

ANNEX 2

Core Grant Narrative Progress Report

Report period Jan-June 2009

Contract Ref. No. 03/Core/29/FIDA

Organisation FIDA -GHANA

Contact Tel. No. 021-229283

Report Date 31st -July 2009

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1. Institutional/Organisation Development: Evidence of significant progress / change

What are major changes in the organisation's circumstances that are likely to have impacted your outputs over the period?

- Organisational structure / board / management team
- Strategy / planning / decision making / knowledge management
- Human resource issues
- Marketing / communication / public relations

What are major changes in the organisation's circumstances that are likely to have impacted your outputs over the period?

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE ORGANISATION' OVER THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

Succession planning

The development of key people has been considered as the plan for the future of the organisation. The Administrator in the Kumasi office is currently pursuing a Master's of Science programme in Development Policy and Planning at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. This is a key position with additional oversight responsibilities for the Brong Ahafo and Northern Regions.

Systems

One major outcome of the staff retreats and staff meetings was to establish a culture where staff from different departments in the Accra office i.e. programs and accounts office undertake visits to the legal aid offices in the Ashanti, Eastern and Northern Regions to track progress of work, evaluate client satisfaction Strengthen relationships among staff from the various offices, assess opportunities for collaboration with other law enforcement agencies, and identify challenges of the work environment as well as obstacles identified in the effective implementation of legal aid in these regions.

Staff identified gaps in regards to the collection and analysis of qualitative data from the legal aid centres, and plans were made to ensure effective management of the organisation's information systems by updating the software used to generate data. This has improved data collection in the organization which could be utilized in the organisation's advocacy initiatives.

Capacity building for Staff

The organization has compiled a calendar of short training courses from the various Training Institutions. The program officer in the Accra office was supported to attend a proposal writing course at the British Council during the period under review. Meanwhile the Regional coordinator from the Tamale office is being supported to attend an African human rights training education program in Ivory Coast to provide her with the competencies in human rights training which will be transferred to the rest of the staff.

• Organisational structure / board / management team

The regular monthly Board meetings have provided strategic direction and assisted the organisation to make strategic choices. A new board was inaugurated in June, as the term of the old board has expired. This new team is expected to bring new perspectives and broader management knowledge to grow the organization.

• Strategy / planning / decision making / knowledge management

Scheduled monthly meetings provide staff with the opportunity to discuss and explore in depth strategic objectives. At such meetings staff designed effective ways to implement activities that will help achieve strategic objectives.

For example, at one such strategic meeting the staff explored ways in which the work environment could be further improved by making sure that it was gender friendly for staff and clients. Staffs have also been able to strengthen monitoring and evaluation tools particularly for the Legal aid program. At such meetings staff identified the critical attributes of well-formulated Indicators that could be used as a monitoring tool. These tools will be implemented to sample studies of women both within and outside project areas, to ascertain the number of women who do not have access to legal aid services, those who are turned away as well as the numbers of women the organisation has been able to reach to give an indication of the relevance of the organization's services and its positive impact on women. This has been an unexpected benefit as it has turned out to be a valuable professional development opportunity for Staff and the organization.

Staff meetings have also provided a platform for open discussions and feedback on project activities, as well as an opportunity to follow up on action items.

Other staff members have become aware of the various activities that others in the organization are doing and how this connected to the organizations strategy.

In order to establish a culture of knowledge based organisation staffs have been encouraged to share relevant information through the internet and have been tasked

with the responsibility of updating the information when it becomes necessary. During staff appraisals knowledge behaviours and performance will be reviewed to ensure that this becomes an inherent part of staff everyday jobs.

Sharing of conference reports and training skills have been institutionalised in the organisation, and this has had its impact on project activities. Program management processes have been improved and this has reinforced staff's confidence in sharing knowledge and asking questions.

• Human Resource issues

After establishing a culture of administering performance appraisals, FIDA is working towards establishing an environment where every year two members of staff will be assisted to improve upon their skills and develop competencies to enable staff progress towards achieving their personal career plans as well as strengthen their capacity to achieve the strategic objectives of the organization.

During the period under review two members of staff, one in Accra was supported to undertake a grant proposal writing course, whilst the Kumasi staff is being supported to pursue a sandwich Development Course at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. (KNUST)

The expertise of staff was further strengthened with technical assistance from WOMANKIND to its accounts and programs staff by transferring know-how and training on fund raising and communication strategies as well as participatory learning techniques to sustain future work.

A member of Staff was encouraged to attend the FIDA biennial conference in Italy. This exposed the staff and also presented an opportunity to network with other women groups, share experiences and learn from their successes. Practical experiences shared by some of the women's groups will be replicated in our programs to enhance our service delivery.

• Marketing / communication / public relations

Marketing

The organization built an overall awareness nationally and internationally of its program activities particularly the role of the paralegals in its access to justice program during the period under review.

General interest stories of activities of paralegals supporting women living with HIV/AIDS in Dodowa, were highlighted Womankind's News letter (Spring 2009) which was distributed to participants at the UN conference in March as well as Womankind's partners in 71 countries. At the UN conference, FIDA Ghana granted interview with the Chinese News Agency, Xinhua on the work of its paralegals in responding to rights abuse in the communities.

As a result of these activities some of our one time donors have agreed to provide further support for FIDa-Ghana's activities. German world Day of Prayer committee has agreed to provide another year's funding for the access to justice program in Koforidua.

FIDA-Ghana has received a number of invitations by other NGO's, faith based organisations and men and women's groups to make presentations on laws promoting and protecting women's rights at all five of its offices in the country. At these platforms the organisation has been able to market itself and its activities as well as sell some of its publications.

Two Research Dissemination meetings and one policy dialogue meeting to various audiences such as Health officers, social welfare, legal and Police personnel have presented opportunities to market the organization and its programs and build awareness that FIDA is available to offer support for victims of abuse, including HIV infected and affected women.

Strategic partnerships with Wildaf and thirteen Community based organisations in the Northern and Upper east regions effectively contributed to marketing the organisation's activities and services.

Community outreach programs of trained paralegals also contributed to marketing the services of the organisation as at every outreach program the paralegals introduce FIDA and market its services to the communities.

Communication

Regular and open interaction via the internet has improved communication between staff and Board members. This also helped Executive members of the Board and staff to arrive at prompt decisions, improving implementation of activities and workforce productivity.

Likewise staff from the various regions have been able to communicate more effectively with staff at the head office, enabling them to receive timely clarifications to questions as well as sharing information amongst themselves.

Of utmost significance is the ability to receive organizational development support from donor partners, which has assisted the organization to deal with thorny questions and clarifications.

Access to broadband Internet services continues to provide knowledge of events, conferences and other relevant listings.

Public relations

There has been extensive media publicity during this half year of FIDA-Ghana's activities. Local, national print and broadcast media have provided extensive coverage of FIDA Ghana's activities, thereby highlighting the position of the organization concerning issues such as women appointees to decision making positions.

Press releases congratulating the first female speaker and the Government's inability to appoint more women as Municipal and District chief Executives were also highlighted in the media.

Interviews with Radio and Television stations as well as the print media and the internet on rights of women affected with HIV/Aids, as well as low level of sentences given to perpetrators of sexual violence are instances of issues that have set the agenda for debate.

In the Northern region, there have been fifteen radio discussion (5)in Tamale and (10)in Bolgatanga. Discussions have focused on negative cultural practices that fuel rights abuses and it is estimated that up to one million people have been reached through these radio programs. In one of the radio discussions in Bolgatanga, a widow who was forced to go through widowhood rites, and her deceased husband's property seized was on the program to speak of her ordeal. This generated an overwhelming response of support from callers, and one of the callers pledged to contribute to the payment of the fees of the children of the widow.

The four major FM stations in Tamale and TV Africa in Accra whose coverage extends to the northern region aired a program which called for men to help in the crusade against violence against women and to change the cultural factors that give rise to gender based discrimination and violence. TV Africa announcement was done in five local languages including Dagbani which is widely spoken in the northern region whilst the four radio stations gave the announcement in four local languages. We are therefore optimistic that the message is getting to so many people from both far and near and is likely to influence people's behaviour and thinking towards the abuse of women.

Dissemination of literacy materials in the local dialects, has been extensively distributed to community members in Bolgatanga (Namely, Vea, Gowrie, Balungu, Sumbrungu, Kulbia, and Kandiga)to provide information on and increase awareness of women rights. The content of the books were used in focus group discussions during night classes of non formal education programs. So far, one hundred women beneficiaries have been able to access information on laws protecting women's rights through this program. The literacy materials have become reference points for the beneficiaries who it is expected will filter the information to the grass root communities.

Indicators	Baseline Jan –Jun 2008	Prior –Period July- Dec- 2008	Current Period- Jan- Jun-2009	Cumulative-
1. HR Management i) <i>Leadership</i> ii) <i>Core staff</i> iii) <i>Support staff</i>	Two (2) Administrators in charge of Accra and Kumasi office Two (2) Core staff Three (3) support staff	1) .Executive Director (1) Administrator Kumasi office (1) Coordinator for Tamale office Twelve core staff manning Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, Bolgatanga and Koforidua (5) support staff	(1) Ag.Executive Director (1) Administrator Kumasi office (1) Coordinator for Tamale office Twelve core staff manning Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, Bolgatanga and Koforidua (5) support staff	
2. Governance i) <i>Board</i> ii) <i>Committees</i> iii) <i>Documented board meetings</i> iv) <i>Management meetings</i> v) <i>Staff meetings</i>	Ten member Board to provide policy direction Documented Board meetings Monthly Management meetings	Ten member Board to provide policy direction Fundraising committee Documented Board meetings Monthly Management meetings Monthly staff meetings	New Board, Established for the next two years. Fundraising committee Documented Board meetings Monthly Management meetings Monthly staff meetings	

<p>4. Funding base development <i>List long-term programmes(3yrs +)</i></p>	<p>Long term UNICEF-(3 years) Support for the legal aid service to women and children in Greater Accra ¢\$46,296 for 4 years(07-2010).</p>	<p>Long term UNICEF-(2 years)</p>	<p>Long term CORDAID-(3 years) Improving women's access to justice in Tamale and Bolgatanga \$146,691.17</p>	<p>Long term CORDAID(ends in 2011)</p>
	<p>CORDAID-(2 years) \$289,768.70</p>	<p>UNFPA-(4 years) Community legal literacy and human rights awareness programme in support of indigent women and children</p>	<p>UNFPA-(3years) Community legal literacy and human rights awareness programme in support of indigent women and children</p>	<p>UNFPA (ends in 2010)</p>
	<p>UNFPA-(5 years) \$54,692.30</p>	<p>\$54,692.30</p>	<p>\$ 0.00</p>	
<p><i>List short-term programme(1 year)</i></p>	<p>Short term A German Day of prayer legal literacy/mobile outreach in outskirts of Koforidua</p>	<p>Short term CORDAID-(1 year) (\$ 87,065.6</p>	<p>Short term Womankind(1 year ends in Dec 2009) \$ 27,045.16</p>	<p>Short term OSIWA(ends in 2010) German Day of prayer (ends in 2010) UNICEF ends in (2010)</p>
<p><i>Total dollar volume of programmes</i></p>	<p>\$ 10,000.00</p> <p>AWDF \$20,000.00</p> <p>ILO (International Labour organisation) project for Legal Literacy and Sensitisation on Child Labour for School Children, Parents and Law enforcement Agencies in Twelve Selected</p>	<p>Womankind Promote the rights of women infected and affected by HIV/Aids \$36,420</p> <p>OSIWA- Provide psycho-social services to women in the Eastern and Greater Accra region \$44,341</p> <p>G-RAP- \$ 50,000</p>	<p>OSIWA- \$186.96</p> <p>German Day . \$12,595.13</p> <p>G-RAP- \$50,000</p> <p>UNICEF \$9,416.89</p>	

2. Collaboration, coalitions and networking

Using the format below, list the most important organisations you collaborated with over the period. For each organisation, give an indication of the issues or themes you worked on, its status and the outcomes.

	Organisation /Coalition	Policy issue / theme / nature Starting / ongoing / ending	Outcome
Government - executive - judiciary - legislature	MOWAC- (<i>Other members include, Dept of Women Ark Foundation, Action Aid, Parliamentary sub committee on Gender, Committee of Muslims organizations Of Ghana.</i>)	Partnering with MOWAC as the lead agency to ensure that gender equality and the human rights of women and adolescent girls, are integrated into national policies development and frameworks – ongoing (March – Dec 2009) FIDA's role is to enhance community legal literacy in 4 target regions namely Volta, Central, Northern and Upper east regions. (activities include advocacy with traditional leaders, all male sessions& community outreach programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved institution and social frameworks to promote and advance women's and girls rights and gender equity & equality.
Coalition, network	Ark Foundation	Roundtable discussion on strategies for ensuring financial sustainability of women's rights organisations. Started/14th April 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ten suggestions were made to assist women rights organizations to begin to explore ways by which long term funding can be raised to grow and sustain women rights organizations. <p>Examples of Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women rights organizations to rebrand and market their services and products to attract funds from corporate institutions. Establish a secretariat with fundraising , consultancy and advocacy units to complement the services of Women rights organizations.. Women's rights Organizations (WRO) to form a partnership and work towards acquiring a building to resolve

	LAWA	<p>To test the use of the draft labour (domestic workers Regulation 2007) to identify the adequacy of the regulation. Ended /23rd -24th February 2009</p> <p>Design strategic plan to address issues affecting domestic workers and domestic assistants.</p> <p>Workshop to collate materials and inputs for a domestic workers manual</p>	<p>problems with rent issues and also serve as a one stop of service delivery. Eg WRO's that focuses on legal issues, micro credit and service delivery all available for women clients in one place. Further discussions are to take place on this in August 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input into development of 3 year Strategic plan. • Draft domestic workers manual produced.
Peers CBOs	WILDAF GENDER CENTRE COWIG HUNGER PROJECT	<p>Policy engagement on affirmative action. Ended</p> <p>First visit to the president on women's concerns 3rd Feb 2009</p> <p>Second visit and Protest march to present petition to President Mills to redeem his campaign promise to ensure that 40% of women forms part of his cabinet of 2009</p> <p>28th May 2008</p> <p>Meeting with women MP's and women leaders of civil society organisations.-8th April 2009</p>	<p>Present key concerns of women to President Mills.</p> <p>Concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise implementation of Dv act. • At least 40% appointment of women to government & public service. • In 2010, government ensures that half of the 30% nomination of appointees to district assemblies are women • Government develops an affirmative action policy or law to address the low numbers in parliament and other decision making positions • This project has opened 'doors' for further engagement with female members of parliament. • Interaction with other women in leadership positions in Ghana indicated opportunities for CSO's to sustain the momentum of

		<p>Evaluation workshop on women's perspectives of the 2008 elections April 23rd 2009.</p>	<p>advocating for women to participate in decision making .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitments made during this project have been compiled into a document that forms the benchmark or baseline against which to judge performance of the present government. • Production and compilation of survey reports have provided a baseline for measuring gender issues by political parties. • Findings from Survey reports have also highlighted gaps that civil society groups could utilize in advocacy efforts and messages. Eg it is expected that in 2012, a stronger call for a woman as vice president or president will come up because these 2 were fielded in 2008. • Through this process a wide network of individuals and organizations has been built for ongoing/future work around governance. Eg Wildaf and FIDA are in the process of working out a proposal on increasing women's access to justice through the implementation of the Domestic violence Act. • Wide media consultations on issues relating to women and decision making resulted in increased debate on the affirmative action policy.
		Develop a five year strategic plan	

	<p>DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COALITION</p> <p>Society of Women living with Aids in Africa (SWAA)</p> <p>Women Initiative for Self Empowerment (WISE)</p>	<p>for the DV Coalition to make it more relevant in the implementation of the DV Act. Ended/ 24th March 2009</p> <p>FIDA provided skills training for traditional rulers, educational institutions, health officials & opinion leaders in Bolgatanga on Women and HIV and to strategize on a multi-sectoral approach towards the reduction of stigmatization and abuse of HIV positive victims. Ended/30th March 09</p> <p>Collaboration with WISE to provide psycho social services to clients at the premises of FIDA-Ghana/ Ongoing /Jan 06 2009</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working towards increasing participation of women in District Assemblies. • Contributed towards building the institutional capacity of the DV Secretariat for effective service delivery and co-ordination of the Coalition's activities. • CAGS and SWGS refer HIV positive women with special needs to Society for Women living with Aids in Africa (SWAA) for redress. Three (3) cases in Bolgatanga have so far been referred to SWAA, for assistance. The assistance include capacity building on how to manage the disease, access to counselling services and how to handle stigmatization and abuse. • One hundred and thirty (130) new clients were provided with psycho social support at FIDA with marital cases being the highest recorded. • One group counseling session was held for a group of eight (8) adult women at FIDA.
<p>Donor agencies</p>	<p>WOMANKIND</p>	<p>Promoting the Rights of Women Affected and Infected by HIV and AIDS. Ongoing/ Jan-Dec 09</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opportunity to make research findings available to various actors working on HIV/AIDS and the communities has highlighted the unique legal issues faced by women infected and affected by AIDS, which had hitherto been

	Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE)	2009 Grassroots Women's Land Academy brings grassroots women leaders from around Africa together to share strategies and innovations towards gaining and maintaining land for women. Ended/23rd &24th March 09	<p>unnoticed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It also succeeded in raising awareness that the legal framework can be utilized to reduce the risk of infection as well as protect the rights of infected and affected women. • The dissemination meetings enhanced networking amongst the service providers in each of the project districts, (DOWVSU, CHRAJ, Social welfare, the Judiciary, Legal aid Board, the health workers, NGOs working with PLWAs,) to ensure effective coordination in their responses to the needs of women infected and affected by AIDS <p>Provided an opportunity to build advocacy messages and forge ideas for further innovations. towards gaining and maintaining land for women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations included sharing strategies in securing and maintaining women's tenure over land and property through local-to-local dialogues held with local leaders and authorities, • established watchdog groups that raise awareness and community action in times of unjust evictions, • train community volunteers as community paralegals, equipped with the skills to settle land and housing disputes
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	OSIWA	<p>Improve access to court representation for indigent women. Ongoing/Jan 2009</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> educate community members on laws protecting women's rights to land and property. Four (4) women in Accra and Kumasi have been supported to send their cases to court. Thirty paralegals trained under this project in Teshie & Nungua have received fifty cases and successfully mediated on thirty two of the cases.
	CORDAID	<p>Improving women's access to justice in the North. -Ongoing/Nov 2009</p> <p><u>Objectives</u></p> <p><i>To provide increased legal aid services to women in the northern</i></p> <p><i>To promote women's empowerment and rights awareness through increased collaboration with the CAGs and SWGs.</i></p> <p><i>To strengthen FIDA's network of collaboration with chiefs and religious leaders to introduce human rights issues in their adjudications and sermons.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fifty cases reported from Jan –May 09 in the two offices. Feedback from clients referred to other law enforcement agencies, such as DOVVSU, Social Welfare and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice has revealed an improvement in the way and manner complaints are being received and handled. Number of complaints to these law enforcement agencies has increased by 30%.
	Women German Day of Prayer	<p>Provide legal rights education through mobile outreach to communities in the Eastern region. Started July 2009</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is expected that three hundred (300) women at the grass root level will be empowered to seek redress for rights violations they experience Four hundred and

	UNICEF	Provision of legal aid to women in Greater Accra Ongoing/Jan 2009	sixty six (466) women have received legal assistance during the period under review.
DA (please indicate district)			
Private Sector			

3. National pro-poor policies

Identified Policy Issue	Research activities in relation to the identified policy area	What are the policy gaps identified from the research conducted	What is your organisations position on these issues supported by your research	What policy alternatives do you propose and how do you hope to achieve this policy change
1. Legal solutions to problem encountered by women infected and affected by HIV/Aids	Research activities have already been carried out. Based on the findings, FIDA mobilised resources to begin to raise awareness of findings and advocate for policy changes where infected and affected women are concerned.	The research revealed that the human rights of HIV positive women were harder to achieve than men due to existing stereotypes, inequalities and patterns of discrimination against women.	FIDA believes that supportive systems for HIV infected and affected women are weak, and these women need to be encouraged to access the services of the court.	To advocate for a shift in judiciary process by advocating that HIV positive women have their civil cases heard in camera in order to encourage them to access the courts This will be achieved through dissemination meetings, policy dialogues and one on one meeting with the Minister of justice, Chief justice & minister of Women and Children Affairs
		Inability of women to access the justice system to prevent violations of		Policies and laws to support Legal aid programs. Such a policy will enable victims to be assisted

		their human rights especially property rights, personal rights and inheritance rights of children.		to seek justice in the country.
		The current legislation to protect the rights of PLWHAs does not go far enough to ensure that their human rights are not violated in relation to education, employment, free movement, free expression and privacy.		
2.Promoting Affirmative action policy with four women defenders of women's rights	Findings from Survey reports as well as post evaluation of the 2008 elections.	<p>Surveys highlight ed gaps that civil society groups could utilize in advocacy efforts and messages.</p> <p>Voting patterns/trends revealed that women do not vote for women candidates.</p> <p>The late timing of advocacy plans and projects meant that advocacy campaigns were implemented close to elections. This makes it difficult to try to change mindsets made up over a long period.</p> <p>Various interventions by women's groups such as awareness creation, sensitization and capacity building among others have helped increased the interest and confidence shown by women and other electorates in women's abilities to compete politically</p> <p>Interventions have also created an educated electorate,</p>	FIDA believes that sustained advocacy, and continuous engagement with government and political parties calling for an affirmative action policy is essential To see increased representation of women in decision making positions	<p>To advocate for the passage of an affirmative action policy.</p> <p>This will be done through Engagement with the President and sector ministries.</p> <p>The development Of brochures/Tracts/ simple messages to give out</p> <p>Engage with the party constituency chairmen (it has been observed that these chairmen/chairpersons wield a lot of power in primaries.</p>

		empowered female aspirants, and produced effective lobbying and advocacy skills as well as media skills.		
		government needs to be engaged on the need for an affirmative action policy, the electoral laws re-looked at to allow for zoning and move from first past the post to proportional representation.		

4. Success Story

Briefly describe your organisation's landmark achievement this period

The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategies (GPRS) of Ghana also recognises access to justice as a major prerequisite to achieving sustained poverty reduction and economic growth and are set to address these challenges.

Mobilisation of women to claim and defend their rights is essential in order to address these challenges and press for reforms, for the implementation of human rights and national legal instruments. This requires the capacity building of women in terms of literacy, legal knowledge and political participation.

These activities carried out, in all of FIDA's target areas in the five regions of the country is resulting in a shift in attitude and behaviour of community members towards women's rights. Women themselves are becoming outspoken, confident and vigilant thereby serving as a disincentive to abuse.

It is commonly noted that there is reluctance, particularly among the poor, to become entangled with the courts and/or its associate elements. This is sometimes attributed to the strong social stigma attached to any encounter with the law, no matter how innocent the one accessing it is. FIDA has been able to secure funds for two of its offices in the Northern region as well as the Accra and Kumasi offices where poor women can be supported financially to access the courts. During the period under review a total number of **six** cases have been sent to court.

Some significant case stories have involved HIV/Aids infected women. The dismissal of an HIV/AIDS female patient who worked in a hospital came to FIDA's attention. The client went to SSNIT to collect her benefits to enable her purchase some drugs. Officials of SSNIT requested a letter from her former employer to explain the reason for claiming her benefits. As the client explained her situation she was referred to FIDA for assistance. This case was successfully mediated upon. The client was not interested in re-instatement, however her employer compensated the client for wrongful dismissal.

In one current case, the client was forced to leave her marital home when her husband discovered she was HIV-positive. Because the husband refused to honour the invitation

to FIDA to participate in mediation, the case was sent to court. FIDA is providing the client with legal representation and the case is currently pending.

These cases are of exceptional interest as FIDA is currently engaged in advocating for the legal rights of women infected and affected by HIV/Aids to be respected and upheld.

During the 2008 elections the paralegals in Bolgatanga played a significant role in providing information to communities on the advantages of women's participation in politics. Despite the fact that none of the women contestants won in the Upper East Region, the number of people who voted for the women candidates in Bolgatanga was more than 8,000 as compared to previous figures of voters in the 2004 elections. This is very significant in a male dominated society.

Significant achievements in the Northern and Upper East region involves the growing emergence of the Community Aid Groups (CAGS otherwise known as paralegals) and Sister Watch Groups(SWG's) as a strong social movement at the grassroots. There is growing evidence that this is happening as the CAG's and SWG's identify and tackle problems such as school drop outs among girls.

For instance the SWG in Labotari in the Karaga District were able to save a girl from being withdrawn from school at the senior secondary level. The girl attended school at Nalerigu Senior Secondary but her father withdrew her from school claiming that his wife i.e. the girl's mother was pompous because every body in the village praised her daughter for her intelligent capabilities in school. The woman was also sent back to her parents' home as a form of punishment for her so called arrogance. Nobody in the village could convince the man to rescind his decision, not even the Chief, but the Sister Watch Group members were able to convince the man by providing him with information on the need to educate children especially the girl child. The father's attitude changed as a result of the information he received and the girl was allowed to return to school while her parents have reconciled.

Some of the chiefs' elders from some communities are part of the Sister Watch Groups who either help the CAGs in the mediation of cases or help the chiefs to resolve cases that are brought before them. Some have been appointed as advisors/counsellors to the chiefs to ensure that a human rights approach is employed in cases involving women. The Chief of karaga working together with one of his elders, himself a member of the sister watch group intervened in an alleged witchcraft case to save a woman from being tortured by her brothers who alleged that she had bewitched one of their brothers.

The formation of the SWGs and CAGs has affirmed the commitment of FIDA to make the programme community-based. This has helped in building a system that will be useful in creating an autonomous community centred process in the end.

One notable achievement was the participation by FIDA-Ghana at the UN conference on the Status of Women held in March 2009 in New York. The organisation was provided with an international platform to share its findings at two separate events on the Solutions to legal challenges facing Women infected and affected by HIV/Aids as well as a presentation on "Lessons from Africa" where FIDA-Ghana shared with the international audience, community responses to reducing violence against women and the incidence of HIV and AIDS

5. Stakeholder Perception

How has the credibility and legitimacy of RAOs changed in the eyes of GoG and the Ghana public? What is your interpretation? Is there a reference to this evidence of change?

FIDA-Ghana's capacity to engage at the social, legal and political levels has increasingly enhanced its position in the country. At the national level FIDA has managed to attain strategic positions as members of various coalitions such as the Domestic Violence Coalition, Netright, Wildaf and as the NGO nominee represented at the Government's National Domestic Violence management board as well as members of the Board of the National Population Council.

The credibility and legitimacy of FIDA is evidenced in its active participation in various consultative processes by donors and civil society groups. Reference to this is its participation in a consultative meeting with CIDA to fashion out mechanisms in addressing constraints facing NGO's and to contribute towards CIDA's future direction. FIDA was also invited to participate in Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) second Women's Land Academy, which brought grassroots women leaders from around Africa together to share strategies and innovations towards gaining and maintaining land for women and to input into the Five year strategic plan of LAWA and the DV Coalition.

Secondly, as a result of the organisation's position, advocacy work with state actors involved in service delivery to women has often resulted in improved and quality services from the state's legal and law enforcement institutions. FIDA recognises that the most effective way to implement legal reform is to do so within the context of a coordinated community response. That is, legal professionals need to communicate and cooperate with medical professionals, social service agencies, the police, CHRAJ, Legal aid Board and other domestic violence advocates. Therefore advocacy work directed at these actors has proven to be the most effective way to promote victim safety and offender accountability.

Indeed clients who have suffered rights violations have often reported of prompt response to their cases by law enforcement agencies.

An example is the case of a widow in Tamale, who was arrested by the police because her neighbour falsely accused her of assault. When the case was reported to FIDA, the organisation managed to withdraw the case from the District police to DOVVSU where police had been trained to handle domestic issues, and the issue was amicably resolved.

An analysis of the evidence shown above indicates that when state actors realize that civil society organisations is playing its watchdog role, in monitoring its activities and that any slackness on their part will come up for public scrutiny, such state actors tend to make significant contributions in offering protection for victims of rights abuse.

Local women NGOs regularly consult with FIDA to make presentations, and share their experiences at such platforms. These meetings have served as channels to build consensus on the problems of women and draw up strategies on how to address them.

FIDA-Ghana has become well known for its legal aid program and advocacy work. It has a long history of activism which has made FIDA-Ghana "influential" and distinguishes it from many other burgeoning women's movements in the country. But more important for the organization is its ability to improve the individual lives of women in the provision of free legal aid and court representation to indigent women.

During the period under review, five hundred and eighty two women (582) from all the

five legal aid and paralegal centres had benefited from legal aid. Whilst six cases are currently pending before the courts, and one case has been litigated on, and client has received compensation from her divorced husband.

6. What is your perception on the general policy making environment in Ghana

Civil society organizations have generated information and ideas, formulated strategies and debated on what the circumstances are concerning issues that could shape or strengthen policies to ensure its effectiveness. Civil society's role in these deliberative processes has proved to be important contributions in determining policy formulation and changes.

Despite civil society's role in the provision of knowledge relevant to policy and provision of venues in which stakeholders and other important actors can carry on the necessary deliberation, the political context maps onto policy making. Institutional pressures and vested interests in particular affect government capacity to adequately respond swiftly to calls for policy reform.

Although, there is a recognition that policy development and implementation take some time, experience in Ghana shows that this process is particularly slowed down by bureaucrats who feel that they do not have the authority to take decisions. There is a focus on their limitations instead of the scope of their authority. This attitude impacts on the length of time involved in the implementation processes that are required to move the policy issue from one official to the other, which civil society may have identified as being important in improving the lives of people.

While independent financial support from donors to Civil society groups to conduct research and present information about 'best practices' or the way in which similar problems have been addressed in other places provide independence and leverage to civil society, this is often misconstrued by public officials as undue interference in the governance system by donor countries.

Notwithstanding, there are still opportunities for engagement with relevant state and non state actors in fashioning out policies or making relevant amendments where necessary. This has largely been so, as a result of the improvement in the political context.

State actors have often responded quickly to concerns from civil society groups when they have been accused of limited broad consultations with civil society in the formulation of policies. Government departments have also been engaging members of civil society groups as facilitators to develop policies or to track, monitor and evaluate the impact of policies.

Defenders of women's rights have in the recent past been forming partnerships and coalitions to give them greater credibility and legitimacy with policy makers. Such efforts have not been without challenges.

Women groups advocating for affirmative action measures visited the President early March to remind him of his promise to promote women's participation in public life. When appointments of Municipal and District Chief Executives two months after clearly showed that this promise will not materialize, the women adopted a strategy to openly

protest on the streets. Pressure from politicians and interest groups effectively stopped this process.

7. Grant and report related issues

7.1 What issues do you wish to raise relating to the Grant or to G-RAP management?

I believe the meeting with the PMT team on 22nd of July helped to clarify issues and I hope such meetings will be sustained in future programming.

7.2 What parts of the report are confidential or cannot be shared without prior consent?

Every portion of the report can be shared without prior consent.