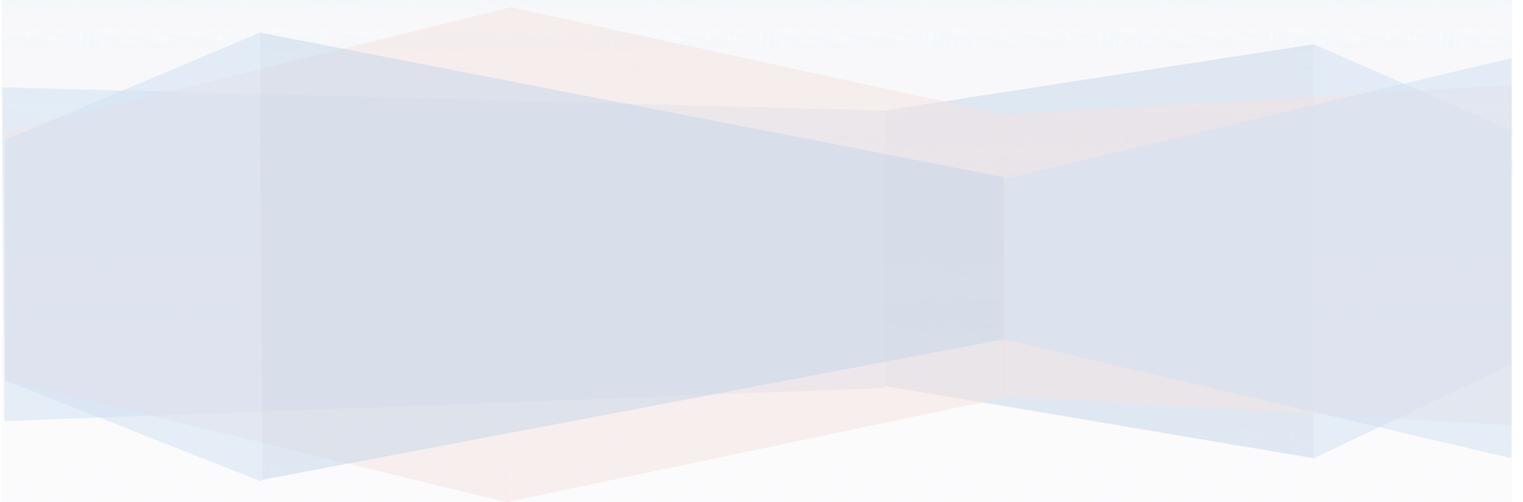


Combating Human Trafficking in Ghana: Action Oriented Research on Child Domestic Servitude

C. Nana Derby, Ph.D.



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FINAL REPORT

Executive Summary

This project commenced with the anticipation that the interplay of research, partnership, media campaign, and the economic empowerment of parents and beneficiaries through education, apprentice training, funding, petty trading, and consistent monitoring would culminate in a long-term fight against human trafficking with specific emphasis on child domestic servitude. Consistent with the anti-trafficking model of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, these long-term goals were also aimed at the protection of vulnerable women and children and the prevention of trafficking and child domestic servitude in Ghana. Project activities further consisted of a pursuit of media campaign and partnerships with some governmental and nongovernmental agencies to protect vulnerable women and children, prevent trafficking for purposes of domestic servitude and others, and to collaborate with the police and courts to prosecute offenders. As part of the short-term goals, it was projected that 300 beneficiaries would be removed from servitude and reunited with their parents or families in their communities of origin, and subsequently enrolled in schools or some type of apprentice training to reduce their vulnerabilities to future trafficking and servitude. We also estimated that 50 parents of beneficiaries would be trained in the management of their petty trades and provided funds to start or expand their own petty trades. At the end of the project, there were 388 beneficiaries 32 of whom could not complete the three-year project for reasons that included the demise of one or both parents resulting in interventions of the extended families and or the removal of the children from the communities that we worked in. In some cases, parents relocated with their children while in at least one instance, the parents decided to send their child back to servitude but refused to disclose her actual whereabouts until two years into the project. We also exceeded the number of parents who received training and funding with a total of 217 actual parent beneficiaries.

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Introduction

This report covers a three-year action-oriented research on child domestic servitude in Ghana. Using funds provided by the US State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, the project adopted the Office's anti-human trafficking model of fighting trafficking in persons with a specific focus on the protection of vulnerable women and children, the prevention of trafficking in persons for purposes of domestic servitude, partnership with governmental and nongovernmental agencies, and the prosecution of offenders. Specific goals of the project included the rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration of 300 child domestic servants from servitude, the training and provision of microcredit financing to about 50 parents, and intensive campaign against child domestic servitude. As a major component of the long term goals of the project, it was anticipated that the PI and project team will work with state institutions like committees at Ghana's Parliament to evaluate and effect the necessary changes in Ghana's Children's Act to make it more enforceable. Observations from the research component of the project suggested a disconnection between the realities of child labor abuse, child domestic servitude, and human trafficking and a vehement denial of the abusive use of children's labor through domestic servitude and human trafficking. At the end of the project, there were 388 child and 217 parent beneficiaries. We encountered extreme resistance working with some public officials and individuals in the fight against child domestic servitude; nevertheless, the success of collaboration with the Ghana Education Service, the Department of Social Welfare, and the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the Ghana Police cannot be overemphasized. the parents decided to send their child back to servitude but refused to disclose In the rest of this report, processes and outcomes of data collection, partnerships and their impact on the entire project, as well as the processes of rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration are discussed.

Data Collection

The nature of the project, action oriented, called for regular assessment of our activities through research and observation. Before visiting villages to return or negotiate rescue of child domestic servants, three sets of data were collected. The first school we visited was in the Ledzorkuku Krowor Municipal Assembly where many of the student population were male and female domestic servants. The school in question was selected because an informant, a teacher in that school, invited the principle investigator to study instances of domestic servitude. Her description of domestic servants corroborated depictions of the phenomenon in interviews with the rest of the teachers, the principal, and the students. At the end of the interviews in this school, we had interacted with 72 participants who qualified to be removed and reunited with their

parents. The second public school researched was at Frafraha, also in the Greater Accra Region, where 12 very serious cases were identified. In both schools, the data suggested children who lived as domestic servants worked before and after school, and usually got to school late and performed poorly academically. Although they worked many hours for the households by performing, among others, domestic chores and petty trading that supplemented the household's income, discussions with the headmistress (i.e. the principal of the school), teachers, and some of the children indicated some of them normally came to school without breakfast, were not provided medical attention when needed, and they did not have the necessary school supplies.

The findings from these studies informed the rest of the preliminary stages of the project. Unfortunately, although the students at the public school shared extremely unpleasant instances of abuse, deprivation, and at times enslaving, we could not remove and return them to their parents because of bottlenecks in the transfer of funds at the initial stages of the study. When the project team returned to the school to start arrangements to locate the parents and families of the participants, it was discovered most of them had either escaped to look for their parents, or asked the households they worked for to return them. This, the school principal Mrs. Ernestina Crankson indicated, was a relative impact of our investigations at the school because it sensitized the students to take action against the abuses they lived with.

The second set of preliminary data was collected under the auspices of Ghana's Department of Social Welfare, and the International Organization for Migration. Mr. Eric Peasah, who was the Field Manager in charge of Counter-Trafficking and Irregular Migration for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Ghana, liaised with the Deputy Director of the Department of Social Welfare in charge of the Child Protection Unit to collaborate with this project to train social work students from the University of Ghana to identify child domestic servants. At the end of a two-day workshop that sought to instruct the students to familiarize themselves with programs to combat human trafficking in Ghana and the processes of rescuing survivors, the trainees visited several market centers and streets where children worked. They spoke to underage boys and girls who were engaged in petty trading during school hours. Generally, the children came from poor households or were orphans who lived with grandparents or other relatives or total strangers. In some cases, the children lived with their biological parents who placed more emphasis on the economic gains from their children's work instead of their rights to education; such children were not defined as survivors of trafficking. These interviews affirmed previous observations that the target population of child domestic servants worked long hours a day, on dangerous streets, and spent less time on education or in school. They did not have enough to eat, and wanted to be reunited with their parents. We also learnt that many of them did not know how to return to their hometowns because they had lost touch with their recruiters, some of whom were relatives.

The third set of pre-rescue data was obtained outside Accra in the Central and Eastern Regions. In the various communities or villages outside Accra, interviews were conducted with parents and local government officials including social welfare officers – if they were stationed at the particular communities – and assembly members most of

whom volunteered to help with the monitoring of the beneficiaries. Assembly members were primarily engaged to help us locate parents whose children were in servitude. As small as their respective communities, these local government representatives knew and shared strong ties with their constituents and thus could easily identify or solicit information on parents who had sent their children into servitude. Subsequent to information that we received from informants including assembly members, we invited parents to interviews to determine the validity in claims of their children being in servitude.

Such interviews with parents gathered information on household structures and size, their survival strategies, the number of children in servitude, processes of recruitment, and factors that compelled them to send their children into servitude. With the permission of parents and under the supervision of personnel from the Department of Social Welfare, children whose parents withdrew them from servitude as a result of our rescue activities were also interviewed. Initial interviews with the children sought to confirm claims or possibilities of trafficking and if the child qualified to benefit from the project. The subsection on rescue further suggests the research component enabled the project to exclude children who had not been trafficked for purposes of domestic servitude or any form of exploitation from the program.

We continued to collect data throughout the project by interviewing or surveying parents, teachers who taught the beneficiary students in the villages, volunteers, and teachers and counselors at public schools from other parts of Accra. Through such studies, we were able to verify our initial observations from the previous schools and to determine the impact of domestic servitude on the education of children even when they were enrolled in schools. Part of the studies suggested tardiness or problems with attendance among participants, and the difficulties they faced regarding funds for school supplies, overall performance, and the demeanor of child domestic servants were not unique to the Ledzorkuku Krowor or Frafraha areas. We also evaluated performance of our students and apprentices with observations and interviews with teachers and trainers.

Another significant aspect of the data collection occurred in the Ga Adangme District of the Greater Accra Region where an informant teacher invited us to talk to his students some of whom were usually withdrawn from school and trafficked for purposes of cattle herding. The boys usually remained in servitude for approximately four years and received a calf as remuneration. For the most part, this calf reward is taken over by the parents, compelling the child to return into this kind of exploitive servitude in anticipation of keeping subsequent rewards to themselves. Arrangements are being made for more in depth research to be conducted in the area when the PI visits Ghana this summer.

Towards the end of the project, data collection partly focused on the relationship between sexual abuse, commercial sex work, and child domestic servitude. The PI visited five locations where commercial sex workers solicited business, and interviewed about fifty of the workers. A sixteen year old prostitute's responses to the questions

indicated while she may not have been forced into prostitution, she picked the habit from a woman she lived with in domestic servitude. When she left that woman, her current “madam” also happened to be a commercial sex worker, and she offered to join her at the club for prostitution. A teacher who participated in one of our workshops introduced other participants in the data collection to the PI. At Accra, a 15 year old girl who slept with at least three men a night said a pimp started using her at the age of seven, soon after her mother passed away and she moved in with her grandmother. At the time of the interview, the grandmother did not know the sexual enslavement her granddaughter lived in. Another victim of sexual abuse, also 15 years, was assaulted by the husband of the household she lived in. She suspected she had contracted some kind of STI as a result of the attacks. Unfortunately, when she mustered courage to inform a friend of the woman she served, the marriage was dissolved and in the interview, she spoke significantly of the guilt she felt for the outcome of her report. A third girl who did not live with her biological parents was abused outside the household she lived in. These and other observations with the girls indicated so much sexual abuses took place among the participants in this study when they lived in servitude.

Partnership

Research at the public school earlier mentioned propelled our partnership with the Ghana Education Service. Following the relationship established with the school, the director of the Municipal Office of the Ghana Education Service at the Ledzorkuku Krowor Municipal Assembly (LEKMA) approved a workshop for the assembly’s coordinators of girl education and guidance and counseling. In attendance were 198 teachers and counselors. Six months later, the project team was granted another opportunity to organize a training workshop for teachers and guidance and counselors and coordinators of girls’ education and the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. About 300 participants attended that workshop. At the two workshops, participants were provided information on the relationship between soft and hard trafficking on one hand, and child domestic servitude on the other. Experiences and general characteristics of child domestic servitude as well as other instances of trafficking affecting children in Ghana, such as the exploitation of children’s labor through trafficking along the Volta Lake were discussed.

The involvement of the Ghana Education Service was not limited to these data collection and workshops. Outside of the nation’s capital of Accra, there were over 70 teacher volunteers who were permitted to participate in the program by their respective schools and headmasters or mistresses, i.e. the principals. Fifty public schools in Central and Eastern Regions received and enrolled project beneficiaries. The involvement of these teachers is further discussed later in this report. Other partners are listed below:

The Ghana Police Service: The Criminal Investigations Department of the Ghana Police and its Anti-Human Trafficking Unit were outstandingly supportive in this project. The Unit collaborated with us on workshops, rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration of beneficiaries. We were usually invited to interview suspected survivors of trafficking

and domestic servitude, and where their statuses were confirmed as qualified for the project, we supported activities for their reintegration and reunification with their parents. Personnel from the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, including the Director, Superintendent Patience Quaye, usually attended our workshops and where appropriate, participated in presentations to enrich the awareness creation on trafficking and child domestic servitude. This principal investigator also participated in their workshops and training of officers in efforts to combat human trafficking.

Department of Social Welfare: Ghana's Department of Social Welfare worked with this project throughout the three-year period. The Deputy Director of the Department, Mrs. Joana Wilhelmina Mensah, was instrumental in the training of social work students who participated in our initial data collection processes. Under the section on rehabilitation, the lack of resources facing Ghana's Department of Social Welfare and how that debilitated against our goals of rehabilitation are outlined. In the face of that problem, six officers of the Department of Social Welfare, in addition to the Director of Child Protection, worked with us in the two regions of Eastern and Central to monitor the progress of beneficiary reentry into their respective communities. When we interviewed rescued survivors of human trafficking, staff from the Department of Social Welfare oversaw the procedures to ensure that our activities did not harm the participants in any way. Cases of truancy or any demonstration of the possibility of return into servitude were reported to them. In some instances, their lack of resources hindered prompt responses to our reports.

The Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam District Assembly: The team that worked on the VSU-Ghana Project, particularly the Principal Investigator and the staff from LAWA, will remain exceedingly indebted to the then District Chief Executive of the Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam District of the Central Region Hon. Peter Light Koomson for his immense support for the project. His administration provided a platform for us to discuss our project with over 70 assembly members about 20 of whom decided to work with us in identifying households with domestic servants in the cities. By the end of the project period, 11 of them had committed to working with on the project as liaison between our team and the parents and teachers. The local assembly members of Besease, Kokoben, Mando, and Amia Baah were particularly instrumental in the monitoring of the beneficiaries in their respective communities and adjoining villages. They alerted the Social Welfare Officers or us whenever they saw or heard any problems with our beneficiaries, or when attempts were being made to re-traffic them into servitude. They maintained consistent interaction with teachers and parents of the beneficiaries and further ensured that participants remained on track with their voluntary work, such as teaching or training of the survivors. Throughout the project, we had several meetings with the parents and in at least 70% of those communities, assemblymen and women arranged such meetings and guaranteed that the parents were in attendance. If we arrived earlier than the meeting time, we witnessed how hard they worked, walking from house to house or making announcements at local radio stations to invite the parents and guardians to our meetings. When we had major training programs or durbars at district capitals, these volunteer assembly members coordinated, supervised, and traveled with parents and or beneficiaries to and from the event locations in rented buses.

The Media: TV3, Skyy Power FM, Skyy TV, Adom TV, the Daily Graphic, and many other media houses worked with us to campaign against child domestic servitude and trafficking in Ghana. The roles they played are further outlined under the section on media campaign and awareness.

Dr. Derby had the privilege of meeting with the Chief Justice, Her Ladyship Georgina Wood on her last trip to Ghana. After the discussion, the Chief Justice requested that she organized a workshop for the junior judges and magistrates on child domestic servitude. Contrary to her meetings with parliamentarians and the Rotary Club, the judges made excellent input on the problem of child domestic servitude and expressed concerns about the seeming disconnection between the laws and the culture. They emphasized their willingness to apply the law whenever they presided over cases involving child abuse, nevertheless, such cases were never sent to the courts. Efforts by the government and nongovernmental organizations to embark on both qualitative and quantitative studies as well as a review of the Children's Act were brought to light at the meeting.

Rescue

A total of 84 girls who were originally identified as qualified beneficiaries based on our visits to public schools LEKMA and Frafraha did not participate in the project. State regulations made it difficult for VSU to transfer funds to Ghana in the whole of 2010, and by the time the problem was situated, the children had found their own means to return to their hometown. This called for a new approach to the identification of domestic servants, hence the collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare and International Organization for Migration's Eric Peasah, who has since left the organization. Following data obtained through social work students from the University of Ghana, we began arrangements to send eight beneficiaries from Accra to the Central Region. This required that we traveled to eight villages in three administrative districts in the region, and after a careful consideration of the cost and time involved, we concluded we could not work with all 400 children whose parents were scattered countrywide. Travel to the 10 regions of Ghana returning the girls and in some cases boys, was going to be costly, and we could not have remained in constant contact with our informants, beneficiaries, and volunteers to monitor progress with reintegration, preventive measures, and protection of the survivors. We wanted to be able to visit the families several times in a month, and working with the 400 children identified in the study would not have made that possible.

This is the reason we contacted the offices of the District Chief Executive at the Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam District in the Central Region. He charged a Social Welfare Officer to coordinate the input of the assembly members as regards their identification of our target parents. Over the next two and half years, we worked with parents whom we confirmed had children in servitude to bring them safely home. After our introduction to the seventy assembly members, some of them became our informants and liaisons in their respective communities. Within two months of our meeting in the Assembly offices, we had meetings in individual communities and interviewed parents who

reported to have their children in servitude. There were a few cases in which the parents or grandparents did not know where their children were at the time of the interview. Working with the police and the Department of Social Welfare, we were able to trace such children. We had to bear the travel costs for parents to visit their domestic servant children and to bring them back home, or to make arrangements for their return home. Children who were excluded from the program comprised those who had lost one parent and members of the extended family wanted financial support so they could go for the children from the living parent, grandparents who stated their children were not able to take care of their grandchildren and thus wanted us to help them bring such minors under their care, or children who did not live with their biological parents but seemed better off remaining in the households they currently lived in. Such children did not live in any abusive conditions, had access to better and quality education, and had opportunities of enjoying their childhoods as other members of the households they lived in. Some parents had more than one child in servitude, and we had to support all of them if they qualified.

Table I: Total Number of Child Beneficiaries

Region	District	Number rescued
Central Region	Ajumako- Enyan- Essiam District	173
	Agona East Municipal	56
	Awutu Senya District	30
Eastern Region	Fanteakwa District	63
	East Akyem Municipal	37
Northern Region	Gushiegu District	15
Volta Region	Jasikan District	14
Total		388

Using the same model, we began another rescue mission in the Eastern Region. We worked through the Assembly's of God Church, where a pastor and a pastor's wife served as our informants and helped us to rescue children in seven communities in the Fanteakwa District and East Akyem Municipal Assembly. In this Region also, we were privileged to have the support of the police, the Department of Social Welfare, and the Ghana Education Service. There were volunteer teachers who provided after school classes for the children, and also when schools went on recess. A social Welfare staff who had served with us in the Central Region continued working with us in the Eastern Region when the Department relocated her. At the end of the project, 100 were rescued and rehabilitated in the Eastern Region. Again, we carefully cross-examined the children and their parents to confirm we would not expend our resources on children who were safely living with their own parents or other relatives. Additionally, there were 15 beneficiaries who were rescued from Nigeria and integrated into their communities in the Gushiegu District of the Northern Region. We had 14 beneficiaries in the Volta

Region. They were also rescued under a different project but we continued to work with them to prevent their reintegration into servitude. At the end of the project, 259 had been rescued in the Central Region. Including beneficiaries from Volta and Northern Regions, We had children in 30 communities.

Rehabilitation and Reunification with Parents

At the start of the project, visits to facilities of rehabilitation supposedly owned by Ghana's Department of Social Welfare and other private institutions were observed to be inadequate for the beneficiaries, or extremely expensive and beyond our budget. In addition to their fees, which were exorbitant, we had to provide supplies from toiletries to beddings, and in some cases, pay for catering services for their meals. The provision of rehabilitation for the children in those facilities with limited or barely any resources could not do much for the children, and it was possible at the end of the program, we might have limited funds left for other important project tasks. Therefore, we decided to retain the services of individual social workers at the Department of Social Work to supervise smooth reintegration of beneficiaries into their respective communities. The implication of this is that although we skipped the rehabilitation of survivors at special institutions, we had Social Welfare Officers work with the beneficiaries to ensure that their return to communities did not affect the success of their rescue, or hurt them psychologically. Throughout the project, the workers visited the households from time to time, and reported to us or received reports from informants including assembly members about recalcitrant children. Negative reports about child beneficiaries were rare, however. The advantage of this approach was the support the children received from their immediate and extended families; the traditional communal setting that they lost to living in the cities were restored, and it seemed useful to the overall goals of the project.

Such approach of rehabilitation was also successful because of the rescue process. Given that parents had to contact households within which their children lived and served, they had contact with the children before we would travel to their respective communities for enrollment in schools or apprentice training. As the parents were approached to go for their children, for the most part, the beneficiaries returned to their communities even before coming into contact with the team. Consequently, it was decided that if they had to be transported back and forth to participate in rehabilitation, the potential of destabilizing their healing processes would be high. Hence, once they came into contact with their families, the social welfare officer had to counsel and provide the necessary resources to the parents and the children for smooth reintegration.

School integration and Apprentice Training

There were 246 beneficiaries enrolled in schools and 14 in apprentice training in the Central Region. In the Eastern Region, 70 children were sent to school while 9 went into skill training. A total of twenty participants, according to LAWA Gh. Inc, were not enrolled in schools or apprentice training prior to their relocation. School integration was a major component of this project with the dual effect of prevention and protection of the beneficiaries. It had the short-term effect of reintegrating the children into their

respective communities while in the long term, reducing vulnerabilities in the children and consequently, protecting them and preventing the incidence of domestic servitude in the communities of interest. Much of the energies of volunteers was focused on this particular component because of the many anticipated effects and their potential of protecting the children from future trafficking into servitude. There were three aspects of this task. The first was the enrollment of child beneficiaries into mostly public schools within the communities. The second was after school programs for all beneficiaries in schools, and the third was vacation classes that were organized for the children whenever school was on recess. The goals of these many classes were to help the students catch up with their peers in the schools they attended. It was established that while in servitude, the students did not have the time to attend school regularly, on time, or even complete homework assignments. Hence, they lagged behind and were repeated frequently in their grades. We had 15 year olds or even 18 year olds in the first, second, or third grades. When we returned them to their parents, we sent them to two three grades higher depending on their skill level, and then provided these extra classes so they will catch up with.

As noted earlier, this component of the project activities enjoyed immense support from head teachers and principals, as well as assembly members. Teachers and head teachers informed the project team of difficulties they encountered as far as student participation in the classes. For example, we were alerted when students did not attend classes for any reason, and when they ran out of supplies for extra classes. We provided teachers with teaching supplies such as notepads and writing materials, and students with uniforms and shoes, and student supplies. Although Ghana has free universal basic education, parents were required to pay so much dues and additional fees, which the latter could not pay for the most part. Integration of students into formal education covered these costs, and we counseled parents to take over once their businesses took off or when the project came to a close.

Older girls or boys who preferred to receive apprentice training were enrolled in dressmaking, hairdressing, carpentry, or commercial driving.

At the end of the program, 15 graduated from the basic school and were enrolled in senior high school. Three girls each had completed their apprentice training in hairdressing and dressmaking, and were provided hairdryers and other resources to start their own hairdressing salons or dressmaking shops. Like the limited facilities for rehabilitation, apprentice beneficiaries had to work with small roadside training centers that dominate the training of boys and girls who could not complete high school. The effectiveness of this option is that they were tailored for trainees who could not read or write. At the end of the training, they had to pass an external examination to receive certification and license. The project provided the resources to enable them complete this part of their training.

Region	Community	School	Skill training
Central Region	Bawjiase	2	1
	Awutu Bontrase	13	-
	Awutu Mampong	14	-
	Agona Duakwa	17	-
	Agona Kwaman	37	-
	Bobikuma Upper	1	-
	Bobikuma Lower	1	-
	Amia/ Baa	63	6
	Techiman	8	-
	Ajumako	2	-
	Bisease	33	1
	Kokoben	6	2
	Asansan	3	-
	Mando	8	-
	Tweikokrom	3	-
	Enyanmaim	19	3
	Akotogua	16	1
Eastern Region	Ettokrom	3	-
	Bunso	18	2
	Segymaase	-	2
	Nsuapemso	32	5
	Bosuso	5	-
	Begoro	12	-
Northern Region	Gushiegu District		15
Volta Region	Jasikan District		14
Total		316	52

Training in Sole Proprietorship and Micro-financing for Parents

The project organized several workshops on the management of sole proprietorship for the parents of child beneficiaries. Ms. Shika Acolatse, the Country Director of Enablis Ghana, a Canadian International Nongovernmental Organization specializing in the development of entrepreneurial skills and small-scale businesses among the youth in developing nations led the facilitation of these workshops. Based on her guidance, the principal investigator and the project manager, Mrs. Barbara Ayesu facilitated some of the workshops and the monitoring of their performances. Parents were assisted to open bank accounts into which sums of C350.00 were deposited for petty trading. Originally, parents were to be grouped into 5 partnerships of

10 members each, provided training and partnerships and \$10,000 per group for their businesses. As the project progressed, it was observed this type of partnership would not be too feasible because of transportation and effective leadership in individual groups. Ms. Acolatse also recommended we allowed the parents to identify their own business interests and be supported to run them. The project team also noted that in those rural communities where these businesses were to run, the parents needed only small sums to trade, and that parents would be committed to taking care of their beneficiary children if they received those small sums as motivation. Therefore, we modified the budget to cover all parents who were involved. Given that some parents had more than one child in the program, we did not have to provide for 388 parents but 217. Some of the parents defied our training and suggestions and instead of trading with the funds, purchased materials to expand their farming ventures. Those who went into the sale of cooked food seemed to do very well, but in the long term, the farmers made equally good gains when they cultivated their farm produce. Other parents sold convenience items and cosmetics. Only one parent in the Central Region could not account for her money. A parent who seemed to suffer mental illness was supported by her sister to use the funds to take care of the child survivor. They were expected to make regular deposits at the banks and depending on progress of their petty trading, they would be permitted to reinvest their deposits. Otherwise, they were informed their capitals would be withdrawn if their trades were unproductive.

Campaign Strategies

In addition to workshops and presentations, campaign against child domestic servitude and efforts to create awareness on the ills of this social problem comprised a publication in the form of a brochure, bill board advertisement, and media campaign. Both the billboard and brochure were reserved for the end of the project given the sensitive nature of the issue being addressed, and the need to locate their content in observations from the rest of the project. At the moment, the attached brochure has been submitted to a publisher and paid for. There will be 1000 copies for dissemination to the various schools and districts where we worked in, and other at risk communities. eight billboards instead of the targeted 10 were erected at vantage locations. These were approved by the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. The billboards cost much more than we budgeted for in 2009 when the proposal was submitted.

Media campaign

The original goal of the project was to have 16 broadcast or electronic media appearances and 8 in print media towards our campaign against child domestic servitude. These media appearances were also aimed at sensitizing the general public to the incidence of domestic servitude and human trafficking. At the end of the project, there were more than the 16 and 8 intended media coverage. The principal investigator and or her team in Ghana appeared on television programs, on radio, and in print news reports. Among the media houses that carried interviews on the project in Ghana were

Ghana's TV3, which carried five live interviews with the principal investigator on their Sunrise Program and news. TV3 was also available at our launch and workshops and reported them in their news. Other television stations that interviewed the principal investigator and or the program manager, Mrs. Barbara Ayesu, or carried news of our activities were Adom Television, Metro Television and Ghana Broadcasting Corporation. A few local, regional, and national radio stations also interviewed the principal investigator and the program manager on live programs or carried reports of our activities. They included Skyy Power FM in Takoradi, Adom FM, Hello FM, Nhyira, and Kiss FM. In the United States, Jack Gravely of the Jack Gravely show interviewed the principal investigator.

Among the print media that carried interviews on the program and the combat against child domestic servitude and human trafficking were the Daily Graphic, the Daily Guide, The Ghanaian Times, and The Ghana News Agency. In the United States, Petersburg's Progress Report published an interview with the principal investigator.

Interviews with these print and electronic media covered human trafficking, Ghana's traditional fosterage and its impact on trafficking and child domestic servitude, other socioeconomic factors that drove and sustained these abuses of children from vulnerable households in rural Ghana, and ways in which individuals, public and nongovernmental agencies could work together to help protect vulnerable children from abuses within the household and beyond.

For print media coverage of the programs, the effectiveness of such strategies was not immediately assessable, but we often received calls from a number of radio stations that wanted to interview us based on news reports, or individuals who supported the focus of the project and had stories to tell us about their personal experiences with child domestic servitude. This was also the case with some radio and television interviews. Unfortunately, the majority of households living in rural areas may not have had access to these broadcasts or publications and so had to be reached through direct contacts or communication. We received only a few phone calls while the programs aired. The PI also received emails or contacts through social media from persons who read, listened to her, or saw her on television. In all, we can estimate that over 5 million newspaper readers, television viewers, or radio listeners heard our campaigns throughout the three-year project.

Dissemination of Information and Scholarly Output

In addition to broadcast and print media campaigns, this PI set out to disseminate information on the project through conference presentations, journal articles, and a book publication. She made one presentation each at the Virginia Social Science Association, William Paterson University, and Virginia State University, two presentations at the American Association of Behavioral and Social Sciences, and three presentations at the International Conference on Human Trafficking at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. In April 2013, Mrs. Barbara Ayesu, the project manager, made a presentation at the First International Conference of Social Injustice at Virginia State University. In Ghana, both the PI and Mrs. Ayesu made presentations at workshops for professionals including teachers, counselors and police officers. At durbars with

parents, presentations focused on trafficking, the implications of their children living in other households and serving them, and the role they could play to help combat trafficking and child domestic servitude. The PI is generating more manuscripts from the studies and project for publication as journal articles and or a book.

Difficulties and Limitations

Since her early teen years, this principal investigator has been enthusiastic about working on campaigns to fight child domestic servitude. With this opportunity from the U.S. State Department, she believed she had received one most important resource to make that long-term ambition a reality. Findings from the interviews and observations from interactions with parents, households who employ domestic servants, and persons in key positions to fight this canker of child labor exploitation suggest, however, there were so many conditions that created and sustained the problem and made it difficult to fight it. This culturally entrenched traditional practice seemed to evade any efforts to combat it because the laws were disconnected from the realities that drove the children into servitude, the powers that be were in denial of the existence of the problem, and the very people who have been placed in positions to enforce the laws or protect children also exploited them. Until June of 2013 when child domestic servitude became the main focus of the World's Child Labor Day, child domestic servants were virtually excluded from discussions of child labor exploitation. Those factors are discussed below.

Problems with the Children's Act

This section highlights problems the PI observed with some relevant sections of the Children's Act. Based on the interviews, cultural practices, and the denial of the abuses of children's labor through domestic servitude, its current state is disconnected from the socio-cultural, political, and economic realities of the nation and thus rather than serving as a preventive instrument to protect the Ghanaian child, seems incapable of even curative approaches to combating the abuse of children in Ghana. Ghana was the first to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991 and in 1998, promulgated the Children's Act into law. The Children's Act was primarily consistent with the CRC, albeit impractical given Ghana's sociocultural environments. Realistically, the Children's Act could have recognized those practices while conforming to the CRC. Several European, Asian, and African countries made sure their internal laws did not overlook the significance of their unique sociocultural contexts. For the purposes of this report, this discussion focuses on Section 1 on age and definition of the child, Section 5 on the right to grow up with parents, and Section 39 (1) that prohibits the publication of information on children. Regarding Section 1 on the definitions of the child and age, the PI notes that although the cut off age of 18 for childhood is almost universal, the cultural and legal conditions of Ghana do not augur well for its enforcement. At 18, many Ghanaian children are still in junior high school if not lower, cannot claim independence, live under their parents' or guardians' roofs, and have not been equipped with the life skills necessary for them to be on their own without seeking consent from their parents. This disconnection between the legal age of children and

the cultural context makes it easy for parents to allow their children to be recruited into servitude or refuse to bring them back home when the children complain.

Section 5 on the right to grow up with parents scoffs Ghana's rich cultural practices on the extended family system, that system which has actually been exploited for purposes of trafficking and child labor abuse. In other cultures, the right to grow up with parents probably originates in the dominance of the nuclear family system; this is not the case in Ghana. It is normal for children to live and grow up in households other than their biological parents' without any legal ramifications. This has been the practice for decades, and many respondents in the study including legislators reminded this PI of that practice oblivious to the stipulations of the Children's Act. This legislation overlooks the traditional relevance of the extended family system and thus fails to regulate its occurrence to adequately provide security and protection for the children. Traditional fosterage is thus permitted to engender forms of child labor abuse, exploitation, and trafficking and servitude although if appropriately regulated, it may remain functional in the upbringing and socialization of children.

Other sections such as Sections 89, 90, and 91 on minimum age for child labor, minimum age for light work, and minimum age for hazardous work should otherwise protect the children from labor abuses but, as earlier noted, this seems not possible because of perceptions that child domestic servitude functionally supports the poor giving households, with advocates of such claims, usually in high public offices, arguing that it should be part of socialization and that it is indispensable culturally. What these advocates fail to mention or recommend is the recruitment of their own children into servitude.

Denial of the problem

In the summer of 2013 when the PI worked with the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the Ghana Police when the latter celebrated Child Labor Day, speeches from various stakeholders including the Minister for Gender and Social Protection and a UNICEF representative suggested shifts in paradigms on child domestic servitude in Ghana. For the first time, institutions acknowledged the problem existed. It was observed courts were ready to adjudicate cases brought before them according to the laws, but to the average child especially those in rural Ghana, that law seems non-existent. As noted earlier, there has been outright denial of child domestic servitude among some public officials, and many people including vulnerable parents and children, are not even knowledgeable of the Act.

The denial of child domestic servitude was particularly evident when the PI appeared before the Gender and Children Committee of the Parliament of Ghana. The main purpose of this meeting was the sensitization of legislators to the problem of child domestic servitude, its location in human trafficking, and the ineffectiveness of the Children's Act. Parliamentarians present at the meeting basically heckled the PI and questioned the validity in her claims that domestic servitude existed in Ghana. This denial notwithstanding, they saw nothing wrong in describing the kinds of assignment or responsibilities they gave the female children they lived with. One of them "proudly"

acknowledged she lived with a 13-year-old girl and claimed she had no need for her as a servant, but needed her to take care of her house because all her children were grown and had left her house. While a 13-year-old girl caretaker of a house may not be classified as a hazardous work, its implications could be worse. At 13, this child needed to be taken care of, and it was disappointing a legislator did not realize taking care of a whole house required a mature adult knowledgeable enough to negotiate contracts and understand when danger was imminent.

Conversations among the legislators and clerks immediately after the presentation confirmed they had domestic servants in their respective homes. These overheard conversations further indicated they were not happy the principal investigator referred to the girls as domestic servants, or referred to the practice as domestic servitude. The PI's concerns were that if the concept describing the statuses of child domestic servants was deemed so derogatory, why could they do nothing about curbing this practice of child labor abuse but rather register their anger at the choice of words? The difficulties with Parliamentarians on the project did not start with the actual presentation. It was quite problematic scheduling the meeting, and that stemmed from time constraints as well as requests by parliamentarians to be paid sitting allowances the seriousness of the issue to be discussed notwithstanding. This experience pointed to a body of legislators who cared the least about the exploitation of children's labor in their country.

Prior to the meeting with the Parliamentarians, the Principal Investigator met with the then Secretary of Ghana's Constitutional Review Committee, which was tasked to review and compile suggestions from various institutions and to recommend relevant changes to Ghana's 1992 Constitution. The secretary, a Harvard trained lawyer, did not deviate from the attitude of public officers' denial of the significance of children's labor in domestic servitude; he pointed to instances of child sexual abuse or homicide in the United States as if to suggest that the problems of child abuses in the United States justified child domestic servitude in Ghana. Following that conversation, the PI provided him with her brief review of the Children's Act, which he received with appreciation.

The demonstration of denial was also exhibited at a Rotary Club meeting where this PI encountered heckling again. As in previous presentations, the PI outlined the main components of the project pertaining to the removal of beneficiaries from servitude and their reunification with their families, rehabilitation, training and micro-financing of parents. The PI emphasized the functional aspects of children's work in general, and the intended goals of fostering of children, traditionally, in particular. The Rotarians did not dispute these. They were, however, not pleased the PI referred to the girls as domestic servants instead of house-helpers. They reminded her that the term of domestic servitude was no longer in use because it was considered derogatory and disrespectful. Some Rotarians said domestic servitude as described by the PI was no longer practiced, but others disputed this claim both at the meeting and in private phone conversations later with the PI. Those who disputed the claims argued the children who were selling water and other convenience items in the streets were actually working for their own parents although they admitted some of them were domestic servants. Other

Rotarians countered their colleagues' admission of the problem by noting that while the practice may still exist, they were not in touch with the victims of trafficking or servitude. Several of the executive committee called to apologize to the PI for the behavior of the members the previous night. Most of them admitted other members were in denial and threw another invitation for her to return to their meeting once she went back to Ghana.

PROSECUTION

This project aimed at having at least 25 cases of child domestic servitude or trafficking prosecuted before the project end. While in many instances the project exceeded its target, this was an area where we were not able to make any headway. We could not get the police to make any arrests that could culminate in the prosecution of offenders. The reasons were primarily cultural. Households whose children were abused in domestic servitude did not consider it traditionally appropriate to have the cases prosecuted in court. The PI came to the conclusion that it was not unique to the households who lived in rural Ghana and were not knowledgeable of the legal implications of the abuses of their children. When we encountered instances of sexual abuses, the sub-grantees implementing the project, although a nongovernmental organization of female lawyers, often referred the cases to the social welfare officers who eventually had the families resort to traditional approaches to solving such abuses. Fifteen beneficiaries whose cases made it to court were referred to us from the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the Ghana Police who utilized their resources within the criminal justice system to have the cases heard in court.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Ghana has been prolific in the ratification of international laws and the promulgation of local instruments to protect children and the generally vulnerable. However, exploitation of children within the informal sector has remained significant, and children from underprivileged households in rural Ghana continue to migrate to urban Ghana through modes of soft trafficking. This report identified some factors responsible for the phenomenon. It reiterates existing observations of the role of poverty, but acknowledges that other factors such as the denial of the phenomenon and the disconnection between legislation and realities of child labor exploitation thwart efforts to combat the problem. Realities of the exploitation of children's labor within the household originate in long standing cultural practices of informal fosterage and socialization. Historically, Ghanaian children have lived in households of extended families to provide household labor and be granted the chance of formal education. This practice of reciprocity is almost nonexistent today because most children living under such arrangements spend more time performing household chores than schoolwork if they are enrolled in formal education. Their abuses seem to be tolerated in elite households, and most of them define the practice as beneficial to the sending households, the abuses of the children's basic rights notwithstanding. They vehemently defend the practice claiming that it is a component of socialization, although only children from poor rural backgrounds have to endure it.

Any efforts to combat this exploitation of children's labor within the household must address the pretense of socialization, and it is imperative to regulate the provision of household labor by children so that they can be protected. Legislators must sincerely put the protection of their constituents, especially minors, ahead of their personal interests so as to admit the seriousness of the problem and to genuinely commit to its abuse. Until institutions established to champion the cause of women and children as well as public officials and elite households recognize that poor children have rights and need to grow up in loving households, this aspect of child labor exploitation will persist; and as long as persons occupying positions of power benefit from such abuses, the Children's Act will not be enforced throughout the country.

Project Staff

In addition to the PI and the volunteers mentioned in the report above, there were three main workers on the project team. Mrs. Barbara Ayesu served as Project Manager, Mrs. Barbara Nartey was the Field Assistant, and a driver. At the end of the project period, Mr. Charles Anim was the driver for the project. Mrs. Barbara Ayesu is a Georgetown University trained lawyer who currently serves as the coordinator of LAWA. Mrs. Nartey holds a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Cape Coast.