

AFRICAN WOMEN DEVELOPMENT FUND (AWDF)

In Partnership with Sung Foundation Ghana (SUFOD)

KASA! Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa Initiative

Tolon District, Northern Region, Ghana

WANTUGU COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY BY-LAWS ON THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Community: Wantugu

District: Tolon District, Northern Region, Ghana

Initiative: KASA! Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa

Implementing Partner: Sung Foundation Ghana (SUFOD)

Funder: AWDF

Date Adopted: _____

PREAMBLE

We, the people of Wantugu Community in the Tolon District, Northern Region of Ghana our traditional leaders, women leaders, youth leaders, elders, teachers, religious leaders, and all community members gathered together in community assembly, do hereby solemnly recognize and declare that:

1. Sexual violence, including rape, defilement, sexual harassment, child marriage, and all other forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, is a grave violation of human rights and a crime against the dignity and well-being of every person in our community.
2. Every woman and girl in our community has the fundamental right to live free from violence, fear, and abuse in her home, in her school, in public spaces, and in all community settings.
3. We recognize that in Wantugu, the safety of our children and women at night has been compromised by late-night gatherings and community noise, and that domestic abuse of wives by husbands has persisted without adequate community deterrence or accountability.
4. The silence and tolerance of sexual violence and harmful practices in our community must end. We affirm that violence against women and girls is not a private matter it is a community concern that demands a community response.
5. We have a collective responsibility to protect our women, girls, and children; to hold perpetrators accountable; to support survivors without stigma; and to transform the social norms and behaviours that allow harm to persist in our community.
6. These by-laws are adopted voluntarily and in good faith by this community, and shall operate alongside and in full support of the laws of the Republic of Ghana, including the Criminal Offences Act, the Domestic Violence Act of 2007 (Act 732), and the Children's Act (Act 560).

PART I: DEFINITIONS

Article 1 – Key Definitions

In these by-laws, unless the context otherwise requires:

1.1 Sexual Violence

Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, directed against a person using coercion, regardless of the relationship between parties or the setting. This includes rape, marital rape, defilement, sexual harassment, sexual trafficking, and online sexual violence.

1.2 Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Any harmful act directed at a person based on their gender. This includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, as well as harmful traditional practices such as child and forced marriage.

1.3 Child Marriage

Any formal or informal union where one or both parties are under 18 years of age. Child and teenage marriage is prohibited under the laws of Ghana and is strictly banned under these by-laws.

1.4 Defilement

Any sexual act with a child under 16 years of age, a criminal offence under Ghanaian law regardless of alleged consent.

1.5 Domestic Violence / Marital Abuse

Any act of physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or abuse committed by a spouse, partner, or family member against another member of the household.

1.6 Survivor / Victim

Any person woman, girl, man, or boy who has experienced sexual violence, domestic abuse, or gender-based harm.

1.7 Perpetrator

Any person who commits, attempts to commit, facilitates, or is complicit in an act of sexual violence, domestic abuse, or other prohibited conduct under these by-laws.

1.8 Community Working Committee (CWC)

The community-level oversight body established to monitor and enforce these by-laws, receive complaints, and facilitate referrals to formal authorities.

PART II: GENERAL PROHIBITIONS

Article 2 – Prohibited Conduct (General)

The following acts are prohibited throughout this community and shall be subject to community sanctions under Article 4, in addition to any applicable criminal or civil law:

1. Rape, attempted rape, marital rape, defilement, or any form of sexual assault against any person.
2. Child or teenage marriage: the arrangement, facilitation, or performance of marriage or cohabitation involving any person under 18 years of age.
3. Physical abuse or maltreatment of a spouse or partner, including beating, assault, or any act of domestic violence without justification.
4. Sexual harassment in any setting, farms, markets, schools, homes, churches, mosques, or public spaces.
5. Intimidating, threatening, or victimizing any person who reports or seeks help for sexual violence or domestic abuse.
6. Discouraging or preventing a community member from reporting sexual violence or domestic abuse to community or formal authorities.
7. Using social position, traditional authority, or economic power to obtain sexual favours, silence survivors, or shield perpetrators from accountability.
8. Facilitating or being knowingly complicit in any act of sexual violence, domestic abuse, or harmful practice including through deliberate silence or concealment.

PART III: COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC BY-LAWS

Article 3 – Specific By-Laws of Wantugu Community

In addition to the general provisions above, the following by-laws were specifically identified and agreed upon by the people of Wantugu Community in their community assembly. These by-laws reflect the specific concerns, experiences, and priorities of this community in protecting women, girls, and children from harm:

- 1. Playing of loud music, jams, or any form of loud entertainment within the community is hereby prohibited after 10:00 p.m. Any person or group found violating this provision shall be subject to community sanction. This measure is adopted to protect the safety of women and girls who are vulnerable to harassment and assault during late-night noise activities.**

- 2. Children are prohibited from roaming or moving unaccompanied within the community after 10:00 p.m. Parents and guardians are held responsible for ensuring their children are home and safe by this time. This by-law is adopted to protect children especially girls from the risk of sexual abuse and other harm at night.**
- 3. Any husband who physically beats, assaults, or maltreats his wife without just cause shall be subject to community sanction by the CWC and traditional council, and the case shall be referred to DOVVSU for formal action. The community affirms that domestic violence is not a private matter and will not be tolerated.**

All community members, including adults, youth, and visitors to this community, are bound by the above community-specific by-laws. Any violation shall be handled in accordance with the sanctions framework in Part IV below.

PART IV: SANCTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

Article 4 – Community Sanctions

Any community member who violates any provision of these by-laws shall be subject to the following graduated sanctions, determined and applied by the Community Working Committee in consultation with the traditional council:

Level 1 – Minor / First-Time Violations

1. Formal warning issued by the CWC before the community or traditional council.
2. Mandatory attendance at a community sensitization session on women's rights and gender-based violence.
3. Public acknowledgement of wrongdoing before community leaders.

Level 2 – Serious or Repeated Violations

1. Temporary ban from specified community gatherings, events, and functions.
2. Mandatory participation in a community-organised rehabilitation session.
3. Formal referral of the case to DOVVSU (Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit), the Tolon District Assembly, or the Ghana Police Service.
4. Loss of any community leadership position held by the perpetrator.

Level 3 – Criminal Offences (Rape, Defilement, Severe Domestic Violence)

1. Immediate referral to DOVVSU, Ghana Police Service, and judicial authorities for criminal prosecution.
2. Full community cooperation with law enforcement and courts during prosecution.

3. Permanent exclusion from all community leadership roles.
4. The community shall not conduct mediation, negotiate settlements, or accept out-of-court arrangements for criminal sexual offences, all such cases must be handled through the formal justice system.

Article 5 – The Community Working Committee (CWC)

The Community Working Committee is responsible for:

1. Receiving, recording, and documenting all complaints of sexual violence, domestic abuse, and by-law violations with strict confidentiality.
2. Conducting community-level inquiries in a fair, sensitive, and trauma-informed manner.
3. Referring criminal cases to DOVVSU and appropriate authorities and tracking follow-up.
4. Conducting bi-monthly monitoring visits and reporting to community leaders and SUFOD.
5. Facilitating regular interface meetings between traditional leaders, women's groups, and community members on by-law compliance.
6. Maintaining a confidential register of complaints, referrals, and outcomes.

The CWC shall comprise a minimum of seven (7) members, with at least 50% female representation, including a traditional council representative, a women's group representative, a youth representative, and a school representative.

PART V: SURVIVOR PROTECTION AND CHILD SAFETY

Article 6 – Rights of Survivors

Every survivor of sexual violence or domestic abuse in this community shall be entitled to:

1. Be treated with full dignity, compassion, and respect at all times.
2. Have their identity and case handled with strict confidentiality no disclosure without their informed consent.
3. Support from the CWC, women leaders, and available community structures without blame or stigma.
4. Referral to health, legal, and psychosocial services including DOVVSU, district hospitals, legal aid, and relevant NGOs.
5. Be protected from retaliation, social punishment, or community ostracism for having reported abuse.

Article 7 – Protection of Children

The community shall take specific and active measures to protect all children from harm, including:

1. Ensuring all children especially girls complete their basic education without interruption for marriage, domestic service, or any other reason.
2. Promptly reporting any case of defilement, attempted defilement, or child abuse to the CWC and formal authorities.
3. Supporting the operation of girl-child clubs, debating clubs, and poetry clubs in community schools as safe advocacy and leadership spaces.
4. Ensuring that children are not placed in situations that expose them to the risk of sexual violence.

PART VI: REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

Article 8 – Annual Review

These by-laws shall be reviewed at a community-wide assembly at least once per year to assess effectiveness, address challenges, and update provisions. The CWC shall prepare an annual compliance report for the traditional council and SUFOD.

Article 9 – Amendments

Amendments to these by-laws may only be made by decision of a community assembly with agreement of at least two-thirds of participants and endorsement of the traditional council. No amendment may reduce the protections afforded to women and girls under these by-laws.

Article 10 – Relationship to National Law

These by-laws operate in full compliance with and in support of the laws of the Republic of Ghana. In any case of conflict between these by-laws and national law, national law shall prevail. The community affirms its full cooperation with law enforcement authorities in all cases of sexual violence.

SIGNATURES AND COMMUNITY ATTESTATION

We, the undersigned leaders and representatives of Wantugu Community, Tolon District, Northern Region of Ghana, do hereby adopt and solemnly commit to uphold, enforce, and observe these Community By-Laws, effective from the date signed below.

Chief / Traditional Leader Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Assembly Member Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Women's Leader Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Youth Leader Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Headteacher / School Representative Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

CWC Chairperson Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

SUFOD Representative / Witness Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Adopted under the KASA! Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa Initiative, funded by the African Women Development Fund (AWDF), and implemented in Tolon District by the Sung Foundation Ghana (SUFOD).

KASA! – Speak! – Because Silence Protects Violence.

AFRICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT FUND (AWDF)

In Partnership with Sung Foundation Ghana (SUFOD)

KASA! Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa Initiative

Tolon District, Northern Region, Ghana

SABEGU COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY BY-LAWS ON THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Community:	Sabegu
District:	Tolon District, Northern Region, Ghana
Initiative:	KASA! Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa
Implementing Partner:	Sung Foundation Ghana (SUFOD)
Funder:	AWDF / Ford Foundation / OSIWA
Date Adopted:	_____

PREAMBLE

We, the people of Sabegu Community in the Tolon District, Northern Region of Ghana, our traditional leaders, women leaders, youth leaders, elders, teachers, religious leaders, and all community members gathered together in community assembly, do hereby solemnly recognize and declare that:

1. Sexual violence, including rape, defilement, sexual harassment, child marriage, and all other forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, is a grave violation of human rights and a crime against the dignity and well-being of every person in our community.
2. Every woman and girl in our community has the fundamental right to live free from violence, fear, and abuse in her home, in her school, in public spaces, and in all community settings.
3. We recognise that in Sabegu, teenage pregnancy has occurred without adequate community accountability, that children's safety at night has not been sufficiently protected, and that domestic abuse of wives by husbands has too often gone unsanctioned in this community.
4. The silence and tolerance of sexual violence and harmful practices in our community must end. We affirm that violence against women and girls is not a private matter it is a community concern that demands a community response.
5. We have a collective responsibility to protect our women, girls, and children; to hold perpetrators accountable; to support survivors without stigma; and to transform the social norms and behaviours that allow harm to persist in our community.
6. These by-laws are adopted voluntarily and in good faith by this community, and shall operate alongside and in full support of the laws of the Republic of Ghana, including the Criminal Offences Act, the Domestic Violence Act (Act 732), and the Children's Act (Act 560).

PART I: DEFINITIONS

Article 1 – Key Definitions

In these by-laws, unless the context otherwise requires:

1.1 Sexual Violence

Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, directed against a person using coercion, regardless of the relationship between parties or the setting. This includes rape, marital rape, defilement, sexual harassment, sexual trafficking, and online sexual violence.

1.2 Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Any harmful act directed at a person based on their gender. This includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, as well as harmful traditional practices such as child and forced marriage.

1.3 Child Marriage

Any formal or informal union where one or both parties are under 18 years of age. Child and teenage marriage is prohibited under the laws of Ghana and is strictly banned under these by-laws.

1.4 Defilement

Any sexual act with a child under 16 years of age a criminal offence under Ghanaian law regardless of alleged consent.

1.5 Domestic Violence / Marital Abuse

Any act of physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or abuse committed by a spouse, partner, or family member against another member of the household.

1.6 Survivor / Victim

Any person woman, girl, man, or boy who has experienced sexual violence, domestic abuse, or gender-based harm.

1.7 Perpetrator

Any person who commits, attempts to commit, facilitates, or is complicit in an act of sexual violence, domestic abuse, or other prohibited conduct under these by-laws.

1.8 Community Working Committee (CWC)

The community-level oversight body established to monitor and enforce these by-laws, receive complaints, and facilitate referrals to formal authorities.

PART II: GENERAL PROHIBITIONS

Article 2 – Prohibited Conduct (General)

The following acts are prohibited throughout this community and shall be subject to community sanctions under Article 4, in addition to any applicable criminal or civil law:

1. Rape, attempted rape, marital rape, defilement, or any form of sexual assault against any person.
2. Child or teenage marriage the arrangement, facilitation, or performance of marriage or cohabitation involving any person under 18 years of age.
3. Physical abuse or maltreatment of a spouse or partner, including beating, assault, or any act of domestic violence without justification.
4. Sexual harassment in any setting farms, markets, schools, homes, churches, mosques, or public spaces.
5. Intimidating, threatening, or victimizing any person who reports or seeks help for sexual violence or domestic abuse.
6. Discouraging or preventing a community member from reporting sexual violence or domestic abuse to community or formal authorities.
7. Using social position, traditional authority, or economic power to obtain sexual favours, silence survivors, or shield perpetrators from accountability.
8. Facilitating or being knowingly complicit in any act of sexual violence, domestic abuse, or harmful practice including through deliberate silence or concealment.

PART III: COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC BY-LAWS

Article 3 – Specific By-Laws of Sabegu Community

In addition to the general provisions above, the following by-laws were specifically identified and agreed upon by the people of Sabegu Community in their community assembly. These by-laws reflect the specific concerns, experiences, and priorities of this community in protecting women, girls, and children from harm:

- 1. Mallams (Islamic clerics) are hereby banned from attending or performing naming ceremonies (outdooing) arising from teenage pregnancy in this community. This by-law is adopted to remove community endorsement and social normalisation of teenage pregnancy, which is often linked to defilement and exploitation of underage girls. Naming ceremonies for teenage pregnancies shall not be publicly celebrated in this community.**

- 2. Children are prohibited from roaming or moving unaccompanied within the community after 10:00 p.m. Parents and guardians shall be held responsible for ensuring their children are safely at home by this time. This by-law is adopted to protect children especially girls from harm, sexual violence, and exploitation at night.**
- 3. Any husband who beats or maltreats his wife without cause shall face community sanction by the CWC and traditional council. The case shall be referred to DOVVSU and relevant authorities for formal action. The community affirms that a wife's body and dignity are inviolable and that domestic violence is a community concern, not a private household matter.**

All community members, including adults, youth, and visitors to this community, are bound by the above community-specific by-laws. Any violation shall be handled in accordance with the sanctions framework in Part IV below.

PART IV: SANCTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

Article 4 – Community Sanctions

Any community member who violates any provision of these by-laws shall be subject to the following graduated sanctions, determined and applied by the Community Working Committee in consultation with the traditional council:

Level 1 – Minor / First-Time Violations

1. Formal warning issued by the CWC before the community or traditional council.
2. Mandatory attendance at a community sensitization session on women's rights and gender-based violence.
3. Public acknowledgement of wrongdoing before community leaders.

Level 2 – Serious or Repeated Violations

1. Temporary ban from specified community gatherings, events, and functions.
2. Mandatory participation in a community-organised rehabilitation session.
3. Formal referral of the case to DOVVSU (Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit), the Tolon District Assembly, or the Ghana Police Service.
4. Loss of any community leadership position held by the perpetrator.

Level 3 – Criminal Offences (Rape, Defilement, Severe Domestic Violence)

1. Immediate referral to DOVVSU, Ghana Police Service, and judicial authorities for criminal prosecution.
2. Full community cooperation with law enforcement and courts during prosecution.
3. Permanent exclusion from all community leadership roles.
4. The community shall not conduct mediation, negotiate settlements, or accept out-of-court arrangements for criminal sexual offences all such cases must be handled through the formal justice system.

Article 5 – The Community Working Committee (CWC)

The Community Working Committee is responsible for:

1. Receiving, recording, and documenting all complaints of sexual violence, domestic abuse, and by-law violations with strict confidentiality.
2. Conducting community-level inquiries in a fair, sensitive, and trauma-informed manner.
3. Referring criminal cases to DOVVSU and appropriate authorities and tracking follow-up.
4. Conducting bi-monthly monitoring visits and reporting to community leaders and SUFOD.
5. Facilitating regular interface meetings between traditional leaders, women's groups, and community members on by-law compliance.
6. Maintaining a confidential register of complaints, referrals, and outcomes.

The CWC shall comprise a minimum of seven (7) members, with at least 50% female representation, including a traditional council representative, a women's group representative, a youth representative, and a school representative.

PART V: SURVIVOR PROTECTION AND CHILD SAFETY

Article 6 – Rights of Survivors

Every survivor of sexual violence or domestic abuse in this community shall be entitled to:

1. Be treated with full dignity, compassion, and respect at all times.
2. Have their identity and case handled with strict confidentiality no disclosure without their informed consent.
3. Support from the CWC, women leaders, and available community structures without blame or stigma.
4. Referral to health, legal, and psychosocial services including DOVVSU, district hospitals, legal aid, and relevant NGOs.
5. Be protected from retaliation, social punishment, or community ostracism for having reported abuse.

Article 7 – Protection of Children

The community shall take specific and active measures to protect all children from harm, including:

1. Ensuring all children especially girls complete their basic education without interruption for marriage, domestic service, or any other reason.
2. Promptly reporting any case of defilement, attempted defilement, or child abuse to the CWC and formal authorities.
3. Supporting the operation of girl-child clubs, debating clubs, and poetry clubs in community schools as safe advocacy and leadership spaces.
4. Ensuring that children are not placed in situations that expose them to the risk of sexual violence.

PART VI: REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

Article 8 – Annual Review

These by-laws shall be reviewed at a community-wide assembly at least once per year to assess effectiveness, address challenges, and update provisions. The CWC shall prepare an annual compliance report for the traditional council and SUFOD.

Article 9 – Amendments

Amendments to these by-laws may only be made by decision of a community assembly with agreement of at least two-thirds of participants and endorsement of the traditional council. No amendment may reduce the protections afforded to women and girls under these by-laws.

Article 10 – Relationship to National Law

These by-laws operate in full compliance with and in support of the laws of the Republic of Ghana. In any case of conflict between these by-laws and national law, national law shall prevail. The community affirms its full cooperation with law enforcement authorities in all cases of sexual violence.

SIGNATURES AND COMMUNITY ATTESTATION

We, the undersigned leaders and representatives of Sabegu Community, Tolon District, Northern Region of Ghana, do hereby adopt and solemnly commit to uphold, enforce, and observe these Community By-Laws, effective from the date signed below.

Chief / Traditional Leader Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Assembly Member Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Women's Leader Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Youth Leader Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Headteacher / School Representative Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

CWC Chairperson Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

SUFOD Representative / Witness Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

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KASA! – Speak! – Because Silence Protects Violence.

AFRICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT FUND (AWDF)

In Partnership with Sung Foundation Ghana (SUFOD)

KASA! Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa Initiative

Tolon District, Northern Region, Ghana

CHIFUYILI COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY BY-LAWS ON THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE **AND PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Community:	Chifuyili
District:	Tolon District, Northern Region, Ghana
Initiative:	KASA! Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa
Implementing Partner:	Sung Foundation Ghana (SUFOD)
Funder:	AWDF
Date Adopted:	_____

PREAMBLE

We, the people of **Chifuyili Community** in the Tolon District, Northern Region of Ghana, our traditional leaders, women leaders, youth leaders, elders, teachers, religious leaders, and all community members gathered together in community assembly, do hereby solemnly recognize and declare that:

1. Sexual violence, including rape, defilement, sexual harassment, child marriage, and all other forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, is a grave violation of human rights and a crime against the dignity and well-being of every person in our community.
2. Every woman and girl in our community has the fundamental right to live free from violence, fear, and abuse in her home, in her school, in public spaces, and in all community settings.
3. We recognize that in Chifuyili, late-night entertainment has created unsafe environments for women and girls, and that swimming in community water bodies has led to loss of life, particularly among children, requiring the community to take protective action.
4. The silence and tolerance of sexual violence and harmful practices in our community must end. We affirm that violence against women and girls is not a private matter it is a community concern that demands a community response.
5. We have a collective responsibility to protect our women, girls, and children; to hold perpetrators accountable; to support survivors without stigma; and to transform the social norms and behaviours that allow harm to persist in our community.
6. These by-laws are adopted voluntarily and in good faith by this community, and shall operate alongside and in full support of the laws of the Republic of Ghana, including the Criminal Offences Act, the Domestic Violence Act (Act 732), and the Children's Act (Act 560).

PART I: DEFINITIONS

Article 1 – Key Definitions

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1.2 Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Any harmful act directed at a person based on their gender. This includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, as well as harmful traditional practices such as child and forced marriage.

1.3 Child Marriage

Any formal or informal union where one or both parties are under 18 years of age. Child and teenage marriage is prohibited under the laws of Ghana and is strictly banned under these by-laws.

1.4 Defilement

Any sexual act with a child under 16 years of age a criminal offence under Ghanaian law regardless of alleged consent.

1.5 Domestic Violence / Marital Abuse

Any act of physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or abuse committed by a spouse, partner, or family member against another member of the household.

1.6 Survivor / Victim

Any person woman, girl, man, or boy who has experienced sexual violence, domestic abuse, or gender-based harm.

1.7 Perpetrator

Any person who commits, attempts to commit, facilitates, or is complicit in an act of sexual violence, domestic abuse, or other prohibited conduct under these by-laws.

1.8 Community Working Committee (CWC)

The community-level oversight body established to monitor and enforce these by-laws, receive complaints, and facilitate referrals to formal authorities.

PART II: GENERAL PROHIBITIONS

Article 2 – Prohibited Conduct (General)

The following acts are prohibited throughout this community and shall be subject to community sanctions under Article 4, in addition to any applicable criminal or civil law:

1. Rape, attempted rape, marital rape, defilement, or any form of sexual assault against any person.
2. Child or teenage marriage the arrangement, facilitation, or performance of marriage or cohabitation involving any person under 18 years of age.
3. Physical abuse or maltreatment of a spouse or partner, including beating, assault, or any act of domestic violence without justification.

4. Sexual harassment in any setting farms, markets, schools, homes, churches, mosques, or public spaces.
5. Intimidating, threatening, or victimizing any person who reports or seeks help for sexual violence or domestic abuse.
6. Discouraging or preventing a community member from reporting sexual violence or domestic abuse to community or formal authorities.
7. Using social position, traditional authority, or economic power to obtain sexual favours, silence survivors, or shield perpetrators from accountability.
8. Facilitating or being knowingly complicit in any act of sexual violence, domestic abuse, or harmful practice including through deliberate silence or concealment.

PART III: COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC BY-LAWS

Article 3 – Specific By-Laws of Chifuyili Community

In addition to the general provisions above, the following by-laws were specifically identified and agreed upon by the people of Chifuyili Community in their community assembly. These by-laws reflect the specific concerns, experiences, and priorities of this community in protecting women, girls, and children from harm:

1. **Playing of jams, loud music, or any form of loud entertainment within the community is hereby banned after 10:00 p.m. This measure is adopted to protect the safety and dignity of women and girls in the community after dark, and to prevent the conditions that expose them to risk of sexual harassment and violence during late-night activities.**
2. **Both children and adults are hereby prohibited from swimming in the river or any community water body within or adjoining Chifuyili. This by-law is adopted to prevent drowning casualties and to protect community members particularly children and young people from loss of life and from the risk of exploitation that can occur at riverside locations.**

All community members, including adults, youth, and visitors to this community, are bound by the above community-specific by-laws. Any violation shall be handled in accordance with the sanctions framework in Part IV below.

PART IV: SANCTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

Article 4 – Community Sanctions

Any community member who violates any provision of these by-laws shall be subject to the following graduated sanctions, determined and applied by the Community Working Committee in consultation with the traditional council:

Level 1 – Minor / First-Time Violations

1. Formal warning issued by the CWC before the community or traditional council.
2. Mandatory attendance at a community sensitization session on women's rights and gender-based violence.
3. Public acknowledgement of wrongdoing before community leaders.

Level 2 – Serious or Repeated Violations

1. Temporary ban from specified community gatherings, events, and functions.
2. Mandatory participation in a community-organised rehabilitation session.
3. Formal referral of the case to DOVVSU (Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit), the Tolon District Assembly, or the Ghana Police Service.
4. Loss of any community leadership position held by the perpetrator.

Level 3 – Criminal Offences (Rape, Defilement, Severe Domestic Violence)

1. Immediate referral to DOVVSU, Ghana Police Service, and judicial authorities for criminal prosecution.
2. Full community cooperation with law enforcement and courts during prosecution.
3. Permanent exclusion from all community leadership roles.
4. The community shall not conduct mediation, negotiate settlements, or accept out-of-court arrangements for criminal sexual offences — all such cases must be handled through the formal justice system.

Article 5 – The Community Working Committee (CWC)

The Community Working Committee is responsible for:

1. Receiving, recording, and documenting all complaints of sexual violence, domestic abuse, and by-law violations with strict confidentiality.
2. Conducting community-level inquiries in a fair, sensitive, and trauma-informed manner.
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PART V: SURVIVOR PROTECTION AND CHILD SAFETY

Article 6 – Rights of Survivors

Every survivor of sexual violence or domestic abuse in this community shall be entitled to:

1. Be treated with full dignity, compassion, and respect at all times.
2. Have their identity and case handled with strict confidentiality — no disclosure without their informed consent.
3. Support from the CWC, women leaders, and available community structures without blame or stigma.
4. Referral to health, legal, and psychosocial services including DOVVSU, district hospitals, legal aid, and relevant NGOs.
5. Be protected from retaliation, social punishment, or community ostracism for having reported abuse.

Article 7 – Protection of Children

The community shall take specific and active measures to protect all children from harm, including:

1. Ensuring all children especially girls complete their basic education without interruption for marriage, domestic service, or any other reason.
2. Promptly reporting any case of defilement, attempted defilement, or child abuse to the CWC and formal authorities.
3. Supporting the operation of girl-child clubs, debating clubs, and poetry clubs in community schools as safe advocacy and leadership spaces.
4. Ensuring that children are not placed in situations that expose them to the risk of sexual violence.

PART VI: REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

Article 8 – Annual Review

These by-laws shall be reviewed at a community-wide assembly at least once per year to assess effectiveness, address challenges, and update provisions. The CWC shall prepare an annual compliance report for the traditional council and SUFOD.

Article 9 – Amendments

Amendments to these by-laws may only be made by decision of a community assembly with agreement of at least two-thirds of participants and endorsement of the traditional council. No amendment may reduce the protections afforded to women and girls under these by-laws.

Article 10 – Relationship to National Law

These by-laws operate in full compliance with and in support of the laws of the Republic of Ghana. In any case of conflict between these by-laws and national law, national law shall prevail. The community affirms its full cooperation with law enforcement authorities in all cases of sexual violence.

AFRICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT FUND (AWDF)

In Partnership with Sung Foundation Ghana (SUFOD)

KASA! Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa Initiative

Tolon District, Northern Region, Ghana

NAGBLIGU COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY BY-LAWS ON THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Community:	Nagbligu
District:	Tolon District, Northern Region, Ghana
Initiative:	KASA! Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa
Implementing Partner:	Sung Foundation Ghana (SUFOD)
Funder:	AWDF
Date Adopted:	_____

PREAMBLE

We, the people of Nagbligu Community in the Tolon District, Northern Region of Ghana our traditional leaders, women leaders, youth leaders, elders, teachers, religious leaders, and all community members gathered together in community assembly, do hereby solemnly recognise and declare that:

1. Sexual violence, including rape, defilement, sexual harassment, child marriage, and all other forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, is a grave violation of human rights and a crime against the dignity and well-being of every person in our community.
2. Every woman and girl in our community has the fundamental right to live free from violence, fear, and abuse in her home, in her school, in public spaces, and in all community settings.
3. We recognise that in Nagbligu, children's safety and protection at night has not been adequately enforced, and that teenage marriage which removes girls from school and exposes them to sexual violence within marriage has persisted as a harmful practice in this community.
4. The silence and tolerance of sexual violence and harmful practices in our community must end. We affirm that violence against women and girls is not a private matter it is a community concern that demands a community response.
5. We have a collective responsibility to protect our women, girls, and children; to hold perpetrators accountable; to support survivors without stigma; and to transform the social norms and behaviours that allow harm to persist in our community.
6. These by-laws are adopted voluntarily and in good faith by this community, and shall operate alongside and in full support of the laws of the Republic of Ghana, including the Criminal Offences Act, the Domestic Violence Act (Act 732), and the Children's Act (Act 560).

PART I: DEFINITIONS

Article 1 – Key Definitions

In these by-laws, unless the context otherwise requires:

1.1 Sexual Violence

Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, directed against a person using coercion, regardless of the relationship between parties or the setting. This includes rape, marital rape, defilement, sexual harassment, sexual trafficking, and online sexual violence.

1.2 Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Any harmful act directed at a person based on their gender. This includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, as well as harmful traditional practices such as child and forced marriage.

1.3 Child Marriage

Any formal or informal union where one or both parties are under 18 years of age. Child and teenage marriage is prohibited under the laws of Ghana and is strictly banned under these by-laws.

1.4 Defilement

Any sexual act with a child under 16 years of age a criminal offence under Ghanaian law regardless of alleged consent.

1.5 Domestic Violence / Marital Abuse

Any act of physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or abuse committed by a spouse, partner, or family member against another member of the household.

1.6 Survivor / Victim

Any person woman, girl, man, or boy who has experienced sexual violence, domestic abuse, or gender-based harm.

1.7 Perpetrator

Any person who commits, attempts to commit, facilitates, or is complicit in an act of sexual violence, domestic abuse, or other prohibited conduct under these by-laws.

1.8 Community Working Committee (CWC)

The community-level oversight body established to monitor and enforce these by-laws, receive complaints, and facilitate referrals to formal authorities.

PART II: GENERAL PROHIBITIONS

Article 2 – Prohibited Conduct (General)

The following acts are prohibited throughout this community and shall be subject to community sanctions under Article 4, in addition to any applicable criminal or civil law:

1. Rape, attempted rape, marital rape, defilement, or any form of sexual assault against any person.
2. Child or teenage marriage the arrangement, facilitation, or performance of marriage or cohabitation involving any person under 18 years of age.
3. Physical abuse or maltreatment of a spouse or partner, including beating, assault, or any act of domestic violence without justification.
4. Sexual harassment in any setting farms, markets, schools, homes, churches, mosques, or public spaces.
5. Intimidating, threatening, or victimizing any person who reports or seeks help for sexual violence or domestic abuse.
6. Discouraging or preventing a community member from reporting sexual violence or domestic abuse to community or formal authorities.
7. Using social position, traditional authority, or economic power to obtain sexual favours, silence survivors, or shield perpetrators from accountability.
8. Facilitating or being knowingly complicit in any act of sexual violence, domestic abuse, or harmful practice including through deliberate silence or concealment.

PART III: COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC BY-LAWS

Article 3 – Specific By-Laws of Nagbligu Community

In addition to the general provisions above, the following by-laws were specifically identified and agreed upon by the people of Nagbligu Community in their community assembly. These by-laws reflect the specific concerns, experiences, and priorities of this community in protecting women, girls, and children from harm:

- 1. Children are prohibited from roaming or moving unaccompanied within the community after 10:00 p.m. Parents and guardians are held directly responsible for ensuring their children are safely at home by this time. This by-law is adopted to protect children especially girls from sexual violence, exploitation, and other harm that occurs at night.**
- 2. Teenage marriage is hereby banned in Nagbligu. No community member, family, or traditional authority shall arrange, facilitate, promote, or support the marriage or cohabitation of any person under 18 years of age. Violation of this by-law shall result in immediate referral to formal authorities including DOVVSU and the Tolon District Assembly. The community affirms that every girl has the right to complete her education and to freely choose whether and whom to marry when she reaches adulthood.**

All community members, including adults, youth, and visitors to this community, are bound by the above community-specific by-laws. Any violation shall be handled in accordance with the sanctions framework in Part IV below.

PART IV: SANCTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

Article 4 – Community Sanctions

Any community member who violates any provision of these by-laws shall be subject to the following graduated sanctions, determined and applied by the Community Working Committee in consultation with the traditional council:

Level 1 – Minor / First-Time Violations

1. Formal warning issued by the CWC before the community or traditional council.
2. Mandatory attendance at a community sensitization session on women's rights and gender-based violence.
3. Public acknowledgement of wrongdoing before community leaders.

Level 2 – Serious or Repeated Violations

1. Temporary ban from specified community gatherings, events, and functions.
2. Mandatory participation in a community-organised rehabilitation session.
3. Formal referral of the case to DOVVSU (Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit), the Tolon District Assembly, or the Ghana Police Service.
4. Loss of any community leadership position held by the perpetrator.

Level 3 – Criminal Offences (Rape, Defilement, Severe Domestic Violence)

1. Immediate referral to DOVVSU, Ghana Police Service, and judicial authorities for criminal prosecution.
2. Full community cooperation with law enforcement and courts during prosecution.
3. Permanent exclusion from all community leadership roles.
4. The community shall not conduct mediation, negotiate settlements, or accept out-of-court arrangements for criminal sexual offences all such cases must be handled through the formal justice system.

Article 5 – The Community Working Committee (CWC)

The Community Working Committee is responsible for:

1. Receiving, recording, and documenting all complaints of sexual violence, domestic abuse, and by-law violations with strict confidentiality.
2. Conducting community-level inquiries in a fair, sensitive, and trauma-informed manner.
3. Referring criminal cases to DOVVSU and appropriate authorities and tracking follow-up.
4. Conducting bi-monthly monitoring visits and reporting to community leaders and SUFOD.
5. Facilitating regular interface meetings between traditional leaders, women's groups, and community members on by-law compliance.
6. Maintaining a confidential register of complaints, referrals, and outcomes.

The CWC shall comprise a minimum of seven (7) members, with at least 50% female representation, including a traditional council representative, a women's group representative, a youth representative, and a school representative.

PART V: SURVIVOR PROTECTION AND CHILD SAFETY

Article 6 – Rights of Survivors

Every survivor of sexual violence or domestic abuse in this community shall be entitled to:

1. Be treated with full dignity, compassion, and respect at all times.
2. Have their identity and case handled with strict confidentiality — no disclosure without their informed consent.
3. Support from the CWC, women leaders, and available community structures without blame or stigma.
4. Referral to health, legal, and psychosocial services including DOVVSU, district hospitals, legal aid, and relevant NGOs.
5. Be protected from retaliation, social punishment, or community ostracism for having reported abuse.

Article 7 – Protection of Children

The community shall take specific and active measures to protect all children from harm, including:

1. Ensuring all children especially girls complete their basic education without interruption for marriage, domestic service, or any other reason.
2. Promptly reporting any case of defilement, attempted defilement, or child abuse to the CWC and formal authorities.
3. Supporting the operation of girl-child clubs, debating clubs, and poetry clubs in community schools as safe advocacy and leadership spaces.
4. Ensuring that children are not placed in situations that expose them to the risk of sexual violence.

PART VI: REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

Article 8 – Annual Review

These by-laws shall be reviewed at a community-wide assembly at least once per year to assess effectiveness, address challenges, and update provisions. The CWC shall prepare an annual compliance report for the traditional council and SUFOD.

Article 9 – Amendments

Amendments to these by-laws may only be made by decision of a community assembly with agreement of at least two-thirds of participants and endorsement of the traditional council. No amendment may reduce the protections afforded to women and girls under these by-laws.

Article 10 – Relationship to National Law

These by-laws operate in full compliance with and in support of the laws of the Republic of Ghana. In any case of conflict between these by-laws and national law, national law shall prevail. The community affirms its full cooperation with law enforcement authorities in all cases of sexual violence.

SIGNATURES AND COMMUNITY ATTESTATION

We, the undersigned leaders and representatives of Nagbligu Community, Tolon District, Northern Region of Ghana, do hereby adopt and solemnly commit to uphold, enforce, and observe these Community By-Laws, effective from the date signed below.

Chief / Traditional Leader Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Assembly Member Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Women's Leader Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Youth Leader Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Headteacher / School Representative Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

CWC Chairperson Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

SUFOD Representative / Witness Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Adopted under the KASA! Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa Initiative, funded by the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), Ford Foundation, and OSIWA, and implemented in Tolon District by the Sung Foundation Ghana (SUFOD).

KASA! – Speak! – Because Silence Protects Violence.

AFRICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT FUND (AWDF)

In Partnership with Sung Foundation Ghana (SUFOD)

KASA! Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa Initiative

Tolon District, Northern Region, Ghana

KPENDUA COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY BY-LAWS ON THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Community:	Kpendua
District:	Tolon District, Northern Region, Ghana
Initiative:	KASA! Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa
Implementing Partner:	Sung Foundation Ghana (SUFOD)
Funder:	AWDF
Date Adopted:	_____

PREAMBLE

We, the people of Kpendua Community in the Tolon District, Northern Region of Ghana — our traditional leaders, women leaders, youth leaders, elders, teachers, religious leaders, and all community members gathered together in community assembly, do hereby solemnly recognize and declare that:

1. Sexual violence, including rape, defilement, sexual harassment, child marriage, and all other forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, is a grave violation of human rights and a crime against the dignity and well-being of every person in our community.
2. Every woman and girl in our community has the fundamental right to live free from violence, fear, and abuse in her home, in her school, in public spaces, and in all community settings.
3. We recognise that in Kpendua, late-night entertainment has created unsafe conditions for women and girls in the community, that children's movement after dark has exposed them to risk of harm, and that domestic violence against wives by husbands has not been adequately addressed or sanctioned within this community.
4. The silence and tolerance of sexual violence and harmful practices in our community must end. We affirm that violence against women and girls is not a private matter — it is a community concern that demands a community response.
5. We have a collective responsibility to protect our women, girls, and children; to hold perpetrators accountable; to support survivors without stigma; and to transform the social norms and behaviours that allow harm to persist in our community.
6. These by-laws are adopted voluntarily and in good faith by this community, and shall operate alongside and in full support of the laws of the Republic of Ghana, including the Criminal Offences Act, the Domestic Violence Act (Act 732), and the Children's Act (Act 560).

PART I: DEFINITIONS

Article 1 – Key Definitions

In these by-laws, unless the context otherwise requires:

1.1 Sexual Violence

Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, directed against a person using coercion, regardless of the relationship between parties or the setting. This includes rape, marital rape, defilement, sexual harassment, sexual trafficking, and online sexual violence.

1.2 Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Any harmful act directed at a person based on their gender. This includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, as well as harmful traditional practices such as child and forced marriage.

1.3 Child Marriage

Any formal or informal union where one or both parties are under 18 years of age. Child and teenage marriage is prohibited under the laws of Ghana and is strictly banned under these by-laws.

1.4 Defilement

Any sexual act with a child under 16 years of age a criminal offence under Ghanaian law regardless of alleged consent.

1.5 Domestic Violence / Marital Abuse

Any act of physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or abuse committed by a spouse, partner, or family member against another member of the household.

1.6 Survivor / Victim

Any person woman, girl, man, or boy who has experienced sexual violence, domestic abuse, or gender-based harm.

1.7 Perpetrator

Any person who commits, attempts to commit, facilitates, or is complicit in an act of sexual violence, domestic abuse, or other prohibited conduct under these by-laws.

1.8 Community Working Committee (CWC)

The community-level oversight body established to monitor and enforce these by-laws, receive complaints, and facilitate referrals to formal authorities.

PART II: GENERAL PROHIBITIONS

Article 2 – Prohibited Conduct (General)

The following acts are prohibited throughout this community and shall be subject to community sanctions under Article 4, in addition to any applicable criminal or civil law:

1. Rape, attempted rape, marital rape, defilement, or any form of sexual assault against any person.
2. Child or teenage marriage the arrangement, facilitation, or performance of marriage or cohabitation involving any person under 18 years of age.
3. Physical abuse or maltreatment of a spouse or partner, including beating, assault, or any act of domestic violence without justification.
4. Sexual harassment in any setting farms, markets, schools, homes, churches, mosques, or public spaces.
5. Intimidating, threatening, or victimising any person who reports or seeks help for sexual violence or domestic abuse.
6. Discouraging or preventing a community member from reporting sexual violence or domestic abuse to community or formal authorities.
7. Using social position, traditional authority, or economic power to obtain sexual favours, silence survivors, or shield perpetrators from accountability.
8. Facilitating or being knowingly complicit in any act of sexual violence, domestic abuse, or harmful practice — including through deliberate silence or concealment.

PART III: COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC BY-LAWS

Article 3 – Specific By-Laws of Kpendua Community

In addition to the general provisions above, the following by-laws were specifically identified and agreed upon by the people of Kpendua Community in their community assembly. These by-laws reflect the specific concerns, experiences, and priorities of this community in protecting women, girls, and children from harm:

- 1. Playing of jams, loud music, or any form of loud entertainment within the community is hereby banned after 10:00 p.m. This measure is adopted to protect the safety of women and girls from the risks of harassment, assault, and sexual violence that are associated with late-night noise and gatherings.**
- 2. Children are prohibited from roaming or moving unaccompanied within the community after 10:00 p.m. Parents and guardians are held responsible for ensuring their children are safely at home by this time. This by-law is adopted to protect children especially girls from sexual abuse, exploitation, and other harm at night.**
- 3. Any husband who beats or maltreats his wife without cause shall face sanction by the CWC and traditional council, and the case shall be referred to DOVVSU and relevant authorities. The community of Kpendua unequivocally affirms that domestic violence is not acceptable under any circumstances, and that a wife's physical and emotional integrity must be protected and respected.**

All community members, including adults, youth, and visitors to this community, are bound by the above community-specific by-laws. Any violation shall be handled in accordance with the sanctions framework in Part IV below.

PART IV: SANCTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

Article 4 – Community Sanctions

Any community member who violates any provision of these by-laws shall be subject to the following graduated sanctions, determined and applied by the Community Working Committee in consultation with the traditional council:

Level 1 – Minor / First-Time Violations

1. Formal warning issued by the CWC before the community or traditional council.
2. Mandatory attendance at a community sensitization session on women's rights and gender-based violence.
3. Public acknowledgement of wrongdoing before community leaders.

Level 2 – Serious or Repeated Violations

1. Temporary ban from specified community gatherings, events, and functions.
2. Mandatory participation in a community-organised rehabilitation session.
3. Formal referral of the case to DOVVSU (Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit), the Tolon District Assembly, or the Ghana Police Service.
4. Loss of any community leadership position held by the perpetrator.

Level 3 – Criminal Offences (Rape, Defilement, Severe Domestic Violence)

1. Immediate referral to DOVVSU, Ghana Police Service, and judicial authorities for criminal prosecution.
2. Full community cooperation with law enforcement and courts during prosecution.
3. Permanent exclusion from all community leadership roles.
4. The community shall not conduct mediation, negotiate settlements, or accept out-of-court arrangements for criminal sexual offences all such cases must be handled through the formal justice system.

Article 5 – The Community Working Committee (CWC)

The Community Working Committee is responsible for:

1. Receiving, recording, and documenting all complaints of sexual violence, domestic abuse, and by-law violations with strict confidentiality.
2. Conducting community-level inquiries in a fair, sensitive, and trauma-informed manner.
3. Referring criminal cases to DOVVSU and appropriate authorities and tracking follow-up.
4. Conducting bi-monthly monitoring visits and reporting to community leaders and SUFOD.
5. Facilitating regular interface meetings between traditional leaders, women's groups, and community members on by-law compliance.
6. Maintaining a confidential register of complaints, referrals, and outcomes.

The CWC shall comprise a minimum of seven (7) members, with at least 50% female representation, including a traditional council representative, a women's group representative, a youth representative, and a school representative.

PART V: SURVIVOR PROTECTION AND CHILD SAFETY

Article 6 – Rights of Survivors

Every survivor of sexual violence or domestic abuse in this community shall be entitled to:

1. Be treated with full dignity, compassion, and respect at all times.
2. Have their identity and case handled with strict confidentiality no disclosure without their informed consent.
3. Support from the CWC, women leaders, and available community structures without blame or stigma.

4. Referral to health, legal, and psychosocial services including DOVVSU, district hospitals, legal aid, and relevant NGOs.
5. Be protected from retaliation, social punishment, or community ostracism for having reported abuse.

Article 7 – Protection of Children

The community shall take specific and active measures to protect all children from harm, including:

1. Ensuring all children especially girls complete their basic education without interruption for marriage, domestic service, or any other reason.
2. Promptly reporting any case of defilement, attempted defilement, or child abuse to the CWC and formal authorities.
3. Supporting the operation of girl-child clubs, debating clubs, and poetry clubs in community schools as safe advocacy and leadership spaces.
4. Ensuring that children are not placed in situations that expose them to the risk of sexual violence.

PART VI: REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

Article 8 – Annual Review

These by-laws shall be reviewed at a community-wide assembly at least once per year to assess effectiveness, address challenges, and update provisions. The CWC shall prepare an annual compliance report for the traditional council and SUFOD.

Article 9 – Amendments

Amendments to these by-laws may only be made by decision of a community assembly with agreement of at least two-thirds of participants and endorsement of the traditional council. No amendment may reduce the protections afforded to women and girls under these by-laws.

Article 10 – Relationship to National Law

These by-laws operate in full compliance with and in support of the laws of the Republic of Ghana. In any case of conflict between these by-laws and national law, national law shall prevail. The community affirms its full cooperation with law enforcement authorities in all cases of sexual violence.

AFRICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT FUND (AWDF)

In Partnership with Sung Foundation Ghana (SUFOD)

KASA! Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa Initiative

Tolon District, Northern Region, Ghana

KPALIGUN COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY BY-LAWS ON THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Community:	Kpaligun
District:	Tolon District, Northern Region, Ghana
Initiative:	KASA! Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa
Implementing Partner:	Sung Foundation Ghana (SUFOD)
Funder:	AWDF / Ford Foundation / OSIWA
Date Adopted:	_____

PREAMBLE

We, the people of Kpaligun Community in the Tolon District, Northern Region of Ghana our traditional leaders, women leaders, youth leaders, elders, teachers, religious leaders, and all community members gathered together in community assembly, do hereby solemnly recognise and declare that:

1. Sexual violence, including rape, defilement, sexual harassment, child marriage, and all other forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, is a grave violation of human rights and a crime against the dignity and well-being of every person in our community.
2. Every woman and girl in our community has the fundamental right to live free from violence, fear, and abuse — in her home, in her school, in public spaces, and in all community settings.
3. We recognise that in Kpaligun, late-night entertainment activities have undermined the safety of women and girls in the community, that children's protection at night requires stronger community enforcement, and that domestic abuse of wives by their husbands has continued without sufficient community accountability or consequence.
4. The silence and tolerance of sexual violence and harmful practices in our community must end. We affirm that violence against women and girls is not a private matter — it is a community concern that demands a community response.
5. We have a collective responsibility to protect our women, girls, and children; to hold perpetrators accountable; to support survivors without stigma; and to transform the social norms and behaviours that allow harm to persist in our community.
6. These by-laws are adopted voluntarily and in good faith by this community, and shall operate alongside — and in full support of — the laws of the Republic of Ghana, including the Criminal Offences Act, the Domestic Violence Act (Act 732), and the Children's Act (Act 560).

PART I: DEFINITIONS

Article 1 – Key Definitions

In these by-laws, unless the context otherwise requires:

1.1 Sexual Violence

Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, directed against a person using coercion, regardless of the relationship between parties or the setting. This includes rape, marital rape, defilement, sexual harassment, sexual trafficking, and online sexual violence.

1.2 Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Any harmful act directed at a person based on their gender. This includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, as well as harmful traditional practices such as child and forced marriage.

1.3 Child Marriage

Any formal or informal union where one or both parties are under 18 years of age. Child and teenage marriage is prohibited under the laws of Ghana and is strictly banned under these by-laws.

1.4 Defilement

Any sexual act with a child under 16 years of age — a criminal offence under Ghanaian law regardless of alleged consent.

1.5 Domestic Violence / Marital Abuse

Any act of physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or abuse committed by a spouse, partner, or family member against another member of the household.

1.6 Survivor / Victim

Any person woman, girl, man, or boy who has experienced sexual violence, domestic abuse, or gender-based harm.

1.7 Perpetrator

Any person who commits, attempts to commit, facilitates, or is complicit in an act of sexual violence, domestic abuse, or other prohibited conduct under these by-laws.

1.8 Community Working Committee (CWC)

The community-level oversight body established to monitor and enforce these by-laws, receive complaints, and facilitate referrals to formal authorities.

PART II: GENERAL PROHIBITIONS

Article 2 – Prohibited Conduct (General)

The following acts are prohibited throughout this community and shall be subject to community sanctions under Article 4, in addition to any applicable criminal or civil law:

1. Rape, attempted rape, marital rape, defilement, or any form of sexual assault against any person.
2. Child or teenage marriage the arrangement, facilitation, or performance of marriage or cohabitation involving any person under 18 years of age.
3. Physical abuse or maltreatment of a spouse or partner, including beating, assault, or any act of domestic violence without justification.
4. Sexual harassment in any setting farms, markets, schools, homes, churches, mosques, or public spaces.
5. Intimidating, threatening, or victimising any person who reports or seeks help for sexual violence or domestic abuse.
6. Discouraging or preventing a community member from reporting sexual violence or domestic abuse to community or formal authorities.
7. Using social position, traditional authority, or economic power to obtain sexual favours, silence survivors, or shield perpetrators from accountability.
8. Facilitating or being knowingly complicit in any act of sexual violence, domestic abuse, or harmful practice — including through deliberate silence or concealment.

PART III: COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC BY-LAWS

Article 3 – Specific By-Laws of Kpaligun Community

In addition to the general provisions above, the following by-laws were specifically identified and agreed upon by the people of Kpaligun Community in their community assembly. These by-laws reflect the specific concerns, experiences, and priorities of this community in protecting women, girls, and children from harm:

1. **Playing of jams, loud music, or any form of loud entertainment within the community is hereby banned after 10:00 p.m. This by-law is adopted to create a safer community environment for women, girls, and children after dark, and to eliminate the conditions that expose them to sexual harassment and violence during late-night activities.**
2. **Children are prohibited from roaming or moving unaccompanied within the community after 10:00 p.m. Parents and guardians are held fully responsible for ensuring their children are safely at home by this time. This by-law is adopted to**

protect children especially girls from the risk of sexual violence and other harm that occurs during unsupervised nighttime movement.

- 3. Any husband who beats or maltreats his wife without cause shall face community sanction by the CWC and traditional council, and the matter shall be formally referred to DOVVSU. The community of Kpaligun declares that husbands do not have the right to physically harm their wives under any circumstance, and that the community will actively intervene to protect every woman from domestic violence.**

All community members, including adults, youth, and visitors to this community, are bound by the above community-specific by-laws. Any violation shall be handled in accordance with the sanctions framework in Part IV below.

PART IV: SANCTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

Article 4 – Community Sanctions

Any community member who violates any provision of these by-laws shall be subject to the following graduated sanctions, determined and applied by the Community Working Committee in consultation with the traditional council:

Level 1 – Minor / First-Time Violations

1. Formal warning issued by the CWC before the community or traditional council.
2. Mandatory attendance at a community sensitization session on women's rights and gender-based violence.
3. Public acknowledgement of wrongdoing before community leaders.

Level 2 – Serious or Repeated Violations

1. Temporary ban from specified community gatherings, events, and functions.
2. Mandatory participation in a community-organised rehabilitation session.
3. Formal referral of the case to DOVVSU (Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit), the Tolon District Assembly, or the Ghana Police Service.
4. Loss of any community leadership position held by the perpetrator.

Level 3 – Criminal Offences (Rape, Defilement, Severe Domestic Violence)

1. Immediate referral to DOVVSU, Ghana Police Service, and judicial authorities for criminal prosecution.
2. Full community cooperation with law enforcement and courts during prosecution.
3. Permanent exclusion from all community leadership roles.

4. The community shall not conduct mediation, negotiate settlements, or accept out-of-court arrangements for criminal sexual offences all such cases must be handled through the formal justice system.

Article 5 – The Community Working Committee (CWC)

The Community Working Committee is responsible for:

1. Receiving, recording, and documenting all complaints of sexual violence, domestic abuse, and by-law violations with strict confidentiality.
2. Conducting community-level inquiries in a fair, sensitive, and trauma-informed manner.
3. Referring criminal cases to DOVVSU and appropriate authorities and tracking follow-up.
4. Conducting bi-monthly monitoring visits and reporting to community leaders and SUFOD.
5. Facilitating regular interface meetings between traditional leaders, women's groups, and community members on by-law compliance.
6. Maintaining a confidential register of complaints, referrals, and outcomes.

The CWC shall comprise a minimum of seven (7) members, with at least 50% female representation, including a traditional council representative, a women's group representative, a youth representative, and a school representative.

PART V: SURVIVOR PROTECTION AND CHILD SAFETY

Article 6 – Rights of Survivors

Every survivor of sexual violence or domestic abuse in this community shall be entitled to:

1. Be treated with full dignity, compassion, and respect at all times.
2. Have their identity and case handled with strict confidentiality no disclosure without their informed consent.
3. Support from the CWC, women leaders, and available community structures without blame or stigma.
4. Referral to health, legal, and psychosocial services including DOVVSU, district hospitals, legal aid, and relevant NGOs.
5. Be protected from retaliation, social punishment, or community ostracism for having reported abuse.

Article 7 – Protection of Children

The community shall take specific and active measures to protect all children from harm, including:

1. Ensuring all children especially girls complete their basic education without interruption for marriage, domestic service, or any other reason.
2. Promptly reporting any case of defilement, attempted defilement, or child abuse to the CWC and formal authorities.
3. Supporting the operation of girl-child clubs, debating clubs, and poetry clubs in community schools as safe advocacy and leadership spaces.
4. Ensuring that children are not placed in situations that expose them to the risk of sexual violence.

PART VI: REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

Article 8 – Annual Review

These by-laws shall be reviewed at a community-wide assembly at least once per year to assess effectiveness, address challenges, and update provisions. The CWC shall prepare an annual compliance report for the traditional council and SUFOD.

Article 9 – Amendments

Amendments to these by-laws may only be made by decision of a community assembly with agreement of at least two-thirds of participants and endorsement of the traditional council. No amendment may reduce the protections afforded to women and girls under these by-laws.

Article 10 – Relationship to National Law

These by-laws operate in full compliance with and in support of the laws of the Republic of Ghana. In any case of conflict between these by-laws and national law, national law shall prevail. The community affirms its full cooperation with law enforcement authorities in all cases of sexual violence.

SIGNATURES AND COMMUNITY ATTESTATION

We, the undersigned leaders and representatives of Kpaligun Community, Tolon District, Northern Region of Ghana, do hereby adopt and solemnly commit to uphold, enforce, and observe these Community By-Laws, effective from the date signed below.

Chief / Traditional Leader Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Assembly Member Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Women's Leader Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Youth Leader Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Headteacher / School Representative Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

CWC Chairperson Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

SUFOD Representative / Witness Date: _____ Signature / Thumbprint: _____

Adopted under the KASA! Ending Sexual Violence in West Africa Initiative, funded by the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), Ford Foundation, and OSIWA, and implemented in Tolon District by the Sung Foundation Ghana (SUFOD).

KASA! – Speak! – Because Silence Protects Violence.