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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Clat Regional District Child Protection Committees Interface Durbars With Community Advocates



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THE
UNIVERSITY
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Friends of the Nation

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Cover photo: A picture of Ghana Immigration Service officer addressing the durbar at Ekon in the Central Region. (Credit – Kwesi Johnson, FoN).

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ACRONYMS

AAKDA	Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District Assembly
ASDA	Awutu-Senya District Assembly
ASEMA	Awutu-Senya Municipal Assembly
CCMA	Cape-Coast Metropolitan Assembly
CLaT	Child Labour and Trafficking
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CEDECOM	Central Region Development Commission
CH	Challenging Heights
CR	Central Region
CRCC	Central Regional Coordinating Council
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DA	District Authorities
DCPC	District Child Protection Committee
DSWCD	Department of Social Welfare and Community Development
EDA	Ekumfi District Assembly
EMA	Effutu Municipal Assembly
FC	Fisheries Commission
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
FOAT	Functional Organizational Assessment Tool
FoN	Friends of Nation
GEDA	Gomoa-East District Assembly
GES	Ghana Education Service
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GIS	Ghana Immigration Service
GPS	Ghana Police Service
GWDA	Gomoa-West District Assembly
IJM	International Justice Movement
IN	International Needs
KEEAMA	Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem Municipal Assembly
MASLOC	Microfinance and Small Loans Centre
MiDA	Millennium Development Authority
MMA	Mfantseman Municipal Assembly
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Records from Ghana's Ministry of Gender and Social Protection indicates that CLaT practices are severe in Ghana and about 2 million children are estimated to be trafficked into child labor. Interactions with the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MoFAD) and coastal-fishing communities along the coastal belt of the country also reveal that children from the area are regularly trafficked to the Volta Lake and neighboring countries to be engaged illegal child labor in fisheries activities.

CLaT issues are one of the blotched areas of Ghana's fisheries contributing to Ghana spiraling down on the US State Department Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report Watch-list in June 2016 after two consecutive years which meant the country's authorities were not doing enough in combatting human trafficking, therefore risking sanctions from the donor community, especially the U.S Government (USG). Friends of the Nation (FoN) and partners in the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (USAID-SFMP) and many other programs in both state and non-state social and economic development initiatives benefit from USG assistance annually to the tune of Eight Hundred Million (US\$800,000,000:00) in the areas of fisheries, agriculture, security, education, health, human rights, judiciary etc) therefore the potential of losing this support had ominous development implications for the country.

FoN has a mission of promoting sustainable and equitable utilization of natural resources in which the respect for the human rights of all citizens are upheld. Therefore, it promotes sustainable fisheries management within principles of good governance.

The history and magnitude of CLaT in fisheries within the coastal-fishing communities in the CR has been determined through community interactions and studies clearly as fishing activity linked. Children from the coastal fishing communities are relatively better swimmers compared to children from other areas of the country. Culturally, these are communities that are already steeped deep into fishing and everything revolved around fisheries. Therefore, taking children from poor families (who hardly are able to put food on the table on daily basis) because are good swimmers or conversant with fish processing, or both to go do same in other geographical areas for perceived rewards was a matter of course. Declining fish harvest has seriously deepened poverty in the fishing communities where there are hardly any other viable forms of livelihood activities.

With that as a backdrop, FoN facilitated the re-establishment of the constitutional mandatory District Child Protection Committees (DCPCs), and incorporation of anti-CLaT initiatives into the designing of the Medium-term Development Plans (MTDPs 2018-2021); and embarked upon the communities' sensitization program between December 2017 and March 2018.

The program impacted the communities so much that neighboring communities are also asking for similar programs from FoN. MMDAs officials who initially were skeptical about the presence of CLaT have become allies of the project, and a few victims have been voluntarily repatriated by their families back to Koromantse and Abandze in the Mfantseman Municipality.

1.1 Objective

Friends of the Nation (FoN) under the auspices of SFMP, carried out anti-CLaT sensitization durbars in selected coastal-fishing communities in the Central Region between November 2017 and April 2018. The community durbars were organized as part of the behavioural change communication campaign to make CLaT practices socially unacceptable.

The durbars were designed in collaboration with District Child Protection Committees (DCPCs) with the aim to support the DCPCs to actively implement their local plans.

1.2 Coastal Districts and Communities where Durbars were held

The sensitization durbars were held in the following coastal districts of the Central Region of Ghana:

- Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem Municipal Assembly (KEEAMA);
- Cape-Coast Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA);
- Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District Assembly (AAKDA);
- Mfantseman Municipal Assembly (MMA);
- Ekumfi District Assembly (EDA);
- Gomoa-West District Assembly (GWDA);
- Effutu Municipal Assembly (EMA);
- Awutu-Senya District Assembly (ASDA);
- Gomoa-East District Assembly (GEDA); and
- Awutu-Senya East Municipal Assembly (ASEMA).

The following agencies listed below also supported the program (providing information and assisted in responding to questions and comments from the communities during the durbars):

- Ghana Education Service;
- Ghana Health Services (Reproductive and Child Health Unit);
- Ghana Immigration Service;
- Ghana Police Service (Anti-Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence and Victim Support Units);
- National Commission for Civic Education; and
- Fisheries Commission.

Specifically, the community sensitization durbars were held in a total of eleven (11) communities as listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Schedules of community engagements

	Community	District	Date	Number of participants		
				Male ♂	Female ♀	Total
1.	Anomabo	MMA	1 st Dec. 2017			Appx. 2000
2.	British-Komenda	KEEAMA	7 th Feb. 2018	108	56	156
3.	Ekon	CCMA	7 th Feb. 2018	20	120	140
4.	Moree	AAKDA	8 th Feb. 2018	64	75	139
5.	Saltpond-Ankafu	MMA	8 th Feb. 2018	62	130	192
6.	Ekumfi-Immuna	EDA	9 th Feb. 2018	83	129	213
7.	Gomoa-Dago	GDWA	9 th Feb. 2018	26	27	53
8.	Yepimso	EDA	8 th Mar. 2018	19	98	117
9.	Senya-Beraku	ASDA	8 th Mar. 2018	59	58	117
10.	Gomoa-Fetteh	GEDA	9 th Mar. 2018	102	167	269
11.	Adansi	ASEMA	9 th Mar. 2018	33	56	86
TOTALS				576	916	1,492

1.3 Key Outputs of the Sensitization Durbars.

The durbars were used to introduce the DCPCs to the communities a total of 1492 persons (576 males and 916 females) were engaged. Also, at Anomabo the sensitization program was held as part of the National Farmers' and Fishers' Day 2017 Program (1st December, 2017) had approximately 2000 people engaged during the event.

The durbars were also used to socialize the National Fisheries anti-CLaT policy.

Specifically, the durbars provided the platform for the DCPCs to:

1. Sensitize the communities on the implications of CLaT on children, individuals, families, communities and the nation.
2. Share information on the role and responsibilities of government agencies and stakeholders.
3. Share information on Districts authorities' (child-centred programs, social intervention initiatives that can help in mitigating CLaT); DCPCs in order to support them where relevant with capacity strengthening activities, and also to assist with resource-raising activities in order to function efficiently.
4. Share information on services that service-provision agencies like Ghana Education Service (GES) and Ghana Health Service (GHS) offer the public that could contribute to assuaging the challenges of providing child welfare services for parents and caretakers (problems that contribute to CLaT).

2.0 COMMUNITY SENSITIZATION ON CLAT

2.1 Introduction of the Communities' Sensitization Program.

Between December 2017 and March 2018, Friends of the Nation (FoN) under the auspices of the SFMP embarked on a series of anti-CLaT sensitization program in the selected coastal-fishing communities. Drama shows and ensuing public talk (verbal interactions) was employed.

2.2 Overview Session of the Community Programs

In each of the communities engaged, a regular pattern for dissemination of information and eliciting community participation was adopted.

- Overview of SFMP by Mr. Kwesi Johnson, FoN.
- Drama display by Nsemkafo Cultural Troupe.
- Questions, contributions and clarifications from locals.
- Overview of government anti-CLaT agencies were given.
- Interaction with the audiences (communities) on CLaT issues and the program.
- The Child Protection Committees were introduced to the communities.
- Recommendations from FoN-SFMP, anti-CLaT advocates/community members and District Authorities.

The above pattern was applied in all the aforementioned communities.

2.3 Outline of The Drama

The subject matter of the drama was very prevalent in most of the coastal-fishing communities.

A group of women who went to the fish-landing beach to buy fish from fishermen they have advanced money to (credit for buying fishing inputs and services like net-mending, fuel, food for crew members etc). Getting no fish from the fishermen who often return from the expeditions empty handy-handed saying they got nothing; they complain about how this has become so regularly in their lives causing worsening poverty in their families. Each of them says life has become hard for them.

Out of desperation, Egya Ekow husband (an impoverished fisherman) and his wife give away two sons out of their many children to be taken to be “undergo apprenticeship in fisheries with generous payments to the family, and good care for the boys” at “Yeji” (*Volta Lake area*). An adolescent daughter of their’s was also given away in “marriage” to defray the debt they owed some “rich benefactors” (human trafficking agents) in the community.

After some few years, wife misses her children and laments never hearing from them since the so-called benefactors who took them away. Her brother who is aware of the activities of child traffickers gets hint of the sister’s predicament and volunteered to take them to “Yeji” to look (rescue) for the children. The sister and the husband both broke and not having money for transportation fare are reluctant to travel. But feeling guilty and remorseful and at the same time scared of being reported by the brother to the police, travel to go and search for the children. They get to “Yeji” and luckily found the children who were being severely abused and in very deplorable slavery conditions. The “slavers” attempt to run away when they see the parents in the company of law enforcement officers. Amidst cries and sobs, the “victim/survivor” children are reunited with their family.

With the above synopsis, the drama was performed in all the communities amidst both sobs and laughter as the drama was both educating and entertaining.

The drama portrayed the issues (situation) victims go through and the consequences perpetrators will face when the arm of the law grab them. It also highlighted issues of depletion in fisheries stock; fishing malpractices like the Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing; the poverty it brings and how it can easily lead to CLaT which is criminal.



Figure 1. Drama troupe in action at Moree

It was both entertaining and learning for the audiences with many of them identifying the issues dramatized as pertaining to their own communities. The play specifically highlighted were

- Depletion of fishstocks;
- Poverty in the coastal fishing areas,
- Large family sizes;
- Trafficking and sexual exploitation of children; and
- Exploitation of poor/vulnerable families.
- At the end of each drama performance, the audience were asked to comment on the story at which many agreed to what was enacted as a true reflection of what pertained in the communities (*specifics are cited in the community reports*).
- That was folowed by talks by officers from government agencies on their roles in combatting CLaT.

Interestingly, in all the community's fisher-folks commented at the end of the program that CLaT practices needs to be stopped. The connection between CLaT in fisheries, poverty, access to birth spacing services, law enforcement and access to state social interventions highlighted in the drama was clearly understood (based on the contributions the audience made after each drama performance). The role of the audience themselves (community people) in combatting the issues was also discussed.

3.0 STATE AGENCIES PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

3.1 Key Statement by Institutions

All agencies present at the durbars made statements after each community drama performance program to educate the gathering in what they do, and how their services contribute combatting CLaT, or should be accessed to help vulnerable households. The following are summaries of the key statements made:

3.2 Statement from District Chief Executives (DCEs)



Figure 2. Municipal Chief Executive of Mfantseman Municipal Assembly addressing the gathering

Mr. (Hon.) Kenneth Kelly Essuman (the Municipal Chief Executive – MCE), addressed the gathering at Anomabo which was integrated into the National Farmers’ and Fishers’ Day 2017 by the Mfantseman Municipal Assembly (MMA) to honor farmers and fishers for their immense efforts to help provide food security for society.

He advised parents to desist from CLaT and rather invest in the education of their children and wards instead of going in for loans for social activities like funerals and outdoorings that are not economically productive.

Since the Farmers’ and Fishers’ Day program was a district-wide program covering both the coastal and hinterlands, there were people from far and near who numbered approximately 2,000 (*according our MoFA collaborators*) at the durbar grounds and watched the anti-CLaT in Fisheries sensitization drama.



Figure 3. Hon. DCE of Ekumfi District Bernard Grant addressing the gathering

Hon. Bernard Grant (the Chief Executive of Ekumfi District) mentioned that there were many interventions available for educational purposes, and children just have to just study hard to be able to access scholarships available from the Assembly. He stated that the district has an unenviable reputation for CLaT activities and his administration will do all it can to address the issue. He also stated that, the Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture is a fisherman who hails from the district so the issue of CLaT in fisheries is very much on their plans to address which explains his presence at the function.

He further went on to conclude that the issue of resources is a critical challenge for the DCPC so they welcome the intervention of NGOs like the FoN and SFMP but will still work towards sustainability in combatting CLaT on their own through appropriate targeting of state social interventions and promotion of education for needy but brilliant students.

3.3 Statement from Department of Social Welfare (DSW)

Officers from the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) addressed the gatherings on the services the agency offers; saying it deals with child-related issues and family conflicts.

CLaT destroys a lot of positive potentials in the communities they stated.

Women were entreated that if their husbands shirk their responsibilities in maintenance of the home and children, they should come to the DSW for the case to be handled instead giving the child away to another person in attempt to relieve themselves of the burden. CLaT is criminal and anyone found guilty will be face prosecution and penalties.

Child-related issues are dear to the country and that is why agencies like the DSW are there to handle the issues.

DSW officers also mentioned that the the Ekumfi District in particular and the coastal belt of the Central Region has a negative reputation as a “ready market” for children trafficked to the Volta Lake area. Many interventions from NGOs and international organizations are not

being made appropriate and adequate use of by the communities and these may soon be cut off if the communities do not change their attitude as the drama suggested.

To conclude, DSW officials advised stakeholders to come to their offices for more education on processes for accessing social intervention programs. The government Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) program is one that all should be attentive to so that when it is time and announcements are made, all qualified persons and family can follow up on it.

3.4 Statement from Ghana Education Service (GES)

According to the GES, children themselves and parents must also change their attitudes for the better where need be so the family does not become vulnerable to CLaT. In 2016/2017 academic year, the Central Regional Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE) chart, showed out of 20 districts in the region, the coastal belt districts performed worst (*e.g. KEEAMA was 18th out of the 20 districts*) which was pathetic. This fall in academics can be attributed to many things including poor school attendance because children want to go to the beach to take part in fishing activities “to earn a living and support their families”. It is realized that every year during the BECE, there are pregnant students which is very sad because these young mothers are not working and their children stands a great chance to end up in CLaT.

Because of money, children are also patronizing the betting and gaming centers, whilst young girls roam the streets in the late of night.

Officers from the GES admonished school children to study hard; adding that though there is Free Senior High School (SHS), it is not really “free” because it also needs the commitment of students who must invest their time resourcefully.



Figure 4. A student asking a question during a sensitization durbar



Figure 5. Mrs. Francisca DeGraft-Johnson addressing stakeholders



Figure 6. Nana Kweigya addressing the gathering

Community members were made to understand that children are great asset and insurance for adults in future so their welfare must always be protected, and their education taken very seriously by parents. Adults must do all they can to maximize government's social interventions programs and make sure their children are formally educated rather than sending them into CLaT.

With the introduction of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), it is mandatory for every Ghanaian parent to send his/her child to school and is liable to prosecution upon failing on that with subsequent harsh sanctions. The government intends to introduce “basic grants” which will cater for the educational logistics for needy students. Already in place is the FCUBE, Free SHS and the Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP) policies so citizens must take advantage of them instead of indulging their children and wards in CLaT.

Sometimes children absent themselves from schools and when asked why, the reason they give is that, their parents did not have money for their lunch. In view of this, the GSFP has been increased to help reduce if not eliminate truancy, Schools benefitting from GSFP services has increased in all the districts so most school children are fed a quality meal each day. Children therefore have no excuse of leaving the school to go home for food during school hours anymore. It was also said the government gives out educational support in form of uniforms and books to those who cannot afford it so parents and the gathering should take note.

3.5 Statement from the Ghana Health Service (GHS)

Resource Persons from the Ghana Health Service (GHS) stressed that one must be willing to be a responsible parent and cater for the child before considering parenthood.

Large family sizes were causes of hardship which made them vulnerable to CLaT. The GHS provides 'family planning' services which can help to check this but unfortunately, most people rely on hearsay that family planning is not safe or healthy.

The GHS encouraged communities to use 'family planning' and that there are in many different forms and any individual must go for counselling to determine what suits him or her best based on his/her lifestyle, and also hormonal disposition, adding that family planning comes in various forms and what works for one may not work for another. People should seek clarification on the issue and not to rely on rumors.

In conclusion, the rampant teenage pregnancy in the communities (*according to GHS records*), will be reduced or curbed through utilizing family planning services. The GHS said should not give birth only when they have the capacity to cater for the children and also for the health of themselves as mothers or husbands.



Figure 7. Mrs. Gifty Kissi (GHS)



Figure 8. Ms. Augustina Adisenu of GHS

2.5 Statement from the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS)

The GIS' collaboration with NGOs especially FoN has alerted them about cross-boundary activities of fishermen, noting that many of this is illegal transportation of humans and also human trafficking. The government is however against illegal immigration and the agency won't spare anyone found culpable.

GIS officers educated the gatherings on the work of the GIS as mainly conducting processes to ensure that travelling into or out of the country is done legally. Therefore, it is against sending children out of Ghana illegally for CLaT purposes and will hand over any person who infringes on this to the police for prosecution. The agency will also ensure that children who are crossing the frontiers of the country are in the right company or for a good intention.

Human trafficking takes many forms. We have the external and the internal. GIS deals with the external which involves crossing the nation's borders whiles the Ghana Police Service and others take care of the internal.

Nowadays, it is common to find recruitments posters all over advertising to send people outside Ghana. We should all be careful and watchful since most of those who fall prey to this are maltreated and sometimes their organs are removed when they are taken out of the country with many also losing their lives.



Figure 9. Mrs. Nartey-Akorful addressing the gathering in Ekumfi-Immuna

3.6 Statement from the Ghana Police Service (GPS)

Ghana Police Service Officers expressed their astonishment at the fact that, with the many social interventions like the FCUBE and Free SHS etc, people still act unconcerned and are able to give out their children to be trafficked.

The agency is the primary law enforcement body in the country and its Anti-Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence and Victim Support Units (AHTU and DOVVSU) are in-

charge of anti-human trafficking and child welfare programs amongst other human rights issues.

CLaT is against the law (*children are used for work that is above their strength*). This is not to say that children should not help out with chores and others. What they do becomes a problem when it is detrimental to their health and normal life as children the police officers added.

CLaT is criminal and punishable by law and if one apprehended, would be prosecuted and penalized.



Figure 10. Ms. Faustina Amisshah addressing the gathering in Saltpond-Ankaful

4.0 KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PROGRAMS

Comments from various stakeholder groupings (e.g. community members, traditional leaders, religious leaders, local organizations and state institutions invariably pointed to the fact that there is a great need for this type of sensitization program and community engagements to continue. Based on unconfirmed estimation, awareness is increasing on the criminality and harm of CLaT over the past three years because of constant presence and education by NGOs. Such programs must therefore continue as a way of entertainment, and more seriously, learning for the communities.

The role of education in lifting families out of deprivation was also hammered on during the programs and the role of the GES in being an agent of anti-CLaT should not be underplayed under any circumstance. Education must also continue for parents and guardians to see that, investing in their children's welfare will also make their own future secure.

Chiefs, queen-mothers and elders (traditional councils) also have a role to play as depicted by the participation of some chiefs and their pronouncements during the engagements. The communities being aware of their poor reputation as a source areas of trafficking in children, expressed that they would want to do better and appealed for more robust enforcement of the laws for fisheries to alleviate the dwindling fish catches, the main cause of poverty and thus CLaT in fisheries.



Figure 11. Queenmother Nana Adwoa Bentsiwa III addressing the gathering in Moree

Community members urged the government and other organizations to be firm in enforcing laws and apprehend children (who have attained the school-going age) but have refused to be in school; and instead be at the shore. Parents of such children should be questioned on whether they have put in much effort to send their wards to school or some undergo some vocational training (apprenticeship). There should be a law that will give authorities the power to “apprehend” recalcitrant children and prosecute their parents to deter others.

5.0 OPEN FORUM

Summary of Key question and Responses

Table 2: Summary of key questions and responses.

	QUESTION	RESPONSE
	<p>Is it wrong for a family to ask a child to take some days off the school calendar to sell to raise money so that it can be used to support him or her in school?</p>	<p>It is unlawful so far as the child is selling during school hours. Again, some parents are able to borrow money for social events (e.g. funerals). It will be prudent to do same in the situation of one's child's education.</p> <p>No one says children should not work but the kind of work that they are engaged in and when determines if it is "child's work" or "child labor".</p> <p>Any work that negatively affects the health, education and growth of the child is termed as child labor. Even for the one that helps out at the shop, the law says no child should found working between 8pm and 6am so it is basically about the kind of work and the time it is being done.</p>
	<p>One trend negatively affecting our children are the game centers. What can be done about them?</p>	<p>There are laws from the assembly governing the operations of these centers. Some are licensed and others are not. They are also not meant for people below age 18; thus the communities themselves can put up measures to check this.</p>
	<p>If there is anyone who was a responsible parent but due to a misfortune, cannot work any longer, is there any intervention by the state for that person so that he/she does not fall into the criminality of CLaT?</p>	<p>In any situation like this, the district assembly and the DSW should be contacted, However we should also be self-reliant and take insurance policies that will be helpful in times like this.</p>
	<p>Is it wrong if I have eight children but six are enrolled in school and the other two work and help me take care of those in school?</p>	<p>Every child is supposed to be educated or trained. One does not have any excuse to prevent the child from getting an education.</p> <p>This is also one key reason that couples are asked to have just the number of kids they can take care of.</p>
	<p>My mother does not have money so I sell to support myself. Is it illegal?</p>	<p>It will depend on the kind of situation the parent is in. The parent can seek for support from the district assembly and DSW. It is never the duty of a child to take care of him or herself.</p>
	<p>One "Sister Adwoa" shared that though she was "elderly and unemployed", because</p>	<p>This was put to the gathering to take as a testimony which they should also emulate.</p> <p>Mr. Kwesi Johnson added that, if "Sister Adwoa" had given away her children to be taken to some "unknown</p>

	QUESTION	RESPONSE
	she took good care of her children, they are taking care of her now.	place” she would not be reaping the fruits of her labor today.
	“Madam Christiana” shared that, it had been observed that the men were not contributing to the open forum and this was because they are “irresponsible”.	This was countered by Kwame Panyin, saying it is true some men are irresponsible but there are responsible ones as well. He added that some men act that way because some women also misuse housekeeping money the men give them, confirming the needed for both parents to work as a team in bringing up the kids.
	Is it illegal if it is vacation and I send my child to Yeji?	No one prevents you from sending your child away for the vacation. The only problem will be with the intention with which you are sending away the child.
	From the drama, we realized people fish with small sized nets which is not right. What is being done about the factories that produce these nets?	Those nets have their own functions excluding fishing so the factories cannot be blamed. It is just that some unscrupulous people are misusing them so it is not about the factories that produce them.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) officials who participated in the program, the durbars from all parameters of assessment was a good program so when an opportunity like this comes, the communities should maximize its benefits by participating fully. According to the officials from the Commission, the mandate of the NCCE to provide civic education for Ghanaians on the laws and inform them on issues in the country like what FoN did through the drama and therefore are very willing to participate in future programs.

According to the Fisheries Commission, fishermen should not wrongly interpret the messages in the drama by not involving children in any sort of fisheries related activity again at all. They said that that will be suicidal for the industry as there will be no replacement for current corps of practitioners. Fishers therefore should learn the difference between “child labor” and “child work” so that their children will receive training in fisheries appropriately.

The Commission will also continue to partner with NGOs like FoN and partners to educate communities in overcoming poverty, and also combatting CLaT through adoption of sustainable and healthy fishing techniques. There are technologically advanced devices that can be used to trace where fish is a great catch. But without education, one might not be able to use these gadgets, and that is why it will be good for all children in the fishing communities be serious with education.

Stressing on the need for education in all endeavors Madam Ama, a female fisher leader from Gomoa-Nyanyano said she is educated and works as a fishmonger and processor. She added that with her literacy and numeracy skills, she runs her business more profitably compared to her non-literate colleagues. She therefore recommended that all in the fishing communities should take education serious and eschew CLaT.



Figure 12. Female youngsters taking keen interest in anti-CLaT posters in Gomoa-Fetteh.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the CLaT awareness situation in the country and especially the source communities in the coastal-belt area of the Central Region, the strength of the DCPCs and the MMDAs in combatting CLaT, the program really was important on the assemblies administrative and the community's social calendars respectively.

Indeed, capacity in logistical resources and skills in community entry and knowledge of the subject (issue) had patches of challenges within all the ten MMDAs so FoN's intervention came in very handy. Also, the program came in to help the assemblies to implement part of their proposed ant-CLaT intervention in the draft MTDPs 2018-2021 which is a plus for all of them because it will gain them points in the National Planning Development Commission's (NDPC) Functional Organizational Assessment Tool (FOAT) process which will earn them resources to carry out development programs in the assembly's plans.

The series of drama program gave the communities and agencies the opportunity interact and broke the ice of "unwarranted fear" of the security agencies, and also government institutions as people who do not care about the grassroots. It also brought out some traditional leaders who are usually "barricaded" in their palaces to interact with the people to talk about the critical community development and human rights issue of CLaT. This facilitated a symbiotic relationship establishment between ordinary citizens and government officials to talk about issues of common interest. Combatting CLaT has been identified as a multi-sectorial issue so it was rewarding that stakeholders and community folks be educated through the drama and experience-sharing, as well as identify the linkages and discuss the issues.

One chief fisherman touched on the illegal fishing practices that were highlighted in the drama which has led to the depletion in fisheries stock and admonished the fishermen to refrain from them; linking it to couples to give birth only when they are ready to do so in order to provide their own children with quality life.

Communities were also pleased to learn firsthand about government's social interventions programs and how to access it and resort to illegalities to survive socio-economically. Another chief fisherman commented that the welfare of children today guarantees that of adults in the future, concluding that his community will find a way of getting all children into the classroom during school hours, and engage colleague fishers to desist from giving away their children or employing child labor.