



# **Workshop Report**

## **Communication Strategy & IT for Advocacy Workshop Report for the following Councils:**

---

*Jwaneng Town Council*

**Consultant: Patricia Kole**

**Date: 03 December, 2012**

## **Background to all the workshops**

The workshops started with the consultant suggesting the objectives of the workshop as follows:

- To understand the 16 Days Activism
- To understand the general concept of communication
- To understand how the media work
- To develop computer skills to be able to join dialogues with other stakeholders and carry out gender campaigns
- To design a GBV campaign

Program for all the workshops would be divided into three parts:

1. Communication/Media: Basic concepts (communication and campaigns)
2. IT Training ( emails, face book, chat rooms)
3. Drawing up a 16 Days Activism plan and where possible, joining the cyber dialogues.

Once the objectives were agreed upon, and where necessary reconstructed, the participants would be requested to express their expectations of the workshop. When these were expressed, they varied from council to council, however, all participants wanted to understand the 16 Days Activism and how that had anything to do with communication strategy and IT. Once the participants had an understanding of the concepts they were able to come up with amazing GBV communication campaigns which would be followed up and worked on and turned into campaigns with the consultation with the gender committee and Council management.

The highlight of these workshops was when participants realized the importance of campaigns against GBV and the role that the media play in such campaigns. The major thrust was to make participants understand that communication forms a critical part in petitioning, advocacy and lobbying against GBV. It is also an important way to network for a common purpose.

Participants were to understand that strategic communication including the use of the internet, can bring change in attitudes and transformation in individuals, communities and the whole society in the long run.

## **Jwaneng Town Council**

### **Synopsis**

The workshop for the Jwaneng Town Council was held at the Jwaneng Public Library from 26 - 27 November, 2012 with nineteen participants. The venue was chosen to allow the participants to have access to computers. No official from the council came over to see how the participants were doing and this might be an indication of the seriousness, or lack of it, of the Council Management on gender issues.

The highlights of this workshop were the dedication and passion the participants displayed in computer literacy and the eagerness to share their personal experiences in GBV and coming up with the slogan "victim or affected". They were excited to learn that they can

communicate through the media to network and campaign against GBV. Most discussed topic was "how someone could recognize violence". This was a multi-phased concern:

- 1) Many times, people do not recognize that others are being abused. These could involve parents, neighbours, teachers or other custodians.
- 2) Due to a number of reasons, sometimes we do not even realize we are being abused even though the situations are unbearable for us.

The participants felt strongly that the media could be a two-way tool: "use them to sensitize people, and engage them as allies". This particular group was interesting because of their ability and love to use slogans. It emerged that slogans could be other forms of communication strategy to be employed in campaigning against GBV.

### **Activities**

1. Participants worked in groups to come up with their own campaigns and how to run such campaigns. They presented their proposals while other groups gave feedback. The campaigns were to reflect gender based violence in their communities.
2. Participants opened email and face book accounts and practiced (although limited) how to join chat rooms.

### **Outputs**

The participants realized they could use computers and cell phones to discuss and plan and that the use of emails, phones and face book is quicker and efficient. They will also network with relevant organizations and plan their own campaigns. They realized the need to run their own campaigns based on gender challenges faced by different communities. Of interest was the need to recognize violence because that is the only way it could be dealt with before destruction.

The participants felt they needed to be involved in gender activities and to initiate some. They felt the media could be engaged in different forms to either combat or campaign against every form of gender abuse and to this end, they are willing to play their part.

### **Outcomes**

Most participants felt the workshop did not fully cover the programme due to lack or limited internet connections. The venue was also not conducive for the workshop as they had to use the study area of the library and there was no air conditioner on the first day. To this end, the workshop only aroused their desire and interest on the topics particularly internet discussions and joining chat rooms. Though they were all able to open email and facebook accounts, they did not have the chance to practice using them due to poor internet connectivity.

However, the participants came up with interesting gender campaign pieces which they wanted to work on and discuss with the focal person to explore possibility of using at least one to them. The participants expressed the desire to be the "eyes and ears" of the Town Council on issues of GBV. They realized that most gender based violence could be prevented

with knowledge and understanding, thus it is important to be able to recognize violence which included workplace gender abuse and violence.

The participants understood the conceptual and operational issues involved in gender campaigns and the importance of Local Government to incorporate these into different operations at council levels. They acknowledged that prior to the workshop they did not fully understand their role in gender activism and thus had limited ability to recognize social and workplace gender exploitations. The workshops helped them realize the importance of networking with others and that different forms of media makes it easier and more efficient. The participants therefore realized that they were partners in fighting and challenging GBV in every aspect of their lives.

### **Lessons learned**

At the end, participants recognized that the overall objective of the workshop was to develop and strengthen the knowledge of participants on gender-based violence and enhance participation between different departments of the council towards challenging and confronting GBV. However, this is a mammoth task that needs coordination, planning and resources and for this reason the town council should improve on important services such as access to the internet appropriate and internet software.

Management interest in gender issues would make it easier for the participants to be fully engaged. The activities of all stakeholders, particularly genderlinks, BALA and Jwaneng Town Council must be synchronized to avoid duplications and time clashes. Most participants complained that they were informed about the workshop late and therefore had other things to attend to during the workshop. There is also the problem of securing a place where there was reliable internet connection, as this resulted in participants not being connected to the cyber dialogue.

Lastly, the focal person and the participants needed to understand the council gender action plan to confidently carry it out on behalf of the council. Once this happens, they will work with management to ensure that they at least run their own campaign during the course of the year.

### **Next steps**

Participants will work with the focal person to ensure that at least they all attend one cyber dialogue. They will consult with management to have a brief programme prior to the dialogue during which they will discuss the topic of the day.

The focal person will incorporate the participants into the gender committee and ensure that they take the gender programme or action plan to their own departments.

The participants agreed to use one of the campaigns they worked on during the workshop as their own campaign for the town council. This will do this to use the skills they learned and acquired during the workshop. This will enable the council to also carry out some of the activities in its gender action plan.

### **Annexes**

I started the workshop alone, and faced with the venue that was not user friendly, I did not take any photos of the workshop.