



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN LAWYERS (FIDA)



2021 FIDA ANNUAL REPORT

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OUR WORK IN 2021

In 2021 donors recognized the need to change their focus area and have projects that will directly deal with the rise in gender based violence as reported in the media. New projects brought some innovation to the work of FIDA and this included a hotline service, podcast and jingles giving information as to where to seek redress for rights violation.

The **SAVE** project was ending and the project looked at the preventive measure through the application of protection and occupation orders. **PLAN** International projects also looked at the official updates by the President on **COVID** 19 whether it included protection measures for women and girls with or without disability during the pandemic.

STAR FOUNDATION from the angle of providing information to the general public through technology by airing the podcast and jingles in four different languages to reach a wider audience, the hotline to bring access to justice to the doorstep of the vulnerable. The media advocacy made access to justice accessible to all in three regions.

The **WAGE** project with funding from **OSIWA** looked at the emergency preparedness of the state in handling gender based violence during a pandemic.

LEGAL AID

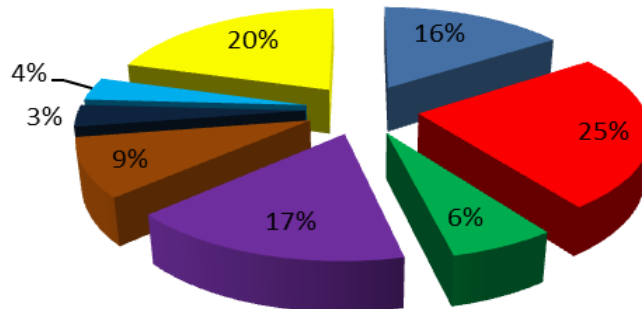
OVERALL CASES IN 2021

Breakdown of cases handled in 2021 under the various categories of cases handled by FIDA, this includes both old and new cases and cases handled by our community paralegals and the ones received on our hotline and other social media outlets.

MAINTENANCE	94
MARITAL	149
COMPENSATION	38
ESTATES	102
LEGAL ADVICE	56
WALK IN	21
HOTLINE	22
PARALEGALS	124
TOTAL	606

2021 CASES

■ MAINTENANCE ■ MARITAL ■ COMPENSATION ■ ESTATES
■ LEGAL ADVICE ■ WALK IN ■ HOTLINE ■ PARALEGALS



SUCCESS STORIES FROM LEGAL AID

Client lodged a complaint at FIDA that her husband, who was a prophet, was allegedly flirting with his church secretary and therefore wanted a divorce and compensation from him. FIDA invited her husband (invitee) for mediation. After months of mediation, both parties finally agreed to dissolve their marriage and the invitee to compensate client. At the end of the mediation process, the client was compensated with a plot of land and the invitee is providing regular financial support and maintenance for their children.

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In another case, the client reported that a piece of land she owns and has built a foundation on has been occupied by someone else. FIDA invited the occupant and he confirmed it and also stated that his wife runs a kiosk on it. FIDA gave him options to either move away or pay for the foundation. After the mediation process, invitee agreed to pay an amount of 1,000 Ghana Cedis to client and has paid seven hundred Ghana Cedis for now. The outstanding balance of three hundred Ghana Cedis was paid by invitee's wife after a month's time.

In another case a complainant client lodged a complaint about the lack of maintenance of her child by the child's father. FIDA called upon the father of the child (invitee) for a mediation session. According to complainant, she got pregnant two years after she met the invitee, only to realize that he was a married man. After childbirth, the invitee was performing his responsibilities as a father until he stopped all of a sudden. During the mediation process, the invitee alleged that complainant kept calling at his house for trivial and unimportant reasons which disturbed his

KUMASI –LEGAL AID CASES 2021

The Kumasi office of FIDA-GHANA is a legal organization that helps those who cannot afford legal representation, mainly women and children in the society. The Kumasi branch of FIDA is one that is focused on addressing discriminatory practices in the society and promoting and protecting the rights of women and children in Ghana.

The Kumasi office of FIDA-GHANA is under the administration of, Miss Helina Opoku-Acheampong. The types of cases that came to the centre in the year 2021 were:

- Marital issues
- Intestate
- Maintenance
- Custody
- Compensation
- Debt
- Abuse

There are two categories of people that come to the centre for help:

- Those that come to the office merely to seek legal advice;
- Those that come for their cases to be attended to by the centre

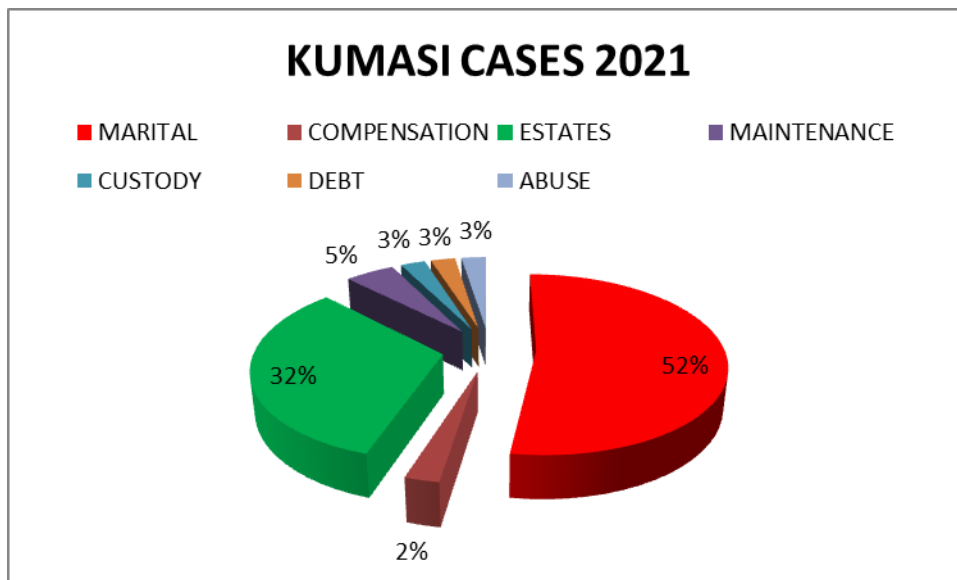
EMERGING ISSUES

During 2021, the main complaints brought to the Kumasi office of FIDA-GHANA involved marital and property issues. This might be attributed in part to the fact that the office has been working hard to educate women about their rights during marriage, and in case of divorce, as well as educating the general public about the rights of children.

CASES

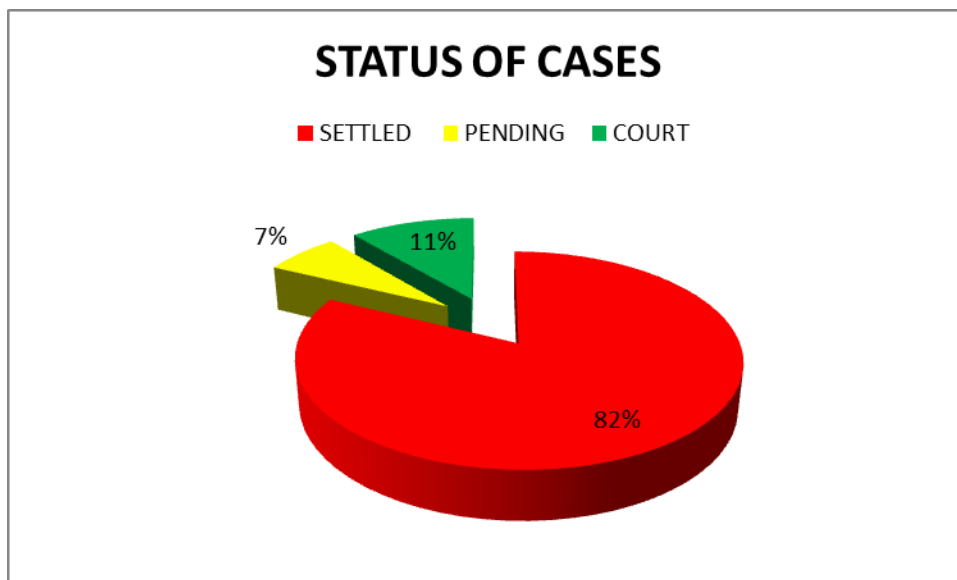
In 2021, the Kumasi office of FIDA-Ghana handled 40 new cases. The following table provides an indication of the clients that were assisted.

MARITAL	21
COMPENSATION	1
ESTATES	13
MAINTENANCE	2
CUSTODY	1
DEBT	1
ABUSE	1
TOTAL	40



The Kumasi office of FIDA-GHANA handled 40 cases. 82% of the clients assisted were female and had 17.5% of male bringing their cases.

The table below is the status of the cases that was handled at the legal aid department.



REFERRALS

The following table provides an indication of cases that were referred to and from the Kumasi Office of FIDA-GHANA in 2021.

	Cases Referred to Kumasi Office of FIDA-GHANA?	Cases Referred from Kumasi Office of FIDA-GHANA to another organisation?
January-December	Cases referred from DOVVSU 5	-

COURT REPRESENTATION

In 2021, the Kumasi office of FIDA-GHANA took five cases to Court on behalf of clients respectively. All these consisted of 5 marital cases which were settled at the High Court Adum Kumasi.

LEGAL OUTREACHES, LECTURES AND RADIO INTERVIEWS

In the year 2021, the office of FIDA had a great exposure and opportunity to educate people on various topics on TV, Radio and church platforms. As results of this outreach programs, the office recorded an increase in cases especially that of marital.

The table below shows a number of outreach programmes done in the year 2021 under review.

DATE	PROGRAMME
29 th November-2021	Went to a church to educate them on Property Right Of Spouse/Interstate Succession Law
24 th September -2021	Domestic Violence on Utv
3 rd June -2021	Went to a church to educate them on marriage laws
13 th August – 2021	On radio to discuss domestic violence
15 th July -2021	Gender equality discussions on TV
2 nd September – 2021	Wills Act (Church program)
23 rd May – 2021	Domestic violence (Church program)

SIGNIFICANT CHANGE STORIES

The following tables contain some cases that were successfully handled by the Kumasi office of FIDA-GHANA in 2021.

In March 2021, a female complainant made a complaint about her husband who she has been married to for 11 years under customary law. They have 3 children. She had been abused
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severally by the husband which led to her hospitalization on one occasion. Client wants divorce by virtue of the fact that the husband has gone ahead to impregnate another lady and is cohabitating with the person. Her husband is reluctant to compensate and leave the marriage. After a successful mediation, the invitee agreed to compensate the complainant by begging the office to ask her client what she would take for compensation after divorce.

Due to FIDA's timely intervention, the client who was in an abusive marriage is now free and has been compensated after the divorce. The ex-husband provides maintenance for the children they also have a share in the house that they both built.

In November 2021, a female complainant who has been married under ordinance for 15 years brought her issue to the office that the husband is engaging in extra marital affairs. Client mother was ill which led to her staying with her mother for some time. Complainant said during her absence, the home that they had both together had become a brothel as her husband kept bringing in different women. Client has been talking and begging to husband to stay away from such behaviour but all to no avail. When the invitee honoured our invitation, he was initially difficult, but after three mediation visits, he agreed to stop the womanising and signed a memorandum of agreement to seal it. Client had lost all hope, but due to FIDA-Kumasi successful intervention, she now lives peacefully with the husband.

[FIDA/OSIWA](#)

END OF PROJECT REPORT FOR SAVE

The SAVE Project Is a new and different way that FIDA-Ghana addressed violence. Through a combination of new media tools, a baseline study, legal aid, advocacy campaigns and

strengthening of inter –institutional coordination at both national and district levels, SAVE improved the justice journeys of **1,877** female beneficiaries, exceeding more than five times the targeted figure of 350 female beneficiaries.

The project’s three-way approach: that is protection, prevention, and justice services to sustain actions on violence prevention are parallel to OSIWA’s priorities to ensure equal access to justice to the vulnerable and benefitted **577,904 persons more than twice the targeted figure of 216, 391**. Beneficiaries comprised of women, community members, policy makers, state actors, community paralegals and male beneficiaries. The break down of the quantitative achievements is found below in Table 1.

OVERALL QUANTITATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

Out of the total beneficiaries of **577,904** a total number of 180, 109 persons benefitted directly from the project, whilst 397,795 persons benefitted indirectly from the project. The pod casts, media advocacy sessions, face book live streaming of the national summit contributed to the significant increase in direct beneficiaries

Table 1

STRATEGIC APPROACHES	DIRECT BENEFICIARIES	INDIRECT BENEFICIAREIS
LEGAL AID	1, 877	5,631

KAATAHE/OUTREACH	2,954	5,908
PODCAST ON APPLICATION OF PROTECTION ORDERS	6,613	13,226
POSTERS	1,600	6,400
FACTSHEET	300	600
STATE ACTORS	235	940
PARALEGALS	30	90
FACEBOOK LIVE STREAMING OF NATIONAL SUMMIT	500	
MEDIA ADVOCACY	166,000	365,000
TOTAL	180,109	397,795
OVERALL TOTAL		
		577,904

QUALITATIVE PROGRESS

Objective 1- To build and collect evidence for advocacy through research and innovative use of SMS platform to collate electronic evidence and feedback of quality of justice services.

Progress made towards achieving objective 1

❖ *Evidence based report generated to advocate for the application of protection/occupation orders and the implementation of free medical care under the Domestic violence Act, 732*

- ✚ The availability of data reflecting the gaps in the implementation of the Domestic violence Act before the initial two year start of the SAVE project enhanced the evidence base for advocacy, starting the process of change. Concrete provisions of the DV act of Ghana that are germane to the protection and security of women and girls such as the protection and occupation orders are largely unknown to state actors particularly staff of the Domestic Violence Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU). The findings together with its recommendations on decentralizing the domestic violence fund and placing free medical fees on the National health insurance scheme triggered broader discourse and media discussions as dissemination of the study was widely shared to state and non- state actors beyond the project areas, reaching more state actors beyond the intervention sites.

Achievement

Interviews with 50% of staff of DOVVSU officers who participated in the project, showed that the information gained had been used to provide protection orders for three (3) women by the Adenta DOVVSU coordinator.

"A 30 year old woman with two children was continually subjected to emotional violence, threat to harm her, constant and persistent calls by her partner of 8 years. As a result of the information gained on protection and occupation orders under the DV Act I reached out to FIDA - Ghana to assist the complainant obtain a protection order, that will keep the perpetrator a safe distance away from his spouse. The order was given by the judge and the survivor has not received any more threats or telephone calls from the perpetrator." Adenta DOVVSU Coordinator

- ✚ The impact of public awareness campaigns also triggered a campaign by a Ghanaian lawyer. The lawyer's status stimulated a social media campaign to advocate for the free medical care

under the DV Act¹. Various statements by lawyers and women's rights activist's speaking out against the injustice of the medical fees has been widely circulated in the media. Notable amongst advocacy efforts was the call from a former executive director of FIDA-Ghana, advocating for the government to implement the free medical care under the DV Act.² The campaign initiated by the Ghanaian Actress has metamorphosed into a Coalition for Survivors of Domestic Violence comprising of various professionals, who actively engage the media and continue to draw on the expertise of its members to provide both legal, psychosocial and financial support for survivors of domestic and sexual violence³.

- ✚ As a result of the media visibility surrounding the dissemination of the evidence base data, Action Aid Ghana collaborated with FIDA-Ghana in December 2020 to organize a National level training and reflection meeting on domestic violence (DV) gender- based violence (GBV) for state and non-state actors
- ✚ The research findings sparked interest within the donor community and other agencies working on gender-based violence, which opened another door for FIDA to share the research findings to the Gender group of Donors such as Canadian International Development Agency, CIDA, UNFPA, UNDP and the EU.

✚ **Progress made with the Web/ Whatsapp platform**

The Kakum web was created and linked to the web site of FIDA Ghana, a WhatsApp platform was also created to encourage increased reports, as fewer women were reporting cases via the internet. A total number of **52** cases were reported via the WhatsApp and a toll free number that was set up during the COVID 19 lock down.

✚ **Progress made with Policy dialogue to disseminate the research findings**

State actors included the Judiciary, representatives of DOVVSU, health institutions, Domestic Violence secretariat, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social protection, media women's rights organizations, representatives of UNFPA and paralegals gained knowledge on the gaps in the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act. The dissemination session set the path towards strengthening coordination with various state actors, where each state

¹ www.reuters.com 7th Aug 2020, www.globalcitizen.org:rape

² www.asaaseradio.com

³ Fees deny victims of sexual violence justices- Coalition for Survivors against domestic violence www.graphic.com.gh Sep 14th 2020

actor recognized that their prompt attention to referrals of cases of domestic violence is linked to a strong coordination of their services. This resulted in the creation of a WhatsApp platform among the state actors present to facilitate quick responses to cases which ultimately led to the improvement of the justice journeys of survivors of domestic violence.

Achievements

- ✚ UNFPA has replicated the use of social media tools in supporting the Domestic violence secretariat under the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection to address gender-based violence. The Boame mobile app was developed in 2020 but launched on 11th March 2021⁴. UNFPA representatives who participated actively in all of FIDA's engagement sessions expressed an interest in the Kakum web application and sms platform under this project. Based on FIDA's concept, the Boame mobile app was developed and has a network of professionals such as legal, and health, representatives including psychologists. The Boame app is currently part of the work of the Domestic Violence Secretariat. The professionals respond to calls of assistance from survivors of domestic violence through a toll-free number placed to the mobile app.
- ✚ Increased awareness of utilizing the provisions under the Domestic Violence Act regarding protection and occupation orders, has resulted in its application by state actors such as DOVVSU to assist women to apply for protection orders.

Objective 2- To empower 350 women to exercise autonomy to access justice by applying for protection and occupation orders under the DV Act and access to Legal Aid Services

Progress made towards achieving objective 2

- ✚ ***1,877 women benefit from legal aid, court representation, and apply for protection orders***

A total number of one thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven, (1,877) persons have benefitted from legal aid support, provided by community paralegals and legal aid officers. Legal aid officers coached clients to self-represent in court, and assisted clients to apply for protection orders to ensure their security and safety from domestic violence. **The total number of beneficiaries represents over a 100% increase over the stated figure of three hundred and fifty women (350)**

Out of the total number 18 women were coached to represent themselves at the district courts. Eighty five percent of the 18 cases were divorce cases, whilst the remaining 15% comprised of custody of children and access to property.

⁴ Boame in the local Akan dialect means help me

Two (2) women applied for protection and occupation orders

As indicated in fig 2 above, data for protection and occupation orders is negligible, with only seven women making applications. This is disappointing, as the issue of prevention of domestic violence was linked to the application for protection orders. It clearly points to the dependence of survivors of domestic violence on their male perpetrators for financial support. Reluctance by women to apply for the protection and occupation orders is attributed to their fear of losing child support and financial support for themselves. Notwithstanding this challenge, Paralegals and Legal Aid officers provided legal support, advice and coaching to clients which improved their justice journeys and impacted on their livelihood.

Progress made in creating Podcast

The podcast has been a valuable tool in disseminating information on the application of protection and occupation order, which had 6,613 views. The repeated viewing and distribution on various platforms locally and at the African regional FIDA conference in Nigeria, increased the impact of FIDA's advocacy efforts on the application of the protection and occupation orders in court. Legal aid officers of FIDA who viewed the podcast have also updated their knowledge on the legal processes and procedures and made references to it when they assisted clients to apply for it in courts.

Progress made with “Kaatahe” conversation in the communities

A milestone achievement under the community conversations or Kaatahe conversations is the establishment of strong social networks within the community⁵. A twenty-one, (21) community watch dog group to watch out for women and prevent domestic violence was formed in one of the communities in Ga East. It is evidence of strong support for the safety of women and girls, whilst fostering a shared community ownership and responsibility necessary to create long-term social change.

Objective 3: To build consensus and support of 200 duty bearer to strengthen multi-agency coordination to advocate for the implementation of free medical treatment under the DV Act and trigger increased application for protection / occupation orders.

⁵ Kaatahe- is a local Ga dialect spoken by the people in the Ga East communities. It means do not accept the status quo”

Progress made towards achieving objective 3

Publication of Fact sheets

Five hundred (500) copies of factsheets printed and disseminated to state actors provided an overview of research findings and recommendations to facilitate easy reference. Interviews with 10% of state actors indicated that contents have been helpful for quick reference. The fact sheets have also been used by trainers from DOVVSU and the Judiciary in training a total of **160** state actors.

Progress made with Developing of protocols for multi-agency coordination

Hundred (100) copies of protocols for multi-agency coordination on domestic violence cases developed and printed to build consensus and support from duty bearers to improve multi-agency coordination. Furthermore, the protocols aided advocacy for the implementation of free medical treatment in the DV Act and also raised consciousness on the application of protection and occupation orders as an alternative remedy to addressing Domestic Violence. The handbook prioritized the physical, cultural and emotional safety of survivors amongst others, and was shared with 35 state actors who deal with domestic violence cases.

Progress under Radio call up programs.

Radio has been instrumental in assisting women to reach out to community paralegals with their legal challenges. Seventy percent (70%) of beneficiaries interviewed indicated that they obtained legal assistance through radio programs. Apart from assisting women to locate help, it also facilitated the sharing of information to a wider audience beyond the project areas.

Box 1

Salome has been married for the past 8 years with two boys. “We lived happily, but my husband made some friends and started changing. He was always seen with friends and chilling with other girls. He was not also taking care of the boy’s school fees and I had to take up the burden on my own. I heard the number of the paralegals on radio and decided to call them. This was because I was at my wits end. I was losing weight and we were always fighting. The paralegal responded and scheduled an appointment with me when I called her. She met with me and assured me that she would meet with both of us. After the mediation, my husband changed so quickly. He now takes care of the school fees and the home. I am pleased with the change that has occurred.”

Box 2 Case study

I have been married for the past 22 years to my husband without any formalisation of the marriage, with three grown up children aged between 22, 18 and 16 years. I asked my husband to formalise the marriage union and this created a rift and I packed out of the marital home and he refused to take care of the children. I then heard of the paralegals on Oman Tv and called. One of the paralegals picked the phone and I made my complaint. He came home and spoke to my husband. He has now agreed to formalize the marital relationship by the end of the year.

Progress made Regarding the National Summit

The focus of the National Summit was to use the outcomes of the project to catalyze the discourse regarding the free medical care under the Domestic Violence Act. The format for the conference was changed as having seen the opportunities that live streaming events during the COVID 19 pandemic allows a larger virtual audience to participate in the discussions at less cost. The Panel discussion focused on the “Implementation of free medical care and protection and occupation orders under Domestic Violence Act”. The objective was to highlight the lapses and effects of enforcement of laws under the domestic violence Act. Speakers are listed below.

Speakers on the panel were: *Latifa Abogo Saddique from the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection, Lawyer Irene Abochie Nyahe of the Coalition of Survivors of Domestic Violence; Nana Akua Asamoabea I –(known in private life as Regina Quansah and also a FIDA paralegal, Doctor Michael Atiso (Medical Doctor at the Madina Poly Clinic) and Superintendent Sophia Ennin from the Madina division of DOVVSU*

Vibrant discussions took place and proposals that were provided have been categorized under three main headings, health, legal and financial.

HEALTH

- ✚ Lack of knowledge on the Hospital fee act, means Health workers should be sensitized on the Hospital Fees Act 387, Section 3 and Section 8.
Though some doctors claim the medical fees is meant to pay for fuel to courts to testify, the Lawyer proposed that doctors can be reimburseed for transport cost from the Court Registrar
- ✚ Suggestion for a separated department in hospitals to facilitate free medical treatment for survivors.
- ✚ Intensify campaign to support survivors of DV who are persons with disabilities.
- ✚ Have regular meetings with doctor's caucus
- ✚ Campaign for private sector establishment of one stop DV stop in other regions of Ghana apart from the one being built in Accra with support from UNFPA.

LEGAL

- ✚ Empower and institutionalize paralegals in all districts of the country to provide support to survivors.
- ✚ DOVVSU, Police personnel and Police Training School must be provided with copies of the DV Legislative Instrument (L.I)

DV FUND

- ✚ Decentralize the DV fund
- ✚ Campaign for resourcing the DV Fund.
- ✚ Hotline for Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and DOVVSU must be widely publicized

Achievements under Objective 3

- ✚ Two hundred and thirty-five (235) State actors as against the targeted figure of 200 benefitted from policy dialogues, dissemination of research findings, and the national summit.
- ✚ Media Advocacy, particularly radio assisted 50% of women interviewed during monitoring visits to reach out to the community paralegals to seek legal assistance.
- ✚ A strong community support watching out for domestic violence presents opportunities to replicate under future projects
- ✚ Information and Communication materials distributed among the participants on safety tips when confronted with domestic violence and the protection orders resulted in massive knowledge gained among members of the communities.
- ✚ The distribution of literature on human and women's rights in its community outreach programs. ensured a wider circulation of the literature produced beyond the target areas.
- ✚ The use of social media such as face book to live stream the national summit was hugely successful, as an online audience of 500 both locally and nationally joined to listen in and ask questions.
- ✚ Finally, the National Summit has been timely, amidst the wake of increased domestic violence and intimate partner violence between March and April 2021 resulting in the deaths of fourteen women. Above all it provided the opportunity to deepen calls for the implementation of the free medical care and to share information regarding the Hospital Fee Act 387, 1971 which is a significant tool in addressing free medical care for survivors of domestic violence.
- ✚ The summit re invigorated the discussions on the free medical care and its link to prosecution of domestic violence. See the following online articles
 - I. "FIDA Ghana urges government to provide free health care for victims of survivors of DV" www.modernafricaonline.com
 - II. "Get out and share your stories"-Lawyer tells victims of domestic violence www.modernafricaonline.com
 - III. "FIDA Ghana campaigns for free health" asempanews.com/fida-ghana-campaigns-for-free-healthcare/
 - IV. The news was also carried on two broadcast stations, namely Tv 3, TV Africa and two local radio stations.
 - V. The print media Daily graphic

- Engagement with Hospital Administrators on the Hospital fee act 378
- Advocacy on the implementation on the protection and occupation orders with DOVVSU must be sustained in other future work.

ISSUES NOT EXPECTED

- ✚ The breakout of COVID 19 was so unexpected. It halted outdoor activities and in person engagement meetings because of restrictions due to the lock down around March 2020 last year.
- ✚ Despite the disadvantages of engaging with large numbers of citizens, FIDA leveraged technology during the implementation of the National Summit at the end of the project implementation, and was able to reach 500 online audience and 50 participants within the conference facility.
- ✚ Survivors of domestic violence are often reluctant to apply for protection or occupation orders because of the weak community and institutional support.
- ✚ During project implementation precisely last year the Ghana Medical Association increased medical fees to be charged by its members by almost 400%, this covers medical reports required by survivors of Domestic violence.
- ✚ There is still no budgetary allocation in the national budget for the Domestic Violence fund.
- ✚ The justification provided by Health personnel regarding medical costs for domestic violence survivors contrary to the provisions under the DV Act. The costs are deemed essential by Health Staff in order to pay for medical supplies applied to wounds of survivors of Domestic Violence

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✚ Appropriate technology must be applied to suit the targeted audience to ensure its effectiveness.
- ✚ The use of technology as a key driver for reaching clients and for clients to access free legal aid services, and to engage with state actors emerged as a new and innovative way to deliver services in times of emergencies,
- ✚ Technology's potential to demand accountability from state actors may not have met the targeted expectations under this project as envisaged. However it is still relevant, and FIDA believes this can be replicated with young people whose fascination with

technology makes them a potential target in demanding feedback and accountability from state actors.

- ✚ FIDA has certainly learnt that the profile of the audience must inform the kind of technology to be applied under any project.
- ✚ Information sharing is critical in domestic violence programs. Such information must target all the state actors and duty bearers including health personnel, faith-based institutions, police investigators and police prosecutors as well as the Judiciary.
- ✚ Massive and continuous education in innovative ways the Domestic Violence Act in the communities deepens awareness of the protection and occupation orders.

Strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the Project.

- ✚ **Threats-** Initially, FIDA envisaged Community back lash, where community persons particularly men will feel that addressing violence challenges their masculinity as they feel it is their entitlement to treat their spouses as they want. However, this has not been the case as demonstrated by the community watch group which comprises of 65% men watching out for women's safety against domestic violence.
- ✚ **Threat** – Reluctance to access services from DOVVSU- It was anticipated that women will be reluctant to access services from state actors, this also changed as the DOVVSU staff in the targeted areas showed an improved understanding of protection and occupation orders. What remained unchanged was the reluctance of a mass of women to apply for the protection orders.
- ✚ **Threat-**Limited literacy levels was expected to threaten the increased reportage of cases and feedback via the sms platform, this changed as WhatsApp was included to the social media tools.
- ✚ **Strengths-**The opportunity presented to use mobile phone technology exceeded expectations as UNFPA decided to assist the Domestic Violence Secretariat with the Boame Application as stated earlier.

PROGRESS REPORT ON FIDA/PLAN GHANA PROJECT

The Gender And Transformative Equality Sustained (GATES) under the WVL project was implemented In Greater Accra in the La-Nkwantanang district in Madina and Weiija-Gbawe in the Ga South Municipal Assembly targeting women with or without disability.

The GATES project worked closely with one principal state institution that is Social Welfare and community development with the focus on their basic mandate of integrating the disadvantaged, vulnerable, persons with disability and the excluded into mainstream society.

Objectives of the Project

- 1) Improved Gender responsiveness and protection measures for women and women with disabilities by Social Welfare and DOVVSU.
- 2) Improved Justice Journeys for 200 women and gender excluded groups through the provision of Legal Aid.

ACTIVITIES OF OBJECTIVE 1

Objective 1 Improved Gender responsiveness and protection measures for women and women with disabilities by Social Welfare and DOVVSU

Conduct evidence based research on inter-institutional gaps between Social Welfare and DOVVSU available

- 1) The findings of this baseline study provided empirical evidence to suggest solutions that address data documentation gaps and service provided by DSW in their work with the gender and socially excluded target group of women and women and girls with disability. Gaps highlighted from the **evidence-based research** of Social Welfare which showed lack of data to capture the extent and nature of violence offences against persons with disability especially women and the weak institutional coordination between DOVVSU and department of Social Welfare have formed the basis of advocacy and sensitization meetings between DOVVSU, Department of Social Welfare and other state actors, such as the gender ministry and other duty bearers.




Recommendations included the following:

- a) The Department could improve the documentation at the district level by ensuring that the SWIMS is strictly implemented at that level. In this regard, the M&E team must ensure that it conducts routine checks to identify and resolve problems with the SWIMS immediately when it is fully implemented in all 260 districts of Ghana in 2021;
- b) The Management Information System (MIS) officers and data entry clerks at the three levels of data collection and management should also ensure that documented cases can be disaggregated according to measures such as sex (to distinguish between males and females), age (to be able to distinguish between children, young and old people) and disability status (to be able to focus on the

GESI target groups); There is also a need to strengthen inter-agency collaboration in terms of data sharing and management (especially in the case of referrals) to improve coordination and maximize the use of available ICT resources.

- 2) One day **capacity building** for state and non-state actors on the disability toolkit and in applying the feminist principle FIDA engaged a person with disability as part of the resource team. This facilitated an interactive session where state actors sought to have a better understanding of disability issues. They also had gained knowledge through research findings of the gaps identified and recommendations on how they can effectively collaborate and work in assisting women and women with disability to access justice. The session revealed that the main issues reported by persons with disability is most often financial and this can be attributed to the dependence on the disability common fund. There is an urgent need for a lot of sensitization of the mandate of social welfare, which includes mediation of cases and to encourage women with disabilities to report any form of abuse
- 3) **Lobbying of Social Welfare hierarchy-** The social welfare information management system, (SWIMS) which was highlighted in the research findings was finally rolled out in the sixteen regions. There are huge expectations that it will contribute to the generation of accurate data and at the same time capture the trend of complaints which can be easily disaggregated. Training of social welfare staff in the 16 pilot areas have been completed.

Progress Towards Project objective 1

-  Evidence based recommendations formed the content of advocacy messages in media interactions, engagement with state actors and informed discussions to improve the disability awareness of duty bearers.
-  One day **capacity building** for state and non-state actors was facilitated by a person with disability who improved disability awareness of state actors. They also had gained knowledge through the research findings of the gaps identified and recommendations on how they can effectively collaborate and work in assisting women and women with disability to access justice.
-  **Lobbying of Social Welfare hierarchy-** The social welfare information management system, (SWIMS) which was highlighted in the research findings was finally rolled out in the sixteen regions. There are huge expectations that it will contribute to the generation of

accurate data and at the same time capture the trend of complaints which can be easily disaggregated.

ACTIVITIES OF OBJECTIVE 2

Objective 2 - Improved justice journey for 200 women and gender excluded groups through the provision legal aid

- 1) **Provision of legal aid** :Legal aid was provided to women with or without disability that visited the FIDA legal aid. Community members were also assisted by community paralegals to assist them with their legal challenges. Legal aid was also provided to those who were out of reach but called the hotline to receive advice. Currently, 11 cases were reported through the hotlines. 100 % were directed to report to the FIDA legal aid centre for assistance. Cases reported through the hotline included, marital, child maintenance and property and inheritance cases.
- 2) **Review meeting for paralegals** – During the course of the project implementation a review meeting with **community paralegals** provided the platform for reflection and addressing challenges that had emerged during project implementation. Recommendations that emerged included stronger collaboration between both groups of community paralegals, and a focus on enhancing and strengthening disability awareness of radio audiences.
- 3) **Media and Community outreach** by paralegals and legal aid officers – Media activities and community conversations continued to focus on creating a supportive environment and promoting positive norms from a rights-based perspective that protects and promotes the rights of women and women with disabilities. It also provided an opportunity to raise community consciousness of disability and its intersection with gender inequality. Stronger partnerships between the paralegals with disabilities and those without disabilities has been forged and it is anticipated that this will be sustained for future work.

Progress Towards Project objective 2

Provision of legal aid: *A total number of 443 cases were received, exceeding the projected figure of 200 by 45%* Legal aid was also provided to those who were out of reach but called the hotline to receive advice. Currently, 22 cases were reported through the hotlines. 100 % of all cases were directed to report to the FIDA legal aid centre for assistance. Cases reported through the hotline included, marital, child maintenance and property and inheritance cases. Sixty five percent (65%) of cases reported through the hotline have all been successfully mediated on, whilst the remaining 35% are still on going.

CHANGES IN CONDITION OR WELL BEING OF BENEFICIARIES

- ✚ Some state actors and duty bearers have shown increased commitment to address legal challenges of the primary beneficiaries this has translated into improved protection measures thereby improving the condition and wellbeing of beneficiaries whose legal challenges have successfully been addressed.
- ✚ Likewise, the availability of a community responsive mechanism, has empowered beneficiaries to report their legal challenges, which contributed to transforming their state from a place of helplessness to a state of hope. The availability of helplines has provided beneficiaries with a prompt and easy way to access legal advice and help which has improved their well-being.

Unintended Outcome (Positive)

The joint paralegal group outreach program was effective as the group was able to learn from each other and have a better understanding of the challenges, again the community members appreciated the barriers persons with disabilities face in accessing justice and how individuals in the communities contribute to it.

Project Impact on organizational capacity

The PIAP process was very significant and important to members of the Board, staff, partners and volunteers of the organization. FIDA mapped out its weaknesses and strengths and identified areas that needed to be improved upon. It also helped the organization to prioritize its needs and what immediate actions it needed to undertake to enable them to reach or attain the goal we set for ourselves.

Success stories

***CASE STUDY 1-**Complainant reported that her husband was subjecting her to domestic violence and not taking care of the children as well. FIDA invited her husband for a mediation session. After the mediation session, the invitee agreed to fulfill his duties by catering for the needs of the children. He rented a place for his wife and children and also provided business capital for his wife to operate provisions shop.*

***CASE STUDY 2-** Our client reported that her husband was not consistent with their child's maintenance. FIDA invited her husband for a mediation session, the invitee agreed to pay 300*

Ghana cedis monthly instead of 200 Ghana cedis to cover the child's transport cost and communicate with the client for the sake of their child.