

# Philanthropist Group Wants Collective Efforts toward Setting Sex Offender Registry

By **Tina S. Mehnpainé** - January 11, 2021



*Wede Elliot-Brownell, PhD, Country Director, Cummings Africa Foundation*

The Cummings Africa Foundation (CAF) is calling on the government of Liberia, NGOs, International partners and Civil Society Organizations to work collectively to set up the national sex offender registry in line with the roadmap to eradicate rape and Sexual and Gender Based Violence.

CAF is a philanthropist organization that provides educational and other supports to Africans, particularly Liberians.

A sex offender registry is a system designed to allow government authorities keep track of the activities of sex offenders, including those who have completed their criminal sentences, physical appearances, and criminal history.

Sex offenders are subject to restrictions, including housing restrictions on being in the presence of under age persons, living in the proximity of a school or daycare center, owning toys or items targeted towards children, or using the internet to sign up for or use Facebook or other social media platforms.

Wede Elliot-Brownell (PhD), CAF Country Director, said the sex offender registry will help to eradicate rape and SGBV especially those perpetrators who molest children after serving their tenure in jail go back into the communities without the public knowledge.

She said CAF will work with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), the Liberia National Police and the Judiciary to set up the national sex offender registry. "We at CAF fully understand that individually and collectively we can all participate in minimizing this menace to society."

Dr. Brownell added that the registry is a public database that will allow the public to check for individuals' information when they go to apply for jobs.

"The public will have full access to the database so that if a person goes for employment or programs; they will be able to check if you have ever been convicted for rape or SGBV" The CAF Country Director added.

She noted that the training has exposed participants to new tools and resources to be even more effective in meeting the challenges of rape and SGBV.

Dr. Brownell made the statement at the close of the first phase of eight days 'Capacity Building Training on SGBV trauma organized by CAF for community leaders, healthcare professionals, policymakers, social workers and civil society organizations.

It can be recalled that following a three-day nationwide protest against rape and SGBV last year, President George Weah on Friday, September 11, 2020, declared Rape as a National Emergency.

Under the National Rape Emergency, President Weah declared initial measures that include the appointment of a Special Prosecutor for rape; the setting up of a National Sex Offender Registry; the establishment of a National Security Taskforce on SGBV, and the allotment of an initial amount of US\$2 million to beef up the fight against rape and SGBV in the country.

With the pronouncement made to the public, advocates and activists are yet to see any action taken by the government.

During the workshop, participants learned the root cause of abuse, the difference between child molester and pedophile, boys and SGBV, the importance of reporting SGBV against male survivors, protection for male victims and trauma, confidentiality and privacy, self-care and post trauma disorder.

They also learned about the interwoven forms of advocacy, barriers to engaging men and boys, trauma informed-care, symptoms as adaptation, trauma-informed therapy for survivors, working with boys and men survivors of SGBV, Strategies used by perpetrators to commit child sexual abuse, minors who commit sexual assault, and adolescent who abuse children.

Mara K. Wulubah of the Ministry of Health (MOH) Family Health Division (FHD), said the training has added more knowledge and improved her skills. "I learned about confidentiality and privacy along with self-care. In our country we downplay confidentiality and as a result SGBV survivors do not feel comfortable explaining their stories to us," she said.

Abigail Dukuly, Clinical Supervisor\Psycho-social Counsellor at MOH said "This year wouldn't have been successful if I were to miss this workshop. This training has added

another new skill to my work as a counsellor how to deal with SGBV survivors.

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