

Widows and Orphans Movement (WOM)

MOTTO: TRUST IN GOD –

P. O. Box 582, Bolgatanga U-E/R – Ghana, West Africa

Tel: 233-03820-24536 or 0244-956370; Website: womghana.org; Email: womghana2000@yahoo.com



Widows and Orphans Annual Report 2012

WOM's Vision

Widows and orphans without tears and intimidation

WOM's Mission

To initiate and facilitate processes and programs to empower widows and orphans, economically,

Socially and spiritually



Acknowledgement: We want to acknowledge Action Aid Ghana, WOM's Board members, St. Paul de.V (Germany), Accra Community Church, VSO, BUERGER Committee Stein Hagen Germany, EDIAF, Amnesty International, World Vision, OXFAM, Mrs. Limann and children, Professor, and Madam Rose for making it possible for us to work this year. We also want to acknowledge the commitment of the staff of WOM and very hard working volunteers and all our attaches Hana Ayamga, and co. May the good Lord give us strength to continue the work in 2013 as we did 2012.

Personnel

No	Name	Office	Position
1	Betty Ayagiba	Directing the affairs of WOM	Director
2	Esther Ayoogo	Sponsorship, HIV/Aids projects	Sponsorship Officer
3	Gifty Abalansa	Micro Credit Project	Micro credit Officer
4	Hanna Ayaba	Micro Credit Project	Assistant Micro credit Officer
5	Clement Tibil	Accounts	Accountant
6	Fati Abdulai	In School	---
7	Desmond Harrison	Shea Butter HIV/Aids projects	Shea Project Officer
8	Lariba Akasabega	Sweeper	Cleaner
9	Kolbil Dong	Watch man	Security Officer
10	Mahama	Watch man	centre

Summary

We are grateful to our God who took us through 2012. WOM was able to carry out all her activities of the year with very few short lived volunteers. Action Aid Ghana and International came out with a new project called Unpaid Care. The project will support the collective organization of women farmers by promoting leadership amongst women smallholder farmer groups and increasing their awareness about their rights. Many strategies will be adopted to address gender specific constraints that have been confronting women smallholder farmers. The goal of this project therefore, is to empower smallholder famers' to have a stronger voice and demand for the reduction of unpaid care work and improve on food security. The 2012 widows' day was a very big crowd. Even though AAG/WOM planned for four hundred, we stopped counting when we reached six hundred attendances. The house of Chiefs hall was too small for this program. WOM is still looking for a permanent gender officer to handle this office and the new project. This is because only few can sacrifice to take small salary for loaded activities. With the Boabab products training we had in 2012, we hope to create more jobs for more widows and to raise funds to address the numerous challenges of salary, transportation, farming and the education of our orphans.

Current Programs

Women's rights (Human's Rights Education), HIV/AIDs, Orphans Education, Income Generating Activities (shea butter processing, pomade, Craft, Farming, Micro Credit and the New project Unpaid Care.

Formation of New Groups: Gbee Widows were the only group added this year to our numerous groups. They had been meeting on their own, for the past two years, and had saved GH¢200.00 with a Bank. This informed WOM that they were a serious group and deserved to be supported. Hence they were included in the FLOW project.

Collaborators

WOM has a strong belief in collaboration with other NGO's and CBO's to learn and share. WOM had a number of review meetings with other partners of AAG where reports and work plan for the quarters were presented facilitating learning and sharing. WOM attended workshops where new friends were made. WOM had good working and social relationships with her internal and external collaborators. At grass roots level, WOM had a very good and strong relationship with the Chiefs, Tindanas, women leaders and the youth. In 2013, WOM plans to collaborate more with Chiefs, the newly installed queen mothers and other organizations who are fighting the same course.

Activities carried out for the year 2012

1. Supported the network of widows to develop advocacy plans to meet with duty bearers; campaign against food taboos and force confinement of widows during widowhood rites. (AAG)
2. Organized a procession and a durbar for the enactment of LI on DV act and the complete abolishment of forced confinement of widows, to mark the annual widows day. (AAG)
3. Organized one inter LRP share /learn session for COMBAT. (AAG)
4. Created platforms for widow's network to engage medical officers, police, and the legal aid on gender based violence and legal access for survivors. (AAG)
5. Supported 20 women with ruminants. (Ten of these people were PLWHIV) (AAG)



Picture showing beneficiaries of small ruminants at Gbee Community

6. Participated in Reflex and review processes (PRRP) (AAG)
7. Organized a meeting between the network of widows and traditional leaders/Tindanas on reform of food taboos and performances of widow hood rites (AAG)

8. Organized 3 radio discussion sessions in two languages on food taboos and forced confinement during the widowhood rites to mark the 16th day of activism campaign in TND.(AAG)
9. Organized a follow up meeting between widow's network and Traditional authorities (T.A.) on the commitment made by Chiefs and T.A.other.
10. Started a New Project called Unpaid Care or FLOW (AAG)
11. Sponsorship Program (AAG)
12. Organized Campaigns for reforms around widowhood rites using Bongo, Kongo and Winkogo Chiefs (Documentation)
13. Trained 60 women on basket weaving, Shea butter packaging and micro credit by NBSSI.
14. Trained widows to make Boabab products by Tree Aid. (Burkina)
15. Supported 20 widows with 40 goats in Talensi Nabdam. (World Vision.)
16. Trained volunteers to register orphans and the venerable in five communities in Bawku West (world Vision)
17. Transplanted 1000 Mango seedlings, farmed corn, groundnuts and soya beans. (EDAIF)
18. Supported Orphans to start, continue, complete school and develop skills (WOM/Christie Tailor)
19. Micro Credit (Swiss Hand)
20. Defending and protecting abused widows and orphans (Domestic Violence) (AAG/WOM)

Objective of Activities

1. To develop an advocacy plan to engage with duty bearers on widows' rights issues.
2. To enable the rural woman acquire access to secured land for their farming activities for food security and poverty reduction. Eradication
3. To create a platform for widows' network to engage medical officers, police and legal aid board on gender base violence issues.
4. To build the economic status of widows and orphans through animal rearing whilst breaking the negative cultural belief that prevents women from owning and rearing animals, this makes them poor. (This include PLWHIV)
5. Building the Capacity of widows and orphans through skill training to claim their rights to employment.
6. To increase public awareness on the plight of widows
7. To empower (women) smallholder famers' to have a stronger voice and demand for the reduction of unpaid care work and improve on food security
8. Identifying Home Visitors and training them to register and monitor vulnerable children in seven communities in Sapelliga

Core Interventions

1. Participatory Analysis and awareness.
2. Advocacy and campaigning
3. Addressing the immediate needs
4. Strengthening Capacity

Participation Review Reflex Process (PRRP) Introduction

In a bid to increase accountability and transparency to the poor and the excluded and to listen to their views, perspectives as well as recommendations on how best to jointly identify activities towards implementation in 2013, the regional programme and its partners conducted PRRP on July 19 – 25, 2012. The community PRRPs sessions took place at Pelungu in the Talensi-Nabdam District, and Ninkogo in the Bawku Municipality. In attendance were a total of 69 people made up of 37 people from TND and

32 from the Bawku Municipality. The participants were drawn from PTA's Network, Widows Network, FHHs Network, Farmers Network, WUA Network, CRTs Network, COMBAT, Reflect, Assemblypersons/Unit Committees, Hunger-free Women's Network, and AAG-UELRP & partners' staff. This activity is carried out every year by WOM/AAG. Two communities are chosen randomly and this activity is carried out. Reviewing the work we did the previous year. Reflecting back the errors, gaps and successes made the previous year.. The people we work for are greatly honored and they do the assessment. The communities now tell us areas they want us to work on in the upcoming year. From the Community, the process continues to the District, Regional and National. AAG works with us in One District so we always carry out another PRRP in another District to cover the other Districts.

Nangodi has been noted as a place with more vulnerable people because of the prevalence of the onchocerciasis in the area. This special PRRP was carried out for these people because we had little funds. It was very interesting and passionate with some of them saying they do not understand why they are not dead but still alive. The Director encouraged them with the word of God that God loves them with their situation. The Nangodi one was sponsored by two women.

Main objective

The overall objective of the sessions was to assess performance in implementation, identify changes that are taking place at different levels and what AAG & partners are contributing to make the changes identified happen, among others.

Specific objectives:

The specific objectives of the 2012 PRRP were as follows:

1. To identify changes taking place in terms of behaviors, attitudes, practices, policies etc.
2. To identify the contributions of AAG and partners in bringing about the changes taking place
3. To decide on what priority areas to continue and/or new ones to add on in 2013, and

To identify partner challenges and come out with proposals on how to address them

The Widows Day Celebration

The United Nations has declared the 23rd of June as International Widows Day and has asked that international organisations as well as civil society, non- governmental organisations and the private sector recognize widows rights and observe the day each year. The objective of this day is to increase awareness to the public, the plight of Widows and their children. Every year with the aid of AAG we celebrate this day with representatives of widows groups coming from the other regions of the country. More than seven hundred widows attended this 2012 celebration. The theme for this years celebration was

"EQUAL RIGHTS, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, PROGRESS FOR ALL" A resolution was calling on Government to see to their issues. One of these was for the passing of the Legislative instrument to make the Domestic violent Act active. Bellow is the Resolution.

INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS DAY RESOLUTION, (23RD JUNE, 2012)

We the widows network at the 2012 international widows day celebration wish to draw the attention of Government, traditional leaders, Assemblymen, Civil Society Organizations, the media and other stake holders to the multiple but often hidden human rights violations experienced by we and our children in the Talensi-Nabdam District and the region as a whole. These violations are entrenched in social, economic, political, cultural, and traditional beliefs and practices.

Due to these beliefs and dehumanizing widowhood practices that we go through, we and our children are rendered invisible and subjected to numerous human right violations including

- 1. Neglect and marginalization*
- 2. Denial of inheritance to deceased couples farmlands and other properties*
- 3. Denial of access to education*
- 4. Forced to go through wife inheritance*
- 5. And many others*

Women and children are also denied access to good nutrition and health in the name of food taboos.

After going through these practices such as the widowhood rites and experiencing the harm of such practices on the well being of women and children, we are calling on Government, traditional leaders, Assemblymen, Civil Society Organizations, the media and other stake holders to see our plight and take necessary actions as resolved below to address our concerns. our plight through the following resolution:

- 1. We want to call on everyone in the Talensi-Nabdam District to respect the rights of women. Women's rights are human rights.*
- 2. We are also appealing to the traditional leaders and chiefs to ban the performance of all negative widowhood rites in their communities, Keep customary practices up to date and in consonance with the laws of Ghana.*
- 3. We also want to appeal to the district assembly to collaborate with the traditional authorities to develop and pass by-laws to permanently abolish negative widowhood rites and food taboos, keep customary practices up to date and in consonance with the laws of Ghana and International Conventions and Declarations ratified by Ghana, with particular regards the need to maintain the health and welfare of our members and children.*
- 4. As a vulnerable group, we are appealing to the Minister, Our DEC, and our assembly members to consider particularly widows and orphans when disbursing the District Assembly Poverty Reduction Fund.*
- 5. As women, we also want to call on all women to support and champion our course to enable us all to live lives of dignity and self respect, should any of you become widows like us, which we don't wish on any woman though.*
- 6. We are also appealing to all relevant and concerned NGOs and governmental organizations to come to our aid to help support orphans who have dropped out of school and provide them with hope for a better future*
- 7. Finally and most importantly, we are calling on government to pass the Legislative Instrument on the Domestic Violence Bill into law to eliminate violence against women.*

Considering the purported effects of these practices and taking into consideration the effects of the practices on the health and development of women and children and society as a whole, it is our fervent hope that all concerned change agents will committed and jointly work to address our concerns.

Training on Baobab Products

The Upper East Region is blessed with wildly grown Baobab trees, which are untapped. My zeal to support the widows learn how to use baobab for money aroused when WOM was invited to Tamale for a workshop organized by Tree Aid on how non-timber trees can be used to generate income and Baobab species were displayed. We therefore wrote to Tree Aid (Burkina) to be trained on the Baobab products, prior to our widows' day celebration which usually falls on 23rd of June. Forty-three (43) participants from the three Northern Regions have been trained to produce four species of the Baobab. That is biscuits, groundnuts, syrup and the baobab drink.



Picture showing widows being trained on Baobab products

Training of 20 widows on basket weaving

WOM has been working with NBSSI for the past ten years. This year three of our widows groups were trained by NBSSI in Basket weaving, packaging of Shea butter and training on Micro Credit. Below is the style of basket the widows were trained to weave.



Picture showing a widow carrying the basket she was trained to weave

Unpaid care/FLOW

Is a new project identified by AAG and AA International. It pertains to the heavy work load of women that are not even recognized? The capacities of these women are to be built through REFLEX to stand for their rights whilst they farm to increase their food security

Overview of the activities Of Un-paid Care or FLOW and how they were implemented

WOM had to indentify these thirteen communities, Share the project with them and help them to select twenty six facilitators (two from each community) to go through a ten day training before the implementation of this project. This was successfully carried out and they were trained at the farmer training centre from the 15th of October to the 26th October by PAMOJA.

At the end of the training a work plan was drawn collectively by all participants that are now being carried out. Below is a group who is having REFLEX meeting to identify issues affecting their community.



Picture showing a community having a REFLEX meeting

WOM/OXFAM Programs for 2012

WOM has been longing to re -organize her widows groups working on Shea, and registering them with both Department of co-operatives and the Global Shea Network. This was made possible with the help from OXFAM. This will create Unity and competition amongst them. WOM has gone round with an officer with the Department of cooperatives and they are now visiting these groups alone to get them registered. This will let these groups' benefit from any national cake for shea processors. WOM wished she could do the same for her basket weavers.

WOM/WFP Programs for 2012

WOM wrote a proposal to WFP for the promotion of Shea butter processing. This was approved and the Zebilla widows group was supported with a Shea butter processing machine. WOM successfully monitored the building of the grinding mill at which is now completed. With several interventions the District Assembly supported the group with GHC2,300.00 and they were able to draw power to the Mill. WOM could buy only 20 bags of Shea nuts because WOM never had a reply from WFP about the buying of the nuts when the market was low .WOM used her own initiative to buy the nuts because of inflation. This year we will buy more for them but the price will double.

WOM/WORLD VISION Program for 2012

Objective: Support and train 20 widows to rear and own animals.

This year 20 widows from Pusu Namogo and Winkogo were supported with two goats each by World Vision WOM. They were trained by MOFA and the goats were treated before given to them.



Picture showing widows receiving goat from project officer

Home Visiting and Monitoring Orphans and Vulnerable Children

Widows and Orphans Movement in partnership with World Vision (Bawku West Zebillah) embarked on this project “Home Visiting and Monitoring Orphans and Vulnerable Children” (OVC’s). This is a national program of WV. This therefore called World vision (Bawku West) to locate organizations that work with orphans in the District for a workshop on the 17th and 18th of September 2012 to carry out this activity.

After the workshop, WOM was assigned to train volunteers to do home visiting to register and monitor orphans and vulnerable Children in the following communities:

Sapelliga -central, Salpiiga, Galaka, Gatuse, Sakpare, Komaka and Googo. This was successfully carried out and the volunteers registered more than hundred children.



picture showing volunteers being trained for OVC

WOM/EDIAF Program for 2012

For sustainability, WOM wrote a proposal to EDIAF in 2010 to go into mango plantation. This was approved but with numerous challenges. WOM lost all mangoes in 2010 and 2011 due to lack of water, bush fires, and animals destroying seedling because the place was not fenced. This year WOM has worked very hard to retain about 550 out of the 1000 mangoes transplanted which was supported by EDIAF. WOM is doing her best to sustain these mangoes by looking outside the financial support from EDIAF to buy water from Bolgatanga to Sakote for the watering of these mangoes. Supporting the two farm managers with one hundred cedis every month to water and watch over these mangoes. WOM has gone further to make advance payment of GH¢600.00 for some local material to fence the mangoes whilst the whole year fund given to WOM for the farm was only GH¢500.00. Of late, EDIAF approved a cheque of GH¢280.00 for insecticide but we cannot spray these mangoes because we do not have the Nassack sprayers to use to spray these mangoes. Our cry is for EDIAF to look through the above mentioned interventions made by WOM indicating her desire for the project and come to our aid by supporting us with our generator and some of the items including the new tractor and three Poly-tanks we were denied off. This will release some of our burden because we can pump water from the bore hole into these Poly-tanks to water the mangoes for many days. **The suffering is so much that this year, we will be tempted to send EDIAF to court if nothing is done about it.** We were able to plough the entire farm for the community to sow their crops, plant ten acres corn, five acres soya beans and five acres groundnuts. We are yet to bag them to know the number of bags we will get: last year we had twenty bags of corn but this year we hope to get forty bags.

WOM/St Paul de V Program

WOM got to know Almuth when she was working with German Development Service in her early years. Getrud Schuaber, Almuth's mother came to Ghana and had the chance to visit WOM. When she returned to Germany she assisted WOM in getting connected to St. Paul's which has been supporting WOM every year. We are really grateful to these widows who have been faithfully supporting us every year. With their support we were able to farm, complete the Habitat house they built for us and supplemented the widow's day celebration for barely eight hundred participants who came all over the country.

BUERGER KOMITTEE STEINHAGEN

WOM apart from the Challenges of Salary for workers has to maintain her only pickup at GH¢170.00 every month as well as fuel it for work activities. All the tires got won out because of the overuse of the pickup for every work of the organization. Unfortunately we had an accident with it in November 2012. Through the above donors WOM was able to add money to repair the damages. We have bought four new tires, done a lot of repairs but it has not been as before. We are very grateful to the Good people of this committee for the new tires because we were riding the car with serious won out tires. though we have new tires now, the pickup usually has to be pushed before it starts.

Amnesty International/WOM

Most efforts aimed at advancing the human rights situation of vulnerable and marginalised groups often ignore the critical role of cultural belief systems and traditional leaders play in the promotion of a sustained culture of respect for human rights. To address this gap, the Widows and Orphans Movement in partnership with Amnesty International implemented a **pilot** project focusing on harmful traditional practices that perpetuate gender based violence by adopting a holistic approach. Titled “Reforming Abusive Cultural Practices through Human Rights Education”, the project ran for a period of three years. The strategy brought together victims, perpetrators and traditional leaders to; dialogue, create awareness and strengthen community level structures to challenge power structures so as to chart a win-win course leading to reforms in dehumanising cultural practices. This was done by working with Traditional Leaders to reform negative cultural practices. The three year project ended in December 2011 so validation of the project was carried out in 2012 in Dakar with a staff of WOM being part of this validation. The continuation of this project will depend on the result of the project.

Goal: To increase awareness and respect for human rights among communities and Traditional leaders

Project objectives output were as follows

- To reform five cultural practices that infringe upon the human rights of women and girls.
- To sensitize 50 Traditional Leaders, Power holders, Duty bearers and 600 community members on human rights instruments, their linkages to women’s rights and the need to reform negative cultural practices and
- To form, nurture and sustain one (1) community based human rights advocacy club

Activities carried out were as follows:

- ✓ Engage stakeholders on Economic, Social and Cultural (ESC) rights in the community
- ✓ Build capacity of local NGOs and CBOs in Human Rights Tools.
- ✓ Form and strengthen community Human Rights (HR) Advocacy clubs.
- ✓ Form and strengthen community HR monitoring structure.
- ✓ Organize community sensitization forum on human rights, land rights etc
- ✓ Organize advocacy forum with traditional leaders and duty bearers to reform cultural practices that infringe on human rights.
- ✓ Mobilise project beneficiaries for Mid-Term Review of Project by External Consultant.

Celebration of the rural women’s day

This was carried out recognize the contribution of the rural women to food security and to encourage them to continue the good work they were doing.

Domestic Violence Project

WOM has opened a book to register cases of abuse that are reported to the office. In all, twenty two cases were registered for the year.. Nine other cases were settled at the DOVVSU CHRAJ and WOM’s office.

A widow has reclaimed back her husband’s 19 room house from her husband’s relatives in court.

We have still got the case of Bea’s mother still in court. All the people in the community refused to bail him and he was allowed to bail himself after spending seven months in remand.

Ayingua Asakipoa, a widow who was beaten by her brother in-law because the perpetrator claimed she had farmed outside the land due her and had therefore encroached on his land. This case was settled with the help of WOM and DOVVSU.



Picture showing Ayingua Asakipoa

The COMBAT are still doing well by settling most of the cases in the communities. At their Review meetings organized by AAG they all read their reports of achievements and vowed to continue supporting widows in their communities. We wished we could get more funds to train more COMBAT at least in five more communities.

HIV/AIDS Program

Some of these widows also benefit from the micro credit we give in the office and some of their children also benefit from our education fund. This year they were privileged to get some high protein products two boxes of some soya beans products from the Bon-vil Company.

Micro Credit: WOM/Swiss Hand Project

With the support of Swiss Hand from Switzerland, WOM has been giving loans to the widows for the past four years. This year WOM has supported 191 widows and orphans with loans. Loans disbursed totaled GHC55,300.00. This fund is too small for barely eight thousand widows: we wished we had more funds to support more widows. We have 95% coverage rate.

Income Generating Activities

Only people in the South have seen the value of our pomade. They always send messages down asking for some. This means that if WOM could get a shop in Kumasi or Accra it could have helped a lot. WOM will also need to advertise this pomade in the Upper East Region and the National TV. Few people still complain of the hardness of the pomade. We have written a proposal for a Skill Developing fund(SDF) to work more on it to make it soft when this proposal is approved.

Achievements

- ❖ WOM has started rearing animals at the centre. At the moment WOM has fifteen goats at the centre.
- ❖ WOM was able to farm ten acres of corn, and five acres of soya beans.
- ❖ Through her income generators activities WOM could pay her staff all through the year.
- ❖ WOM exported more than 6000 baskets to USA in 2012.
- ❖ Hundred Orphans benefited from the education fund to continue their education.
- ❖ WOM was trained to make syrup, groundnuts and biscuit with Baobab powder (an untapped venture using the natural gifted raw material that was untapped for several years)

Challenges

- ✓ -Fifteen widows reported that their rooms had collapsed and they have no place to sleep. At the moment one widow is staying at the shelter with her child because she has no sleeping place.
- ✓ -The burden of the mango plantation is weighing the organization down. This is because WOM has to pay the farm helpers, buy water for the mangoes when she is already burdened with salaries of workers, maintenance of lorries and fuel to run the organization.
- ✓ -WOM has challenges getting funds to audit her accounts because the cost keeps increasing.
- ✓ -The multipurpose machine that could process 20 to 50 bags of shea nuts, soya beans and groundnuts into oils per day and could employ more than 100 widows is still standing unused because of lack of funds.
- ✓ -Many widows who were trained in cloth weaving have no place(shelter) to start their weaving businesses.
- ✓ -WOM's pick up is now in a horrible state and is sent for repairs every two days apart from the fact that it has to be pushed before it can start.
- ✓ -WOM will need capital to start the Boabab project.

Visits

The Director was able to visit the Nandom-Ko widows group (in the Upper West Region) who invited her to join them celebrate their St. Monica's day. More than 400 widows attended this meeting .They invited Government officials, queen mothers and the Assembly members of their community. It was a celebration where they had the chance to express their problems to the Duty bearer, listen to the word of God and ended the day with dancing and drinking 'pito' they had brewed for the occasion.

A team from Tree Aid in Burkina-faso visited WOM and two widows groups to learn and share knowledge. ADRA also visited WOM's mango plantation and offered advice on the project.

Way forward.

- WOM plans to write more proposals for the fencing of the mango plantation and center for rearing of small ruminants.
- WOM will write proposals for funds to go into more serious shea butter processing involving the multipurpose machine and 13 groups that all have grinding mills.
- WOM will farm more groundnuts and soya-beans to feed the multi- purpose machine.
- WOM will raise more funds to support more children to go to school.
- WOM plans to explore in the Baobab tree by inviting somebody from Burkina to come and teach us how to make money from the leaves, seed and powder of the Baobab tree.

Conclusion

WOM is admired by many but more is yet to be done. There are more wild trees like shea nuts that are grown in the Region that can be used to process oils yet nothing is done to it. WOM is prepared to exploit more of these natural resources that are being used in countries like Burkina. WOM will continue to defend widows with the numerous challenges and will always work harder than the previous year. WOM is once again grateful to all its donors and partners for their support in ensuring that widows and orphans live a life free of unnecessary tears and intimidation. WOM looks forward in working with you all in 2013.