

REDUCING CHILD LABOR AND TRAFFICKING IN GHANA'S FISHING COMMUNITIES



Ghana's open access fishery continues to create an avenue for many fishers to employ illegal and unsustainable fishing practices, and many children are caught in the center of these practices.

Children are exposed to various degrees of life-threatening dangers such as rain storms, very cold weather, and risk of drowning, while some suffer daily beatings from their employers. Some are held in debt bondage while others are sexually exploited. All miss out on their childhood, as well as the right to live with their families and be treated with respect and dignity. These consequences have long-term effects on children's physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

High poverty rates among fishing communities lead some families to give up their children to child labor and trafficking recruiters. This issue is likely to increase as Ghana's small pelagic fishery nears collapse. This is particularly true in the Central Region, where the majority of children are victims to trafficking. Supporting local organizations in reaching out to vulnerable households and communities is an essential step towards creating a better future for these children and for Ghana.

The Feed the Future Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development, works with local organizations to support the Ghana Government's programs to end child labor and trafficking across the country.

Project Overview

The Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) is a five-year joint effort between the Government of the United States and Ghana. The objective of the project is to rebuild fish stocks and catches through the adoption of responsible fishing practices. SFMP contributes to the U.S. Government's Feed the Future initiative and supports the Government of Ghana's implementation of its Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Fisheries Sector Medium Term Development Plan.

Duration: 2014 – 2019
Funding: \$23,987,000

Implementing Partners:

Coastal Resources Center of the University of Rhode Island, USA (prime); Hen Mpoano; Friends of the Nation; SNV; SSG Advisors; CEWEFIA; and Development Action Association

Contact Information:

Ellis Ekekepi
Administrative Officer Representative SFMP
Office of Economic Growth, USAID/Ghana
eekekepi@usaid.gov

Maurice Knight
Chief of Party
Coastal Resources Center – The University of Rhode Island
maurice.sfm@crcuri.org



USAID Sustainable Fisheries Management Project

What is USAID SFMP Doing?

SFMP works with the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, Fisheries Commission, and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to reduce child labor and trafficking in fishing communities. SFMP promotes improved policies at the national level and promotes behavior change and awareness campaigns among vulnerable households and communities in Ghana's Central Region.

1. Developing an Anti-child labor and trafficking (CLaT) National Strategy and Two Community Action Plans

SFMP worked with the government to develop a national fisheries sector Anti-CLaT strategy that is awaiting adoption by the Fisheries Commission. Anticipating adoption of the national strategy, SFMP worked with community leaders and local governments to develop and adopt community Anti-CLaT action plans in Moree and Elmina communities in the Central Region that align with the new strategy.

2. Implementing Behavior Change Prevention Awareness Campaigns

Working to raise awareness about the dangers of child labor and trafficking, SFMP implements campaigns focused on adult caretakers such as parents, guardians, and family members. Awareness campaigns are organized to inform parents about the negative consequences of child labor, as well as the rights of children to education and quality life.

3. Strengthening Capacity of Government Institutions

SFMP supports Anti-CLaT focal persons at the fisheries and child protection ministries at the national level, and social welfare officers and representative assemblies at the district level to mainstream Anti-CLaT efforts. SFMP links these government representatives with local organizations, such as churches, mosques, fishers and fish processor groups, and community-based child advocates to inform parents about the negative consequences of child labor and the rights of children.

4. Empowering of Child Protection Committees and Advocates

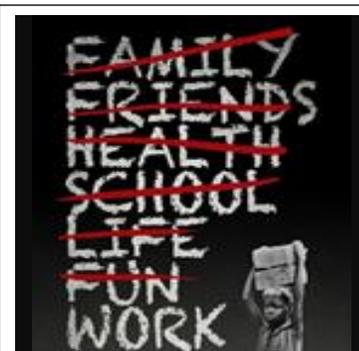
Community child protection committees have been formed across the Central Region and members have been trained to identify households that may be vulnerable to CLaT recruiters. Child protection committee members are trained to provide counselling and advisory support and carry out house-to-house education on child rights and the dangers faced by trafficked children. To date, 240 anti-child labor advocates have been trained and are active across 14 coastal fishing communities in the Central Region.

5. Provision of Ahotor Ovens as a Means of Livelihood to Vulnerable Households

SFMP piloted new fish smoking technology that produces a cleaner, healthier product with 30 percent less fuelwood to decrease the cost of smoking. SFMP introduced this new technology in 16 locations in Elmina, Moree, Winneba, Apam and Mumford communities for use by vulnerable households. One third of the beneficiaries already showed increases in gross business revenues (improved incomes), doubled school attendance rates of their children, and indicated a personal reporting of a 50 percent reduction in children sent away to work.

Fast Facts

- Child Labor in Ghana deprives large numbers of children of their childhood, and harms them physically, and mentally.
- Records indicate over 2.7 million child laborers in Ghana, with the largest percentage in the fisheries, cocoa, and artisanal mining sectors.
- Ghana currently receives USD \$5 million under the Child Protection Compact and the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project to combat child labor and trafficking.
- Ghana's continuing child labor and trafficking problem was recognized by a second year Tier 2 designation in the U.S. Government's Trafficking in Persons Report that threatens future U.S. development support.



Why USAID SFMP?

The Sustainable Fisheries Management Project seeks to support the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development to contribute to the achievement of goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking; as well as eliminate the worst forms of child labor in the fisheries sector. This represents a significant step toward improving livelihoods and a better world for children in fishing communities.