

Gender



Don't automatically go with the first doctor you see. And yes, you have time.

Over 50 students, teachers educated on gender-based violence

Gender Desk Report

OVER 50 students and teachers from St Augustine R/C Basic School in Ashaiman have received education on School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) and its impact on their physical, emotional and psychological well-being.

The educational session, held on the school's premises, was facilitated by experts in gender-based violence (GBV) and forms part of the United States (US) Department of State International Visitor Leadership Programme (IVLP) Impact Project, spearheaded by Regina Asamoah, an IVLP alumna and founder of Missing Children Ghana.

The Headmistress of St. Augustine

R/C Basic School, Juliana Apaliyah, welcomed the project team and expressed her delight in having her students empowered on GBV.

She emphasised that such education would promote mutual respect among students, creating a safer environment for all.

In her introductory remarks, Ms Asamoah explained that the project, with the title: "Young Voices Matter: Empowering Boys and Girls in the Fight Against GBV", sought to equip young students with the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent, recognise and respond to GBV.

The initiative aims to create a generation of active agents of change committed to ending GBV in schools. A total of 100 students from two schools in the Greater Accra Region are expected to benefit from these sessions, with 10

trained teachers leading efforts to extend this knowledge across other schools.

The project is funded by the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs with Meridian International Centre as the implementing partner.

Harmful effects

ACP (Rtd) Patience Ashorkor Quaye, US Embassy Ghana GBV Champion and Fellow of Missing Children Ghana, led a session on understanding SRGBV, highlighting the harmful effects of bullying, harassment and teasing.

She emphasised that SRGBV could create a hostile learning environment, which could negatively affect students' well-being and academic performance.

"Schools should be places where young minds are nurtured, not where they are torn down. We must act now to end all forms of gender-based violence and make our schools true sanctuaries of learning," she urged.

A Clinical Psychologist and University of Ghana Medical School lecturer, Dr Dzifa Abra Attah, delved into the emotional trauma caused by bullying, harassment, and teasing, emphasising the long-term psychological impacts such as anxiety, loneliness and poor academic performance.

"The scars left by bullying and harassment are often invisible, but they are just as deep. We need to understand that every act of cruelty can change a life forever," she cautioned while

encouraging students to seek help, build confidence, and surround themselves with supportive peers and teachers.

The Head of the Biomedical Engineering Department at the University of Ghana, who spoke on technology-facilitated GBV, Prof. Samuel Kojo Kwofie, warned students about the dangers of cyberbullying.

He shared practical steps to prevent cyberbullying, including safeguarding personal information and avoiding inappropriate online content.

"The internet can either be a tool for empowerment or a weapon for harm. Choose wisely what you post because once it is out there, it is out of your control," he emphasised.

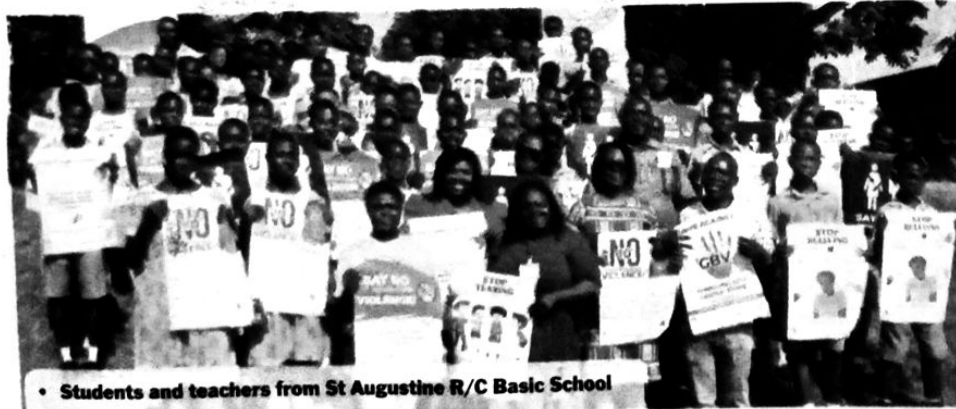
Supportive school environment

The students at the end of the training expressed their newfound awareness of the harmful effects of bullying, teasing and harassment, with many pledging to promote a more respectful and supportive school environment.

"I have learned that teasing can have serious psychological effects, so I will no longer tease anyone and will encourage my friends to stop as well," one student remarked.

Another student stated, "I have come to know that we do not have to take nude pictures of ourselves and share them with our friends. Once it is out there, we will not have control over it, and we can be cyberbullied and blackmailed."

In his solidarity message, the Ashaiman Municipal Education Director, Clifford Heneku Budu, commended the project team for selecting a school within the municipality and encouraged students to apply the knowledge gained to foster safer school environments.



• Students and teachers from St Augustine R/C Basic School