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FIGHTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN GHANA

How DOVVSU Set-ups provide
Safe Spaces for Survivors





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How DOVVSU Set-Ups Provide Safe Spaces for Survivors

Editorial Consultant
Benjamin Kwesi Tawiah

Design & Layout
Richmond Darko & Nathaniel Abadji

Print
Direct Concept

ActionAid Ghana

Okokotey Link, East Legon
P. O. Box AN 19083,
Accra - North
Ghana
Tel: 03022544714/5

aaghana@actionaid.org
ghana.actionaid.org

    [actionaidghana](https://www.actionaidghana.org)

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ACRONYMS

AAG	ActionAid Ghana
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CID	Criminal Investigations Department
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DOWSU	Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit
DV	Domestic Violence
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GSS	Ghana Statistical Services
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MIC	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MTTD	Motor Traffic & Transport Department
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Violence against women and girls is prevalent everywhere in the world, particularly in Africa. Violence can take many forms, including domestic abuse, trafficking, rape, early marriage and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C). Both males and females can be affected by gender-based violence but violence against women and girls, which is often rooted in long-term behaviours and attitudes, can have debilitating effect on the victims. As the ultimate duty bearer, the state should provide vulnerable women and girls with maximum protection and the safety assurance possible.

In Ghana, girls and young women are most at risk of gender-based violence, especially sexual violence. Ghana's first legislative interventions against domestic violence (DV) reflected the global efforts in pushing for women's rights to be recognised as human rights. The Government of Ghana has enacted several national laws to protect women's rights and outlaw violence against women and girls. The Government has also put in place a range of policy and institutional mechanisms to protect girls and women from violence, including the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service.

This study was commissioned by ActionAid Ghana (AAG) to assess 10 districts/Municipal offices of DOVVSU in the Greater Accra Region and ascertain how DOVVSU set-ups provide safe spaces for survivors and how these offices are operationally resourced.

Both secondary and primary data were collected and analysed for this study, using a structured questionnaire, semi structured questionnaire, observation and focus group discussions. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling. The quantitative data was processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 while the qualitative data was analysed using open coding¹, followed by thematic content analysis.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study include:

- The number of officers per station ranges between four and 17 while the regional office has an exceptionally high number of officers (42).
- The sampled DOVVSU offices have police officers of all ranks, from Superintendent to Constables
- The offices of DOVVSU are dominated by female personnel, constituting 73%. There is the need for more male officers.
- The workload of the DOVVSU offices far outweighs the number of officers assigned to the unit.
- DOVVSU personnel do not receive any training in domestic violence before they are assigned to the unit. Occasionally, DOVVSU personnel participate in training workshops organised by development partners and civil society organisations as well the DOVVSU secretariat.

¹ Corbin & Strauss, 2008

DOVVSU'S WORK

- Cases of Domestic Violence submitted by complainants are heard and recorded before they are referred to DOWVSU. The privacy of the complainant is likely to be compromised at the point of reporting
- DOWVSU personnel are unable to accompany every victim for medical assessment due to limited resources. DOWVSU personnel accompany victims to the hospitals only in cases involving severe injury
- DOWVSU offices do not have secure places where they store the exhibits and preserve the evidence they gather from crime scenes.
- DOWVSU officers do not have access to official vehicles to perform their duties, they often use public or private means of transport with their own funds.
- There are no shelters for adult DV victims.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO DOVVSU

The study revealed the following in relation to the resources available to DOWVSU offices:

- Limited number of personnel assigned to the unit
- Poor office accommodation
- Lack of relevant office equipment
- Old and weak office furniture
- Lack of vehicles
- Lack of office storage facilities
- Lack of operational budget

DOVVSU OFFICE SET-UP AND VICTIMS' SAFETY


- The DOWVSU officers believe that the safety of the victim is assured in their premises since generally Ghanaians fear the police. According to participants in the civil society focus group discussions, a DV victim is not safe in DOWVSU offices since their privacy is not guaranteed. It was revealed during interviews that 71% felt safe while 29% felt unsafe.
- With respect to the privacy of victims in DOWVSU offices, 87% of the respondents indicated that they did not have privacy in DOWVSU offices.

CONCLUSIONS

- DOWVSU set-ups do not provide adequate safe spaces for victims and survivors of DV.
- DOWVSU offices are poorly resourced and there is a lack of counsellors
- DOWVSU's operational set-up does not provide adequate support to the DV victim beyond supporting them to obtain justice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- AAG should collaborate with other relevant stakeholders to embark on a massive advocacy campaign towards the urgent establishment and utilisation of the DV Fund.
- DOWVSU should consider collaborating with some development partners to solicit funding support.
- Institutionalise induction training for newly posted officers and regular in-service training for all DOWVSU personnel
- While there are budgetary constraints, the Government of Ghana should consider providing separate, spacious and well-equipped offices for the unit.
- Providing an accountable operational budget (petty cash) to the unit would go a long way to improve the services DOWVSU offers to victims of DV.
- AAG should consider expanding the scope of this study to cover other regions of Ghana for a more representative result.
- DOWVSU's role in providing support to the DV victim beyond justice should be strengthened.



Valeria is a member of the Community Based Anti-Violence Team (COMBAT) in the Upper West region, engaged in fighting violence against women and girls in ActionAid operational communities in Ghana

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Violence against women and girls cuts across cultures, economic status and ethnicity, and is prevalent everywhere in the world, particularly in Africa. Violence can take many forms, such as domestic abuse, trafficking, rape, or harmful practices such as early marriage and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C). It can occur at anytime and anywhere. Anyone can be a victim of sexual and gender-based violence, male or female of any age. However, women and girls are the worst victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

The effects of violence against women and girls are far-reaching. It is, therefore, necessary for women and girls to receive the maximum protection and safety assurance that a nation can offer. Since many victims of DV tend to constantly live in fear, it is critical that the set up and general environment of institutions responsible for the protection of victims provide the maximum assurance of their safety. In Ghana, DOWSU has the mandate to fulfil this obligation.

1.2 Background

ActionAid Ghana (AAG) is a national non-governmental organisation working to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication. In its operational areas in Ghana, AAG works to strengthen the capacity and active agency of people living in poverty and exclusion, especially women, to assert their rights. AAG works directly with communities, people's organisations, women's movements, groups and networks, social movements and other allies to overcome the structural causes and consequences of poverty and injustice. AAG connects the work it does at the community level with broader efforts and struggles for justice at every level to make the greatest contribution towards a just, equitable and sustainable world.

Guided by its feminist and Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA), the organisation seeks to shift and transform power through empowerment, solidarity, campaigning and the generation of alternatives to ensure that every person can enjoy a life of dignity, freedom from poverty and all forms of oppression. AAG prioritises the leadership of women and young people, especially those living in poverty and exclusion, in their efforts to achieve their right to a dignified life. The organisation also creates platforms for collective action and solidarity by enabling people around the world to unite and contribute to social justice struggles in diverse ways—as active citizens, supporters, staff and volunteers.

Around the world, ActionAid is rooted in the contexts where they operate and proudly upholds their primary accountability to the people most affected by unequal power relations.

ActionAid has a vision of “A just, equitable and sustainable world in which every person enjoys the right to a life of dignity, freedom from poverty and all forms of oppression.” Their mission is to achieve social justice, gender equality, and poverty eradication by working with people living in poverty and exclusion, their communities, people's organisations, activists, social movements and supporters. ActionAid currently operates in 45 countries, including Ghana.

AAG's Country Strategy Paper (CSP VI) which comes under the name 'People's Power for Social Justice', places women's rights and gender equality at the centre of its work. Reducing violence against women and girls is a key thematic area in AAG's programme and campaign work. In this thematic area, AAG mobilises, organises and supports women and girls to actively participate in decision-making processes and empower them to challenge and reject all forms of gender-based violence, while advocating for gender-responsive policies at the national level.

Contextual Analysis of Domestic Violence in Ghana

Domestic violence, also referred to as domestic abuse or family violence, is a pattern of behaviour which involves violence or other abuse by one person against another in a domestic setting such as in marriage or cohabitation. It is one of the most common forms of gender-based violence in the world². Globally, the victims of DV are overwhelmingly women, who tend to experience more severe forms of violence. Research has established that there exists a direct and significant correlation between a country's level of gender equality and rates of domestic violence³.

Governments around the world have acknowledged that violence against women and girls (VAWG), including domestic violence, is a violation of basic human rights and a global policy concern. In recognition of this international attention, “eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres” is one of the targets against which Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 which is aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, will be measured.

To underscore the importance of tackling VAWG, the 60th Session of the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women in March 2016⁴ chose as its review theme the “elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.” This research has established a high prevalence of DV, particularly violence against women and girls in Ghana.

According to the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) conducted in Ghana in 2008, 38.7% of married women between the ages of 15 and 49 years reported having experienced physical, psychological or sexual violence by a husband or partner at some point in their lives. Over a quarter (27.6 per cent) of Ghanaian males reported having experienced physical or psychological violence from their wife or partner⁵. The prevalence of DV in Ghana can be partly attributed to the deep cultural belief that it is socially acceptable for men to discipline their wives physically. Also, many Ghanaian women live in a highly patriarchal society where the man or father is the head of the household and takes all major household decisions. Another reason given for the prevalence of DV in Ghana is that, many spouses are reluctant to report DV cases to the police. They would rather consult their local family or spiritual leader because they see DV as private, and not a legal matter⁶.

In Ghana, girls and young women who are most at risk of sexual violence are between the ages of 10 and 18. Puberty is a time of increased vulnerability for Ghanaian girls, with menstruation seen culturally in some communities as a sign that girls are now “sexually ripe” and “fair game.” A quarter (24.9%) of girls who were under the age of 15 said they were forced against their will in their first sexual intercourse.

²Abramsky et al., 2011; Ellsberg et al., 2008; Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006, 2013; USAID, 2006

³Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006, 2013

⁴Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Ghana Statistical Services (GSS) and Associates (2016), Domestic Violence in Ghana: Incidence, Attitudes, Determinants and Consequences, Brighton: IDS.

⁵GSS et al., 2009

⁶Domestic Violence in Ghana: Incidence, Attitudes, Determinants and Consequences, Brighton: IDS



Members of the Young Urban Women's Movement (YUWM) campaigning against gender-based violence, sexual harassment and women's right to decent work



MENT,
LAW
DOMESTIC
NOW!!!
WORK

#STOP GBV
NOW!
#ALL WOMEN
WORK

PUSH FOR AN
ILO
CONVENTION ON
GBV
AT WORK NOW!
#ALLWOMENWORK

RIGHT OF 35%
OF WOMEN IN
THE EMPLOYMENT
SECTOR ARE
VIOLATED!!!
#STOP GBV AT WORK

STOP
SEX
R JOBS
WOMEN WORK

DEAR MEN, KEEP YOUR
TO YOURSELF, O!
IN THE WORK
IN THE WORKPL

Similarly, 16.9% of girls aged 15 to 19 also indicated that they did not consent to their first intercourse⁷. The 2008 DHS found that 16.5% of girls (aged 15-19) had ever experienced sexual violence. Out of this number, 3.7% had their first experience of sexual violence under the age of 10, 23.3% between 10 and 14 years, and 63.6% between 15 and 19 years. Another form of violence which has gained notoriety is sexual abuse of girls in school by teachers⁸.

As part of efforts to address DV, Ghana has contributed to national and international legal interventions and campaigns to push for women's rights to be recognised as human rights⁹. This has followed years of advocacy by key civil society organisations (CSOs), women's rights organisations and international bodies. These actions resulted in the Government of Ghana enacting several national laws to protect women's rights and outlaw violence against women and girls. These include a provision in the 1992 Constitution that prohibited discrimination based on sex; the 1998 Criminal Code Amendment Act; and legal amendments criminalising certain harmful traditional practices, such as widowhood rites (1984), FGM (1995) and child abuse (1998). In February 2007, Ghana's Parliament voted to enact the Domestic Violence Act (Act 732). Other relevant legislations include the Children's Act (1998), Juvenile Justice Act (2003), Human Trafficking Act (2005), Child and Family Welfare Policy (2014), National Gender Policy (2015), and Justice for Children Policy (2016). The country has also passed the Legislative Instrument to guide the implementation of the DV Act and developed a Social Protection Policy as well as a National Strategic Framework on Ending Child Marriage.

Ghana has established a range of institutional mechanisms to protect girls and women from violence, including DOWVSU under the Ghana Police Service, a Domestic Violence Secretariat at the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), and a Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). Despite all the existing laws and policies, there are major gaps in their implementation and enforcement, and little awareness in promoting the rights of women and girls.

The challenges include:

- Lack of interventions to shift harmful social norms and transform gender relations, particularly regarding women and girls
- Non-implementation of the Domestic Violence Act and other laws/policies
- Lack of safe spaces or DOWVSU offices for survivors of abuse
- Few Domestic Violence courts exist
- Poor coordination among state institutions mandated to protect and promote the rights of victims.

It is against this background that AAG purports to assess the safe spaces in DOWVSU offices in the Greater Accra region.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The overall objective of the study is to conduct a pilot assessment of 10 district/Municipal offices of DOWVSU in the Greater Accra region to ascertain how DOWVSU set-ups provide safe spaces for survivors and how these offices are operationally resourced.

⁷Ghana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MIC, 2011)

⁸Ghana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MIC, 2011)

⁹Cook, 2011

1.4 How the Report is Organised

This assessment report has five chapters, comprising the background of the study, methodology, findings, conclusion and recommendations. The first chapter starts with a brief introduction to the report and gives an overview of AAG's work. This covers a contextual analysis of DV in Ghana and the objectives of the study. The second chapter covers all aspects of the methodology of the study while chapter three details the findings, providing both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The fourth chapter presents the conclusions of the study and proposes several recommendations for stakeholders to consider.



A victim who has suffered aggravated burns following a domestic attack. Photo credit: MyJoyOnline.com

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed to collect data for the study. First, a secondary data study was undertaken by reviewing relevant literature, including on-line publications, on the subject matter to obtain information on historical and current global, regional and national trends related to DV. It also assessed material relating to the safety of women and girls who are victims of DV as well as acceptable safety standards required in the set-ups of agencies like DOWSU.

2.2 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Primary data was collected from clients and potential clients of DOWVSU using a survey instrument in the form of a structured questionnaire. The second instrument used in gathering additional information was a semi-structured questionnaire (checklist) which sought information from key informants and focus group discussions. For proper targeting, the purposive sampling method was used to identify people for key informant interviews. A stratified random and convenient sampling methods were used to gather data from the 10 selected DOWVSU offices. The research team also used observation as a tool to gather additional data from the sampled DOWVSU offices.

The instruments were structured to contextualise the safety provisions in the set-up of the selected DOWVSU offices. This approach ensured triangulation, which according to Galt (2009)¹⁰, helps to integrate statistics with text. The combination of statistics and text will be crucial in providing an effective reference point to compare and draw conclusions on the safety spaces in the selected offices.

In this study, respondents who were surveyed or interviewed included women, girls, men, boys, victims of DV, parents and DOWVSU Officers. Others include development practitioners and civil society groups, especially organisations that focus on women's rights and DV, as well as spouses of victims of DV.

The quantitative data was processed using the SPSS version 20. The qualitative data was analysed using open coding¹¹, followed by thematic content analysis¹². The findings from the different data approaches were triangulated to inform the conclusions of the study and the recommendations.

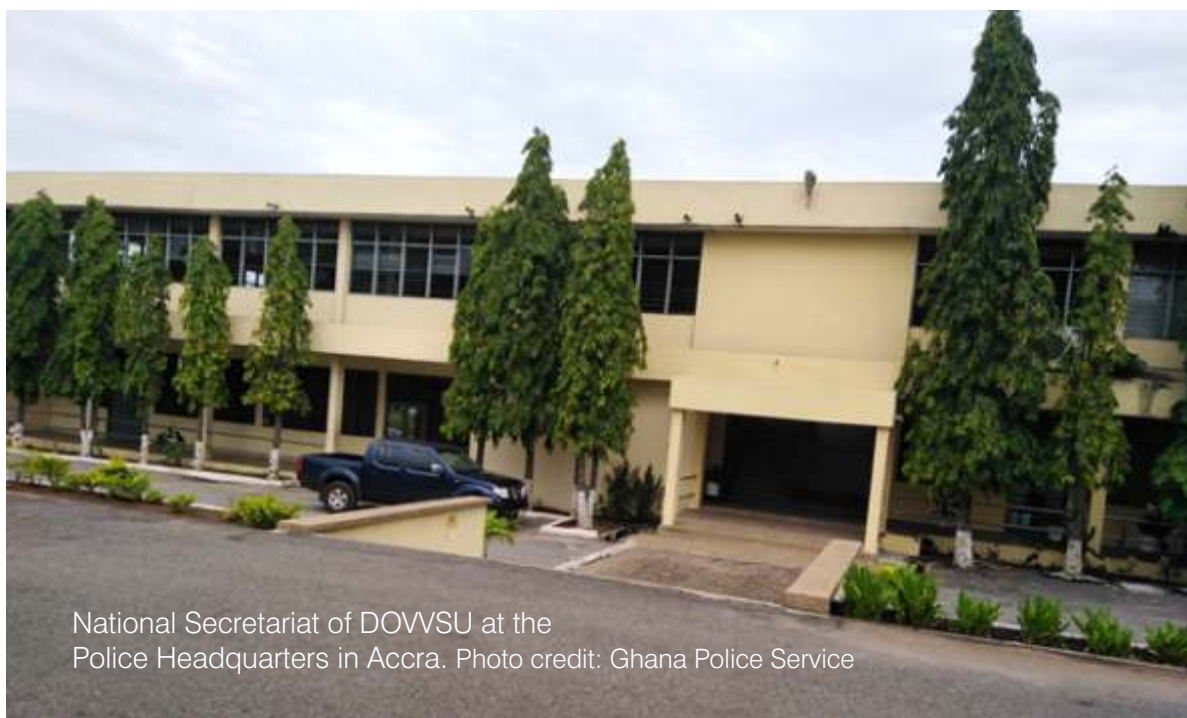
¹⁰Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches to Research & Inquiry (2009)

¹¹Corbin & Strauss, 2008

¹²Lieblich, Tuval Mashlach, & Zilber 1998



The National Headquarters of the Ghana Police Service, Accra. Photo credit: Ghana Police Service



National Secretariat of DOWVSU at the
Police Headquarters in Accra. Photo credit: Ghana Police Service

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

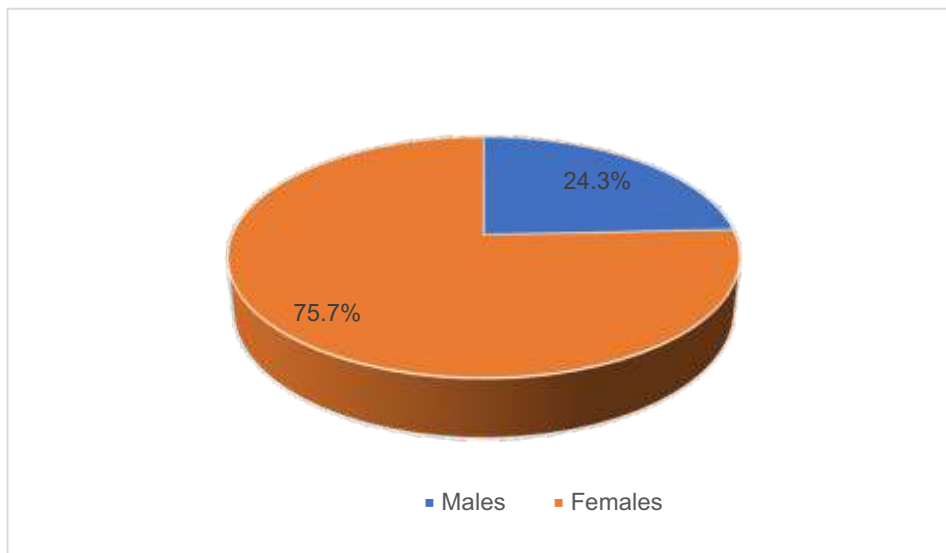
3.1 Background Information on Respondents

Eighteen key informants, 52 general public respondents and 78 focus group participants took part in this assessment. In total, the number of respondents in the study were 148.

Sex of Respondents

To ensure fair gender representation in data collection, males and females were involved in the surveys and interviews conducted as part of the study. However, because gender-based violence affects more women than men, the study involved more women than men, 75.7% and 24.3% respectively.

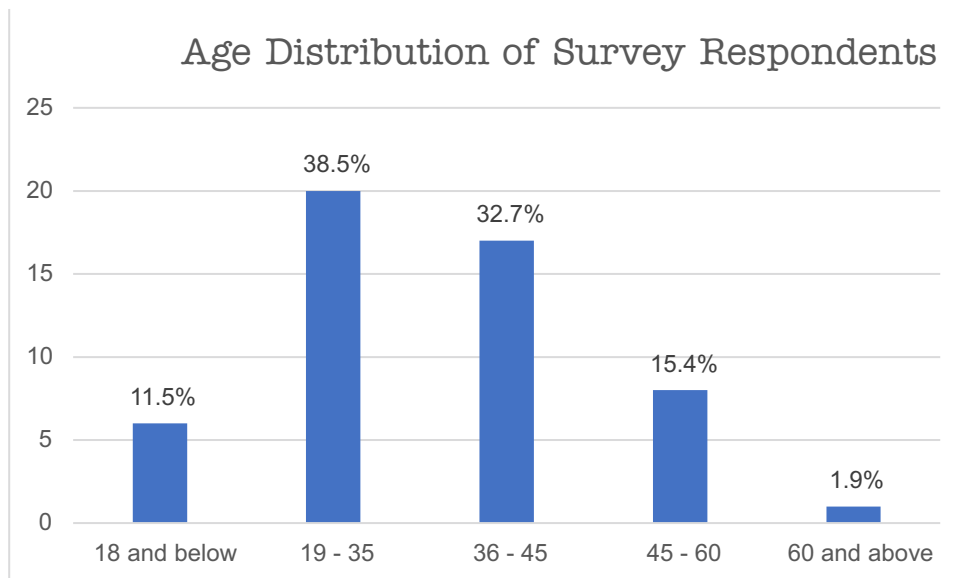
Figure 1: Sex of Respondents



Age Distribution of General Respondents

The age distribution of respondents in the study is indicated in figure 2. Twenty respondents, representing 48.5% fell within the youthful age bracket (19-35 years). Respondents between the ages of 36 and 45 formed 32.7% of the total number of survey respondents. Respondents between 45 and 60 years represented 15.4% of the total population while those who were 60 years and above were 1.9%. Respondents who were 18 years and below accounted for 11.5%.

Figure 2: Age Distribution of Survey Respondents



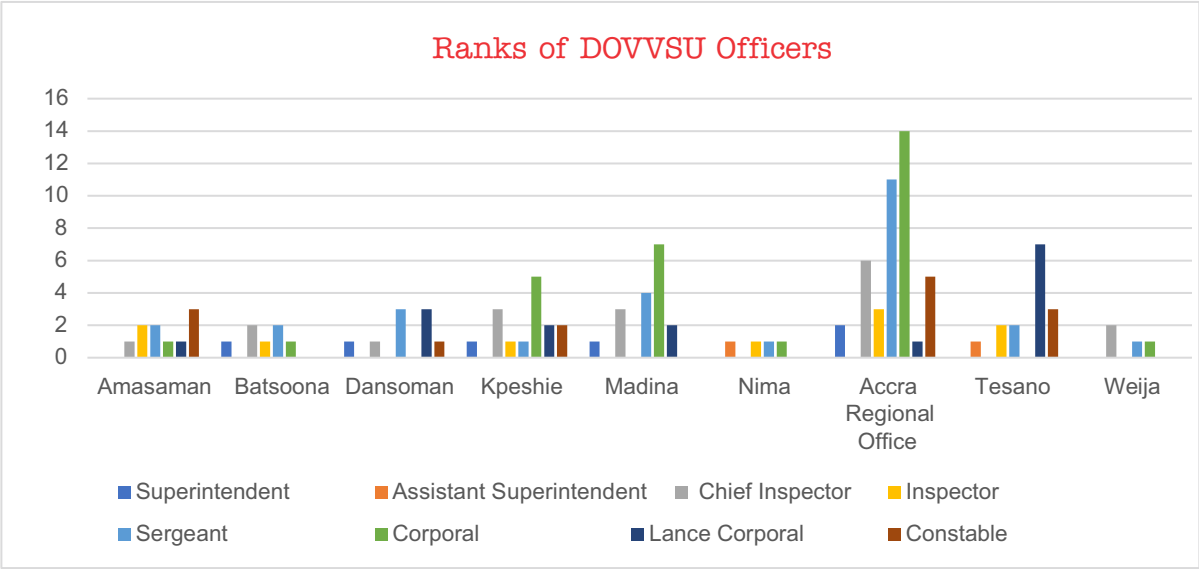
3.2 DOVVSU's Human Resource Capacity and Personnel Ranking

Officers Assigned to DOVVSU Offices

The number of officers per station ranged between four and 17. The regional office has an exceptionally high number of assigned officers (42) because of the additional responsibility as the regional headquarters. The Nima office has a small number of officers (4) and Madina has 17. The number of officers assigned to the sampled DOVVSU stations are outlined in Table 1.

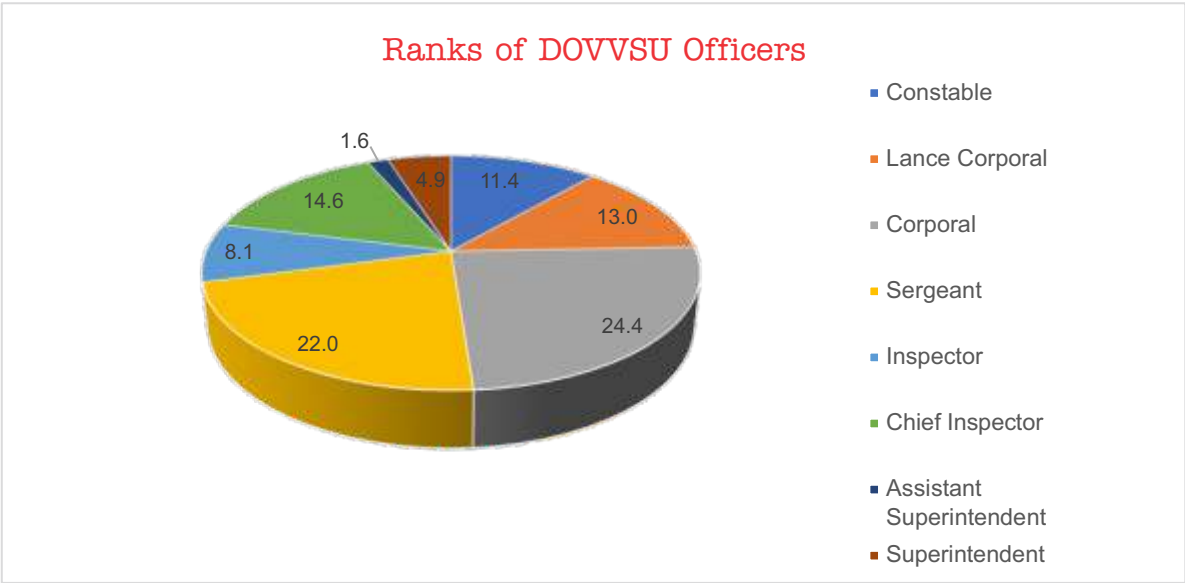
The DOVVSU offices sampled have police officers of all ranks, from Superintendent to Constables. Five out of the nine are headed by police Superintendents, with the regional office having two superintendents. Two are headed by Assistant Superintendents and the other two by Chief Inspectors. Table 1 and figure 3 give a clearer picture of the number and ranks of police officers assigned to the DOVVSU offices.

Figure 3: Ranks of DOVVSU Officers



An analysis of the police ranks revealed that 22% of the DOVVSU officers are Sergeants and 24.4% being Corporals. Only 1.6% are Assistant Superintendents while 4.9% are Superintendents, and 13.0% being Lance Corporals. Figure 4 provides a pictorial presentation of the percentage of the ranks of officers in the sampled DOVVSU offices.

Figure 4: Ranks of DOVVSU Officers



3.3 SEX OF DOVVSU OFFICERS

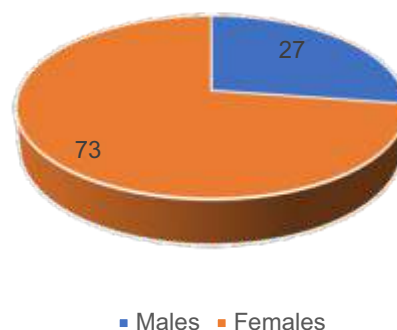
The offices of DOVVSU in the Greater Accra region are dominated by female officers. In total, the men form only 27% of the entire DOVVSU force while women constitute 73%. The Batsoona office has seven officers who are all women and the Amasaman office has only one male, out of the 10 officers. The Tesano office has the highest percentage of male officers (40%) followed by the Kpeshie office (38%).

Table 1: Sex of DOVVSU Officers

DOVVSU Office	Number of Officers	Sex			
		Males	% Male	Females	% Female
Amasaman	10	1	10	9	90
Batsoona	7	0	0	7	100
Dansoman	10	2	20	8	80
Kpeshie	13	5	38	8	62
Madina	17	4	24	13	76
Nima	4	1	25	3	75
Accra Regional	41	13	32	28	68
Tesano	15	6	40	9	60
Weija	4	1	25	3	75
TOTAL	121	33	27	88	73

Figure 5: Gender of DOVVSU Officers

Gender of Officers in sampled Police stations



The high number of female officers in the DOVVSU offices can be considered positive. This is because most of the victims of DV who benefit from DOVVSU's services are women. Some of the respondents argued that it takes a woman to fully understand the plight of a fellow woman. Majority of the participants in the focus group discussion agreed that it is a good thing to have more female officers running the DOVVSU offices even though they also recognised the need to work with some men. However, the DOVVSU officers interviewed did not support this view.

Almost all the commanders and DOVVSU personnel interviewed expressed the need to have more male officers to support the work they are doing. For instance, the Amasaman DOVVSU station commander could not hide his frustration, being the only male among a team of 10 women officers. The commanders indicated the strategic roles female officers play in empathising with the female victims. However, there are instances where male officers are required to undertake specific assignments. A typical example is when there is the need to arrest a male suspect who is physically strong and has the tendency to be violent.

Many of the DOVVSU officers admitted that it is not ethical to assign female officers to arrest male suspects. Some of the DOVVSU Station commanders revealed that most of the female officers are reluctant to go to court. Another instance where the officers claimed male officers are required is when they have to transport a male suspect to court, since DOVVSU does not have official vehicles for these duties. The practice has been for officers to use public transport to convey suspects to court. All the DOVVSU officers who participated in the study expressed the need to have more male officers assigned to DOVVSU.

“ The female officers don't have the physical strength to make arrest so the staff composition should be balanced.
The staff strength of 10 is ok but the gender composition is very problematic. The females are not physically trained to handle hardened criminals. The physical nature of the work needs more men than women. Practically the ladies are doing the work but having enough men on the staff would be appropriate ”

A DOWSU Station Commander

3.4 DOVVSU Staff Strength and Workload

All respondents in the study expressed the need for more officers to be allocated to the DOWVSU offices. They expressed concern that the workload at the DOWVSU offices is overwhelming considering the limited number of officers assigned to the unit. Some of the responses in relation to staff number and gender include:

- The workload is too much; we cover three constituencies so we should have between 15 and 20 personnel at this station. Ten is inadequate
- The workload is too much for the staff because we don't only perform DOWVSU duties. The DOWVSU office operates 24hours and the personnel are also involved in general police work, including night patrols and snap checks. We also undertake patrols when dignitaries are visiting the region.
- We need more staff especially male officers. The male officers help in making arrest and are also confident and willing to go to court, unlike the female officers.
- The offices are understaffed; they have fewer men than women. It's dangerous for female officers to handle criminals and take them to court. There should be gender balance. Can you imagine a pregnant female officer handling male criminals or suspects?
- The female officers don't have the physical strength to make arrest so the staff composition should be balanced. The staff strength of 10 is ok but the gender composition is very problematic. The females are not physically trained to handle hardened criminals. The physical nature of the work requires that more men than women are recruited. Practically, the ladies are doing the work but having enough men on the staff would be appropriate.
- We need more personnel. A lot of complainants and victims like to report their cases at the regional office but we need to refer them to the DOWVSU offices in their area due to our workload. One hundred personnel at the regional office will be ideal.
- There are five district courts and one circuit court. We need five officers for warrants at the courts but we have only four. We also need more prosecutors but we have just four.
-

3.5 TRAINING

The assessment revealed that DOWSU personnel do not receive any training in DV before they are assigned to the unit. Some of the station commanders organise their own internal orientations for newly posted officers on the DV and the Children's Act. Occasionally, the stations receive invitations from some development partners and CSOs to participate in training workshops. Sometimes, the DOWSU secretariat at the headquarters also invites selected officers for in-service training. The police administration also organises quarterly sensitisation programmes on general policing.

The DOWSU officers lamented that the number of training opportunities have reduced drastically. In 2016 for instance, only two persons per station benefited from any training opportunities and only one benefited in 2017. Several officers reported that after benefiting from DV training programmes, some of the officers were transferred to other units such as the Criminal Investigations Department (CID). The regional office indicated that they organise in-service training once a month for DOWSU officers. They used to invite two personnel each from other divisional offices but they are unable to organise the training due to financial constraints. They still organise training programmes once every month at the headquarters.

A legal practitioner who is also a DV activist revealed that the Police administration has included issues of DV in the curriculum at the Police training schools but those subjects are not examinable.

3.6 WHAT DOES THE WORK OF DOWVSU OFFICERS ENTAIL?

To have a good understanding of the status of safe spaces in DOWVSU offices for the DV victim, and the resources available to the unit for their work, the study sought to understand what the work of DOWVSU entails, in relation to how DV cases are handled. The DOWVSU personnel summed up their work as the enforcers of the DV Act. They focus on issues that arise through relationships and other forms of human association, not only in homes but also in schools, workplaces and wherever relationships exist. DOWVSU focuses on the criminal aspect of such relationships. Their mandate is to protect victims, make arrests, and take suspects to court. They also engage in public education and advocacy. It is important to emphasise that the approach used in handling a case depends on the nature of the case. However, typically, the steps include reporting the case, obtaining medical report, and inspecting the crime scene.

1. Reporting the Case

The victim or suspect lodges a complaint at the general police charge office and the case is transferred to DOWVSU by referring the diary to a DOWVSU investigator. Some of the DOWVSU personnel indicated that complaints may be lodged directly in their offices. They however, admitted that many complainants do not know where to report their cases, so they often go to the charge office where their complaints are recorded before they are referred to DOWVSU. This implies that the privacy of the complainant is likely to be compromised at the point of reporting. A rape victim shared how she could not narrate her full story at the counter because there were too many people at the time of her visit. She added that it was however a relief meeting the DOWVSU investigator who showed her empathy and demonstrated a good understanding of her situation, after which she opened up to her.

2. Medical Assessment

In cases of physical abuse, the victims are given medical forms for assessment and medical report. The medical assessment ranges between GHc200 and GHc500, depending on the medical facility¹³. Some

¹³ This is a clear violation of the DV Act which states that the police shall assist the victim to obtain free medical treatment.

Alisha Dixon (left) ActionAid Ambassador and Judge on Britain's Got Talent, with Felicia, a teenage mother in Tropaala in the Upper West region

Alisha was in Ghana to support ActionAid's campaign against marriage by abduction and other forms of gender-based violence.





COMBAT squad members Naomi Manu (left), and Doris Owusu Prempeh (middle) with Lance Corporal Felicia Adewe, of the Kenyasi office of DOWVSU

victims who are unable to afford the medical charges do not return with the forms and often abandon their cases. Those who can meet the costs proceed to obtain the medical report and return with it to DOWVSU. According to the law, victims of DV are supposed to be accompanied by the police to the hospitals for the medical assessment. However, the DOWVSU officers indicated that it is not possible to accompany every victim to the hospital due to their own limited resources, including inadequate personnel, lack of vehicles and limited budget.

In spite of all the limitations, the DOWVSU personnel find convenient means to accompany victims to hospitals, especially in cases involving severe injury where victims are unaccompanied when lodging complaints. The officers also shared that they sometimes use their personal funds to transport victims and pay for hospital bills. Often, they liaise with medical doctors to negotiate price reduction, to enable victims meet unexpected costs. The Tesano DOWVSU commander indicated that she has assigned the task of accompanying victims to the hospital to one of her officers. In emergency cases, the DOWVSU office may fall on the Divisional Police patrol team to transport victims to the hospital and arrest suspects. When victims return with the medical reports, they are further interrogated for more information.

3. Inspection of Crime Scene and Storage of Exhibits

As part of the investigations, the DOWVSU investigator visits the crime scene to collect evidence and obtain first-hand information and possible evidence for the case. They also interview witnesses at the scene. As stated earlier, DOWVSU has no vehicles or petty cash budget to cater for the transportation of officers to and from the crime scenes. Officers often rely on public transport or find their own personal means to meet public expenditure.

An inspection of DOWVSU offices revealed that the service does not have secure places to store exhibits from the crime scenes. Some are kept in bags and boxes under the desks of officers. Big items such as television sets are openly displayed in their offices.

4. Arresting the Suspect

In minor cases, the suspect is invited to the police station by a letter, which may be handed over to their pastor, assembly person or someone they respect or hold in high esteem. If the suspect refuses to show-up, he is arrested. In criminal cases involving rape, defilement, assaults and murder, the suspect is immediately arrested after interrogating the victim. Usually, the victim accompanies the police to help identify and arrest the suspect. When the suspects are considered dangerous and likely to run away, they are detained and a case is made against them and presented in court within 48 hours. Those who satisfy the bail conditions are given bail. In very minor cases, suspects may only be cautioned and the case is closed. Some victims reported that they had to use their own money to transport police officers to arrest suspects.

5. Investigation

Investigation begins immediately the case is reported and the complainant is handed over to DOWVSU. The assigned investigator interviews the complainant for a deeper insight into the case. In cases of physical and sexual assaults, medical reports and other pieces of evidence from the crime scene are assessed by the investigator. The complainants and suspects may be further interrogated based on the evidence from the scene and other pieces of intelligence.

In non-criminal cases such as child neglect, the suspect and the complainant may be interviewed separately together. This enables the officers to pick up body language and responses to accusations,



Being the head of the home is not a license to BEAT your spouse. Be of good example!



YOU CAN BE PROSECUTED IF YOU PHYSICALLY ABUSE YOUR SPOUSE. IT IS THE LAW!



Report abuse: Tel #####

Infographics from DOVVSU's Domestic Violence campaign

which may provide more insight and further leads towards settlement or adjudication. The next steps are determined by the outcome of the investigations. It must be noted that DOVVSU officers do not settle cases or pronounce judgment on any matter. Minor cases are referred to the Department of Social Welfare. The seriousness of the matter and the preferences of the parties involved determine the mode of settlement. The case can be sent to the social welfare, recommended for Legal Aid or referred for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).

6. Court

In accordance with the law, suspects are arraigned before court in 48 hours. When the investigations are not completed and there is reason to believe that the suspect is likely to frustrate investigations, the prosecutors may appeal to the judge to remand the suspects in custody. If the judge is not satisfied with the reasons behind the request for remand, he/she can grant the suspect bail. As part of their duties and responsibilities, DOVVSU personnel would continue to accompany suspects to court until the investigation is over and the court pronounces judgment on the case.

7. Supporting the Victim

Generally, the DV victim receives support from DOWSU in the pursuit for justice. Some of the DOWSU personnel provide counselling services though they do not have professional counsellors in their team. Also, when victims express fear of being attacked again by the suspect, it is the role of DOWSU officers to advise them on what to do, including looking for a temporary shelter. Adult victims are encouraged to move in with relatives or friends who are willing to accommodate them. Often, children involved in assault cases are sent to the Department of Social Welfare and kept in a temporary shelter until the case has been decided on.

As there are no shelters for adult DV victims, some of them end up going back homes. In some cases, they share the same accommodation with the suspects e.g. husband and wife. Also, after the case has been determined, either through the court, ADR or caution by the police, there is usually little or no support for the victim. For example, a rape victim who becomes pregnant may succeed in having her perpetrator jailed but she receives no further support at all for herself and the child. Ironically, while in police custody, DOWSU feeds and takes care of the suspect, including hospital attendance and medical attention when they fall ill.

“

*I don't see any form of support after the case has ended.
During the period when the case is being heard,
Social Welfare takes care of the children/victims but after
the case is solved the children are reunited with their families.
Adult victims can be compensated based on the judgement but
DOWSU doesn't provide any support after the case has ended.
Social Welfare's support is only mostly for children under 18 years
but we also do some counselling for adults.*

”

A legal practitioner and a DV activist

3.7 Resources Available to DOVVSU

All the respondents in the study were of the view that DOVVSU offices are poorly resourced. The observations and inspections conducted by the research team also confirmed this assertion, as detailed below:

- **Limited number of personnel assigned to the unit:** All the heads of the nine stations studied indicated that they were overwhelmed by the workload at their stations because of the limited number of personnel available. Most of them said they require staff increase of between 40 to 100% if they had spaces to provide adequate office accommodation for all of them. This is also because the DOVVSU officers also perform general police duties like night patrols and responding to emergency calls.
- **Poor office accommodation:** Four out of the nine offices visited (including the regional office) had separate office buildings, which has been commended as a good practice. However, apart from the regional office, the other branches operated in small spaces. For instance, the Madina office block does not have toilet facilities; the Batsoona office worked from a weak wooden structure. The rest of the DOVVSU offices are operated from one or two office rooms within the divisional police stations. It was observed that the officers were crowded in the small offices. The DOVVSU branch at Amasaman was accommodated in two office rooms in the Municipal Assembly. The DOVVSU officers did not have access to their offices during weekends. They were therefore compelled to close their offices to the public when the main office closes. Also, only the regional DOVVSU office had a separate room for counselling.
- **Lack of relevant office equipment:** Majority of the DOVVSU offices did not have the basic equipment they require to do their work. They lacked working tools such as computers, printers, photocopiers, scanners, projectors and digital cameras, to enable them capture crime scene evidence. The few computers and printers available were obsolete and dysfunctional. It was also observed that many of the officers used their private laptops and cameras for their official jobs.
- **Old and weak office furniture:** Most of the DOVVSU offices were poorly furnished with old and weak chairs and desks. There were no refrigerators and very few air conditioners and fans to supply fresh air. The windows had no curtains and were also not secure, exposing their personal effects and office equipment to the activities of thieves. In some of the offices, there were inadequate desks for all the team, as in the Tesano DOVVSU branch. In Dansoman, the two resident officers shared one desk. Many of the officers and commanders used their personal office furniture and refrigerators in their offices.
- **Lack of vehicles:** Seven out of the nine offices did not have vehicles for their work. At Dansoman DOVVSU, the only official vehicle, which was 21-years old, served the office poorly as it was difficult and expensive to maintain. The regional office had a decent vehicle for their operations. None of the offices had a motorbike or a bicycle for their official work.
- **Lack of office storage facilities:** A few of the DOVVSU offices had cabinets to store their files and dockets. In many of the offices, it was observed that files were kept in boxes and other containers placed under desks or on the floor. The regional office had inbuilt wall spaces fitted with cardboards which served as storage places for files and dockets. The offices did not have spaces to store exhibits and relevant crime scene evidence. The research team were shown files and documents that were kept in polythene bags and stored under the desks of officers. Some bigger exhibits like TV were seen left in the open office. The validation workshop revealed that there were general exhibit rooms in some of the divisional police stations where all the police officers, including the DOVVSU investigators, kept key

exhibits. However, none of the research respondents mentioned this. This meant that they were not making use of this facility.

- **Lack of operational budget:** The DOWSU offices did not have any budget allocations to run the offices. Some of the commanders admitted that they were supplied with stationery from the divisional offices, while others did not even receive any supplies. In the absence of petty cash budget, the officers were compelled to use their own resources to manage the office and perform their duties. They paid for their own transportation fares to perform official duties, including catering for lost children brought to the office, and many more.



Centre for the Protection and Promotion of Women and Girls' Rights: the centre, which was constructed by ActionAid Ghana with funding from People's Postcode Lottery, UK, serves as a counselling and empowerment facility.

Table 2: Resources Available to DOVVSU Stations and their Resource Needs

	DOVVSU Station	State of Available Resources	Resources Needed
1	Weija	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No separate office for DOVVSU A desk for the DOVVSU officer No clear distinction between DOVVSU and the general police Officers are crowded in one office room 	
2	Accra Regional Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 office rooms (prosecutor's room, investigators room, waiting room, counselling room, children's room, computer room), Tables and chairs One functional computer and two non-functional computers Personal chairs and tables, a personal mosquito net¹⁴. A vehicle four non-functional air-conditioners, 13 ceiling fans A personal laptop computer A photocopier machine Two functional and two non-functional printers A scanner and a binder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicles Partitioning of offices for the privacy of our clients Tiling and painting of offices Curtains Office desks Swivel chairs Visitors chairs Air-conditioners Cabinets for the storage of files and dockets Toys and television set for the children's room Computers Printers Tables and chairs Scanner Front desk Toilets in washrooms
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet services, Partitioning for counselling room Pre-trial conference room, Staff trainings A modern desk for pre-trial,
3	Kpeshie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A monitor An office building donated by Maa Sherawali Indian Ladies Group in 2012, Furniture Fan, Air-conditioner, A personal clock, fridge and television, Some of the staff have personal chairs and tables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new roofing on the building Computers, Printers, Refrigerator Furniture A vehicle, Operational budget Stationeries, Shelter for victims Tables, Chairs Benches,
4	Dansoman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 office room for the superintendent and another office for the remaining nine staff members and the victims for complaints, A printer A 21-year-old vehicle Old worn out tables and chairs Stationery, An officer's personal laptop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photocopy machine Computers Digital cameras Air-conditioners Table and chairs Carpet Refrigerator A new vehicle

¹⁴ One of the senior officers had furnished her office with her own money and fixed mosquito net in the windows

	DOVVSU Station	State of Available Resources	Resources Needed
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Television • Mosquito net for office windows • Sliding doors/windows • Designated office space – a separate block for DOVVSU • Personal complaint desks • A spacious and secluded area for officers and victims to interact
5	Tesano	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 2-room office, sandwiched between the MTTD and the CID offices. • An air-conditioner • Old tables and chairs • A fan • A big uncompleted office complex funded by entrepreneur Kwame Despite • A non-functioning fridge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office tables and chairs • Conference room chairs • Office cabinet • Photocopier • Computers • Printers • Digital cameras • Projector • TV sets • Office telephone • Refrigerators • Wall clock • Student mattresses for missing children • Office curtains • A vehicle
6	Nima	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One dysfunctional computer • Tables and chairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bigger office building • More personnel
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single room office • An air-conditioner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vehicle • Office stationery • Printer • Office furniture • Fridge • Internet access • Operational budget • Scanner
7	Madina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four Ceiling fans, • A building with three rooms ¹⁴ • Stationery • A desktop computer • A printer • A dysfunctional photocopy machine, • 3 dysfunctional air conditioners, • Office tables and chairs • Plastic chairs • A dysfunctional television, • A dysfunctional vehicle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juvenile cells • Desktop computer • Laptop • Photocopy machine • Scanner • Digital cameras • Audio recordings • six ceiling fans, • three air conditions, • Swivel chairs • eight cabinets • three television sets • A fridge • A vehicle • Washrooms for both staff and clients

¹⁴ No washrooms in this building

	DOVVSU Station	State of Available Resources	Resources Needed
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview rooms • Rest rooms • Financial resources
8	Batsoona	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wooden office structure • A washroom, • A general office -3 rooms plus a store room. • A personal fridge • Three ceiling fans, • Two air-conditioners • A dysfunctional computer, • A donated camera • A shed for visitors, donated by ActionAid. • An unused toilet facility for visitors, also donated by ActionAid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vehicle • Motor bikes • Desktop computers • Printer • Scanner • Photo albums to build photo library of cases • A petty cash system • Filing cabinet • A shelter
9	Amasaman ¹⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 2-room office building • One ceiling fan • One dysfunctional ceiling fan • old tables and chairs • Plastic chairs • Personnel's personal chairs and tables, • One dysfunctional computer, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office accommodation on the premises of the police station • Office and client/victims' furniture • Computers and accessories • Photocopier • Filing cabinet, • Scanner

¹⁵ The DOVVSU office in Amasaman is housed within the Municipal Assembly and far from the Divisional Police station, unlike other DOVVSU offices located within the police station premises

3.8 The DOVVSU office set-up and the Safety of Victims

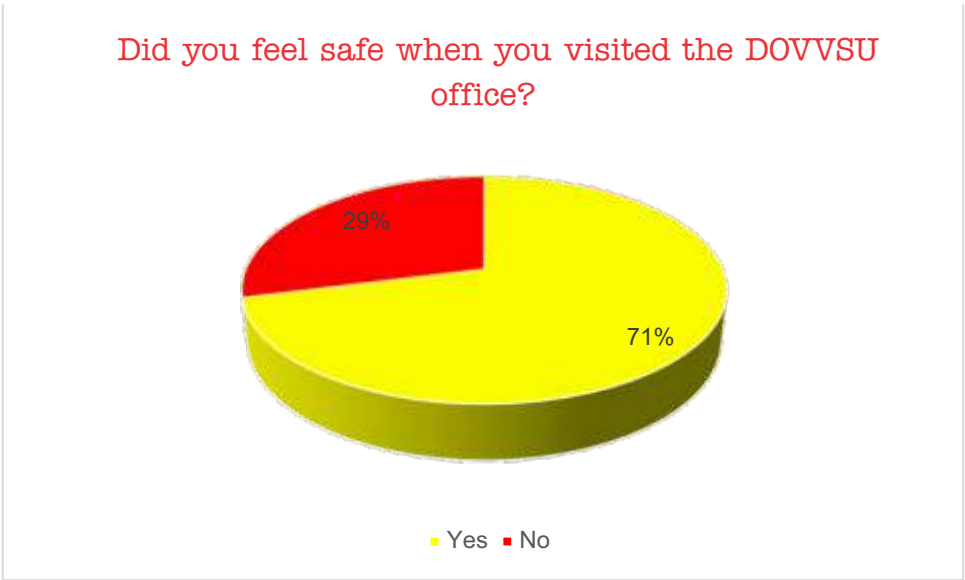
Safety of Victims in the DOVVSU offices

Many of the DOVVSU officers believe that the safety of the victim is assured in their premises. Generally, Ghanaians fear the police so no suspect will dare attack a victim in the DOVVSU office. An officer emphasised that all clients have a 'default protection' from high police presence in the premises.

However, some of the participants in the civil society focus group discussions had a contrary view. To them, a DV victim is not safe at all in DOVVSU offices since privacy is not guaranteed. Since privacy cannot be guaranteed, one cannot tell who is listening to their complaints. The victim is also not assured that they will not be secretly recorded and the information passed on to their perpetrators whiles in the DOVVSU office. They also argued that because there are no temporary shelters for victims, they cannot be assured of their safety, even in the DOVVSU offices.

When asked about their safety in DOVVSU office, 71% of the respondents said they feel safe while 29% indicated that they feel unsafe, as indicated in figure 6.

Figure 6: Safety concerns of Victims in DOVVSU Offices



The reasons respondents gave in response to whether they felt safe or unsafe are indicated in figures 7 and 8 respectively.

Figure 7: What makes Victims Feel Safe in DOVVSU Office

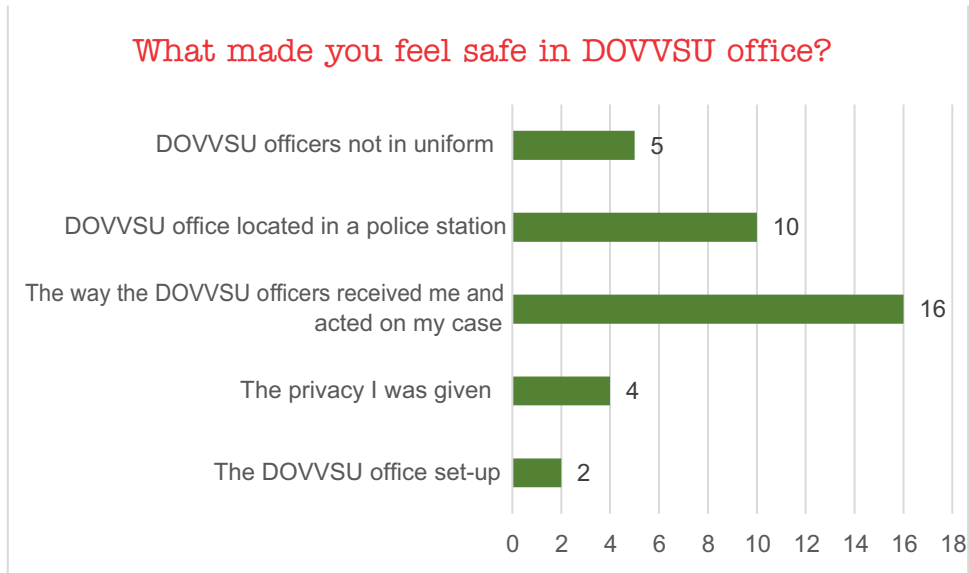
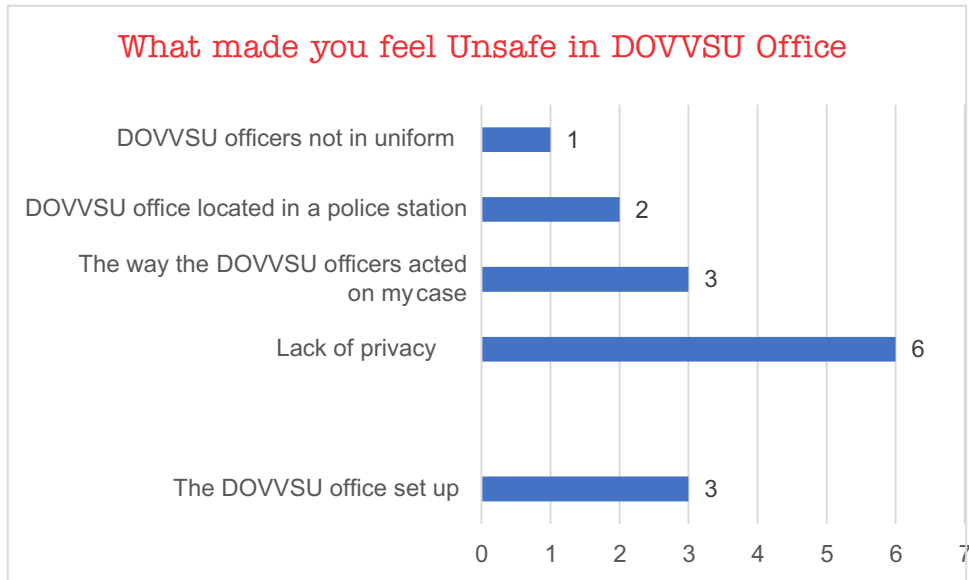


Figure 8: What makes Victims Feel Unsafe in DOVVSU Office



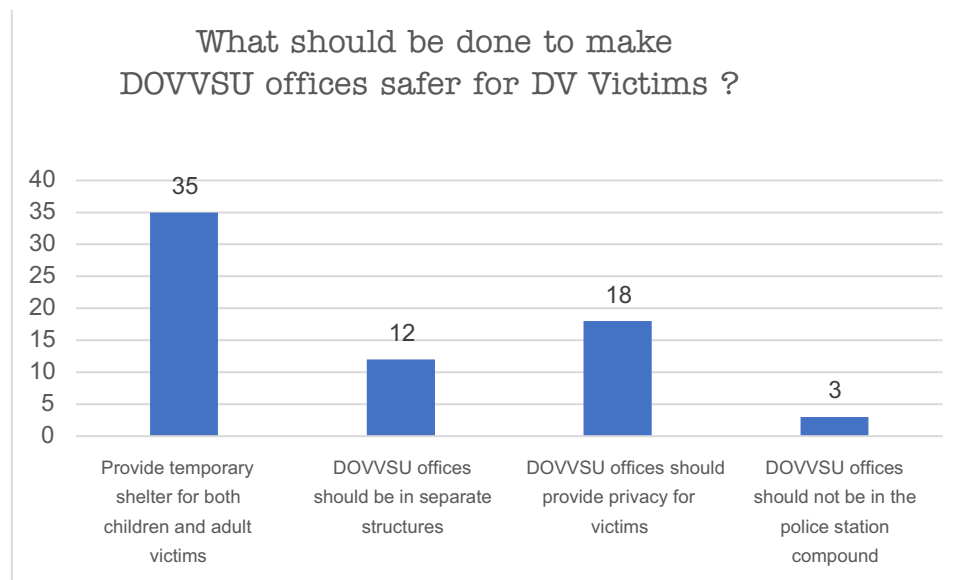
With respect to children and juvenile suspects, most of the respondents including the DOWVSU officers, argued that without temporary shelters, they cannot be safe in DOWVSU. The DOWVSU set-up is not a safe place for children because it exposes them to other people and certain dangers.

The question of what can be done to make DOWVSU offices safer generated many ideas, some of which are listed below:

- Provide temporary shelter for both children and adult victims
- DOWVSU offices should be in separate structures from the other police units
- DOWVSU offices should have designated rooms where victims can be interviewed privately
- DOWVSU offices should not be in the premises of the police station
- DOWVSU officers should be more tolerant to DV victims

The public survey responses are shown in figure 9.

Figure 9 : Making DOVVSU Offices Safer for DV Victims



Other public survey responses are:

- The availability of uniformed police officers in the premises makes it safe for victims
- The officers should be responsive
- They should encourage and support victims
- There is the need for a waiting area for victims/clients
- More facilities are needed
- Victims should not be made to wait too long in their offices
- The officers should be more understanding and assure victims and survivors of DV that they care about their feelings
- Officers should not hear victims' case when other people are listening, as this can be very embarrassing to the victim.
- Victims should not report their complaint at the general duty counter before lodging their case with DOWVSU; they should be allowed to report to DOWVSU directly.

“ *There is no privacy for victims in our office.
Victims have no option but to speak with officers
in the presence of other people in the office.
The 10 officers share one room and all interrogations
are held openly* ”

A DOVVSU Station Commander

3.9 Privacy for DOVVSU Clients

Many of the respondents said that domestic issues are considered very private and should therefore be treated as such. All the DOVVSU officers agreed that there is the need to improve upon the level of privacy in the hearing of cases to win the confidence of victims and survivors. Victims lodge their complaints at the charge office where there is no room for privacy at all.

Some of the victims expressed their discomfort and disappointment as strangers freely discussed their issues when their cases were being heard by the police officers. This is because in the DOVVSU offices, victims are interviewed openly, irrespective of who is present or listening in. The officers interview victims in the presence of suspects handcuffed to tables and chairs in the office to restrain them. Several of the DOVVSU officers said they were doing their best to provide privacy to their clients but the limited office accommodation and seating arrangement in the offices do not allow for any privacy. They, however, assured that they employ the measures below to handle delicate issues to ensure victims' privacy:

- Officers use the commanders' office or sit in the open spaces to interview the victim privately. For instance, in Weija, they sit under the trees behind the office block.
- Victims are interviewed separately from suspects.
- Only one case is heard at a time to provide privacy. However, this tends to increase the waiting time since there are always many clients waiting to be attended to.
- Highly emotional parties are met separately.
- Irrate suspects are kept in cells to control their anger.
- Some victims are made to wait outside until interactions with others are completed, to avoid congestion in the office.

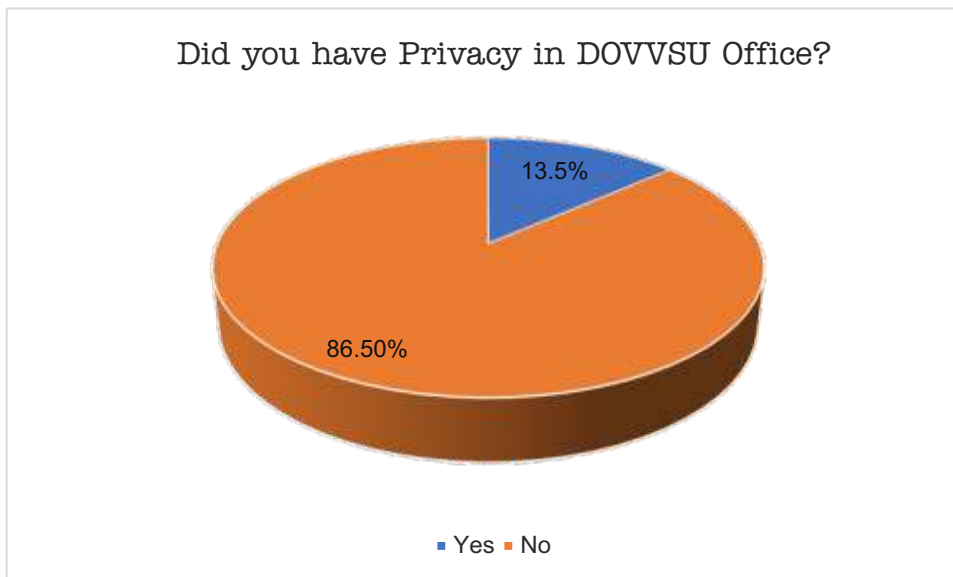
In spite of these measures, the study found a typical case of gross disregard for a victim's privacy, as describe below:

“A middle-aged lady we met in the office had come to complain that her husband had been depriving her of sexual intercourse. The officers told us about her case in her presence. Immediately, all those present started analysing and sharing their perspectives on her case. Though eventually the other people were asked to leave the office, it was unacceptable that the police had already shared their private details with us without seeking her permission. This was a demonstration of the lack of privacy for DV victims in the DOWSU offices.”

The study confirmed this through observations and interactions with DOWSU staff.

In the public survey, 86.5% of the respondents indicated that they did not have privacy in DOWSU offices. This is seen in figure 10.

Figure 10: Privacy in DOWVSU Office



ActionAid women's group embarking on community sensitisation in Nsawkaw, Bono Region, as part of the campaign on 16 Days of Activism



CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

The DV Act is very explicit on what constitutes domestic violence and how domestic problems should be handled in this country. However, the implementation of the Act is fraught with challenges, especially difficulties in providing adequate resources for its enforcement. After assessing some of these challenges and gaps in DOWVSU's operations, the study reached the following conclusions:

- DOWVSU set-ups do not provide adequate safe spaces for victims and survivors of DV. The office set-up compromises the victim's safety and privacy. The absence of temporary shelters and juvenile cells makes DV victims and juvenile suspects more vulnerable;
- DOWVSU offices are poorly resourced and have problems such as limited personnel, poorly equipped office accommodation, lack of vehicles; absence of temporary shelters for adults and children, as well as lack of operational budget to run the offices;
- The DOWVSU offices have no professional personnel such as counsellors who are critical in providing support services to victims and survivors of DV;
- DOWVSU's operational set-up does not provide adequate support to the DV victim beyond supporting them to obtain justice. Admittedly, obtaining justice is paramount to any DV survivor or victim but their needs certainly go beyond that. The current set-up places more emphasis on the suspect than the victim.

4.2 Recommendations

- Establishing the DV Fund is long overdue; AAG should collaborate with other relevant stakeholders to embark on a massive advocacy campaign and engage the government to urgently establish the fund. This will provide adequate financial support for DOWVSU's work;
- The Ministries of Interior and Gender, Children and Social Protection should work together and collaborate with some of Ghana's development partners, to solicit their policy and financial support for DOWVSU. They should proactively develop proposals and approach development partners for support. This support will enable DOWVSU improve upon the safety spaces in their offices as well as their operational resources;
- The Ghana Police Service should assign more male officers to the unit to augment the work of the female officers;
- Institutionalise induction training for newly posted officers and regular in-service training for all DOWVSU personnel. The DV Act should be added to the training programmes of the police academy to ensure that all officers have basic understanding of DV and the enforcement of the law.

- The Government of Ghana should consider providing separate, spacious and well-equipped offices for the unit. Each DOWVSU office should have temporary shelters for adults and children. They should also have social welfare offices attached to the DOWVSU offices, to foster a closer collaboration between the two institutions.
- The Government of Ghana should provide an accountable operational budget (petty cash) to the unit. It would go a long way to improve the services DOWVSU provides to their clients, particularly the poor and vulnerable.
- AAG should consider expanding the scope of this study to include other critical areas relating to DV, not limiting it to DOWVSU's office spaces and resources. The study should also include more regions, preferably the whole country, to make the findings statistically valid. The expanded study would provide nationally-relevant data and reliable evidence to inform bigger advocacy campaigns.
- DOWVSU's role in providing support to the DV victim beyond justice should be strengthened. It is important to consider the use of a coordinated inter-agency approach in providing the needed support to DV survivors.
- Efforts should be made to strengthen the relationship between DOWVSU and the Department of Social Welfare, to facilitate the provision of support for DV victims beyond justice at the law courts or other forms of arbitration.
- The Ghana Police Service should recruit and assign professional counsellors to all DOWVSU stations.
- AAG should review and analyse the budget allocations for DOWVSU as evidence to engage government to provide more support for the unit.



A school girl standing beside a violence reporting box, an innovation by ActionAid Ghana to encourage victims to report sexual harassment and other forms of rights violations in schools

ANNEXES

5.1 Annex 1: References

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5.2 Annex 2: Data Collection Instruments

Assessing how DOVVSU Set-ups Provide Safe Spaces for Survivors and how they are Operationally Resourced Key Informants Interview Guide – Relevant Institutions

Date of Interview:
Respondent Name:
Timing:
M/F:

Interviewer:
Place of Interview:
Organisation/Unit:
Age Range:

Thank you for your time and your availability to participate in this survey. The purpose of this interview is to find out whether there are safe spaces available to victims of domestic violence in selected Police stations and also provide information on the resources available to DOWVSU officers in conducting their duties. Your responses are therefore invaluable and will help ActionAid Ghana utilise the eventual survey report as a reference point for planning their collaboration with DOWVSU towards improving the support they provide to victims of domestic violence. I will therefore be asking you some questions relating to DOWVSU and the support they provide to victims of domestic violence. Please answer these questions as accurately as possible. If you have any questions or doubts, do not hesitate to ask me at any time. Some of the questions may be personal. If you do not want to give an answer, you do not have to and please note that confidentiality of the responses provided is guaranteed. Thank you.

1. How long have you worked on Domestic Violence and with DOWVSU?
2. What is your assessment of DOWVSU's officer's general capacity and professional competence for the work they do?
3. What is your assessment of DOWVSU's staff strength compared to the quantum of work assigned to them?
4. Do police officers receive additional training before being assigned to DOWVSU?
5. How often do DOWVSU officers receive in-service training? Who provides the training?
6. What is your assessment of the adequacy (or otherwise) of the facilities and logistics available to DOWVSU in the execution of their work?
7. What other facilities/resources would you recommend should be provided to promote DOWVSU's work?
8. How does the DOWVSU office set-up provide safety for the domestic violence victim?
9. What safety mechanisms are in place at DOWVSU for the victim?
10. How does DOWVSU provide privacy for its clients?
11. What safety support does DOWVSU provide victims after they have reported their cases to you?
12. What collaborations exist between DOWVSU and other relevant institutions like social welfare, hospitals, counsellors and DV focused NGOs?
13. What should be done to make DOWVSU offices safer for victims of domestic violence?
14. What should be done to ensure victims' safety after they have reported their cases to DOWVSU?
15. What challenges are associated with DOWVSU's work?
16. What would you recommend should be done to mitigate these challenges?
17. Any other comments on availability of safe spaces in DOWVSU offices?

Assessing how DOVVSU Set-ups Provide Safe Spaces for Survivors and how they are Operationally Resourced

Public Interview Guide

Date of Interview:

Respondent Name:

Timing:

M/F:

Interviewer:

Place of Interview:

Organisation/Unit:

Age Range:

Thank you for your time and your availability to participate in this survey. The purpose of this interview is to find out whether there are safe spaces available to victims of domestic violence in selected Police stations and also provide information on the resources available to DOWSU officers in conducting their duties. Your responses are therefore invaluable and will help ActionAid Ghana utilise the eventual survey report as a reference point for planning their collaboration with DOWSU towards improving the support they provide to victims of domestic violence. I will therefore be asking you some questions relating to DOWSU and the support they provide to victims of domestic violence. Please answer these questions as accurately as possible. If you have any questions or doubts, do not hesitate to ask me at any time. Some of the questions may be personal. If you do not want to give an answer, you do not have to and please note that confidentiality of the responses provided is guaranteed. Thank you.

1. Did you feel safe when you visited the DOWSU office? Yes No

2. If yes, what made you feel safe?

- A. The DOWSU office set up
- B. The privacy I was given
- C. The way the DOWSU officers received me and acted on my case
- D. DOWSU officers not in uniform
- E. DOWSU office located in a police station

Others (Please specify)

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3. If no go to question 4, what made you feel unsafe?

- A. The office set up
- B. The privacy I was given
- C. The way the DOWSU officers acted on my case
- D. DOWSU officers not in uniform
- E. DOWSU office located in a police station

Others (Please specify)

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4. Did you have privacy when you visited DOWSU? Yes No

5. As a DV victim, what support did you receive from DOWVSU after you reported your case?

- A. Counselling support
- B. Accommodated in a temporary shelter
- C. They linked me to social welfare/an NGO for support
- D. Monitoring visit to check on me
- E. Financial/material support

Others (Please specify)

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6. Did you spend any money on your case? Yes No

7. If yes what did you spend the money on?

- A. Transportation to inspect the scene
- B. Hospital bill
- C. Transportation to arrest the suspect
- D. Court expenses

Others (Please specify)

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8. What should be done to make DOWVSU offices safe/safer for victims of domestic violence?

- A. Provide temporary shelter for both children and adult victims
- B. DOWVSU offices should be in separate structures
- C. DOWVSU offices should provide privacy for victims
- D. DOWVSU should have vehicles to transport victims to hospitals/shelter and effect arrests

Others (Please specify)

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9. What should be done to ensure victims' safety after they have reported their cases to DOWVSU?

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STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Okokotey Link, East Legon.
P. O. Box AN 19083,
Accra-North. Ghana
Tel: +233 (0) 302544714/5
Fax: +233 (0) 302764930

@ aaghana@actionaid.org
ghana.actionaid.org
f actionaidghana