Annual Report 2014

Reports of GenCED’s Activities in 2014
Dear Friend and Family of GenCED

Through the kind support of individuals, groups and organizations, GenCED was able to implement its programmes under the 2015 operational plan. We are very grateful to the women’s rights and gender based NGOs and civil society organisations who worked assiduously with us in all the regions we worked in Ghana.

We wish to commend our local and international partners especially those who honored their commitment to us in our work even in the face of a global recession. Here, we would like to
sincerely thank the United Nations democracy fund (UNDEF), British High Commission and United Nations Development Programme for their support.

We would also like to congratulate the Board, Management and our hardworking staff for their commitment and dedicated service which has put the organisation on the pinnacle. It is our fervent hope that all our partners will remain committed in sustaining the gains so far made in promoting women’s in governance in Ghana.

Please Join GenCED and support a worthy cause.

Sincerely and God bless you,

Esther Tawiah

Executive Director

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**Executive Summary**

GenCED has successfully completed another year of promoting women’s representation and participation in decision-making and gender inclusion in Governance. The year 2015 was a landmark in GenCED’s history as we enhanced our credibility as a non-governmental organisation (NGO) dedicated to gender and policy advocacy. We started implementing programmes under the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan.

Throughout 2015, GenCED maintained its cutting edge efforts in gender and policy advocacy, a feat that has been achieved through our coalition building and networking approach. We worked
collaboratively with other civil society organisations to ensure women’s rights and gender equality issues were prioritized at all levels of policy-making. We have also strengthened the capacity of different constituencies of women such as district assembly women, women politicians and tertiary students who are now more able to engage, interrogate and scrutinize public policies and programmes to demand for women’s rights, social justice and accountability.

Again, feminist research and publications that promote gender equality and women’s rights were produced to benefit a wider reach of women and men in their institutions and organisations. These publications provided the basis for our engagement with government, policymakers and other actors. In this annual report, we provide information on the programmes implemented during the 2015 calendar year under each of GenCED’s four functional areas.

Highlights of the year include the following:

- Training
- Civic Education
- Accountability Audit

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF GENDER CENTRE FOR EMPOWERING DEVELOPMENT (GenCED)

About Us

Gender Centre for Empowering Development (GenCED) is a Non-governmental Organisation that seeks to empower women and youth for sustainable development in our communities. Established in May 2011 as an independent, not-for-profit, research and advocacy organisation, GenCED is currently focusing on the following key areas of development as enclosed in the 12 Critical Areas of Worry in the Beijing Platform for Action: Governance, Social interference Issues and Entrepreneurship.

The inspiration behind GenCED’s work is that, the emergence of multiparty democracy provides the opportunity to enhance civic participation, social accountability and economic governance which includes mechanisms/platforms to increase men and women’s access to increased knowledge, participate in decision-making processes and demand accountability from their duty bearers. Gender equality and equity principles are yet to be fully integrated into democratization processes, structures of power and decision-making procedures countrywide. The current weak
gender equality in politics and decision-making is a pressing human rights issue, for example, governance is still an ideal situation that most women particularly strive to achieve. Lack of civic knowledge among women has worsened their participation and representation in decision-making, election and governance. This is particularly reflected by their slim percentage in parliament, district assemblies, corporations and other public positions. For example, after more than two decades of implementation of Ghana’s decentralization policy, several challenges still remain to be addressed as women participation compared to men in governance and development is still low.

Education is the lifeblood of GenCED, all our work is educational. We integrate education, particularly for women and the youth, into all our programs. GenCED intends to become increasingly involved in policy dialogue as it emerges, to help broaden women and youth understanding, participation in governance and on their socio-economic development. Women are the custodians of indigenous information, which is critical to family and community welfare, particularly in the areas of health, environmental sanitation, politics and religion, however these type of information will disappear, unless women are integrated into modern systems of politics and democracy since societies and communities are urbanised and modernise in democracy and governance.

GenCED’s work is therefore aimed at helping increase women’s participation in decision-making and in the governance process. GenCED also seeks to do more research on women’s experiences, participation in policy making and their representation in governance to influence the level of advocacy and outreaches which the women need to increase their understanding of the democratic process and also influence national and regional policies on women.

VISION
GenCED’s vision is to become a leading grassroots’ organization, through empowering the marginalised, especially women, economically, politically and socially.

MISSION
GenCED seeks to close the gender deficit in our governance by building the capacity of marginalised especially women through the provision of political education and sustainable human resources development services to participate in district and national electoral politics to catalyse democracy. GenCED seeks to achieve this through evidence-based research, advocacy, training, community outreach and information sharing. GenCED was established to:

- Boost the capacity of women to participate in development
- Increase the participation of women in the political and economic structures of the country.

**OBJECTIVES**

As a community focused civil society organisation that seeks to empower women and youth for sustainable development in our communities through advocacy, training, research. GenCED aims at working towards achieving these by upholding key principals like not-for-profit and nonpartisan giving some specific objectives of GenCED include:

- Promoting democracy, decentralisation and good governance
- Educate women on issues that affect their development, climate change, food security and socioeconomic issues
- Promote women and youth participation in good local governance at all level.
- Promote sustainable livelihood programmes
- Build the capacities of women on entrepreneurial skills development.

**Programme Priorities**

**Governance**

Women participation in decision-making has consistently been at the centre of the global agenda since the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in 1985. In Ghana gender equality and equity principles are yet to be fully integrated into democratization processes, structures of power and decision-making procedures. Women
participation compared to men in governance and development is still low, nevertheless some women have exhibited the qualities of good leadership.

However, for women to be efficient and effective, they need education and advocacy to encourage their participation in decision-making. This project develops research and advocacy materials to demystify governances and demonstrate women’s need to participate effectively in electoral politics. There will be advocatory activities which are more geared towards more discussion and participation of women in our governances and also with political parties to increase seats for women within parties and also in national and district assembly elections. GenCED drive is to encourage, promote and strengthen women to be in governance. If women who form majority of Ghana’s population actively participate in good governance by seeking transparency, efficiency and accountability, poverty would significantly be reduced. The general lack of civic knowledge among women has worsened their participation and representation in decision-making, election and governance. This is particularly reflected by their slim percentage in parliament, district assemblies, corporations and other public positions.

There project is aim at giving an intensive political education (electoral issues, policies of governances and women involvement in governance) to women about our national and district authority. The general objective of the Women and Governance project is to educate the women in the localities to be able to participate in politics to enhance their participation in governance. This will include women’s empowerment through advocacy, research, knowledge sharing and networking (to address gender equity and equality).

The specific objectives of the project are to

- Increase women’s awareness of their civic rights and responsibilities;
- Increase the pool of informed women who can participate in the electoral process as candidates and voters;
- Increase women’s representation in decision-making positions in the public and private sectors and thereby improve their capacity for development-related decision-making.
• Increase community members’ control of the electoral process and promote the principles of free and fair elections;

• Create awareness of the virtues of accountability, transparency, and good governance;
• Increase the opportunities for communities to update their information on governance

• Encourage women to assume key leadership positions at local and national levels by participating in governance
• Network and build coalition with partners and critical actors to influence decentralization/local governance to promote gender responsiveness
• Tracking parliamentary proceedings that centre on gender issues

**Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EntDEP)**

EntDEP focuses on developing economically marginalised women and unemployed youth through the provision of financial advisory services, education and entrepreneurial development initiatives. The nation’s greatest asset is her human resource, the unemployed youth and women have the propensity to boost the economy by increasing current production level. The rising unemployment rate and seeming lack of jobs informed GenCED to address this concern by providing training and capacity building on wealth creation for the youth and women. The wealth creation aims at poverty reduction and self-reliance.

This program seeks to provide a comprehensive and adoptable approach to human resources development and also to empower youth for employment or self-employment. The program assists vocational trainees, young entrepreneurs, community-based business groups, and farmer groups. Training in credit management, financial literacy and business education are integral parts of the financial support package.
GenCED Governances Programs for 2015

The decentralisation agenda was carefully designed to create space for woman participation in local governance. This objective is far from attainment as research findings by GenCED confirmed that women continue to lag behind their male counterpart in political representation as statistics from the 2010 assembly elections continue to show the low participation of women in our local governance system. With emphasis on the Central and Western region, the statistics for the District Assembly Election indicates that out of a total number of 1,555 candidates who contested in the Western Region, only 86 were females as against 1469 males (www.ghanadistricts.com). For example, in Sefwi Akontombra the only female Assembly member is government appointee meaning no woman has ever contested the district Assembly elections. In the Central region a total number of 1,664 contestants taking part only 120 females. Indeed, less than 10% of this number of women who contested was successful (www.ghanadistricts.com).

With this statistics we can argue that women are yet to make any meaningful representation at the local level. This also shows that involvement and participation of women in community planning and decision-making process of project and programs to protect sustainable development is lacking. For reasons of justice, efficiency and diversity, and to change the political system women’s active participation and representation is essential.

1.0 PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES:

The project seeks to promote women’s participation in the upcoming district level elections in these four districts, in these two regions. The project will specifically focus on the following

- Building the confidence of women to file in the upcoming district level elections which has been lower than expected;
- Coach women to develop an acceptable manifestoes and provide platform for selling these manifestoes to their electorates; and
- Generally prepare women to benchmark their male counterparts in the upcoming elections so that more women can be voted into district assemblies in Ghana.

2.0 METHODOLOGY/APPROACH:

The process started with the stakeholder meetings which led to the training programme.

GenCED team in collaboration with local NGOs/Officials of the District Assembly selected and invited participants in the District for the stakeholders meetings. The meeting started with an open prayer and self-introductions. Next activity on the agenda was opening remarks by officials
of the District Assembly and National Commission for Civic education. The key session is the project overview by GenCED and then an open forum session where issues bothering women’s participation in the upcoming district level elections were raised and discussed. The last session is the identification and selection of participants for the 3-day training workshop.

For wider participation in the stakeholder meeting by the public in Aowin/suaman District a thirty minute Radio discussions program was held on Trickie 99.5 FM, Enchi. The purpose was to explain to educate the general public about the upcoming general elections and the importance of encouraging women to participate particularly where the District Assembly comprises of thirty-five (35) Male Assembly Members with only one (1) Elected Female Assembly member. The radio program with the phone-in segments resulted in healthy comments and suggestions from the general public.

For the training programme, participatory processes were used for the implementation of the training programme following an initial assessment of the participants in Mfantiman District, Komenda Edina Akuabo Abrim Municipal, Aowin/Suaman District, and Sefwi Akontonbra and East Akyem municipal by the facilitators. The training combined the tools of lecture-format delivery, individual assignments, group exercises and experience sharing. Group assignments also provided the opportunity for peer-to-peer learning as well as platform for boosting confidence level of participants as they engaged in fruitful deliberations.

In districts where participants’ levels of education were low, a local language (Twi) that is widely spoken by the people and English language were used during the training.

Adult learning methods in the form of questions and answers, discussions, experience sharing and simulation exercise were applied. The group assignments also provided the opportunity for peer-to-peer learning as well as platform for boosting confidence level of participants as they engaged in fruitful deliberations.

The participatory process of implementing the project started with initial assessment of participants.

GenCED with support from the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) started the implementation of a 2-year project under the theme “Strengthening Participation of Women in Geographically Deprived Communities in Local Governance in Ghana” in Juaboso, Bia and Sefwi Wiawso districts in the Western Region of Ghana. In line with the project implementation, GenCED held three District level stakeholder meetings to introduced the project to various stakeholders and also solicit their support and commitment for the successfully implementation of the project. Attendees of the meetings were drawn from the various communities in the three project districts and they included Queen mothers, Chiefs, Assembly members, officials of the
District Assemblies, Persons with Disabilities (PWD), leaders of women groups and associations.

The project goal is to increase women participation in decision making for sustainable decentralized bottom-up planning process and its main objective to institutionalize Women Group Advocacy Platforms to engage and dialogue with local government authorities in decision making process and public service delivery. She outlined the project expected outcomes as follows:

1. Women groups mobilized, strengthened, and united under one platform to be mutually recognized by the district assemblies and other stakeholders as champions of women concerns at the district level of policy engagement. (Institutional building and Capacity Development),

2. Increased understanding of Local citizens, traditional authorities, local government officials on the significance of gender inclusiveness in decision-making, social accountability mechanisms and its application to hold local government authorities accountable for efficient quality service delivery. (Awareness raising),

3. Active Women participated in the decision making process for sustainable decentralized bottom-up planning and implementation (Participation)

The project seeks to institutionalize Women Group Advocacy (WOMGA) Platforms made up of women leaders in the three Districts to engage and dialogue with local government authorities, in decision making process for sustainable decentralized bottom-up planning and public project implementation. During the stakeholders meeting the women applauded the initiative particularly the established of the District level Women Group Advocacy (WOMGA) Platforms. According to participants, this initiative is novelty and will go a long way to reduced mistrust between the local people and District Assemblies in order to accelerate development in the Districts

3.0 OUTPUT (S) ACHIEVED:

- 150 WOMGA platform members were identified and established.
- 120 grassroots women level of knowledge and awareness increased on local government systems and structures; leadership skills; public speaking and campaign strategies, gender and women’s participation in governance and leadership.
- A larger number of the trained women trained changed their views towards holding leadership positions in local governance by showing readiness to contest in upcoming district level elections in 2015.
- Some of the women had picked nomination forms immediately it was announced.
- Participants equipped with skills in public presentations, political communication and confidence-building.
- Campaign platforms were set-up in to support the women aspirants’ in the District elections

4.0 EMERGING ISSUES AND LESSONS LEARNT:
Information flow to women in the rural areas is a challenge. 
Husband are likely to restrain the women from contesting in the elections. 
Main concern of would be contesters of the 2015 elections was resources (money) for campaign. Most of the women are peasant farmers and petty traders. 
The meeting was hurriedly arranged such that enough notices were not given to invitees as well as key stakeholders including the Assemblies. 
Working with state institutions like NCCE would have been more effective since they are mandated by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana to carry out civic education.

Financial Reports

GenCED maintains financial records with supporting documentation in accordance with general accepted accounting principles. Pertinent program records are maintained and available for examination by independent auditors on yearly basis by authorised funding agencies upon request. Annual auditor’s reports include Independent auditor’s reports and compliance.

The total income for the year 2014 amounted to including miscellaneous income. The table below provides information on the income & expenditure for 2014.

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<th>SOURCE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<td>GHS</td>
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<td>United Nation Democracy Fund</td>
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<td>British High Commission</td>
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<td>BOARD OF DIRECTORS</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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Conclusion

The project really helped in creating awareness among the women to contest the districts elections and also demand quality service delivery from the district assembly. Citizens were full of commendation for GenCED and the United Nations Democracy fund, United Nation Development Programme and British High Commission for such a brilliant initiative.