WOMEN IN ENERGY CONFERENCE II

30th November – 2nd December 2020

Theme:

Women in Energy: Building Resilience and Growing Our Strengths

Labadi Beach Hotel | Accra, Ghana

Moderators and Facilitators

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Ms. Joyce Ocansey   USAID Power Africa's West Africa Energy Program (WAEP)

Mrs. Rosemond Asamoah-Frimpong   GSI Manager, Electricity Company of Ghana Ltd (ECG)

Mrs. Ivy Mawuko   Head for Africa, Learning and Development, Stanbic Bank

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Rapporteur: Adwowa Boohene

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ACRONYMS

CEGENSA	Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
DP	Development Partner
ECG	Electricity Company of Ghana Ltd
EKEDC	Eko Electricity Distribution Company
GSI	Gender and Social Inclusion
GhIE	Ghana Institution of Engineering
GPCIMP	Ghana Power Compact Internship & Mentoring Program
GRIDCo	Ghana Grid Company
Gridlass	GRIDCo Ladies' Association
GSA	Ghana Standards Authority
GSI	Gender and Social Inclusion
IBEDC	Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company
ICT	Information and Communications Technology.
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
LEC	Liberia Electricity Corporation
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MiDA	Millennium Development Authority
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEDCo	Northern Electricity Distribution Company
NGO	Nongovernmental Organisation
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UMaT	University of Mines and Technology
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VRA	Volta River Authority
WAEP	West Africa Energy Program
WFH	Work from home
WIE	Women in Energy
WinE	Women in Engineering

DAY ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Women in Energy Conference (WIEC II) is part of the Ghana Power Compact (Compact II) activities under Institutionalizing Gender Responsiveness in the Power Utilities, and MiDA's contribution to the progression of gender equality and social inclusion in the Energy Sector in Ghana towards the achievement of SDGs 5, 7 and 10.

The Women in Energy Conference held in 2020 (WIEC II) under the theme ***Women in Energy: Building Resilience and Growing our Strengths"*** builds on the successful maiden Women in Energy Conference (WIEC I) organized by MiDA in 2019.

1.1 CONFERENCE OBJECTIVE

WIEC II was organized to promote networking amongst participating organizations, exchange knowledge as well as share experiences and best practices of Female Employee Associations and related groups in the Energy sector, to build clout for the advancement of gender equality and social inclusion in Ghana's power utilities.

It was also an opportunity for MiDA to update stakeholders and participants on the Ghana Power Compact Internship and Mentoring Program's (GPCIMP) Sustainability Strategy which aims at finding sponsors and implementers to carry on the Internship and Mentorship program for female students from universities and technical institutes pursuing STEM courses when the Compact ends in September 2021.

1.2 PARTICIPANTS

The Conference was a combination of in-person and virtual participation. Over 150 participants from both public and private Energy organizations, alumni of the Ghana Internship and Mentoring Program (GPCIMP), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and representatives of MCC, USAID WAEP, and USAID Engendering Utilities partners in the West Africa sub-region were present on-site and virtually to give presentations or join discussions.

1.3.0 OPENING AND KEYNOTE ADDRESSES, MESSAGES

1.3.1 Opening Address

The opening address was given by the CEO of MiDA, Mr. Martin Eson-Benjamin who reminded participants that in line with the theme of the maiden conference last year, they had spent their post-conference time growing their strengths; this year, their focus will be on building resilience.

Resilience, he said, allows us to effectively carry on despite adverse circumstances and is very much needed presently. COVID-19 has thrown an unprecedented curveball, and organizations and their employees have had to quickly adapt as best as limitations imposed by the pandemic would allow. There are new challenges and gender balance is still lagging. The compact needs to focus on reforms to achieve the right gender balance within the energy sector, in line with (i) SDG 5 - *achieving gender*

equality and empowering girls, (ii) SDG 7 - *ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all* and (iii) SDG 10 - *reducing inequality within and among countries*. MiDA worked with ECG on these during last year's conference, with the promise to come up with strategies for female associations.

Mr. Eson-Benjamin was also hopeful that what has begun at ECG with the gender audit, gender policy, and institutional strengthening, will be emulated by all in the sector.

1.3.2 Messages

There were messages from CEOs of Energy organizations GRIDCo, VRA, Energy Commission, and ECG; and the Ghana Employers Association.

GRIDCo affirmed their support of more women taking up higher management and leadership roles in line with the worldwide call for gender balance and diversity. She argued that after all, during this covid-19 pandemic, it is the countries with female leaders that have fared best. The gender gap has to be closed. Florence Adjei represented the GRIDCo CEO, Jonathan Amoako-Baah.

VRA's CEO Emmanuel Twum Antwi-Darkwa's message highlighted the effect of the pandemic on the workforce and business practices, and the need for resilient business models and mindsets. He contended that the virtual office is here to stay; and for Women in Energy (WIE) to be resilient, the right mindset and psychology are required. This type of resilience can be innate but can also be learned and cautioned against unpreparedness for change. Citing the effect of the pandemic on the travel and tourism industry as an example, Women in Energy organizations were advised to be tech-savvy, update skills and stand up and be counted. VRA is committed to employing at least 10 female engineers by 2021, based on expertise. The CEO's message was relayed by Dr. Stella Agyenim Boateng, Deputy CEO.

Energy Commission's Head of Human Resources, Judith Ron Oppong-Tawiah, read a message from their CEO who emphasized that resilient women bring about social inclusion and productivity; therefore, WIE needs support to build resilience and navigate their work-life balance efficiently. To build resilience, women need strong values and must have the ability to improvise, find solutions, make meaning out of hardships and bounce back solidly.

ECG's message was given by Ing. Kofi Afewu, Director for Corporate Affairs who also oversees the Gender and Social Inclusion Unit. They launched a Gender Policy this year to advance gender equality and diversity. They also have two strong female associations; one founded in 1998 to promote skills development amongst its members, and the other, *ECG-Women in Engineering,* was launched 3 years ago to raise women of power in various engineering disciplines. He stressed that gender inclusion is not about feminism or putting women over men, but about equality. Hence, ECG seeks constant improvement and excellence in women. The organization now has 2 women in top management positions. He concluded that constant improvement and excellence are what is needed for women to be resilient.

The Ghana Employers Association gave the last message. The address, read on behalf of the Association's President by Ms. Victoria Hajar (2nd Vice President), reiterated the importance for women to be given the opportunity to perform in the entrepreneurial space. They appealed to MiDA to integrate the Female Program which was formed in 2019 into their programs. "Women have always formed an integral part of change. There needs to be a strong will to include women." MiDA was commended for its work on Women's issues.

1.3.3 Keynote Address | Women in Energy: Building Resilience and Growing Our Strengths

The keynote address was given by Prof. Aba Bentil Andam; *former President, Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences (GAAS).*

Professor Aba Bentil Andam; former President, Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, began her keynote address by highlighting the importance of women's economic empowerment which she said is fundamental to achieving women's rights and gender equality. It is also central to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG 1, 3, 5, 8, and 10) and closing the gender gap in the workplace.

She explained that Education is key. It is, therefore encouraging and noteworthy that in tertiary education, the University of Ghana exceeded their female intake in the 2019/2020 academic year, bringing their female student population to 51.49% that year.

Interestingly, she noted, in the rural areas women hold a lot of economic and social power and this ought to be emphasized internationally. However, in the Energy sector, gender diversity problems exist in all three major stages of a female employee's career cycle. Engineering firms need to promote engineering courses to females.

Why Women Still Lag Behind in the Energy Sector

Prof Aba Andam expounded on why women still lag behind in the Energy Sector. She said that although there are several reasons for women lagging behind in the Energy Sector, cultural & societal norms and education are the leading factors that ultimately negatively impact career progression.

Cultural and societal norms continue to influence how children are raised. The woman as primary caregiver is limited by cultural and societal expectations which impact the way she raises her children. Boys are raised differently from girls, even by women who want gender and social inclusion.

This filters into education where girls are directed along specific 'gender conformity' paths, away from STEM programs. In the home, the mother raising her children without basic scientific knowledge will not inspire and direct her daughter on a STEM path.

Systemic and cultural challenges prevent women from taking up leadership positions in the clean energy sector and this makes recruitment of females difficult.

Furthermore, women self-sabotage, using their husbands and children as an excuse not to advance themselves education or career-wise.

How to be Resilient

Prof. Bentil Andam offered some solutions and suggestions for women to build their resilience. She covered the areas of education and socialization (which go hand in hand), systems and policies, and the individual.

Education and Socialization

According to Prof. Bentil Andam, our education and socialization must change to reflect the desire for gender parity in STEM careers. Educate the woman as a primary caregiver and domestic scientist to appreciate her actual power and influence at home when it comes to shaping her children's future. If the mother can explain the science behind everyday chores and activities at home, she can inspire and encourage her sons and daughters to believe that science is not the preserve of boys alone. Raise girls

to be as curious in sport and play, as boys are. Break down the structural and cultural challenges which prevent women from taking up leadership positions.

She also tasked women to identify self-sabotage mindsets and not use obligation towards family as an excuse to delay the pursuance of career advancement through further education.

Closing the gender gap in the Energy Sector

Energy firms have a responsibility to attract females into the field through the promotion of engineering courses and activities, like contests and competitions geared towards high school female students and women already studying engineering. Recruitment campaigns are also a practical way of attracting females into the field and closing the gender gap.

Workplace

Policymaking – workplace policies are for accountability and should protect the rights of women. Gender responsiveness should be institutionalized since gender equality is about men and women working productively together. Women should not be divisive or work against their superiors. Work to make everyone fall in line with policies, she advised.

In summary, if women are to be resilient, the following must be done:

- Educate the woman.

The question of how WIE can be resilient hinges on education. Education is key. Educate the woman, educate the nation. As Dr. Kwegyir Aggrey said, "The surest way of bringing down a people is to educate the men and neglect the women. If you educate a woman, you educate a nation". Educate the woman.

- Hold science clinics for girls.

The GES Science Clinics of the late 80s were successful in getting more girls into science courses. It was through these science clinics that the Department of Physics at KNUST finally started getting applications from girls. Now girls apply and gain admission into the physics department.

- Encourage co-ed; educate girls with boys.

This is important for girls, especially in the teenage years. It helps dispel the mentality that certain courses or careers are for boys only.

- Avoid self-sabotage.

Women must advance their careers through further education and not use their responsibilities at home (husband and children) as an excuse to remain stagnant.

- Engage policymakers.

In the workplace, women can have a lot of influence with the right outlook. Be respectful, not abusive. Engage policymakers in a way that gets their cooperation and work to make everyone fall in line with policies.

The keynote address resonated well with the audience.

1.3.4 Address by Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection

Hon. Cynthia Mamle Morrison, Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection in a solidarity message, assured conference participants of her focus in pushing the Affirmative Action Bill through. She asked that Women in Energy should also focus on rural women, build strong partnerships and mentor younger women and girls.

1.4.0 SESSION 1 – BRIDGING THE GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE

1.4.1 Presentation on "Women in ICT Space in the Energy Sector: Policy Issues"
Ing. (Dr. Mrs.) Enyonam Kpekpena, Manager, ICT PM, Electricity Company of Ghana

From a brief background given by Dr. Enyonam Kpekpena, participants learned that ICT started from WWII and has evolved from huge machines which occupied large rooms, to the sleek desktops, laptop,s and tablets we use today. Internationally, there are not many women at the forefront of the ICT industry but throughout its history, landmark progress in ICT has all been by women. Ada Lovelace is considered to be the first computer programmer. Since then, the early 1800s, although largely underrepresented, women have been at the forefront of some major ICT milestones.

In the Ghana case, she presented statistics of women in ICT from ECG (13.07%), Bui Power (14%), and GSA (26%) to illustrate her point. Clearly, there's a gender and skills gap which needs to be bridged. Women need better representation in ICT.

She noted cultural and religious reasons, among others, as key to the gender deficit in ICT in the Energy sector. Dr. Kpekpena added that the focus should be on parents to change mindsets. In the workplace, lack of access to professional development and the speed with which technology evolves have also made it difficult to fulfill the gender quota mandate for women.

Dr. Kpekpena made the following recommendations towards the formulation of policy for WIE, ICT:

- Ensure equal remuneration and benefits for both men and women.
- Provide well-defined, well-established career paths for women.
- Establish work from home.
- Address inequalities in education by improving access to funding, offering internships, scholarships, mentorships, and industry programs.
- Promote women on women mentorships. Fear of sexual harassment is a barrier to men mentoring women.
- Implement strategies that promote female career progress and showcase the achievements of women in ICT.
- Take advantage of organizations' capacity-building programs.
- Make available broadband internet in every home.

Dr. Kpekpena concluded her presentation by emphasizing that mentorship is the foundation for building a strong women's network in ICT and should be promoted. She charged women in ICT to showcase themselves and inspire others.

1.4.2 Panel Discussion on Experiences from the Field: Challenges, Gaps, Best practices, and the Way Forward

Moderator: *Mrs. Genevieve Mante,* Head, Material Science Department, Ghana Standards Authority (GSA).

On the panel were representatives of the ICT directorates of ECG, *Luvinia Sandra Atsu*; VRA, *Anna Bama-Awun; and* GRIDCo, *Naa Ayikailey Okletey*, and *Ing. Salma Adam*.

The panelists agreed that the importance of ICT cannot be overemphasized. Companies and organizations would not have survived the spontaneous compulsory lockdown and work from home requirements brought on by the covid-19 pandemic without ICT support. Everything from work, school, shopping, and more, has changed to embrace more online transactions during this period. Therefore, it has become imperative to bridge the gender digital divide to include skilled women.

Challenges

Women face tough challenges in ICT right from the educational level. Very few girls study computer science and it is common to find only one girl or a maximum of 3 girls in a class. Even then, they drop out before graduation. The boys feel threatened by the girls and exclude them from study groups, and create a discouraging environment that is not conducive to learning.

Speaking from personal experience, Ms. Atsu disclosed that at the university, all study was theoretical and she obtained her degree in computer science without once working with a computer or laptop. The STEM courses, especially mathematics, were not taught well; the lecturer did not encourage questions and it was impossible to understand. In the end, she had to change from Calculus 2 to Arts to pass well to move on to level 3 and eventually graduate.

The common experience shared was that the few females who graduate, find it difficult to get jobs in ICT and end up in other fields. Those who end up in ICT do not get many opportunities for career progression, unlike their male counterparts. Men with the same qualifications and job description are quickly promoted and given job titles to foster career progression whilst their female counterparts may work for years with the same job title and at the same career level. For example, the woman will have the job title of "*Programmer*" while the man is given the job title "*Systems Analyst*" which carries more weight and remuneration.

Women face micro-aggressions at work daily. At meetings, women are automatically selected to write minutes whilst some men refuse to work under women or participate in training courses with female leads. Also, external consultants automatically gravitate towards men even when they are not as qualified as the female head. Furthermore, getting projects that are headed by women approved is always a challenge unless one gets backing from an advocate.

Women are not acknowledged or recognized for their work and venturing out independently is hindered by lack of access to finance for women-led start-ups, as Ing. Adam found out when she tried to get funding for a start-up.

Bridging the Gap

Suggestions were made on how to bridge the gap in the areas of education and workplace programs.

Education at all levels is essential: The education model must change. At the tertiary level, students should be given feedback forms, preferably online, so they can relay constructive feedback about courses they undertake. It is a good way to find out how students are getting along in class. Training methods should be gender-sensitive and females should be rewarded for their achievements. Teachers should be gender-sensitive and not openly discriminate against female students. Girls' education in ICT should be prioritized.

Gender Sensitization Programs like what VRA has, make the work environment more conducive for women and help women work more productively. For instance, a workplace with a nursery for lactating mothers is ultimately cost-effective and is worthy of consideration.

Mentorship is essential. Women should help themselves by putting in the extra effort to bring other women along. The cry to foster teamwork goes beyond associations. The role model system helps other women aspire to greatness in a male-dominated space; so women in positions of influence should mentor younger ones.

This session ended on the consensus that to bridge the gender gap in ICT for WIE, a more concerted effort has to be made in educational programs and work policies, which vigilantly promote the inclusion of women in ICT.

1.4.3 Skills Building: Training on Information Technology and Virtual Conferencing Tools

Trainer: *Ms. Joy-Eugenia Quarshie*, *GRIDCo*

In this session, participants benefited from training on Information Technology and Virtual Conferencing Tools. The objective of the training was to take conference participants through some of the best cybersecurity and teleconferencing tools.

Ms. Quarshie offered a list of reliable teleconferencing tools: Teams, Zoom, Skype, Google Meet, Slack, GoTo Meeting, Cisco Webinar Meetings, Discourse, WhatsApp, and Telegram. She cautioned participants to choose a teleconferencing tool with good security. An efficient teleconferencing app must be cost-effective and have user-friendly interfaces, a good privacy policy, mobility, cross-platform accessibility, and video conferencing features.

Internet dependency can be a disadvantage but teleconferencing tools do provide the advantage of increasing communication across departments, pooling wider stakeholder/audience engagement, growing collaboration and saving costs.

Some of the risks organizations must guard against are exposure to cyber hacking, increased workload through more online hours, distractions from surroundings (at home), and meeting bombing.

She gave the following security tips for safe teleconferencing: Meeting organizers should set up passwords, verify the list of attendees, verify meeting link, get regular application updates from the vendor, keep confidentiality, review security settings regularly, keep children secure, and report suspicious activities.

For work teleconferencing, virtual meeting etiquette has to be observed. Agree on meeting rules before the meeting starts. Remember, minimizing the screen does not shut off the camera, so manually turn the video off to stop others from seeing any private moments during the meeting. Be professional, dress appropriately, check surroundings before putting video on, turn off the microphone when not speaking so background noise does not disturb the meeting. Introduce new members to the meeting. Inform members, if the meeting will be recorded. At the end of the meeting, wrap up, summarize and thank all.

1.4.4 Day One Closing

Ms. Naa-Aku Acquaye-Baddoo, a Development Practitioner and Independent Consultant wrapped up the day's sessions. She presented participants with the following questions aimed at guiding their reflections on Day One's activities/sessions.

1. Which voices have we not heard today? What questions might they be asking?
2. Did you feel particularly confronted by anything you heard today? Why?
3. Did anything trigger ideas about something that you can start or do?

DAY TWO

2.0 REFLECTIONS ON DAY ONE

Ms. Naa-Aku Acquaye-Baddoo, *Independent Consultant*

Before the second day's sessions began, conference participants engaged in an activity of reflection on the previous day's sessions based on questions given at the end of day one.

1. **Which voices have we not heard today? What questions might they be asking?**

   Conference participants said they did not hear from or about their male counterparts, marginalized women (domestic violence victims, women on maternity leave, etc), and the youth.

   o Men might be asking why they act the way they do and may benefit from knowing that women are looking to work together, not fight.
   o Marginalized women may be asking what other women are doing about domestic violence, the inadequate 3-month maternity leave, and if the state machinery can be used to make them comfortable.
   o The youth may be asking why decisions are being made for them when they are not in the room.

2. **Did you feel particularly confronted by anything you heard today? Why?**

   Some felt convicted by the charge not to resort to self-sabotage (use their husband and children as an excuse) not to move forward and resolved to do better for themselves. Others learned from the ICT training on teleconferencing etiquette and the advice to minimize mistakes, face reality and move on appropriately. Still, others learned from the keynote address; women are domestic scientists and competent.

3. **Did anything trigger ideas about something that you can start or do?**

   Some pledged to take up mentoring, starting at home with their daughters and following it through in the workplace.

   A participant who had met a 65-year-old woman doing an MPhil course was additionally inspired at the conference by the charge to take advantage of opportunities to upgrade her skills and is determined to study law at the age of 55.

This reflection period ushered in Day Two's sessions.

2.1.0 SESSION 2: BUILDING RESILIENCE DURING COVID-19 AND BEYOND

2.1.1 Panel Discussion on the New Normal: Working Effectively from Home

The panelists were:

- Ms. Angela Olanrewaju, *Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company (IBEDC), Nigeria*
- Ms. Oyinlola Osinubi, *Eko Electricity Distribution Company (EKEDC), Nigeria*
- Mr. Richard Asante, *GRIDCo, and,*
- **Moderato**r: Ms. Joyce Ocansey, *USAID Power Africa's West Africa Energy Program (WAEP)*

Session 2 was in two parts: A panel discussion on working effectively from home and a presentation on stress and mental health. Two panelists, Angela Olanrewaju of IBEDC and Oyinlola Osinubi of EKEDC, joined virtually.

The two sessions were moderated by Joyce Ocansey and aimed at putting into perspective the demands that working from home (WFH) puts on work-life balance and mental health.

The panel discussion on "*The New Normal: Working Effectively from Home*" began with panelists acknowledging that balancing working from home with domestic duties can be hallenging when other family members, especially children, are present because they can intrude and make demands on one's working day. Separation of home and work can be challenging. It demands skilled time management.

From the GRIDCo perspective shared by Mr. Asante, although initially there were barriers like internet connectivity, the unpreparedness of organizations to transition to Work From Home (WFH), training deficit, access to documents, and integrated technology platforms, WFH is a viable policy that will continue after Covid-19. Employees cut back on the time spent in traffic to and from work and are more productive. Productivity against targets can be evaluated from home. At work, some interruptions impede productivity while this may not be the case at home. Nursing mothers might prefer WFH more. The challenge might be access to work documents, technology tools, and devices, but HR would have to remodel work and uniformity in technology platforms for employees. For him, the transition to WFH was easy.

The experience at EKEDC was a little different as they already had a business continuity plan which kicked in at the beginning of the pandemic. Staff was grouped into remote and onsite teams and they have been modifying their model as necessary. They put steps in place to ensure productivity and are working on a WFH policy now. Ms. Oyinlola Osinubi personally did not have it easy in the initial stages of their transition to WFH. She had to be intentional about it, creating a home office space, taking breaks, and getting family support to keep her children away from her home office space.

Angela Olarewaju shared the IBEDC experience. Though they did not have a WFH policy, they reacted decisively with an initial 40% of staff working onsite. Nursing mothers were sent home for 3 months or until January on full salary. Drivers were sent home. For safety reasons, staff with company vehicles had to drive themselves. Going by Heads of Departments' assessments, staff worked on an onsite/remote hybrid schedule with some onsite presence once or twice a week, or one week on, the other week remote. Communication has been important. The Senior staff ensures they touch base with staff regularly. There is no policy at the national level but companies have latched on to the opportunities WFH offer and are evaluating their needs for the future.

The role of gender in WFH was not overlooked. At EKEDC, male employees are given time off upon request, to assist with family duties. It's a concerted effort between couples. Women should not juggle work and home duties alone. It's also worth noting that women may not necessarily want to work from home and must have the flexibility to choose which model suits them best.

At GRIDCo, tools like the internet and laptops were easier to provide but office furniture and other financially tasking infrastructure will have to wait. The priority is more on information access, so the right technological infrastructure to use is more urgent.

The audience's participation was high during the discussion period. Best practices were shared and productive contributions were given.

For example, VRA has a Covid-19 committee that sends out a monthly circular to indicate onsite strength. Initially, it was 60/40. WFH staff must have their PCs on by 8:00 a.m. Meetings and training are online.

The concern for staff health was raised. Staff should be advised on how to create a safe workspace from home to avoid occupational hazards. The type of furniture used is important in order not to cause injury to the back and spine. Organizations need to look into whether they should provide furniture, internet, and other working tools for staff who work from home. Some are working from make-shift spaces without proper furniture; WFH policies must consider the impact of inappropriate work tools on physical and mental health.

Low attendance and participation in online training and durbars was a concern for some organizations so the panel advised that knowledge sharing sessions should be kept short, recorded, and shared with snippets and infographics so absentees can benefit.

2.1.2 Presentation on Stress and Mental Health Issues

Mr. Nortey Dua, Clinical Psychologist, University of Ghana Medical School and Host on Joy FM's Ultimate Health, defined stress as a non-specific response of the body to any perceived or actual demand. It is the mind and body's response or reaction to a real or imagined threat, demand, event, or change. Stress is normal and part of everyday life. It occurs anytime we must adjust or adapt to the environment. The causative event is the stressor, the response or reaction is stress. It can be beneficial or detrimental to health. Eustress (moderate stress) energizes. Low-stress de-motivates. High stress (distress) harms.

Covid-19 has brought its stressors and the reactions of fear, panic, worry, and stress, are all typical responses to a real or imagined threat.

How can individuals and organizations build resilience?

According to Mr. Nortey Dua, resilience can be built through effective coping strategies and a managed planned transition to recovery or the new normal. A recovery plan that maintains safety, considers resources, restores morale, ensures optimum individual and organizational productivity, and sustainability is the best.

Identifying our unique covid-19 stressors like fear, anxiety, work disruptions, finance, information overload, job security, health, strained relationship, etc. helps in planning better responses to stress. Appreciating our default responses to stress is crucial to effective coping and building resilience. Learning which responses to stress are automatic and involuntary places one in a better position to control or manage stress through adapting appropriate coping responses. Control is a vital determining component in resilient coping.

Mental Health Coping Skills
Mr. Nortey Dua offered some coping skills to combat loneliness and feelings of isolation.

- Find safe ways to go outdoors and socialize while observing covid-19 safety protocols.
- Be assertive about covid-19 safety protocols so you feel safe and in control.
- Channel your creativity into a new project at home.
- Stick to the routine especially when it comes to working from home.
- Take advantage of teleconferencing tools and messaging apps to connect with family, friends, and colleagues.
- Take charge of your thoughts, fears, and news inflow. Detach from sources of unverified alarming news that heighten tension and source verifiable content only.
- Be mindful of hyper-vigilance or unhelpful anxious behavior.

- Talk openly and factually about covid-19 with your children, focusing on positive things that will remain unchanged; like being together, your love and support of each other, and develop structured, consistent daily family routines for your children. Recognizing how your anxiety affects your children can help you take steps to tackle it.
- Control information/misinformation overload through self-censorship. Occasionally disconnect from social media and patronize only credible news sources. Facts minimize fear.
- Combat hyper-vigilance, paranoia, disillusionment, disorientation, by creating and sticking to a new routine.
- Identify time wasters and set new realistic goals and priorities.
- Reduce the physical impact of mental stress through exercise, meditation, progressive relaxation and, eating and sleeping at the right time.
- Acquire new skills and build capacity to boost your confidence at work. Time management, social skills, assertiveness can be learned and are beneficial at this time.
- Slow down, reorganize, de-clutter, seek social support and be proactive, not reactive.
- Finally, acknowledge and celebrate new-found strengths. Make sure you are not just informed, but transformed and don't be afraid to seek help.

He ended his discussions by sharing his contact details and inviting all to seek professional assistance for optimum mental health.

2.2.0 SESSION 3: CREATING AN ENABLING WORK ENVIRONMENT

Moderator: Rosemond Asamoah-Frimpong, GSI Manager, ECG (with questions submitted by VRA/GRIDCo/ECG)

There was a presentation on creating an enabling work environment by ensuring a harmonious and safe workplace climate, free from the toxic culture of sexual harassment. This was followed by an animated plenary session.

2.2.1 Presentation on Addressing Sexual Harassment: Beyond the Policy – An Overview

Dr. (Mrs.) Angela Dwamena-Aboagye, The ARK Foundation gave an overview of what should happen after a good sexual harassment policy is put in place.

When asked, it was obvious that participants had not read their workplace sexual harassment policies. Dr. (Mrs.) Angela Dwamena-Aboagye expressed the desire to give some training on the subject when given the opportunity.

She described sexual harassment as overt, subtle, physical, verbal, quid pro quo. A sexual harassment policy is communicated and distributed through sensitization, distribution, orientation, training, and third-party sign-offs. It covers bystander intervention and requires training of top management so they can recognize the signs.

Addressing Sexual Harassment Complaints
Dr. (Mrs.) Angela Dwamena-Aboagye explained that the complaints mechanism should offer several avenues for victims or employees to report sexual harassment complaints. It should be effective, appropriate, context-specific, and easy to access or used for grievance redress. The organization should set up a trained team or committee to investigate or adjudicate. She continued that confidentiality is key

to preventing retaliation, victimization, and stigmatization. Culpable persons should be sanctioned, and complaint mechanisms should account for fake claims as well, while redress processes should be in line with governing laws.

Counseling

She called for the provision of mechanisms for confidential counseling for both claimants and respondents, and; to ensure it is available upon request in-house or externally. She advised that proper training be given to staff who counsel.

Workplace Culture

This requires a careful and honest review of the corporate culture and the re-creation of the right corporate culture. There should be zero tolerance for sexual harassment in the workplace. In the final analysis, the sexual harassment policy must have top management buy-in supported by a budget, must protect the organization from suits, and ensure a favorable and safe environment for people to work in.

2.2.2 Panel Discussion – Sexual Harassment: Beyond the Policy[1]

- Dr. Mrs. Angela Dwamena-Aboagye, *The ARK Foundation*
- Prof. Kwadwo Appiagyei Atuah, *Faculty of Law, University of Ghana*

The panel discussed what constitutes sexual harassment, whether or not dressing plays a role, who the perpetrators are, the place for work relationships, quid pro quo, modes of reporting, victim conduct, and how to gather evidence and build a case.

Prof. Appiagyei Atuah explained that sexual harassment is unwelcome, unwanted, persistent, and impacts the victim's ability to function. It is done through comments, messages, touching, and so on. The perpetrators are not always male. It can be male on male harassment, female on male, or female on female too. Concerning dressing, if there is the exposure of the body parts and the complainant finds it unwelcome, then to the complainant, it is harassment. Dr. Dwamena-Aboagye, though generally in agreement, clarified that a one-off incident also constitutes sexual harassment and one cannot use another's dressing to validate sexual harassment.

Another point she made is that sexual harassment can also manifest as discrimination.

Quid pro quo, bosses asking subordinates for dates before promotion, for instance, should be reported with evidence, using policy guidelines. Trained staff can help establish a case so it is best to find evidence or journal the incident(s) and report it.

Should companies have a policy on workplace relationships and marriages? A good policy would have clear guidelines on how employees must behave and relate to each other in the workplace. The University of Ghana has a policy of barring lecturers from dating or marrying students but colleagues can engage in consensual relationships or marry. Each organization must decide what suits them.

Ignorance of the policy, fear, stigmatization, self-doubt, ambivalence, lack of guaranteed confidentiality, victimization, are among the many reasons why victims refuse to come forward. Whistleblowers and complainants must be protected from retaliation.

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[1] Note: Prof. Akosua Darkwah, Dept of Sociology, University of Ghana did not make it and due to technological challenges, Mr. Daniel Iyoha-Oji, Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company (IBEDC), Nigeria, could only join the panel discussion virtually and make his presentation after Dr. Dwamena-Aboagye's.

Remedies for Sexual Harassment

Some remedies were given for sexual harassment which must form part of the policy.

- There should be a support system for victims.
- Redress must include sanctions of perpetrators.
- Confidentiality - The right to privacy must be protected.
- Employees must be taught how to gather evidence. Some examples of evidence gathering mechanisms used are:
  - Recorded conversations (audio or text) and personal journal entries. A recording is an acceptable piece of evidence if it is not entrapment.
  - Confiding in a colleague or someone who can act as a witness.
- Victims must not feel pressured to change jobs or as it happens in some cultures, marry the perpetrator.
- If redress in the organization is unsatisfactory or impossible, victims have recourse to seek external sources of help like the Police or Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). An example is the Case of the Commissioner, CHRAJ Vs. Prof. Frank Awuku Norvor. The victim was awarded Five Million old Cedis (GH¢5,000,000.00), an equivalent of Five Hundred new Ghana Cedis (GHS500) in damages. The harassment case was well established and the victim got redress though the perpetrator never paid the fine.

There was vibrant audience contribution and the following observations were made:

- Adverts and education focus on the victim and the act but there is not much information on how to recognize the signs.
- Women are not empowered to stop harassment nor are men taught the appropriate response to 'no'.
- Policies that put too much responsibility on the victim result in system-induced trauma. Children should also be educated on this and empowered to be assertive and not give in to intimidation.
- Perpetrators should be compelled to pay damages awarded to the victim. There should be laws to enforce sentencing.

Concluding, Prof. Appiagyei Atuah was hopeful that in the next five years, sexual harassment will be seen as a human rights issue and there will be a heightened awareness of it, while Dr. Dwamena Aboagye hoped that because of the knowledge shared in this session, sexual harassment would not go on in the organizations of those represented at the conference.

2.2.3 Presentation – Addressing Unconscious Bias in the Workplace

Mr. Daniel Iyoha-Ojie, *Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company (IBEDC), Nigeria*
Daniel Iyoha-Ojie's virtual presentation on *Unconscious Bias in the Workplace* guided participants on how to recognize unconscious bias in themselves and manage it so it does not affect their workplace relationships and choices.

Everyone subconsciously forms social stereotypes (unconscious biases) about certain groups of people, things, or experiences. It is a natural way of categorizing information that is hard-wired into the brain, and a default fall-back for quick assessments and reaction times in decision making. For instance, in an encounter with a ferocious animal, an unconscious bias will enable one to act swiftly to protect oneself.

The source of unconscious bias is your story, which is made up of your background and life experiences. Your story informs your biases. The events in your life shape your values and perception of others. Ultimately this affects the way you interact with others.

A recruiter has to know her unconscious biases to objectively assess a candidate. Gut feelings come from unconscious bias, not logic. To overcome unconscious bias in the interview process, an interview panel must consist of people trained in unconscious bias, and must have a gender balance; 2 females, 2 males.

Manage unconscious bias by doing an emotional intelligence self-audit and identifying your biases to correct the negative ones. Do not make assumptions about others. Make decisions based on facts, not emotions. He suggested that women engage men as mentors and bring on board a policy gatekeeper to keep everyone in check. Work together with men, he charged. In conclusion, Daniel Ojie stressed that unconscious bias is not bad in itself; ignorance and prejudice are, and they have no place in the workplace.

2.3.0 Session 4: ACTION PLANNING BY ASSOCIATIONS/ORGANIZATIONS

Moderator/Facilitator: Mrs. Ivy Mawuko, *Head for Africa, Learning and Development, Stanbic Bank, Accra*

Presentations:
- Progress made on the implementation of 2020 Action Plans
- Action Planning for 2021 Associations/Organizations

Session 4 was the final session for Day Two. Various organizations presented developments they had made on the implementation of the 2020 Action Plan along the following lines:

- Bearing in mind the mandate to promote women's issues in the energy sector, if 2020 is a successful year for our association/group/organization what are some key initiatives we focused on?
- What are we strong in, and where are the opportunities for growth and improvement?

In this session, they broke up into groups per organization. Smaller organizations (small in terms of the number of representatives at the conference, not organizational size per se) grouped under 'Others'.

Groups were instructed to send copies of their plans to The Millennium Development Authority (MiDA).

2.3.1 Action Planning for 2021

Groups planned for what they are going to do in 2021 for their female employee associations.

2.3.2 Presentations

The groups made presentations on the progress they made on their 2020 Action plans and their proposals for 2021.

- ECG will focus on capacity building so they can start mentorship programs, leadership training, look at retirement plans, training for non-engineers, finance and non-finance staff, and welfare.

- GRIDCo formed Gridlass, a women's association, and partnered with USAID for some science outreach programs for selected schools in Tema. Their Bring-Your-Child-To-Work program has been suspended due to COVID-19. A successful year for them will be one with a robust mentorship program.

- GSA will form a women's association and embark on outreach programs. Currently, their associations are based on profession, not gender.

- VRA is ahead with a vibrant 21-year-old association and has a Go-Girl Mentorship program that is sponsoring the education of 2 girls. They also have a Bring-Your-Child-To-Work program. In 2021 they will do more online programs and focus on cyber-security and network programs with sister organizations. They aim to build a daycare center too.
- 'Others' pledged to start the conversation going on creating women's associations and other gender empowerment programs.

Day two was duly ended after this accountability activity.

DAY THREE

3.0 REFLECTIONS ON DAY TWO

There was a short round of reflection on the previous day's sessions. Some were challenged by the *"Panel Discussion on the New Normal: Working Effectively from Home"* and the Mental Health talk, to take better care of their work environment at home and in the office, and make it a habit to control their stress levels. It had not occurred to many participants that the wrong furniture could have long-term effects on their health. The need to take breaks from the computer, exercise, and prioritize work-life balance, were lessons participants will take away from the conference. Mentorship is also now high on everyone's list. Most importantly, the sexual harassment discussion and unconscious bias were topics all will research further and watch out for.

3.1.0 SESSION 5: RESEARCH ON ATTRACTING YOUNG WOMEN IN STEM AND BUILDING RESILIENCE

Moderator: Mrs. Ellen Dzah, *MiDA*

There were two presentations and training in Session 5; the first presentation was on *Career Aspirations of Females Studying STEM Subjects*, and the second on *Experiences of Women in Mining and How They Build their Resilience in a Male-Dominated Industry*. The training on *Mentor-Mentee Interactions* rounded off the session. Mrs. Ellen Dzah of MiDA moderated the session.

3.1.1 Career Aspirations of Females Studying STEM subjects: Factors Influencing their Aspirations.

Prof. Charlotte Wrigley-Asante*, Head, Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA), University of Ghana*, presented research findings from CEGENSA's research on career choices of females in STEM. From a sample of 252 students from the University of Ghana, there were 53 males and 47 females from the Engineering, Biological science, and Computer science departments.

They found out that career aspirations of females are influenced by socio-economic factors, self-efficacy/self-interest, pre-tertiary and college experience, socio-cultural factors, and role models.

Males were more likely to consider financial prospects than females but as many as 44% of the females were undecided on which career paths to take because of economic challenges and uncertainties in the job market.

There is a lot of enthusiasm from females to pursue STEM courses and careers but uncertainties make them abandon those ambitions after school. The uncertainties in the job market come about because there are no guaranteed employment opportunities after school. The young ladies are not sure they would be able to secure jobs in their chosen fields after school as such they become torn between taking other jobs which are not in their fields and being unemployed for a long time.

The way forward
It is therefore highly recommended that there should be sensitization of parents and teachers in counseling girls to motivate them at a very young age. Establish seminars, talk shows, scholarships, mentorship programs, and beyond that, advocate for policies geared towards promoting STEM for girls.

3.1.2 Building Resilience in Male-Dominated Organizations: Experiences of Women Miners in Ghana

Dr. Rufai Kilu*, Department of Business Administration and Centre for Research and Consultancy, UPSA*, gave a presentation on building resilience in male-dominated workplaces with a focus on the mining industry.

His research showed that women are challenged in the mines in so many respects. UMaT ran as a university for three (3) decades without a single female being admitted. Women just did not apply for mining courses.

There are also socio-cultural barriers to add to the myriad of discrimination faced by women in mining. This discourages women from considering mining as a profession but dynamics are shifting now. Industry women have since 2013, used the Association of Women in Mining to support themselves in the industry.

There have been encouraging achievements. In 2011/12 and 2012/13 academic years, the overall best students in mining were women.

Building Resilience

Dr. Rufai Kilu gave some recommendations for building resilience:

- For women to thrive in the mining industry, the right support must be given.
- Women in mining should interact with government bodies and NGOs to promote programs in mining.

- The Affirmative Action quota at the tertiary level for girls in STEM should focus on the recruitment of girls in Engineering because there is still a huge gender gap there.

A participant asked if there were any studies disproving taboos that bar women from mining and Dr. Kilu responded that there were none. He agreed that research in that direction would be worthwhile. Another participant mentioned that currently, though companies deny it, women are barred from going down into mines during their menstrual cycle because it is considered taboo. She added that all these taboos and superstitions should be debunked.

3.1.3 Training on Mentor-Mentee Interactions

Ms. Famatta Sirleaf, *LEC, Liberia,* joined virtually and took conference participants through the best practices of LEC's mentor-mentee program. LEC has had some successful mentorship programs where bright females interested in STEM have been trained by the organization and employed. They have also had cases where members of staff have been upgraded through their mentorship program.

It is a program that has been formalized through HR and mentors are engaged on specific terms. They are selected from the senior management level and are trained in communication skills. They must inspire trust, communicate well, ask questions, offer sound advice, and be inspirational role models.

She added that objectives and outcomes are desirable but not essential.

This ended Session 5's presentations and plenary on *"Attracting Young Women in STEM and Building Resilience"*.

3.2.0 SESSION 6: SUSTAINING THE INSTITUTIONALIZING GENDER RESPONSIVENESS ACTIVITIES IN ENERGY ORGANIZATIONS

Moderator: Naa-Aku Acquaye-Baddoo, *Independent Consultant*

There were two presentations in Session 6, followed by a plenary discussion. The first presentation by MiDA's Dr. Cherub Antwi-Nsiah was an overview of the *Power Compact's Institutionalizing Gender Responsiveness Activiti*es, and the second presentation was by Dr. Esi Sey who shared MiDA's *Ghana Power Compact Internship and Mentoring Program's Sustainability Strategy*. The presentations were followed by a plenary discussion.

3.2.1 Presentation: Overview of Power Compact - Institutionalizing Gender Responsiveness Activities

Dr. Cherub Antwi-Nsiah, Director Gender and Social Inclusion, MiDA, gave an overview of the Institutionalization of Gender responsiveness activities for the Compact, implemented by the Gender and Social Inclusion (GSI) program.

She pointed out that there are gender diversity problems at all three levels of the woman in Energy's career; the entry-level where it is difficult to attract skilled women, at the mid-career level where there is a struggle to maintain them in an environment that is not enabling, and at the senior level where there are no viable options and opportunities for promotion of women.

Dr. Cherub Antwi-Nsiah used a roadmap of the Institutionalizing Gender-responsiveness Sub-Activities for the presentation. There are two complementary components of the Institutionalizing gender responsiveness sub-activity. The first, a participatory institutional gender assessment or gender audit and a gender policy with an action plan, seeks to improve the workplace environment and create equal

opportunities for all. MiDA supported ECG to do a Gender Audit and address identified deficiencies. The second is an Internship and Mentoring Program which seeks to prepare tertiary students for STEM courses and careers in the power/energy sector, with the focus of getting them employed.

For the Gender Audit, the organization looked back at least 3 years and do a situational analysis to identify where the gaps and needs are. It helps to set up a Gender Unit to take charge of the whole process, including engendering senior management buy-in, capacity building, and other capacity strengthening and support activities. It needs to be participatory to foster ownership.

The second component is the Internship and Mentoring Program. It was designed with insights from thorough due diligence to find out about current issues on the ground and where the gaps are. Implementation included a call for applications, recruitment, orientation, and placement of the Interns in Energy organizations.

The Gender Unit has been set up to facilitate, coordinate, and monitor the implementation of gender mainstreaming in all areas of the organization. Specifically, the Gender and Social Inclusion Action Plan. It is made up of a GSI Manager and Regional and District Gender Focal persons. The Gender Unit is expected to be well-resourced and to have an accessible documentation center ECG established a Gender Unit and is in the process of resourcing it.

The GSI manager supports the development and execution of the GSI Action Plan and the gender responsiveness activities. The team should be made up of competent consultants. Their role is to support the GSI manager to organize and oversee the Gender Action Plan and support the GSI audit. They are the contact and resource persons within their unit, championing institutionalizing gender responsiveness activities in the organization.

The program also supported the ECG's GSI team through a strategic implementation process to clarify their mission, define their vision, values, strategic objectives, and actions for the short- to medium-term.

Sustaining the Institutionalizing Gender-responsiveness in the Energy Sector will take the involvement of all organizations in the energy sector. ECG cannot do it alone. Other Energy organizations must follow suit: conduct a gender audit and formulate a gender policy and action plan. Institutional strengthening activities for ECG must continue. The Annual Women in Energy Conference for female employee associations must also continue after MiDA. A gender and energy working group was set up as a mechanism to support the gender focal persons in the Compact implementing entities.

The Gender Working Group is made up of gender focal persons and experts in the gender and energy field who support the gender focus conferences in the various organizations to look at gender responsiveness in their organizations internally, as well as in the program of activities that they implement in their organizations. They hold quarterly meetings.

USAID's Engendering Utilities Program could take up Gender Audit/Gender Policy and Institutional Strengthening Activities in Energy Organizations. They are already working with GRIDCo and have expressed interest in working with ECG.

CEGENSA and ECG expressed an interest in jointly hosting the annual Women in Energy Conference for female employee associations. Hopefully, they will take up the Gender Working Group as well because they go together. WAEP has expressed interest in hosting the Gender and Energy Working Group.

Dr. Antwi-Nsiah explained that with the second component, the Ghana Power Compact Internship and Mentoring Program (GPCIMP), the design was guided by the Get-To-Energy Career Pathway Model: early preparation at the basic level, education, and preparation to enter the job market which deals with internship and mentoring. Some organizations and associations work with girls at the basic level so Energy companies should partner with them. The program was designed and with insights from

thorough due diligence by MiDA with the support of MCC's HCD consultant to find out about current issues on the ground and where the gaps are. Implementation included a call for applications, recruitment, orientation, and placement of the Interns in Energy organizations.

Education of girls at the tertiary level includes capacity building to make them more marketable in terms of diversity and skill, ensuring they are matched with the right organizations, providing them with coping skills, and confidence-building.

Elements of the Internship and Mentoring Program include orientation, capacity building on leadership, other soft skills, and anti-sexual harassment. They learn practical skills under the care of dedicated supervisors and participate in individual and group mentoring sessions. The program is monitored by MiDA and educational institutions with a reflection forum at the end where feedback on the program is collected. GPCIMP alumni will be taken through bi-annual group mentoring sessions.

Program beneficiaries are resourced with protective equipment/clothing, group accident insurance, and a monthly stipend for two months.

She continued that the GPCIMP's Mentoring organizations are ECG's WinE, Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, Women in STEM, KNUST. There are also a couple of individuals who help with the mentoring, including the Deputy Director of the Ghana Statistical Service. All the STEM areas are thus covered and placement is according to relevance and need.

The stakeholders are public educational institutions, providers of capacity enhancement services, and mentoring organizations and individuals. She explained that interns are only selected from public educational institutions because Compact is an agreement between the US and the Government of Ghana. However, after the Compact, any organization that takes the Internship and Mentoring Program up can include private educational institutions.

The results of the GPCIMP program are seen in how the interns, employers, and educational institutes benefit. The program produces well-rounded, confident interns, equipped with practical skills for further education and the workplace. Educational institutions and employers gain practical insights into what is expected of each other.

Possibilities for sustaining the program are through sponsors/donors, educators, or employers taking it up. A coordinating unit/steering committee will be set up by MiDA to start driving sustainability from now on.

3.2.2 Presentation on GPCIMP Sustainability Strategy

Dr. Esi Sey, *Organizational Development Consultant*, explained how the GPCIMP's 2-month internship and mentoring program was an upgrade of the norm in terms of the preparation put in to train and match females with the right organizations to suit their study and future career needs. She explained that a lot of funding goes into it, so as MiDA is winding down in September 2021, a new sponsor or facilitator is urgently needed. That is why the 2-Phased GPCIMP Sustainability Strategy was developed.

The Two-Phase GPCIMP Strategy

The 2-phase GPCIMP Sustainability Strategy seeks to address the question of who will play the lead role, fund, and coordinate the program after MiDA. It also examines how the program will continue to provide information on job opportunities to interns and sustain the interests of the female students,

educators, employers, government, and ensure the safety of the female students against the possible threat of sexual harassment. Will the Government's interest be sustained enough to push the Affirmative Action Bill through?

The strategy is a combination of short and medium-term measures that can shift the program from an externally managed short-term project to an institutionalized internship scheme incorporated into the administrative structures of educators, employers, and STEM professional associations in Ghana.

Tangible and intangible aspects of the program have to be sustained. Funding to cover infrastructure, systems, and mechanisms, is needed. Intangible aspects like values, the culture of partnership and cooperation, commitment, management style (managed by gender experts) of the program must be preserved.

Alternative Pathways - GPCIMP Sustainability Strategy

Four alternative pathways were considered for implementation.

1. The institutionalization pathway: Integrate the distinct features of the program into tertiary institutions' internship processes. MiDA would have to do intensive capacity building before handing it over.

2. Project design/Special initiative pathway:

   Maintain the program as it is, not with the assistance of a Development Partner (DP), but with execution by a government agency with a special interest in females in STEM or professional associations like GhIE or WinE, interested in advancing STEM professionals. Again, here, MiDA's gender team will have to do some capacity building before handing it over.

3. Extended phase-out with alternative funding pathway:

   Let another donor (DP/INGO) take it up for another 3 years and build capacity for educational institutions to take it up.

4. Employer-centered pathway:

   Let the energy organizations take it up and decide the number of females to admit to internship and employment positions with an affirmative action approach. Mentorship will continue. Interns may be recruited by the host organization after school so the internship period may be factored into the employment probationary period.

In the final analysis, all four pathways were adopted into a 2-phase system.

Phase 1: the interim implementation period, aims at implementing the existing GPCIMP while phasing out external funding over three years (September 2021-September 2024). During this phase-out period, the project could be supported by funding from a DP and/or government agency while educators and employers are trained to adopt the GPCIMP model at the end of the period.

Phase 2: an employer-centered pathway, is when the Phase 1 model will be institutionalized as an internship placement and management system of public tertiary institutions and energy sector organizations for female STEM interns by August 2027.

Questions and comments on the two presentations were suspended and taken to the plenary discussion.

3.2.3 Plenary Discussion on Sustaining Gender Responsiveness Activities in Utilities
Other Stakeholders and Representatives of Employers, Educators, and Mentors.

Helpful suggestions and observations were shared by participants during this plenary session. A representative of NEDCo who expressed interest in the program was directed to contact ECG to follow their internship and mentorship model. The discourse spanned the following points:

- How will organizations feel obligated or compelled to continue with the program so females in STEM do not suffer? An MOU is not effective as it will expire when MiDA folds up and accreditation of organizations is also not possible at the moment. The fact that foreign funding is so central to the success of the program makes it restrictive and makes a strong case for looking at more reliable and sustained sources of funding; perhaps taking ownership of it.

  Though taking ownership of the program seems ideal, representatives present were quick to point out that typically, organizations do not budget for such programs. It will need CEOs' buy-in to change. MiDA responded that they are planning a much wider stakeholder's workshop in 2021. Organizations must see internships as beneficial, not costly. An example was given that the green lobby faced such difficulties in the beginning until eventually, it was able to push through. Female associations have a role to play in lobbying for the employment of females in STEM.

- Telephone companies have STEM internship programs and are excellent sponsors that can be approached for funding; however, orientation has to be given because when they take in female STEM interns, some of them place the interns in sales and marketing and not in STEM functions. The need for capacity building and orientation of organizations for the establishment of good internship programs was echoed as very important because some interns are not allowed to learn and are used for personal errands.

- It was also strongly recommended that female STEM students in remote areas of the country should also be given internship opportunities.

Follow-up questions:

- Could organizations look at this project as their Corporate Social Responsibility?
- Where does the program stand on PWDs (persons with disabilities)?
- What about female STEM graduates who want to start their own business? Where can they get funding for start-ups? MiDA explained their proposed Mentoring program for National Service Personnel in the Energy Sector which will include training in innovation/incubation/start-up.
- Can educational institutions partner with National Service Secretariat to post females in STEM to energy organizations? MiDA explained their engagement with the National Service Secretariat
- What is the economic model the government wants to use? What underpins it? Is the government prepared to budget for this?

The plenary session ended on the note that the two drivers of success will be funding and a steering committee to coordinate activities. Government must prioritize this in terms of budget. Individuals (even those present) and organizations can also get involved by contributing resources and time too.

With the assurance from Dr. Sey that all points raised were appreciated and had been noted for consideration, the session ended with optimism.

3.3.0 SESSION 7: – THE HARVEST

Moderators: Ms. Jayne Kumi*, Human Resources, VRA*

Ms. Jayne Kumi, a Human Resources Manager of VRA, invited the moderators of the conference to share highlights of presentations, panel and plenary discussions from their sessions. Each moderator had five minutes to give a summary of what transpired and the learning from it. Outlined below are topics covered by the moderator of each session:

- Highlights of Keynote Address:
  Ms. Adwowa Boohene, Independent Consultant

- Session 1: Bridging the Digital Divide -
  Mrs. Genevieve Mante, Ghana Standards Authority (GSA)

- Session 2: Building Resilience During Covid-19 and Beyond -
  Ms. Joyce Ocansey, WAEP

- Session 3: Creating an Enabling Work Environment -
  Mrs. Rosemond Asamoah-Frimpong, ECG

- Session 4: Progress on Implementation of 2020 Action Plan and Highlights of Action Plans for 2021 –
  *Mrs. Ivy Ana*n, Head of Learning, Stanbic Bank

- Session 5: Research on Attracting Young Women in Stem and Building Resilience –
  Mrs. Ellen Dzah, MiDA

- Session 6: Sustaining the Institutionalizing Gender Responsiveness Activities in Energy Organizations,
  Ms. Naa-Aku Acquaye-Baddoo, Independent Consultant.

Concluding points by Moderator:

- It is a shame that boys and girls are still raised differently
- We have learned how to work with and survive with COVID
- We should limit unconscious bias in the workplace
- Sexual harassment policies are put on shelves. We do not confront those who drive the policies
- The girls and young women should tell more of their stories
- MiDA will go. We need people who will take up the agenda and drive the policies
- If the workplace is male-dominated when you go to management you need to take facts and figures to show how women who have led have made a difference. Statistics that will tell a story.

3.3.1 CONFERENCE EVALUATION

Naa-Aku Acquaye-Baddoo led conference participants through a participatory evaluation method to share their final thoughts on the conference: What participants simply loved about the three days, what they would have liked more of; and the future -- What they would like in 2021, and what they would do when they leave the conference.

Participants loved:

- The achievements to date and pathways after MiDA;
- The achievements to date and pathways after MiDA;
- Women coming together to think about women and the promotion of girls and young women;
- Empowering ladies in STEM; and
- The lunch and dancing sessions.

They want more of:
- Women in Energy conferences;
- talks on mental health and managing biases;
- Men and Senior Management participation in the conference deliberations;
- More mentoring and coaching strategies; and
- Funding.

For the future, specifically 2021, participants want:
- To see an established and functional Steering Committee (for GPCIMP);
- Resources for STEM programs;
- Positive masculinity and representation of men at women's meetings; and
- Men (accompanying women) in the same spaces to have these conversations.

When participants leave the Conference:

- Those without associations will form associations;
- They will do more advocacy, network to become decision-makers; and
- get involved in coaching and mentoring.

3.3.2 CLOSING

The conference ended at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, 2nd December 2020 with concluding highlights by Mrs. Benedicta Carr, *Immediate Past National Secretary, ECG Power* Queens. Benedicta said that there is a need to hold these informative and educative conferences each year to learn and share. She thanked the organizers, speakers, moderators, panelists, and participants for the quality of presentations, questions, and responses. She added that the participation was excellent and empowered all of us.

Going forward, she continued that we need to put what we have learned into practice, adapting and adopting strategies, new skills and building resilience requires the right mindset and ability to improve solutions and overcome challenges faced by women. Furthermore, we need to embrace technology. Although COVID brought an abnormal situation, it has also brought a lot of positives: - virtual meetings. She concluded that participants appreciate the technologies of the modern era. We need to be proactive, manage, and adapt. We did good work with the action plans. Certificates of participation for this conference will be given at a later date.

The vote of thanks was given by Ing. Miriam Amponsah, President, ECG WinE.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Conference program
Final_WIEC 2020-PROGRAM.pdf

Annex 2: List of Organizations and Countries Participating in the Women in Energy Conference (WIEC) 2020
WOMEN IN ENERGY CONFERENCE\WIEC II\Annex_2 - List of Organizations and Countries Participating in Women in Energy Conference (WIEC) II (2020).docx