



Action on African
Women Foundation
Ghana

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE), 2016

PRESENTED TO THE

UNITED NATIONS
GLOBAL COMPACT



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**The Secretary-General
United Nations
Headquarters, New York
USA**

Dear Sir,

Women constitute over 60% of the world's population. Women engagements in the world's affairs remains invaluable significant for social transformation and development. Throughout the world, women, especially, in Africa, are the main economic drivers in the home. While few supports their husband to keep a home, majority, in most cases become the source of livelihood for their homes and families.



Recognising this plain truth, Action on African Women Foundation-Ghana (AAWF-Ghana), resolves to focus on helping women in Africa better position themselves so as to be able to play their roles in national development through their active participation in policy decisions and other economic activities within their home communities, countries, and across the African continent.

Over the years therefore, AAWF-Ghana has been working very closely within women in Ghana in areas that further showcase their invaluable talents and empower them to continue doing what has been recorded in history as their strength.

Our considered view is that this partnership we have signed on with the Ghanaian women will go a long way to help them improve the lives and livelihood of their families, communities and regions and also help promote the collective aspiration of the UN Global Compact principles.

AAWF-Ghana signed up to the 10 principles of the UN Global Compact in 2008, and we are determined to helping the global community implement and advance these cherished principles with the view to advancing the cause of humanity.

In this Communications on Engagement (COE), I report on our activities over the years in accordance with the UN Global Compact. Terms of engagements.

I also present the Foundation's outlook for the future, as we endeavour to pursue a gender-based programmes, building closer relations with counterpart institutions and the business community as we collectively aspire to promote the ten principles of the Global Compact on Human rights, Anti-Corruption, Labour and Environment.

By this COE, the Foundation wishes to reaffirm its commitment and support for the Global Compact and will continue to work in partnership with the United Nations towards the achievement of the collective goal.

Isace Kweku OTCHERE
Executive Director.
Accra- Ghana, January 27, 2016



1.0 ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

Action on African Women Foundation, Ghana (AAW F, GH) is a Community Development oriented, not for profit organization which focuses on Strategic Business and Enterprise Development potentials of women and youth to promote their empowerment and poverty reduction. The organization was formed in 2006 by Mr Isaac kweku Otchere a social development practitioner.

1.1 Objectives

- To enable young women to participate effectively in the planning and decision making process of their communities.
- To recognize the infirmities of middle-age women and adolescent girls for their own social and economic development and that of their communities.
- To engender development potentials of women entrepreneurs/ agri-business and entrepreneurship programs that enhance empowerment creation, increase income levels of rural and peri-urban women entrepreneurs as productive segments of their families and communities.
- To support in promoting gender-based policies and programs to ensure national development.

1.2 Overview

Ghana's commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as prerequisite for its ability to attain middle income status by 2015 and 2020 respectively is widely shared by stakeholders in both governmental and non-governmental organizations. Late last year, the world reconvened in the New York Headquarters to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), made up of 17 targets to be met as a move to consolidate the gains of the MDGs. The MDG 3 is focused on removal of gender inequalities and empowerment of women.

Ghana's Medium-term National Development Policy Framework identified women, especially, food crop farmers among the poorest socio-economic group who need to be assisted and guided to take their footing and supported in ways that empower them to take charge over their own lives and that of their dependants. (AAWF, Gh) is poised to work towards achieving this goal through its community-driven participatory processes on capacity building of the informal sector, which houses women and creating employment opportunities for youth empowerment.



1.3 Activities

AAWF-Ghana activities are geared towards shaping the creativity and skills of women and youth in deprived communities of Africa through advocacy, awareness creation, sensitization, skill training and best farm practices. AAWF-Ghana also provides platforms for community durbars to promote information sharing and acquisition of knowledge useful for participation in decision making.

Program Areas

- Activities to strengthen the service capacities of women entrepreneurs and youth
- Capacity building activities of service providers
- Promotion of modern agricultural practices through training to promote economic development
- Leadership training and development





2.0 MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

Action on African Women Foundation carried out the following activities and also participated in some activities, in strict compliance with the ten principles of the Compact, with the view to promoting these principles of the Global Compact adopted in 1999 thereabout, which aimed at bringing business together with UN agencies, labour, NGOs and other civil-society actors to foster partnerships in the pursuit of a more sustainable and inclusive global economy.

2.1 Poverty Reduction and Economic Empowerment

Action on African Women Foundation Ghana, from 2007 to 2012, carried out a Social Inclusion Transfer under the urban poverty reduction project, funded by the African Development Bank, in the Tema Metropolitan Assembly and Gomoa West District Assemblies in Ghana. Women were registered, including the girl-youth and were assisted with credit as seed money for their chosen business. The project covered 581 people in Tema Metropolis and 540 in Gomoa District in which 80% of target beneficiaries were women.



This is in conformity with the UN principle for the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. In most communities in Ghana, the perception still exists that women are not eligible for certain jobs, occupation and officialdom. This intervention aimed to contribute towards the reduction of poverty and the creation of equal employment or engagement opportunities in our communities. The programme took participants through a wide range of topics including the erroneous impressions about why women should not accept or be allowed to have access to certain employment opportunities and personal hygiene practices.

The Foundation also embarked on a social intervention program to improve socio-economic conditions of rural and peri-urban poor settlements in Tema within Greater Accra region and Apam in the Central Region from 2007 – 2008. This was a participatory management, job creation, public-private partnership and good governance project at the grass root level.

Currently, The Foundation is embarking on a nationwide capacity building and sensitisation programme for rural women in entrepreneurship. The project has just taken off in the Central Region and it is still at the consultation stage with key stakeholders.



2.2 Women in Agriculture and Small-holder Farmer



The Foundation continues to empower women in various capacities. In 2012, the Foundation provided agro-based training and advisory service to rural women in some cocoa growing areas in the Twifo-Hemang Lower Denkyira District in the Central Region. These training programmes, in our view will help improve their understanding of the art of farming or being a small-holder farmer in a country, where many are not keen in accepting agriculture as permanent occupation. These training, have so far proved some useful results as more women are eagerly taking up farming at their local levels as a means of livelihood, if the enabling environment is being created for them/.

2.3 Sanitation and Human Rights

Sanitation remains one of the critical concerns of the world and this why it has been captured in both the MDGs and SDGs for the world, especially, developing countries to improve on it. The Foundation, in accordance with the Global Compact, Principles 7,8 and 9, mobilized over 120 Muslim women in Ashaiman, a peri- urban community in the Greater Accra Region, where women play key roles in sanitation and family health to undergo various workshops in sanitation or environmental related programmes. The Foundation met women groups on weekly basis to carry out education on sanitation, human rights, HIV/AIDS, violence against women and Girl Child Education. Abuse against women, especially, domestic violence against women in particular remain significant in those communities. Low Girl-child education is still being fought in most communities, as the menace still persists as well as the stigma on women or persons living with HIV/AIDS continue to threaten communities and families and the victim, in particular. These advocacy and awareness programmes were pursued in line with these issues in the area.



As part of various interventions, Action on African Women Foundation is in negotiation with a Chinese based Company Yuan Alvares, a manufacturer of low cost sanitary pads for distribution to rural women in deprived communities throughout Ghana and beyond. As part of the package, women will be identified as distribution outlet points to take delivery of some of these low cost but highly quality sanitary pads sell and make returns to the Foundation. The move is to cure the perennial problem of non-availability of sanitary



pads in most rural communities in Ghana.

There are empirical evidence for providing free pads to senior high schools in Ghana by Government. It is good to have policies that are based on research. Due to experience as a national service personnel teacher at Keneshie Kingsway and Kpeve Secondary Technical, I know the difficulty girls go through where there are no toilets. I am also aware of the stigma they suffer when they soil themselves due to lack of sanitary pads, etc. (Mr. Kenneth Ashigbey, MD, Graphyc Communications Group, 2014).

In rural Ghana and across most African countries, women, especial female adolescences observing their menstrual periods struggle to keep their dignity and personal hygiene in order to go about their daily responsibilities. In fact, most traditions prohibit them from participating in normal family activities during their menstruation periods because they are considered impure. They cannot attend school and are forbidden from socialisation.

When Barclays Paul Okjari was still studying for a bachelor's degree in France at the University of Nairobi, in 2011, he volunteered to teach at a Girl High School in Narok, a small town in south-western Kenya, to boost his resume and improve his future job prospects. While at the school, Okjari discovered that a large number of the girls repeatedly missed classes. On making a few inquiries, he learned that a large number of the girls, many of them from impoverished rural families, usually opted to stay at homes during their monthly periods as they could not afford the regular pads manufactured by large consumer goods companies (Forbes.com, 2014).

An awareness creation and advocacy programmes for Women, girl child and the youth in Tema and Ashaiman on human right issues and violence against women through community durbars for market women, opinion leaders, traditional authority, departmental heads of the various assemblies and other CSOs was carried out. Indeed, the Foundation organized counselling sessions for women and youth in Tema and Ashaiman whose rights had been violated through sexual abuse and wife-battering.

2.4 International Fora Participation and Domestic Familiarizations



The Tema Municipal Assembly sponsored our Foundation for its effective collaboration with the Assembly to represent the Assembly at UNCTAD 13 Conference in Doha, Qatar. This participation offered significant opportunities for the Foundation to build closer collaboration with other institutions and individuals. In the area of labor, the Foundation sponsored 45 women to Coca Cola to familiarize and learn on firsthand how the Company is adhering to the 10 principal of the Global Compact. The Foundation continue to actively engage in both local and international conferences. 2014 the

Foundation was the sole Ghanaian NGO to have participated in the UN South-South Cooperation Conference in Qatar, Futur Active



3.0 THE FOUNDATION'S OUTLOOK FOR 2016/2017 OPERATIONAL YEAR

The Global Compact encourages innovation, creative solutions and good practices among its participants. Going forward into the future, Action on African Women Foundation Ghana will continue to pursue gender-based programmes and projects with the view to aggressively promoting the ten principles of the Global Compact.

According to the Compact, "An important emphasis of the Compact is on promoting corporate change through the use of a learning approach that facilitates discussion between the various parties and that builds new partnerships for implementing future projects. Going forward, the Foundation will partner institutions, focusing on the fight against corruption and promoting best practices in corporate offices using advocacy. We will also pursue anti-social exclusion, sanitation and poverty reduction campaigns, as well as advocate for the promotion of human rights, especially, of women and children. The Foundation is determined to do these within the constraint of limited resources. In our considered view, the promotion of these ideals will go a long way to help nations, communities accelerate development and significantly improve the lives of communities and their people, especially, the vulnerable.

3.1 AAWF-Ghana Policy Commitment

The Foundation strongly believes in responsible in integrity, ethical behaviour and full disclosure to promote transparency. We also cherish the rights of others and the independence of sovereign nations or states. While we continue to uphold these cherished values, we will also speed up the game to promote these values across businesses.

