

## OUTREACHES

### International Women's Day

In commemoration of the 2020 International Women's Day (IWD), the Human Rights Advocacy Centre (HRAC) through its Human Rights Clinic, organized an outreach for **150** students of O'Reilly Senior High School (SHS) on Tuesday 10th March, 2020. The event which was held under the theme "*An Equal World is an Enabled World*" (#EachforEqual) reached the school's Forms one and two students. The aim of the outreach was to challenge social norms that perpetuate inequalities and help students think critically about them, whilst equipping them to identify and help combat gender inequality in their communities and school. Discussions comprised gender inequality, its manifestations and the steps participants could take as teenagers to remedy them. The choice of O'Reilly SHS was informed by the need to reach and empower less privileged and



neglected SHS in vulnerable communities in Accra, Ghana.



The discussions highlighted the importance of partnership, collaboration and solidarity between men/boys and women/girls in creating social change. These efforts will require powerful female advocates and powerful male allies to change opinions and create lasting and sustainable change. The students were engaged in interactive activities including identifying their role models, their biases regarding gender and formulating plans of action to address gender related issues.

At the end of outreach, the students shared that they valued boldness, conviction and courage in women and would want to emulate those traits. The outreach also increased the level of awareness of the subtle forms of gender inequality within their school, homes and communities and how to advocate for change.

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND LEGAL EDUCATION

### Right-Based Approach to Mental Health Workshops

Under the Star-Ghana funded project "*Promoting quality access to mental healthcare and rights of persons with mental disabilities in traditional mental*

*health centres in Ghana*" we conducted the last in a series of ten (10) workshops each for nurses and operators of traditional mental health centres (TMHC). The workshops were held in Sege in the Ada West District in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana on the 21st and 22nd of January, 2020. The aim of the workshops was to improve human rights conditions at the TMHC through effective collaboration between the orthodox and unorthodox service providers. The purpose of the trainings was to build the capacity of mental health service providers on rights-based approach to mental healthcare within the context of the Mental Health Act 2012, the national Guidelines for Traditional and Faith-based Healers, which was launched in December, 2018 and national and



international human rights laws. The workshops reached **twenty-nine (29)** nurses and **thirty-two (32)** operators of TMHC.



## RESEARCH

### Launch of Research Report

The HRAC and MFGh (STAR-Coalition on Mental Health) under the project “*Promoting quality access to mental healthcare and rights of persons with mental disabilities in traditional mental healthcare centres (TMHC) in Ghana*” embarked on a research to explore the role of traditional mental health centres and their impact on promoting quality mental healthcare and human rights in Ghana. The research assessed the quality of care offered



by operators of TMHC, variation in service provision, regulations and their adherence to human rights practices for the treatment of persons with mental disabilities in TMHC. The research was conducted in ten (10) districts selected from six (6) zoned regions of Ghana.

The STAR-Coalition launched the research report on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2020 at the Ghana Academy of Arts and Science, Accra. The event had **forty-five (45)** participants from

both State and non-State stakeholder institutions and the media.

The Chairperson for the launch Dr. Akwasi Osei, the Chief Executive of Mental Health Authority, Ghana remarked that Ghana has received worldwide commendation for incorporating faith-based practitioners in mental healthcare delivery system. Other activities at the event include a brief presentation on the key findings and recommendations of the research by the research consultant Dr. Gina Teddy and delivery of solidarity messages by some key stakeholders like the Ghana Health Service and Ghana Federation of Traditional Medicine Practitioner’s Association (GHAFTRAM). The presentation on the key findings and recommendations emphasized the need to build the capacity of key actors, such as teachers, traditional and religious leaders and caregivers, and embarking on intensive education to reduce stigmatization of persons with mental disabilities/illness. Dr. Lily Kpobi from the Department of Psychology, University of Ghana who launched the Research Report commended the STAR-Coalition for the rich content of the Report and expressed the hope that it will contribute to mental health service provision and future research in mental health. Dr Kpobi launched the Report with support from Dr. Osei, Ms Cynthia Nimo-Ampedu, Executive Director of HRAC and Mr. Nii Lartey Addico, Co-Director Director of MFGh.



In his closing remarks, the Chairperson called for the full implementation of the recommendations and mental health laws in Ghana. He also highlighted some of the challenges of sending mental health care to the community level and the need for the Mental Health Authority to collaborate with traditional and faith-based healers in providing right-based mental health service in Ghana.



## COMMUNITY DURBARS

### Mental Health Sensitization Durbar

The STAR-Coalition held a community durbar in Jasikan, Oti Region in January 2020 as part of community awareness activities under the project “*Promoting Quality Access to Mental Healthcare and Rights of Persons with Mental Disabilities in Traditional Mental Health Centres (TMHC) in Ghana*”. The aim of the durbar was to sensitize the community and garner support for protection of the human rights of persons with mental disabilities under the theme, “*Promoting the wellbeing and rights of persons with mental disabilities: It could be me! It could be you!!!*” **One hundred and fifty-two (152)** community members were reached with information on the law on mental health in Ghana, causes of mental disabilities and available health facilities for treatment of mental illness at community/district and regional levels.



The durbar received immense support from both State and non-State actors in mental health and leaders and members of the community, including the District Chief Executive, traditional and religious leaders, District Director of Health Services, District Director of Ghana Education Service (GES), District Director of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). Also participating were the Heads of invited Junior and Senior High Schools, elders of the Jasikan Traditional Council, Assembly Men, market women, trade unions, dressmakers, operators of traditional and faith-based healing centres, Department of Social Welfare and Community Development

The durbar activities included drama, cultural display, panel discussion and an open forum. In his closing remarks, Mr. Albert Ntoso who chaired the event thanked all for participating and urged the Government to prioritize mental healthcare by providing adequate mental health nurses and facilities. He also called for the continuous training of traditional and faith-based healers to ensure the rights of persons with mental disabilities are always protected.

## HUMAN RIGHTS CLINIC

In the first half of 2020, the Human Rights Clinic received sixteen (16) complaints. In accordance with the operation of the Clinic, complaints are either addressed in-house, referred to responsible State institutions or the Clinic's Pro-bono Lawyers Network. Below is disaggregated data on complaints received.

