sexually touched inappropriately that made them feel uncomfortable. The proportion of the youth who have experienced sexual abuse over their lifetime (59.2%) is slightly higher than the adult females (56%). Many of the females sometimes or often experienced any form of sexual abuse. A large proportion of the girls or women sometimes or often experienced some form of sexual abuse. A large proportion of the girls and women often received inappropriate sexual comment or were touched inappropriately (see Table 12).

***Experience before 15 years (Child Abuse):*** Generally, only about 15% of the girls and women have ever experienced some form of sexual violence before 15 years. The disaggregation shows that about 4 in every 10 girls and women received inappropriate sexual comment or was sexually touched inappropriately before she was 15 years. About 2 in every 10 women were physically forced to have sex before age 15 (see Table 12)

***Perpetrators of Abuse:*** Perpetrators of sexual abuse are mainly intimate partners or non-relative. The results show that a large proportion of people who make inappropriate sexual comments about women or sexually touch females inappropriately are non-relatives. A large proportion of those who perpetuate sexually-related abuses against women are intimate partners as shown in Table 12.

**Table 12: Percentage of women who have experienced sexual violence over their lifetime up to 2021**

| Variables                               | Sexual<br>comment | Sexual<br>touch | Physically<br>forced to<br>have sex | Otherwise<br>forced to<br>have sex | Sex<br>without<br>consent | Sex<br>without<br>protection | Not<br>say<br>known<br>HIV | Sex<br>because<br>had no<br>choice | Object<br>Penetration | Any Sexual<br>Violence |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Consider as abuse</i>                |                   |                 |                                     |                                    |                           |                              |                            |                                    |                       |                        |
| Youth                                   | 77.04             | 89.73           | 98.18                               | 97.88                              | 94.85                     | 80                           | 94.24                      | 90.3                               | 94.85                 | 90.78                  |
| Adult                                   | 82.35             | 90.88           | 96.47                               | 97.35                              | 95.29                     | 70.88                        | 91.76                      | 86.76                              | 94.71                 | 89.61                  |
| Total                                   | 79.73             | 90.31           | 97.31                               | 97.61                              | 95.07                     | 75.37                        | 92.99                      | 88.51                              | 94.78                 | 90.19                  |
| <i>Lifetime experience to 2021</i>      |                   |                 |                                     |                                    |                           |                              |                            |                                    |                       |                        |
| Youth                                   | 93.66             | 93.66           | 72.42                               | 65.76                              | 66.36                     | 64.24                        | 0                          | 67.58                              | 8.79                  | 59.19                  |
| Adult                                   | 90.29             | 89.12           | 71.18                               | 64.41                              | 62.94                     | 52.94                        | 1.76                       | 66.18                              | 5.29                  | 56.01                  |
| Total                                   | 91.95             | 91.36           | 71.79                               | 65.07                              | 64.63                     | 58.51                        | 0.9                        | 66.87                              | 7.01                  | 57.58                  |
| <i>Frequency of occurrence</i>          |                   |                 |                                     |                                    |                           |                              |                            |                                    |                       |                        |
| Rarely                                  | 19.12             | 19.58           | 33.68                               | 35.32                              | 33.49                     | 28.83                        | 66.67                      | 22.54                              | 70.21                 | 27.35                  |
| Sometimes                               | 29.66             | 33.12           | 38.25                               | 36.47                              | 38.34                     | 37.76                        | 16.67                      | 42.19                              | 23.4                  | 35.82                  |
| Often                                   | 51.22             | 47.31           | 28.07                               | 28.21                              | 28.18                     | 33.42                        | 16.67                      | 35.27                              | 6.38                  | 36.83                  |
| <i>Experience abuse before 15 years</i> |                   |                 |                                     |                                    |                           |                              |                            |                                    |                       |                        |
| Youth                                   | 40.79             | 37.46           | 19.34                               | 16.06                              | 11.82                     | 6.67                         | 0                          | 7.58                               | 4.85                  | 15.5                   |
| Adult                                   | 41.76             | 38.24           | 17.65                               | 12.65                              | 8.53                      | 4.71                         | 0.29                       | 6.47                               | 3.24                  | 14.36                  |
| Total                                   | 41.24             | 37.85           | 18.48                               | 14.33                              | 10.15                     | 5.67                         | 0.15                       | 7.7                                | 4.03                  | 14.97                  |
| <i>Perpetrators</i>                     |                   |                 |                                     |                                    |                           |                              |                            |                                    |                       |                        |
| Intimate partner                        | 3.73              | 14.03           | 44.28                               | 48.39                              | 65.36                     | 83.67                        | 50                         | 68.30                              | 27.66                 | 42.21                  |
| Household member                        | 0.97              | 2.45            | 3.74                                | 3.67                               | 3.00                      | 0.26                         | 0                          | 1.79                               | 6.38                  | 2.30                   |
| Other relative                          | 5.02              | 5.55            | 4.16                                | 5.05                               | 3.93                      | 1.02                         | 16.67                      | 2.68                               | 4.26                  | 4.12                   |
| Non-relative                            | 76.34             | 67.54           | 44.07                               | 40.14                              | 24.71                     | 13.78                        | 33.33                      | 26.56                              | 59.57                 | 45.55                  |
| Non household member                    | 13.94             | 10.44           | 3.74                                | 2.75                               | 3.00                      | 1.28                         | 0                          | 0.67                               | 2.13                  | 5.82                   |

**Source:** Evaluation Survey, 2022



#### 4.6.3 Economic Abuse

***Consider as Abuse:*** Seven actions were used to measure economic abuse: denied pocket money (even though they have enough), taken cash with permission, controlled spending decisions, damaged or destroyed property, prohibited person from working or forced to quit work, and denied food or other basic needs. The majority of the females considered each of these actions as a form of sexual abuse (94.5%).

***Experience of Abuse:*** With the exception of being prohibited person from working or forced to quit work, many of the girls and women have experienced all the other forms of economic abuses over their lifetime up to 2021. Among the economic abuses, the highest proportion of the girls and women have ever been denied pocket money (83.4%) and denied food or basic needs (68.2%). The proportion of women who have experienced any form of economic abuse over their lifetime up to 2021 (60.2%) is relatively higher than the girls (56%). Many women were often denied pocket money (51%). The rest of the economic abuses sometimes or rarely happened to the girls or women over their lifetime up to 2021.

***Experience before 15 years (Child Abuse):*** About a third of the girls and women experienced an economic abuse when they were children. A large proportion of them were denied food or basic needs (55.8%), forced to work (44.3%), denied pocket money (43.6%), and controlled spending decision (38.4 %) (see Table 13).

***Perpetrators of Abuse:*** Generally, about a third of the perpetrators of economic abuse are other relative (33.4%). However, a large proportion of the people who denied girls and women pocket money and prohibited them from working were intimate partners (see Table 13)

**Table 13: Percentage of women who have experienced Economic violence over their lifetime up to 2021**

| <b>Variables</b>                               | <b>Denied pocket money</b> | <b>Cash taken out</b> | <b>Controlled spending decision</b> | <b>Property damaged</b> | <b>Prohibited from working</b> | <b>Forced to work</b> | <b>Denied basic needs</b> | <b>Any economic violence</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i><b>Consider as abuse</b></i>                |                            |                       |                                     |                         |                                |                       |                           |                              |
| Youth                                          | 92.73                      | 93.64                 | 91.21                               | 96.97                   | 94.55                          | 96.06                 | 95.15                     | 94.33                        |
| Adult                                          | 93.53                      | 95.29                 | 90.29                               | 95.88                   | 94.41                          | 96.47                 | 96.76                     | 94.66                        |
| Total                                          | 93.13                      | 94.48                 | 90.75                               | 96.42                   | 94.48                          | 96.27                 | 95.97                     | 94.50                        |
| <i><b>Lifetime experience to 2021</b></i>      |                            |                       |                                     |                         |                                |                       |                           |                              |
| Youth                                          | 84.55                      | 49.39                 | 51.82                               | 47.88                   | 31.52                          | 58.18                 | 68.79                     | 56.02                        |
| Adult                                          | 82.06                      | 61.76                 | 59.12                               | 53.82                   | 39.41                          | 57.35                 | 67.65                     | 60.17                        |
| Total                                          | 83.28                      | 55.67                 | 55.52                               | 50.90                   | 35.52                          | 57.76                 | 68.21                     | 58.12                        |
| <i><b>Frequency of occurrence</b></i>          |                            |                       |                                     |                         |                                |                       |                           |                              |
| Rarely                                         | 19.71                      | 36.46                 | 33.33                               | 48.09                   | 54.20                          | 33.33                 | 20.79                     | 32.54                        |
| Sometimes                                      | 29.57                      | 39.41                 | 33.33                               | 33.14                   | 33.19                          | 34.37                 | 40.92                     | 34.78                        |
| Often                                          | 50.72                      | 24.13                 | 33.33                               | 18.77                   | 12.61                          | 32.30                 | 38.29                     | 32.69                        |
| <i><b>Experience abuse before 15 years</b></i> |                            |                       |                                     |                         |                                |                       |                           |                              |
| Youth                                          | 48.18                      | 8.48                  | 36.06                               | 19.39                   | 6.67                           | 42.73                 | 55.15                     | 29.78                        |
| Adult                                          | 39.12                      | 12.94                 | 40.59                               | 18.82                   | 7.94                           | 45.88                 | 56.47                     | 30.38                        |
| Total                                          | 43.58                      | 10.75                 | 38.36                               | 19.10                   | 7.31                           | 44.33                 | 55.82                     | 30.08                        |
| <i><b>Perpetrators</b></i>                     |                            |                       |                                     |                         |                                |                       |                           |                              |
| Intimate partner                               | 40.14                      | 28.95                 | 20.43                               | 15.25                   | 50.84                          | 9.82                  | 10.94                     | 24.54                        |
| Household member                               | 27.60                      | 18.77                 | 24.73                               | 14.66                   | 11.34                          | 23.26                 | 33.70                     | 23.37                        |
| Other relative                                 | 20.61                      | 30.29                 | 40.32                               | 33.72                   | 18.91                          | 48.06                 | 41.14                     | 33.46                        |
| Non-relative                                   | 3.94                       | 16.89                 | 4.84                                | 28.45                   | 11.76                          | 12.40                 | 6.56                      | 11.23                        |
| Non household member                           | 7.71                       | 5.09                  | 9.68                                | 7.92                    | 7.14                           | 6.46                  | 7.66                      | 7.41                         |

**Source:** Evaluation Survey, 2022

#### **4.6.4 Psychological Abuse**

***Consider as Abuse:*** Five actions were used to measure psychological abuse: insulted, humiliated, belittled in private or public; threatened to be abandoned, ignored or treated indifferently; acted to scare or intimidate her; threatened to use a gun, knife or other weapon against her; and threatened to hurt her or someone she cares about (like taking her child away). The majority of the girls and women considered each of these actions as a form of psychological abuse (94.7%).

***Experience of Abuse:*** With the exception of threat of weapon attack, many of the girls and women have experienced all the other forms of psychological abuses over their lifetime up to 2021. Among the psychological abuses, as high as 96.4% of the girls and women have ever been insulted, humiliated, and belittled in private or public. At least 6 in every 10 women have ever been threatened to be abandoned, ignored or treated indifferently or someone has acted to scare or intimidate them over their lifetime up to 2021. Generally, large proportion of the girls and women sometimes or often experience some form of psychological abuses.

***Experience before 15 years (Child Abuse):*** Close to a third of the girls and women (30%) experienced psychological abuses when they were children (less than 15 years). Many of them have ever been insulted, humiliated, belittled in private or public (60.3%). The proportion of young girls who have experienced any form of economic violence when they were children (31%) is slightly higher than the adults (28%) (see Table 14).

***Perpetrators of Abuse:*** A large proportion of the perpetrators of psychological intimate partners (26.9%) or other relatives (24.4%). Put together, those who perpetuate psychological abuse against women are their relatives (see Table 14).

**Table 14: Percentage of women who have experienced psychological violence over their lifetime up to 2021**

|                                                | <b>Insulted,<br/>humiliated,<br/>belittled</b> | <b>Ignored,<br/>threatened to<br/>be abandoned</b> | <b>Scared,<br/>intimidated</b> | <b>Threat of<br/>weapon<br/>attack</b> | <b>Threaten to<br/>be hurt</b> | <b>Any<br/>psychological<br/>Violence</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <i><b>Consider as abuse</b></i>                |                                                |                                                    |                                |                                        |                                |                                           |
| Youth                                          | 96.67                                          | 93.33                                              | 95.45                          | 95.15                                  | 96.97                          | 95.52                                     |
| Adult                                          | 96.18                                          | 91.76                                              | 92.06                          | 94.12                                  | 95.29                          | 93.88                                     |
| Total                                          | 96.42                                          | 92.54                                              | 93.73                          | 94.63                                  | 96.12                          | 94.69                                     |
| <i><b>Lifetime experience to 2021</b></i>      |                                                |                                                    |                                |                                        |                                |                                           |
| Youth                                          | 95.76                                          | 68.18                                              | 63.64                          | 39.09                                  | 52.12                          | 63.76                                     |
| Adult                                          | 97.06                                          | 63.82                                              | 61.76                          | 39.71                                  | 47.06                          | 61.88                                     |
| Total                                          | 96.42                                          | 65.97                                              | 62.69                          | 39.40                                  | 49.55                          | 62.81                                     |
| <i><b>Frequency of occurrence</b></i>          |                                                |                                                    |                                |                                        |                                |                                           |
| Rarely                                         | 16.25                                          | 37.33                                              | 24.05                          | 46.59                                  | 38.25                          | 29.52                                     |
| Sometimes                                      | 24.77                                          | 38.24                                              | 42.62                          | 36.74                                  | 40.66                          | 35.17                                     |
| Often                                          | 58.98                                          | 24.43                                              | 33.33                          | 16.67                                  | 21.08                          | 35.31                                     |
| <i><b>Experience abuse before 15 years</b></i> |                                                |                                                    |                                |                                        |                                |                                           |
| Youth                                          | 60.91                                          | 29.39                                              | 37.58                          | 12.42                                  | 21.82                          | 30.73                                     |
| Adult                                          | 59.71                                          | 26.18                                              | 36.76                          | 12.06                                  | 16.18                          | 28.47                                     |
| Total                                          | 60.30                                          | 27.76                                              | 37.16                          | 12.24                                  | 18.96                          | 29.58                                     |
| <i><b>Perpetrators</b></i>                     |                                                |                                                    |                                |                                        |                                |                                           |
| Intimate partner                               | 13.16                                          | 40.95                                              | 19.52                          | 30.68                                  | 40.96                          | 26.85                                     |
| Household member                               | 18.42                                          | 14.93                                              | 14.76                          | 14.02                                  | 14.46                          | 15.78                                     |
| Other relative                                 | 25.39                                          | 28.51                                              | 28.33                          | 22.73                                  | 13.25                          | 24.38                                     |
| Non-relative                                   | 18.58                                          | 6.33                                               | 23.10                          | 27.27                                  | 21.99                          | 18.54                                     |
| Non household member                           | 24.46                                          | 9.28                                               | 14.29                          | 5.30                                   | 9.34                           | 14.45                                     |

**Source:** Evaluation Survey, 2022

#### 4.6.5 Traditional Abuse

**Consider as Abuse:** Traditional abuse was assessed using eight (8) measures. The eight (8) items include: forced her to marry someone they are not interested in, family pushed her into marriage before 18 years, engaged her in hazardous form of labour that can hurt her, sent to serve a shrine as slave (Trokosi), forced/Insisted you perform widowhood rites, denied rightful inheritance because she is a woman / girl, spouse and children were denied personal properties of the deceased husband, female Genital Mutilation. The majority of the females considered each of these actions as a form of traditional abuse (93.30%).

**Experience of Abuse (include: experience, frequency):** Generally, most of the females have not experienced any form of traditional violence throughout their life up to 2021. The results show that only 11.88% of both girls and women have ever experienced traditional abuse as at 2021. Out of this, 14.37% of women and 9.32% of girls have experienced traditional violence as at 2021. Engagement in hazardous was the only traditional abuse that nearly 40% of women and girls have experienced as at 2021 (see Table 15).

The results further show more than half of women and girls have rarely experience any form of traditional violence/abuse in their lifetime About 22% and 21% have experienced traditional violence/abuse sometimes or often respectively. Only a whole, only engagement in hazardous labour recorded has more than a third of the women and girls indicating they sometimes (35.38%) and often (41.54%) such abuses as shown in Table 15.

**Experience before 15 years (Child Abuse):** Table 15 show that 6.03% of all girls and women interviewed in the study have experience a form of traditional abuse when they were children. A little over 4%% were pushed into marriages, while about 33% were engaged in hazardous labour when they were children and nearly 5% women and girls have been denied their inheritance before the age of 15 years.

**Perpetrators of Abuse (include gender of perpetrators):** Traditional violence/abuse was shown to be perpetrated people close to victims. These are largely relative and members of households. Table 15 show that other relatives (56.83%) and household members (21.35%) tend to perpetrate traditional violence/abuse on women and girls. Across the board perpetrators tended to be predominantly female except in the case of the denial of inheritance and denial of children of personal properties.

**Table 15: Percentage of women who have experienced Traditional Abuse over their lifetime up to 2021**

| Variables                                      | Forced marriage | Pushed to marriage | Hazardous labor | Serve in shrine | Widowhood rite | Denied inheritance | Children denied | FGM    | Any Traditional Abuse |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------|-----------------------|
| <i><b>Consider as abuse</b></i>                |                 |                    |                 |                 |                |                    |                 |        |                       |
| Youth                                          | 94.85           | 93.03              | 95.15           | 94.55           | 92.73          | 94.85              | 95.15           | 95.15  | 94.43                 |
| Adult                                          | 92.65           | 92.35              | 92.35           | 91.76           | 89.71          | 92.94              | 92.94           | 92.94  | 92.21                 |
| Total                                          | 93.73           | 92.69              | 93.73           | 93.13           | 91.19          | 93.88              | 94.03           | 94.03  | 93.30                 |
| <i><b>Lifetime experience to 2021</b></i>      |                 |                    |                 |                 |                |                    |                 |        |                       |
| Youth                                          | 17.58           | 9.09               | 38.48           | 0.30            | 0.30           | 7.27               | 1.21            | 0.30   | 9.32                  |
| Adult                                          | 22.06           | 12.35              | 39.12           | 1.18            | 8.24           | 20.59              | 11.47           | 0.00   | 14.37                 |
| Total                                          | 19.85           | 10.75              | 38.81           | 0.75            | 4.33           | 14.03              | 6.42            | 0.15   | 11.88                 |
| <i><b>Frequency of occurrence</b></i>          |                 |                    |                 |                 |                |                    |                 |        |                       |
| Rarely                                         | 80.45           | 87.50              | 23.08           | 60.00           | 86.21          | 75.53              | 81.40           | 100.00 | 57.30                 |
| Sometimes                                      | 12.03           | 9.72               | 35.38           | 40.00           |                | 18.09              | 13.95           |        | 21.98                 |
| Often                                          | 7.52            | 2.78               | 41.54           |                 | 13.79          | 6.38               | 4.65            |        | 20.72                 |
| <i><b>Experience abuse before 15 years</b></i> |                 |                    |                 |                 |                |                    |                 |        |                       |
| Youth                                          | 3.94            | 4.55               | 33.94           | 0               | 0              | 3.94               | 0               | 0.3    | 5.64                  |
| Adult                                          | 4.41            | 7.94               | 32.35           | 1.18            | 0.29           | 5.88               | 1.18            | 0      | 6.41                  |
| Total                                          | 4.18            | 6.27               | 33.13           | 0.60            | 0.15           | 4.93               | 0.6             | 0.15   | 6.03                  |
| <i><b>Perpetrators</b></i>                     |                 |                    |                 |                 |                |                    |                 |        |                       |
| Intimate partner                               | 0.75            |                    | 2.31            | 20.00           | 3.45           | 6.38               | 9.30            |        | 2.98                  |
| Household member                               | 33.08           | 36.11              | 19.62           | 20.00           | 3.45           | 7.45               | 11.63           | 100    | 21.35                 |
| Other relative                                 | 51.88           | 47.22              | 58.46           | 20.00           | 65.52          | 71.28              | 46.51           |        | 56.83                 |
| Non relative                                   | 3.01            | 2.78               | 10.77           | 40.00           | 17.24          | 13.83              | 30.23           |        | 10.52                 |
| Non household member                           | 11.28           | 13.89              | 8.85            |                 | 10.34          | 1.06               | 2.33            |        | 8.32                  |

**Source:** Evaluation Survey, 2022

## 4.7 Girls and women experience of abuse in the last 12 months

### 4.7.1 Physical Abuse

***Experience of Abuse:*** Compared to the life time experience of physical violence by girls and women, only 26.97% of them have experienced any form of physical violence over the last 12 months. The data indicates that, of the total proportion of girls and women who have experienced some form of physical violence over the last 12 months, 33.27% of girls have experience at least one form of physical violence and 20.58% of women have experienced any form of physical violence over the last 12 months. The dominant physical violence experiences over the last 12 months include pushed or shoved (61.79%), Slapped or thrown things at (51.49%) and hit by someone (48.36%). Across all these forms of physical violence, more young girls experienced the most over the last 12 months. Table 16, provides more details of the distribution of physical violence experienced over the past 12 months. Furthermore, results on the frequency of occurrence of physical violence over the last 12 months indicate that many of the victims rarely or sometimes experienced.

***Perpetrators of Abuse:*** Apart from pouring of hazardous chemicals and burning, intimate partners were the dominant perpetrators across all forms of physical violence experienced by girls and women over the last 12 months. Non-relatives were also high compared to other categories of perpetrators. This is especially in the case of pulling of genitalia where the percentage of perpetrators was 51.4%.

**Table 16: Percentage of women who have experienced Physical violence over past 12 months**

| Variables                               | Slapped or<br>thrown things<br>at | Pushed<br>or<br>shoved | Hit   | Kicked,<br>dragged or<br>beaten up | Choked or<br>strangled | Burnt | Attacked<br>with<br>weapon | Hazardous<br>chemicals | pulled your<br>genitalia | Any<br>physical<br>violence |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-------|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Experience in the last 12 months</i> |                                   |                        |       |                                    |                        |       |                            |                        |                          |                             |
| Youth                                   | 64.55                             | 73.33                  | 58.79 | 48.79                              | 23.64                  | 3.94  | 17.27                      | 0.30                   | 8.79                     | 33.27                       |
| Adult                                   | 38.82                             | 50.59                  | 38.24 | 30.59                              | 13.24                  | 3.53  | 10.29                      | 0.00                   | 2.35                     | 20.85                       |
| Total                                   | 51.49                             | 61.79                  | 48.36 | 39.55                              | 18.36                  | 3.73  | 13.73                      | 0.15                   | 5.52                     | 26.97                       |
| <i>Frequency of occurrence</i>          |                                   |                        |       |                                    |                        |       |                            |                        |                          |                             |
| Rarely                                  | 48.41                             | 39.86                  | 46.91 | 49.06                              | 53.66                  | 68.00 | 67.39                      | 100.00                 | 51.35                    | 47.91                       |
| Sometimes                               | 32.17                             | 35.75                  | 34.26 | 31.70                              | 26.02                  | 24.00 | 22.83                      |                        | 21.62                    | 32.04                       |
| Often                                   | 19.42                             | 24.40                  | 18.83 | 19.25                              | 20.33                  | 8.00  | 9.78                       |                        | 27.03                    | 20.05                       |
| <i>Perpetrators</i>                     |                                   |                        |       |                                    |                        |       |                            |                        |                          |                             |
| Intimate partner                        | 34.78                             | 26.33                  | 35.49 | 43.02                              | 40.65                  | 16.00 | 33.70                      |                        | 29.73                    | 34.07                       |
| HH member                               | 21.45                             | 12.56                  | 17.28 | 17.74                              | 13.82                  | 24.00 | 16.30                      | 100.00                 |                          | 16.48                       |
| Other-relative                          | 18.55                             | 25.85                  | 23.77 | 22.26                              | 21.14                  | 36.00 | 21.74                      |                        | 18.92                    | 22.69                       |
| Non-relative                            | 25.22                             | 35.27                  | 23.46 | 16.98                              | 24.39                  | 24.00 | 28.26                      |                        | 51.35                    | 26.75                       |

**Source:** Evaluation Survey, 2022



#### 4.7.2 Sexual Violence

***Experience of Abuse:*** Over the last 12 months, a total of 40.57 young girls/youth have experience at least one form of sexual violence/abuse. The total proportion of women who have experienced any form of sexual violence over the last 12 months was 22.68%. Making of inappropriate sexual comments and sexual touch which makes a person feel uncomfortable were acts that have been experienced the most over the last 12 months by girls and women. The total proportion of women and girls who have experienced inappropriate comments was 61.64% and those who have experience sexual touches is 56.42%.

In terms of frequency of occurrence, 41.39% of the girls and women noted that that over the course of the last 12 months at least one form of sexually violent act has happened to them. Additionally, 27.86% indicated that at least one form of sexually violent act happened often to them. The distribution across the different sexually violent act is provided in table 17

***Perpetrators of Abuse:*** Perpetrators of sexual violence over the last 12 month were largely by non-relatives. This constituted 74.82% of the total proportion of all perpetrators over the last 12 months. Non-relatives' high incidence of perpetration is shown regarding sexually violent acts such as sexually inappropriate comments (74.82%) and unwelcomed sexual touch (58.47%). Though the proportion of intimate partners perpetrating sexually violent acts overall is 13.32%, the proportion perpetrating acts like physical force to have sex, forcibly having sex with a person, sex without consent, sex without protection, engaged in sexual acts through fear and penetration with objects were higher compared to other categories of perpetrators.

**Table 17: Percentage of women who have experienced sexual violence over past 12 months**

| <b>Variables</b>                               | <b>Sexual<br/>comment</b> | <b>Sexual<br/>touch</b> | <b>Physically<br/>forced to<br/>have sex</b> | <b>Otherwise<br/>forced to<br/>have sex</b> | <b>Sex<br/>without<br/>consent</b> | <b>Sex without<br/>protection</b> | <b>Sex<br/>because<br/>afraid</b> | <b>Object<br/>penetration</b> | <b>Any<br/>sexual<br/>violence</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i><b>Experience in the last 12 months</b></i> |                           |                         |                                              |                                             |                                    |                                   |                                   |                               |                                    |
| Youth                                          | 79.09                     | 71.52                   | 46.06                                        | 38.79                                       | 40.00                              | 40.91                             | 46.67                             | 2.12                          | 40.57                              |
| Adult                                          | 44.71                     | 41.76                   | 23.82                                        | 17.94                                       | 24.71                              | 26.76                             | 23.82                             | 0.59                          | 22.68                              |
| Total                                          | 61.64                     | 56.42                   | 34.78                                        | 28.21                                       | 32.24                              | 33.73                             | 35.07                             | 1.34                          | 31.49                              |
| <i><b>Frequency of occurrence</b></i>          |                           |                         |                                              |                                             |                                    |                                   |                                   |                               |                                    |
| Rarely                                         | 30.75                     | 31.48                   | 30.90                                        | 37.04                                       | 34.72                              | 26.11                             | 23.83                             | 66.67                         | 30.75                              |
| Sometimes                                      | 34.38                     | 40.74                   | 45.92                                        | 36.51                                       | 43.52                              | 44.25                             | 49.79                             | 33.33                         | 41.39                              |
| Often                                          | 34.87                     | 27.78                   | 23.18                                        | 26.46                                       | 21.76                              | 29.65                             | 26.38                             | 0                             | 27.86                              |
| <i><b>Perpetrators</b></i>                     |                           |                         |                                              |                                             |                                    |                                   |                                   |                               |                                    |
| Intimate partner                               | 13.32                     | 33.07                   | 68.24                                        | 71.43                                       | 79.17                              | 86.73                             | 55.56                             | 54.24                         | 13.32                              |
| Household member                               | 1.21                      | 0.79                    | 1.29                                         | 2.12                                        | 1.85                               | 0.88                              | 11.11                             | 1.21                          | 1.21                               |
| Other relative                                 | 10.65                     | 7.67                    | 3.86                                         | 4.23                                        | 3.70                               | 1.33                              | 11.11                             | 5.85                          | 10.65                              |
| Non-relative                                   | 74.82                     | 58.47                   | 26.61                                        | 22.22                                       | 15.28                              | 11.06                             | 22.22                             | 38.70                         | 74.82                              |

**Source:** Evaluation Survey, 2022

### 4.7.3 Economic Abuse

***Experience of Abuse:*** Total of 41.36% of girls and women indicated that they have experienced economic violence over the last 12 months. This difference between the proportion of girls and women reporting the experience of economic violence over the last 12 month was 42.64% and 40.13%. With respect to the specific economic violence experienced, the denial of pocket money has the highest percentage with a total of 71.94%. When disaggregated, the proportion of youth/girls who have experienced economic violence was 78.48% and the proportion of women was 65.59%. Table 18 provides full details of the distribution of acts and the proportions of girls and women who have experienced them over the last 12 months.

The frequency of occurrence of any form of economic violence over the last 12 month was reported to be rarely by 41.42%, sometimes by 33.33% and often by 25.24%. Denial of pocket money and denial of food was reported to occur often over the last 12 months by 39.63% and 28.38% respectively.

***Perpetrators of Abuse:*** Perpetrators of economic violence experienced over the last 12 months were predominantly close relations. Intimate partners and household members were largely responsible for economic abuses experienced over the last 12 month. Perpetration by non-relatives members was 10.7% Table.18 provides more details on the distribution.

**Table 18: Percentage of women who have experienced Economic violence over past 12 months**

| <b>Variables</b>                      | <b>Denied pocket money</b> | <b>Cash taken out</b> | <b>Belongings controlled</b> | <b>Property damaged</b> | <b>Prohibited from working</b> | <b>Forced to work</b> | <b>Denied food or basic needs</b> | <b>Any economic violence</b> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i><b>Experience of Abuse</b></i>     |                            |                       |                              |                         |                                |                       |                                   |                              |
| Youth                                 | 78.48                      | 42.42                 | 44.24                        | 28.48                   | 21.82                          | 34.85                 | 48.18                             | 42.64                        |
| Adult                                 | 65.59                      | 46.47                 | 40.88                        | 33.53                   | 23.24                          | 31.18                 | 40.00                             | 40.13                        |
| Total                                 | 71.94                      | 44.48                 | 42.54                        | 31.04                   | 22.54                          | 32.99                 | 44.03                             | 41.36                        |
| <i><b>Frequency of occurrence</b></i> |                            |                       |                              |                         |                                |                       |                                   |                              |
| Rarely                                | 27.18                      | 48.32                 | 45.61                        | 60.10                   | 58.94                          | 38.01                 | 34.12                             | 41.42                        |
| Sometimes                             | 33.20                      | 31.54                 | 36.84                        | 27.40                   | 28.48                          | 34.84                 | 37.50                             | 33.33                        |
| Often                                 | 39.63                      | 20.13                 | 17.54                        | 12.50                   | 12.58                          | 27.15                 | 28.38                             | 25.24                        |
| <i><b>Perpetrators</b></i>            |                            |                       |                              |                         |                                |                       |                                   |                              |
| Intimate partner                      | 59.34                      | 30.87                 | 43.16                        | 19.71                   | 51.66                          | 18.55                 | 26.44                             | 38.09                        |
| Household member                      | 23.86                      | 22.48                 | 21.40                        | 15.87                   | 13.25                          | 28.05                 | 36.61                             | 24.02                        |
| Other relative                        | 11.62                      | 22.82                 | 26.32                        | 24.52                   | 15.23                          | 34.39                 | 25.08                             | 21.80                        |
| Non-relative                          | 2.90                       | 18.12                 | 3.86                         | 32.69                   | 12.58                          | 11.76                 | 5.08                              | 10.67                        |

**Source:** Evaluation Survey, 2022

#### 4.7.4 Psychological Abuse

***Experience of Abuse:*** Over the last 12 months 51.34% of girls and women have experienced at least one form of psychological abuse. A total of 55.03% have experienced a form of psychological abuse while 47.76% of women have experienced a form of psychological abuse. The psychological abuse that have been experienced by most girls and women over the last 12 months is insults and public humiliation (88.81%). Overall the results indicate that high proportions of young girls have experienced all the forms of psychological abuse over the last 12 months compared to women.

Regarding the frequency of occurrence, the results show that insults, humiliations and belittling acts have been experienced often by both girls and women over the last 12 months. The experience of acts such as threats of abandonment, intimidation, attack with weapons and threat to hurt were experienced by about a third of women and girls over the last 12 months. Further details are provided in Table 19.

***Perpetrators of Abuse:*** Table 19 shows that perpetrators of psychological abuse/violence experienced by girls and women over the last 12 month are largely by people who are related to them. Intimate partners (34.71%) were the major perpetrators. Perpetration by household members and other relatives were 23.37% and 23.6% respectively. The dominance of close relations in the perpetration of psychological violence indicates the influence of proximity in the experience of psychological abuse/violence. Details of the distribution of acts and perpetrators are provided in Table 19

**Table 19: Percentage of women who have experienced Psychological Violence over past 12 months**

| <b>Variables</b>                               | <b>Insulted,<br/>humiliated, belittled</b> | <b>Ignored,<br/>threatened to be<br/>abandoned</b> | <b>Scared,<br/>intimidated</b> | <b>Attacked with<br/>weapon</b> | <b>Threaten to<br/>be hurt</b> | <b>Any<br/>Psychological<br/>Violence</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <i><b>Experience in the last 12 months</b></i> |                                            |                                                    |                                |                                 |                                |                                           |
| Youth                                          | 92.12                                      | 59.39                                              | 52.42                          | 30.91                           | 40.30                          | 55.03                                     |
| Adult                                          | 85.59                                      | 50.00                                              | 47.35                          | 25.00                           | 30.88                          | 47.76                                     |
| Total                                          | 88.81                                      | 54.63                                              | 49.85                          | 27.91                           | 35.52                          | 51.34                                     |
| <i><b>Frequency of occurrence</b></i>          |                                            |                                                    |                                |                                 |                                |                                           |
| Rarely                                         | 26.89                                      | 45.36                                              | 43.41                          | 63.10                           | 53.36                          | 41.63                                     |
| Sometimes                                      | 28.91                                      | 35.52                                              | 33.53                          | 24.60                           | 28.99                          | 30.76                                     |
| Often                                          | 44.20                                      | 19.13                                              | 23.05                          | 12.30                           | 17.65                          | 27.62                                     |
| <i><b>Perpetrators</b></i>                     |                                            |                                                    |                                |                                 |                                |                                           |
| Intimate partner                               | 18.82                                      | 52.19                                              | 31.44                          | 38.50                           | 49.16                          | 34.71                                     |
| Household member                               | 30.42                                      | 19.95                                              | 22.75                          | 16.58                           | 17.23                          | 23.37                                     |
| Other relative                                 | 25.04                                      | 21.86                                              | 25.75                          | 24.60                           | 19.33                          | 23.66                                     |
| Non-relative                                   | 25.71                                      | 6.01                                               | 20.06                          | 20.32                           | 14.29                          | 18.26                                     |

**Source:** Evaluation Survey, 2022

#### 4.7.5 Traditional Abuse

***Experience of Abuse:*** Table 20 indicates that significantly low proportion of women and girls have experienced any form of traditional violence/abuse over the last 12 month. Only 4.07% have experienced any traditional abuse. Though the proportions are low, the segment that have been engaged in hazardous labour and denied inheritance over the last 12 months were 10.75% and 8.96%, respectively.

The result further showed that the frequency of occurrence of traditional abuse is generally rare (59.63%) followed by sometimes (26.61%) and often (13.76). Despite the low frequency of occurrence, the proportions indicating engagement in hazardous labour over the last 12 months are 36.11% for sometimes and 31.94% for often in terms of frequency of occurrence.

***Perpetrators of Abuse:*** As shown regarding the lifetime experience of traditional abuse, the distribution of perpetrators for the experience of traditional abuse over the last 12 months indicates that household members and other relatives were those who subject girls and women to traditional abuse. Denial of inheritance and denial of children personal properties had the highest proportions as shown in Table 20.

**Table 20: Percentage of women who have experienced Traditional Abuse in the last 12 months**

| Variables                              | Forced marriage | Pushed to marriage | Hazardous labor | Serve in shrine | Widowhood rite | Denied inheritance | Children denied | FGM    | Any Traditional Abuse |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------|-----------------------|
| <i>Experience in the last 12 month</i> |                 |                    |                 |                 |                |                    |                 |        |                       |
| Youth                                  | 6.97            | 2.42               | 13.03           | 0.30            | 0.00           | 6.06               | 0.61            | 0.30   | 3.71                  |
| Adult                                  | 5.29            | 3.24               | 8.53            | 0.59            | 2.35           | 11.76              | 3.53            | 0.00   | 4.41                  |
| Total                                  | 6.12            | 2.84               | 10.75           | 0.45            | 1.19           | 8.96               | 2.09            | 0.15   | 4.07                  |
| <i>Frequency of occurrence</i>         |                 |                    |                 |                 |                |                    |                 |        |                       |
| Rarely                                 | 68.29           | 73.68              | 31.94           | 66.67           | 87.50          | 76.67              | 64.29           | 100.00 | 59.63                 |
| Sometimes                              | 21.95           | 26.32              | 36.11           | 33.33           | 12.50          | 21.67              | 28.57           |        | 26.61                 |
| Often                                  | 9.76            |                    | 31.94           |                 |                | 1.67               | 7.14            |        | 13.76                 |
| <i>Perpetrators of abuse</i>           |                 |                    |                 |                 |                |                    |                 |        |                       |
| Intimate partner                       | 2.44            |                    | 2.78            | 33.33           |                | 6.67               | 7.14            |        | 4.13                  |
| Household member                       | 58.54           | 63.16              | 38.89           | 33.33           | 12.50          | 11.67              | 14.29           | 100.00 | 34.86                 |
| Other relative                         | 26.83           | 26.32              | 38.89           | 33.33           | 25.00          | 76.67              | 50.00           |        | 45.87                 |
| Non-relative                           | 7.32            | 5.26               | 11.11           |                 |                | 5.00               | 14.29           |        | 7.80                  |

**Source:** Evaluation Survey, 2022



#### **4.8 Victim Report of Abuse in the Last 12 Months**

One of the expected outcomes of the COMBAT intervention is that through the awareness-creation on gender-based violence, its causes and consequences, it is expected that people will become informed and empowered to report any abuses. The results show that the majority of the victims did not report the abuse they suffered in the last 12 months. Only 11% of sexual abuse victims reported, 21% of the physical abuse victims reported, 25% of psychological abuse victims reported, 24% of economic abuse victims reported, and 26% of traditional abuse victims reported. The qualitative data show that some of the victims consider some of the abuses as not serious and hence, there is no need reporting it. Others indicated that the crime was perpetuated by either their intimate partners, household members or other relatives and hence, it is very difficult to report such people.

Of the few who reported the abuse, many of them reported to non-state actors. Only a few of the victims reported it to state actors. Among the non-state actors, the majority of the victims reported their cases to family and relatives. Only a few people reported it to COMBAT. Some of the participants reiterated that they do not trust the institutions and actors available, especially, to the COMBAT members.

Many of the victims expressed satisfaction (very satisfied or satisfied) with the way those they reported their cases to handled them and the outcome. Cumulatively, 87.8% of sexual violence victims, 84.3% of physical abuse victims, 84.7% of psychological abuse victims, 81% of economic abuse victims, and 77.2% of traditional abuse victims who reported the case were satisfied with the way it was handled and its outcome.

Many of the people (at least 70%) did not pay any money to access the services they reported the case. A few of the girls and women paid some fees to access the services when they reported the case. Many of the victims of sexual abuse (63.4%), physical abuse (52.5%) and traditional abuse (84.2%) received support from at least 3 community members to report the abuse. For sexual abuse victims, the proportion of youth (66.2%) who received support to report the cases was slightly higher than the proportion of adults (56.1%). However, the proportion of adult physical abuse victims and traditional abuse victims who received support from community members to report cases was slightly higher than the youth (see Table 21)

**Table 21: Reporting of Abuse within the last 12 Month**

| <b>Variables</b>                                                   | <b>Sexual Abuse</b> | <b>Physical Abuse</b> | <b>Psychological Abuse</b> | <b>Economic Abuse</b> | <b>Traditional Abuse</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| <b><i>Report Abuse</i></b>                                         |                     |                       |                            |                       |                          |
| Youth                                                              | 12.28               | 20.55                 | 25.55                      | 22.74                 | 19.39                    |
| Adult                                                              | 8.21                | 21.00                 | 23.89                      | 24.92                 | 31.67                    |
| Total                                                              | 10.8                | 20.73                 | 24.77                      | 23.81                 | 26.15                    |
| <b><i>Who abuse was reported to</i></b>                            |                     |                       |                            |                       |                          |
| State actors                                                       | 20.0                | 23.74                 | 13.15                      | 9.52                  | 10.53                    |
| Non-state Actors                                                   | 80.0                | 76.26                 | 86.85                      | 90.48                 | 89.47                    |
| <b><i>Satisfaction with outcome of case</i></b>                    |                     |                       |                            |                       |                          |
| Very satisfied                                                     | 54.15               | 37.09                 | 29.81                      | 32.68                 | 43.86                    |
| Satisfied                                                          | 33.66               | 47.18                 | 54.93                      | 48.27                 | 33.33                    |
| Neutral                                                            | 7.32                | 5.93                  | 4.23                       | 8.44                  | 5.26                     |
| Dissatisfied                                                       | 2.93                | 4.45                  | 7.98                       | 9.09                  | 10.53                    |
| Very dissatisfied                                                  | 1.95                | 5.34                  | 3.05                       | 1.52                  | 7.02                     |
| <b><i>Paid to receive service</i></b>                              |                     |                       |                            |                       |                          |
| Yes, fees                                                          | 28.78               | 18.99                 | 9.39                       | 4.33                  | 24.56                    |
| Yes, bribe                                                         | 0                   | 0.89                  | 0.94                       | 0.22                  | 1.75                     |
| No                                                                 | 71.2                | 80.12                 | 89.67                      | 95.45                 | 73.68                    |
| <b><i>Received community support in reporting case</i></b>         |                     |                       |                            |                       |                          |
| Youth                                                              | 66.22               | 50.25                 | 43.53                      | 31.25                 | 78.95                    |
| Adult                                                              | 56.14               | 55.97                 | 40.21                      | 32.35                 | 86.84                    |
| Total                                                              | 63.41               | 52.52                 | 42.02                      | 31.82                 | 84.21                    |
| <b><i>Number of community members that supported reporting</i></b> |                     |                       |                            |                       |                          |
| Average                                                            | 4                   | 3                     | 3                          | 3                     | 3                        |

**Source:** Evaluation Survey, 2022

#### **4.9 Response by state institutions to victims reporting abuse cases.**

As found earlier, the majority of the females reported to non-state actors. Generally, the few victims who reported the abuse they suffered reported to either DOVVSU/ Police or Department of Social Welfare. Many of the victims sought advisory or counselling services and mediatory services from both state and non-state institutions. Additionally, some of the victims of sexual violence sought for prosecution or arrest of the perpetrators (35%) and legal service (25%). Also, some victims of economic violence sought for compensation / restitution (21.4%) as shown in Table 22.

**Table 22: Victims Report of cases to State Institutions and Services Accessed**

| <b>Abuses</b> | <b>DOVVSU / Police</b> | <b>Department of Social Welfare</b> | <b>Health centre/hospital/other</b> | <b>Lawyer or member of the Court</b> | <b>Legal aid group</b> |
|---------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Sexual        | 11.71                  | 11.22                               | 5.85                                | 0                                    | 0                      |
| Physical      | 24.33                  | 7.42                                | 4.15                                | 0                                    | 0.3                    |
| Psychological | 9.62                   | 5.87                                | 0.47                                | 0.23                                 | 1.64                   |
| Economic      | 3.9                    | 8.66                                | 0.65                                | 0.22                                 | 0.43                   |
| Tradition     | 8.77                   | 17.54                               | 1.75                                | 1.75                                 | 3.51                   |

| <b>Service Accessed</b>       | <b>Sexual</b> | <b>Physical</b> | <b>Psychological</b> | <b>Economic</b> | <b>Tradition</b> |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Legal service                 | 25            | 7.74            | 6.34                 | 4.55            | 19.3             |
| Advisory/Counselling services | 40            | 66.67           | 80.52                | 84.2            | 77.19            |
| Compensation / Restitution    | 5             | 4.46            | 3.05                 | 21.43           | 19.3             |
| Medical Service               | 15            | 12.8            | 1.41                 | 0.87            | 3.51             |
| Prosecution/Arrest            | 35            | 14.58           | 6.34                 | 3.68            | 3.51             |
| Mediatory services            | 37.5          | 30.06           | 26.29                | 24.03           | 42.11            |
| Others                        | 0             | 2.38            | 0.94                 | 1.95            | 0                |

**Source:** Evaluation Survey, 2022

#### 4.10 Effectiveness of Partnership

Without the contributions of effective partnerships at the community and state levels the work of COMBAT will be very difficult and unsustainable. The programme had very strong and reliable connections with traditional leaders, religions leaders, community-based organization and state institutions. State institutional partners who worked actively and closely with the programme and COMBATs include the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service (DOVVSU), the Social Welfare Department and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ).

There was deep collaboration between all the partners of the project. The partnerships were maximized in such a way that work from one actor dovetails into another actors. For instance, DOVVSU constitutes an important partner to COMBATs in the communities who refer cases of abuse to the police to make arrest or interventions. Some of the police investigations are referred to the court to adjudicate.

The Social Welfare Department also work closely with COMBATs in community straining and sesitizations, dealing with referred cases as well as public educations and sensitizations in the communities. The Social Welfare official in Akuapim North noted that:

*We now have community-based people who can assist us with our investigations/clarifications on happenings within the community*

Provision of training at the community level constitutes an important feature of the partnerships with state institutions. DOVVSU, the Social Welfare Department and CHRAJ constitute an important resource in complementing the capacity of COMBAT in community education and sensitizations. This empowers the COMBAT to adequately execute their duties.

Additionally, the periodic interaction with the state institutions offers opportunity for a form of in-service training and refresher to help COMBATs update their knowledge on laws and changing nature things. The knowledge sharing process enhance the confidence of COMBATs when dealing with cases brought to them.

Working with community and traditional leaders according to most COMBAT members is important since it engenders community confidence in them as well provided them with the normative authority to operate in the communities. Community leaders and religious leaders help COMBATs in counselling and addressing most issues in the community. They also provide conducive platforms for education and sensitizations. Church premises and communal gatherings are willingly offered for information to be shared.

Durbars and community gatherings are used as platform to communicate important messages. The presence of chiefs, queen mothers, pastors and imams at sensitization meeting confer enormous credibility to information presented therefore influencing attitude change and normative transformation. In some instances, community and religious leader make statements to affirm the position and messages of COMBATs during presentations.

#### **4.11 Factors that, positively or negatively, were critical for obtaining the impact**

Several factors positively contributed to the achievement of the project outcomes and a few negative factors also negatively affected the degree of project impact.

##### **4.11.1 Factors that positively impacted project outcomes**

The effect of COMBAT activities in the communities have raised the community level awareness on gender rights, gender-based violence, the sexual and reproductive health and rights. Specifically, the content of the sensitization and community engagement, especially, those relating to issues such as gendered roles and norms, early marriage, sexual abuse, child labour, widowhood rites, channels for reporting crimes and abuses among others increased

the level of awareness and impacted the communities. The use of the community information centres beyond the face-to-face education and interaction ensure that more people are reached with information that can influence behaviour and actions to transform the community norms and practices.

Collaborating with state institutions and community leaders confirmed legitimacy and authenticity on the activities of COMBAT. Respect is thus accorded to their interventions and advice. At a focus group discussion in Konko it was noted that:

*They (the COMBATs) are doing a great job in this community and they are helping us a lot, we the members of this community also accept and receive them when they visit us in our homes, when they call for meetings, we go there on time to listen to their teachings. We have good rapport with them and we feel free to approach them to talk to them about our issues, especially one of them who is always smiling whenever he sees you..... I like what they are doing and the impact they are having on this community. I just wish it will be there permanently. They have the total support of the leaders of the community.*

#### **4.11.2 Factors that negatively impacted project outcomes**

Participants and respondents outlined some factors that negatively impacted on the project outcomes. The respondents indicated that some of the factors that negatively affected the impact of the project were inadequate funding to organize programmes as well as the lack of remuneration/motivation to COMBAT members, inadequate logistics to undertake outreach programmes, gradual erosion of trust due to nepotism arising from conflict of interests in dealing with cases reported and lack of cooperation or conflicts between state institutions. Misunderstanding and conflicts between COMBATs and community leaders.

The lack of funds to support programmes and activities massively affect the ability of COMBATs to fully reach the community with the full retinue of activities. This affected their ability to obtain essential logistics such as transportation and refreshment for participants of sensitizations programmes. This tended to affect attendance to programmes organized in some cases. Additionally, the absence of remuneration or motivation meant that COMBATs are forced to combine their day jobs with their duties as COMBATs, in cases where they are faced with a choice most COMBAT tended to choose their jobs or other engagement over their duties as COMBATs. This was clear during the evaluation study. Some COMBATs who

had other engagement were very hard to reach or simply refused to assist the team while in the field.

Another issue that has negatively impacted project outcomes is the gradual erosion of trust for the COMBATs due to nepotism arising from conflict of interests in dealing with cases reported. It was noted that some COMBATs tend to hesitate in addressing cases or referring cases to appropriate agencies due to their relationship with perpetrators. This action has led to an increasing mistrust towards some COMBAT members. Additionally, some COMBATs sometimes seek to resolve cases in an attempt to shield perpetrator who tend to be relatives of the victim of abuse. Members bemoaned this behaviour which according to them has influenced their lack of trust for the COMBATs in their communities.

While partnership constitute a core pillar of the programme, an issue that may have influenced project outcomes negatively is the non-referral of cases to the appropriate agency or referring case to the wrong agency. This situation was noted by the Social Welfare officers at both Akuakpim North and Okere.

*They do the sensitization on their own and when complaints do come they were to do referrals to the appropriate institution. But they do not do effectively in regards to my office because we have not had any case referred except for one case. What we found was that they will report cases to us which is meant for DOVVSU because they don't want the perpetrator to face the police. Because we tell them this, they refuse to refer cases..... As I said earlier, so far, they have referred only one case to us.*

The lack of referrals has negatively influenced achievement outcomes. This is in addition to wrongful referrals which sometimes lead to conflict between the agencies.

The participation of the youth in the programme is relatively low as compared to the adults. Meanwhile, the youth are more vulnerable to many forms of abuse than the adults. During the FGD, it became clear that many of the youth do not participate in the COMBAT programmes because they don't see any [financial] benefit from the programme. This has potential implications for reducing the rate of GBV to the barest minimum.

There is a general perception, especially, among the men that the programme is for females but not for males. Thus, the concept of gender is perceived as a female-related programme. Some of the men do not agree with some of the knowledge being advanced by the programme, especially, on the issue of equality and the need to change certain cultural norms and practices. They consider changing some of the norms as anti-cultural because they grew

up in a culture where certain practices were normal and ‘kept the balance of power in society’ when males and females know their ‘rightful’ place. For instance, some of the men lamented on ‘*why do I need the consent of my wife to have sex with her when I have legally and culturally married her*’. Similarly, some do not see any value in cooking or washing when they have to work to bring money home. Therefore, home duties should be taken care of by the women.

#### **4.12 General impact of the Project**

The general impacts of the project are:

***Increasing knowledge and awareness about abuse and related issues:*** There were also various acts the people were doing that they never thought were abuses, like insults, husbands not giving their wives enough chop money, refusing to eat their wife’s food, and lack of communication between couples among others. Through the education, awareness creation and sensitization from the COMBAT programme, many people have become aware of the various actions that are considered GBV and the related legal actions. Thus, many people are now aware that in case of certain abuses, you can be jailed or made to pay high compensation.

The project has made the people become aware of the need to prepare will and to plan well to avoid issues should they die intestate. The statement below was made by a COMBAT officer at Onyamebekyere. A similar statement was made by some FGD participants in Aseseso:

*“At first I thought wills were only meant for people who are rich and are staying in the cities with so many properties, but through COMBAT, I have come to know that, everyone can prepare a will and even if you can’t do it yourself, there are people there to help”.*

***Reduction in harmful bad cultural practices:*** Certain harmful cultural practices that are inhumane to women such as widowhood rites, inheritance based on sex, and denial of access to productive resources because one is a female among others have been reduced over the years.

***Knowledge on reporting channels:*** Through the programme, many girls and women have become aware of issues they should report and at what levels (where and whom) to report. Thus, cases to report to the police and those to other agencies like family heads or to

traditional leaders. Many of the females usually did not complain or complained mainly to family members because relations were the major perpetrators.

***Reduction in the number and rate of abuses:*** Generally, the past months have seen a reduction in the number and rate of abuses against women. Programme has led to a reduction in the number of cases traditional leaders, especially queen mothers, used to deal with. Many issues are channeled to the COMBAT rather than to the clan heads and chiefs for concrete actions to be taken.

***Behaviourial change:*** Many of the youth and men indicated that they completely change their behaviours towards women due to the experiences of other male perpetrators. Some explained that some of their colleagues who misconducted themselves and were found guilty were made to pay huge sums of money as a fine. The fear of going to jail or being fined an amount they can't pay serve as a deterrent for them to engage in certain actions that may be considered an abuse.

***Changing gendered norms and practices:*** There used to be strict culturally gendered division of labour, roles and responsibilities. The education from the COMBAT is gradually changing these perceptions even though some are still holding on to those perceptions. It is therefore not surprising that some of the men who now help their wives to cook, wash or fetch water are usually mocked and tagged as being fooled by their wives.

***Reducing the rate of abuses:*** there is a general reduction especially, the abuses parents commit against children like physical punishment. Men who beat their wives has also reduced even though some men still perpetrate it. Some still have not accepted that certain types of psychological abuses like insults still exist even though they know that they are abuse.

***Responsible Parenting:*** The education on child rights has also encouraged parents to be more responsible for their children. Child labour and forced labour is reducing. Most parents are changing the way they treat children such as meting physical punishment on children. A parent stated that there was a time my money got missing and I realized that, one of my children took it, so I bought a blade, held his hand and used the blade to cut some parts of his fingers and blood was spilling. It was too much that I even collected the blood with a bowl. COMBAT wasn't there at that time and when they came through their education, I have realized that, if it was to be today, I would have been in prison.



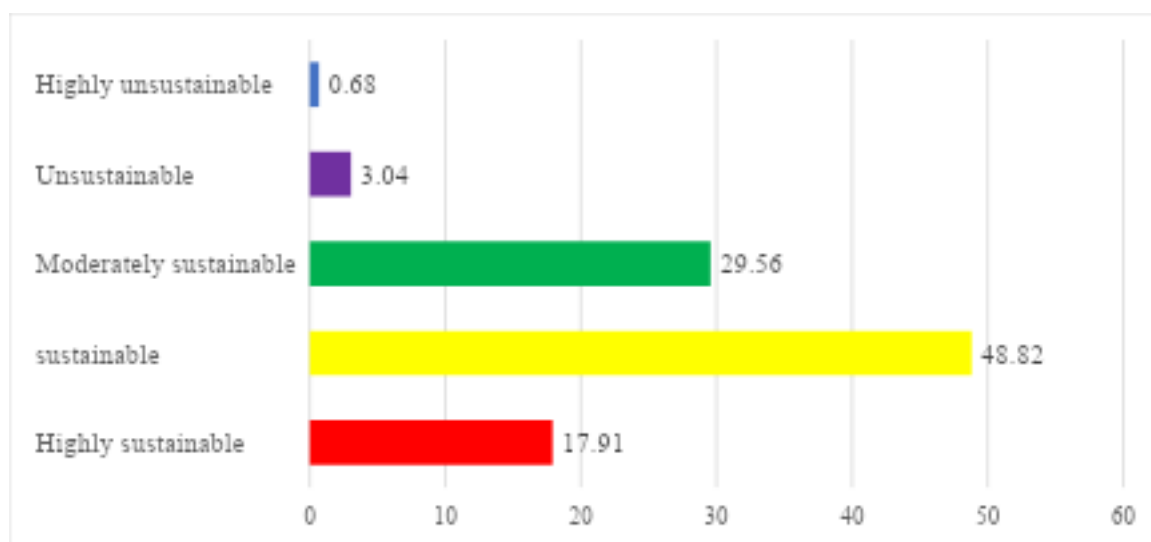
## SECTION FIVE

### SUSTAINABILITY, LESSONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Potential for Replication or Good Practice / Sustainability of the COMBAT Programme

Cumulatively, many of the respondent considered the COMBAT programme as sustainable. Close to half of the respondents (48.8%) considered the programme as sustainable while 17.9% considered it as highly sustainable. Also, approximately 30% of the respondents considered the programme as moderately sustainable as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: How sustainable is the COMBAT programme**



As noted in the figure 1, participants of focus group discussions and key informants share similar sentiments or views in relation to the sustainability of the programme. They

highlighted a number of issues that must be noted to ensure that the COMBAT programme is sustained to consolidate gains made. A key point of focus was the need to provide a means of financing the activities of COMBATs in the communities. The financial resources will *provide COMBATs with the needed funds to cater for their logistics and their transportation cost* [Social Welfare Officer, Okere]. This fact was noted by virtually all respondents due largely to the impact the COMBATs have had.

*If the activities of COMBAT will continue, it will depend on us and the people who went for the training (COMBATs), and most of us here are farmers with little or no income, so if they can still plead with Gender Centre to continue with the project, we will be grateful. Also, we the leaders in this community would have to come in and help (provide the financial support)* [Traditional Leader, Okrakwadjo].

As noted in the earlier quote, the provision of financial support through a form of allowance could be done in two ways. First community support through fund raising can be done. Additionally, raising funds in churches, mosques and other forms of religious gathering will constitute a means to obtain total community support for sustaining the operation of the COMBAT. The local council of churches can take occasional offering to assist the work of COMBAT.

Beside the need for finance and funding to support the work of COMBAT, the level of success of the activities of COMBATs have given rise to the need to spread the concept to other communities around the beneficiary communities. This need to recruit and train more people will enhance the reach and expand the catchment of sensitization programmes.

The formation of community based clubs made of people of all ages to drive public sensitization/education. The integration of such clubs will ensure that a clear line of replacing COMBATs who drop out over time are easily replaced to facilitate continuity through transfer of experience and knowledge. Community leaders can be a key driver of this processes.

*There is the need to strengthen and increase their education and this should be extended to all households, churches and schools. Community leaders should join the education.*

Expanding the COMBAT initiative to adjoining communities/villages was identified as a way to maintain its relevance and impacts. Integration of door-step services and regular home visits in addition to the existing retinue of services provided will engender community support and willingness to provide needed funding.

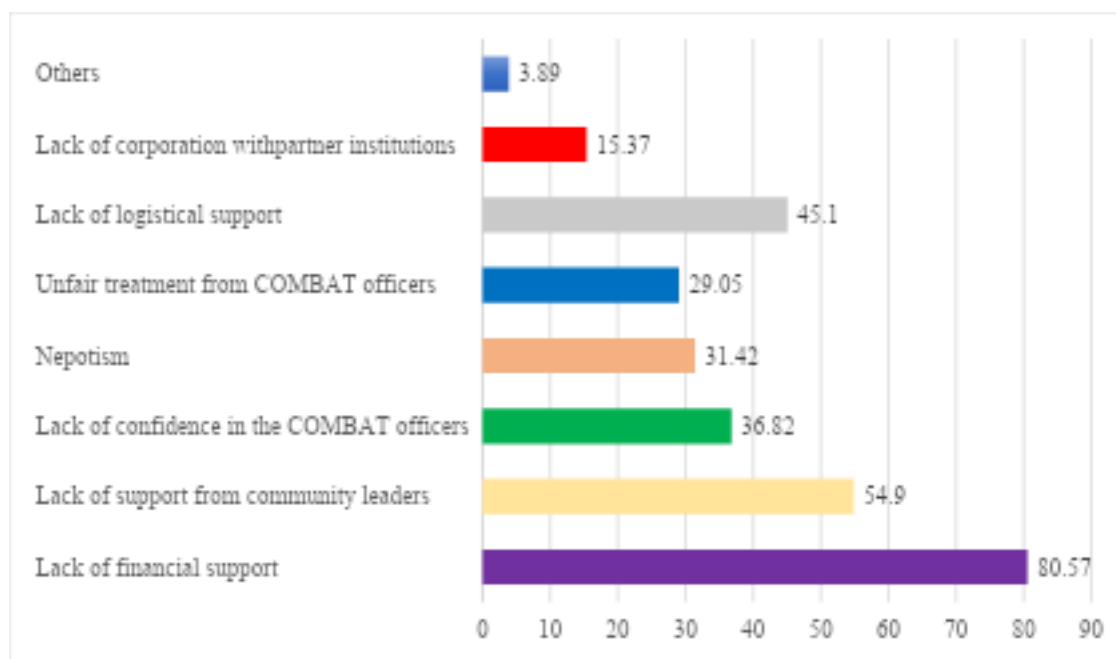
## 5.2 Critical issues and potential threat to the sustainability of the COMBAT programme

Even though the COMBAT programme is considered sustainable, the respondents outlined certain threats that need to be addressed in order to make the programme sustainable. The major factors that can potentially threaten the sustainability of the COMBAT programme are lack of financial support (80.6%), lack of support from community leaders (54.9%) and lack of logistical support (45.1%) as shown in Figure 2. Other potential factors are lack of confidence in COMBAT officers (36.8%), nepotism on the part of the COMBAT officers (31.4%) and unfair treatment from COMBAT officers (29.1%). Lastly, the potential lack of cooperation with the partner institutions was also identified as a threat to the sustainability the programme.

The lack of cooperation and the seeming usurpation of powers and authority by some COMBATs was strongly noted by the official at the Social Welfare Department. It was noted that the penchant for some COMBATs to assume the powers of state institution can potentially harm the sustainability of the initiative. The issue was put in this way:

*Usurpation of powers of state institutions COMBAT must not settle issues, it must be an institution to refer cases to the appropriate units for further actions to be taken.*

**Figure 2: Factors likely to threaten the sustainability of the COMBAT programme**



The likely low levels of support from community leaders as shown in the figure was noted as something that must be forestalled to ensure that the COMBAT is sustained. It was noted that:

*Community leaders can hinder because when they get to know that the project is about to end, they may not support or recognise the COMBATs again since they know no body or law is backing them now. They would like to take their powers back and enjoy from it.*

Conflict of interest on the side of COMBAT members arising from nepotism and favouritism was identified as a key threat to sustainability and permanence of the COMBAT in the communities. It was identified by a number of participants that the lack of objectivity by some COMBAT members in dealing with cases involving friends and family relation. This has led to a gradual wane in the level of trust for COMBAT members. Related to this is the increasing incidence of COMBAT members viewed as untrustworthy people who cannot be entrusted with people's personal information. While impacts have been made, mistrust of the COMBAT can undermine the process thereby eroding gains made over time.

An important point to be noted is the need to continue recruiting and training new members to join the COMBATs in the communities. This is in the light of the attrition facing the COMBAT in some communities. The need to continue to build a critical mass of persons capable of joining the cadre of people carrying out community education and sensitization is vital for sustaining the COMBAT initiative in the communities.

### **5.3 Lessons Learnt**

The programme has achieved significant success in the community. Sensitization has influenced behaviours leading to transformations in strongly held cultural norms and practices. The achievement of these was strongly linked to the approach used in the implementation of the programme. The use of community-based systems facilitated community buy-in at the on-set of the programme. The implementation structure encouraged deep community participation and ownership. Ceding of control and organization largely to community leaders and COMBATs ensured that the project was viewed as a system to keep and sustain. This is more especially with the engagement of traditional and community leaders in sensitization and education programme.

The built-in facilitation approach in the implementation of the project represented an excellent exit strategy integrated into the formulation of the project from its on-set. Channeling resources to building capacity and keeping a thin project staff conferred enormous responsibilities on all beneficiary groups especially the COMBATs, community stakeholders and state institutions to ensure that the project does not fail. A clear outcome is a

built-in sustainability structure to keep the initiative going far beyond the close-out of the project. The COMBATs have become a legacy with the potential to self-sustain themselves through community fund raising, mobilization to renew its membership and identification of potential threat to eliminate rapidly.

Selecting COMBATs based on full community consent and choice helps to achieve two important goals. A sense of deep involvement in the entire process by the communities and a latent function of inducing commitment and responsibility from members of the communities to ensure that selected COMBATs succeed. The constant desire to see them succeed creates an environment of support and good will. This also places enormous responsibility on selected COMBATs to walk the fine line as a means of justifying the confidence/responsibility reposed in them as well as the respect accorded them.

In spite of the positives this approach offers, the loss of trust in COMBATs for whatever reason can have a serious implication for sustainability. This was observed in the hesitation of some community member to use the services of the COMBATs especially regarding very personal and sensitive matter due to fear of exposure which may result in public ridicule.

Increased awareness through community-based education and sensitization results in heightened sensitivity to abuse as shown in the high proportions of respondents viewing largely overlooked actions as abuse. The collective sensitivity of abuse ensures that people generally reconsider their action and thus refrain from action/behaviours that may result in physical or emotional injury.

The collaborative link with state institutions such as the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service, The Social Welfare Department, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice constitute a formidable community-state collaboration that confers strong credibility on the project as well as the COMBATs in the communities. The close linkage with state institutions and agencies provides a bridge through referrals to strengthen state-community engagement. This linkage must however be managed carefully to avoid non-cooperative actions such as attempts to usurp the authority of the institutions in dealing with some cases which may threaten the entire structure.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Recommendations are made based on findings and observations made:

First, the COMBAT's potential to cumulative eradicate Gender Based Violence and abuses in communities [both rural and urban] is enormous. This has to be fully taken advantage of by ensuring its sustainability. Two key stems are needed to accomplish this:

3. A deliberate action to finance and resource the work and operations of the COMBATs in the communities. The means to achieve this are varied. As suggested by respondents and participants of the evaluations, traditional leaders and religious organization must take the first step. Establishing clear lines for the flow of resources such as community contributions and offerings during religious gatherings can help provide the needed funds to pay for logistics for sensitization and educations. Additionally, establish a fund through which periodic donations can be made to motivate their activities. The management of such funds can be discussed and firmed at the community and local authority level to enhance accountability. Prominent citizens of communities can be encouraged to make donations into the funds.
4. Periodic recruiting and training new persons to fill vacant places when old members leave or become inactive. The availability of willing and profoundly energetic people to continue doing the work will foster continuity and growth as well as sustained sensitization and education.

Periodic refreshers training programmes are required to ensure that COMBAT update their knowledge as well as emphasizing the importance of the partnerships with the state institutions. This will ensure that potential conflict of interest cases and overreaching of their authority are avoided.

Due to the diversity of groups in the communities, it is imperative that the composition of COMBAT in every community should be representative of the major differences in the community. For instance, in a religious diverse community, the selection of the COMBAT officers should ensure that there is a representation of Moslems, Christians and Traditionality in the COMBAT. This will enable different groups to approach the COMBAT with their issues.

The concept of gender includes both men and women. In the case of GBV, men are the major perpetrators and hence, there is the need to ensure that programme activities target them. Changing negative sociocultural norms and practices requires a re-orientation of the perceptions of men. Some of the awareness creation activities should be organized mainly for only men.

Equally important is for the programme to devise strategies to ensure that young girls, who are the most vulnerable group to many of the abuses are reached with the programme. This may require selecting some interested and influential youth into the COMBAT. A youth COMBAT team can be established to be responsible of advancing the course of reaching out to the youth.

Transforming gender social norms and ending violence against women and girls in rural communities in Ghana is a complex task that requires a coordinated effort from all relevant stakeholders including government, CSOs, NGOs as well as community leaders and influencers. Even though the COMBAT model is a robust intervention for addressing GBV in rural communities, it may not be adequate due to the entrenched sociocultural and religious beliefs that continue to relegate women to the background. Transforming gender social norms and ending GBV demands time, hence, the period for the implementation of this project is not adequate to significantly achieve the intended targets. Extending the project life and expanding the scope to include other districts and communities is highly recommended.

## 5.5 Summary Key Indicator Results

Table 23 provides a summary of the key indicators for this project.

**Table 23: Summary Indicator Table**

| Indicators                                                                                         | Lifetime up to 2021 | Last 12 Months |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| <b><i>Proportion of women and girl-victims/survivors</i></b>                                       |                     |                |
| Sexual Abuse                                                                                       | 57.58               | 31.49          |
| Physical Abuse                                                                                     | 52.57               | 26.97          |
| Psychological Abuse                                                                                | 62.81               | 51.34          |
| Economic Abuse                                                                                     | 58.12               | 41.36          |
| Traditional Abuse                                                                                  | 11.88               | 4.07           |
| <b><i>Proportion of women and girl-victims/survivors reporting cases</i></b>                       |                     |                |
| Sexual Abuse                                                                                       |                     | 10.8           |
| Physical Abuse                                                                                     |                     | 20.73          |
| Psychological Abuse                                                                                |                     | 24.77          |
| Economic Abuse                                                                                     |                     | 23.81          |
| Traditional Abuse                                                                                  |                     | 26.15          |
| <b><i>Proportion of women and girl-victims/survivors accessing support services they need.</i></b> |                     |                |
| Sexual Abuse                                                                                       |                     | 63.05          |
| Physical Abuse                                                                                     |                     | 66.67          |
| Psychological Abuse                                                                                |                     | 80.52          |
| Economic Abuse                                                                                     |                     | 84.2           |

|                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| Traditional Abuse | 77.19 |
|-------------------|-------|

***Proportion of women and girls expressing satisfaction  
at response received from state institutions.***

|              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| Sexual Abuse | 87.81 |
|--------------|-------|

|                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| Physical Abuse | 84.27 |
|----------------|-------|

|                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| Psychological Abuse | 84.74 |
|---------------------|-------|

|                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| Economic Abuse | 80.95 |
|----------------|-------|

|                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| Traditional Abuse | 77.19 |
|-------------------|-------|

|                                                                                                      |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Number of community members supporting women and<br/>girls to report cases of abuse (average)</i> | 3 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|

|                                                                                                                                              |       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <i>Proportion of key influencers who often/always make<br/>public opinion making statements against violence<br/>against women and girls</i> | 45.23 |
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