



CONCEPT NOTE

6TH KNOWLEDGE SHARING WORKSHOP ON CHILD PROTECTION

JUNE 2022

Introduction

Participatory Development Associates, in conjunction with the Department of Children under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, will hold the 6th edition of its annual Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Child Protection. Since 2017, these workshops have provided a platform for convening key actors in the Ghanaian child protection space to discuss issues of child protection online and offline.

Background

PDA's Role in Child Protection in Ghana

For the past twenty years, PDA has been a thought-leader in research and advocacy on a wide range of issues related to child rights and protection particularly in Ghana. Apart from the annual knowledge sharing workshops that have generated awareness, strengthened partnerships, and stimulated concerted efforts to improve the state of child protection in the country, the organization has also committed resources to monitoring and tracking child abuse cases reported in the Ghanaian media in order to advocate for victims and press for justice against perpetrators of criminal acts against children. Moreover, PDA is a member of the National Child Protection Committee of Ghana, working closely with government and non-government stakeholders of child protection to plan, develop, implement and assess various initiatives to enhance child protection in the country.

In 2020, PDA launched a report on [The State of Child Protection in Ghana](#), the first of its kind. The publication discusses concerns ranging from child labour and trafficking to issues of child marriage, and makes policy proposals for strengthening the child protection system in Ghana. Aside from this, PDA has maintained child protection as a key aspect of its strategic focus, and has – through its continuing relationships with partner organizations – embarked on research, training, and evaluation of child protection-focused interventions. The organization has thereby been involved in targeted efforts dealing with issues like child trafficking, slavery and forced labour, and has developed and implemented child labour remediation methodologies in cocoa growing communities that have led to a reduction in incidences of child labour on cocoa farms.

The Knowledge Sharing Workshops have remained a flagship event for child protection. Previous editions of the Knowledge Sharing Workshops on Child Protection have focused attention on child exploitation as a result of poverty, the various aspects of child protection raised in The State of Child Protection in Ghana report, child protection in schools, the hydra-headed issues of protecting children with disabilities, and child online protection. Recordings of these are available [here](#). This year's event will return the spotlight to the continuing reality of child labour in Ghana.

About Child Labour in Ghana

Despite the government's commitment to attaining SDG Goal 8.7 by ratifying all the key conventions on the issue, child labour has remained a pervasive challenge in every region of Ghana. While it often takes the form of harmfully engaging in the agricultural or mineral industries in rural areas, child labour in urban communities includes street-trading, begging (for themselves or assisting adults with disabilities), manually transporting heavy loads as kayaye, and domestic servitude.

It has been estimated that more than one out of every five children in Ghana (21.8%) is involved in child work, and over 60% of children who are not in school are engaged in hazardous child labour. The majority of child labourers (37.2%) are 8-11 years, followed by 12-14 years (29.8%). This means that most child labourers are below the minimum age for employment (i.e. 15 years) and should be in school. Some 32.5% of Ghanaian children are also combining child labour with school attendance, affecting the quality of their education, with foreseeable negative effects on their socio-economic empowerment and communities.

The alarming concern of exploitation of children in domestic servitude and commercial sex work is also on the rise, although its informal nature and confusion with acceptable child work makes such cases difficult to pursue. 91% of children who suffered some form of abuse were involved in child labour, and 87.4% of such children were engaged in hazardous forms of child labour. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated matters: as nationwide school closures began on March 16, 2020 in Ghana, several children were forced to enter/re-enter the workforce in order to support their families' much-reduced incomes, and to occupy themselves in the absence of schoolwork. Many such are yet to fully resume their education even though schools have been re-opened. Sadly, the desire of children and their families to make quick money undermines their engagement of the slower path of a proper education.

Child labour not only poses well-known immediate health, safety and development risks, but is also associated with compromised earning prospects and chances of securing decent work in the longer term, perpetuating vicious cycles of intergenerational poverty. Yet there are still a significant number of people who are inadequately aware of the concept and consequences of child labour. There also remains the need for an inter-sectoral determination to lay and/or strengthen social, policy and institutional foundations for the elimination and prevention of all forms of child labour in the long term.

About This Year's Event

This year's workshop will draw attention to the efforts and challenges that have accompanied Ghana's journey to achieving SDG Goal 8.7 of securing the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms, and spearhead discussions among stakeholders on what must and can be done to accelerate the nation's attainment of the SDG target.

The objectives of the 2022 Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Child Protection are therefore to:

- Draw attention to the meaning and prevalence of child labour (awareness creation)
- Share the successes and challenges encountered by PDA and other partners in protecting the working child
- Encourage all stakeholders to re-commit to eliminating hazardous child work in Ghana by 2025
- Provide a platform to consolidate efforts in the fight to eliminate/reduce child labour and all forms of hazardous child work in Ghana by 2025

Event Structure and Details

At the workshop, a presentation and accompanying documentary on PDA and its partners' past and current involvement in initiatives related to child labour will be featured. This will include a highlight of PDA's Child Labour Remediation and VSLA-CHILD projects being carried out in conjunction with our partners Nyonkopa and Beyond Beans, respectively. This will be followed by an exhibition of knowledge products – photos, learning materials, guides and handbooks – that have had immense impact in sensitizing communities about child labour. A panel discussion will then ensue, comprising representatives from the government, CSO, and private sectors. The workshop will end with an interactive session fielding contributions, questions and comments from attendants.

Below are the proposed details of the event:

Theme: Child Labor and the Working Child: Institutional Approaches to Child Labor Remediation in Ghana

Date: Thursday, 24th November 2022

Venue: Kofi Annan International Peace-Keeping and Training Centre - Advanced Information Technology Institute (KAIPTC-AITI)

Time: 9:00 am - 12.30 pm