

Regional

Addressing gender stereotyping in military: GAF sensitises 1,500 female students in 3 regions



From Biiya Mukusah Ali, SUNYANI

OVER the years, the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) has realised that the number of females recruited and enlisted into the GAF does not commensurate with the national population of females.

That, according to GAF, was also against the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 that requires the military across the world to increase female participation in peacekeeping operations.

A research has also revealed that females are not interested in joining GAF, while the few who do want the soft way out in areas such as the Combat

Service Support Unit, which is a logistic unit.

It is in the face of this that the GAF has embarked on a sensitisation campaign in schools across the country on career opportunities within the GAF to whip up the interest of young girls to pursue careers in the GAF, particularly within combat units of the GAF.

In the Bono, Bono East and Ahafo regions, the GAF engaged more than 1,500 students, mainly girls from 15 selected senior high schools to address gender stereotypes and misconceptions about females taking up a career in GAF.

The sensitisation was organised by the Women, Youth, Peace and Security Institute (WYPSI) of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPCT), in partnership with the GAF and funded by the Elsie Initiative

Fund.

The nationwide sensitisation campaign was also to help female students to overcome barriers facing them in venturing into the GAF and promote the GAF gender mainstreaming agenda of creating equal opportunities for men and women.

Schools

The beneficiary schools in the Bono Region were the St James Seminary and SHS, Sunyani SHS, Notre Dame Girls' SHS, Odumasehman SHS, Twene Amanfo Senior High and Technical School and Berekum Presbyterian SHS.

In the Bono East Region, Techiman SHS, Akumfi Ameyaw Senior High and Technical School, Our Lady of Mount Camel Girls SHS, Abari SHS and Tuobodom Senior High and Technical School were selected to participate.

OLA Girls SHS, Serwa Kesse Girls SHS, Boakye Tromo SHS, Bechem Presbyterian SHS and Hwidiem SHS in the Ahafo Region also benefited from the sensitisation campaign.

During the programme, the participants were provided with information on possible career options within the GAF and educated on lesser-known opportunities in the military to enable them to make informed choices.

International requirement

Speaking in Sunyani last Tuesday, the Command Logistic and Gender Adviser at the Accra Army Training Command, Colonel Dr Mohammed Wumbei, said it was an international requirement that there should be gender equality and equity in the recruitment and enlistment in the military.

Col. Dr Wumbei said the purpose of the sensitisation was therefore to get females to join the GAF in the combat roles to help them rise to the highest rank of the forces.

He said the GAF had initiated gender policies to entice females to venture into the GAF, explaining that the forces would not relent on its efforts, roles and campaigns to get more women recruited.

Col. Dr Wumbei said the GAF had also planned to organise town hall meetings to engage the public on the need to refrain from stereotyping and eliminate socio-cultural practices, as well as customs hindering girls from venturing into the forces.

He expressed the hope that the nationwide sensitisation campaign and the existing GAF gender policies would help resolve the gaps hindering females from joining the GAF.

For her part, a Senior Programme Officer of the WYPSI KAIPCT, Adelaide Ekua Otoo, who took the participants through gender mainstreaming in the GAF, encouraged the girls to join the GAF.

@ a glance



More than 1,500 female students from 15 selected senior high schools in the Bono, Bono East and Ahafo regions have been schooled on career opportunities within the Ghana Armed Forces and sensitised to gender stereotyping and misconceptions about females taking up careers within the forces.



Colonel Dr Mohammed Wumbei (inset), Command Logistic and Gender Adviser at the Accra Army Training Command, addressing the participants during the engagement in Sunyani

