

# VRA ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE | Volume 7: October – December 2016

Bridging the Competency Gap in the Energy Sector

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**LEARNING  
NEVER ENDS**

## Photo Gallery



MPA Closing ceremony held at GIMPA on October 28, 2016



Mr. Robertson N.O Okpoti retires from the services of the Authority effective November 25, 2016



Lubrication Course (November 7-11, 2016)



Nuclear Plant Training Programme November 21-25, 2016



Transformer Maintenance October 10-14, 2016



Leadership Development Programme November 21-24, 2016

Bridging the Competency Gap in the Energy Sector

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** All end of course training reports from course Participants, non-VRA Facilitators and Part-Time Trainers should be directed to: [mgr.nontech@vra.com](mailto:mgr.nontech@vra.com) (For Non-Technical Programmes) / [mgr.tech@vra.com](mailto:mgr.tech@vra.com) (For Technical Programmes)

## Christmas Message from the Chief Learning Officer



Christmas time is here again! Christmas time is a time to reflect and celebrate our Saviour's birth, a special time to join together with family and friends to rejoice.

It is a time of birth, wonder, sharing and prayer. A time to review our performance, values, attitude and challenges and plan for a better tomorrow.

We wish to thank the Almighty God for seeing us through the year 2016 successfully. Even though it has been a challenging year for the VRA Academy, we are happy to say that a good number of the challenges were surmounted, leaving us with a bright future ahead of us. The commitment of our staff, their zeal, willingness to go the extra mile and their untiring efforts to find solutions to the myriads of issues we were confronted with, was simply heart-warming. To staff, Part-Time Trainers and external facilitators of the VRA Academy we say ayeekoo, well done, congrats! Your attitude to work has been exemplary. Let's keep it up

In line with our new mandate to provide a platform for structured and systematic learning and development schemes for staff of VRA and other power utility companies in West Africa and beyond, the VRA Academy provided training for about 2000 course participants in 2016. This includes participants from VRA, GRIDCO and Bui Power Authority (BPA).

The VRA Academy also hosted participants from Mainstream Energy Solutions Limited of Nigeria (operators of Kanji and Jebba Dams). This was the first time the VRA Academy received Nigerian participants for its programmes in Akuse. Running courses for non-VRA participants is helping generate some revenue for the Authority.

We also engaged various stakeholders, both local and international, in discussions concerning partnerships, sponsorships,

affiliations and accreditations for our training programmes. These included Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), University of Ghana Business School (UGBS) and Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA).

Others included Association of Power Utilities of Africa (APUA), Energie Du Mali (EDM), PROEF Group of Companies, African Network of Centers of Excellence in Electricity (ANCEE), GIZWAPP and Agent de Development de France (Afd).

We expect that the various training initiatives and partnerships would pave the way for a comprehensive training in both technical and non-technical fields for our clients in the energy, mining sectors and the general public. We look forward to having you all participate in our exciting programmes in 2017 and beyond. Look out for details in the VRA Academy's quarterly Newsletters and at [info.academy@vra.com](mailto:info.academy@vra.com).

We take this opportunity to once again thank all VRA Academy staff, Part-Time Trainers, course participants and other stakeholders for their dedication and commitment towards the successful implementation of our 2016 training programmes. We could not have gotten this far without all of you. We appreciate your support and endorsement of our efforts and pledge to work even harder, as we seek 'to bridge the competency gap in the energy sector' in Ghana, West Africa and beyond. God richly bless you.

We will start Year 2017 with a big bang by hosting an international course for 20 participants coming from 7 West African countries. The course is being organised by WAPP and GIZ from Cotonou, Benin. 3 VRA Academy staff will also participate in the said programme. We have no doubt that the VRA Academy is poised to chalk great success stories in the coming years.

We pray the New Year brings us renewed hope, life, energy and greater success. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Efua Garbrah-Sarfo (Mrs)  
Chief Learning Officer, VRA Academy

## Events

### GIMPA MPA Programme 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Ends



MPA Closing ceremony held at GIMPA

The Closing Ceremony for the second batch of VRA-GRIDCo Masters in Public Administration (PMA) programme was held on October 28, 2016 at GIMPA Executive Conference Centre.

VRA and GRIDCO jointly engaged Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), to develop a compressed and customized one-year MPA (Master in Public Administration) programme for their staff.

The main objective of the programme is to develop staff intellectual capacities, sound analytical skills, an understanding of the ethical and value concerns that are central to the traditions of the field of public administration.

It was attended by the Deputy Chief Executive (Services) of VRA, Ing. Evans-Appiah, Deputy Chief Executive (Engineering and Operations) of VRA, Ing. Richard Badger, CEO of BUI Power, Jabesh Amisah-Arthur, Chief Learning Officer, VRA Academy, Efua Garbrah-Sarfo (Mrs), Director of Human Resources VRA, George Koranteng.

Ag. Director Procurement VRA, Miriam Darke, Director of Human Resources GRIDCO, Wing Commander Rtd Samuel Allotey, Ag. Dean of Business School and Governance GIMPA, Nana Banyin.

The programme was also attended by staff and management of GIMPA, BUI Power, VRA, GRIDCO and NEDCO. Addressing the occasion, the Deputy Chief Executive (Services), Ing. Evans-Appiah said VRA is continuously searching new opportunities to grow especially in the areas of technical and professional competencies.

## Bridging the Competency Gap in the Energy Sector

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Deputy Chief Executive (Services),  
Of VRA, Ing. Evans-Appiah,

The MPA programme is one such opportunity identified by VRA and sister-companies that will provide the required competencies necessary to the Energy Sector.

He urged graduants to practice the knowledge they have acquired through the programme to improve productivity at their respective companies.



Some of the MPA Graduates

Delegates for the second batch included staff of Volta River Authority(VRA), Ghana Grid Company(GRIDCo), Bui Power Authority and Northern Electrification Distribution Company (NEDCo).

Presentations by course participants were made to some dignitaries:



Ing. Evans-Appiah, Deputy Chief Executive (Services)  
Of VRA



Jabesh Amissah-Arthur, Chief Executive Officer,  
BUI Power



George Koranteng, Director of Human Resources VRA,



Wing Commander Rtd Samuel Allotey  
Director of Human Resources GRIDCo



Representative from NEDCo

### Conference for Human Resources Management Practitioners and Managers in the Public Service, Ghana

The Fourth (4th) Conference for Human Resource Management Practitioners' Network (HR-NET) and Managers in the Public Service, Ghana was held on Wednesday, November 23, 2016, at Coconut Grove Regency Hotel, Accra under the theme "Effective Human Resource Management: A Driving Force in Organizational Change, Innovation and Productivity in the Public Service"

The Chief Learning Officer of the VRA Academy, Mrs Efua Garbrah-Sarfo, an HRM & HRD Practitioner was invited as a Panel Discussant for the programme. The Network is to provide a platform for Human Resource practitioners and managers in the public services to engage one another in sharing of ideas, adopting innovative practices and conventions including outcomes of research findings to improve on duties and functions at their work places in the various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

### TRAINING ACTIVITIES

#### 1. Job Safety / Risk Assessment

Date: October 11-13, 2016

**Course Objectives:** To provide participants with the practical skills and techniques for identification of occupational safety and health hazard, assessment and control of associated risk.

**Attended by:** Engineers and other qualified personnel.

#### 2. Compressor Operations and Maintenance

Date: October 17-21, 2016

**Course Objectives:** Participants at the end of the course will be able to:

- Explain the terminologies associated with compressors
- Identify the type of compressors
- Acquire more knowledge on the operations of rotary and centrifugal pumps.

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- Identify damaged or worn out parts of compressors

**Attended by:** Engineers, Technician Engineers.

**3. Governor Controls**  
(October 24-28, 2016)

**Course Objectives:** Participants at the end of the course will be able to:

- Explain the fundamentals of control system
- Explain the role of governor in power system
- Explain the operation and Maintenance of Governor
- Explain the necessity of Droop
- Explain synchronization

**Attended by:** Technical and non-Technical professionals

**4. Maintenance of Electric Motors**  
(November 7-11, 2016)

**Course Objectives:** Participants would be able to acquire the necessary knowledge; skills and attitudes to enable them carry out efficient and effective maintenance and troubleshooting/repair of faults on Electric Motors.

**Attended by:** Engineers, Technician Engineers, Foremen and Other Qualified Personnel.

**5. Microsoft Excel (Basic)**  
(November 14-18, 2016)

**Course Objectives:** Participants will be equipped to:

- A working understanding of the basic features of MS Excel
- Knowledge of functions and formulae to save time and reduce workload
- Use menu commands
- Understand navigation and movement

**Attended by:** Engineering staff, Administrative staff, and other professional personnel.

**6. Leadership Development**  
(November 21-24, 2016)

**Course Objectives:** To provide participants with knowledge of the concepts of modern organisational leadership and attitudes/behaviours required from a modern leader.

**Attended by:** Managers, HR officers, Administrators, Engineers, Supervisors, Officers and Other Qualified Personnel.

**STAFF DURBAR**

Management of VRA Academy on November 30, 2016 met staff of the Academy in Akuse to interact, listen to their concerns and share with them the strategy for 2017.

The Chief Learning Officer of the VRA Academy, formally welcomed staff to the event.

She appealed to staff to spend some time reviewing their individual performance in 2016 and find areas where they can improve even as we prepare to go into a new year.

Issues discussed during the durbar included highlights on the last VRA Management Retreat, the Academy's Safety Performance and 2017 Corporate Planning Cycle.

The durbar was very interactive; staff had opportunities to ask pertinent questions and share ideas with management.



Chief Learning Officer addressing the event

**THANKSGIVING SERVICE**

In connection with the Authority's annual thanksgiving activities, VRA Academy held its Annual Thanksgiving Service in the department's meeting room in Akuse on November 30, 2016.

The emphasis of the service was to thank the Almighty God for his mercies and loving kindness throughout the 2016 year. Furthermore, the service was to thank God for the coming years and pray for the

Authority especially in this challenging time.

The Chief Learning Officer gave a brief biblical exhortation and encouraged staff to do more for the VRA Academy. She thanked all for the wonderful job done in 2016 in spite of very challenging events.

Mr. Kingsley Gyamfi challenged all present to feed on God's word regularly during the remaining days of 2016 and pray for the Authority in the coming year.



Staff of VRA Academy thanking God

**MEETINGS**

**Meeting between VRA Academy and ASEA Brown Boveri (ABB)**

ABB is a global leader in power and automation technologies. Based in Zurich, Switzerland, the company employs about 150,000 people and operates in approximately 100 countries.

Asea Brown Boveri (ABB), The ABB group comprised about 1000 companies, has operations in 140 countries and is involved in power generation, transmission and distribution (T&D), industrial equipments and systems, and factory automation.

On November 22, 2016, the Management of VRA Academy met representatives from ABB. The purpose for the meeting was to introduce VRA Academy to ABB and identify potential areas of collaboration between ABB and VRA Academy.



ABB Country representatives at the Meeting: Hesham Tehemer (Managing Director, Ghana), Ahmed El-Saeed (Local Business Unit Manger)

### Meeting between VRA Academy and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST)

The Management of VRA Academy met delegates from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) on November 23, 2016 at Akuse.

The meeting was to discuss potential areas of collaboration and agree on concept for implementation. The collaboration will strengthen the long relationship between VRA Academy and KNUST.



KNUST representatives and staff of VRA Academy

### Mr. Robertson N. O. Okpoti Retires from the Services of the Authority.



Mr. Robertson N.O Okpoti, Principal Training Instructor retired.

VRA Academy announces the retirement of Mr. Robertson N.O Okpoti after 33 years of wonderful service to the Authority.

Mr. Okpoti popular joined the Authority on 25th March, 1983 as Technician Engineer and retired on November 25, 2016.

#### Life at Volta River Authority

Mr. Okpoti joined the Authority shortly after completing Tema Technical Institute. He went through the two year technical orientation programme from 1983-1985. He was posted to Kpong Generation Station as Maintenance Technician Engineer after successfully completing the two year programme.

He was later transferred to Akosombo Generation Station as Senior Maintenance Technician Engineer where he worked for about 23 years.

In 2010, he was transferred from Akosombo Generation Station to VRA Academy (formerly VRA Training School) to fill a vacancy as Senior Training Instructor (Mechanical).

Later through hard work and dedication, he was promoted to Principal Training Instructor, a position which he held until his separation from the Authority. He was part of the team sent to Ontario, Canada in 1992, prior to retrofit project at Akosombo Generation Station.

“VRA is a learning organization and it is through this environment that I had the opportunity to development myself and profession aspiration. I have been able to development myself and build my professional as engineer through the tremendous support from the Authority. To me, everything about Engineering is VRA.”

#### Message to VRA Engineers

“I have served the Authority with all that I know and can do and believe my fellow engineers will continue the good work. I respect the capabilities of my fellow engineers and pray God will give them the knowledge and strength to serve the Authority.

To young engineers, you are the future of the Authority, be focused, show dedication to work, work with Integrity in order to uphold the reputation of the Authority”

#### Message to Management and Staff of Volta River Authority.

“All will be missed, I thank you for your friendship and support throughout my stay at Volta River Authority. I thank Management staff for their leadership and hope they will continues to uphold the welfare of employees and ensure the Authority continue to serve its purpose within the sub-region.”

#### Message to Management and Staff of VRA Academy.

“I have enjoyed my stay at VRA Academy, not only as a training instructor but as a member of a team, a friend, brother and a father to many.

I consider you all as a family. I have received tremendous support from you within and outside the Academy and I am very grateful.

Technical team, God blessed you all. I believe in the competencies of each instructor and I think VRA Academy is fortunate to have such dedicated Instructors.

To the management Team, continue the good work, though some time the terrain look rough, I strongly believe in the capacity of each management staff and I believe the VRA Academy will very soon achieve it purpose and become a training center of choice globally”

#### I WISH YOU ALL GOD BLESSING

### Participants' Corner



“The training was very good, the facilitator is good, I like the training so much, I like to come back again”

#### -Generator Protection

“The facilitator is very great and the training was very good with more experiments”

#### -Rigging (Level 2)

“The training was good wish to stay for next session”

#### -Risk Assessment

“The training was good, more understanding”

#### -Pump Operation and Maintenance

“The training provided lot of understanding”

#### -Transformer Maintenance

Send your Requests for the 2017 training brochure/Calendar to: [info.academy@vra.com](mailto:info.academy@vra.com)

**"Nothing is a waste of time if you use the experience wisely."**

**Auguste Rodin**

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## Act with Integrity!!

By Godfred Kwame Nyarkoh

Two team members were discussing another team member's failure to perform. They talked critically about the individual's lack of skills and imagination. A colleague entered the room in the midst of their discussion, listened for a minute and then interrupted.

Does this team member know that you people feel this way, He asked? How will he ever improved if no one talks to him about his perceived failures? There may be reasons that we don't know about. Reasons that perhaps we could help him improve.

### What exactly is integrity?

Integrity can be defined as the consistency between what a person say and what that person does. Alignment between a persons's values, beliefs, words and actions, as well as the extent to which promises are kept.

Integrity is also relate to honesty, trustworthiness and fairness and often thought to be a measure of good moral character. Integrity is one of the critical traits that employers seek in the employees that they hire.

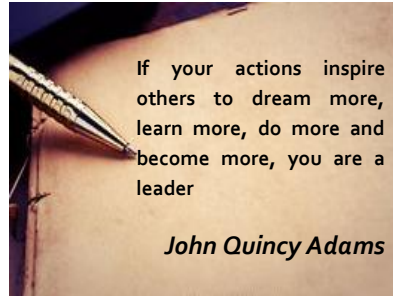
### Acting with integrity means:

- ◆ Demonstrating honesty and moral courage.
- ◆ Doing the right thing: people with integrity have high moral principles and they demonstrate that in all their dealings.
- ◆ Being Accountable: people with integrity don't just blame others or always query others for their non-performance but take the blame themselves; they take full responsibility for the outcome of team actions.

People act with transparency and accountability in decision making.

Integrity comes in many forms but honesty and dependability are two critical traits that are expected especially at the workplace situations.

Workplace integrity starts with honesty, decency and trustworthiness. So it doesn't matter whether you are the subordinate or the boss, acting with integrity at the workplace will make a big difference not only to your long-term professional development but also enhance the overall company brand or culture.



## Ergonomic tips for Driving



Driving can creates significant stress to the neck and the upper and lower back. Compact cars often do not fit taller users. For others certain seats may not support them properly.

Safety is always the first concern. Never make an adjustment that would make you less likely to see the road, your mirrors or affect your health.

## Proper Adjustment



1. **Position yourself correctly in the seat itself.** Make sure you sit straight and that your buttocks and back are square and completely squeezed into the seat.

This helps to avoid backaches, possible back injuries and maintains awareness during long drives

2. **Adjust the seat distance.** The seat should always be positioned with regard to the pedals. Press the brake pedal fully with your right foot and fully depress the clutch (in a manual transmission car) or dead pedal (in an automatic).

The distance should be adjusted so that with fully depressed pedals, your knees remain slightly bent (about 120 degrees).

3. **Adjust the seat height.** This should allow us to see forward clearly, while still having a clear view of the dashboard, and proper height relative to the wheel and pedals.

In most cars, the proper height for forward vision should allow us to place five fingers (a hand width) between our head and the ceiling.

4. **Adjust the steering height.** Where adjustable, the steering height should be adjusted to as parallel to back angle, and to a clear view of the dashboard through the rim.

The privilege of a lifetime is being who you are.

Joseph Campbell

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The ideal adjustment should also allow us to grip the wheel properly.

5. [Adjust the steering distance.](#)

Where adjustable, this should be adjusted with the steering wheel height, to as parallel to the back as possible. While gripping the wheel properly, our elbows should be bent at about 120 degrees.

There should be a minimal clearance of 10" (and preferably 30cm) between the center of the steering hub and the base of the breastbone (sternum). It should also not be further away than 45 centimeter (17.7 in).

6. [Adjust the head restraints.](#) Place the headrest to a height just above your eyelids, and (more importantly) -- as close to the head as possible (2-3cm). A head-restraint further than 7 centimeter (2.8 in) increases the risk of whiplash.

Keep in mind that while driving our head bends forward a bit more. If you cannot adjust the head-restraint to the proper distance, you need to compensate by increasing the backrest tilt.

7. [Position your hands properly.](#)

Your hands should both be on the wheel. This increases the leverage on the wheel to a maximum. Your palms should be placed against the outer diameter of the wheel and the thumbs should be lightly hooked on the cross-brace of the wheel.

Grip and stabilize the wheel not only with the thumbs and/or palms, but mainly with your fingers and fingertips. In general, keep the grip of the wheel as light as possible without losing your control over the wheel. This results in better control and less fatigue.


8. [Wear your seat belt properly.](#)

Adjust the lap-belt as snugly as

possible over the waist. The belt should be physically tightened and placed as low as possible, on the pelvic bones, rather than the soft belly

Source:

1. ([www.eddiejackman.com/how-to-adjust-your-seating-position-while-driving-part-1/](http://www.eddiejackman.com/how-to-adjust-your-seating-position-while-driving-part-1/))
2. ([www.ergonomicssimplified.com/tips/driving](http://www.ergonomicssimplified.com/tips/driving))



**“As we look ahead  
into the next century,  
leaders will be those  
who empower  
others.”**

**- Bill Gates**

**Don't waste  
a good mistake...  
Learn from it.**

**Robert Kiyosaki**

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<b>UPCOMING COURSES</b>	
<b>Course</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>JANUARY 2017</b>	
Director's Programme	January 23-27, 2017
Director's Programme	January 30- February 03, 2017
Orientation Programme	January 30- February 03, 2017
<b>FEBRUARY 2017</b>	
Leadership Development	February 06 - 10, 2017
Basic Functional French	February 08 - 10, 2017
Leadership Development	February 13 - 17, 2017
Basic Corporate Computer Application Skills	February 13 - 17, 2017
Maintenance of Electric Cranes	February 13 - 17, 2017
French for Corporate Communicators	February 15 - 17, 2017
Risk Assessment	February 20-24, 2017
Leadership Development	February 20 - 24, 2017
Line Staking/Pole Framing	February 20 - 24, 2017
MS Access Intermediate	February 20-24, 2017
Report Writing Skills	February 20-24, 2017
Effective Presentation Skills	February 22-24, 2017
French for Power Business (Advance)	February 22-24, 2017
<b>MARCH 2017</b>	
Director's Programme	March 07 - 10, 2017
Work and Standard Protection Code	March 13 - 17, 2017
Effective Logging and Communication Skills	March 13 -17, 2017
Work and Standard Protection Code	March 13 -17, 2017
Mechanical Drives	March 13-17, 2017
Excel for Beginners	March 13-17, 2017
Admin. Officers programme	March 13-15, 2017
French for Power Line Operations and Maintenance	March 14-16, 2017
Team Building and Development	March 15-17, 2017
Retirement Planning	March 15-17, 2017
Maintenance of Electric Cranes	March 20 - 24, 2017
Leadership Development	March 20 - 24, 2017
Distribution Transformer Loading and Fuse Coordination	March 20 - 24, 2017
French for Power System Operators	March 21 - 23, 2017
Business Etiquette and Protocol Intelligence	March 23 - 24, 2017
Precision Measuring Instruments	March 27-31, 2017
MS Access Intermediate	March 27-31, 2017
Human Resource Management	March 27-31, 2017
Director's Programme	March 27 - 31, 2017
Oracle Procurement (Professional)	March 29 - 31, 2017
Time and Stress Management	March 29 - 31, 2017

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