

# REPORT ON SECOND ANNUAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING WORKSHOP ON **CHILD PROTECTION**

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# Executive Summary

The Second Annual Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Child Protection was held at the British Council Auditorium in Accra on 27th November 2018, as part of Participatory Development Associates' (PDA) strategic themes for 2016-2021. The purpose of the workshop was to provide an environment to share and discuss preliminary findings of a draft *Report on the State of Child Protection in Ghana*. The event, which brought together a total of 101 participants from government agencies, development organisations, the media and the general public, also featured discussions on a UNICEF supported assessment on *The Most Significant Change (MSC) Stories on Child Protection in Ghana*. This aided the appreciation of project interventions on child protection across the country.

The workshop commenced with a welcome address delivered by Mr Tony Dogbe, a co-founder and Principal Consultant at PDA. His address captured the importance of evidence-based research for policy discourse and the need for non-state actors to collaborate more in their bid to augment state efforts in the child protection space. The address was followed by a statement from the Department of Children which was delivered by Mrs. Abena A. Badu-Aboagye, a senior staff at the department. Her statement focused on the state of child protection and touted the efforts of the government, through laws, policies and its agencies, to ensure the welfare and protection of every child. Turning to the private sector, she noted that the milestones chalked were through efforts by both state and non-state actors, adding that such efforts needed to be sustained if not intensified.

This year's workshop was divided into two sessions. The first session entailed three presentations and a panel discussion on Juvenile Justice in Ghana. The first presentation on *Children, Streetism and the Begging Economy* assessed the plight of children living and working on the streets of Ghana's cities, the institutional provisions for their welfare and protection, as well as how these are implemented. This was followed by a presentation on *Child Labour, Trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery* which featured stories of victims of child trafficking, their ordeals and the rescue efforts to secure their freedom. The presentations were complimented by a facilitated discussion which explored the drivers of juvenile offending, the adequacy of the Juvenile Justice Act 2003 (Act 653) and related policies, and the efficiency of state institutions responsible for juvenile justice. The session concluded with a presentation on a UNICEF supported assessment on *The Most Significant Change (MSC) Stories on Child Protection in Ghana* - a compilation of people's experiences on project interventions in order to assess the impact of the interventions and identify avenues for improvement.

The second session featured two panel discussions and a presentation on the protection of the working child. The first panel discussion, on the history of child protection in Ghana, assessed the traditional systems of child protection dating back to the colonial era, and the values of altruism and reciprocity that informed these practices as well as the utility of incorporating aspects of this system into the contemporary formal child protection structure. The second

panel discussion on *child online protection in Ghana* noted the hazards children are exposed to online, including the risk of sexual abuse and hate speech. The discussions further recognized the efforts of the government to adopt a framework and policy on child online protection that shall guide the efforts of state and non-state actors in the area. The session concluded with a presentation on a study that explored the plight of working children in rural and urban areas, and the protection of these children. Noting the restrictions placed by the Children's Act

on child work, the study highlighted the fact that economic realities had driven children of school going age to fend for themselves or assist parents in doing so, and called on state institutions, particularly law enforcement to adopt a child friendly approach towards such children.

Participants recognized implementation as the most pressing challenge of child protection. Acknowledging that the legal and policy frameworks provided a sound foundation, participants agreed that efforts towards law enforcement and policy implementation needed to be intensified.

## Main Issues and Action Points

- Participants recognized that even though **the population of child beggars in the country** is on the rise with about 20,000 children reported to be on the streets of Accra alone, interestingly, majority of these children and their parents have little to no knowledge of state agencies such as the Department of Children, responsible for their welfare and protection apart from the police. State institutions within this area need to do more to increase their visibility particularly to the children that require their protection.
- Participants observed that even though **domestic laws and international instruments** that Ghana is signatory to, interacted to provide a sound framework, adequate for preventing and responding to issues of child trafficking and slavery, many within law enforcement and the government remain unyielding to the fact that modern-day slavery exists within the country. Advocacy efforts need to be evidence based in order to prompt government to intensify efforts towards the enforcement of laws in this area.
- Participants also agreed that **merging equally important issues** of child welfare and protection with that of gender and social protection under

a single ministry **only conflated the mandate and frustrated the ability of the Ministry** of Gender Children and Social Protection to deliver. The weight of these issues required separate ministries or agencies with specific mandates and a certain degree of autonomy to effectively address them.

- The participants further recognized that **interventions in the area of child welfare and protection** are more likely to achieve the intended outcomes in situations where government agencies and civil society collaborate in an environment of trust and good communication. More of such collaborations were thus necessary for current and future projects to succeed.
- Participants urged the government to **hasten the adoption of a framework on child online safety** and soon, a legislation on child online protection in order to guide the efforts of both state and non-state actors in the area.
- Participants also agreed in the concluding deliberations that PDA will incorporate the outcome of the discussions into the final *Report on the State of Child Protection in Ghana* to be published on [www.pdaghana.com](http://www.pdaghana.com) in March 2019.

# Introduction

Child protection is one of Participatory Development Associates' (PDA) strategic themes for the period 2016-2021. Furthermore to this, in 2017, PDA put together what was to be [the first of a series of Knowledge Sharing Workshops on Child Protection](#) organized to discuss emerging studies and explore avenues to influence policy and better collaboration among stakeholders. The maiden event brought together 78 participants from the public and private sector and highlighted issues relating to Forced Early Marriages in Volta Lake Communities and Child Labour in Mining and Fishing Communities among others.

A key issue that emerged at the maiden edition was the fragmented and uncoordinated nature of many child protection interventions and studies. In response, PDA initiated a process of putting together a [Report on the State of Child Protection in Ghana](#), preliminary findings of which was shared and discussed at the Second Knowledge Sharing Workshop held at the British Council. Feedback and comments from the over 100 participants would be integrated into the final report, which would be out by the first quarter of 2019.

The Second Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Child Protection was held at the British Council Auditorium in Accra on 27th November 2018, brought together a total of 101 participants from government agencies, development organisations, the media and general public. The event, in addition to providing a sound springboard to share and discuss findings from the draft [Report on the State of Child Protection in Ghana](#), also featured discussions on a UNICEF supported Assessment on the Most Significant Change Stories on Child Protection as well as three panel discussions which include:

- An Assessment of the Juvenile Justice System in Ghana;
- Historical Evolution of Child Protection in Ghana;
- An Assessment of Child Online Protection in Ghana

This report presents a detailed account of the workshop. It highlights the main issues that emerged from the discussions, action points for both state and non-state actors and recommendations for further engagement and practice within the area of child protection. The report is organized into three parts- opening session, session one and session two- reflecting the order in which the event unfolded.



Fig. 1 Some participants at the workshop

# 1.0 Opening Session



Fig. 2 Mr. Tony Dogbe delivering the welcome addresss

## 1.1 WELCOME ADDRESS

Mr. Tony Dogbe, co-founder and Principal Consultant at PDA, delivered the welcome address. In his address, he briefly touched on PDA's work in the child protection space, specifically on the maiden knowledge sharing workshop that was held in 2017. He noted that workshops of this kind, in addition to providing avenues to discuss emerging issues in the child protection space, also represents one of the key ways the private sector can augment government efforts.

While commending the efforts of government in safeguarding and protecting children, he also noted that insights from empirical studies, daily observations and newspaper reports still mirrored a dire situation that required further action especially at the level of enforcement and implementation. On this note he called for more partnerships between the state and the private sector, particularly those with projects on the ground in order to strengthen efforts at implementation.

## **1.2 STATEMENT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN**

A statement from the Department of Children was delivered by Mrs. Abena A. Badu-Aboagye. She began her speech by acknowledging the need to ensure optimum security for every Ghanaian child as these efforts tend to ultimately safeguard the growth and development of the nation. Her address focused on the current state of child protection and what the Government of Ghana is doing to protect every Ghanaian child. In view of this, she indicated that, comparatively, Ghana has made significant strides in the area of child protection by successfully implementing and enforcing legal and policy frameworks including the Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560), the Juvenile

Justice Act, 2003 (Act 563), and a host of other frameworks. These remarkable milestones have been through the efforts of both state and non-state actors to protect every child in the country. She however stated that, even though the Government is doing a lot, there should be more continuous engagements with both the public and the private sector to bring on board their various levels of expertise to protect children. She applauded PDA for introducing this worthwhile initiative and entreated other organizations to chart the path of PDA in the child protection business to ensure maximum protection for every Ghanaian child.



Fig. 3 Abena A. Badu- Aboagye delivering the statement from the Department of Children

## 2.0 Session One

In this session, three studies were presented, two of which form part of the *Report on the State of Child Protection in Ghana*. This was followed by a facilitated panel discussion on the Juvenile Justice in Ghana. What follows is a detailed account of the studies presented and the accompanying discussions.



Fig. 4 Edem Agbe & Wilhemina Tetteh presenting on Children, Streetism and the begging economy

### 2.1 Children, Streetism and the Begging Economy

The first presentation was delivered by Edem Agbe of PDA and Wilhemina Tetteh of the University of Ghana, both co-authors of the study together with Jonathan Antwi Hagan also of PDA. Adopting a Reality Check Approach which required active participant observation of the study subjects, the study sought to assess the plight of children living and working on the streets, the institutional provisions for their safeguard and protection as well as the implementation of these. The study focused on three major cities- Accra, Kumasi and Tamale.

In presenting the findings, Edem noted that begging had become an important 'economic activity' for children and parents alike. Some children were either out on the street begging out of their own volition or were being guided to do so by their parents or other adults. As a result, some act as parents of children primarily for economic expediency. Dysfunctional families, social networks of children and religious beliefs are other factors identified by the study as impacting the occurrence of child begging in the study locations. Delving into the findings further, two main groups of child beggars in Ghana were identified: Ghanaians and non-Ghanaians.

# CHILD BEGGING ECONOMY IN GHANA

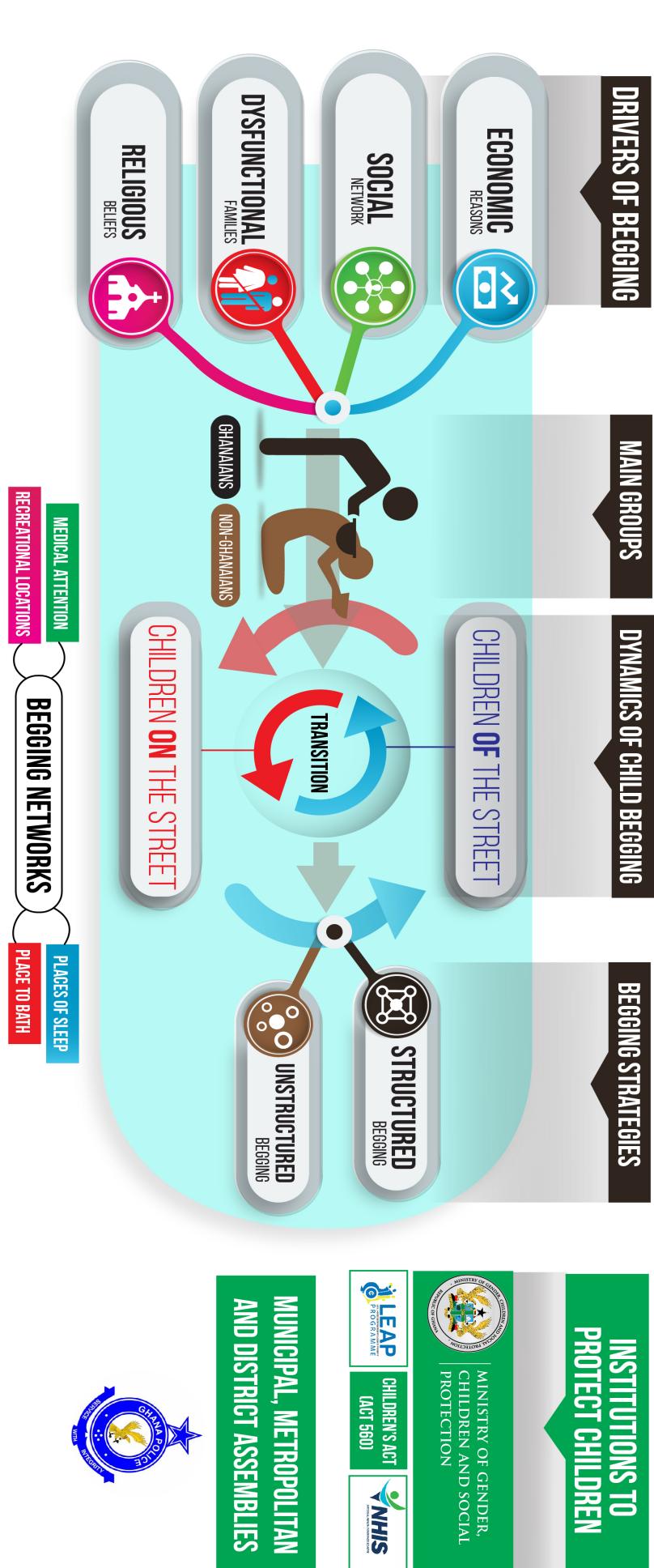


Fig. 5 An infographic on Child begging economy in Ghana

The non-Ghanaians are further grouped into two – children who have been trafficked into the country and children who have migrated into the country with their parents to work. The study further revealed that child beggars can be classified into three major groupings: a child- of- the- street, a child-on-the- street and a transition child beggar.

Child beggars on the street come and leave the street at a given time frame usually between 5:00 am and 5:00 pm. Children-of-the-street are children born and raised on the street and thus live on the streets. Transition child beggars sit between these polar-ends and are either in the process of fully migrating onto the streets from home or attempting to return home while still begging and living on the street.

The begging strategy adopted in the study areas was found to be both structured, and non – structured. Whereas those in Accra had no defined structure, those in Tamale were largely structured, with a ‘chief beggar’ to whom all other beggars report to and receive instructions at times. The health and sanitary conditions of the children was also noted to be precarious. Besides their exposure to unhealthy living conditions, many of the children seldom took their baths as they were also required

to pay before using public toilets and bathrooms. To complicate the situation, when faced with illnesses, the children seldom visited hospitals and frequently self-medicated or sought medical care via unlicensed Over The Counter (OTC) services in provision shops and drug hawkers in the market.

On state institutions, Edem made mention of the ‘Operation Get Off The Street’, a strategy adopted by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to integrate children back into their families. This resonates firmly with the ideological underpinnings of the Child and Family Welfare Policy 2015 on the role of the family as a critical institution in the child welfare and protection agenda. Interestingly however, the study findings also revealed little to no knowledge on the part of child beggars and parents about institutions responsible for their welfare, support and protection, highlighting the gap between laws and policies on one hand, and their implementation on the other.

The presenters concluded with a call for increased commitment on the part of state institutions to attend to the welfare of street children as an immediate strategy while putting in place long term measures to get them off the streets.

## 2.1.1 Questions and Discussions

The presentation was followed by discussions that emanated from questions and contributions from participants. The discussions converged around two key points.

- The first point is on the contribution of other possible factors that may lead children to beg on the streets. Citing findings from other studies, the participants noted school dropout rates and rejection from immediate social circles (family and peer groups) as immediate factors that also contribute to the occurrence of the phenomenon. The point on rejection, the presenters noted, tied very closely to dysfunctional family system and had strong influences on the possibilities for rehabilitation of street children.

- The second point is the role of state institutions directly involved in child protection. Here, participants noted the little credit given to state institutions, particularly the Department for Children and the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) for the initiatives put in place and efforts thus far to address the situation. There was however consensus among participants that such efforts, though commendable, is far from adequate and that more needed to be done, specifically on the aspects of enforcements of laws and implementation of policies.

## 2.2 Child Labour, Trafficking & Modern-Day Slavery

Following the presentation on Children, Streetism and the Begging Economy was another presentation on Child Labour, Trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery delivered by Joha Braimah of Free the Slaves.



Fig. 6 Joha Braimah presenting on Children, Streetism Child labour, Trafficking & Modern-day slavery.

Joha began on the favourable note that on the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) ranking 2018, Ghana had been promoted from Tier 2 Watch List to Tier 2, an indication of progress in addressing human trafficking. The TIP Report, published annually, is a tool used by the United States government to engage foreign governments on human and child trafficking, and ranking of countries on the report affects their eligibility for aid.

The presentation, which centred on the institutional framework on child labour and trafficking, highlighted the fact that domestic laws such as the Labour Act 2003 (Act 651) and the Human Trafficking Act, 2005 (Act 694), as well as international instruments such as the International Labour Organization's Convention Number 182 on the worst forms of child labour, interacted to provide a sound framework, adequate for preventing

and responding to issues of child labour and trafficking. The major challenge however was that of enforcement and implementation, which required political will and capacity building to address.

Joha noted that even though an estimated "3,100,000 children, between 5 and 17 years, are said to be involved in child labour" and slavery, interestingly, many within law enforcement and the government remain unyielding to the fact that modern-day slavery exists within the country.

This has necessitated an evidenced based advocacy strategy, by concerned activists and practitioners, that requires sharing the experiences of rescued child labourers and slaves, who's stories may prompt the state into decisive action.

On this note, Joha proceeded to tell stories of some of the victims of child labour and trafficking. For purposes of anonymity, the real names of the victims were not used.

- "Ama was sold into slavery at the age of 12 for 2 years at the price of Ghc 200.00. The trafficker gave a deposit of Ghc 100 and takes the victim away. Six years down the line, Ama turns 16 and is forced into marriage with another trafficked boy living with the trafficker. In this case the boy was trafficked at the age of seven and is now a grown up and is resisting some of the oppression from the master so the temptation to run away was high. So, one way the trafficker could keep him to still work for him was to get him a wife. Ama is then forced to sleep with this guy, serve him food etc. Eventually Ama was rescued with a baby girl."
- "Kwame was given to a farmer for a period of two years. The contractual agreement was that after the two years Kwame's labour would be rewarded with a calf. Kwaku, an eight-year old boy also lives with the parents and instead of attending school, goes to farm all day and herds cattle as well. His younger sister of 7 years also works for some neighbors in the community. Kwame has been rescued and so have Kweku and his sister. Some of these victims and their parents are undergoing some form of rehabilitation."

Joha indicated that these were just few among thousands of children who were forced into labour and trafficking at an early age, depriving them an education and a decent childhood experience. He added that even though the reason for sharing some of these accounts is to provide government and other stakeholders evidence that can stimulate action, more needed to be done to provide solid evidence for the prosecution of culprits and securing justice for victims.

## 2.2.2 Questions and Discussions

- The main issues that emerged from the discussions centered on the focus area of the presentation and its failure to touch on trafficking across the African continent, and between Africa and other continents, as some of the participants anticipated. The presenter made it known that the study only intended to focus on Ghana instead of the entire African continent or on inter-continental bases. He said the shift of focus was because most people only think of trafficking as solely an international phenomenon, losing sight on the fact that people are trafficked to be engaged in tedious and inhumane activities even within the country. He further stated that the nature of trafficking does not always require movement, hence the shift of focus to intra-national trafficking.
- Other concerns were raised as to the extent of awareness on trafficking, child labour and modern-day slavery. In response, Joha Braimah indicated that awareness on the phenomenon was on a steady rise through the efforts of non-state actors such as Free the Slaves working in the area. He added that recent advocacy has been much more targeted towards state agencies to stimulate deliberate preventive and responsive action.
- He concluded on the reassuring note that Ghana had the capacity to effectively tackle child trafficking and slavery, and that all that was required was more commitment from the state and its law enforcement apparatus to address the menace proactively.

## 2.3

# Facilitated Panel Discussion on Juvenile Justice in Ghana



Chris Dadzie (Facilitator)

One of the highlights of the workshop was a panel discussion on the juvenile justice system in Ghana, its successes, shortfalls and avenues for reforms. The discussion was facilitated by Chris Dadzie, a private legal practitioner and Associate of PDA. The panel was constituted by Courage Asabagna of LADA Group Ghana; Susan Sabaah of Crrecent Ghana; Angela Dwamena of Ark Foundation; Dr Lilian Ayete-Nyampong, Director of Research at the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ); and Mrs. Sheila Menka-Premo, a consultant in charge of the national policy reform on juvenile justice in Ghana. The discussions centered around three main issues namely; **the drivers of juvenile offending; the adequacy of the Juvenile Justice Act and related policies; and the efficiency of state institutions.**



Angela Dwamena Aboagye, Mrs. Sheila Menka-Premo,Susan Sabaa, Dr. Lilian Ayete-Nyampong, Courage Asabagna

Fig. 7 Panalists discussing Juvenile Justice in Ghana

- On the drivers of crime among juveniles, the panelists identified parental neglect and dropping out of school as the two main drivers. In her submission, Dr Lilian Ayete-Nyampong noted that many studies, her own inclusive, reveal that children who are neglected by their parents, in an attempt to fend for themselves, usually end up in conflict with the law. Often times, this parental neglect becomes evident during trial processes of apprehended culprits, as most parents rarely ever show up during the trials.

In many cases, this builds up resentment in juvenile offenders, particularly since they view their parents as more culpable for their actions. The discussants also observed that parental neglect makes the rehabilitation process, which hinges around the family system, much more difficult, increasing the possibility of recidivism among juveniles. Children who also drop out of school, besides lacking the discipline that the school may instill, also run the risk of joining similar company to engage in activities that mostly put them in conflict with the law.

- Assessing the Juvenile Justice Act 2003 (ACT 653) and related laws and policies, the panelist lauded the introduction of the Justice for Children Policy as an attempt to coordinate all the legal and policy efforts concerned with children in conflict with the law. Rooted in the utility of family and community care systems, the policy carefully integrates community-based justice systems into the formal structure, allowing the family to play a crucial role in the rehabilitation process and also in reintegrating child offenders back into society. The panelists further observed that the courts in the country are not child friendly and recommended that all courts presiding over child and family related cases be called 'family courts' in order to reduce public stigma against juvenile offenders.

- In assessing the efficacy of state institutions, two related issues were identified; mandate and resources. On mandate, Angela Dwamena argued that the main problem with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP) was in merging issues of child welfare with other important issues as gender and social protection. In so doing "we set them up to fail". The weight of child welfare and social protection issues necessitates a separate ministry or agency with its own mandate and a certain level of autonomy to function effectively. The Department of Children, which receives its directives and resources from the MOGCSP lacks the mandate and autonomy to function as such. It was also noted that even among the different state agencies with responsibilities for child welfare and protection, there is poor coordination of efforts, resulting in duplications and inefficiencies. On resources, the panelists revealed that the past two years have seen a steady decline in governments budgetary allocation to the MOGCSP and the Department of Children. This has further hampered the operations of these institutions.
- In their recommendations, the discussants, in addition to calling on government to set up a separate well-resourced ministry/agency specifically for children, also called for special training for prosecutors handling juvenile cases.



fig. 8 Panelist

## 2.4 Most Significant Change Stories on Child Protection

UNICEF-DCD supported assessment on the Most Significant Change (MSC) Stories on Child Protection in Ghana was also presented by Dr Leslie Casely-Hayford of Associates for Change. As a qualitative and participatory form of monitoring and evaluation based on the experiences of people, the MSC technique aims primarily to promote discourse and learning on programs and to identify ways to achieve optimum impact. With a rigorous selection process, the assessment was carried out in 100 communities across five regions, compiling about 700 stories all together.

The findings from the study revealed that government interventions and efforts by UNICEF and other partners in the area of child protection, had significant impacts on the lives of children, families and communities. Sexual reproductive health rights, child labour, child rights to education, child trafficking, child abuse and neglect were all areas identified as having recorded positive change even though Dr Hayford's presentation, owing to time constraints and requests from participants, focused more on child marriages. On child marriages, Dr Hayford shared some voices of change from the West Mamprusi District in the Northern region and Bawku West District in the Upper East Region. Below are some instructive quotes;



Fig 9. Dr. Leslie Casely-Hayford presenting on Most significant change Storison Child Protection

- “We have unit committee in place and they can arrest the perpetrators of child marriage. The committee members go out in the night to monitor and bring our children back to us if they are seen wandering in the town. We have divided the community into six sections. Each section is made of 5 members, so they are 30 members in all. They are all men because only men can be members of the committee.” (A focus group discussion of female opinion leaders in the West Mamprusi District).
- “The incidence of child marriage is now being reported that is why the girl who was abducted was rescued.” (A 13-year-old pupil, female student from the West Mamprusi District).
- “The most significant change to me is more women are seeing the need to struggle to educate their children even if the husbands neglect their role rather than giving them out for marriages” (Female adult in the Bawku West District).

In general, the findings showed a significant reduction in the incidence of child marriages with some communities recording zero child marriage for about 2-3 years. The stories reveal not only an increase in awareness on the physical and psychological effects of child marriage on the child, but also that by and large, children have been empowered to speak and act against child marriages. This is mirrored by the increase in child marriage cases reported by victims to state agencies such as the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU).

In conclusion, Dr Hayford noted that successful interventions that produced the most positive change occurred where government agencies and civil society collaborate in an environment of trust and good communication. She further stressed the need to sustain the sensitization and awareness creation activities of organizations working in the area, adding that UNICEF and other partners need to continue to support NGOs and state institutions collaborating on child protection.

# 3.0 Session II



Fig 10 Zayan Imoro (Facilitator)

In this session, two panel discussions were held in addition to a presentation on the protection of working children in Ghana. The first panel discussion was on the history of child protection in Ghana and the second was on Child online protection. Both discussions were facilitated by Zayan Imoro.

## 3.1 Panel Discussion on the Historical Evolution of Child Protection in Ghana

The second session of the workshop began with a panel discussion on the history of child protection in Ghana. The objective was to discuss the traditional systems of child protection in pre-colonial societies and to assess its relevance in contemporary times. The discussions were facilitated by Zayan Imoro, a senior project officer at PDA, and the panellists include Charles Tsegah, former Director General of Ghana Education Service, Abena A. Badu-Aboagye of the Department of Children,

Dr Kwabena Frimpong-Manso, a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Social Work, University of Ghana and Clement Sefanya-Nyarko, Research, Evaluation and Learning Manager at PDA.

The discussions centred on the communal responsibility for child protection and the principles that informed these as well as the utility of incorporating aspects of this system into the contemporary formal child protection structure.



Dr. Kwabena F. Manso

Charles Y. A Tsegah

Clement S. Nyarko

Abena A.B. Aboagye

Fig 11. Panalists discussing the Historical Evolution of Child Protection in Ghana

- The panelists noted that in the pre-colonial era, child welfare and protection was viewed as the responsibility of the child's family- both nuclear and extended- as well as that of the immediate community. This practice was informed primarily by the principles of reciprocity and altruism and many born within the period imbued these principles causing the practice to endure. Clement Sefa-Nyarko noted that nuances existed in the various societies differed, even though they were all based on the values of reciprocity, and altruism. Charles Tsegah also added that the social structures in place at the time assigned responsibilities to family and community members based on status and gender and this in-turn had impact on the care of children. For example, the male figures mostly assumed the role of the disciplinarian ensuring that children were brought up in the culturally accepted way. Dr Frimpong-Manso in his submission advanced that in some societies there is also the belief that children are the reincarnation of the ancestors so they needed to be protected, as a way of protecting the ancestors. Children were also considered the family's insurance and therefore the parents took care of them so that they could also take care of them when they grew.
- Participants also noted that the traditional system of child protection began to change when in the colonial and post-colonial era, many abandoned the agricultural sector and moved to the urban centres in search of factory jobs among others. The extended family system began to breakdown as a result and many- especially men- who had children outside wedlock in the cities felt less responsible for them. The Europeans also introduced the residential care system which assumed a dominant role in the child protection system, gradually weakening the traditional system in place at the time. They observed however that the residential care system turned out to be dysfunctional, neglecting family-based consensus decision making.
- In their recommendation, the panellists lauded the introduction of the Child and Family Welfare Policy with its focus on the family and added that further steps should be taken to strengthen the family system, particularly the extended family, so children growing up in such environments can receive adequate protection.

## 3.2 Panel Discussion on Child Online Protection



Fig. 12 Zayan (Facilitator)

Dr. Nana Kofi Annan

Awo Aidan Amenyia

Discussing Child online protection

The second session also featured a panel discussion on Child Online Protection in Ghana. The panellists were Awo Aidan Amenyia, Executive Director of J Initiative, and Dr Nana Kofi Annan, the Lead on Child Online Protection at the Ministry of Communication. The discussions, facilitated by Zayan Imoro, sought to identify the risks children are regularly exposed to on the internet, and as a burgeoning concern, what efforts state and non-state actors are putting in place to ensure the safety of children on the internet.

- On the risks faced online, the discussants recognized that although the internet has grown to become a vital resource for research, learning, networking and entertainment; not every content online is appropriate for the child's development and that not every person using the internet had pure motives. Awo noted that there are unscrupulous people online who take advantage of unsuspecting children online and

either abuse them sexually or lure them to be trafficked and sold into servitude. Moreover, due to poor regulations, children are consistently exposed to inappropriate explicit sexual content and hate speech on social media sites. These and other factors interact to make the internet potentially dangerous for children if appropriate regulations are not put in place.

- Broaching the issue of state efforts to protect children online, Dr Nana Kofi Annan noted that government had put together a Steering Committee composed of key stakeholders to prepare the National Child Online Protection Framework consistent with the national cybersecurity agenda. Noting that the government already had a Cybersecurity Policy which touched on issues of children online, he conceded that a specific policy on child online protection is still necessary.

- Touting the achievements of the government, Dr Annan stated that the Ministry of Communication had already embarked on a national cybersecurity awareness campaign that had a child online sensitization component targeting Senior High Schools. The campaign succeeded in reaching about 7,000 students in 32 Senior High Schools across the country. He also added that, engagements had begun with content providers/producers as well as the content hosts in order to intensify online content regulation.
  - While lauding the sensitization campaign, Awo in her response to Dr Annan noted that the delays in adopting the framework have frustrated the efforts by actors, both state and non-state alike, to ensure children's safety online. For example, the absence of explicit legal
- provisions on child online protection makes it difficult for prosecutors to make grounded cases against perpetrators of child online abuse. Herself a member of the Steering Committee, Awo was adamant about the need to adopt digital citizenship as an integral part of the provisions on child online protection. She argued this will encourage digital literacy among both children and adults especially parents, since the family also has an important role to play in ensuring the safety of children online. The discussions concluded with Dr Annan reassuring participants that the government is fully committed to the course and that since the area of child online protection is a budding one, more time was needed to put in place the appropriate regulations and safeguards to ensure the safety of children online.

### 3.3 Leaving no Child Behind in Ghana; Is the working child protected?

This presentation was delivered by Mohammed Nurudeen, a lecturer at the Department of Social Work, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), on behalf of Dr. Esmeralda Manful. The presentation was based on a study which forms part of the *Report on the State of Child Protection in Ghana*. Acknowledging the reality that some children are engaged in labor intensive activities and the need to protect them, the study sought to broadly explore the livelihood strategies working children in both rural and urban areas in the Greater Accra and Ashanti regions are engaged in and the availability of child protection institutions in the places they work. To achieve the ultimate objective set out for this study, a qualitative approach was adopted, using non-participant observation and in-depth interview methods.



Fig 13 Mohammed Nurudeen presenting on  
Leaving no Child behind in Ghana; Is the  
working Child protected?

Mohammed Nurudeen began the presentation by stating that there are an estimated 2 million children involved in labor intensive activities in Ghana. Although the Children's Act 560 stipulates that the minimum age for child employment is 15yrs and that for light work 13yrs, many children still engage in work as a result of the economic realities. That means that if the state cannot do much to address their economic concerns, the least that can be done is to keep these children protected.

The findings revealed that many children combined working with schooling and some of the activities they were engaged in include commercial sex activities, cleaning, dish washing, and hawking among others. The fact that many of the children chose to remain in school mirrors the importance of education to them. The choice of the livelihood activity is mainly informed by the likelihood to meet a financial need, the availability of the activity and its profitability, with some respondents indicating that earnings from their activities helped them save for school. Situated within the informal sector,

many of the livelihood activities adopted required little to no skills, making them more desirable, some of the respondents admitted. The challenges children in this study faced included harassment by city officials, exploitation by customers and verbal abuse.

According to Nurudeen, one of the worrying findings of the study was that few of the children had any knowledge of state institutions besides the police that could protect them from any challenges faced. Their view of the police was unsurprisingly antagonist, given the frequent harassments they faced when the police came around. The problem, he observed, was that law enforcement officials treat minors as adults, which ordinarily ought not to be the case. It was also noted that the children's inability to identify any agency from which they could seek support could be attributed to their fleeting and non-permanency in a particular space for their economic activities. It is indicative that such agencies are invisible at the lorry terminals and markets where children operate more often.

### **3.3.1 Questions and Discussion**

Participants recognized that even though the situation was fraught due to the legal stipulations on child work and economic realities many faced, it was still important that children engaged in work, particularly light work, be protected. They added that as a short-term measure, city officials at the various MMDA's must be sensitized on how to deal with working children, while long term plans are put in place to get children out of work and to focus more on their education.

### **3.3.2 Closing Remarks**

Deputy Managing Director of PDA, Mrs. Helen Nti, delivered the vote of thanks and closing remarks. Helen expressed her profound appreciation to all participants who took time off their busy schedules to honour the invitation to participate in this worthwhile workshop. She indicated that the workshop had sufficiently met her expectations of knowing and understanding the gap between research, policy and practice in child protection in Ghana. She continued to thank all the panellists for their elaborate presentations. She ended by applauding the staff of PDA for their relentless efforts in making this workshop a success.

## 4.0 Main Issues and Action Points

- Participants recognized that even though the **population of child beggars in the country is on the rise** with about 20,000 children reported to be on the streets of Accra alone, interestingly, majority of these children and their parents have little to no knowledge of state agencies such as the Department of Children, responsible for their welfare and protection apart from the police. State institutions within this area needed to do more to increase their visibility particularly to the children that require their protection.
- Participants observed that even though **domestic laws and international instruments** that Ghana is signatory to, interacted to provide a sound framework, adequate for preventing and responding to issues of child trafficking and slavery, many within law enforcement and the government remain unyielding to the fact that modern-day slavery exists within the country. Advocacy efforts need to be evidence based in order to prompt government to intensify efforts towards the enforcement of laws in this area.
- Participants also agreed that **merging equally important issues of child welfare and protection** with that of gender and social protection under a single ministry **only conflated the mandate and frustrated the ability of the Ministry** of Gender Children and Social Protection to deliver. The weight of these issues required separate ministries or agencies with specific mandates and a certain degree of autonomy to effectively address them.
- The participants further recognized that **interventions in the area of child welfare and protection** are more likely to achieve the intended outcomes in situations where government agencies and civil society collaborate in an environment of trust and good communication. More of such collaborations were thus necessary for current and future projects to succeed.
- Participants urged the government to **hasten the adoption of a framework on child online safety** and soon, a legislation on child online protection in order to guide the efforts of both state and non-state actors in the area.

Participants also agreed in the concluding deliberations that PDA will incorporate the outcome of the discussions into the final *Report on the State of Child Protection* in Ghana to be published on [www.pdaghana.com](http://www.pdaghana.com) in March 2019.

# Appendices

## APPENDIX A    PROGRAMME OUTLINE

Facilitators: Mohammed Zayan Imoro and Chris Dadzie

TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE/ REMARKS
8:30am - 9:00am	Registration, Setting-up the Market Place	
9:00am - 9:10am	Welcome Address and Opening Remarks	Tony Dogbe (Principal Consultant, PDA)
9:10am - 9:25am	Key Note Address	Hon. Cynthia Morrison (Minister for GCSP)
<b>SESSION I: OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF REPORT AND PRESENTATIONS</b>		
9:25am - 9:55am	Children, Streetism, and the Begging Economy	Edem Agbe
9:55am - 10:25am	Child Labor, Trafficking, and Modern-Day Slavery	Joha Braimah (Free the Slaves)
10:25am 11:05am	Facilitated Discussion on Juvenile Justice in Ghana	Chris Dadzie (Legal Practitioner)
11:05am - 11:30am	<b>SNACK BREAK</b>	
11:30am - 11:55am	Most Significant Change Stories Related to Child Protection (UNICEF Study)	Dr. Lesley Casely-Hayford (Associates for Change)
<b>SESSION II</b>		
11:55am - 1:00pm	<p>Panel Discussion I: Historical Evolution of Child Protection Systems in Ghana: The Relevance of Traditional Institutions and Domesticated International Instruments.</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charles Tsegah - Former Director General, GES</li> <li>Abena Aprekua Ogyiri - Dept. of Children</li> <li>Kwabena Frimpong-Manso (PhD) - Senior Lecturer, Dept of Social Work, University of Ghana</li> <li>Clement Sefa-Nyarko - REL Manager, PDA</li> </ul>	<b>Moderator:</b> Zayan Imoro
1:00pm - 1:45pm	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>	
1:45pm - 2:15pm	Rural and Urban Livelihood Dynamics and Welfare of Children	Mohammed Nurudeen Musah (Lecturer KNUST)
2:15pm - 3:15pm	<p>Panel Discussion II: Child Online Protection</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awo Aidan Amenza - J Initiative</li> <li>Representative from UNICEF</li> <li>Dr. Lilian Ayete-Nyampong - CHRAJ</li> <li>Dr. Nana Kofi Annan - Ministry of Communication</li> </ul>	<b>Moderator:</b> Zayan Imoro
3:15pm - 3:40pm	Overview of PDA's Child Abuse Tracker	Raymond Hodor
3:40pm - 4:00pm	Discussions and Closing Remarks	Helen Nti

## APPENDIX B: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

NO.	NAME	ORGANIZATION
1	Abdulai Sani	GGI
2	Abena A. Badu-Aboagye	Department of Children
3	Adjoa Awinador	The Mothers of Africa
4	Adubea Jennifer Hall	Apex Law Consult
5	Alex Billy	IOM
6	Amadu Mohammed	Achievers Ghana
7	Angela Dwamena-Aboagye	The Ark
8	Angela Poku Coffie	The Khana Group
9	Araba M. Korsah	Sabre Education
10	Augster Boateng	The Butterfly Effect
11	Awo Aidan Amenyia	J Initiative
12	Ayisha Mohammed	Achievers Ghana
13	Bismark Quartey	Free The Slaves
14	Charles Dakpe	Empowerment Centre for Women and Children
15	Charles Y. Aheto-Tsegah	Private Consultant
16	Courage Asabagna	LADA Group
17	Deborah Darko	KAEME Foundation
18	Doris Tagoe	Alpha Primus
19	Dr. Ayete-Nyampong Lilian	CHRAJ
20	Dr. Kwabena Frimpong-Manso	Social Work Department, UG
21	Dr. Nana K Annan	NCSC- MOC
22	Dr. Prince B Abrah	School of Social Work
23	E. K. Amponsah	Ghana Guardian
24	Elikem Awuye	IWGH
25	Enock D. Putau	AFC
26	Ethan Way	IOM
27	Faustina Gahen	GES/Basic
28	Gbedawoo Chris	
29	Geottry Nyikar	
30	Iddris Mohammed	Achievers Ghana
31	Isaac Opoku	Starlight Foundation
32	Jane Assamoah-Broni	The Mothers of Africa
33	Jennifer Quaicoe	Associates for Change
34	Jessica Denteh	CMaC
35	Joha Braimah	Free The Slaves

36	Jonathan Kojo Anderson	Challenging Heights
37	Joy Essandoh	Camfed
38	Joyce Larnyoh	ICDP
39	Kobby Optson	Isprings
40	Kofi Larweh	GCRN
41	Lucy Ama Berma	Sabre Education
42	Lucy N. Ama Essuman	The Mothers of Africa
43	Maame Darkowa	Coderina
44	Mawutor Fleku	CHRAJ
45	Mohammed Nurudeen Musah	Sociology and Social Work Department, KNUST
46	Owusu-Afriyie Sandra	School of Nursing and Midwifery, UG
47	Paa Ekow Quansah	LADA
48	Patrick Kwao	GIPC
49	Peter S. Moradoo	GYIC
50	Priscilla Okai	Organization Development for Change Management
51	Reuben Nana Yaw	Gardja
52	Robert Amoafio	Amnesty International
53	Salamatu Baba	Free The Slaves
54	Selorm K Segbedzi	Africa 2000 Network
55	Sheila	Apex Law Consult
56	Suki Annan	
57	Susan Sabaa	CRRECENT
58	Tanima Jamil	African Rights Initiative
59	Teiko Sabah	STAR-Ghana/ PDA Board
60	Victoria Dede Mensah	
61	Vikuba Yartey	Centre for Child Protection
62	Vivian Kwadzokpo	Organization Development for Change Management
63	Wilhemina Tetteh	Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana
64	Yvonne Nkrumah	KAEME Foundation
65	Zetha Annan	

#### MEDIA

66	Adobah Samuel	Oxzy fm
67	Adwoa Safoa	Hope fm
68	Alex	TV Africa
69	Bazaana Gertrude	The Bridge news

<b>70</b>	<b>Benedicta Folley</b>	<b>Ghanaian Times</b>
<b>71</b>	<b>Bervelyn Longdon</b>	<b>Citi Fm</b>
<b>72</b>	<b>Christiana Solomon</b>	<b>Metro TV</b>
<b>73</b>	<b>E. K Amponsah</b>	<b>The Ghana Guardian</b>
<b>74</b>	<b>Efa E Chinney</b>	<b>Joyfm/Jonews</b>
<b>75</b>	<b>Emmanuel Akpaka</b>	<b>TV Africa</b>
<b>76</b>	<b>Florence Anim</b>	<b>The Insight</b>
<b>77</b>	<b>Irene Esther Akrong</b>	<b>Ghana News Agency</b>
<b>78</b>	<b>Isaac Kofi Dzokpo</b>	<b>NewsGhana online</b>
<b>79</b>	<b>Nana Ama</b>	<b>GH One</b>
<b>80</b>	<b>Prosper Agbenyega</b>	<b>Ghanaian Observer</b>
<b>81</b>	<b>Saani Mohammed</b>	<b>Metro TV</b>
<b>82</b>	<b>Salomey Appiah</b>	<b>Daily Graphic</b>
<b>83</b>	<b>Stephen Addo</b>	<b>TV Africa</b>
<b>84</b>	<b>Stephen Tetteh</b>	<b>Bryt Fm</b>
<b>PDA STAFF</b>		
<b>85</b>	<b>Edem Agbe</b>	<b>PDA (Managing Director)</b>
<b>86</b>	<b>Helen Nti</b>	<b>PDA (Deputy Managing Director)</b>
<b>87</b>	<b>Clement Sefa-Nyarko</b>	<b>PDA (Head, Research, Learning and Evaluation Unit)</b>
<b>88</b>	<b>Ethel Seiwaah Boateng</b>	<b>PDA (Head, Community-Driven Development)</b>
<b>89</b>	<b>Alex Afram</b>	<b>PDA (Research, Learning and Evaluation Unit)</b>
<b>90</b>	<b>Raymond Hodor</b>	<b>PDA (Research, Learning and Evaluation Unit)</b>
<b>91</b>	<b>Victoria Ampiah</b>	<b>PDA (Research, Learning and Evaluation Unit)</b>
<b>92</b>	<b>Jonathan Antwi Hagan</b>	<b>PDA (Community-Driven Development)</b>
<b>93</b>	<b>Chris Yeboah</b>	<b>PDA (Administration and Finance)</b>
<b>94</b>	<b>Gaddiel Mensah Yamoah</b>	<b>PDA (Advocacy and Communications Unit)</b>
<b>95</b>	<b>Godsway Dzato</b>	<b>PDA (Research, Learning and Evaluation Unit)</b>
<b>96</b>	<b>Samuel Akoto</b>	<b>PDA (Research, Learning and Evaluation Unit)</b>
<b>97</b>	<b>Kennedy Ankomah Boadu</b>	<b>PDA (Administration and Finance)</b>
<b>98</b>	<b>Charles Kwadwo Anokye</b>	<b>PDA (Administration and Finance)</b>
<b>99</b>	<b>Mohammed Zayan Imoro</b>	<b>PDA (Head, Advocacy and Communications Unit)</b>
<b>100</b>	<b>Peter Annor Mensah</b>	<b>PDA (Advocacy and Communications Unit)</b>
<b>101</b>	<b>Lorretta Owusu Domfeh</b>	<b>PDA (Advocacy and Communications Unit)</b>

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