

Documenting VAW cases at state institutions and key informant perspectives on facilitators and barriers: Baseline findings from the impact assessment of the rural response system to prevent VAW in Ghana

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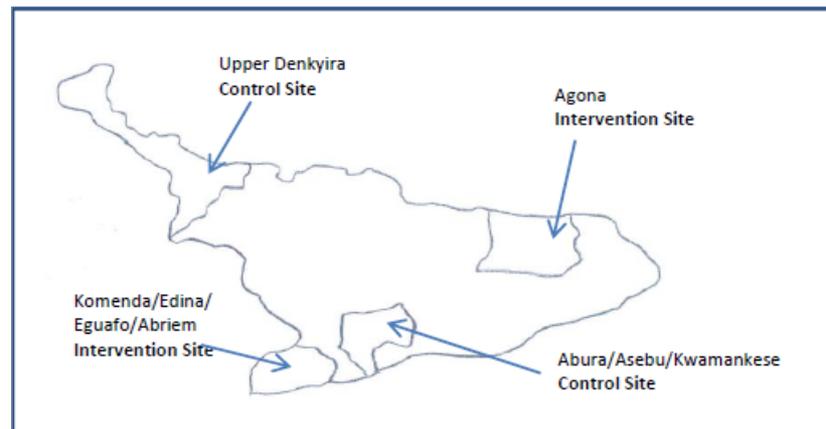
Study Background

Purpose: To assess the community level impact of the Gender Centre's Rural Response System also known as "COMBAT" in reducing VAW in Ghana

Design: Community randomized controlled trial

- Intervention arm - Receive GC's RRS/COMBAT (Community Based Action Teams) package for communities & state

Setting: Rural / urban communities in 4 districts of the Central Region of Ghana



Specific Objectives



- To describe **VAW reporting practices** at State Institutions in the Central Region of Ghana (baseline data from April - June 2016)
- Share **key informant perspectives** on facilitators and barriers to VAW reporting at State Institutions



Process

- In both intervention (2) and control (2) districts, institutional documents used for capturing reports of VAW cases as well as actions taken on such reports were sourced and reviewed from 30 agencies
 - ❖ Police / Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit – (**DOVVSU = 4**)
 - ❖ Social Welfare - (**SW = 6**)
 - ❖ Commission on Human rights and Administrative Justice - (**CHRAJ = 4**)
 - ❖ Ghana Health Service – (**GHS = 4**)
- From Records: #of cases reported, who is reporting, what is being reported, follow-up on cases reported, recurrence of VAW, etc.
- Data from record reviews was triangulated with perspectives from key informant interviews conducted among heads/directors of units on practices of VAW reporting

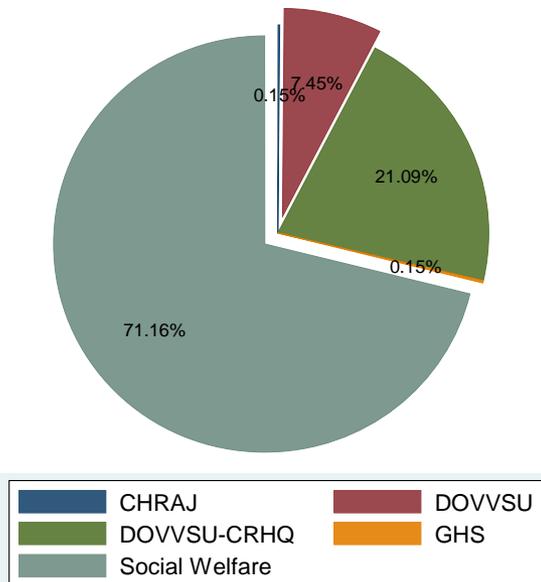


Cases & Forms of VAWG Reported

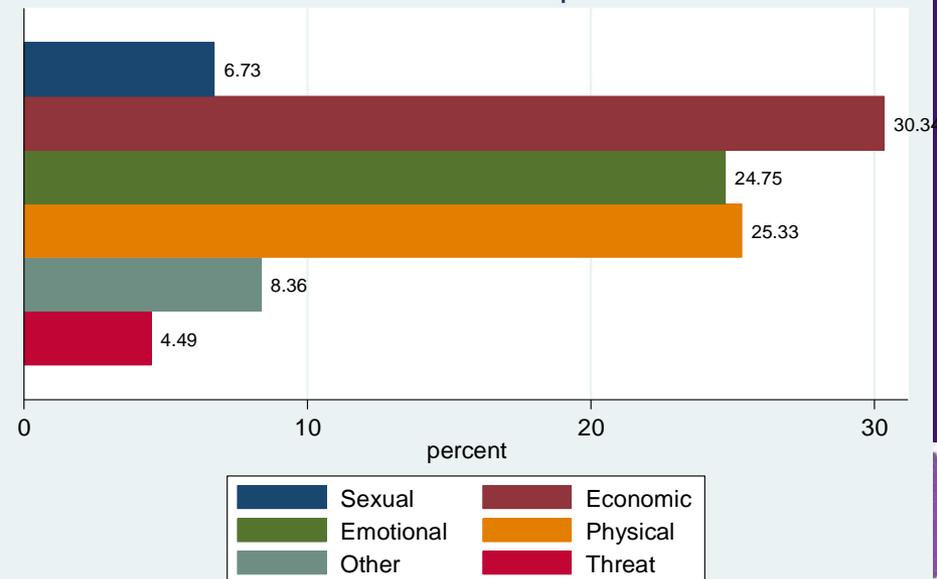
Total cases = 3,706 reported : 406 (10.9%) < 15 years

- 115 (3.1%) recurrent and 721(19.5%) referrals

Total cases reported by Institution (January - December 2015)



Forms of VAWG reported

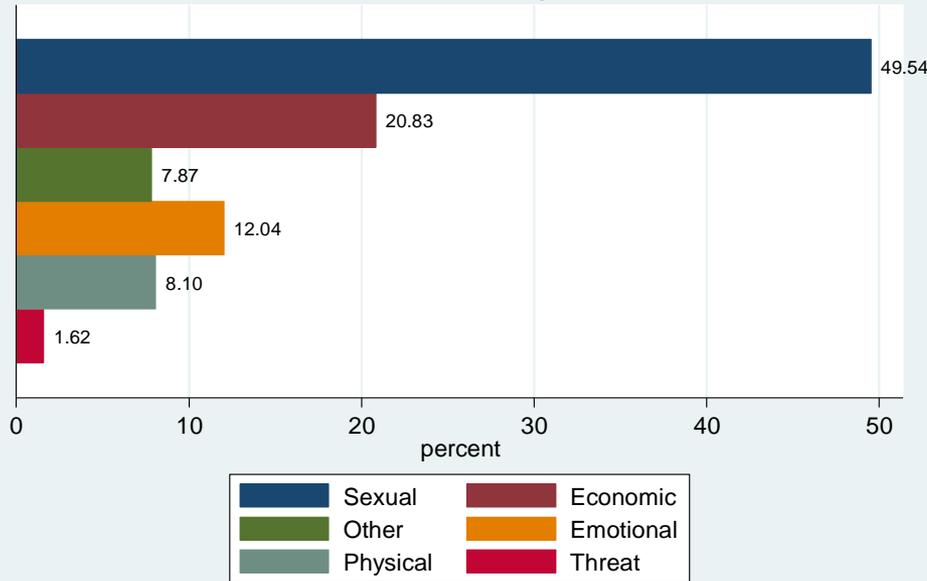


Forms of VAWG Reported

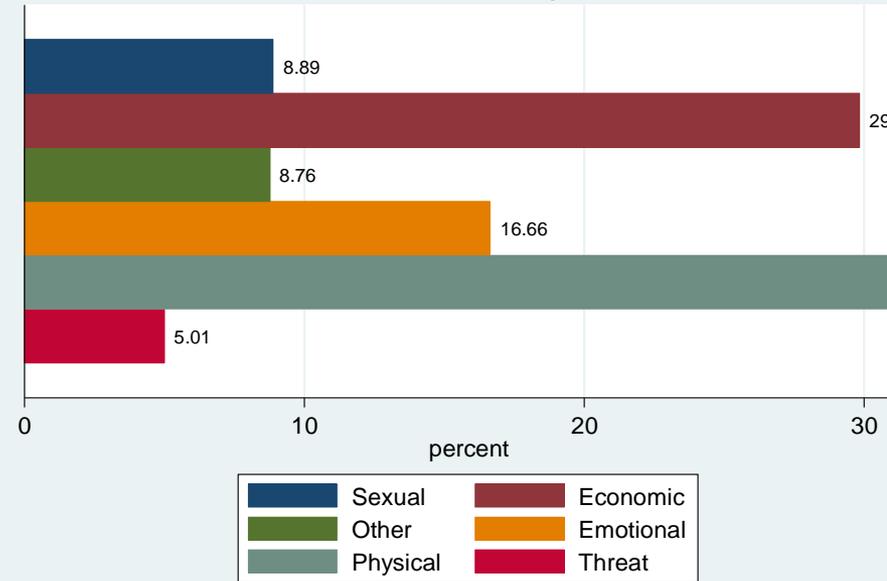
Girls (<15 years)

Women (>= 15 years)

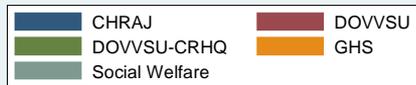
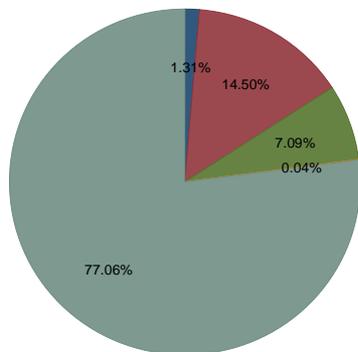
Forms of VAG reported



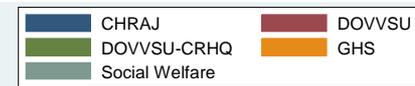
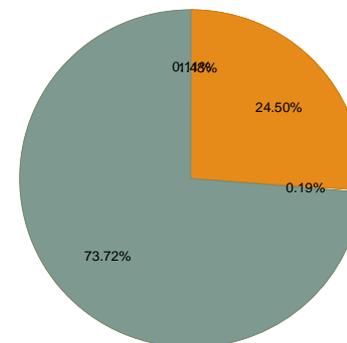
Forms of VAW reported



Where reporting (girls)

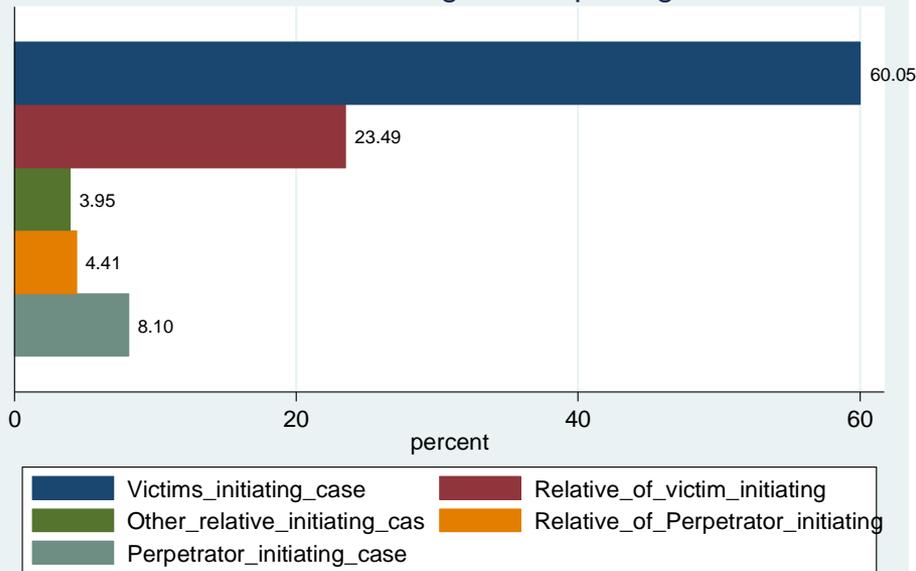


Where Reporting (women)

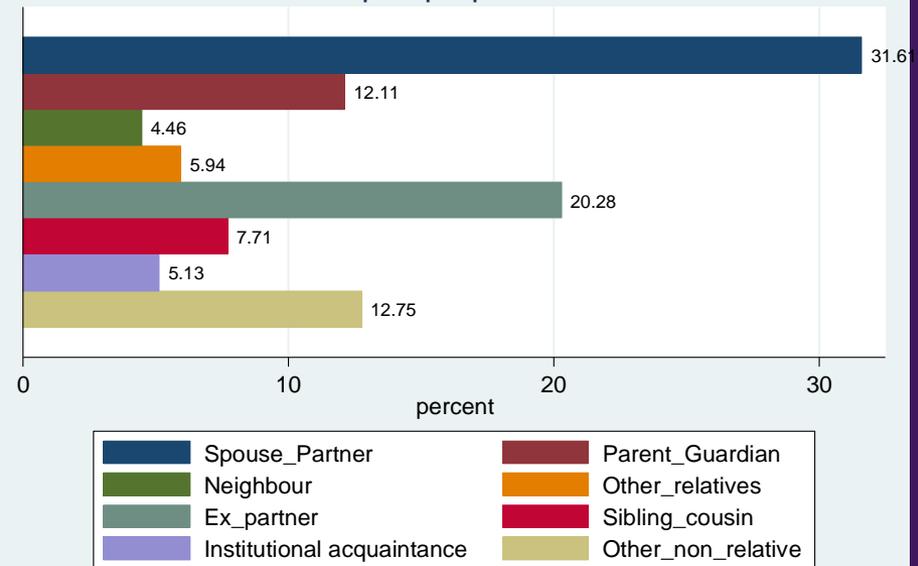


Reporting – Who “victim” & Whom “perpetrator”

Person initiating case reporting



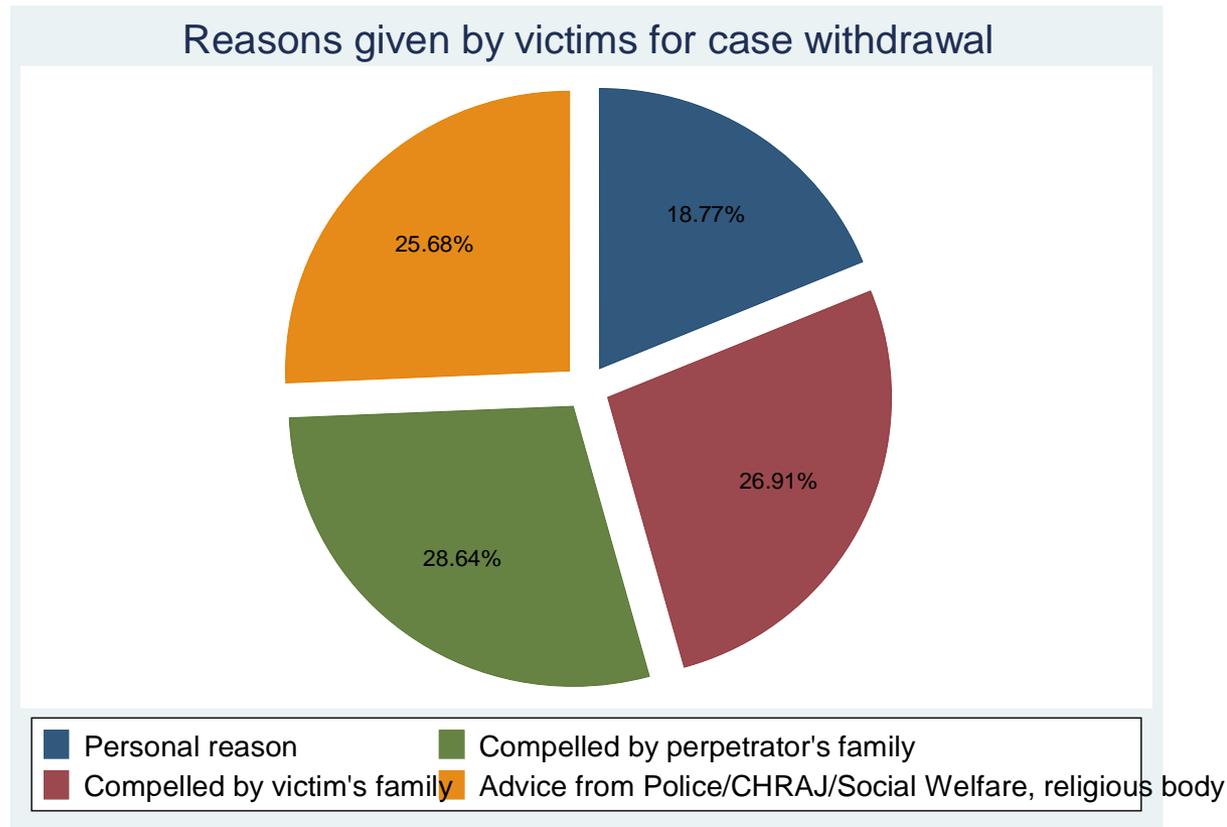
Relationship of perpetrator to victim



Case Prosecution / Withdrawal

Total cases = 3,706 reported :

- Prosecuted 174 (4.7%); Withdrawn 396 (10.7%)



KEY INFORMANT PERSPECTIVES



Perspectives on what is reported to institutions

- Cases of VAW are mostly reported to family members, elders in society, and chiefs, however some were reported to formal institutions for arbitration or mediation and care **as indicated by document review**.
- VAW cases bordering around child neglect, verbal and physical abuse are usually reported to CHRAJ, DOVVSU and Social Welfare
- Physical abuse that result in injury and rape cases are often reported to DOVVSU and the GHS health facilities



Perspectives on facilitators for reporting to formal institutions

- Inability of the informal / **traditional** mediators (Chiefs, family members, church leaders, elderly community members or friends) to **effectively** arbitrate cases of VAW.

*“before they will come here, they meet with their family heads and present the issue to him and they sometimes go to their pastor, to discuss the issue, and so **before they come here they would have gone through these two areas to solve their problems.** So when they go back home and they see that the problem is only half way solved then they come to the social welfare”*

(Social development officer, Social Welfare)



Key Informant perspectives on facilitators for reporting to formal institutions

- Severity of abuse is a major reason for reporting and this was normally observed in severe physical abuse cases.

“As for physical like beatings it happens a lot, and most at times when they are reported, they are issued with medical forms to attend hospital. Also the women usually report threats of death on them by their husbands or boyfriends”

(Chief Inspector, DOVVSU)



Perspectives on barriers to formal institutions

- Burden of completing reporting forms.

"They go to the police to report first, then they give them the police form, and when they come you have to treat what you see, the various injuries and document everything because normally it might turn into a court case, either at the court or even at home so you have to document whatever you've seen"

(Physician Assistant, District Hospital)

"Within last week or so I had similar case... I think she was assaulted by her husband. But when she went to the hospital the doctor asked her to come to us for a medical report to be filled before they will continue her treatment. So she came and I gave the medical form to her, I think she is even pregnant, so she is still there, I visited her and she was ok, we are waiting to see what happens next"

(Second in Command, DOVVSU)



Perspectives on barriers to formal institutions

- Perception of VAW as a family matter that must be resolved at home

“The main reason behind some cases not reported is because lets say I have suffered violence from my husband and I know that it is a family and therefore a family issue between myself and my husband, so they go to the family and tell maybe their father, mother or the family head and they also advise them that this is a family issue. You don't worry, next week we will call your husband, we will sit and everything will be over. You understand?..... so the main reason why some of the issues are not reported is that the family advise them to like settle it in the family. ”

(Social Development Officer, Social Welfare)





Perspectives on barriers to formal institutions

- Fear or losing their marriage

“Some might think that if you report your partner to the police then you didn’t mean well for that person...And this is one of the challenges that this unit is facing...So sometimes it does not allow others to come here and report the cases.

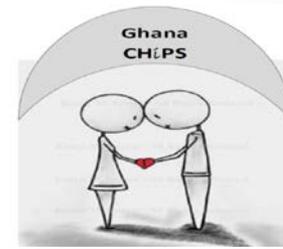
Some also openly before us, tell whoever reported the case that, “hey! You think you can bring me here, and I’ll go home and live with you peacefully? I can tell you the marriage has just come to an end”, right before us. Some of the men are bold to say it. So I think some of these things will not allow some people to confidently come out and report cases.

Some of the victims, after reporting the case should not be allowed to go back home but the state has no avenue for her to go and lodge for some time while the matter is being resolved. So they are forced to go back to the same home that they were abused.

So thinking about, it if I come and report and I’ll come back to you, then why should I go ahead and report? So social protection is not so much out there to encourage some of these women, who think that if I report and still go back to the same home, then why the need to go ahead and report” (Regional Coordinator, DOVVSU)



Conclusions



Building stronger, healthier and happy relationships...

What we found...

- The bulk of VAW cases are reported to Social Welfare & Police/DOVVSU
- Forms of VAW reported include sexual, physical, economic and emotional
- Persons initiating the report are usually victims
- Perpetrators are generally spouses/partners/ex-partners
- Family/Religious leaders often preferred as arbitrators
- Case withdrawal is largely influenced by families

Factors influencing VAW reporting

- Breakdown in alternate options for resolution
- Severity of VAW
- Burden of reporting forms
- Perception of VAW as family matter
- Fear of losing the marriage

What is needed to help?

- Lessen burden of completing reporting forms if possible
- Putting in place systems to provide social protection for victims that report
- Education to change social views/norms on reporting VAW





Thank you for your attention!

