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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Central Region Coastal-Fishing Communities Anti Child Labor and Trafficking Sensitization Program



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THE
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Cover photo: Night film show in Ekumfi-Otuam (Credit: Kwadwo Kyei Yamoah - FoN)

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ACRONYMS

CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
CLaT	Child Labour and Trafficking
CR	Central Region
CRC	Coastal Resources Center, University of Rhode Island
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DA	District Authorities
DAA	Development Action Association
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
FiC	Fisheries Commission
FoN	Friends of Nation
GOG	Government of Ghana
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LEAP	Livelihood Enhancement Against Poverty
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
MGCSP	Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
UCEW	University College of Education - Winneba

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FOREWARD

In order to raise awareness about the negative effects of activities of Child Labor and Trafficking (CLaT) within source communities, Friends of the Nation (FoN) as part of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) anti-CLaT initiative embarked upon a community sensitization program in nine identified communities in February, 2016.

Using drama and discussions (day time); and film-shows and discussions (at night), the team was able to facilitate a successful engagement with the communities. It also succeeded to get a pool of volunteers in each community who volunteered to act as Community Anti-CLaT Advocates and Whistle-blowers. The volunteers will be further supported and resourced to reduce the incidence of CLaT the communities, and promote human rights, and the welfare of children.

The history, and magnitude of Child Labour and Trafficking (CLaT) in fisheries within the coastal fishing communities in the Central Region was determined through respondents and it pointed clearly as a fishing activity linked issue. 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.

Poverty and deprivation were noted as the main reason why families gave their children away. Declining fish harvest has seriously deepened poverty in the coastal fishing communities where there are hardly any other viable forms of livelihood activities. Many single-parent female-headed households who are among the lowest rungs of the poor send their children away to assist others for a fee, thinking they are helping both themselves and the trafficked child. Therefore the issue of CLaT has profound gender dimensions that should be paid attention to by the appropriate authorities with adequate interventions.

Stakeholders have expressed worry that despite the enormous potentials in the Central Region, it has been ranked the fourth poorest area in the country in a recent Ghana Living Standards Survey, conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service. The region which has some of the best educational institutions, tourist attractions and other economic ventures in the country is an enigma in terms of development issues, notably CLaT.

The region which played significant roles in national development since the colonial period, through to the independence and post-independence era, has 14 major fish landing beaches.

Sanitation has been an issue with the region for a long time and all the beaches except a few are littered with human excreta and plastic waste which is bad for fisheries hygiene.

Deteriorating academic performance of students at the basic education level in the region in general and the coastal areas in particular has deprived students in accessing some of the prestigious second cycle schools located in the area, thus compounding the unemployment rate in the region and pushing more and more persons into fisheries, and also CLaT.

The gaps in law enforcement should be plugged to contribute to reducing the expenses made in rescuing and rehabilitating victims. The fact that some police post are just besides embarking points in communities is disturbing. This shows that either the law enforcement agencies are not conversant with that aspect of the law, or they are just playing into the hands of traffickers who may induce them to turn their attention to ‘more serious things’.

Ignorance is however no excuse and complicity is a crime. Children's rights are human rights and should be treated as such.

Lastly though the SFMP is about contributing to resuscitating Ghana's fisheries, managing the fisheries is actually about managing people efforts by Friends of the Nation (FoN) and partners to bring to fore the drivers of CLaT and propose actions that will contribute to a clean, and sustainable fisheries for now and the upcoming generations.

OBJECTIVE OF THE SFMP

As part of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP), FoN conducted a comprehensive assessment of Child Labour and Trafficking (CLaT) problem in the Central Region which aimed at identifying communities and households most susceptible to such practices to unearth the root drivers of the problem, and gather up-to-date information in collaboration with Coastal Resources Centre -Ghana, Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) and the Fisheries Commission. Other partners in this activity were Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association (CEWEFIA) and Development Action Associates (DAA).

The purpose of the SFMP is to "Rebuild targeted fish stocks through adoption of sustainable practices and exploitation levels". This project will forge a campaign that is aimed at facilitating building a constituency for change that captures the support of high-level decision-makers and politicians, as well as grass-roots fishermen, fishmongers and processors.

The SFMP seeks to build on gains and lessons learned by the USAID/Ghana Integrated Coastal Fisheries Governance initiative (ICFG) to scale up the latter's successful model for improving law enforcement effectiveness; and extend the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) capacities from the Western to the Central Region (CR) Coordinating Council (RCC), and nine district assemblies (DAs) in the CR.

COMMUNITY SENSITIZATION MEETINGS

Nine (9) community sensitization meetings on CLaT were organized by FoN in selected communities in the Central Region. The community CLaT meetings focused on behavior change communications to reduce child labor and Trafficking activities in fisheries. The meeting were held in the following communities; Ekumfi-Narkwa, Eku-Mpoano, Ekumfi-Otuam, Ekumfi-Immuna, Gomoa-Dago, Mumford. Abandze, Anomabo and Biriwa

Participants for the communities meetings were from; Representative from District Assemblies, Local Traditional Leaders, Assembly Members, Chief fishermen, community opinion leaders, representatives of identifiable groups, women fish mongers, fisher folks, Vulnerable households identified during the CLaT survey, Local Media persons, Social Welfare Officers, Youth, Selected basic schools and school children, etc.

The meetings involved the use of Power-point Presentation with simple illustrations, Film shows on CLaT, community drama and cultural performance to sensitize the community members about the bad and hazardous effects of CLaT on Children and appeal to them to stop the practice. Also key community leaders and other representatives Social Welfare Dept. Marine Police, etc. gave speeches with the following key messages to the audience:

- CLaT has negative and hazardous effect on the psychological, Physical, Health and Social wellbeing of Children
- It is Illegal to traffic children and or engages them in hazardous labor.
- Birth spacing (family planning) is relevant to ensure small manageable family size.

- Responsible parenting is key to ensure the protection of children.
- Children have rights and should be respected.
- CLaT practices are illegal and there is the urgent need for community actions to stop such practices.

The Key Output of the community meetings included the following;

- Community members were sensitized on the negative effects of CLaT.
- Key follow-up actions to reduced CLaT were also identified and discussed.
- Community Local Actions were developed by community members.
- Nomination of community members for the Anti-CLaT local committees was made.

PROCEEDINGS

The SFMP (initiative) was always elucidated on in the opening remarks by the FoN team. This was always done (in each community gathering) after the community's leadership had welcomed the visiting team with a "welcome statement".

A brief was given on the objectives of SFMP CLaT intervention as: to contribute to prevention of child labour and trafficking activities in communities within the coastal communities of Central Region.

Activities carried out so far was highlighted and light thrown on findings from comprehensive assessment of the problem in the fisheries industry of Central Region which was done to identify communities and households vulnerable to such practices; and specific issues pertaining to individual communities highlighted to the audience.

The key findings that the survey made and mentioned to the communities were the following:

- Single-parent female-headed families are very susceptible especially where the female head has no sustainable income.
- Divorced women with children from previous relationships who remarry other men are tricked into getting rid of the children by selling them off into child work by their new partners.
- Single women with children with 'troublesome character' give them off to other men. This is so that the children could "have a father-figure or disciplinarian around," but ends up with bitter experiences or been sold.
- Homes where the fathers do not honor their responsibilities of catering for the children, this includes providing them with the basic necessities of life.
- Inadequacy of social amenities in the coastal fishing areas and deprivation make life elsewhere appear better. Therefore parents give out their children hoping for better life for them.
- Large family sizes due to inadequate access to birth spacing (family planning) commodities was noted as a contributing factor for CLaT.
- Some families migrate and ensemble as workers and sometimes the whole family are engaged as laborer including the children.

In addition to the above, after the performance of the drama, questions start coming and the planned 3-hour programmes sometimes went as far as 4 hours and over. This is because of the sensitivity of the issue, the depth of interest and recognition of the issue as pertaining to them; and the magnitude of prevalence in the communities.

The scenes in the drama covered the dependent variables which causes parent to give their children to perpetrators (family members and strangers) of the act. It also captured the challenges the children go through when they are sent to destination-communities.

The last item in which the drama unfolds was the effect of CLaT on the society. Community members appreciated the story of the drama, and therefore articulated their take on the issue for adequate and sustainable redress.

The community stakeholder engagements were done in the mornings and afternoons. The evening was utilized to a show video-documentary on CLaT (causes, effect, challenges, success stories) titled the **Fisher Boys** (made in 2008 by the Christian Council of Ghana) to enlighten the community members on the reality of the menace. Participants came out with strategies to curb CLaT in the communities.

Key issues across the communities included:

- Increased deviant behaviors among the youth.
- Increased gambling activities among the youth and adolescents.
- Increased teenage pregnancy.
- Increased improper method of abortion.
- Increased in truancy by school children.
- Dereliction of responsibility by fathers in the care of their children.
- Prioritization of socially non-essential issues over upkeep and education for children by mothers.
- At the end of each community program, volunteers were courted to assist in implementing the strategies (look at recommendations) were appointed.
- Many dignitaries at the meetings expressed their concern about the existence of CLaT in the communities and stated their readiness to join forces with stakeholders to eradicate CLaT in the communities.

Various communities made recommendations on CLaT prevention. Proposed strategies for combatting the menace or were developed and summarized in the following sections.

INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITIES' REPORT

Ekumfi-Narkwa

Ekumfi-Narkwa is a coastal-fishing community in the Ekumfi District of the Central Region. It is inhabited by the indigenous Ekumfi-Fantes with patches of migrant populations especially from amongst the Gas and Ewes from the Greater-Accra and Volta Regions respectively.

Coconut plantations encircle the community and also, people carry out farming at subsistence level in porous and an increasingly infertile soil. These had contributed to poverty in the community with vast majority of the people living as migrants in other towns in Ghana and outside (especially in La Cote d'Ivoire).

The Ghana Investments Promotion Company (GIPC) had over a decade plans to establish an integrated Chlorine Alkali and salt winning facilities with an initial output of 415,478 tons, yielded from an area of 509,040m² (located between Ekumfi Narkwa and Assafa) at a total cost estimated at 60,000,000 USD. The project location provides easy access to potential markets of oil and gas companies operating from Takoradi and other neighbouring West African countries.

Incidences of CLaT within the community

It was reported that the number of school drop-outs in and within the community's environs has risen over the years, thus forcing many 'frustrated' teachers there to seek transfers to other schools. Reports from the Ghana Education Service (GES) say teachers in the town have threatened to leave primary and JSS schools in the area because the pupils prefer going fishing to attending school. This has affected the academic standard of pupils in the area and predisposing them to fisheries at very young ages.

The situation very precarious with many of the girl-child pupils amongst them are regularly sent to neighboring countries especially, La Cote d'Ivoire to either process, smoke or sell fish. The boys are also sent to Yeji to fish and serve as "fishing mates".

Mrs. Corazon Amissah of the Department of Social Welfare in the Ekumfi District appealed to parents in the community to take proper care of their wards and provide them with the needed members for effective teaching and learning at school to make the more productive members of the society in future rather than jeopardize it by given the off at ridiculously low amounts of money. An elder of Nakwa, Opanyin Kojo Essoun assured officers on the SFMP-FoN team that everything possible would be done to create awareness on the need to send children who are the future leaders of the country to school.

Opanyin Kojo Essoun, an elder of the community appealed to the District Assembly and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to assist the parents who are mostly fishermen and fishmongers with some financial assistance to be able to take their wards to, and retain them school.

Getting children to stay in school and completing their education is one sure way of keeping children away from being victims of CLaT, and also facilitating them to become more responsible and productive members of the society – hopefully, advocates and practitioners of sustainable and responsible fisheries.

Suggested Community Strategies to Help Reduce CLaT

Table 1 Strategies and responsible persons from Ekumfi-Narkwa

NO	STRATEGIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSONS
1	Establishment of by-laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unit Comm. Members - Traditional leaders
2	Patrol by watch dog committee members	Local anti-CLaT Advocates
3	The Local Government Assembly to enforce by-laws to the letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ekumfi District Assembly - Local anti-CLaT Advocates - Traditional leaders
4	Report irresponsible parents to the DSW	Local anti-CLaT Advocates
5	Frequent community sensitization on CLaT	FoN, Local anti-CLaT Advocates

Ekumfi-Mpoano

Ekumfi-Mpoano is a coastal-fishing community in the Ekumfi District of the Central Region. It is inhabited by the indigenous Ekumfi-Fantes with Ewes from the Volta Region as a dominant migrant group.

Coconut plantations encircle the community and also, people carry out farming at subsistence level in porous and an increasingly infertile soil. These had contributed to poverty in the community with vast majority of the people living as migrants in other towns in Ghana and outside (especially in Jomoro District of the Western Region, and in La Cote d'Ivoire).

Incidences of CLaT within the community

There have many been reported cases of interception of busloads of children from the community who were being transported to the Western Region to join the parents during school holidays. Many times, the children of the community who are usually living with grandparents themselves opt to be taken out due to the drudgery of the place. They hear stories of "better life" outside the community and want to leave. Fish processors are very keen on engaging girl-children and send them regularly La Cote d'Ivoire to either process, smoke or sell fish. The boys are also sent to Yeji to fish and serve as "fishing mates".

Mrs. Corazon Amissah of the DSW in the Ekumfi District appealed to parents in the community to take proper care of their wards and provide them with the needed accessories at school to make the more productive members of the society in future rather than jeopardize their lives by given them off for a pittance.

The women amongst the gathering lamented the carefree nature of men who are irresponsible towards the care of their children, thus burdening women with the upkeep of children, and

also the manner in which men in the community chase young under-aged girls for sex which usually results in teenage pregnancy. Children from these young mothers usually grow up to be victims of CLaT as their young single-mothers are not able to fend for them. The services of Ghana Health Service (GHS) in availing pregnancy prevention and birth spacing services to all females of reproductive bracket was recommended.

Suggested Community Strategies to Help Reduce CLaT

Table 2 Suggested strategies for reducing CLaT in Eku-Mpoano

NO	STRATEGIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSONS
1	Enactment anti-CLaT of by-laws	Watch dog committee
3	The assembly to enforce by-laws to the letter	Local anti-CLaT Advocates
4	Report irresponsible parents to DSW	Local anti-CLaT Advocates Traditional leaders
5	Frequent community sensitization on CLaT	Local anti-CLaT Advocates

Ekumfi-Immuna

Ekumfi-Immuna is a coastal-fishing community in the Ekumfi District of the Central Region. It is inhabited by the indigenous Ekumfi-Fantes with Anlo-Ewes from the Volta Region as a dominant migrant group. Saddled between pristine wetlands and the sea, it is an ageing community as most of the youth have left to seek greener pastures elsewhere and leaving very young children and the elderly behind.

Coconut plantations devastated by the Cape St. Paul's Wilt Disease encircle the community. Inhabitants carry out farming at subsistence level in porous and an increasingly infertile soil. The coastline is also being ravaged by sea erosion with residents reporting that four rows (about 35 metres of coconut trees have been razed down by the invading sea. Loss of the coconut has contributed to the increased poverty situation in the community.



Figure 1 Canoes berthing on the wetlands in Immuna

Incidences of CLaT within the community

Immuna has been cited as a bastion of CLaT with several arrests or interdictions made on the roads by the police at the Moree police checkpoint (near Cape Coast) and the Newtown Border crossing point (in Jomoro District) of busloads of children being transported from the community during school holidays to assist their parents and relatives. Interviews conducted

by the police and immigration officials however usually bring out conflicting feedbacks from the drivers of the vehicles, and the passengers (suspected trafficked children).

Few NGOs (notably the International Organization for Migration – IOM) has been present in the community and brought in a number of rescued victims from the Yeji area but that effort has not been sustainable as many returnees themselves later left because their elderly grandparents and relatives could not take care of them.

Many adults and young persons in the community claimed they had been victims. There were also a few teenage young mothers who claimed they were impregnated by fishermen at Yeji because they needed food which their masters and *mesdammes* hardly give them in sufficient quantities.

Suggested Community Strategies to Help Reduce CLaT

Table 3 Suggested strategies for reducing CLaT in Ekumfi-Immuna

NO	STRATEGIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSONS
1.	Collaborate with the Assembly to enforce the laws	Unit committee, Chiefs
2.	By- laws need to enacted	Traditional leaders
3.	The assembly to enforce by-laws to the letter	CLaT prevention volunteers
4.	Irresponsible parents will be reported to the DSW	Assembly
5.	Frequent community sensitization on CLaT	CLaT prevention volunteers
6.	Children who indulge in criminality needs to be handed over to the police.	Community
7.	Report fathers shirking their parental duties should to the appropriate institution or agency and made to live up to his responsibilities.	Community and family elders.
8.	Birth spacing strategies needs to be adopted	Ghana Health Service



Figure 2 Cross-section of pupils in Immuna



Figure 3 Regent of Immuna addressing gathering



Figure 4 Community anti-CLaT Advocacy Volunteers



Figure 5 Young Community anti-CLaT Advocate

Ekumfi-Otuam

Ekumfi-Otuam is a coastal-fishing community in the Ekumfi District. It is bordered by a very rocky coast thus forcing many of its artisanal fishermen to berth most of their canoes in nearby Gomoa-Dago, Mumford and Apam. They also migrate as far as Abuesi in the Shama District of the Western Region where they have a strong and huge diaspora.

Coconut plantations curtain the community on the east and west ends and the coast. There are few patches of piggery activities interspersing human dwellings towards the western end of the community. Poverty is endemic in the community with a few persons during a recent survey in the community to unearth causes of CLaT in the community listing their profession as “beggars”!

The community has got a new second cycle school built in it but located about 8km to the north with students having to walk in and out to school each day.

Incidences of CLaT within the community

Otuam is recognized by neighboring communities as a place to source children for CLaT. There is a house named “Cotonou House” where any family in need can simply walk in and trade a child for some amount of money. These victim-children are then trafficked to Cotonou in the Republic of Benin where they are engaged in fisheries.

It was reported that, indeed just on the eve of the arrival of the SFMP-FoN team for the sensitization program, a busload of children had been trafficked to Yeji.



Figure 6 A victim of CLaT addressing the gathering



Figure 7 A victim of CLaT addressing the gathering

Also, after the talk, drama and discussion during the day, and film show and discussions at night, there were reports of a lot of households that were in turmoil because “uncles” stated demanding the whereabouts of the nephews. This is a positive sign of the impact that sensitization and awareness raising could achieve. This should therefore be made regular.

Suggested Community Strategies to Help Reduce CLaT

Table 4 Suggested strategies for reducing CLaT in Ekumfi-Otuam.

NO	STRATEGIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSONS
1	Enactment of by-laws	Unit committee members
2	Patrol by watch dog committee members	CLaT prevention volunteers
3	The Assembly to enforce by-laws to the latter	
4	Fathers shirking their parental duties should be reported to the appropriate institution or agency and made to live up to his responsibilities.	Families, community leadership, DSW
5	Frequent community sensitization on CLaT	NGOs and anti-CLaT advocates
6	Birth spacing strategies needs to be adopted	GHS and community leadership



Figure 8 Anti-CLaT advocate admonishing community



Figure 9 Cross-section of Community leadership

Mumford (Dwoma)

Mumford (which is also known as Dwoma) is a coastal-fishing community in the Gomoa-West District. It is home to several semi-industrial artisanal fishing vessels and thus a vibrant fishing activity. It is bordered by a very rocky coast and boisterous sea with the fishers regularly calling for the construction of a breakwater to improve fishing, and also contribute to improvement of livelihood activity in the community and surrounding areas.

On the west of Mumford are pristine wetlands at which's banks live a migrant Anlo-Ewe artisanal fisher folk settlement. To the north-west are hills and subsistence level food crop farms.

Mumford is home to a vibrant association of fisher leaders in the semi-industrial sector and often cited in discourse when talking about fisheries in the Central Region.

Incidences of CLaT within the community

Mumford has an infamous reputation as home of perpetrators of CLaT. They are reported to entice children and families from neighboring communities to send their children in CLaT. There are reports that suggest that many members of cartels that control CLaT in fisheries in Ghana are coordinated from a leadership in Mumford.

Reports from surrounding communities also suggest that, a gang of perpetrators from Mumford go round enticing young children and teenagers to run away from home to be engaged in fishing elsewhere in the country. One sick widow (in Otum) reported that the disappearance of her four children five years ago has been linked to an invisible gang in Mumford. She has no news of them since half-a-decade (rumors suggest they are in La Cote d'Ivoire).

Suggested Community Strategies to Help Reduce CLaT

Table 5 Suggested strategies for reducing CLaT in Mumford.

NO	STRATEGIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSONS
1	Education at the basic level need to be encouraged and enforced	Unit committee members
2	Watch dog committee must be supported by traditional leaders	Traditional leaders
3	The assembly to enforce by-laws to the latter	District Assembly
4	Irresponsible parents to reported to the DSW	Anti-CLaT volunteers
5	Frequent community sensitization on CLaT	
6	Male teachers who entice girl-students' for sex needs to be reported sanctioned appropriately.	Community leadership and GES.
7	Community members monitor for misconduct	Unit Committee
8	Birth spacing strategies needs to be adopted	GHS

Gomoa-Dago

Gomoa-Dago is a coastal-fishing community in the Gomoa-West District. A hilly coastal community with a rocky beach and pristine wetlands to west, it is inhabited mainly by the indigenous Gomoa-Fante people. Though the wetland has a lot of mangroves, it appears to be shrinking during the dry (harmattan) season.

Inhabitants carry out farming at subsistence level in porous and an increasingly infertile soil. These had contributed to poverty in the community.

The community has a strong leadership in the form of the Unit Committee, Chiefs and elders and also the person of the immediate-past Presiding Member of the local District Assembly.

Incidences of CLaT within the community

There are many been reported cases of children from the community who have been trafficked and the DSW was actually following upon a few cases when the SFMP-FoN team visited. It was reported that many secret operators (perpetrators) work in collusion with others from neighboring Mumford to entice families to give out their children. Indeed during the night film-show session, two males among the audience who were conversing said **“we thought they were coming to tell us something useful, not knowing they were just bringing nonsense!”**

Fish processors are very keen on engaging girl-children and send them regularly La Cote d'Ivoire to either process, smoke or sell fish. The boys are also sent to Yeji to fish and serve as "fishing mates" to the neglect of any schooling or training in a vocation.

The women amongst the gathering openly criticized their menfolk for their irresponsible attitude towards the care of their children, thus burdening women with the upkeep of children. Some also lamented the manner in which men in the community chase young under-aged girls for sex which usually results in teenage pregnancy (reporting that even some male school teachers are part of this ignominy). Children from these young mothers usually grow up to be victims of CLaT as their young single-mothers are not able to fend for them.



Figure 10 Children and others at night film show



Figure 11 Anti-CLaT advocacy drama

Suggested Community Strategies to Help Reduce CLaT

Table 6 Suggested strategies for reducing CLaT in Gomoa-Dago.

NO	STRATEGIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSONS
1	Enact by-laws	Unit committee members
2	The assembly to enforce by-laws to the letter	Anti-CLaT Advocates
3	Community members monitor for misconduct	Unit Committee;
4	Frequent community sensitization on CLaT	Traditional leaders
5	Parent to collaborate with institutions and agencies	Unit Comm. & Dist. Assembly
7	Birth spacing strategies to be adopted	GHS, Unit Committee
8	Report CLaT practices to the police and DSW	Anti-CLaT advocates, U.C

Anomabo

Anomabo is a coastal fishing community in the Mfantseman District. Most men and women are fishermen and fish processors and mongers respectively though. There is a big diaspora of people who hail from or trace their ancestry from here. Fishing is the main occupation unlike other areas where most fisher folks attached farming as a supporting form of livelihood during the low catching seasons.

Incidence of CLaT in the community

Most parents/guardians prefer to engage their children in fishing activities to enable them take over in the future when they are no longer active and strong. Fishermen intimated that children are more hard-working than adults and thus, they prefer engaging children in their work, rather than adults. Others commented that children are easy to deal with in terms of payment and control with adult demanding higher wages though they work less.

Though children are trafficked to other communities (notably the Volta Lake area), many of them are engaged in the community's fishing activities. Most adults commented on issues of "sex for fish" and large family size. Some also hinted the large family size makes them vulnerable to CLaT when the many mouths cannot be fed.



Figure 12 Cross-section of audience at night film show



Figure 13 Attentive audience at night film show

Suggested Community Strategies to Help Reduce CLaT

Table 7 Suggested strategies for reducing CLaT in Anomabo.

NO	STRATEGIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSONS
1	The assembly to collaborate with Traditional Authorities to help curb CLaT.	Unit committee members
2	Frequent community sensitization on CLaT	Traditional leaders
3	Increase educational outreach programs to the community	NGOs, GES, GHS
4	Parents to collaborate with institutions and agencies	Assemblymen, Unit Comm.
5	Birth spacing strategies needs to be adopted	Ghana Health Service

Abandze

Abandze is a coastal fishing community in the Mfantseman District (the main economic livelihood being fishing and fish marketing). With a slightly rocky beach, the coast is a bay fringed by a lot of coconut trees. An estuary of a medium size river flows into the sea at the astern boundary of the community.

The community has a strong fisherfolk leadership who are well-respected among the fisherfolk leadership throughout the Central Region. The Chief Fisherman here is also the President of the Region Chapter of the Ghana National Canoe Fishermen’s Council (GNCFC).

Incidences of Child Labor and Trafficking in the Community

Girls The females normally help their parents in fish smoking activities and the males help in fishing. The children are sent out because the parents are not financially sound which leads to the inability to not sending their children to school and they don’t pay them much. Many children on their own abandon school for the beach to work in times of bumper harvest.

Children are giving out (trafficked) to help others in other communities because most parents are not financially sound which leads to the inability to not sending their children to school claiming they do not earn much from their fishing and fish processing activities. They are normally sent to Yeji and La Cote d’Ivoire and they are involved in child work in fishing. All these happen due to poor parental care.

Dropping out of school by girls due to pregnancy is common among teenage girls.

Suggested Community Strategies to Help Reduce CLaT

Table 8 Suggested strategies for reducing CLaT in Abandze.

NO	STRATEGIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSONS
1	Establishment of by-laws to deal with CLaT situations	Unit committee members
2	The assembly to enforce by-laws to the latter	CLaT prevention volunteers
3	Establish a community watch-dog committee (to be visiting homes and survey the communities) Report children indulge in indecent activities to	Community, Assembly

NO	STRATEGIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSONS
	DSW.	
4	Frequent community sensitization on CLaT	Traditional leaders
6	Birth spacing strategies needs to be adopted	Community, GHS, NGOs
7	Work with teachers to increase school attendance.	Community, GES
8	Facilitate awareness and adoption family planning	Community, GHS, NGOs

Biriwa

Biriwa is a coastal fishing community in the Mfantseman District with most of the inhabitants being indigenes. It is mostly hilly with undulating topography. It also has a slightly rocky beachfront and a sandy canoe landing beach. Most households are involved in fishing and fish processing as the major livelihood activity. Making and mending nets and selling of fish coupled with and other petty trading also abound.

Incidences of CLaT in the Community

Children of both sexes aged between 4-18 years are involved in the various economic activities. Many unfortunate children are sent to the forest zone to work on farms and to Takoradi, Axim and Half Assini, Tema, and Abidjan in La Cote d'Ivoire to work in fisheries. They were sent away by total strangers as well as immediate relatives.

It is widely acknowledged that child-workers are inexpensive and parents are easily wooed to give out their children for money due to high levels of poverty. However, some children on their own volition are eager to work because they must also find alternative ways to eat. Many children of school-going age either drop out to engage in fishing, or travel to other coastal communities for fishing activities. One female contributor said she lost her cousin as a result of CLaT so she is ever ready to advocate for Child Education.

Children in school run away from school during break time to the beach to work during the peak fishing season. Most of the children (especially the males) are not interested in going to school but rather interested in fishing. Some children talked to said they were just not interested in school.

Most contributors during the drama agreed that it will be good to improve access to birth-control services because it will reduce high birth rate, ensure proper child care as well as reducing teenage pregnancy.

Suggested Community Strategies to Help Reduce CLaT

Table 9 Suggested strategies for reducing CLaT in Biriwa.

NO	STRATEGIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSONS
1	Enactment of by-laws	Unit committee members
2	District Assembly to enforce by-laws to the letter	CLaT prevention advocates
3	Report irresponsible parents to the DSW	CLaT prevention advocates
4	Frequent community sensitization on CLaT	Traditional leaders
5	Parent to collaborate with institution and agencies	Traditional leaders
7	Adopt birth spacing strategies	GHS, Community
8	Report recalcitrant parents to the police	Anti-CLaT advocates

SNAPSHOTS OF STORIES FROM VICTIMS OF CLAT

1.	<p>I was a hard-working child so my parent decided to keep me in the fishing business. I resisted but was not successful.</p> <p>Many of my friends were taken from where we were sent to onwards to other countries (Benin, Nigeria and La Cote d'Ivoire) on fishing expeditions and never returned to the destination communities.</p>
2.	<p>My master moved me round from place to place on a motorbike to go and fish for others for a fee. Whenever we got to a police checkpoint and we are asked questions, he would hit me in the ribs with his elbow when I attempted to talk. He always did all the talking and gave the police some coins!</p>
3.	<p>I was taken to Benin when I was a little boy to learn fishing as a trade. My stay in the country was full of devastating experience.</p> <p>Together with other children, I was sent on hazardous fishing expeditions many times. The masters of the boats do not care about our health. What they are interested is money and we are to work to make money.</p> <p>I was always beaten because I could not paddle the boat very well. The beatings caused some of my colleagues to become deaf, blind and other physical damages.</p> <p>It was said that, the god of the sea has decreed that children's body should not be searched for when they drown. But domestic animals were searched for when they get missing.</p> <p>I will not advise anybody to give his or her child out for fishing or any other activities.</p>
4.	<p>My nephew was taken to Yeji to learn the fishing trade. I was later informed that he got burnt in a boat and died.</p> <p>He was then buried before the information of his death got to us. We could therefore not do anything but to accept the news.</p>
5.	<p>I travelled to Benin with my sister to ostensibly attend school and also for a better life. My sister later handed me over to a fisher to work for him.</p> <p>I was sleeping on cement papers behind the door while my master and his wife and children slept comfortably on beds inside the room.</p> <p>I worked for about four years and realized the place was not where I can stay to make my life better. I then returned to my hometown.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS: WHAT THE COMMUNITIES AND STAKEHOLDERS WANT TO, OR CAN DO TO HELP REDUCE CLaT

After the sensitization programs in the nine communities (listed below)

Ekumfi-Narkwa, Eku-Mpoano, Ekumfi-Otuam, Ekumfi-Immuna – **Ekumfi District Assembly**)

Mumford (Dwoma) and Gomoa-Dago - **Gomoa-West District Assembly**)

Anomabo, Abandze and Biriwa – **Mfantseman District Assembly**)

Many persons volunteered to help in reducing CLaT, and eventually eliminating it totally within the area. Here is a list of what the communities cited as possibilities that they can help with, with support from stakeholders (e.g. NGOs and government agencies).

- Community members volunteer to offer services to anti-CLaT initiatives.
- Learn the red flags that may indicate human trafficking and ask follow up questions to help identify potential victims.
- Establish / start a grassroots anti-trafficking coalition/network.
- Receive human trafficking awareness training.
- Law enforcement agents must be present and active in the communities.
 - Law Enforcement Officials (Ghana Police Service (Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, Marine Unit and, Motor Transport and Traffic Unit) Ghana Immigration Service, join or start a local human trafficking task force.
- There should be a hotline where people or committee members can quickly send information to (e.g. sms, whatsapp or calls). The project at the initial stage should give phone credit to committee members.
- IEC materials should be developed and used to educate community members, and also to inform people about what are the appropriate actions to take when they see or suspect such incidences.
- Distribute public awareness-creation materials available from the Ghana Health Service to increase patronage of birth-spacing services for all females and males who have reached reproductive age.
- Community volunteers should be trained and connected to relevant social service providers in the area (e.g. the police, schools, religious leaders, elected officers and traditional authorities, NGOs and the District Assembly) to report or to tip off when they see or get wind of potential human trafficking activity.
- Incorporate human trafficking information in community and social gatherings and events (e.g. church services, festivals, inter-schools' sports sessions etc).
- Identify moles in recipient communities who will collaborate with enforcement agencies and NGOs for appropriate action.
- Link and assist volunteer groups to CSR programs and also carry out fund-raising activities to support local anti-CLaT actions.
- Organize regular and periodic awareness-creation activities to watch and discuss human trafficking activities and its effects on communities, families and individuals (e.g. anti-CLaT film festival, drama and radio talk shows.
- Liaise with the GES to facilitate formation of anti-CLaT school clubs for children and adolescents within CLaT-prone communities.
 - **Students:** Take action on campuses. Establish a universities' or secondary school clubs to raise awareness about human trafficking and initiate action

throughout local community. Consider doing one of your research papers on a topic concerning human trafficking.

- **University teachers/NGOs:** Request that human trafficking as an issue be included in universities' curriculum. Increase scholarship about human trafficking by publishing an article, teaching a class, or hosting a symposium.
- Facilitate formation of linkages to partner schools with outside tertiary institutions (departments and students) to periodically embark on outreach programs to augment school teachers' work and also, serve as young/youth role models to pupils and students.
Liaise with local churches (and other religious organizations) in the communities to carry out anti-CLaT advocacy campaigns and outreaches within church activities.
- Trade Unions (especially the Ghana Private Roads Transport Union – GPRTU) should be sensitized on CLaT and advocated to assist in clamping down on incidence.
- **Legal assistance:** State attorneys and private practitioners offer pro-bono services to trafficking victims or anti-trafficking organizations. Learn about and offer CLaT victims the legal benefits for which they are eligible.
- Assist anti-trafficking NGOs with capacity building and legal work.

CONCLUSION

It is frequently said that “deprivation is an illness that needs fixing”, but if one is not careful about what fix to apply, one might be led into taking more detrimental actions.

Poverty might lead people into Child labour and Trafficking (CLaT), prostitution, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy etc. From all indications, all these social ills are widespread in the coastal fishing communities in the Central Region of Ghana where poverty has become pervasive arguably, due to dwindling fish harvests.

In fact, many initiatives from government and NGOs have tried to either "reduce" or "alleviate" poverty with each program unable to root out the problem. Administration after administration (governments) has had different view and strategy to addressing the issue. The political and economic jargons have been awash on the media over time but with no real success to tout.

Many Ghanaian children live in wretchedness and begin working at a very young age to help support their families. Although most of these victims are aged between 12 and 16, CLaT victims as young as 4-5 have been found.

The movement of internally trafficked children takes place between all areas, whether it is from rural to urban, urban to rural, or rural to rural. Fishing (and farming) and communities are favorite areas from which children are taken. Many Ghanaian boys and girls from the coastal fishing communities in the Central Region are subjected to forced labour within and outside the country in fishing. The girls, and to a lesser extent boys, are turned into commercial sex workers, some being kept in Ghana while others are trafficked to Benin, Gambia, La Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mauritania and Nigeria amongst others.

However, not all victims are “stolen” from their parents. Uninformed parents, thinking they are giving their children to these traffickers so that they can be provided with a better life, may not understand that they are exposing their children to bonded servitude, coercion, or outright sale. Trafficked children endure hardships no parent would ever want for their child.

These include harsh treatment, long working hours, debt bondage, lack of pay, physical dangers, and sexual abuse from masters and co-child workers.

The Government, in an effort to eliminate this horrifying trade, has taken steps to combat the problem, albeit with limited resources. *Section 1(1) of the 2005 Human Trafficking Act (HTA) defines human trafficking as: “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, trading or receipt of persons for the purpose of exploitation within and across national borders by*

- a. The use of threats, force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power or exploitation of vulnerability, or
- b. Giving or receiving payments and benefits to achieve consent.

“Exploitation ‘shall include at a minimum induced prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs.’”

The 2005 Human Trafficking Act mandates a punishment of five years’ incarceration for anyone found guilty of the crime. In 2009, the government stepped up law enforcement efforts to control human trafficking culminating in opening of thirty-one new investigations. Fifteen persons were indicted representing a fifty percent improvement over the previous year; with six successful convictions. Twenty victims were rescued from neighbouring countries and returned home.

Clearly, these numbers are extremely low, signifying that law enforcement efforts, though improving, have a long way to go before the nation can arrive at the threshold of hope in combatting the problem.

In January 2010, the Circuit Court in Agona Swedru convicted a Ghanaian woman of enslaving two boys, ages six and eight. The boys were taken from the Central Region and forced to fish for the woman in Lake Volta area. The woman was sentenced to nine years imprisonment. This case represented the first ever domestic prosecution of a human trafficker in Ghana.

Human trafficking often occurs across international borders, so no effective system of policing this activity can succeed without the coordination of the teams set up to deal with the problem in various countries as illustrated by Chief Superintendent of Police Mrs. Patience Quaye of the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the Ghana Police Service recently in Cape Coast at the opening session of training for the Marine Police and Fisheries Commission personnel on Fisheries Laws and Regulations enforcement. Other agencies and units like the Ghana Immigration Service, the Motor Transport Traffic Unit (MTTU) of the Ghana Police Service, The Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU of TUC), and the Attorney General’s Department of the Ministry of Justice must all be roped in appropriately to integrate the struggle which till now, is being led by NGOs, religious bodies, and civil society.

Sustainable methods have been proposed in the recommendation of this report and it should be worth considering by stakeholders.

This work implemented by in selected coastal fishing communities of the Central Region designed to unearth the rationales that drives CLaT and to conscientize community members in making the practice a socially unacceptable practice, was implemented by Friends of the Nation (FoN) as part of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) funded by the

United States International Development Agency (USAID) and implemented by the Coastal Resources Centre of University of Rhode Island.

Efforts to stop CLaT are not confined to government and law enforcement agencies. Many Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organizations (NGOs and CSOs) are working on a variety of initiatives primarily with a focus on the coastal fishing communities. Many of them concentrate their activities on education, rescue, rehabilitation, and community empowerment.

The situation is without any doubt getting worse. It is therefore safe to say that we are quicker to make laws than to see them enforced. Efforts therefore need to be stepped up to build the capacity of community leaders and strengthen community governance structures for dealing with the problem. These efforts will involve selfless leadership and, most of all, resources. Complimentarily, the poorest in the communities should be targeted to receive direct social intervention programs from both state and non-state actors (eg, Livelihood and Economic against Poverty and Ghana Schools Feeding Programme. These initiatives should be absolutely devoid of political inclinations.