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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

CLaT in Fisheries: Overview of the Ghanaian Situation



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Friends of the Nation

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Cover photo: Cross-section of participants in Cape Coast (Credit: Frederick Eduful - FoN)

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Resonance Global: <https://resonanceglobal.com/>
SNV: <http://www.snvworld.org/en/countries/ghana>

ACRONYMS

CCM	Centre for Coastal Management (at UCC)
CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
CHRAJ	Commission for Human Rights & Administrative Justice
CLaT	Child Labor and Trafficking
COMFISH	Collaborative Management for a Sustainable Fisheries Future
CR	Central Region
CRC	Coastal Resources Center, University of Rhode Island
CRCC	Central Regional Coordinating Council
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DA	District Authorities
DAA	Development Action Association
DAASGIFT	Daasgift Quality Foundation
DFAS	Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization (of the United Nations)
FASDEP	Food and Agriculture Sector Development Program
FASDP	Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector Development Program
FC	Fisheries Commission
FoN	Friends of Nation
GAWU	Ghana Agricultural Workers Union of the Trades Union Congress
GEA	Ghana Employers Association
GNAT	Ghana National Association of Teachers
GOG	Government of Ghana
GSA	Ghana Standards Authority
GSFP	Ghana Schools Feeding Program
HM	Hen Mpoano
ICFG	Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance
ICM	Integrated Coastal Management
ILO	International Labor Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LEAP	Livelihood Enhancement Against Poverty
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAFAG	National Fisheries Association of Ghana
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
SS	Spatial Solutions
SSG	SSG Advisors
TUC	Ghana Trades Union Congress
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Educational and Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
VSO	Voluntary Services Organization

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The preliminary literature review identified several stakeholder agencies, organizations, academia and individuals with significant interest in fishing and its related child labor and child trafficking in Ghana. Their published research findings, reports on individual work or collaborations with others, write-ups on work and general information gleaned from the internet, one-on-one conversations with individuals, and participation in stakeholder meetings all contributed immensely to the compilation of this overview. These include but not in any way limited the following:

- Government Agencies - Department of Social Welfare (DSW); Ghana Police Service - Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU); Commission for Human Rights & Administrative Justice (CHRAJ); Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Protection; Ministry of Labor Relations & Employment; Ministry of Fisheries & Aquaculture Development (MOFAD); and Ghana Statistical Service from amongst the state agencies.
- Civil Society Organizations and NGOs included Ghana Agricultural Workers Union of the Trades Union Congress (GAWU); Ghana Employers Association (GEA); Ghana Trades Union Congress (TUC); Ghana National Association of Teachers.
- Parent and Child Foundation (PACF); Challenging Heights; Partners in community Development Program (PACODEP); World Vision Int; Facts for the Youth in Southern Sector Organization; PROLINK – Ghana (Accra, Hohoe); Friends for Human Development (FHD); Association for Practical Life Education (APPLE); Child Rights International; Legal Resources Centre – Accra; Cheerful Hearts Foundation; Volta Care; Legatum Foundation and, Fact for the Youth in the Southern Sector Organization (FYSSO).
- Faith-based organizations - Assemblies of God Relief and Development (AGREDS); Rescue Foundation; International Needs and Cry of Refuge.
- International organizations - Plan International; International Child Foundation; International Organization for Migration (IOM); International Labor Organization (ILO); United Nations Educational and Children’s Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - UNCRC; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - UNODC; Voluntary Services Organization (VSO); Food and Agriculture Organization.
- Academia - University of Cape Coast; Tulane University (USA); University of Ghana; International Child Resource Institute; Humbolt University (Berlin); University of Development Studies (Tamale) and University College of Education (Winneba)

With their great perseverance and enterprise in documenting what has been done (in terms of successes and challenges) by previous works; and also as dissertation within academic programs, or consultancy work for client agencies and organizations, the daunting challenge of collating of information for this overview was mitigated to a near-straightforward task. Works used are cited in the reference section.

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

The Coastal Resources Center (CRC), University of Rhode Island (URI) was awarded a cooperative agreement (AID-641-A-15-00001) from USAID/Ghana on October 21, 2014 to implement the USAID/Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) from October 2014 to September 2019. CRC-URI leads a team of core implementing partners including two intimately involved in the previous URI-led USAID/Ghana ICFG Initiative: Friends of the Nation and Hen Mpoano, as well as a new partner SNV Ghana (Netherlands Development Organization).

One component of the SFMP is the anti-Child Labor and Trafficking dubbed “CLaT”. Led by FoN, the CLaT component of the SFMP in the CR will also involve livelihoods activities conducted by Central and Western Fishmongers ‘Improvement Association (CEWEFIA), a women-focused organization that has an organizational mandate related to fishing communities and social welfare; Development Action Association (DAA) a national women’s advocacy organization; and SNV who will also work in two eastern landing sites of the CR.

Discussions with the FC leadership (CR), the Department of Social Welfare in Accra, and local implementing partners during the designing stage of the SFMP, highlighted the problem of illegal child labor in fishing—especially in the CR. This includes both hazardous fisheries work by children under age 18 and child trafficking. During focus group discussions held during project design, participants reported that child labor and child trafficking is prevalent in the Central Region. Children are being sent to the Volta Lake region to engage in dangerous fishing practices and are never enrolled in school. Especially vulnerable are single female-headed households with many children. Migrant fishers often leave women to fend for themselves and their children, without money for school fees or food. Agents come offering relief in the form of payments and promises to care for the children, but then force them into hard physical labor in the lake fisheries. Coordinating closely with the Fisheries Commission Child Labor focal person in Accra, the SFMP will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the problem in the CR and identify communities and households most susceptible to such practices and root drivers of the problem. This work will involve a comprehensive literature review on the problem, identify current actors involved in addressing this issue, and conduct a number of community meetings as well as a household survey. Out of that, a behavior change communications initiative will be developed in the CR on the issue in an effort to make such practices socially unacceptable.

Livelihood activities will be targeted at vulnerable households most likely to engage in such practices, under the premise that economic hardship is the root cause of the problem. We will work with social welfare agencies, the Department of Labor and District authorities to bring social services more forcefully to bear, such as reproductive health education and access to family planning services and commodities. We will engage the National Steering Committee on Child Labor, and in the design and roll out of the communications campaign.

1. INTRODUCTION

Fishing, from ancient times has been an important source of food and employment and provide enormous other benefits not only to those who engage in the activity but to the rest of the world. For many decades, experts have thought that this valuable wealth of aquatic or marine resource is unlimited; since it is renewable, humanity can depend on it almost forever. In recent memory however, with increased knowledge, it has become clearer, this aquatic and marine resource although renewable is indeed not infinite. It thus required that the resources need to be managed properly for purposes of sustainability.

In recent times, issues of child labor and child trafficking, having gained tremendous attention the world over, have led to the need to find ways of instituting regulatory measures to protect children and deal with the systems that put the health and future of children at risk. The International Labor Organization of the United Nations (ILO) is the lead agency for work, employment legislation, employment generation and labor standards and has spearheaded these regulations through development of Conventions and Recommendations - setting minimum standards of basic labor rights which several countries including Ghana have ratified and served as models for development of national level policies and regulations to govern child labor and other related slavery and slavery-like practices.

The fishing sector, of which child labor and trafficking have come to be associated with, is described as one of the most dangerous occupations in the world and that the involvement of children represent worst forms of child labor. While instituting measures to conserve and manage the world's fisheries for future generations, the future of children who have been intertwined with the activity must also be protected. Children work in large varieties of work as part of family enterprises, as unpaid family workers, self-employed or employed by others. In the agriculture sector, child labor and trafficking occurs in fisheries, aquaculture, livestock and forestry (ILO, 2010).

The occurrence of child labor and child trafficking are entwined in poverty and social injustices making them a problem that cannot be tackled in isolation. The ILO estimates in 2008 that some 60 percent of the 215 million boys and girls who are in child labor are engaged in the agricultural sector, including fishing, aquaculture, livestock and forestry (ILO, 2010). In this whole fishing enterprise, the work children do interferes with their schooling and are harmful to their personal development. Some work in hazardous activities and environment that often threaten health conditions and affects their lives.

In Ghana, child labor permeates every socioeconomic endeavour. The Ghana Child labor Survey (2003) estimates that nearly 20 percent of children of school-going age are involved in work classified as child labor. Of these, over 242,074 are engaged in worst forms of child labor (WFCL) including hazardous work, thus jeopardizing their health, safety or morals. The fisheries sector is known as one key area where daily activities have involved children. Both in the marine and inland fishery activities, children work on board vessels, unloading catches, preparing nets and baits, feeding and harvesting fish in aquaculture ponds, and sorting, processing and selling. At the upstream level, child labor occurs in areas as net-making and boat building.

Defining Child Labor and Child Trafficking

According to the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is a person under 18 years of age. The 1999 ILO Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labor (C182) indicates that the term "child" apply to all persons under 18 years. Child labor refers to work that impairs children's well-being or hinders their education, development and future livelihoods. Such

work is damaging to a child's physical, social, mental, psychological or spiritual livelihoods because it is performed too early an age or otherwise unsuitable for children.

“Child work begins to be described as ‘child labor’ when the work is likely to interfere with the child's education, health, physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development; or expose the child to an environment not conducive to his/her development” - (*Dela Afenyadu, April, 2010*).

In recent past, several organizations and governments have expressed disgust about the child labor and child trafficking situation in fisheries especially for the Volta Lake fishing and have thus sought to tackle the problem. **However, as concise information on child labor in fisheries is limited and the fact that the available data is very much disaggregated; the need to collate available information/data into a simple but comprehensive overview of the problem to provide knowledge and platform for redress is important.** Thus, Friends of the Nation (FoN) as part of its work within the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP), with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is collaborating with other organizations and academia (University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Centre (URI-CRC); Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association (CEWEFIA); Development Action Association (DAA) and University of Cape Coast Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences/Centre for Coastal Management (UCC-CCM).

Ghana's Fishery Sector in the Context of the Study

Ghana's fishery sector comprises marine and inland fishing. It accounts for 5 percent of agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Fish accounts for 60 percent of the animal protein consumed in Ghana. The sector contributes significantly to the national economy through foreign exchange earnings of about US\$94 million and provides employment to about 1.5 to 2 million people living along the coastal and inland fishing communities (FAO, 2004). The exercise focuses on availing information prevailing to CLaT in the fisheries sector in the Central Region, and conditions of trafficked children in the destination-communities for advocacy work.

At a glance, a trained eye observes a “from frying pan to fire” situation where typically, children from poor communities (eg Elmina, Moree, Apam, Winneba and Senya-Beraku) are trafficked into any of some largely impoverished 1,232 fishing villages inhabited largely by poor rural population in small communities (eg Jaklai, Kajai, Ezukope, Kido (Fanteakwa District); and Accra Town, Agbezuge (Pru/Yeji District); Abotoase, Kwamekrom, Kortokorpe, Banini, Gborkpodzi, Odei (Jasikan District) and others in Kpando, Kete-Krachie, Donkorkrom and Ada areas) whose main source of livelihood anchors around fishing activities on the Volta Lake with a shoreline of 54,000km which remains a critical resource for water transport and fishing. It is estimated that over 80,000 fishers, 20,000 fish processors and traders are involved in the Lake Volta fishing (NAFAG, 2004-2005). Fishing in the Volta Lake contributes about 90 percent of the total inland fishery and an estimated 140 species contributing approximately 20 percent of the total fish catch in Ghana.

The most landed species belongs to the Tilapia species such as *Chrysichtys sp.* (34.3 percent), *Synodontis sp.* (11.4 percent), *Mormyrids* (2.0 percent), *Heterotis* (1.5 percent), *Clariassp.* (1.5 percent), *Schilbeide* (1.4 percent), *Odaxothrissamento* (1.4 percent), *Bagru sp.* (1.35 percent), and *Citharinus sp.* (1.2 percent¹). Many Ghanaians eat tilapia in one form or the other (salted, smoked, grilled etc) as a delicacy and may be contributing to the menace of CLaT unknowingly.

Many trafficked children are used in the fishing industry. According to the Ghana Child Labor Survey Report (2003), over 49,000 children are involved in fishing in Ghana: 87 percent boys, 13 percent girls. 25 percent are children 5-9 years of age, 41 percent are 10-14 years of age, and 34 percent are 15-17 years of age. Of these figures, 20,000 are in the Volta Region and over 15,000 in the Eastern Region. Though more than 70 percent of the children in fishing are found in the two regions, 90 percent of all these trafficked children are from the Central Region.

In recent years, several studies and researches have been carried out and the findings are clear on the prevalence of CLaT within the country. Some recommendations have been made and efforts are underway in combating the menace. Although a lot has been put into eradicating the scourge, it continues to eat up society. Its dehumanizing face calls for more insight into the changing approaches of perpetrators and new ways of combating the menace.

As a project seeking to bring sanity into the fisheries sector in the Central Region, the issues of social nuances relating closely to fisheries cannot be overlooked. Friends of the Nation's work with partners in the Region will bring "fresh ideas" into the national struggle against CLaT.

Acknowledging the fact that much work has been carried out in the area in recent years and not seeking to "re-invent the wheel", FoN's work with SFMP partners and strategic agencies, organizations, academia and individuals will help inform the design of appropriate strategic measures to deal with the scourge.

Challenges and Limitations

In collating the study, one clear challenge identified by earlier initiatives was inadequate field visits. That notwithstanding, this is meant to augment anti CLaT initiatives in Ghana and therefore deepen existing works and bring findings therein into wider view. Another fact is interview fatigue among the general population. Rural communities are thinking of present and intermediate quenching of wants and are especially tired of unfulfilled promises in earlier studies. Another is an emerging attitude of rural people associating information gathering with political and social investigations which sometimes leads to increase in taxation and finding political inclination of people.

A few abridged versions of critical documents have been added in the appendix for readers to make quick references, directed to web addresses where detailed information could be accessed.

2. THE PROBLEM OF CHILD LABOR AND TRAFFICKING IN GHANAIAN CONTEXT

Child labor and Trafficking (CLaT) is a serious problem in Ghana, where about one-third of children between the ages of seven and fourteen work full-time. In the Lake Volta areas, children as young as four are sent to live with relatives in hope of learning a trade. This cultural tradition has become twisted by many Ghanaian fishermen who pay parents roughly an equivalent of fifty dollars (US\$50) per child, ostensibly to teach them their trade. Few parents realize that their children spend their days jumping into frigid, parasite-infested waters at dawn seven days a week to catch fish and untangle nets for ten to twelve-hour stretches. Young girls are tasked with cleaning, smoking and selling the fish and are also employed as domestic servants.

Coastal fishing communities are guilty of recruiting large numbers of children and sending them into fishing on the Lake Volta. They are either sold, or involuntarily taken from their communities, and exploited as child laborers. The fishing industry on Lake Volta had a particularly high number of child laborers engaged in potentially hazardous work, such as deep diving. Though there is no universal definition of the issue, Child Labor is lightly described as “the employment of children in a manner that deprives them of their childhood, and is hazardous to their physical and mental development”. Agriculture, fisheries and small-scale mining are major employers of child labor in Ghana. This is usually done with connivance with their families. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that agriculture is the largest employer of child labor in Africa. Vast majority are unpaid family workers.

Elsewhere in Ghana (apart from the fishing areas), It is common for children to work at cocoa farms and in the commercial sex industry. Many of these children die or suffer from ill-health, malnutrition and deplorable living conditions with no access to basic medical care. Traffickers, including relatives and parents, often understand the illegality of child labor, but traditional cultural practices, combined with poverty, lack of viable economic activities and human selfishness drive the growth, demand and supply of CLaT in Ghana.

CLaT is an international problem affecting millions of people and many countries around the world. In Ghana, the internal trafficking of children is one of the biggest developmental challenges. According to the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) in 2010, it is estimated that there are over 2.7 million child laborers in Ghana, or about 43% of all children aged 5–14. This figure is corroborated by the earlier Child Labor Survey of in 2001 which revealed that child labor was prevalent in all the 10 administrative regions, and that 2.47 million children 5-17 years, representing 40% of the estimated 6.36 million children were in that age group were economically-active with some engaged in the worst forms of child labor. This is slightly higher than 10% of the nation’s total population.

Agriculture, fishing and artisanal mining are the largest employers of child labor. Children in Accra and Ashanti regions were commonly indulged in domestic services. Child porters, locally called *kayaye*, work in urban areas and some of them are as young as six years. Children aged as young as seven work as domestic laborers, hawkers, miners, quarry workers, fare collectors, and in agriculture. According to an ILO representative, child labor in the tourism industry also on the increase. Child laborers are poorly remunerated and subjected to physical abuse. They receive little or no health care, and generally did not attend school. Available data also revealed that 1.59 million children (25%) were economically active while in school. Thus, many Ghanaian children work from an early age, with the situation more prevalent amongst rural children compared to their urban counterparts, whether in or out of school. But children’s work activities and their social and economic

context vary greatly between ethnic groups and between different social classes. It is within this context that the phenomenon of child labor in fishing and fish processing is located. As would be seen later, the peculiarities of artisanal fishery-based communities and livelihoods make children there vulnerable to child labor and trafficking.

3. CAUSES OF CHILD LABOR AND TRAFFICKING IN GHANA

Poverty is considered as the primary cause of child labor in Ghana, and many other parts of Africa. Media reports suggest children being sold into various forms of involuntary servitude for either sexual exploitation, dangerous work, or both. Ten to twelve year old boys work for fishermen in exchange for yearly remittances to their families with the practice often involving the consent of their generally impoverished parents. Reliable data is not available on the number of children who are working in fishing villages along Lake Volta; nevertheless, NGOs who worked on this issue estimated the number to be well into the thousands.

In trying to stem endemic poverty, many families in coastal fishing communities participate actively, or are swindled into trafficking children. In the Central Region, the fishing communities which are noted for this are Gomoa-Fetteh, Nyanyano, Moree, Elmina, Apam, Winneba and Senya-Beraku. From here, they are trafficked to work often in other coastal fishing communities, or even outside Ghana. But most often, the Lake Volta freshwater inland area is the destination. These children forgo an education and training in order to work in the fishing industry for low, or no wages - sometimes for many years without any compensation (eg a nine-year-old boy toils under the hot sun, fishing from morning to night, seven days a week. He was trafficked with his entire family from Moree, one of the poorest and most under-developed towns along the coast. With no means of escape and unable to speak the local language, the family is isolated and lives in terrible conditions. This is a typical situation a poor family slaving off their lives in these modern times in Ghana's artisanal freshwater fishing industry).

Though not thoroughly studied, there are reports of cultural practice in which parents that are financially indebted to boat owners release their children to work for the creditor; thus placing their children in debt bondage. It is also reported that fisher-entrepreneurs in the marine sector would insist that at least one (sometimes more) of their children familiarize themselves enough with the practice and management of fishing and related activities to be able to inherit their parents assets, and thereby take over and sustain the family business in future; hence, the insistence on engaging the children in the industry. Child labor in fishing and fish processing therefore becomes the socio-cultural mechanism by which the fisher-culture is transferred from one generation to the next.

Created by the construction of the Akosombo dam in the early 1960s, Lake Volta is one of the world's largest artificial lakes. A number of fishermen who have depended on the bounties of the lake for many years report that fish stocks are decreasing, making it difficult to survive off fishing alone. Other work is scarce in a country where unemployment is widespread and approximately 40 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. The depletion of stocks is one of the key reasons why children are needed as workers in the fishing industry. In addition to being cheap labor, their small, nimble fingers are useful in releasing the fish from the ever smaller nets.

The driving forces behind child labor (and trafficking) however extends beyond fish scarcity. Deep-rooted traditions can also help explain the prevalence of this crime. For example, it is common in Ghana for children to participate in apprentice work with a relative or family friend. Many kids, and their parents, believe that going away to work is a route to a better life. "The Government should ban the use of nets with tiny holes," says Jack Dawson, Executive Director of APPLE, a local NGO that works in several fishing villages. "Doing so would allow fish stocks to improve and discourage the use of kids because there would be no need for such small hands."

"Child trafficking is actually a distortion of the old cultural practice of placement with relatives or townspeople," says Joe Rispoli, Head of the Counter-Trafficking Department of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Ghana. "And many parents don't know the value of education; for them, it's more immediately valuable for their children to learn how to fish."

Fishing and fish processing in Ghana have become socio-cultural. For example the Ewes especially the Tongus and Anlos; the Gas; Adas, Fantes and Nzemas are notable fishing ethnicities in Ghana. Studies on child labor in fisheries in the Volta Region of Ghana reveal that the Tongus who mostly fish along the Volta Lake for example regard fishing as an integral aspect of their cultural identity and therefore insist that their children assimilate the fishing-fish processing occupation, no matter the circumstances. Consistent with this orientation, Tongu households no matter their social class would ensure that their citizens assimilate the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and values associated with fishing and fish processing in their childhood. Thus children are trained from a very tender age, to acquire skills in swimming, handling the fishing net, and diving, through apprenticeship. Some of the training methods are risky. Children may be asked to dive deep into the Volta Lake. If they return too quickly according to the estimation of their masters, they are beaten to return. For children who are very young however, a rope is tied around their waist while on fishing expeditions or training so that they can be easily rescued by pulling the rope. There is evidence however that some children get drowned during training. Their females would also acquire skills in fish processing. The females of Tongu ethnicity also acquire fishing skills from childhood. Thus children of this ethnicity would whether in school or not, have to contribute to fishing effort of the household.

In the Tema Newtown area, children slug it out with adults during school hours struggling at the Manhean sea shore over fish catch and how to make it to the next day's fishing. According to media reports, it was gathered from investigations that parents of the children virtually endorse the idea of child fishing because it is the only way to cater for their larger families. "We have big families and with fishing as the only vocation for us; we encourage our children to go fishing in order to make some money to support us", a mother fishmonger disclosed.

Some teenagers disclosed that since their parents, especially fathers owned the canoes, their expedition on the high seas is a way of helping their parents to make enough money that would not necessarily go to an outsider who might have been employed by their parents. "I decided to go to fishing to make sure that any money that I make will not only help my family members, but will also ensure that outsiders do not feed on our family". This is a quote from "a boy believed to be close to 10" according to the Today newspaper.

Some children however, are coerced into fishing by either their foster parents or adopted families, with the reason being similar to those assigned earlier on. Living in meagre conditions and working long hours every day, these kids are exploited by fishermen desperate to feed their families and eke out a living along the banks of Lake Volta. They are a source of cheap labor and are quite 'dispensable' if they should perish through accident or illness. After all, they are purchased very cheaply.

Child labor (and trafficking) is deeply ingrained in the fishing industry in Ghana. Through conversations with traffickers, it became clear that many of them simply do not realize that it is wrong for children to be away from their parents, not attending school and performing hard physical work for long hours. For example, Benjamin Torny, a fisherman for 15 years, used to visit parents and ask them if their children could help him with his work. He said, "children

are good fishers." He would teach them how to use the boat, swim and dive, and he believed he was doing the right thing.

An immediate consequence of fishing and related skill acquisition in childhood is migration of children into supposedly more thriving fishing areas to sell their skills. By early adolescence, some of these who acquire enough technological confidence and skills in fishing do migrate to other communities to engage in fishing and related labor. It is common for children of the Tongu ethnicity to travel during school vacation, to thriving fishing communities to engage in fishing and return when school re-opens. Of course as mentioned earlier, there are incidences of more permanent migration of children from elsewhere in Ghana, to pursue fishery livelihoods in other communities; with the related phenomenon of child trafficking to pursue fishery livelihoods. This often involves the practice whereby, fisher-entrepreneurs actively seek children that can be engaged in fishing and fish processing operations elsewhere. With the consent of parents, these children, be they male or female, are taken away under a verbal agreement that lasts for periods up to five years, after which they may be rewarded in cash or kind. Boys would most probably be rewarded with a cow, while girls may be rewarded with a sewing machine or cash. This transaction may or may not be facilitated by an intermediary.

In Tema, a traditional leader (chief) Nii Adjei Kraku II (Tema Mantse), opined that, child labor in his opinion "is depriving the Tema Manhean community of potential scholars. Going fishing is not bad. I was once a fisherboy. However, it is bad to ignore school totally," he stated. He added that, the 'love for money' on the part of children as well as the inability of parents to provide the basic needs of their children causes them to end up fishing. Nii Adjei Kraku II also blamed the situation on the rotary systems in schools (as in the case of most of the schools in Tema Manhean). This, he stated, was one of the causes for responsible adults not being able to properly check children who have been forcefully turned into fisher folks.

The Tema Traditional Council have instituted a scholarship scheme which seeks to support the education of the indigenous people in the community with over 200 people have benefited from the scheme and most of whom are passed through the Senior High School and tertiary levels. This initiative they hope will reduce the incidence of children dropping out of school to go into fishing¹.

In southern areas of the Volta Region, children work in [religious servitude](#) for a period ranging between few months to three years. They are part of the *trokosi* (literally - wife of a god), *fiashidi*, or *vudusi* religious or cult system. This practice requires young girls to work and serve the religious order, in order to atone for family members' alleged sins or, as an offering for the family's good fortune. This practice is present in adjoining ethnic areas of the Dangbe-speaking; and also, neighboring countries of Togo and Benin. It has been outlawed and imposes prison term under the laws of Ghana all three countries.

4. CONSEQUENCE OF CHILD LABOR AND TRAFFICKING IN GHANA

The effect of child labor and trafficking in Ghana based on literature reviewed affect children who find themselves in this situation negatively. Children involved in fishing and related work along the Volta-Lake are exposed to a variety of hazards and abuses. Consistently, data from the different sources reveal that these children suffer frequently suffer verbal abuse as well as physical abuse inflicted through beating.

In a study along the Volta Lake in which forty trafficked boys were interviewed, (35%) of them had sores or scars from injuries resulting from battering they had received from their employers. Girls are also frequently injured by fins of fish during handling and processing. Further, injured trafficked children rarely receive any decent medical treatment. A study along the Volta Lake revealed that only 6% of injured children were likely to be treated in a formal health facility. Others receive hot water massages, herbal, or no treatment at all.

Apart from injuries suffered from battering, many children in fishing are exposed to the elements of the weather (sun, rain, rain storms, and very cold weather); mosquito bites; attack by snakes, and the risk of drowning. In addition the girls also experience the hazards of exposure to excess heat from fire and smoke during fish smoking, and sexual abuse. Of these hazards, drowning is the most terrible because it is the one that is the most frequently mentioned as resulting in the death of children.

Drowning results from a variety of causes-when the boat capsizes due to wind storms or when it runs over a tree stump in the Lake; when the children are forced to dive into the lake to disentangle nets or observe fish distribution; when the children are swimming or learning to swim; and when the children get entangled in a net. While some of those who get drowned are fortunate to be rescued, others are not. Most children are not provided with any protective gadgets as they engage in the risky fishing and fish processing operations. For the very few (less than 20%), who are provided with any form of protective gear, this is usually in the form of warm clothes, life jacket, a knife and a spear.

Trafficked girls also suffer sexual harassment. Such sexual overtures come from many sources. The boat/gear owner himself or boys also similarly engaged in fishing work within the same household are usually the perpetrators. It was reported that some of these girls end up getting pregnant, and sometimes getting married to their abusers without having any say in the issue.

It was mentioned to this writer by social workers in the river port township of Akosombo that, there are brothels where trafficked girl-children are kept in “sexual slavery camps” established on hard-to-access islands located sporadically on the Volta Lake. These are completely secret communities where patrons go to have sex with the girls while their masters and mesdammes take the money. These secret “sex-tourism destinations” are heavily foliated islands with look-out points for any approaching boats or vessels to quickly camouflage any incriminating evidence.

Beyond the hazards from abuse and accidents are health hazards in the form of sickness and disability. The most common of these are headaches, stomach aches, fever and bodily pains, bilharzia in the case of Volta Lake fisheries; and ear problems or partial deafness. There is evidence also that many children resort to self-medication by taking pain killers, procuring off the counter drugs, or do not carry out any treatment at all, when ill.

Some children die on the job, due mainly to drowning and snake bites. It was also reported that some boat/gear owners end up killing some of the children through battery, which may be termed murder or manslaughter, whichever legal experts judge it to be.

There is evidence that parents involved in trafficking children to be engaged in fishing and related activities have low perception of the risks associated with the practice. In a study on parents in originating communities of trafficked children operating along the Volta Lake, 33% of parents in originating communities indicated that they did not know the conditions under which their children were living and operating. 35% thought their children were operating under good conditions; 7% under very good conditions, and with only 15% affirming the knowledge that their trafficked children were operating under bad conditions. Sensitizing “supply communities” about the risks associated with child trafficking could and does affect their willingness to let their children go.

5. CHILD LABOR AND TRAFFICKING PROVISIONS IN GHANA

The law sets a minimum employment age of 15 years and prohibits night work and certain types of hazardous labor for persons less than 18 years of age. However, child labor is a serious problem in the informal sector.

Summary of Child labor and trafficking Act, Ghana:

The Children's Act, 1998 (Act of the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana) states inter alia "an Act to reform and consolidate the law relating to children, to provide for the rights of the child, maintenance and adoption, regulate child labor and apprenticeship, for ancillary matters concerning children generally and to provide for related matters. Part I (Sub-Part I. Rights of the child and parental duty

Section 1. Definition of child. For purposes of this Act, a child is a person below the age of eighteen years.

Section 2. Welfare principle. (1) The best interest of the child shall be paramount in any matter concerning a child.

Section 5. Right to grow up with parents. No person shall deny a child the right to live with his parents and family and grow up in a caring and peaceful environment unless it is proved in court that living with his parents would....."¹ (Inimical to the child's welfare).

The Anti-Human Trafficking Act was passed in the February 2015; and Ghana was the first country to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and used it as a guiding factor to create child right policies. It clearly defines a set of rights that all children are entitled to.

Ghana has ratified several international conventions that establish standards to protect children from exploitative work, including the ILO's Minimum Age Convention (C138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention (C182). There are also other national laws restricting child labor, but these are not vigorously enforced. The minimum age for work in Ghana is 15 years; 18 years for hazardous work. In addition, like many other African countries, the country has signed a memorandum of understanding with ILO to launch a program under the International Program for the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC)².

Section 87 of its Children's Act 1998 forbids any person from employing a child in exploitative labor, or in any engagement that deprives the child of its health, education or development. Section 88 prohibits anyone from employing any child at night that is between the hours of eight o'clock in the evening and six o'clock in the morning. The Act's section 89 to 90 allow children above the age of 13 to engage in light work, and those aged over 15 non-hazardous work. However, the practice of children working is unfortunately, commonly accepted in Ghanaian society.

The Children's Act establishes a minimum age for employment, prohibits night work and hazardous labor, and provides for fines and imprisonment for violators. In addition, the legislation allows for children age 15 years and above having an apprenticeship whereby the craftsmen and employers have the obligation to provide a safe and healthy work environment along with training and tools.

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While substantial legislation is now in place in Ghana, legal enforcement remains a challenge. Child labor laws are not enforced effectively or consistently; and law enforcement officials, including judges, police, and labor officials, often were unfamiliar with the provisions of the law protecting children¹.

Observance of minimum age laws was eroded by local custom and economic circumstances that encouraged children to work to help support their families. An ILO and International Program on Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) and Ghana Statistical Service survey of child labor released in 2003 found that two million, four-hundred and seventy children were engaged in some economic activity, and 64.3 percent of those children attended school. Of those children engaged in economic activity, one million, two-hundred and seventy were found to be engaged in child labor as defined by age and, as hazardous.

According to government labor officials and the Ghana Employers Association, child labor problems did not exist in the formal labor sector because as it is better regulated. The law prohibits forced and compulsory labor performed by children. However, during the year children were reportedly sold, leased, or given away by parents to work in agriculture, fishing villages, quarry mines, shops, or homes.

The legal framework on trafficking in Ghana was strengthened in December 2005, when the Government passed a comprehensive Anti-Trafficking Bill with assistance from a variety of international organizations. Though the country is yet to ratify the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, there is optimism of its ratification in the near future. "We are definitely going to ratify the UN Convention," says Marilyn Amponsah, Director of the International Children's Desk for the then Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. "We have participated in ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) regional cooperation for many years, and we are now ready for the UN." She however stresses that the Ghanaian Government will need external assistance to be able to effectively implement the Convention. The international community could, for example, help build local capacity on human trafficking-related topics, finance micro-credit schemes to prevent and combat human trafficking, and provide the equipment necessary to perform day-to-day administrative tasks.

6. INITIATIVES GEARED TOWARDS CURBING CLAT IN GHANA

In 2007, the Ghana Child Labor Strategic Initiative (GCLSI) was established to focus on child labor and trafficking in the fishing communities of Lake Volta. The Initiative's approach addressed the child labor problem around Lake Volta from several perspectives. Because the most effective way to counter human trafficking, including child labor, is to stop it before it starts, this three-year Initiative focused on prevention efforts among parents, children, traffickers and law enforcement officials to keep children from being trapped in the fishing industry. The approach also addressed the underlying poverty that fuels child labor practices by training parents in alternative income generation activities to boost their household income and reduce their dependence on child labor.

Additionally, the fishermen and other traffickers were sensitized to the impact of child labor and the applicable laws and sentences they would face if prosecuted. They also received training on alternative income generating activities, and some received microcredit loans to improve their fishing enterprises without the use of child labor. Finally, the Initiative's strategy included a rescue and rehabilitation component, addressed in part by the establishment of transit shelters to make it easier for the rescued children to receive medical care and counselling before reunification with their families. With a total investment of US\$ 1,362,689, the initiative's goal was to impact over 40,000 people.

Broadly, two types of approaches are being applied in Ghana for the progressive elimination of child labor in fisheries - the rights based approach and the participatory approach.

The rights-based approach, as it has been variously applied has sought to educate communities about the nation's laws concerning child labor; encourage individual members of communities to obey these laws; or be sanctioned for not doing so.

The participatory approach empowers individuals, families and communities through a process of conscientization about child protection, mobilization, and capacity building, to take informed and voluntary decisions and actions, towards the progressive elimination of different forms of child labor in fisheries.

Overall, the participatory approach has shown more promise than the rights-based approach, as the latter tends to intimidate communities into denial and non-cooperation, while the former causes communities to open up to the issues and enables them to take ownership and charge of ensuring child protection at the individual, family and community level. Further, the participatory approach helps in facilitating voluntary withdrawal of children from exploitative child labor including those trafficked for such purposes. The effectiveness of this approach is driven and sustained by conviction, as well as community and peer pressure on families who subject children to exploitative labor, or traffic them for such purposes.

However, an eclectic combination of the two approaches seems to be evolving, more so when certain individuals tend to defy both peer and community pressure, in which case, it takes only a threat or actual enforcement of legal sanctions for them to comply. Under these circumstances, communities are willing to resort to legality only as a last resort for ensuring compliance. It must be added that conscientizing individuals, families and communities to opt against child labor is facilitated very much by complementary programs of support for susceptible children and families. Counselling, sponsorship, withdrawal and placement services for education and vocational skill training for victims or susceptible children have proved worthwhile. Counselling of parents who traffic their children has also proved useful.

The Ghana Child Labor Monitoring System (GCLMS) established by the Government of Ghana spells out interventions at the district and community levels to protect children against

the worst forms of child labor. The objectives of this monitoring system are further complemented by the Hazardous Activity Framework and the Standard Operational Procedures and Guidelines prepared by the government to protect children in child labor. The International Organization on Migration (IOM), with support from UNICEF, has also developed the Child Protection Toolkit, which outlines specific interventions for children, families and communities as a whole.

The Ghana Living Standards Survey 6 (GLSS6) between 18th October 2012 and 17th October 2013 conducted a nation-wide household survey. It collected detailed information on topics including the demographic characteristics of the population, education, health, employment and time use, migration, housing conditions and household agriculture.

Each of the previous rounds of GLSS had a specific focus. In addition, new sections covering Tourism and Migrants & Remittances were introduced. In line with this practice, the GLSS6 had two unique features; namely, the Labor Force Survey (LFS) module was expanded to include a section on Child Labor (amongst other areas). It was difficult to determine the extent to which forced and bonded labor by children was practiced. Inspectors from the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare are responsible for enforcement of child labor regulations, district labor officers; and the Social Services sub-committees of District Assemblies are charged with seeing that the relevant provisions of the law are observed. They visit each workplace annually and made spot checks whenever they received allegations of violations.

All law enforcement and judicial authorities in the country are hampered by severe resource constraints and a lack of public awareness about the problem. There were no prosecutions when Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment inspectors found infractions of child labor laws during their routine monitoring of companies' labor practices. They generally informed the employers about the provisions of the law and asked them to make changes. There were no prosecutions for child labor resulting from these inspections. Officials only occasionally punished violators of regulations that prohibited heavy labor and night work for children.

In addition, the inspectors' efforts were concentrated only in the formal sector, which was not where most child labor was performed. ILO/IPEC, government representatives, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the media, international organizations, and NGOs continued to build upon the 2001-02 "National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Ghana" by increasing institutional capacity to combat child labor. Education and sensitization workshops were conducted with police, labor inspectors, local governments, and communities. Forums were held throughout the country to develop and implement an ILO/IPEC Time-Bound Program, which aimed to eliminate all forms of child labor under specified time periods and benchmarks.

NGO's and Charitable Organizations

Basically, NGOs and CSOs have been in the forefront of education and awareness creation. They also have been providing vital services in support of families, victims and communities. This help is regarded by communities and victims as the most efficient manner of tackling the issue though clearly, policy and enforcement issues and activities when gotten right will speed up solution of the problem. **Challenging Heights (a Winneba-based organization)** brings unique expertise of rescuing children trafficked within Ghana for exploitation in the fishing industry, providing temporary shelter and protection and reintegrating these children with their families, extended families or foster families. It supports families to reintegrate former child laborers through providing psychosocial support, linking families to micro-

finance providers, closely monitoring the child in the school and home environments. These are done in collaboration with chiefs and elders in target communities.

Interestingly, many of the staff, including the Director at Challenging Heights has firsthand experience of child labor, as they themselves were victims of internal trafficking and exploitation. They have been able to change their lives for the better because of the support received from NGOs/CSOs.

It is through researches by NGOs, that the outside world got exposed to what trafficked children go through (*that most children have been injured on the boats, numerous have reported instances of bullying and abuse at the hands of the fishermen and others describe cases of other trafficked children dying as a result of the dangerous work they are forced to perform. The children are often paid in fish, which they sell in the market for money to feed themselves*). To combat the problem, a few NGOs provide educational sponsorship to current child laborers and children who have returned from being trafficked. These initiatives seeks to eliminate the financial constraints associated with the child's education and covers school fees, stationery, textbooks, uniforms and sometimes school lunch amongst other relevant ancillary activities.

Plans are also afoot by certain NGOs to expand their projects in the near future to include financial assistance packages to families, and mental health rehabilitation program for victims. The ability to provide alternative income generation methods, financial training, and micro-loans to parents of child laborers is vital in addressing the root cause of the labor and trafficking problem; which is "poverty". These programs will allow sponsorship program to become more sustainable, requiring that parents pay for schooling after the first year of sponsorship with their improved incomes.

When visiting the fishing villages, Ormond observed several boats and their crews. She recalls that spotting victims of trafficking was relatively easy as their demeanor differed from that of children still living with their parents. Whereas kids tend to be playful and seek the attention of visitors, particularly those who have cameras, trafficked children are generally more reserved. "There was this young boy who came off the lake," she says, "he simply froze when he saw us! Carrying his paddles, his jeans falling off him; he wanted the attention of the camera, and gave a little smile, but it was so diffident, so broken." Having learned about the complexity of the child trafficking situation in Ghana, Julia Ormond says that in spite of the problems and the horrendous conditions facing many children, she is encouraged by the efforts and the commitment to fight child trafficking she has witnessed during her stay. "I am touched by the work done by people on the ground here," she says. "It's effective! The villagers are responding to the sensitization, as are the traffickers and children."

IOM has provided micro-credit assistance to some of the traffickers who have released children as well as to the parents and guardians of the children under its program. However, there have been certain conditions attached to the provision of these loans, such as the development of a viable business plan and timely attendance at meetings.

Success of Initiatives

Efforts of organizations with support from government agencies over the years have resulted in a number of important achievements including community education, rescue of children from forced labor and their rehabilitation, the promulgation of by-laws, training of police officers, the creation of community surveillance units to protect more children from exploitative labor and trafficking, and the establishment of transit shelters for rescued children. Education and awareness campaigns, in particular, have impacted communities in a positive way, leading to parents withdrawing their children from labor in both the fishing and

cocoa industries. Additionally, prevention education related to keeping vulnerable children in school or enrolling them in vocational training schools deterred some parents from sending their children to relatives as laborers.

As a result of continuous education and sensitization on child labor and children's rights, compliance with Ghana's anti-human trafficking laws has improved drastically in the Lake Volta region, as confirmed by the independent evaluation. The voluntary return of children and their withdrawal by their parents from the fishing and cocoa sectors is testament to the impact of this knowledge. Training police officers – The involvement and training of police officers NGOs and faith-based organizations, reinforced prevention education efforts. The officers' authority will lead to the prosecution of traffickers, which has been very weak in Ghana.

The media plays a key role in fighting child trafficking. The use of national television, with a viewing audience of millions people in Ghana and via satellite across parts of Africa. Engagements with local FMs helped reached over 600,000 people in the Winneba area of the Central Region. Supporting formal education or vocational skills training was one of the major strengths of NGO programs. Rescued children are given physical and emotional support, which enable them to stay in school. Support includes school uniforms and complimentary items, as well as income generating initiatives for their parents.

Despite these overall successes, some expectations have not been adequately met in the implementation of initiatives. NGOs are appear to be generally left on their own to operate without adequate support from national governmental agencies, especially the Child Labor Unit (CLU). However, independent evaluation indicated that governmental agencies sometimes are also not kept in the loop. Moreover, resources are another big area of concern for these agencies therefore rendering them incapable partners to the NGOs.

While authorities at the district level are relatively better involved, the lack of an intentional strategy to engage with and include Ghana's governmental representatives at the national level is a gap that needs addressing.

Financial sustainability also remains a concern for most of the organizations and individuals. For those involved in the rescue and reintegration of children, alternative sources of funding are limited. Creative responses to economically empower and motivate fishermen (masters), parents and guardians of trafficked children must further be explored, and financial micro credit schemes and governments anti-poverty programs (eg Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty – LEAP) be re-appraised and tailored to target very vulnerable families in target communities as a contributory effective and promising solution in this regard.

Challenges Associated With Interventions Carried Out

Up to 40 percent of the children in some communities could not be traced one or two years after having been rescued. There were suspicions of the children being trafficked again. Without the parents' cooperation it was difficult to determine the children's location. There is lack of an effective monitoring system and this contributes to children being re-trafficked.

An independent evaluation of eight organizations revealed that some of them lacked trained personnel, such as social workers and counsellors, critical for helping rescued children deal with the trauma they faced as a result of years of abuse and labor, as well as preparing them for reunification with their parents. When compared to the organizations with qualified staff, the lack of experienced personnel impacted the program's implementation.

During the independent evaluator's visit to FYSSO, the organization that receives and reintegrates children rescued by PACODEP, it was realized that latter's process of identifying

trafficked children and differentiating them from those whose parents had migrated to the fishing communities was unclear. Some of the children had migrated there with their families and were being exploited by their own parents or relatives. It is important for rescuing organizations to have a clear understanding of each child's unique circumstances.

"While there is a need for a certain grace period to establish their business," Rispoli says, "we don't want to be seen as Father Christmas. This way, we're not encouraging dependency." He says that reducing its incidence is a process that requires patience. "We need to build trust, to win the parents' hearts and souls," he says. "If they open up to us, we can make them understand. Therefore, we don't use legal arguments, as that frightens them."

Currently, IOM and APPLE both rescue children from trafficking situations and bring them back to their families. Rescued children are first taken to a government-run shelter for up to three months before they are reunited with their parents. At the shelter, they receive medical checks and treatment, psychological counselling and basic education, preparing them to attend school back home. However, insufficient resources limit what this institution can do. "Our biggest challenge is lack of transportation," says Sharon Abbey, the shelter's Principal. "And we can't offer the children as much counselling as we would like. Their experiences can make them a bit difficult to deal with, but we would like to teach them responsible behavior."

7. CONCLUSIONS

While this document is not meant to be a “master” document to bring issues of child labor and trafficking to an end in Ghana, to summarize this essay, a mixture of success stories, challenges are briefly cited for serious consideration.

The United Nations has challenged Ghanaian authorities to focus on addressing the root causes of slavery and Child labor in the country. This is part of recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, Gulnara Shahinian following her recent visit to Ghana. She had observed that children, some as young as four years, continue to be sent on fishing expeditions to do some of the most dangerous work. They are deprived of education and are not paid what they are due from the work they do. She blamed the persistence of the practice on poverty and regional disparities, urging that the country must begin to focus on education and health delivery to its citizenry.

The socio-cultural dimension of child labor in fisheries has proved difficult to deal with. Ethnicities with fishery-based livelihood cultures fear that fishery livelihoods would disappear if future generations were not allowed to acquire the relevant knowledge, values and skills. Moreover, there are no educational institutions in Ghana that teach fishing. Similar fears arise at national level because soon we would have no fishers or fishing industry due to lack of fishing skills, if we effectively prevent children from engaging in or supporting their households in pursuing fishery livelihoods.

Identification of genuinely needy families and directing government’s pro-poor programs to those will be critical in containing CLaT issues. For example, the Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) program and other relevant social intervention programs (eg District Assembly Common Fund for the People Living with Disabilities etc) could be re-calibrated so households that are not benefitting but ought to be roped in.

The need for formal vocational education and training in fishing that improves upon the traditional techniques, technologies, ethics and safety practices in fishing are therefore also evident.

Managing national fisheries in a manner that assures profitability of the industry may also help to curtail the demand for child labor for the reason of its exploitability. Facilitating and promoting safety consciousness as well as a safety gear industry in Ghana could also prove beneficial for fishers in general and children in particular.

As a result of continuous education and sensitization on child labor and children’s rights, compliance with Ghana’s anti-human trafficking laws has improved in the Lake Volta region, as confirmed by the independent evaluation. The voluntary return of children and their withdrawal by their parents from the fishing (and cocoa sectors) is testament to the impact of this knowledge. Training police officers for enforcement and prosecution have proven a success by a few organizations and must be increased to augment the authority of officers’ authority will lead to the prosecution of traffickers, which has been very weak in Ghana.

The media plays a key role in fighting child trafficking. Documentaries on TV bring to the fore issues to audiences. Few organizations made good use of print and electronic media with collaborations to air documentaries on national television, with a viewing audience of over 4 million people in Ghana and millions more via satellite across parts of Africa. (Rescue Foundation worked with Radio Peace, which has a reach of over 600,000 people and aired RF’s programs three times a week). Such media engagements and collaborations must be deepened.

Supporting formal education or vocational skills training was one of the major strengths of the initiatives in the sector. Some rescued children received physical and emotional support, which enabled them to stay in school (with support including school uniforms and other school items, as well as income generating initiatives for their parents). Such programs should be continued, and the quantum increased to reduce, and eventually eliminate incidences of re-trafficking. Up to 40 percent of the children in some communities could not be traced one or two years after having been rescued. There were suspicions of these children being sent away; and without the parents' cooperation it was difficult to determine the children's location. The lack of an effective monitoring system contributes to children being re-trafficked.

Lack of proper training and skills – an independent evaluation of organizations revealed that some of them do not have adequately trained personnel, such as social workers and counsellors, critical for helping rescued children deal with the trauma they faced as a result of years of abuse and labor, as well as preparing them for reunification with their parents. When compared to the organizations with qualified staff, the lack of experienced personnel impacted the program's implementation.

Provision and training of adults linked to the problem should be explored and available programs (eg Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty – LEAP) initiative of the Government of Ghana could be looked at critically so as to extend it to cover such families if need be.

Identification of trafficked children – During the independent evaluator's visit to an organization that receives and reintegrates children rescued by another agency, it was realized that the former's processes of identifying trafficked children and differentiating them from those whose parents had migrated to the fishing communities was unclear. Some of the children had migrated there with their families and were being exploited by their own parents or relatives. It is important for rescuing organizations to have a clear understanding of each child's unique circumstances.

Bright Appiah who is with the Civil Society group, Child Rights International agrees largely with the comments by Shahinian. While admitting that efforts are being made to resolve the challenges, he was quick to add these interventions provide support during emergencies rather than dealing holistically with the problem. He also suggested that the root causes of the child labor and trafficking must be ascertained and dealt with thoroughly.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Networks, Organizations, Agencies, Coalitions, Bodies and Individuals in Anti-Child Labor and Trafficking initiatives in Ghana

1. Department of Social Welfare (DSW) -
2. District Assemblies - Social Services sub-committees (Child Panels)
3. Ghana Police Service - Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU)
4. Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)
5. Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
6. Ministry of Labor Relations and Employment
7. Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD) - Alex Yao Sarbah
8. Ghana Statistical Service
9. Friends of the Nation (FoN) – Sekondi-Takoradi
10. Challenging Heights – Winneba
11. World Vision International – Accra
12. Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association (CEWEFIA)
13. Facts for the Youth in Southern Sector Organization
14. PROLINK – Ghana (Accra, Hohoe)
15. Partners in Community Development (PACODEP)
16. Friends for Human Development (FHD)
17. Association for Practical Life Education (APPLE)
18. Child Rights International
19. Legal Resources Centre – Accra
20. Cheerful Hearts Foundation –
21. Volta Care
22. Legatum Foundation
23. Fact for the Youth in the Southern Sector Organization (FYSSO),
24. Partners in Community Development (PACODEP)
25. Assemblies of God Relief and Development (AGREDS)
26. Rescue Foundation
27. International Needs
28. Cry of Refuge (church based)
29. Plan International – Accra
30. International Child Foundation
31. International Organization for Migration (IOM)
32. International Justice Mission
33. International Labor Organization
34. SNV Netherlands Development Organization
35. United Nations Educational and Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
36. UNCRC
37. UNODC
38. Voluntary Services Organization (VSO)

39. Food and Agriculture Organization (Albertine de Lange, Bernd Seiffert, Eve Crowley and Diana Tempelman - FAO)
40. Ghana Trades Union Congress (TUC)
41. Ghana Employers Association
42. General Agricultural Workers' Union,
43. Ghana National Association of Teachers.
44. Tulane University (USA)
45. International Child Resource Institute
46. University of Ghana – Department of Social Work *et al* (Legon)
47. University of Cape Coast
48. Humbolt University, Berlin
49. University of Development Studies – Tamale
50. University College of Education (Winneba)
51. Bright Appiah (Child Rights International)
52. Raggie Johansen
53. Kwasi Amenuvor (Partners in Development)
54. Noble Wadza (Friends of the Earth, Oil Watch - Ghana)
55. Marylin Amponsah (Director of the Desk at Ministry of Gender, Children.....)
56. Joe Rispoli, Head of the Counter-Trafficking Department of the International Organization for Migration (IOM)
57. Emmanuel Agyepong (APPLE)
58. Jack James Dawson (APPLE)
59. Gulnara Shahinian - UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery
60. Julia Ormond - UNODC Goodwill Ambassador to Ghana
61. Bright Gboglo – Greenlight (0248986334).
62. Samuel Kofi Addo,
63. Ibrahim Laberan
64. Patrick Kudiabor
65. Sylvanus Adukpo
66. Mary Stella Ofori from the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment,
67. Marylin Amponsah
68. Faustinos Obrotey (DSW – Pru in 2008)
69. Isaac Asante Koramgah (DSW – Kwahu-North in 2008)
70. Moses Kakaw (DSW - South-Tongu in 2008)
71. Ayih Jerryson (UCC)
72. Abdul-Malik Alidu (UDS – Tamale)
73. Mercy Esi Harrison (UCEW)
74. Saaka Abukar Yahaya (UDS – Tamale)
75. Radio Peace (Winneba)
76. Fisher of Kids (video film) – James Kofi Annan

Appendix 2

Mandate of the Department of Social Welfare (DSW)

The Department of Social Welfare - (under the auspices of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection).

P.O. Box MB 230, Accra Ghana

Tel: 0302 684536; Fax: 0302 663615

Legal Status and Obligations

The Department of Social Welfare is the Government Statutory Agency that has the mandate to regulate the operations of children's homes in Ghana (vide Part VI, of Sub- Part I, Section 105 – 114 of the Children's Act.) The statutory obligations of DSW include the following:

- a. The promotion and protection of the rights of children
- b. Justice and administration of child related issues
- c. Community care (for disabled and needy adults)
- d. Budget, Planning and Monitoring Unit

Organizational Structure

- DSW is headed by a Director who is supported in his/her administrative duties by four (4) Deputy Directors, each of whom is responsible for the administration of one of the following four units of DSW:
 - Budget, Planning & Monitoring Unit
 - Child Rights Promotion & Protection Unit
 - Justice & Administration Unit
 - Community Care Unit
- The Director, Deputy Directors, Officers (Social workers) and secretariat staff constitutes the head office team. A Regional Director heads each of the ten regions, while District officers and relevant supporting staff are responsible for the Districts.
- Family Unit (*a recent report commissioned by the Ministry recommended adding a Family Unit, whose mandate for re-enforcing the capacity of families would coincide with many of the objectives of the present program*).

Supervision of Children's Homes

In the specific case of children's homes, DSW is mandated to regulate the operations of these institutions through the enforcement of the guidelines for the registration and operation of these establishments.

In connection with the above, DSW is required to undertake sustained monitoring of the activities of children's homes, in order to safeguard the interest and well-being of the children involved.

Appendix 3

The Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty Program (LEAP)

The Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) Program is a social cash transfer program which provides cash and health insurance to extremely poor households across Ghana to alleviate short-term poverty and encourage long term human capital development.

LEAP started a trial phase in March 2008 and then began expanding gradually in 2009 and 2010. As of July 2013, the program had reached over 70,000 households across Ghana with an annual expenditure of approximately USD20m. The program is funded from general revenues of the Government of Ghana (50 percent), donations from DFID and a loan from the World Bank. It is the flagship program of Ghana's National Social Protection Strategy and is implemented by the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) in the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP).

Eligibility is based on poverty and having a household member in at least one of three demographic categories

Single parent with orphan or vulnerable child (OVC),

Elderly poor (with no practical support from family),

Person with extreme disability unable to work (PWD).

Initial selection of households is done through a community-based process and is verified centrally with a proxy means test. An exciting feature of LEAP, unique in the world, is that aside from direct cash payments, beneficiaries are provided free health insurance through the National Health Insurance Scheme which began in 2004-05. This is facilitated through an MOU between the MoGCSP and Ministry of Health; funds to cover enrollment in health insurance are transferred directly to the local health authority who then issues cards to LEAP households. Continued receipt of cash payments from LEAP is conditional on a health insurance card.

Evaluation of the Ghana LEAP Program

The impact evaluation was implemented by a consortium of partners including the Institute for Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) of the University of Ghana-Legon and the University of North Carolina under contract to the Government of Ghana. The evaluation strategy entails a longitudinal propensity score matching (PSM) design.

Baseline data was collected from future beneficiaries who were included in a larger nationally representative sample of households surveyed as part of a research study conducted by ISSER and Yale University (USA) in the first quarter of 2010.

A comparison group of 'matched' households has been selected from the ISSER sample and were re-interviewed in the first quarter of 2012 along with LEAP beneficiaries to measure changes in outcomes across treatment and comparison group. During implementation of the follow-up survey, 215 additional households were re-interviewed from the ISSER sample to generate additional statistical power for the study. These additional households were households that had similar propensity scores to the LEAP households and that were residing in the same communities that were already being visited by the ISSER enumeration team, and so could be interviewed at low additional cost.

There were 1398 target households (699 in each of the LEAP and matched ISSER samples) to be followed during the 2012 survey. A total of 1298 of these households were actually re-interviewed for a success rate of 92 percent. With the additional 215 households from the

ISSER sample, the final analysis sample consists of 1613 households and a final longitudinal sample of 1504 households (858 ISSER, 646 LEAP).

The baseline and the 24-month follow-up survey of the special evaluation sample are funded by DSW through an Institutional Strengthening Program with DFID. Funding from 3IE has been acquired to finance the follow-up survey of the comparison group from the ISSER sample in order to carry out a robust impact evaluation analysis. The PSM strategy will enable the evaluation team to attribute changes over time to the intervention by allowing for the construction of a counterfactual through the matched comparison group, and to follow this group over the same period of observation.

Reports

The Baseline Evaluation Report, which presents the propensity score matching results, was presented to Government and other development partners in October 2011. An Operations Report was also produced in 2012. Final Evaluation report was made in Ghana in June 2013 are all herein attached.

Appendix 4

Background to the Latest Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS 6 – 2012-2013)

The Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) has emerged as one of the most important tools in the welfare monitoring system and has, in combination with other surveys such as the Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ) and the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS), provided a wealth of information for understanding living conditions in Ghana, particularly, as the country is undergoing rapid transition into an oil-producing middle income country.

The GLSS6 is a nation-wide household survey which was conducted between 18th October 2012 and 17th October 2013. It collected detailed information on topics including the demographic characteristics of the population, education, health, employment and time use, migration, housing conditions and household agriculture. Each of the previous rounds of GLSS had a specific focus (*in the fifth round the focus was on Non-Farm Household Enterprises. In addition, new sections covering Tourism and Migrants & Remittances were introduced*).

In line with this practice, the GLSS6 had two unique features. First, the Labor Force Survey (LFS) module was expanded to include a section on **Child Labor**. Secondly, the sample was increased to address the inclusion of additional indicators pertaining to the Northern Savannah Ecological Zone, where a major Government of Ghana initiative, the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) program, was being implemented.

Survey Objectives

The specific objectives of the labor force survey were to:

1. Estimate the number of persons in the labor force (Employed, Under-employed and Unemployed) and their distribution by sex, age-group, educational level, geographical and rural/urban spread, as well as the ecological manifestations of these, particularly in the northern savannah ecological zone which is a known source of migrant and child labor.
2. Estimate the number of child workers (or children in employment) aged 5-17 years, and their distribution by sex, age-group, educational status, geographical, ecological and rural/urban spread.
3. For both adult workers and children in employment, their distribution by status in employment, occupation and industry, as well as weekly hours worked, location of place of work, earnings, occupational injury and hazards at the work place, contractual status, and informal / formal sector employment status.
4. Provide benchmark data needed for monitoring progress of labor policies, programs and law-making.
5. Provide up-to-date information for assessing the Child Labor and Labor Force situation in Ghana.
6. Provide current Child Labor and Labor Force indicators for Ghana.
7. Provide the data needed for monitoring progress towards the elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL) in Ghana.
8. Estimate the prevalence of child labor (as distinct from ‘children in employment’ of which child labor is a sub-set).
9. Identify the social and economic causes and consequences of child labor.

10. Establish a national database on decent work indicators, including LF and CL statistics.
11. Strengthen technical capacity of GSS in the design and implementation of such surveys.
12. Help set targets and priorities in the fight against child labor.
13. Assess the nature and extent of child labor.

In order to achieve these objectives, detailed data were collected on the following key elements:

- Demographic Characteristics
- Housing and Housing Conditions
- Education and Skills Training
- Health and Fertility Behavior
- Employment and Time Use
- Child Labor
- Household Income, Consumption and Expenditure
- Prices of Consumer Items, and
- Household Assets – both domestic and economic assets

Structure of the Report

The report is organized into six chapters. The first chapter provides a background to the survey, its objectives and the instruments used for data collection.

Chapter Two looks at the sample design, the survey methodology, geographic coverage, and concepts and definitions used in the data collection.

Chapter Three examines the demographic characteristics of the households interviewed and the living arrangements of children.

The fourth chapter deals with education, school attendance, levels attained as well as reasons for not attending school.

Chapter five examines the economic activities of children, occupation and industry of work, working hours and dangers and risks at work. The sixth chapter looks at children's involvement in child labor and hazardous work and makes recommendations for their elimination.

Kindly Google for a PDF copy of the report – [Ghana Living Standards Survey 2013 Report](#)

Appendix 5

REVIEW OF SECTOR POLICIES AND REGULATIONS ON VOLTA LAKE FISHING AND CHILD LABOR AND TRAFFICKING IN GHANA

Introduction

Fishing, from ancient times has been an important source of food and employment and provide enormous other benefits not only to those who engage in the activity but to the rest of the world. For many decades, experts have thought that this valuable wealth of aquatic or marine resource is unlimited; since it is renewable, humanity can depend on it almost forever. In recent memory however, with increased knowledge, it has become clearer, particularly after the World War II, that this aquatic and marine resource although renewable is indeed not infinite. It thus required that the resources need to be managed properly for purposes of sustainability.

In recent times, issues of child labor and child trafficking, having gained tremendous attention the world over, have led to the need to find ways of instituting regulatory measures to protect children and deal with the systems that put the health and future of children at risk. The International Labor Organization of the United Nations (ILO) is the lead agency for work, employment legislation, employment generation and labor standards. The ILO has spearheaded these international regulations through development of Conventions and Recommendations setting minimum standards of basic labor rights which several countries have ratified and served as models for development of national level policies and regulations to govern child labor and other related slavery and slavery-like practices. The fishing sector, of which child labor and trafficking have come to be associated with, is described as one of the most dangerous occupations in the world and that the involvement of children represent worst forms of child labor. While instituting measures to conserve and manage the world's fisheries for future generations, the future of children who have been intertwined with the activity must also be protected.

The discussions around child labor will not be complete without a thorough assimilation of the various international conventions and national regulations that govern child labor and child trafficking and in this context as it relates to fishing activities on Volta Lake.

Review of International Conventions and Recommendations on Worst Forms of Child Labor, Child Trafficking and Work in Fishing

The ILO-IPEC estimates that over 70 percent of all child labor is found in agriculture (mainly fisheries and forestry) accounting for over 173 million children worldwide working from subsistence to commercial level. A large number of these children in agriculture are in hazardous child labor environment which exposes them to greater risks of danger and injuries. In relation to child labor and trafficking of children in fishing, the relevant ILO conventions and recommendations include (i) the Convention of the Rights of the Child (ii) the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999 (ILO).

Hazardous child labor is defined by Article 3 of ILO Convention on Prohibition and immediate Action on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, 1999 No. 182 as “work which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to jeopardize the health, safety, or morals of young persons”.

The Rights of the Child Convention was the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the complete range of human rights for children, including civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. This convention defines a child as anyone below the age of 18 years and it is the convention that also spelt out more clearly the basic human rights that

children everywhere in the world should have including the right to protection from economic exploitation (Article 32) and the right to education (Article 28). The Rights of Child Convention remains the most endorsed human rights treaties in the world.

The Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999 (No. 182) calls for immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of WFCL as a matter of urgency. Under the Convention, all forms of slavery or slavery-like practices (i.e. sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, forced or compulsory labor including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict); the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, in particular for the production of pornography or pornographic performances; the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; work, which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

With respect to agriculture, Convention 182 seeks to promote urgent action by governments and other stakeholders to eliminate all forms of slavery, including debt bondage and serfdom, trafficking and hazardous child labor.

The Minimum Age Convention for Admission to Employment, 1973 (No. 138) seeks to promote age limits for admission to employment. Recognizing that child labor is work that children should not be doing because they are too young to work or – if they have reached minimum age – because it is dangerous or otherwise unsuitable, it requires countries that ratify this convention to undertake a legal promise to stop child labor and make sure that children below a certain “minimum age” are not employed.

4. The Work in Fishing Convention 2007 (ILO Convention 188) has for its objectives to ensure that fishers have decent conditions of work on board fishing vessels with regard to minimum requirements for work on board, conditions of service, accommodation and food, occupational safety and health protection, medical care and social security. Its subject areas include, among others, minimum age for work on board fishing vessels and for assignment for certain types of activities, manning hours of rest, fisher’s work agreements, medical care at sea, protection in the case of work-related sicknesses, injury or death. Although many of these typically apply to bigger fishing vessels at sea, it is equally important for this study given that some of the subject areas address issues confronting working children even for inland lake.

ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998) covers four main areas as follows: (a) freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining (b) the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor (c) the effective abolition of child labor and (d) the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. The Declaration specifies that the ILO Convention Nos. 182 and 138 on child labor are considered as “core conventions” which obliges ILO Member States, even if they have not ratified the Conventions, by the fact of their membership to promote and realise the principles concerning such fundamental rights.

Review of National Policies, Regulations and Initiatives on Fishing, Child labor and Trafficking

(Ghana’s National Fishery Policy and Regulations and Child Labor)

Ghana’s fishery community has been described, since the 1960s as the most knowledgeable fishing communities in the world. For instance a UN report indicated that “the indigenous fishers are among the most rudimentary fishers ever known, even though literacy is

practically unknown yet the people are intelligent in a way that makes one to believe that much of their fishing activities are controlled by fetishes and taboos”.

Several years after this report, the situation has changed primarily because agricultural policy makers have marginalized native knowledge that is inherently Ghanaian. The failure to adjoin traditional knowledge with scientific education in environmental and resource management as well as food production programs has produced socioeconomic delinquencies that are not helpful to a developing economy.

The fishery sector has to be proficient and effective but this can only be achieved if management programs collaborate with indigenous knowledge and experiences resident in traditional communities. Over the past five decades, the introduction and adoption of intensive capitalism into Ghana’s traditional fishery sector has disrupted indigenous ecological initiatives and in the process, exposed local food and agricultural programs to external cultural influences. For example the open access fish policy of 1963/64–1969/70 introduced by the first republican government of Kwame Nkrumah undermined indigenous control of the fisheries sector because decision-making among many things were removed from the native community and put under foreign authority.

The policy allowed both domestic and foreign fishers to exploit local fish resources without subjecting fishers to quotas or assessing the quantity of fish stock. This policy allowed influx of foreign factory vessels in Ghana’s coastal regions between 1965 and 2002 with the capacity to scoop every available fish causing serious ecological degradation of fish habitat and the overall marine ecosystem.

The failures of those fishery policies led to the promulgation of the Fisheries Law 1991 (PNDCL 256) and the Fisheries Commission Act, 1993 (ACT 457). While these policies brought some modest improvements in the fisheries sector, further holistic improvements were required. Thus, in recent times, key policy and regulatory initiatives have included the Fisheries Act, 2002 (ACT 625) and the Fisheries Regulations, 2010 (L.I. 1968). These policy and regulatory framework govern both marine and inland fishery activities as well as other fishing resources (e.g. aquaculture etc.). The Fisheries Act seeks “to provide for the regulation and management of fisheries; to provide for the development of the fishing industry and the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources and to provide for connected matters”.

The Act establishes a Fisheries Commission as body corporate whose functions includes, among others, the preparation and continual review of plans for the management and development of fisheries in waters under Ghana’s jurisdiction; in collaboration with District Assemblies (DAs) within fishing communities, ensure the enforcement of the fishery laws including bye-laws made by the relevant DAs. Even though the Act does not touch on child labor issues in fishing, several provisions makes it possible for the Commission to deal with issues of child labor and related slavery-like practices in fishing.

The Fisheries Regulations, 2010 (L.I. 1968) set to regulate fishery activities under the Act. The Regulation is equally silent of child labor and trafficking of children into fishing, like the Act, its provisions makes it possible for the Fisheries Commission and Ministry to contribute to the elimination of child labor and trafficking of children in fishing.

National Response to Child Welfare and Reduction in Vulnerability in Children

The Core Welfare Indicators Survey of 1997 estimated that 9.2 percent of children between the ages of 6 and 14 were working. Majority of these are found in rural areas. Many of these children are unpaid and found on family farms and enterprises and as they work, it is recognized as means of training into adulthood to take over the mantle of the enterprise.

Deteriorating economic conditions have exacerbated the problem making many of these children to continue working to earn a living for themselves or to supplement family incomes. They thus forgo education or combine work with schooling.

There have been increasing concerns raised about child labor in inland fishing enterprises, especially in villages around the Volta Lake and the Volta River. It is reported that 10 to 12 year old boys and girls often work for fishermen in exchange for a yearly payment to families. The practice is reportedly found in about 156 fishing villages along the Afram River and in settlements along the Volta Lake in the Afram Plains. Small children are used to dive down to the riverbeds for oysters (*adode*), and a number of them have drowned.

Closely associated with issue of child labor is migration and child trafficking. Girls and boys migrate from rural areas to urban centres to work – serve as porters (*kayayoos*) who carry goods, or work in shops, in the markets, as domestic servants, and in construction sites as laborers. They come to live in deplorable environments (on the streets, in makeshift structures/ghettos). Children are also trafficked from one location to the other to work. Parents/guardians or relatives give out children to traffickers unaware of the type of work these children will engage in or the conditions and environment in which they will find themselves. Many of them are illiterate, school dropouts or primary/JHS leavers who lack the necessary support to continue their education. They are often mistreated, beaten, raped, and molested. They also face forced marriages.

The above situation posed serious worry to Government that in 2000, the Government of Ghana (GoG) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the ILO/IPEC to initiate child elimination activities in Ghana. With financial support from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL), and in collaboration with the GoG, the ILO/IPEC Programs aims at formulating a national policy and plan of action to combat child labor, with a focus on the WFCL and establish a national steering committee.

In 1999, Ghana in her quest to deal with child trafficking, joined other countries participating in phase one of a 3-year ILO/IPEC regional project to combat the trafficking of children for labor exploitation in West and Central Africa. The project, with the USDOL financial support, was a follow-up to the July 1998 sub-regional workshop on trafficking in child domestic workers sponsored by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the ILO. From this and many other programs, Ghana has developed measures against Child Labor and Child Trafficking which have also included provision of social protection programs and support services for victims of trafficking.

Ghana has also initiated a number of key policies and programs to advert vulnerability of children in all its forms and child labor exploitation. Initiatives include the promulgation of the Children's Act, 1998, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) program, and the Universal Children's Law enacted out of the Constitutional provision on Children's Rights. Various MDAs (e.g. MESW, MOWAC, MoE, GNCC, etc.) and NGOs (e.g. GNCRC, and Civil Society groups) have been part of these initiatives.

Highlights of Legislative framework on Children Welfare and Vulnerability

- The Children's Act, 1998 (ACT 560) and Child Rights Regulation (LI)

The Children's Act of 1998 is the key policy document that governs children's welfare. Article 87 of the Act specifies that (1) No person shall engage a child in exploitative labor and (2) Labor is exploitative of a child if it deprives the child of its health, education or development. These two provisions conform to the provisions of the ILO Conventions 182 (WFCL Convention) and 138 (Minimum Age Convention) respectively. In fulfilling its obligation under the Conventions, the Children's Act sets as 13 years for light work; 15 years

for engagement in non-hazardous work and 18 years for full employment (including engagement in hazardous work). Following the promulgation of the Act, institutions in the formal sector have complied with these minimum age provisions and have thus been active in efforts to prevent the use of children at work. The situation is different in the informal sector which employs majority of the populace. The sector employs a large chunk of children who work on various activities including hazardous activity.

Whiles the sector remains unregulated, the Children's Act mandates the Social Services sub-committee of the DAs and the Social Welfare department to monitor and act accordingly towards prevention of the use of children. In practice, the DAs fall short of the implementation of this mandate allowing the sector to continually engage children.

- *The Human Trafficking Act, 2005 (ACT 694)*

The Human Trafficking Act of 2005 (ACT 694) was promulgation as an "Act for the prevention, reduction and punishment of human trafficking, for the rehabilitation and reintegration of trafficked persons and for related matters". The law defines trafficking as "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, trading or receipt of persons within and across national borders by (a) use of threats, force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, (b) giving or receiving payments and benefits to achieve consent. The law is emphatic on trafficking of children and prescribes specific punitive sanctions on perpetrators. In recent times, the Human Trafficking Act has been applied in prosecuting cases of trafficking in persons including children who were being trafficked into various economic sectors including fishing, cocoa, commercial sex and for ritual purposes.

- *The Domestic Violence Act, 2006 (ACT 732)*

The Domestic Violence Act, 2006 (ACT 732) was promulgated in response to the increasing reports of domestic violence over the past decade. It seeks to provide opportunities for addressing violence in the home and family arena and also defines in clear terms the range of violence to cover the following: assault (of marriages and within families), deprivation (of food, clothing, health, education, shelter etc.) and abuse (physical, emotional and financial). The broad scope of the Act is the protection of the vulnerable of which women and children are the major victims. This particular tenet put children as part of the key groups that the Act seeks to protect in Ghana.

Other institutional Reforms towards Improving Children's Welfare Ghana also restructured certain institutions and their systems and structures to give meaning to the national response to child labor and related issues. Some of these include the establishment of the Child Labor Unit of the MESW as a focal point for National Child Labor Elimination Program, establishment of the National Steering Committee on Child Labor as overall coordinating entity for child labor elimination programs in Ghana, the institution of Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE), School Feeding Program, and the Capitation Grant.

- *The Child Labor Unit of the Labor Department of the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations MELR)*

Child labor issues remain one of the key agenda of the GoG and thus its commitment to eliminate the canker is high. The MELR has been the lead Ministry and to give it the needed impetus, the Child Labor Unit (CLU) was established as the focal point of the National Child Labor Elimination Program with the mandate to coordinate the child labor issues of MDAs, Employers and Workers Organizations, International agencies (IOM, ILO, UNICEF etc.), CSOs etc. in the area of policy and legislative formulation. The Unit also spearheaded the development of the National Plan of Action for the Elimination of the WFCL in Ghana by 2015 and it is coordinating its implementation. It also led the development of the of

comprehensive hazardous child labor activities framework for Ghana. In all these child labor occupies a critical position and the Unit has been deeply involved in the design, planning and implementation of programs and projects towards its elimination.

- The National Steering Committee on Child Labor

Given that high level consultations is required in efforts to deal with child labor, a National Steering Committee on Child Labor was established in 2000 as a coordinating body for child labor elimination programs in Ghana. The Committee is composed of the following institutions: MDAs, Employers and Organizations, Research Institutions and CSOs which provide broad policy advice.

- National Plan of Action for Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor in Ghana

The National Plan of Action is developed as a coordinated framework in the fight against child labor. As Ghana needs to fulfil several international conventions, constitutional obligations and legislative instruments, the NPA provides the guidelines for implementing and achieving the government's commitment to eliminating child labor, child trafficking and other slavery-like practices. The goal of the NPA is to reduce the WFCL to the barest minimum by 2015 and build a platform for dealing critically with all forms child labor in the long run. The Plan was endorsed in October, 2010 by Cabinet and launched by the Chairman of Council of State on 13th June, 2011 as the National Child Labor Policy.

- Free Compulsory Basic Education (fCUBE), Capitation Grant and the School Feeding Program

Education is an important tool for development and the GoG recognises its role in providing free access to education. The 1992 constitution incorporated the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) with the view of encouraging school attendance and ensures that children from the age of six years enjoy fee-free formal education. Over the years, several reforms have been made aimed at making education more accessible and affordable. However, the substantial difficulties faced by children along the Volta Lake (including walking long distances to school, studying in dilapidated school blocks, few teachers – sometimes none, remoteness of schools and lack of school amenities, inadequate school supplies – textbooks, copybooks, pens etc.) are just enough to render the fCUBE unattainable. Also in some schools, the payment of PTA dues, payment of development fees (to cover examinations, water, electricity, sports, maintenance, equipment, extra curriculum activities) equally affects the purpose and achievement of the fCUBE.

The Capitation Grant proposed by the Educational Strategic Plan was meant to boost the attainment of universal basic education. It was introduced and initially piloted in 40 districts with World Bank funding during 2004/2005 academic year and by the beginning of the 2005/2006 academic year, the grant was extended to all basic schools countrywide with Government funding. The Grant is a fee-free policy which covers culture, sports and schools internal development fees. In the first term of the 2010/2011 academic year, government released GHC8.398 million as Capitation Grant based on the previous year's academic year enrolment of 5,598,133 pupils.

The Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP) was informed by the fact that children going out of the school compound or home to eat during break results in many not returning to school for the rest of the day. To increase school enrolment and make children go and remain in school, especially at basic schools, the SFP was introduced and there have been tremendous improvements as their full concentration and participation led to better studies and performance.