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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Anti CLaT Community Public Video Shows and Campaigns Report



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Action Association

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Cover photo: A section of the community folks during a community video show on Anti CLaT. Credit: Development Action Association.

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ACRONYMS

CLaT	Child Labor and Trafficking
DAA	Development Action Association
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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1. INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of Child Labor and Trafficking (CLaT) in fishing is an issue of public concern, in the Central Region of Ghana. This has made it necessary for DAA under the USAID SFMP to train Community Advocates from CLaT prevalent communities; Mumford, Apam and Winneba.

As part of the behavioral change communication strategy, the Anti CLaT advocates in Apam with the support of DAA organized video shows to sensitize people in Apam, Winneba and Mumford. The objective of the video shows, which brought together, children, traditional leaders and parents was to sensitize the communities on the dangers of CLaT and make it an unacceptable practice.

Some rescued victims of CLaT also shared their experiences while members of the community were given the opportunity to share their views on CLaT, lessons learned from the video and pledged to serve as agents of change.

1.1 The Objectives of the Campaign

- To create awareness of the community on CLaT and its impact on the welfare of children.
- To educate the community on the economic, social and physiological effect of victims.

1.2. Expected Outcome

The outcome expected out of the screening of the video show are that:

- Members of the Apam community would be informed on issues of CLaT, will be agents for change.
- It is expected that after receiving the knowledge, people in the community will change their attitude and mindset on CLaT.
- Parents will take responsibility for the upkeep of their children, instead of selling them off to slave masters.

2. IMPACT AND LESSON LEARNED

2.1 Location: Mumford Premix selling station, Central Region.

Date: 30th November 2017

After the video show, some of the viewers shared their experiences and testimonies on the torture trafficked children are put through on the Volta Lake by their masters.

Mr. Kobina Mensah, who is a canoe owner and fisherman at Yeji confirmed that, what was shown in the video actually happens in Yeji and while he has tried to speak against the practice, some of his peers ignore him, because CLaT is somewhat seen as ‘normal’. He therefore advised the parents never to give their children to ‘masters’ for labor, and encouraged the community advocates to continue to create awareness and sensitize people on CLaT in Ghana.

Abena Nyarkoh, a trader who had been trafficked to Yeji by her father also confirmed the hardship trafficked children face on the Volta Lake, and advised the parents against ‘selling’ their children off. She commended the Anti CLaT advocate and DAA for their efforts and pleaded with government agencies to help combat CLaT in the society.



Figure 1. Mr. Kobina Mensah telling what victims of Child labor and trafficked children go from their Masters at Yeji

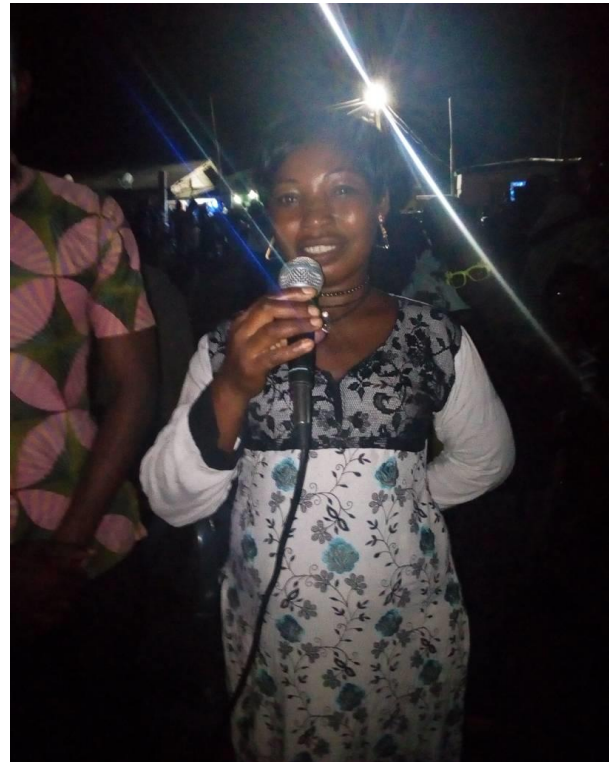


Figure 2. Madam Abena Nyarkoh a victim, trafficked to Yeji by her father, shares the challenges and inhuman treatment she went through at Yeji

Another fisherman Kofi Sekyi, also added that, he had been a victim of CLaT and shared his experience. According to him, he sometimes had to eat Gari and fish after a hard day’s work while his “master” and his family ate fufu. He added that Yeji, is no doubt a good town for

fishing, but fishermen should not employ children as slaves. He advised his fellow fishermen to desist from such behavior and pleaded with parents to stop ‘selling their children’

Conclusion

The video show achieved its objective as the community members present are now aware of the dangers of CLaT, especially after the experiences shared by the three people.

The advocates advised the parents and guardians to help reduce the prevalence of CLaT in their communities.

2.2 Location: Apam Premix Station, Central Region.

Date: 13th December, 2017

The video show continued at the Apam Premix station and was watched by school children, fishermen, parents and other members of the community.

After the show, Mr. Know fisherman confirmed the harsh treatment given to these children by their task masters and pleaded with the government to act immediately and arrest all the perpetrators of such practices..

Lt Emmanuel Quansah also shared his opinion on the content of the video. According to him, most parents allow their children below the age of 18 to sell at the landing beach or go fishing during school breaks, which hampers the development of the children. In his speech gave his word of advice to the participants, he said now that schools are vacated, He urged parents to be concerned about the welfare of their wards and not leave them to fend for themselves.



Figure 3. Participants testifying on their own experiences

A 38 year old man Mr. Abakah, after watching the maltreatment given to victims in the video, broke out in tears and asked the organizers to allow him to share his own experience with the audience. According to him, the video reminds him of what he went through in Yeji. He recounted the harsh treatment meted out to him by his ‘master’. He and the other children never bathed or wore clothes and sometimes slept outside, while the master will be indoors and comfortable with their families. He asked the advocates to travel to such areas to rescue victims and advice parents never to give out their wards to anyone in Yeji for fishing.

Conclusion

Mr. Peter Edzie a community advocate, ended the video screening session by admonishing the audience to become change agents and sensitize others in the Apam community on the dangers of CLaT.

2.3 Location: Nsuekyire Football Park- Apam – Gomoa West

Date: 17th, April, 2018

The program commenced with an opening prayer by the Assembly Woman of the area Hon. Cecilia Awotwe Pratt at 6:24 pm, the show brought together people from nearby communities such as Abaakwa and Mamfam after the public announcement by the Assembly Member two days before the program. 150 people came to watch the video.

Captain Emmanuel Quansah then welcomed the audience to the video show and asked that they pay attention to the contents.



Figure 4. The Assembly woman of the Area, Hon. Cecilia Awotwe Pratt sensitizing the people on the negative effects of child labor and trafficking on community



Figure 5. Captain Quansah and Kojo Amoah (the child who shared that he sells plantain after school)



Figure 6: Mr. Boamah a teacher and an advocate from Apam, during the video show advising parents to take good of their children to prevent possible trafficked

After the screening of the video, a young boy Kojo Amoah, shared that even though he is lives with his parents but he still has to sell plantains before he goes to school every morning, and so he is always caned for being late at school.

Mr. Boamah,admonished the parents to ensure that their children attend school on time to avoid being punished also show keen interest in their children’s education.

Conclusion

After the show, the audience were grateful to the community advocates for educating the community on the dangers of CLaT and its adverse impact on a child’s welfare.

2.4 Location: Nsawam Akonteng, Apam

Date: 18, April, 2018

The program commenced with an opening prayer by the Assembly woman of the community, Honorable Aunty Mary. She welcomed the audience to the video show especially those who had traveled from Akyeremah as they had been especially invited.

50 people came to watch the show. Captain Emmanuel Quansah the lead community advocate welcomed the audience to the show and asked that they pay attention to the issues in the video.



Figure 7. Captain Emmanuel Quansah the lead community advocate welcomes the audience to the show

Miss Leticia Damson reminded the audience after the show, that today’s children are the future leaders and so parents should show an interest in their general instead of selling them off as slaves for fishing in Yeji, sometimes for as low as GHS 50 .According to her the children are maltreated and sometimes sold off as sex slaves and end up as social deviants.



Figure 8. Leticia Dampson addressing the audience after the show

Miss Florence Nartey an anti CLaT advocate, also said the trauma that CLaT victims go through, deprives them of any self-worth. She reminded parents on the constitutional rights of children and the consequences for parents who neglect their children.

She urged all present to help fight CLaT by reporting all suspected CLaT activities to the CLaT advocates and other state agencies for necessary actions to be taken.



Figure 9. Florence Nartey addressing the show

2.5 Location: Akyemfo Mumford, Gomoa West

Date: 14th May 2018

The Akyemfo is a known CLaT source community and so showing the video here was most appropriate.

The program commenced at 7:10pm and was attended by both young and old members of the community. The audience watched the video attentively to the end and seemed awed by the maltreatment of children by their “master” in the video.

After the screening of the video the community liaison for DAA introduced the anti-CLaT advocates (Aunty Agnes Sheburah, Florence Arthur, John Effirim, James Effirim, Humility Abbiw and Roland) from Mumford to the Akyemfo community, and told asked them to report any issues of CLaT to them for further action.

Madam Adjoa Mensah a native of the Akyemfo approached the advocates, and said that the video has reminded her of how her son was trafficked to Yeji as a slave. According to her, a man from her community asked her to give him her son so he would work with him in Yeji, in return for financial support with his education.

After convincing her, she gave them her son who was ten years old at the time. It has been five years, and she still has not heard anything from him. She therefore appealed to the advocates to help her get her child back.

Madam Florence Arthur, an anti-child labor and trafficking advocate, revealed to the participants that she has also lived at Yeji with her relative when she was younger and she witnessed hazardous work done by children and the maltreatment from their ‘masters’. She then advised the parents to refrain from giving their children away for work.



Figure 10. Florence Arthur (left) an anti-CLaT advocate addressing the participant on some the treatment victims face at the hands of their masters when trafficked to Yeji. Right, Sister Adjoa, who trafficked her 10 years old son to Yeji.

Recommendations

Following the screening of the video and the feedback from the community, the following are recommended:

- The Children’s Act, Human Trafficking Act and many other laws and plans (including the National Plan of Action on child Labor) should be enforced and/or implemented.
- Stakeholders should continue to raise awareness on the issue so that parents will appreciate the importance of investing in their children’s education; report perpetrators of child labor and trafficking; to support enforcement, and to resist all forms of slavery and slavery-like practices.
- Government agencies should also improving the educational infrastructure in fishing communities to make school going and apprenticeship training attractive. This should include providing school supplies (uniforms, text books, exercise books, sandals, school feeding.) as well as apprenticeship items. School system and learning must also be made “girl-friendly” to enable more girls opt for school rather than any other form of slavery or trafficking.

Conclusion

The child labor and trafficking prevalent in many communities especially along the coast. DAA with the support of USAID/SFMP will continue to sensitize and educate the people in the DAA intervention zones on the prevention of CLaT and the protection of children from the menace.