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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Report On Learning Tour To Torkor For SFMP Partners And Selected Stakeholders



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Cover photo: SFMP partners and some stakeholders in a picture with the Municipal Chief Executive of Kpando Municipality (Credit: SNV)

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ACRONYMS

FC	Fisheries Commission
GAWU	General Agricultural Workers Union
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NAFPTA	National Fish Processors and Traders Association
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS

ACRONYMS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	1
1.0 BACKGROUND	1
1.1 Tour Objectives	1
1.2 Expected outcomes.....	1
1.3 Tour method	2
1.4 Venue	2
1.5 Attendance.....	2
2.0 THE TOUR OF THE TORKOR COMMUNITY	2
3.0 KEY CONTACTS	3
3.1 Kpando Municipal Assembly.....	3
3.2 Meeting with General Agriculture Workers Union (GAWU)	4
3.3 The School Teachers (GES).....	5
3.4 The Community Durbar (Time with The Opinion Leaders and The Community).....	6
3.5 Interaction with Fish Smokers and Fresh Fish Sellers.....	7
3.6 The Ghana Armed Forces stationed in Kpando Torkor.....	9
3.7 The Missahoe Orphanage (Means higher missions)	9
3.8 Introduction of the Ahotor oven (Dzidedi oven) to the National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA)	10
4.0 OVERALL OBSERVATIONS FROM THE TOUR	11
5.0 THE WAY FORWARD	12
6.0 CONCLUSION.....	14

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Partners in a picture with the Municipal Chief Executive of Kpando Municipality after the meeting	4
Figure 2	Breakout session with the school children	6
Figure 3	SFMP anti-CLaT team and the community pledging to support to make Kpando Torkor a CLaT-free community.....	7
Figure 4	Fresh fish mongers	8
Figure 5	The type of oven used by Torkor Fish processors.....	8
Figure 6	Section of partners in a group picture with the Ghana Armed Forces servicemen stationed at Kpando Torkor	9
Figure 7	Partners in a brief meeting with the Missahoe Orphanage (One of the orphanages that house the CLaT victims).....	10
Figure 8	Mr. Emmanuel Kwarteng from SNV engaging the community and fish processors on the new energy-efficient fish smoking oven.....	11
Figure 9	Meeting with members of NAFPTA to educate them about the new fish smoking technology.....	11
Figure 10	IEC material to help educate people.....	14

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We are also grateful for the support and participation of partners and the Fisheries Commission.

1.0 BACKGROUND

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has committed funds to the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) in Ghana for five years. The objective is to rebuild marine fisheries stocks and catches through adoption of responsible fishing practices. The project will contribute to the Government of Ghana's fisheries development objectives and USAID's Feed the Future Initiative.

As part of the project, partners embarked on anti-Child Labor and Trafficking activities to help reduce and subsequently eliminate CLaT activities in the fisheries sector of Ghana.

The General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU) of the TUC implemented the Torkor Model at Kpando Torkor in the Volta Region which focused on fishers (fishermen and processors). The model put in place systems that promote decent work and community development, using Child Labor as an entry point. The Model is hinged on organizing and mobilizing fish workers (including fishermen and fish processors) and employers (boat/canoe owners) by equipping them with the relevant knowledge, skills and motivation to combat child labor, enhance their productivity and share their experiences with national and international partners.

The Child Labor and Trafficking partners' team of the SFMP was interested in understanding how the Model was implemented and assess the possibility of replicating the learnings in the respective pilot communities. It is in this regard that the team decided to embark on a tour to Kpando Torkor to experience the changes on the ground and learn from the beneficiaries.

1.1 Tour Objectives

The main objectives of the tour were to

1. Provide a learning platform for partners on the Torkor Model.
2. Experience and understand how real changes on the ground were achieved.
3. Find opportunities for replication in the Central Region.

1.2 Expected outcomes

- The tour aimed to provide an on the ground experience of the Torkor model.
- To identify the various components and actors.
- To understand the various roles of the actors.
- Identify aspects that could be replicated in the Central Region.

1.3 Tour method

- Cursory walk through the town.
- Durbar with most of the actors of the model.
- Interviews with some of the actors.
- Observation.

1.4 Venue

The tour took place at Kpando Torkor in the Volta Region of Ghana.

1.5 Attendance

The tour was patronized by nineteen (19) participants, including 15 men. This was made up of two (2) male facilitators from GAWU, 8 partners (5 males and 3 females) and 5 other stakeholders (including 1 female) from the Fisheries Commission, Ghana Education Service, and the Municipal Assembly.

2.0 THE TOUR OF THE TORKOR COMMUNITY

On the 22nd of February 2018, the SFMP anti-CLaT partners embarked on a full day learning tour to Kpando Torkor. The team visited various actors in the community, participated in a durbar and also undertook a cursory walk through the Torkor community.

This community, like most on the lake was known for receiving trafficked children to work in the community, especially in the fishery industry. Their (trafficked children) work involved hazardous tasks such as diving deep to release the snagged nets from tree stumps, laying nets in the waters, fishing, fish processing, livestock rearing, selling processed fish, amongst others. The model works through the various stakeholders. The General Agriculture Workers Union (GAWU) which is the originator of this model plays a key role in coordinating all stakeholders and partners on the model and collaborates with the Ghana Education Service (GES) and orphanages to shelter and rehabilitate the children who are rescued into schools.

The Kpando Municipal assembly's role is more of governance support to the model. The point of contact is the Social Welfare Department and the Planning team. They provide support in building the capacity of the various actors and link up with important stakeholders such as the Navy and the traditional leaders to ensure enforcement of regulations and by-laws. The social Welfare Department also provides counselling and rehabilitation support to rescued children and help to re-integrate them into their families and the community.

The chiefs and traditional leaders are the custodians of the community laws and the by-laws and they support the police and navy in enforcement and prosecution roles, thus deterring offenders. They also help to educate their community on CLaT related issues. This is because they have been trained and educated by GAWU and the district assembly as well.

There are three (3) schools in Torkor namely, Roman Catholic (RC) School, Evangelical Presbyterian (EP) School and the local Authority (L.A JHS) who are also playing other key roles in the model. They help in education of the rescued children. A former head teacher who saw the need to create another form of school to cater for the rescued children who are very old to start from the lower class has established an adult school called the "Bridge School". The current statistics of rescued children in schools indicate that there are 7 in EP school, 3 in RC school and 2 in L.A JHS, making a total of 12 such children in schools at Torkor.

The Navy also supports the model by rescuing trafficked children, arrest and prosecute offenders. They patrol the area and inspect boats and canoes to ensure enforcement of by-

laws and regulations. Messahoe Orphanage in Kpando is one of the oldest orphanages in the municipality. They take in rescued children and give them basic need of life which includes shelter, food, clothing and education.

The model also seeks to promote descent work. Thus the more prominent occupations such as fishing and fish processing were provided the needed support to increase incomes and improve livelihoods. Sheds were built for fresh fish traders and fish smokers to make their work more decent and much more attractive to the youth. Some of the processors were also supported with smoking ovens.

3.0 KEY CONTACTS

3.1 Kpando Municipal Assembly

The USAID-SFMP Anti-CLaT partners (SNV, CEWEFIA, DAA, FoN) on Thursday February 22, 2018 paid a courtesy call on the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) and the Coordinating Director of the Kpando Municipal Assembly to officially announce the SFMP teams' presence and also to learn and share information on the Torkor Model for combatting CLaT. The interactions with the assembly staff noted the following as some of the achievements and challenges of the Torkor model, in respect to the role of the assembly:

- The Torkor Model in combating CLaT has given birth to a police station to help deal with CLaT offenders and other security issues. The police station is yet to be commissioned.
- They have also built a clinic to help with basic health issues of the community members.
- The Torkor Model has been included in the District assembly medium and long term plan of action.
- The social welfare department has taken full responsibility of helping partners to sensitize and educate the communities on the need to stop child labor and trafficking and to promote and protect the rights of children in the community.
- Social welfare with the help of partners (GAWU) has trained teachers as counsellors to help with the rehabilitation of the children when they are rescued.

Challenges include the fact that there are still few people who are in the CLaT business. A few days earlier it was reported that a child was sold for GHc25.00, Mr. Sayibu Innuisah Coordinating Director explained.



Figure 1 Partners in a picture with the Municipal Chief Executive of Kpando Municipality after the meeting

3.2 Meeting with General Agriculture Workers Union (GAWU)

Mr. Andrews Tagoe, GAWU Deputy General-Secretary said the main visions of the Torkor model are:

- a) To get every child in school.
- b) To get every adult in decent work.

Among the results and achievements of the Torkor model mentioned in the meeting:

- GAWU with the opinion leaders have gotten on board tradesmen such as carpenters, seamstresses, mechanics and others. This was to help the children who are not interested in schooling after they have been rescued from their slave masters to go into learning a trade.
- The model helped to form a 'Bridge School'. This is a type of school where the children who are very old and are shy to join the main stream are engaged by the headmaster and some teachers who are committed to helping the Torkor Model to combat CLaT by giving them basic education to help them in life. These children are mostly called 'school papa and school mama' in the local language.
- The good example of the project is that everybody that matter was involved from the very beginning, i.e. opinion leaders, the various tribes, the District Assembly, and all other stakeholders.
- The process of withdrawing a child from the slave master is handled by the community leaders.
- After rescuing a child from the slave master, they take the child to a school or to learn a trade; and the child's upkeep is funded by GAWU and its partners.
- Out of the Model, a child protection committee has been formed and Anti-Child Labor and Trafficking clubs also formed in the various schools to help combat CLaT.

- GAWU with its partners trained guidance and counselling coordinators in the schools to help in counselling CLaT victims.

3.3 The School Teachers (GES)

In the Torkor model, teachers play a very key role in reintegrating the children into the society either through formal or informal education. Out of the model, the following have been achieved by the teachers:

- Monitoring of the rescued kids in school.
- Provision of counselling; because some of the rescued children become lonely and will not socialize, while others become aggressive. The teachers train them on how to take care of themselves.
- The model helped to form a 'Bridge School'; a type of school where the children who are very old and are shy to join the main stream are engaged by the headmaster and some teachers who are committed to helping the Torkor Model in combating CLaT to get basic education to help them in life. These children are mostly called 'School Papa and School mama' in the local language.
- The teachers sometimes adopt some of these children and provide for them. But the head teacher claims it has not been easy since the children are sometimes many to support; especially when in addition to their own children.

The day the SFMP team visited was a day set aside by the school authorities for their inter-school's football games. This made it difficult to meet the boys who were mostly the victims of CLaT activities along the Volta Lake. Notwithstanding, the teachers and the community elders made the team aware that the females also go through other forms of child labor. This made it possible to engage the females and a few boys during the break out session. Although they were not comfortable, their teachers asked them to open up to the team. Information shared by the children include:

- The children had some rescued children in their class.
- They explained that such victims were usually unfriendly, violent and easily angry.
- Some of the rescued children in the school were withdrawn and do not easily associate with the other kids.
- Some engage in work which sometimes affect their school i.e. selling during school hours.
- Some are abused at home by their guardian.
- A young boy of about 14 years told his story. He said he was given to a man in another community when he was younger to support his master with cattle rearing. Now that he has been rescued, he is now in school. He further informed that he goes back to the man during vacation to work for some money. He explained that even though he worked for long hours, he was not abused and the man took care of his basic needs.



Figure 2 Breakout session with the school children

3.4 The Community Durbar (Time with The Opinion Leaders and The Community)

The backbone of the model is the community leadership. Their commitment has supported the Torkor model. Since the community has different tribes from different parts of the country, they engage each and every one from the beginning, through constant education and sensitization by GAWU and its partners. They all meet together with most of the victims and masters of CLaT at a durbar and encourage them to stop engaging children on the lake. Such people have become Anti-CLaT advocates.

Other comments include:

- The chiefs also sanction perpetrators.
- The project was strategized by the ordinary fisher folks of Torkor.
- Implementation of project activities is driven by the fishermen, fish processors, traditional leaders, unionized informal workers and youth groups.
- Effective use of technology (surveillance cameras and online/mobile applications were used for information sharing on trafficking).
- Training of adult divers to replace children.
- Use of speed boats for child labor monitoring on the lake.
- Effective partnership with the Navy.
- Emphasis on OSH, Cooperatives and productivity.

Lessons:

- When organized and given the opportunity to drive implementation, ordinary local people can achieve practical and sustainable results.

- When child labor elimination is coupled with improving productivity (including OSH, Cooperative and business planning) and incomes for families, it becomes a win-win strategy.
- Bottom-up approach is an effective way of testing what works and what does not work.

Challenges:

- There are few recalcitrants who will not heed to the call to stop CLaT activities.
- Poverty on the part of some parents, who after their ward has been returned to them, still send them back because they cannot take care of them.
- The police are also not helpful in handling CLaT issues. This makes the fight to combat it difficult since the slave masters are released after they are reported to the police; after which they mock the community leaders committed to combatting CLaT activities in their community.



Figure 3 SFMP anti-CLaT team and the community pledging to support to make Kpando Torkor a CLaT-free community

3.5 Interaction with Fish Smokers and Fresh Fish Sellers.

These women are part of the value chain in the fisheries and were engaged in both selling of fresh and smoked fish.

Observations

- They were still engaged in using the chorkor type of stove which is harmful to their health.
- Some of the places they sell the fish are not very hygienic. They need to be encouraged to cement their working areas, educated on personal hygiene and good ways of handling fish.
- They use cement paper to wrap the smoked fish; which is a bad practice. Mr Abraham of DAA advised the women to desist from that practice because it is harmful to the health of consumers.

- The fish after harvest are kept for a long time without ice usage. They were advised to use ice.



Figure 4 Fresh fish mongers



Figure 5 The type of oven used by Torkor Fish processors

3.6 The Ghana Armed Forces stationed in Kpando Torkor

The Ghana Armed Forces came to the community to police the illegal activities on the lake and also help with CLaT cases.

- The Ghana Armed Forces service men in Torkor support the enforcement and prosecution needs of the program.
- This has helped with many arrests over the period; and between January and February 2018, a 25-year old man was imprisoned.
- They patrol the lake areas to ensure compliance and to protect the community members.
- Because the service men are changed every 3 months, the current group complained that communication gaps and poor coordination among community leaders and the municipal assembly negatively affect activities.



Figure 6 Section of partners in a group picture with the Ghana Armed Forces servicemen stationed at Kpando Torkor

Challenges

- Organizational challenges (lack of proper coordination on the part of the municipal assembly, opinion leaders and the Ghana Armed Forces).

3.7 The Missahoe Orphanage (Means higher missions)

It is the first orphanage in the Kpando municipality; and has assisted with sheltering and rehabilitation of most of the victims under the Torkor Model.

- Most of the children that are brought there go through basic education, since the orphanage has a school.
- Most of these children, especially the males are very aggressive.
- They provide counseling and rehabilitation needs for the children.
- They provide them with their basic needs.
- They re-integrate them into the school system and the community.



Figure 7 Partners in a brief meeting with the Missahoe Orphanage (One of the orphanages that house the CLaT victims)

3.8 Introduction of the Ahotor oven (Dzidedi oven) to the National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA)

- Mr. Emmanuel Kwarteng took the opportunity to engage the community to introduce the new and safe energy-efficient fish smoking oven.
- He then met the NAFPTA group during the breakout session to educate them on the Ahotor oven and how they can acquire it.
- He talked about how efficient and effective the Dzidedi Mekple (Ahotor oven) is.

Response from the Group

- Since it was the first time hearing of the oven they needed more practical demonstration to better appreciate the new technology.
- Many complained of the high cost.
- The Queenmother assured the SFMP team of their readiness to switch to the proposed Dzidedi Mekple or Ahotor oven, but needed more training and education on its use.



Figure 8 Mr. Emmanuel Kwarteng from SNV engaging the community and fish processors on the new energy-efficient fish smoking oven



Figure 9 Meeting with members of NAFPTA to educate them about the new fish smoking technology

4.0 OVERALL OBSERVATIONS FROM THE TOUR

- The model thrives on committed community members to survive.
- Opinion leaders have powers to sanction offenders.
- The model included every party from the beginning, thus the community owned the model and are committed to making the community a Child Labor and Trafficking-free zone.
- There is a support system for the rescued children from the community and social welfare department in the assembly although it is not enough. In future, a rehabilitation center should be built for the rescued children.

- Most children when rescued and sent to their families end up with their slave masters, because the family send them back due to factors such as poverty and many mouths to feed.
- The rescued children have behavioral issues. This include hardiness, aggression, violence etc., thus making it difficult to control them.
- The model has brought together people with skills, such as carpenters and dressmakers to support some of the rescued children with handicrafts and economic skills.

5.0 THE WAY FORWARD

The Torkor Model was developed by the Ghana Agricultural Workers Union of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and consist of an integrated system of three components hinged upon a central feature - organized informal workers. The three components are organization of informal workers; social mobilization through sensitization and capacity building; and knowledge sharing. Organization of informal workers, being the core component of the model, is based on the recognition that informal workers in the rural economy are capable of addressing the challenges associated with their work, including the problem of child labor; when appropriately assisted.

Thus, an inside-out approach is facilitated rather than an outside-in approach (that focuses on unsustainable external agents). By social mobilization through sensitization and capacity building component of the model, fishers and fish processors are organised and mobilized so that they are motivated to take action towards stopping child labor in the community. The third component of the model, Knowledge sharing, dwells on good practices and lessons learned; and these are documented during implementation with partners at the international, national and local levels. The Torkor Model is gaining international recognition and some aspects have been incorporated in the National Plan of Action against Worst Forms of Child Labor. The model encourages the ability of fishermen and fish mongers to apply safe, healthy and efficient methods in fishing and fish processing to increase their productivity. Thus the ability to strengthen their existing cooperative groups would have been improved through sensitization and training.

Thus in Torkor, GAWU has organized local fishermen to form the GAWU local Union and the inland Canoe Fishers Association (ICFA). This organization is empowering the workers to drive the child labor elimination process. GAWU has also mobilized the women who buy, process and retail the fish. These are the actors along the fish supply chain where child labor occurs.

They are being sensitized to feel the consequences of child labor on the health, education and development of the children they see every day in their community.

They are not given a mere head knowledge awareness. The sensitization in done through mutual sharing of the experiences encountered with a child laborer. It is a real life sensitization platform.

It is not a hotel-setting workshop or technical seminar on text-book theory on child labor. These fishermen see the children recruited and trafficked away from home, harbored and abused by slave masters, hardened and criminalized through mixing with delinquent adults, drowned and die in the lake. GAWU's approach is to bring to bear on their conscience the evil of child labor and the opportunities to stop it. Many of them are victims of child labor themselves, and have grown into poor adults who must struggle to survive and keep their families.

They have limited opportunities today because they lost childhood opportunities for education, play and the acquisition of competitive skills. They would not want this to happen to any child within their sphere of influence.

This kind of sensitization, carried out at the very site of child labor on the banks of the Volta Lake would spur rational men into action against the menace. It is different from sensationalism; where imageries are used to tickle the senses for a short time of effect. Sensitization, in the Torkor Model is coupled with ready organization and immediate long term action. This approach stimulates the social infrastructure required to bring real change and transformation.

When the eyes of the fishermen are opened, the hearts of the fish processing women are moved for the children, and the mind of the traditional leaders and the whole community is stirred to take action, GAWU is ready with its organizational apparatus to immediately construct and execute sustainable action against the evil of child labor. This is when appropriate training and capacity building comes in. When the children are removed from fishing, there is a labor deficiency. This is an economic reality for the fishermen. There is an imbalance in the factors of production. To restore the balance, and even improve productivity, the Torkor Model applies alternative measures to the use of children: legally employable young adults are trained as divers to disentangle the fishing nets caught by the underwater tree stumps. This may be a short term measure, compared with the removal of the tree stumps altogether from the lake. Consultations with the fishermen at Abotoase is galvanizing momentum for the removal of the tree stumps. Another measure is to increase the amount of fish-catch upon a fishing expedition. This is difficult because the general natural fish stock in the Volta Lake is dwindling, because of many factors exogenous to the community; not the least is the effect of climate change.

So alternatives such a fish-farming and aquaculture are being pursued. This is where collaboration with the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD) fits in. The local MOFAD Office in Torkor is fitting into this niche. Improving productivity for the fishermen and women engaged in fish processing and selling, is also achieved by strengthening the capacity of Associations, including Unions and Cooperatives.

This is the vehicle by which advocacy for improved supply of fishing inputs such as pre-mixed fuel, outboard motors, boat-building wood, removal of tree stumps and other needs can be met.

Penetrating the inertia associated with having good results from such advocacy can be daunting, but the processing itself is a useful input to the capacity of these Associations and future success in their relentless efforts to move government to be responsive and responsible.

Revitalizing the rural economy in Torkor may take more years and dimensions than a brief 10-months child labor intervention can initiate. But the Torkor Model is a veritable learning opportunity that should be taken advantage of in the national quest to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in Ghana.

Given that it is a piece of a broader experimentation by the ILO on testing methodologies that work for sustainable child labor elimination in various countries including India, Zambia and Benin, the approach may well evolve into just what is needed to meet target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which calls for immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor and end all child labor by 2025.

In this same faith there is the need for SFMP to replicate such model in its Project areas which include the Central region where their research confirms that the Central region is one of the sources for children being trafficked to many parts of the fishing communities not only in Ghana but outside the shores of Ghana as well.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The Torkor model involves all stakeholders in working towards a child labor-free zone. To complement the Anti-CLaT issues, the women need to be introduced to the new oven for the fishmongers. The Torkor model is a shared responsibility to ensure that the project intervention systems continue to run. There is therefore the need for traditional leaders (chiefs and queenmothers), the municipal assembly and other stakeholders to continue to collaborate and commit to the model to reach CLaT-free communities.

Figure 10 IEC material to help educate people

