

Growing Up Free

Ending Child Trafficking in Ghana



Child Protection Compact Interventions to Address Child Trafficking in Fishing in Ghana

Background and Prevalence: Child Trafficking and Exploitation

- This study, conducted in 2019 in 33 Ghanaian communities, found high prevalent rates of child labor trafficking, hazardous child labor, child sex trafficking, and forced marriage. The number of identified cases of these forms of abuse varied significantly, though this may also be related to challenges in detection and reporting.
- Prevalence rates of these forms of abuse were generally lower following 4 years of Growing Up Free (GUF) project implementation, which aims to enhance the effectiveness of Ghana's efforts to combat child trafficking.
- Other forms of exploitation (sex trafficking and child marriage) are difficult to detect, but the project was found to have an overall positive influence on how children are treated across the project communities, especially in regards to reduced forms of child labor.
- Around 275 cases of child labor trafficking were discovered, 54% of which took place in the fishing industry, and 38% of which represented forms of domestic servitude.
- Regional breakdowns demonstrate that the highest number of confirmed hazardous child labor cases took place in the Central Region (121), followed by 18 in the Greater Accra Region, and 13 each in the Oti and Volta regions.

Enabling factors

- Poverty is a leading cause of vulnerability to child trafficking; families who lack a reliable source of livelihood are at significantly higher risk of having their children fall victim to trafficking. Further, high fertility rates contribute to vulnerability, in that some large families may feel economically pressured to reduce their household burden and give their children away.
- Parents and their children can be deceived into believing in better opportunities for employment, and education elsewhere, and this trickery causes children to be subject to exploitation in the form of forced labor and/or harsh living conditions.

Recommendations

- Both adults and parents' and children's limited knowledge around sex education, the enabling factors of trafficking, and children's rights to resist exploitation exposes children to potential exploitation. Therefore, education and awareness campaigns should be strengthened at both national and local levels in order to mobilize communities to resist trafficking.
- Stronger collaboration between and among national, and local actors, especially law enforcement and community organizations, would be helpful in further reducing the vulnerability and prevalence of these abuses.
- More robust national data on child trafficking would contribute to a stronger consensus around its prevalence and severity in Ghana and help mobilize support and resources.
- Access to means of economic empowerment for both children and adults should be amplified at a district or community level in order to reduce poverty, a major factor attributed to most cases of child trafficking.

Study Purpose and Use

- To gather data in 33 communities, this study employed a mix-methods before-and-after approach for comparison with baseline data in order to explore variation and drivers of change in communities.
- The evaluation used a participatory rural appraisal approach to gather relevant community information in focus group discussions, combined with social mapping, household surveys, and key informant interviews.