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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

The Formation and Inauguration Of
Community Child Protection
Committees (CCPCS) at Elmina and
at Moree in the Central Region.



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Cover photo: Picture of people at the meeting. (Credit: CEWEFIA)

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ACRONYMS

CCPC	Community Child Protection Committees
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Justice
CLaT	Child Labor and Trafficking
DOVSU	Domestic Violence & Victim Support Unit
KEEA	Komenda/Edina/Eguafo/Abirem Municipal District
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labour

INTRODUCTION

In our coastal areas, parents and the communities find it very difficult to care for and protect their children, who are the most vulnerable members of the society. Most especially, during the lean season of the fish business, which is their main occupation, children are compelled to find themselves in risky situations. These risks are compounded where social welfare systems lack the reach to deliver services in areas of greatest need. In order to sustain children's protection from Child Labour, Worst Forms of Child Labour including Child Trafficking in fisheries, humanitarian actors, such as local NGOs have promoted the establishment of Community Child Protection Committees.

The committees normally serve as a forum where community members meet, discuss child protection problems and research solutions. It is an informal structure representing all sectors in the community who have a role to play in protecting children. Children themselves are included since they serve as platforms for holding Duty- Bearers accountable for promoting Child Rights and protecting children from Child Labour and Worst Forms Child Labour including Child Trafficking. There is thus the need to establish such committees in communities where child labour and abuse go on.

CEWEFIA has organized a series of activities in support of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project to reducing Child Labour and Trafficking.

Illegal Child Labour in fishing is a problem in Central Region of Ghana especially the towns and villages along the coast where fishing is the main source of livelihood. The Year 1 Work Plan included activities that would reduce or prevent Child Labour and Trafficking in fisheries. The anti-Child Labour activities were implemented by CEWEFIA in two targeted communities in the Central Region of Ghana namely; Elmina and Moree.

IDENTIFICATION, SELECTION, AND FORMATION OF THE COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE (CCPC)

In order to reduce Child Labour and trafficking in fisheries two Community Child Protection Committees were formed to work with the anti CLaT advocate in the communities. Modalities and the criteria for identification and selection were also discussed and drawn.(See Appendix 2). The identification and selection of members was done by consulting people at the Assemblies, Education Directorate, Health Directorate, some branches of the Christian Council of Ghana in both the Municipal and the District Assemblies, Islamic Bodies, Opinion leaders, Traditional Authorities, Youth Groups, Women Groups, Assemblymen and. An election was conducted by the committee members to chose their Executives. Four members formed the Executives for each committee, made up of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, the Secretary and the Organizing Secretary.

Each committee is composed of seventeen members (17)

The Composition of the Community Child Protection Committee:

- 1 Representative from the Traditional Council
- 1 Queen mother
- 1 Chief fisherman
- 1 Religious Leader
- 1 Islamic Leader
- 1 Assembly person
- 1 Unit Committee member
- 1 Teacher

- 1 Representative from PTA/ SMC
- 2 Opinion Leaders
- 1 Watchdog Committee member
- 1 Youth Group Leader
- 1 Market Queen
- 1 Media House personnel
- 1 Representative from Trade Associations
- 1 Children's Representative

The Elected Executive Members

MOREE :

Chairman; Nana Mensa- Bonsu

Vice Chairman; Madam Rebecca Eshun

Secretary; Madam Emelia Halm

Organizing Secretary; Hon. Mathew Kakra Boison

ELMINA:

Chairman: Madam Cecilia Arthur

Vice Chairman: Nana Kwesi Duncan I

Secretary: Hon. Ebenezer Dadzie

Organizing Secretary: Mr Alexander Blavo

OUTCOME OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEES

The Inauguration of the Formed Community Child Protection Committees for both Moree and Elmina took off on Thursday, 11th February, 2016 at the Oguaa Teachers Credit Union Conference Hall, Cape Coast.

Theme for the Inauguration: REDUCING CHILD LABOUR IN FISHERIES

A total of 67 persons attended the ceremony, made up of 20 females and 57 males. The CCPC members alone were 34 while the rest were Government Officials, Opinion Leaders, Traditional Authorities, SFMP Official, an Official from Challenging Heights, 2 Staff from Friends of the Nation, 6 Staff from CEWEFIA, 10 Media personnel, 2 Community Facilitators and 4 anti-CLaT Advocates. The Inaugural Ceremony was chaired by The KEEA Municipal Director of CHRAJ. The Acting Regional Director of Department for Gender gave the Keynote Address while the Regional Director of Department for Social Development inaugurated the Community Child Protection Committees.

WELCOME ADDRESS

A welcome address was given by the Executive Director of CEWEFIA who doubles as the Project Coordinator for SFMP. In her welcome address, she touched on some discussions, events and training workshops that were held by CEWEFIA on the prevention of Child Labour and Trafficking in the first year of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) in the two targeted communities, Elmina and Moree. Again, the Executive Director of CEWEFIA laid emphasis on the fact that Child Labour and Trafficking issues were very

serious in the Central Region which needed to be addressed and tackled through participatory approach which had a focus on a broad base sensitization and behavioral change communication campaign to make such practices socially unacceptable and to ensure the protection of the rights of children.

Furthermore, she confidently believed that with the Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs) and the anti- CLaT advocates, holistically, they would work together with CEWEFIA to achieve SFMP's objective of reducing child labour and trafficking in Fisheries in the Central Region.

DOCUMENTARY ON CLAT

A documentary film was shown to the participants by Challenging Heights on Child labour and Worst Forms of Child Labour including Child Trafficking in Fisheries and its effects. All participants after watching it indicated that there should be a holistic approach to prevent or eliminate Child Labour and Trafficking from our society.

The Representative from Challenging Heights explained vividly some aspects in the film while the participants were watching it. Furthermore, participants became alarmed when they started watching the effects of Child Labour and Trafficking. Some of the effects were as follows; Severe beatings some of the children were receiving from their masters, one child becoming hunch back as a result of the fishing work he was engaged in on the high seas, some children dying during deep sea fishing due to bad weather deep sea diving or any other particular work they were engaged in, the fingernails of some children being destroyed as a result of the fishing work they were forced to do. Most of the children went into slavery where their masters subjected them to severe beatings and to all forms of atrocities. Some were denied of food if they failed to go on fishing expedition. Some were eating once or twice a day. Although some children were doing fish business, they were served with scanty fish.

The documentary taught the participants so many lessons. The participants learnt that;

- Parents who were shirking their responsibilities put their children into such risky situation.
- Some children were engaged in Child Labour at the age of 5 years.
- Due to financial crisis, some parents sent their children away to other places to work for a living.
- Some children were sent away to other places to be enslaved by their masters between the ages of six and thirteen.
- Some men or most of the men are not there when the agents go to negotiate with the women. A lot of women were single parents. The men impregnate them and leave them to fend for themselves.
- Some of the health implications the child victims encounter are Bilharzia, skin rashes, Hepatitis B and other diseases.
- Challenging Heights had a Rehabilitation Centre for rescued victims. Some victims of Child Labour , who were rescued would be sent there for counseling services, while some too would start to learn how to read and write there before they were enrolled or re-enrolled into the normal Public school since some children had not had any formal education at all.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

A Keynote address was read by the Acting Regional Director of Department for Gender. She started her address by first making reference to the documentary film shown by Challenging Heights. She further urged participants to abhor slavery of any kind.

The Director continued her speech by briefing the participants on the various Conventions, Protocols and programmes that Ghana had signed in a bid to protect the rights of children. The Constitution of Ghana has fundamental human Rights and children were entitled to them. It was up to all and sundry to make sure that they followed them for they were laws that protected children.

Last but not least, the Acting Director read the 2014 Ghana Living Standard Survey to the General House including the statistics on Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL). She commented that it was most gratifying that CEWEFIA and SFMP had made it possible for the formation of the CCPCs to work to prevent child labour and trafficking in Moree and Elmina. She concluded by commending the CCPs and advising them to work hard for a brighter future.

Statement by Friends of the Nation:

The representative from FoN started his presentation detailed their activities in the SFMP and other activities they are involved in coastal communities. He listed the various stakeholders they are working with to arrive at good policies to protect the fisheries sector.

Sharing Of Interest Stories and Successes:

The Fact sheet containing some success stories prepared by SFMP was read by Ms Hannah Antwi and copies distributed to all the participants. An opportunity was given to the fishmonger turned advocate to tell her own story.

Inauguration Of CCPCS

The inauguration of the CCPCs was done by the Deputy Regional Director of Department of Social Development who deputized for the Regional Director. Before inaugurating the CCPCs, the Director advised to the members that they should not compromise with parents who sold their children with the excuse that they were confronted with financial difficulties. The CCPC members were reminded that the work was arduous and voluntary. They should stand firm to protect the rights of the children. They should ask questions in their communities. They should be bold to approach the children's parents to encourage them to send their children to school. The Director first inaugurated Moree CCPC and then did that of Elmina. The CCPCs for both Moree and Elmina were duly inaugurated on Thursday, 11th February, 2016.

CHALLENGES

- One major challenge mentioned was opposition from the communities.
- Selecting days of meetings with the community members. Every fishing community wanted Tuesday to be used as its meeting day.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Acting Regional Director of Department for Gender suggested to CEWEFIA and SFMP that the fish processors must be provided with sustainable ways of preserving fish so that the women would not work for long hours which would compel them to use their in the work.

- CEWEFIA should not leave the work to the CCPCs alone to do it. It should move into the communities to educate the parents on Children' rights and the need to protect them.
- The Staff from Friends of the Nation also suggested that the Government should provide the needed resources to Government Agencies like the National Commission for Civic Education NCCE, Department of Social Development, Domestic Violence & Victim Support Unit DOVSU, CHRAJ, Ghana Education Service, Ghana Police Service and equally important institutions not mentioned to do the work well by either reducing Child Labour and Trafficking to the barest minimum or preventing it from occurring in Ghana

APPENDIX 1: PICTURES OF THE INAUGURATION EVENT



Figure 1 The Deputy Regional Director Of The Department Of Social Welfare Inaugurating The Selected Community Child Protection Committee



Figure 2 A cross section of participants at the inauguration



Figure 3 The regional deputy director of the department of social welfare, giving her inaugural address

APPENDIX 2: CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS ON CLAT

Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association (Cewefia)

Sustainable Fisheries Management Project

IR1.7: Reducing Child Labour and Trafficking In Fisheries

Criteria for the Selection of Community Champions on CLaT

- • A Community Champion should be between the ages of 18 – 60 years
- • They must reside in the community
- • They must be literate in English language
- • They must be able to speak and understand the local language
- • They must be sociable
- • They should be ready to do voluntary work
- • They must be honest and open minded
- • They must be prepared to participate in project activities
- • They should possess confidentiality qualities
- • Twenty (20) persons should be selected from each of the two (2) CLaT participating communities (Elmina and Moree)