TACKLING THE PERVERSIVE SOCIAL ISSUE OF VAWG: A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH

LESSONS LEARNT IN INTERVENTION MODEL

Dorcas Coker-Appiah, GSHRDC
BACKGROUND

• The intervention model developed by GSHRDC undergoing impact assessment by SPH, University of Ghana

• Impact assessment designed to use unmatched randomized control trial

• Intervention arm receives the model

• Control arm, no intervention
Intervention goals and objectives

• The overall goal of the project is to reduce the incidence of violence against women and girls in Ghana and protect women's rights through state and community based structures.

• The intervention seeks to change community attitudes, norms and behaviours that result in gender inequality.

• Addressing the complex societal and institutional factors recognises that intimate partner violence results from the complex interplay of factors which operate at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels,

• and that if effective change is to be achieved, it is important for interventions to systematically work with a broad range of stakeholders within the community.
• General confusion about what constitutes violence and ignorance about the causes, consequences and mechanisms that perpetuate VAW, and

• Isolation of rural women and women’s expressed dissatisfaction at the assistance and support they received when they reported
Intervention description

• The Rural Response System uses the strategy of training community members known as Community-based action team, COMBAT to undertake awareness-raising on gender-based violence as well as provide support to victims of violence to access justice and services
Intervention description contd.

• the intervention model was developed to respond to the following problem areas prioritized from our 1998 research findings.

• Poor state/institutional response to VAW, with frequent patterns of victim blaming, referring reported cases back to family and state agency personnel and society in general trivializing the issue;

• High degree of tolerance of VAW in Ghanaian society, perpetuated by strong perceptions that domestic violence is a private/family matter and not a serious crime;
• General confusion about what constitutes violence and ignorance about the causes, consequences and mechanisms that perpetuate VAW, and

• Isolation of rural women and women’s expressed dissatisfaction at the assistance and support they received when they reported
Intervention principles

• The RRS operates on the following key principles:
• That violence against women is a violation of their human rights;
• That violence is unacceptable and should be condemned;
• That the woman experiencing violence has a right to be protected from such violence.
Intervention principles contd.

• That the state and its agencies have a duty to protect the woman experiencing violence
• That perpetrators need to be sanctioned to serve as deterrent to others
• That a violent free relationship, one based on equality of the partners inures to the benefit of not only the partners, but their family, the community and society as a whole.
Intervention activities

• Training of COMBAT on VAW, counselling and gender.

• They are also trained on the various elements of the RRS including reporting and support to victims.

• Laws that deal with violence as well as laws on property rights, testate and intestate succession, parental roles and responsibilities
Activities continued

• Training of staff of some staff agency personnel from police, health, social welfare, CHRAJ and NCCE
• Training of other CSOs
• Meetings with community traditional and religious leadership and other stakeholders
Combat at work
Combat Work

• **Community interventions**
  COMBAT use any and every opportunity to undertake its core activity of sensitisation and awareness-raising.

• The COMBAT organise public meetings, in churches, during community festivals, association or group meetings and through radio programmes.

• Various strategies such as role plays are used to introduce the topic to be discussed.

• Opportunity given for questions
• Individual sessions with community member for counselling

• Where required by a victim, a COMBAT member may accompany a victim to report to an agency, to support the victim who is engaging with the service for the first time and might be nervous about doing so.

• Follow-up on cases that have been referred to service provider and also the victim.
Results of Combat sensitization Activities in Project & surrounding communities
July 2016 – July 2017

Result of COMBAT Activities in 20 Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of sensitization activities</th>
<th>Male participants</th>
<th>Female Participants</th>
<th>Total participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>860</td>
<td>8405</td>
<td>10973</td>
<td>19378</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Violence Cases Reported

- Psychological: 6%
- Child Abuse: 9%
- Non-Maintenance: 8%
- Marital Dispute: 19%
- Property Rights: 10%
- Physical: 48%

Result of Reported Cases

- Cases referred to the Police: 14%
- Cases not pursued: 19%
- Resolved cases by COMBAT: 67%
Lessons learnt

• When people have access to information, they are able to use it.

• “the training has made me realise that I have been cheating my wife all these years and I have apologized to her. I have promised to change and help her at home” (Combat member)
Lessons learnt contd.

- Economic and social factors drive IPV
- “I am a man and I married you. I have a right to have sex with you anytime I want”  (male community member)
- “So long as you don’t provide my needs, I will not allow you”  (female)
- “Is it right for my wife to charge me before having sex with me?”
- Male response: NO!!!!
- Female response:  YES!!!!
Lessons learnt contd.

- Combat acquire status in community
- Challenges with volunteerism
- Safety and security risks for Combat members and staff.
- Good communication among partners is critical to reducing IPV
• Recognition of complex interplay of factors affecting IPV
• Need to address all factors
• Support of community leadership is important
• Community involvement in development process and implementation ensures buy-in and sustainability
Lessons learnt contd.

• Need for continuous capacity building and backstopping
Lessons learnt contd.
Creating opportunities for inter-agency co-operation
Inter-agency collaboration

• Creating opportunity for agencies to meet through training and quarterly stakeholder meetings
• Sharing of institutional practice and challenges
• Developing inter-agency protocols
• Effective response to cases
• THANK YOU