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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Focus Group Discussion on Child Labor and Trafficking with Churches, School PTAs and Mosques



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Cover photo: School Pupils from Apam Salvation Primary School in Apam. (Credit: Development Action Association)

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ACRONYMS

CLaT	Child Labor and Trafficking
DAA	Development Action Association
FtF	Feed the Future
MP	Member of Parliament
PTA	Parents Teacher Association
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of child labor and trafficking in fishing has been an issue of public concern in Ghana, especially in the Central region. This had made it necessary for DAA-trained Community Advocates (under the USAID/SFMP) from child labor and trafficking prone communities like Mumford, Apam and Winneba to advocate against child labor and trafficking in those communities. The anti-CLaT advocates from Apam, Winneba and Mumford organized focus group discussion with students, parents and teachers in their respective communities to educate and sensitize them on the prevalence and negative impact of child labor and trafficking. The public campaign, sponsored by USAID through the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) was successful. . The campaign brought together different people including children, teachers and parents to discuss how best to find lasting solution to the rampant activities of child labor and trafficking in Ghana. The focus group discussion was to educate, sensitize and create awareness of prevalence of child labor and trafficking in fishing communities especially. Education on behavioral change and change of mindset was imparted to the three communities for them to learn lessons, share experiences and serve as agents of change to their communities. `The focus group discussion created awareness and sensitized the participants especially when the victims of child labor and trafficking willingly told their story, advised the parents and guardians against the practice; and pledged their full support to the anti-child labor and trafficking fight. The parents also suggested possible solutions to prevent child labor and trafficking in Ghana.

The human, economic, social and health costs of not addressing these issues are enormous and pose serious threat to our future society. Child labor and trafficking are issues of global social injustice. It needs to be perceived as everybody's problem. Creation of an enabling environment for sustainable change requires "upstream" effort on an international and national level as well as "downstream" effort from families and communities.

In combating CLaT issues along the coastal belt of Ghana and especially in the Central region, DAA found the need to train anti-CLaT advocates in Winneba, Apam and Mumford to help create awareness and educate the communities on the impact of CLaT on victims and the society. The sensitization, awareness creation and education were carried out by community anti-CLaT advocates in the form of focus group discussion at school PTAs, Churches and Mosques.

1.1 Objectives of the Campaign

- To create awareness of child labor and trafficking in the community.
- To sensitize the people on the negative impact of child labor and trafficking in the society and the country as a whole.
- To educate people about the economic, social and physiological effect on victims and their behavior in society.
- To prevent possible occurrence of child labor and trafficking in the Central Region, especially Apam.

1.2 Expected Outcome

- People will have behavioral change towards the issue of child labor and trafficking in the society.
- People in Apam Community would be informed about the issues of child labor and trafficking and will be agents of change by advocating against such illegal canker in the community.

- People will have change of attitude and mindset when it comes to child labor and trafficking issues.
- It will create awareness and sensitivity among people in Apam community, since most of them are naive about the negative impact of trafficked children to the community.
- It will alert parents to fully take their responsibilities in the upbringing of their children than allowing their children to go through such inhuman treatment.

1.3 Date and Places for the Focus Group Discussion

Table 1. Date and Places for Focus Group Discussion

	Date	Community	Focus group
1	14 th April,2017	Apam	Apam Central Mosque
2	26 th June,2017	Mumford	Methodist School
3	23 rd July,2017	Apam	Apam Catholic Church
4	6 th August,2017	Warabeba-Winneba	Peace Baptist Church
5	27 th August,2017	Ankamu	Apostolic Int. Church
6	1 st September,2017	Winneba	Winneba Moslem Community
7	3 rd September,2017	Winneba	Methodist Church
8	3 rd Sepember,2017	Mumford	Salvation Church

2.0 OUTCOMES

The focus group discussion with Schools PTAs and Mosques brought stakeholders, policy makers, Non-Governmental Organizations, parents, teachers, opinion leaders, religious leaders and children together to address the issue. Below are some possible ways, suggestions and recommendations to prevent child labor and trafficking in the country:



Figure 1. MP for Gomoa West, Hon. Bismark Nkum, during focus group discussion on child labor and trafficking with Apam Muslim Community

Hon. Bismark Nkum, during the focus group discussion on child labor and trafficking with Apam Muslim Community, said such act is criminal and urged all parents to restrain from it. He also pledged his support to the fight against child labor and trafficking in Gomoa West, especially Apam and Mumford.



Figure 2. The District Chief Imam of Gomoa West at Apam with some Leaders, reading a portion of the Holy Quran that speaks against child labor and trafficking to the Congregation



Figure 3. Mr Rahman Forson CEO of Aljaleel Art and Cultural Centre

Mr Rahman Forson said he had a drama crew and would like to be given the opportunity to perform against CLaT.



Figure 4. Madam Stella Quatey, Community anti-CLaT advocate from Warabeba, sensitizing Warabeba Baptist Congregation on the negative impact of Child labor and trafficking in the society



Figure 5. Cross section of Apam Catholic Church shocked at the prevalence of child labor and trafficking in the society



Figure 6. Cross section of Worabebe Baptist Congregation being sensitized on child labor and trafficking



Figure 7. Cross section of female congregation of Winneba Moslem at Winneba Zion School Park during focus group discussion on child labor and trafficking



Figure 8. Cross section of male congregation of Winneba Moslems at Winneba Zion School Park during focus group discussion on child labor and trafficking



Figure 9. Cross section of Christ Faith Church at Ankamu being sensitized on child labor and trafficking



Figure 10. Community anti-CLaT Advocates discussion strategies to prevent child labor and trafficking during focus group discussion with Apam Salvation Church



Figure 11. Cross section of Apam Salvation students saying "No" to child labor and trafficking

3.0 ROOT CAUSES OF CHILD LABOR AND TRAFFICKING

3.1 Causes

- Poverty.
- Lack of education and health care.
- Broken homes and marriages.
- Lack of anti-trafficking legislation.
- Undocumented status of immigrants.
- Lack of effective enforcement.

3.2 Effects of Child Labor and Trafficking

- General child injuries and abuses like cuts, burns, laceration, fracture, excessive fear and nightmares.
- Physical abuse that involve corporal punishment, emotional maltreatment such as blaming, belittling, verbal attacks, rejection and bad remarks.
- Lack of schooling resulting in missing educational qualification and higher skills thus perpetuating poverty.
- Competition of children with adult workers leads to depressing wages and salaries.

3.3 Challenges

- Lack of rehabilitation centres to refer victims of child of labor and trafficking.
- The Sustainable Fisheries Management Project's inability to provide support to identified victims has been a problem.
- Lack of support and motivation for community anti-CLaT advocates to do their work effectively.
- Weak enforcement of the law against child labor and trafficking in Ghana is also a challenge.

3.4 Success Stories

The focus group discussions have resulted in the successes below:

- There has been behavioral change in the society and people voluntarily teamed up with community anti-CLaT advocates to prevent possible child labor and trafficking.
- Through the focus group discussions two victims were identified and rescued from Yeji in collaboration with Challenging Heights

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

4.1 Recommendation

It is recommended that further campaigns be done from time to time to create more awareness. Training and seminars on the prevalence of child labor and trafficking should be organized to teachers and parents since they spend more time with children.

4.2 Conclusion

Child labor and trafficking is an often overlooked and misunderstood form of human trafficking. Thus, increased effort to identify child victims of labor and trafficking would be effective in addressing the menace. To achieve this goal, more training and education about child labor and trafficking should be given to the public, law enforcement and policy makers. Furthermore, more resources should be put into developing and implementing evidence-based programs and treatments for victims of child labor and trafficking. Data collection on child labor and trafficking would inform the scope of the phenomenon and assist in developing coordinated responses to prosecute traffickers and connect victims to services.