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COMPENDIUM OF GOOD PRACTICES IN WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHT EDUCATION IN AFRICA: WESTERN AFRICA SUB- REGIONAL OUTLOOK

THE CASE OF GHANA

Prepared by Dorothy Oben
Consultant
African Centre for Gender and Development

ACRONYMS

FGM	FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION
CSO	CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION
NGO	NON- GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
UDHR	UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
UNHRDE	UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS DECADE FOR EDUCATION
UNESCO	UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION
UNHCHR	UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
CEDAW	CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
UNIC	UNITED NATION INFORMATION CENTRE
OAU	ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY
ACGD	AFRICAN CENTRE FOR GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT
CECS	CIVIC EDUCATION CLUBS
NFED	NON- FORMAL EDUCATION DIVISION
NCD	NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY
NCCE	NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION
GES	GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE
MOE	MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
NCWD	NATIONAL COUNCIL ON WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

ASSID	ASSOCIATES IN DEVELOPMENT
CHRAJ	COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE
WILDAF	WOMEN IN LAW AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA
FIDA	INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN LAWYERS
ASWIM	ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN IN THE MEDIA
WIB	WOMEN IN BROADCASTING
IAE	INSTITUTE OF ADULT EDUCATION

I. BACKGROUND:

1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948¹. During the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the declaration in 1988, a global campaign for human rights was launched with a view to promoting awareness of and understanding by the public of human rights and fundamental freedoms, alert people to the international machinery available to all for the promotion and protection of human rights, and eventually to build a culture of full human rights for all people².

2. Following the recommendations of the International Congress on Education and Democracy organised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Centre for Human Rights in Montreal, Canada, in March 1993, the Commission on Human Rights recommended that the General Assembly take proper measures to declare a decade for human rights education and adopted a World Plan of Action on Education for Human Rights and Democracy. The commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Human rights in 1998 once again drew the attention of the international community to the need to enhance human rights education and related information activities throughout the world.

3. Also, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in June 1993, reaffirmed in accordance with international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, that States should ensure that education was aimed at strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms³. Education should promote understanding, tolerance, peace and friendly relations among nations, and all racial or religious groups, as well as encourage the development of United Nations activities in pursuance of those objectives.

4. It called on States not only to aim at eradicating illiteracy, but also to direct education towards the development of the individual and to strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms⁴. It also recommended that human rights, humanitarian law, democracy and the rule of law should be included as subjects in all formal and informal learning institutions. In this connection, the World Conference further recommended that States develop specific programmes and strategies to ensure widespread human rights education and the dissemination of public information, taking into account the World Plan of Action on Education for Human Rights and Democracy adopted in Montreal in March 1993⁵, and particularly the human rights needs of women. Intergovernmental organizations, national institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were called upon to assist Governments in those tasks

¹ ECA/ACW/HRE.GD/98: Human right Education in the Formal Educational System in Africa: A gender Dimension

ibid p.v

³ Universal Declaration for Human rights, Article 26; UNHCHR Report 1996 P. 2

⁴ ibid

⁵ UNHCHR Report, 1995 P. 2 and 1996 P.1

5. Pursuant to the call made by the World conference in 1993, the General Assembly, in its resolution 49/184 of 23 December 1994, proclaimed the 10-year period beginning on 1 January 1995, the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, and welcomed the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004 to promote, encourage and focus on human rights education in the Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in June 1993⁶.

6. The Assembly invited the specialised agencies and United Nations programmes to contribute, within their respective areas of competence, to the implementation of the Plan of Action. It urged governmental and non-governmental educational agencies to intensify their efforts to establish and implement programmes of human rights education, as recommended in the Plan of Action, in particular, by preparing and implementing national plans for human rights education.

7. In recognition of the need to actively engage non - governmental organisations, grass-roots organisations and professional associations since they are a crucial element for success, the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights both called upon the international, regional and non-governmental organisations, especially those concerned with women, labour, development and the environment, as well as all other social justice groups, human rights advocates , educators, religious organisations and the media to increase their involvement in formal and non formal education in human rights and to co-operate with the Centre for Human Rights in this regard. It further requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to co-ordinate the implementation of the Plan of Action.

8. In resolution 1995/47 adopted at its fifty-first session on 3 March 1995, the Commission on Human Rights called upon all Governments to contribute, in co-operation with NGOs, educators and the media, to the implementation of the Plan of Action and in particular to consider the establishment of a national focal point for human rights education, the development of an action-oriented national plan for human rights education and the creation of a national resource and training centre for human rights education, as envisaged in the Plan of Action;

9. The Commission further requested the High Commissioner, with the assistance of the Centre for Human Rights and in co-operation with UNESCO, to carry out the survey on human rights education and prepare the preliminary report provided for in the Plan of Action as soon as possible, and to convene, at the appropriate time, the international planning conference for the Decade.

10. The proposals in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on human rights education were also emphasised later in 1997 when the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) launched the African decade for education.

a) Justification for the "Good Practice" case study.

11. Following the adoption by the General Assembly of the Plan of Action, the Assembly invited the United Nations programmes and specialised agencies to contribute, within their respective areas of competence, to the implementation of the Plan of Action. Considering this and its mission, the African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD) of the Economic

⁶ ibid P.3; P.2

commission for Africa (ECA), has given priority in its work programme, to the promotion of women's human rights and education among other gender issues. For example, during the Conference on " African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our Future" organised by the Centre on the occasion of the ECA's fortieth anniversary in 1998, strategies and actions to protect women's rights and to eliminate the gap between the provisions of law and practice were discussed in depth under the theme " Achieving good governance: The Essential Participation of women".

12. The Centre has also carried out some studies on the subject of Women's human rights education. One such study entitled " Human Rights Education in Formal Educational System in Africa: A Gender Dimension" highlights the inter-linkages between human rights education, diversification of information, participation of civil society and gender sensitisation and the attainment of human rights by women. Based on the findings of this and other studies as well as the call to the United Nations system by the General Assembly to promote the implementation of the plan of action, the Centre is attempting to identify countries in Africa which have been successful in putting in place innovative and successful policies, strategies and programmes for promoting women's human right education. The objective is to provide lessons for other countries of the region which are grappling, albeit less successfully, with the implementation of the plan of action on human rights education. It is within this context that this "Compendium of Good Practice in Women's Human Right Education in Africa: The Case of Ghana, is being prepared.

b.) Human Rights Education and the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education

i) Human Right Education

13. The United Nations Decade for Human Right Education derives from an attempt to operationalise the provision of the international human rights instruments addressing human rights education. These include article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights, article 13 of the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, article 29 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination against women, article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, paragraphs 33 and 34 of the Vienna Declaration and paragraphs 78 to 82 of its Programme of Action⁷.

14. According to those provisions, and within the context of the decade, human rights education is defined as training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at building a universal culture of human rights through a process of imparting knowledge and skills and moulding attitudes⁸. It is aimed at strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; fully developing the human personality and the sense of its dignity; promoting understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous people and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups; enabling all people to participate effectively in free society; and furthering the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace⁹.

⁷ UNHCHR Report 1996 P. 3

⁸ ibid

⁹ ibid P.4

15. Such education is understood to include the equal participation of women and men of all age groups and all sectors of society both in formal learning (through schools and vocational and professional training), as well as in non-formal learning (through institutions of civil society, the family and the mass media)¹⁰. Human right education under the decade, seeks to combat and be free of gender bias, racial and other stereotypes. It also seeks to impart skills and knowledge to learners and to affect positively their attitudes and behaviour, consistent with all other principles set forth in the Plan of Action and in the international human rights instruments upon which it is based¹¹.

ii.) The Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education

16. The Plan of Action adopted by the General Assembly was the result of extensive consultations conducted by the Centre for Human Rights with the Commission on Human Rights, Member States, human rights treaty bodies, the specialized agencies, other appropriate bodies, and competent NGOs. The Plan has five objectives:

- the assessment of needs and formulation of effective strategies in order to further human rights education at all school levels in vocational training as well as non-formal learning;
- the building and strengthening of human rights education programmes;
- the co-ordinated development of educational material;
- the strengthening of the role of the mass media;
- and the global dissemination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

17. The Plan focuses on stimulating and supporting national and local activities and initiatives and is built upon the idea of a partnership between Governments, international organisations, NGOs, professional associations, individuals and large segments of civil society.

iii.) Human Right Education In Africa

18. Since the declaration of the decade for Human right education in 1994, some African states have taken positive steps to implement the plan of Action.

19. A brief review of education programmes of some African states shows that Human right education has been incorporated at the least in their formal educational systems. Generally, this has formed part of the civic and moral curriculum, mainly at primary and secondary levels. In a few countries such as Eritrea, however, human right / moral and civic education is introduced at all levels with emphasise on values such as culture of democracy, peace, justice and equality regardless of sex, age, or religion, and educational background or political orientation. However, no special emphases has been given to the rights of women although the importance of their rights is acknowledged.

20. In Namibia, under the Life skills curriculum, students are taught daily living skills which include life, conflicts and roles within the family unit as well as rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship such as respect for the rights of others, respect for authority etc. However, efforts are being made by non- governmental organisations in collaboration with the

¹⁰ ibid

¹¹ UNHCHR Report 1999

Ministry of higher education and culture to have concepts of human rights and democracy taught in the formal educational system.

21. The situation in Chad is slightly different in that human right education has not been institutionalised within the educational system even though it is implicitly included within the civic and moral education curriculum at the primary and secondary school levels. It has also been covered as a separate discipline in teacher training institutes. As of 1998 plans were underway to integrate human rights education into the school curricula.

22. In other countries like the republic of Seychelles, human rights education was introduced in the formal school system on a trial basis in January 1998¹². Topics covered at each level included political rights as well as women's and the rights of families and the child. From secondary school level onwards, some aspects of rights and duties are treated based on the Seychelles Charter of Fundamental Human rights and Freedoms which are enshrined in their constitution.

23. In Tanzania, the social studies curriculum for primary schools includes human rights concepts while the civics education curriculum incorporates human rights education at the secondary level.

24. Tunisia is one of the good examples within the region where a comprehensive and wide range of activities is being carried out under its human rights initiative. For instance, civic education at the primary and secondary levels has been reformed and strengthened and human rights chairs have been established in faculties of law and departments of civic education in order to train teachers and co-ordinate research on human rights. Human rights is also integrated into the curriculum of law enforcing educational institutions and the public at large is being sensitised through the media. Furthermore, Tunisia has also established a National Committee on Human rights education; the country celebrates Universal Declaration of Human Rights Day awards prizes to human rights agencies ; organises school competitions and conferences on the theme of Human rights.

25. In Burkina Faso, human right education had been incorporated into its primary school curriculum as of 1998. There was a training of trainers by national experts to teach human rights education at all levels of schooling. A Burkinabe human rights NGO, Le Mouvement Burkina des Droits de L'homme et des Peuples (MBDHP) is involved in the promotion of human rights in the formal educational systems as well as the society.

26. For a very long time, human rights education has formed part of the civic and moral education curriculum of Malian schooling system. This includes basic human rights as spelt out in the UDHR . However, there is no specific focus on the rights of women and the girl child.

27. From this brief survey of human rights education within Africa in general and specifically West Africa, it is clear that a lot needs to be done to promote human rights education in the region and particularly in West Africa.

¹² ECA/ACW/HRE.GD/98 P.37 : Human right Education in the Formal Educational System in Africa: A gender Dimension

II. Criteria used in the selection Ghana as a case of "Good Practices"

28. The case study of Ghana is considered a "good practice" case because it meets the criteria of "good" practices adopted by the United Nations Resources on Gender. These criteria are:

a) **The case study should have an impact on the policy environment, and create a more conducive or enabling environment for women's human right education. The policy environment should include legislation, the regulatory environment or resource allocation. It also includes an assessment of the degree of institutionalisation of the identified good practice.**

29. In the case of Ghana, its Constitution provides a good basis for the promotion of Human Right Education within the country. All citizen rights stated in chapter 3 of the constitution apply to both genders as well as the Fundamental Human Rights stated in chapter 5 of the same document. Human rights as well as women's right are also adequately covered in chapter 5 of the constitution under *Human Right Protection and Advancement*. Article 216 of chapter 18 of the constitution provides for the establishment of a Commission on human rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) as laid down in the general principles governing the establishment of a national plan of action for human right education. One of the functions of this commission is 'to educate the public on human rights and freedoms, by such means as the Commissioner may decide, including publications, lectures and symposia'¹³.

b) **In a good practice case, policies and programs on women's right education should contributes to women's increased awareness of their rights or break new ground in non-traditional areas for women, including a link between the 'good practice' and some visible or measurable change in women's human rights**

30. In Ghana, policies and programmes of the CHRAJ, NCCE and other human right groups have focused among others in promoting awareness of women's rights through civic rights education, media, lectures, training workshops, seminars etc. The National Commission for civic education (NCCE) for example, although it has no policy focus on women, has constantly included topics on women in its civic education programmes. In order to sensitise both boys and girls about their rights, the constitution is taught in the primary and junior secondary schools. National workshops on Life Skills, cultural studies and social studies are organised for selected teachers to build capacity towards the teaching of the constitution in schools. As a result of increased awareness and education of women, they are now engaged in professions and economic domains hitherto thought of as men's.

31. The National Council on women and Development on the other hand has carried out sustained programme of Human Rights sensitisation through small groups discussions and workshops, to raise the awareness of the public on Articles of the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women¹⁴. By raising awareness of the rights of both men

¹³ The Constitution of Ghana Chp. 18 Para 218 f

¹⁴ In particular article 29

and women through educating them on their rights, the potential of all members of the society is increased and as a result all fundamental rights will be respected and social justice enhanced.

c) The case should demonstrate an innovative and replicable approach. This implies that there is something new or unique about the initiative- either its product or its process and it offers opportunities for the initiative to be replicated in other countries and contexts;

32. Considering that action at the national and local levels is crucial to the effective promotion of human rights education, Ghana has designated a national focal point to co-ordinate national and local level actions. The CHRAJ plays the role of the national focal point. It has the responsibility of identifying national human rights education needs both at the national and local levels; investigating alleged violations of human rights and taking action to remedy proven violations. It also holds workshops to educate the public, traditional leaders, the police and the military on human rights issues. In addition, it mediates and settles cases brought to it by individuals with grievances against government agencies or private companies.

33. The NCCE has also set up hundreds of community level and in-school civic education clubs (CECS) through which it has facilitated discussions on topics of civic importance. Theatre groups are also used to educate the public on their rights and responsibilities. Radio programmes have also been used to disseminate information at the national level. The NCWD also applied for the issuance of **Postage Stamps** to publicise the Articles of the CEDAW, selected Critical Areas of Concern emerging from Beijing Platform For Action and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) has also been abridged and translated into local languages, to enhance public's accessibility to the information contained in the original documents.

d) The good practice case should demonstrate sustainability. In this context, the commitment of mainstreaming or institutional sponsors or participants in the initiative whereby government, academia, media, the UN, Non Governmental Organisations, etc needs to be a component of the good practice.

34. The Ghana case is recommended a good practice case because of the participatory process which involves a range of actors: Civil society, private sector, government, NGOs etc. It also significantly involves inter-agency collaboration; the process addresses the issues of human right from a life-cycle perspective and demonstrates government's commitment to sustain action and resources. This fact is confirmed in the 1999 report of the United States, State Department which observed that the Ghanaian government is taking every step necessary to implement what is enshrined in the UDHR. The establishment of structures such as legal clinics to advise both men and women on their rights demonstrates sustainability.

III. The Success Story: The case of Ghana

A. Promotion of Human rights education In Ghana: Exemplary Aspects and its relevance to Gender concerns

35. This case exemplifies a strategic and successful approach to human right education at the national level. It will be recalled that the UN Resolution on the Declaration on Human Rights urged governments to play an active role in the implementation of the programme of the UNDHRE "through the development of national plans for action for human rights education, the introduction or strengthening of national human rights curricula in their formal educational systems, the conducting of national information campaigns on human rights and the opening of public access to human rights resources, information and training centres, as well as through enhanced donor support for relevant voluntary funds and international and national human rights education programmes"¹⁵. In addition, governments are urged to encourage national NGOs, grass-root organisations, professional associations and individuals to be actively engaged in realisation of the goals of the decade. The government of Ghana, in co-operation with private human right agencies and NGOs, has developed and implemented human right education at both national and local levels in the true spirit and letter of this resolution.

36. Ghana is a constitutional Republic. As such, it used its greatest and most powerful tool in the implementing its human right education programme - its constitution. In chapter 5 article 12.2 of its constitution, discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, disability, language, or social status is prohibited.¹⁶ The courts are empowered specifically to enforce these prohibitions, although enforcement by the authorities is generally inadequate, due partly to limited financial resources.

37. The Ghana government has taken appropriate measures to address certain injustices to women such as gender-based violence, sexual harassment etc. Although both men and women enjoy the same rights in Ghana, violence against women, including rape and domestic violence, is a major problem faced by many women. In 1998 a study revealed that at least 54 percent of women have been assaulted in recent years, particularly in low-income, high-density areas of greater Accra. A total of 95 percent of the victims of domestic violence are women, according to data gathered by the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA). These abuses are usually not reported and seldom come before the courts. The situation is made worse by the fact that the police tend not to intervene in domestic disputes. **As a measure to protect women, the government of Ghana in its legislation doubled the mandatory sentence for rape in 1998.**¹⁷ When the report on cases of assault and rape by the media continued, the police administration established in late 1998, a "women and juvenile unit" to handle cases involving domestic violence, child abuse, and juvenile offences.¹⁸ In the first quarter of the year, this unit recorded 199 cases, including 30 assaults on women and 9 rapes. The unit which is located in Accra works closely with the Department of Social Welfare, FIDA, and the Legal Aid Board.

¹⁵ UNHCHR Report 1996 P. 5

¹⁶ The Ghanaian Constitution Chapter 5 P. 1

¹⁷ United States, Dept of States, 1999 Country Report on Human Rights Practices p.17

¹⁸ *ibid*

38. In 1998 Parliament passed legislation that amended the 1960 Criminal Code to provide additional protection for women and children. The legislation added new definitions of sexual offences and strengthened punishments for others. **The provisions of the bill "ban the practice of "customary servitude" (known as Trokosi), protect women accused of witchcraft, double the mandatory sentence for rape, raise the age of criminal responsibility from 7 years to 12, criminalise indecent assault and forced marriages, and raise punishments for defilement, incest, and prostitution involving children".**¹⁹ In August the Cabinet endorsed the Government's proposal to appoint women to 40 percent of public office positions with a view to politically empowering women.

39. In parts of Ghana, rural women are often punished with banishment by traditional village authorities for teenage pregnancy or suspected witchcraft. Hundreds of women accused of witchcraft are sent to penal villages in the Northern Region by traditional authorities, such as a shaman. In 1997 two villages contained 400 elderly women, and one village contained 2,000 women and family members, all sentenced by a village authority who claimed to have the power to divine witches. Although the women face no formal legal sanction if they leave the village, most fear that they would be beaten to death if caught outside the penal villages. Forced labour also occurs at the camps for women accused of witchcraft. This issue became a concern to the government. It therefore took action and passed a **Legislation in 1998 providing some additional protection to women banned from their communities for alleged witchcraft. The CHRAJ and human rights NGO's are mounting a campaign to end this traditional practice, which violates the victims' constitutional rights.** The challenge lies not only in persuading custodians of the witches' homes to abolish the practice, but also in educating the community so the women will be allowed to return safely to their homes. In 1998 FIDA persuaded custodians to abolish the Gambaga witches home in the Northern Region, contingent on the performance of "exorcism" rites and payment of accommodation and discharge fees. However, a few months later, there was an increase in the number of alleged witches banished to the home, mainly due to the communities' belief that these women were responsible for an outbreak of cerebrospinal meningitis which claimed many lives in the region. The government of Ghana is making a concerted effort to eradicate such practices which are harmful to women and violate their basic human right of freedom to live wherever they wish as enshrined in all Human rights instruments.

a) *The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)*

40. The programme of Implementation of the UNHRDE requires that governments appoint national focal points for human rights education. In the case of Ghana the CHRAJ plays the role of the national focal point. It educates the public on human rights and freedoms, through publications, lectures and symposia. The CHRAJ has offices in all the 10 regions of Ghana and in 89 out of the 110 Districts of Ghana. It undertakes activities based on topical national issues or those emerging from the 10 regions. CHRAJ has trained all its 10 Regional Directors and the 89 District Officers in topics such as *Basic Introduction to Women's Rights and Children's Rights* as a way of enhancing their capacity to educate the society on their rights as well as to fulfil their mandate.

¹⁹ ibid

41. According to the Commissioner of CHRAJ, "Statutory human rights agencies must accept the challenges and enjoy the institutional cooperation with NGOs" To this end, the CHRAJ has held a number of meetings with NGOs as a way of mobilizing them for better impact in their work. There have been Round - Table Conferences with NGOs on 'Cooperation and Collaboration, Networking and Coalition Building' as well as workshops geared towards capacity building.

42. The CHRAJ has formed a National Human Rights Advisory Council with NGOs at grass-root levels to assist the Commission in the work of identifying pressing human rights issues worthy of the Commission's urgent attention and intervention. The Council also assists in disseminating and exchanging information to ensure broad acceptance of Human Rights Principles, values and practice in Ghana. The Commission maintains an inventory of Human rights organisations and has also accepted the request of an NGO to set up an NGO Desk and hotline to facilitate liaison between them.

43. Subsequent to CHRAJ's success on a court case on a sexual harassment, a private paper, "*Public Agenda*", did an 8-page pullout on the full text of the decision. The publication was partly sponsored by a network of nine NGOs in the sub-region committed to the subject of Gender Equality and Justice. After the case, the Commission teamed up with FIDA, WAJU, the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) and others to educate the public on 'Violence Against Women and Sexual Harassment'.

44. The Commission has actively promoted and protected the rights of women. It takes Human Rights education down into the Communities by organising community-based sensitisation activities. According to the staff, it provided human rights education in 1997, through a Pilot Educational Project covering all the communities in 2 of the 10 regions in depth. In addition to processing complaints relating to women's rights, it has vigorously campaigned against all forms of violence against women including Spousal Violence, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Rape and Defilement, inhuman treatment of women suspected to be witches and sexual harassment. The CHRAJ has also used one popular FM station to provide regular rights education in a local language. **The CHRAJ annually issues a press statement in the local Daily papers, on the State of Human Rights in the country, and these always have a section on Women's rights.**

45. Women in Ghana like other women within the region and globally, experience societal discrimination. Women in urban centres and those with skills and training encounter little overt bias, and resistance to women entering non-traditional fields persists. Only about one quarter of university students are women, although women's enrolment is increasing. Women, especially in rural areas remain subject to burdensome labour conditions and traditional male dominance. Traditional practices and social norms often deny women their statutory entitlements to inheritance and property, legally registered marriage (and with it, certain legal rights), and the maintenance and custody of children. Women's rights groups are actively involved in educational campaigns and in programs to provide vocational training, legal aid, and other support to women. The Government also is active in educational programmes, and is an advocate of women's rights.

46. Within the limits of its resources, the Government of Ghana is committed to protecting the rights and welfare of children as well. There is little or no discrimination against female children

in education but girls and women frequently drop out of school due to societal or economic pressures. The Government actively campaigns for girls' education and in 1997 established a girls' education unit within the basic education division of the Ghana Educational Service. Although the percentages of girls enrolled in school increased from 1996 to date, participation is still low. Statistics for 1995 (the most recent available) show that from grades 1 to 6, 46 percent of pupils are girls; from grades 7 to 9, this drops to 43 percent. In grades 10 to 12, girls drop to 36 percent of students, and at the university level to 23 percent.²⁰ However, enrolment of women at the university level increased by 5 percent from 1993 to 1998.

47. A 1997 country report by the Ghana National Commission on Children further substantiated the gap between enrolment of boys and girls particularly at the high school level. In the eight districts examined, there were 22,418 boys and 14,318 girls enrolled at the high school level. In the report, officials attribute the lower female enrolment to the fact that many girls marry early or become pregnant. Moreover, several traditional discriminatory practices that are detrimental to the health and development of young females, in particular, female genital mutilation (FGM) which is widely condemned by international health experts as damaging to both physical and psychological health, is a serious problem. According to one study, as many as 30 percent of women may have undergone this procedure. Most observers believe that 15 percent is a likely figure. **A Ministry of Health survey conducted between 1995 and 1998 found that FGM is practised among nearly all the northern sector ethnic groups.** Officials at all levels have spoken out against the practice and local NGO's are making some progress through their educational campaigns to discourage the practice of FGM and to re-train practitioners in some other professional skills. In 1999 so many women were arrested for performing FGM, thus illustrating the seriousness with which government views the practice. Two practitioners were sentenced to a total of 8 years of hard labor. **Members of the legal community have advocated legislation to close loopholes in the FGM law including extending culpability to family members and others who aid in carrying out FGM and to Ghanaians who commit the crime outside the country's borders.** Any person who conceals information about an instance of FGM is liable. In addition, FGM is banned no matter how medically safe the procedure is made—dispelling a belief by some that FGM is acceptable as long as the girls' health is protected. Traditional chiefs have as result of education become more outspoken in their opposition to the practice of FGM.

48. Although the Constitution prohibits slavery, it exists on a limited scale. Trokosi, a traditional practice found among the Ewe ethnic group and in parts of the Volta Region, is an especially severe abuse and a flagrant violation of children's and women's rights. It is a system in which a young girl, usually under the age of 10, is made a slave to a fetish shrine for offences allegedly committed by a member of the girl's family. In rare instances, boys are offered. The belief is that, if someone in that family has committed a crime, such as stealing, members of the family may begin to die in large numbers unless a young girl is given to the local fetish shrine to atone for the offence. The girl becomes the property of the fetish priest, must work on the priest's farm, and perform other labours for him. Because they are the sexual property of the priests, most Trokosi slaves have children by them. Although the girls' families must provide for their needs such as food, most are unable to do so. There are at least 2,510 girls and women bound to various shrines in the Trokosi system, a figure that does not include the slaves' children. Even if released, generally without skills or hope of marriage, a Trokosi woman continues her

²⁰ *ibid* p.18

obligations to the shrine for the duration of her life. When the fetish slave dies, the family is expected to replace her with another young girl for the fetish shrine.

49. In 1998 Parliament passed legislation that banned the practice of Trokosi through legislation to protect women and children's rights. Human rights activists believe that the eradication of the practice of Trokosi is achievable with the new law. NGO's, such as International Needs, and government agencies, such as the CHRAJ, have been campaigning against Trokosi for several years and are familiar with the locations of the fetish shrines and know the numbers of women and children enslaved. Activists know the community leaders and fetish priests and, thus, know with whom to negotiate. The CHRAJ and International Needs have had some success in approaching village authorities and fetish priests at over 116 of the shrines. To date they have won the release of 2,190 Trokosi slaves and retrained them for new professions. The organizations continue to work for more releases. Another traditional practice that violates the rights of children is forced childhood marriage, which became illegal under the Children's Act.

b.) *The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE)*

50. Another national machinery established through Article 231 of the 1992 Constitution with a mandate to educate the public on civic rights and responsibilities is the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE). Although women are not the only target group in its policy, it has regularly included topics on women in its **Civic Education programmes**.

51. The NCCE has continued earlier activities started by the National Commission for Democracy (NCD). In this regard, it organized a national workshop for selected teachers in the discipline of *Life Skills, Cultural Studies and Social Studies* in 1994 as the first phase of the programme to build capacity towards the teaching of the Constitution in schools. The teachers trained during the workshop were to train their colleagues on a pilot basis in the classroom. Unfortunately, due to constraints on logistics the programme was discontinued.

52. The Commission however managed in 1996 to mobilise some funds to organise a 10day workshop for 120 teachers from three selected districts in the Central Region under the theme *Sowing Seeds of Constitutionalism and Democracy Within the School System in Ghana*. The workshop was to use the schools in the three districts as pilot centres in the teaching programme. The workshop was intended to give the requisite training in the use of a Teacher's Guide that was prepared in 1994 by the Ghana Education Service (GES) for the Teaching of the Constitution in schools. This could not also continue due to lack of funds to carry out the training on a sustained basis.

53. The NCCE has also set up hundreds of community level and in-school Civic Education Clubs (CECs), through which it facilitates discussions on topics of civic importance. The NCCE also works through Theatre groups (composed of staff members), which use drama to educate the public on their civic rights and responsibilities. These have been found to be very effective in driving messages down. Officers of the NCCE have also used Radio programs to disseminate information at the Regional level. It has recently set up a Women's Desk and is currently reviewing its Policy to include a gender focus.

54. The drama Section of its Public Education Department started the production of video documentaries with financial support from Konrad Adenauer Foundation. These documentaries were on based on short drama sketches on the following themes:

- (i) *The Constitution*
- (ii) *Separation of Powers (functions of the Executive, Parliament, the Judiciary)*
- (iii) *Political life in a Democracy (role of government and the opposition)*
- (iv) *Police/Civil Relations*
- (v) *The Decentralization Concept*
- (vi) *Women in Politics*
- (vii) *The Media (Freedom of Speech)*
- (viii) *The Environment.*

◆ In 1998, in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Universal Human Rights, the NCCE, in collaboration with the Faculty of Law of the University of Ghana organized a series of radio discussions aimed at informing and educating citizens on a number of human rights issues and their relevance to Ghana. The programme was again sponsored by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF). Topics discussed included:

- a) *Significance of United Nations Declarations of Universal Human Rights in Ghana;*
- b) *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the 1992 Constitution; and*
- c) *Civic Awareness of Human Rights Issues: Prospects, Aim and Challenges Under the 1992 Constitution.*

55. In western, Eastern, central and Ashanti regions the following topics are covered:

- ◆ *Violence against women*
- ◆ *Women empowerment*
- ◆ *Women in politics*
- ◆ *Intestate Succession Law*
- ◆ *Social-Cultural Imbalances: An obstacle to Women's Empowerment*
- ◆ *Educating the women: A necessary Tool for Nation Building*
- ◆ *Girl Child Education, Issues of House Helps,*
- ◆ *Women in Politics and Women in Employment.*

- ◆ *Police and Civilian relations.*
- ◆ *The Rent Situation in Ghana.*
- ◆ *Agreeing to disagree.*
- ◆ *Freedom of speech in Ghana.*
- ◆ *Women's involvement in the Local government machinery.*
- ◆ *Women in politics Women's Empowerment*
- ◆ *Special Rights of Women and Children*

56. The Upper West Regional office of the NCCE initiated a civic education programme on a local FM radio station, called *Civic Agenda*. The topics included in its 1999 programme were:

- ◆ *Responsibilities of good citizens*
- ◆ *Property Rights of Spouses, Women and Children*
- ◆ *The Rights of Children*
- ◆ *Economic, Political, Social, Educational/Cultural Obligations, Duties of a citizen*

- ◆ *Unit Committees*
- ◆ *The Laws of Ghana*
- ◆ *Citizenship*
- ◆ *Fundamental Human Rights and Freedom*
- ◆ *The essence and meaning of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms*
- ◆ *Rights of women, Children, the disabled and the sick*
- ◆ *Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights under the Constitution*
- ◆ *Duties of a citizen*
- ◆ *The Wills Act*
- ◆ *Drug Abuse and Alcoholism*
- ◆ *The Girl Child –Child Education*
- ◆ *Polygamy- Views from Africa, Islamic, and Christian Traditions*
- ◆ *Rising cost of funerals*
- ◆ *Political and Religious Tolerance*
- ◆ *The Intestate Succession Law*
- ◆ *Effect of high bride price in the Ghanaian Society*
- ◆ *The Socio-economic prospects of the extended family system.*

c) *The National Council on Women and Development (NCWD)*

57. This women's national machinery, which was set up since 1975 to be the mouth piece on women's development issues, has carried out a sustained program of Human Rights sensitisation through Small Group Discussions and Workshops, to raise public awareness on Articles of the CEDAW. In addition the NCWD has applied for the issuance of **Postage Stamps** to publicise the Articles of the CEDAW, selected Critical Areas of Concern emerging from Beijing Platform For Action and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) has also been abridged and translated into local languages, to enhance public's accessibility to the information contained in the original documents.

58. The afore- mentioned initiatives by national machineries buttress the fact that Ghana is a good practice within the sub-region with respect to implementing the Plan of Action for Human right education. The government of Ghana plays a pivotal role in fostering women's human rights education. Gender - specific issues touching on women's personal rights and freedoms that have been highlighted in CEDAW, UDHR and the African Charter, such as marriage, reproductive health, inheritance, violence, harmful cultural practices, etc are being addressed. This is very unlike the case of some countries within the sub-region, for example, the Gambia, where information of the United Nations Human Rights Education Plan of Action (UNHREPA) hardly exist although the UDHR has been translated into the four main local languages for literacy programmes within the country.

d) **Promotion through the formal Education systems**

59. The National Commission for Civic Education, the National Council on Women and Development, and the Ghana Education Service recently introduced a number of Human Rights - related Topics into two core subjects at the Basic and Secondary School Levels on the directives of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice.

60. At the Primary School level, within the **Environmental Studies** curriculum for Classes 1 to 3 under the theme: **Rights and Responsibilities of the Child**, the following topics are covered :

- ◆ *Rights The Child Expects Of His Teachers, Parent, And Community*
- ◆ *Reasons Why The Child Is Entitled To Such Rights*
- ◆ *Mention Some Of The Duties She Has To Perform In Return For Rights*
- ◆ *Avoid Situations Of Abuse*
- ◆ *Demonstrate His /Her Appreciation To Teachers, Parents And Community.*

For Classes 4-6, within the same subject, but under the theme Human **Rights**, the following topics are included:

- ◆ *Explanation of Fundamental Human Rights*
- ◆ *Explanation Basic Freedoms*
- ◆ *Explanation of Rights And Freedom To Promote Quality Of Life*
- ◆ *The Limits To Which Rights And Freedoms Can Be Exercised*
- ◆ *The United Nations' Charter.*

61. At the Junior and Senior Secondary School levels, two core subjects i.e. **Social Studies** and **Life Skills/Psycho Social Skills** are taught and are compulsory for all students. Under the theme, **Citizenship and Human Rights** taught within the social studies curriculum the following topics are treated:

- ◆ *Concept Of Citizenship And How It Is Obtained*
- ◆ *Characteristics Desired Of A Citizen For Nation Building*
- ◆ *Rights And Responsibilities Of The Citizen*
- ◆ *Meaning Of Human Rights Abuse And How They Occur*
- ◆ *Groups Which Suffer Human Rights Abuse More Than Other Sectors Of The Population*
- ◆ *Ways By Which Human Rights Abuse Can Be Prevented*
- ◆ *Meaning Of Democracy And Effective Ways For Democratic Citizenship At Home, School And Community*

62. Within the Life Skills/Psyco-Social Skills curriculum, the topics taught include:

- ◆ *Right To Education*
- ◆ *Right To Free Speech*
- ◆ *Improving Yourself For Success*
- ◆ *Adolescent Reproductive Health*

63. Under the topic, "Improving Yourself For Success", the following topics, which seek to empower girls in particular, are covered:

- ◆ *Negotiation Skills*
- ◆ *Assertiveness*

64. Under "Adolescent Reproductive Health" the following topics are covered:

- *Things To Avoid In Friendship*
- *Explanation of Sexual Abuse*
- *Identification And Explanation of "Rape" As A Form Of Sex Abuse*
- *Explanation of Some Circumstances That Can Lead To Rape*

- *Analysis of The Effects Of Rape On The Victim*
- *Outline of Ways And Means Of Avoiding Rapists*
- *Outline of Ways Of Preventing HIV/AIDS*
- *Description of The Various Ways In Which Boys Can Be Sexually Abused*

65. Although the themes and topics included in the curriculum are relevant, the issues of inadequate qualified human resources and insufficient funding pose a huge problem in the teaching of the curriculum. The need for capacity building for teaching these topics in the Classroom is imperative. However, the fact that most gender issues highlighted in all the international human right instruments are incorporated in the curriculum is worthy of note. These gender issues could become the focus of advocacy efforts even among the female students themselves if they are made aware of the relevant principles in the human rights instruments.

e) Through Basic Adult literacy programmes

66. Following the call by government, adult educational institutions have made efforts to integrate gender and development into all their programs. Although, no special call per se, has been made for the introduction of Human Rights education in basic education programs, all on-going development programs have aspects of Human rights and Women's rights topics incorporated in them.

67. In the *Adult Literacy Program of the Ministry of Education*, a Non-formal Education Division (NFED) within the Ministry of Education is responsible for Adult Basic Education. Its main responsibility is to teach adult Literacy Classes in local languages in the rural communities. In addition to the NFED, several NGOs also undertake Literacy projects in collaboration with the NFED which trains their Literacy Facilitators. These organizations use the Primers (Readers) developed and used by the NFED. However, though the Primers cover a lot of useful topics that are intended to give the Adult learners a wide variety of information for living, the only topic relevant to the issue of Human Rights is *Intestate Succession Law* which explains how property is shared when a person dies intestate. Also, though the Primer has a topic on *Civic Awareness*, the subject matter dealt with under the topic is not very relevant to human rights issues.

f) Through Tertiary Level Programmes

i) Institute of Adult Education (IAE)

68.) The Institute which is the arm of the University of Ghana, reaches out to communities and the public at large, with educational programs. It also offers a Diploma and MPhil Courses.

The Institute is renowned for its Annual New Year and Easter Schools. It brings together large number of participants from a cross section of the Ghanaian society during its annual events. Themes covered in the past at these events have included the following:

- Enhancing the Status of Women;
- Enhancing Women's Participation in Politics
- Gender and Socio- political Development of Ghana

69.) In 1999, the Northern Easter School included the following topics for a panel discussion while treating the theme, "Education And Development In The Next Millennium: Issues Affecting Northern Ghana":

1. *The Rights of the Girl Child*
2. *Enhancing the Development of the Girl Child*
3. *Violence against the girl-child*

In a seminar to mark its 37th Annual New Year school in the year 2000, the theme, " *Peace, Development and Human Rights in Africa*" was treated. The following topics were covered:

- *Education And the Development of Peace and Understanding*
- *The Role of the Youth in the Promotion of Peace.*
- *Human Rights and the Role of Women in the Development of Peace and Understanding.*

ii) The University

70.) At the University level, there are a number of programs with elements of Gender Studies integrated into them, though no specific information on Course content is available at the time of the study. However, information obtained shows that in the sociology department there is "Gender Studies". The outline for this course in the first degree course is the following:

1. *The development of the study of Gender*
2. *Definitions of Basic Concepts*
3. *The theoretical basis of Gender Studies*
4. *Gender and the Division of Labour*
5. *An overview of Gender differences and issues within identified socio-economic and political arena's in Ghana.*

71. Semester Essays are given to students in groups presentation during Class Seminars. The Essays are marked by a Panel of Judges, and forms part of the students' Interim Assessment Marks.

Topics covered are:

- ☐ *The status of men and women in Ghana*
- ☐ ***Legal Provisions for Women's rights in Ghana***
- ☐ *Women and Men in Politics in Ghana*
- ☐ ***The media and women in Ghana***
- ☐ *Gender Issues in Rural Communities (Households and rural production)*
- ☐ *Gender issues in rural development Policies*
- ☐ *Gender issues in urban communities (households and urban production)*
- ☐ *Gender issues in urban production and policies*
- ☐ ***Gender and Reproductive Health problems in Ghana***
- ☐ *Gender Issues and the Environment*
- ☐ ***Violence Against Women***

72.) 'Gender Planning and Development' is studied at the M. Phil level in the department of Agriculture. The course covers areas such as:

- *Need for Gender Planning*
- *Practical and Strategic Gender Needs*

- *Policy Approaches to WID*
- *Characteristics of Gender Planning*
- *Gender Planning in Rural Development*

73.) It is vital for girls to be knowledgeable in these issues. Armed with such knowledge they can overcome obstacles that hamper them from enjoying their rights and be at parity with boys/men in society. The mere fact that Gender issues are covered in departments such as agriculture, is a good indication that gender issues have been mainstreamed at all levels in Ghana's educational systems.

g) Promotion of Human rights education by NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

74.) A plethora of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have emerged in Ghana to articulate, defend and promote respect for fundamental human rights and to ensure that these rights are observed for the purpose of justice and democracy. Many of these NGOs are also committed to advancing the process of social development and ensuring a wider appreciation of democratic values in Ghana through Adult Education programs. They cover a wide range of constituencies and interests, including women's groups, organizations for the promotion of the welfare of children, persons with disabilities, the elderly and many vulnerable and disadvantaged minorities in society. Categories of bodies undertaking Human Rights education include NGOs and other civil society organizations such as religious bodies, schools, Trade Unions and Professional groups. Their contribution to human rights education in Ghana is best seen in the activities which they carry out.

75. Their approaches also differ. While some focus on advancing equality of the sexes, some more conservative ones indirectly aim at fostering positive attitudes towards women. These CSOs mostly organise ad hoc Lectures, Seminars and Training Workshops for other Civil society groups such as development focused NGOs, personnel from governmental agencies (e.g the Police and Prisons Services, the NCCE and NFED) and Women's Groups and Community-based associations. In the case of a few however, specific Rights Education Projects with extended duration have been implemented or are on-going.

76. An affiliate of the **International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Ghana)**, constantly carries out public education, mostly targeting women, to educate them on Women's rights and selected Laws affecting women and Children. FIDA took a leadership stance in Women's Rights Education by simplifying and translating selected domestic Laws affecting women and children, into the main local languages in Ghana. Most of the NGOs undertaking Rights education have depended on these booklets for their programmes. It has also recently simplified the Convention On the Rights of the Child. FIDA has also since 1985, run a legal Aid Clinic in Accra, which offers legal counsel and court representation for hundreds of indigent women and men. Lately, FIDA has operated mobile legal Clinics to expand its services to other parts of the country.

77. **Women in law and Development for Africa (WiLDAF)**, a regional organisation with a branch in Ghana has for the past 8 years, carried out a consistent program of Rights Education Training to equip representatives of NGOs to integrate Legal Literacy into their ongoing

development activities. Focused work has been done in three of the 10 regions of Ghana (Volta, Western, and Brong Ahafo)

78. Another NGO, **Associates In Development (ASSID)**, between 1996 and 1998, carried out a two - tier Training of Trainers project in Rights Education and Leadership Skills Project in one of the remotest regions of Ghana (Upper West). The project built the capacity of 21 representatives drawn from the 5 districts, who later trained 237 grassroots level female Educators who carried out regular community level rights education among women's groups and provided counseling and referral services. Over a year's period, the Educators recorded having reached over 11,000 people with their educational activities, and succeeded in helping to resolve several cases of Child Maintenance, Child Custody, Domestic Violence and Marriage regularization Cases. The project which retained a Legal Advisor, succeeded for the first time, to carry legal assistance to the doorsteps of the rural women.

79. The **Ark Foundation**, a new NGO carries out focused training on Fundamental Human Rights as contained in the 1992 Constitution. It targets Civil Society groups and Young Women from tertiary institutions for the training.

80. Most of the professional associations such as the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF), and the Ghana Literacy Program undertake Advocacy activities to sensitise as well as influence government policy/legislation. Where such advocacy has been in collaboration with governmental bodies such as the national machinery, much leeway has been made and important legislation have been passed, such as happened with action on Harmful Traditional practices/Widowhood rites, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), the Intestate Succession Law, and recently, Marriageable Age.

81. Lately, the **Media** has been exceptionally active in its focus on women's issues, most of which border on issues of human rights. Associations of women journalists, such as **Women in Broadcasting (WIB)**, **Association of Women in the Media (ASWIM)**, **West African Women's Network (WAMNET)** and others have been very active in highlighting issues of women's rights. FM Radio stations have also played active roles by focusing Talk Shows on women's rights issues. Almost all the Radio Stations have Women's Programs, which focus on topical issues of concern or interest on a regular basis. Since these are aired in the local languages, the ordinary illiterate person is able to understand and participate in these discussions through Call-ins. Even though not all the people have home phones, the proliferation of Communication Centres in almost every average sized town, enables the ordinary people, to contribute to Radio discussions of interest to them.

82. The **Ghana Broadcasting Corporation** and **Ghana Television** have played equally vital roles in promoting Talk Shows such as, "*Mma Nkomo*" (literarily meaning, "Women's Conversation"), and "*Asomdwoe Nkomo*" (literarily meaning, "Peace Conversation"). These shows both educate as well as provoke discussions on topical Women's and Girl-child Rights issues such as: Domestic Violence, Girl-Child Education, Wills, Property Rights, Political Participation, Sexual Violence Against Children, Child Abuse, Incest, FGM etc, on Television, with both men and women as discussants and the participating audience.

83. A network of Human Rights NGOs mostly led by women, also undertook a study on Violence Against Women in 1999. It has since the study, implemented a sustained program of Training of Trainers' Workshops and Community-Based Capacity-Building activities to create a

pool of resource persons to sensitize people as well as handle cases of violence at the local level. Key targets for the training activities have included Opinion Leaders, Chiefs and elders, the Police, Prison Officers, Health Personnel, NGO staff and Women's Group leaders.

84. While most of the activities of civil society organizations are geared towards adult learners, several NGOs have also targeted Junior and Senior secondary school students with their Rights education activities. A number of Rights Education Clubs have been formed in Secondary Schools. While a lot of these focus on educating the students on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a few, such as the ASSID Teen Clubs use Group Discussions and Drama to highlight key rights abuses that are suffered mainly by the girl-child, such as denial of access to education, sexual abuse, child labour etc.

B) Limitations in the provision of Women's Human rights Education

Teachers' lack of Capacity And Skills In The Provision Of Women's Human Rights Education

85. With the exception of the CHRAJ and professional (Legal) NGOs interviewed, all respondents indicated that they require training in Human Rights to be able to teach, train or educate others. Even the staff of the CHRAJ are given periodic In-house Capacity Building when funds are available. It is obvious that even for the CHRAJ staff with legal backgrounds who have the requisite knowledge about Human Rights, additional training is necessary to sensitise them on Gender Issues, as well as modify their attitudes to women's issues.

86. In addition to the obvious need for rights training and exposure to the Fundamental Human Rights contained in the Constitution, the unavailability of teaching, learning and training materials is a major constraint. The respondents indicated the need for Handouts such as Pamphlets, Posters, and Books etc.

87. **Human resource and logistical constraints** were other main obstacles to almost all institutions involved in carrying out Women's Rights Educational activities. The CHRAJ for instance, noted that it was sadly understaffed and under-resourced. The result of this is **low sustainability** of programs, as exemplified by the inability of the NCCE to implement its planned activities. There is a need for human resources, such as documentation specialist, training experts and other appropriate personnel.

88. Both the CHRAJ and NCWD expressed dissatisfaction with the Ministry of Education (MOE) for its reluctance over time, to introduce Human Rights education into the Curricula and were obviously not aware that it had been done. Discussions with the officers of the CRDD however confirmed their earlier assertion that the curriculum was overloaded, and perhaps their real reasons for not wanting to do so. To them, the real challenge now that they had succeeded in putting the above-mentioned topics into the already loaded Curricula, was how to build the capacities of the classroom Teachers to teach the new topics. While the new Curricula had been already distributed to the Teachers and they were already using them, they were doing so without the requisite knowledge or skills. So, despite the relevance of the topics included in the curriculum, the extent to which topics are actually being covered remains questionable. It could be concluded based on discussions held with the officials of the Curriculum Research and Development Department (CRDD) of the Ghana Education Service, which developed the syllabi, that the capacity for teaching these topics in the Classroom was absent. Yet the syllabi had

already been distributed to the relevant Teachers and were being used. It was therefore most gratifying when they admitted that, they, the Curriculum developers, needed to be trained, to be enabled to pass on the knowledge and skills acquired, onwards to the Teachers in the Classroom. There is the need for appropriate teaching methodologies to human rights education, hence the need for technical assistance.

89. Furthermore, CHRAJ explained that for the Primary and Junior Secondary School levels alone, they would have to train not less than 101,180 Teachers in the Public Schools, and about another 8,000 in the Private Schools. Without the requisite tools and capacity, the extent to which the topics outlined would be taught becomes a main concern.

The respondents from the MOE and GES for instance, stressed their need for a *Teachers' Guide* to accompany the new Syllabi they had developed, and for copies of the Simplified versions of the *Convention on The Rights of The Child*, as well as others such as *The 1992 Constitution*, as *Supplementary Readers*.

90. **Short In-service Training Courses were lacking to train all staff of institutions and organizations, which are implementing Rights Education programmes.**

91. **The need for more legal professionals to lend themselves to use by the educational system, as Trainers, to train the Curriculum Research Development Department (CRDD) staff, so that they can in turn train the Teachers on the ground was emphasized. A Trainer's Guide could be developed for the CRDD staff to use in training the Teachers.**

92. **Financial resources** is another main limitation in the promotion of human rights education. Funding, especially in the long term would ensure continued impact of human right education programmes.

93. The Women's Ministry also indicated that while they are very familiar with the International Legal Instruments and Conventions, they **needed some knowledge of the domestic laws, the Constitution, as well as the mechanisms** for seeking and assessing redress in instances of denial or abuse of rights so they can teach these to women.

94. Considering women's absence in the political arena and their denial of the right to vote, it was surprising to find that a program like the Adult Literacy had no defined topic on 'Political Education', in a growing democracy like Ghana. The *Right to Vote* and *Procedures for Casting a Vote*, are obvious topics that could have been covered in the Primers but which had been missed. For many women, this would have been the most appropriate forum through which to access such vital information and skills, since women have always constituted the majority of learners (60-90%) in all Adult Literacy programs.

Embedded Societal attitudes

95. Another limitation is that of **deep-rooted societal attitudes** about the position/ value of women vis a vis men. For instance a respondent of the NCCE, responsible for a whole region's Civic Rights Education program, indicated that *men and women cannot be equal*. He therefore tries in his Radio Talk Show in Northern Ghana, to focus on the importance of the household chores that women perform, and the need for the men to begin to see the value in the work of women, which they have hitherto taken for granted, rather than talking about women's right to equality with men. This is a clear illustration that many other people who are expected to be

promoting human rights have already decided who should or should not have rights. The extent to which they can or will undertake to transform people's attitudes, is already compromised, even before they do anything. Unfortunately, many women also, do not lend themselves to education on their human rights due to the way they have been socialized into valuing themselves.

Poor sensitivity of the Courts

96. **Poor sensitivity of the Courts** to gender issues is an impediment which frustrates the ability of women to trust the usefulness of rights education programmes for them. Many cases are poorly dealt with, once the few courageous women make the effort to use the system to their benefit.

97. **Inadequate state response** to women's rights education is another challenge which can easily be remedied under the present democratic dispensation.

C) Recommendations for overcoming obstacles

i.) Ways to increasing the Capacities of teachers to effectively teach Human rights at Both The Formal educational level and Basic Adult Education Programmes.

98. Women's rights education should be a conviction rather than a job. There is the need to encourage and develop interested and committed people who believe in the cause of women, to undertake the task. Training in Human Rights education should be combined with capacity building in the area of Gender Awareness/ Planning/ Analysis, Leadership/ Assertiveness Skills and Facilitation skills. Effective collaboration among key stakeholders from government bodies and Civil Society organisations such as NGOs is necessary. There should also be effective collaboration between legal professionals and Adult education providers. The professionals should be prepared to welcome and work with the non-specialists without patronising them. Also, there is a need to integrate women's rights education and gender sensitisation into all Extension programmes. There should also be a Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism to assess the effectiveness of all the educational activities being carried out. Finally, human Rights education should be done using a multiplicity of techniques and media to reach their audience effectively. Examples should include Group Discussions, Production of Leaflets in local languages, Role Playing, Sketches, Radio, Mini Lectures.

ii) Ways to Promote The Provision Of Women's Rights Education in Both Formal Educational System and Adult Literacy Programmes

99. Fostering a culture of Human rights is a great task, which cannot be handled by any one group or institution. It is important that multiple partners collaborate to tackle it with multi-faceted approaches. Therefore, organisations should work towards collaboration rather than isolation. Partnership should be established and co operation should be furthered rather than co-option. They should aim at increasing advocacy on the importance of Human Rights education and a strong statement on this made by the government would be ideal.

100. A process approach, to research into the origins of traditional beliefs, attitudes and practices, which actually constrain women's advancement and equality with men, should be

pursued before a change in societal beliefs and practices that are both discriminatory and harmful to women can be removed through attitude change. In the case of the Traditional practice of "Trokosi" (Ritual servitude, where virgin girls are made to atone for the crimes of family members at Shrines), the priests have argued that no "Trokosi" priest goes for the girls. They claimed that it is the family members who bring them to the shrines to atone for the sins so they the Priests have not committed any crime.

101. Again, the almost routine practice among some ethnic groups, of not accepting death as natural but using spiritual means to ascertain causes of death is a source of problem for older and often barren women, who invariably get pronounced as witches, and are attacked as being responsible for all deaths that occur. Since traditional cultures and beliefs as well as illiteracy are main obstacles to the promotion of human right education, it could be linked to the basic needs of the final beneficiaries in order for them to be emancipating. There is a need to understand that we are moving from one belief set to another and so the basis of certain attitudes and practices should be understood.

102. Co-operation from women themselves in accepting that there is a problem, and wanting change, is very important in effectively promoting women's rights education. Many women lack the desire to enforce their rights once they have been educated on these rights. Many women for example, do not believe women should stand for elections, and will therefore not vote for a female who musters the courage to offer herself for election.

103. At the institutional level, it has become apparent that male chauvinism and Gender insensitivity work to constrain access to resources for women's programs when faced with the issue of scarce resources. Even in the absence of male chauvinism, scarce resources often dictate that a generic programme for both sexes be carried out instead of a special program to address women's rights.

104. There is a need for Rights Education organisations to plan integrated programs that empower women holistically rather than merely focusing on the Rights alone. For instance, Economic self-sufficiency should form an integral component of all Rights education programs so that the beneficiaries can move towards economic independence, without which the exercise of their rights would be difficult to enforce.

105 Attempts should be made to teach women what institutions exist and how they can be used to enforce their rights, as well as sensitise these institutions to women's issues.

D) Impact

106. A National Sub-Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was launched in April 1997 to monitor the implementation of the Convention, the implementation of an Affirmative Action policy, as well as to serve as the watchdog on women's rights generally, in collaboration with other women's rights organisations.

107. An **Affirmative Action Proposal** towards de facto equality between the sexes, which was submitted by the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) and adopted by the government in 1997, resulted in the government calling on all Ministries and relevant institutions to create Women's Desks/Focal Points, to ensure that issues concerning women are

addressed. The Ministries of Education, Health, Agriculture, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) etc. now have Women's Desks.

108. The policy on Affirmative Action aims among others:

- To establish a more clear-cut Administrative framework for handling women's affairs by creating a position within the executive arm of government to handle women's affairs
- To ensure appropriate representation of women on all Advisory Boards by evaluating vacant positions in the public sector and insisting as far as practicable, on a 40% quota for women.
- To initiate action for credible representation of women in Parliament by tasking the National Electoral Commission to encourage Political parties to put up more women as parliamentary candidates to pave the way for the target of at least 40% representation in Parliament, and,
- To ensure adequate representation of women at District and sub-District levels of Administration by charging the NCCE to create the necessary awareness on the importance of women offering themselves as candidates, while at the same time embarking on a campaign to educate the electorate on the election of more women to such places as Parliament, District Assemblies and Unit Committees.

109. Greater awareness regarding key instruments on human rights especially the UDHR and CEDAW were translated into local languages thus making them user-friendly and was widely disseminated, along with workshops organised with certain sector of the government servants. This familiarised them with the documents and through the use of communication materials, the main ministries came to appreciate their own responsibility and this have contributed to building greater awareness in this regard.

110. A nation-wide **Study** on Violence Against Women was under taken in 1999, by the women's national machinery on, "The Nature, Incidence and Consequences of Violence, and Methods of Redress". Following this, a Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) was established within the Police Force to provide Counselling, Referrals as well as take appropriate actions as necessary to address cases of Violence against women and children. However, there are only 3 of such Units, based in 3 of the 10 regional capitals. Their presence is therefore hardly felt in the wider country, and especially in rural areas where entrenched beliefs and practices constrain women's rights enjoyment the most.

111. People have in recent times been well sensitized to the situation of women, in terms of the rights abuses they suffer, and there is some amount of **goodwill and the desire for change**. An officer from the CHRAJ for instance, indicated that there had been a rise in the number of women who come to them for Counseling and information on legal matters, as well as Cases brought to them for redress, which was indicative of people's desire to know about their rights. He went on to say that the general populace, it appeared, had come to accept and understand that Human Rights is an aspect of Good Governance and thus, they all want to hear about Human Rights. He noted that, "men used to giggle when women's rights issues were raised, but now some men have become serious advocates for women's rights"

D) Lessons Learned

112. Several lessons have been learned that would further contribute to an effective implementation of the UNDHRE Plan of Action by other counties. UNDHRE Plan of Action is not a programme that can be accomplished by one single activity. Thus the government of Ghana uses a phased approach that is strategic in targeting women's human right at multiple levels to reach women of different social status in different ways.

113. A key lesson learned from the Ghana good practice is the role of government's leadership in championing and supporting activities leading to the Implementation of the Plan of Action of the UNHRDE. The government of Ghana is committed to the promotion of human right education in Ghana and is doing everything within its capability to accelerate the pace of implementation so as to realize significant achievement by the end of the decade.

114. As noted, topics in Human Rights lend themselves to **ready accommodation** within the issues already being covered in the various educational Curricula and development programs so their introduction does not pose any problems.

115. The fact that state institutions like the Police, prisons etc. lend themselves to training, indicating the **general goodwill** that exists for women's rights education. The media has also proved itself as a great ally in the promotion of women's rights issues

116 With the coming into being of a new government in Ghana, the time appears right for women to draw attention to their rights. There is room for growth in a constitutional era, and Human Rights could thrive with strong state support. The establishment of a **Women's Ministry** provides further opportunities for a greater voice for women at the policy level. This could translate into accessibility of funds for Women's rights education, if a strong case is made for it.

117 The linkages developed with other ministries have improved communication relations between the Ministry of Women Affairs and a number of other ministries which will provide a good base for future collaboration. Such a collaboration clarifies any misunderstanding among other sectors of government that the Ministry of Women Affairs has the sole responsibility for promoting the implementation of UNHRDE.

118. Undertaking activities with NGOs is a good way of building linkages and encouraging information sharing between the government and civil society organisations. Through collaboration in this way, each partner can learn to appreciate how each other operates as well as get to know the constraints and comparative advantage experience of the other. Most of the respondents from the NGOs indicated that they have had occasion to use the services of legal professionals for their programmes. Thus, opportunities do exist for them to **access vital human resources**, where these are lacking in their own organisations. Indeed, officials from ASSID and The Hunger Project-Ghana, indicated that they had used trained female Lawyers from WILDAF as Resource Persons for all their Rights Education Workshops.

IV. Conclusion:

119. This paper has presented human right education in Ghana as a good practice case attempted a presentation of Ghana case study as a good practice. In doing so, it has brought out the special features that make it an example of a good practice. At the same time, it has identified

some limitations and proposed recommendations to address the problems encountered in the implementation of the Plan of Action.

120. It has also highlighted the crucial role of the government's national machinery, CHRAJ, in facilitating cooperation among government agencies, inter- governmental organizations, NGOs, professional associations, individuals and other civil society groups. However, lack of funds for implementation from government sources, donor agencies and from cooperating intergovernmental agencies for human right education were a major limitation hence the need to solicit for funds becomes imperative

121. The Ghana case study reveals the comprehensive nature of the country's human right education programme. For instance, the public awareness campaigns etc including the non-discriminatory and affirmative action measures are very comprehensive. Furthermore there is maximum out reach to target audience by core group and focal point, the CHRAJ, which in turn has leadership, visibility and motivation to influence others in their respective sectors for example the line ministries.

122. The programmes implemented in Ghana are sustainable. Although, a few programmes have been discontinued due to financial constraints, most of them have a potential to continue. For example, training activities conducted directly by staff of CHRAJ or trainees trained by the staff of CHRAJ will in turn train others in the field.

123. Evidence presented in this paper clearly show that most of the initiatives and, in particular, the role of government, and linkages/partnerships with other agencies involved in the promotion of human rights education are replicable. For instance, the setting up of hundreds of community level and in-school Civic Education Clubs (CECs) by the NCCE through which it facilitates discussions on topics of civic importance and its working through Theatre groups (composed of staff members), using drama to educate the public on their civic rights and responsibilities. These initiatives have been found to be very effective in communicating human rights messages. NCCE's use of radio to Radio programmes to disseminate information at the Regional level and setting up a Women's Desk to review its Policy to include a gender focus is also replicable.

124. These initiatives seek to highlight the need to strengthen civil society's and Non - governmental organisations (NGOs) contribution to women's human right education and respect for women's rights by increasing the capacity of women in human rights; providing them with vital information on human rights and at the same time encouraging them to demand for such rights.

125. The case study has successfully underscored the roles that governments have to play in the implementation of the Plan of action. The government of Ghana is promoting the development of national strategies which are comprehensive in terms of outreach for human rights education in general and in particular, women's rights. The strategies are also participatory in terms of relevant actors, effective, and sustainable. It is hoped that examples of approaches being used in Ghana's case of good practices on women's human right education may serve to help other countries which wish to develop women's human right education in their countries but lack the experience and ideas.

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14. *Ghana' National Progress Report on the Implementation of the African and Beijing Platform for Action*
15. National Council on Women and Development (NCWD): *Ghana Report on Status of Programs and projects related to the Advancement of Women's Political and Economic Empowerment*
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