

# Growing Up Free

Ending Child Trafficking in Ghana



## Final Project Report

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

September 2020

## Project Partners

### FREE THE SLAVES

[Free the Slaves](#) changes the social, economic and political conditions that allow slavery to persist. We support community-driven interventions in partnership with local groups that help people to sustainable freedom and dismantle a region's system of slavery.

### INTERNATIONAL NEEDS GHANA

[International Needs Ghana](#) (INGH) is a Christian development organization committed to seeing transformed lives and changed communities through partnerships guided by God's love and a commitment to holistic development.

### PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES

[Participatory Development Associates](#) (PDA) is an organization of skilled people who aim to support processes of empowerment and self-determination in communities, organizations and individuals. Founded in 2001, it has been at the forefront of research, evaluation and development facilitation.

### U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT

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The contents of this report are the responsibility of Free the Slaves, and do not reflect the views of the Department of State or the United States Government.

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## Executive Summary

The Growing Up Free (GUF) project has been implemented in Ghana since 2015 as part of the Child Protection Compact (CPC) agreement between the Government of Ghana and that of the United States to support efforts of the Government of Ghana and Ghanaian civil society to address child sex trafficking and forced child labor. The first phase<sup>i</sup> of the project was implemented from 2016 to 2019 in four regions—Central, Greater Accra, Oti and Volta—and focused primarily on addressing child labor trafficking, child sex trafficking, and other forms of abuse such as hazardous child labor and child marriage in fishing communities where such abuses are pervasive. While GUF focused primarily on trafficking for sex and labor, other forms of exploitation (child marriage, hazardous child labor), were also considered in the communities learning groups' agendas because of their common occurrence in the project communities.

Using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods, the study was conducted in six districts across 34 communities in the Central, Greater Accra, Oti and Volta regions of Ghana where the GUF project was implemented. Collection of qualitative data followed random and purposive sampling processes where Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIs) were held to solicit relevant information on each community regarding how the GUF project has contributed to addressing child trafficking. Survey questionnaires were also administered to households who were identified as having cases of Child Labor Trafficking (CLT), Hazardous Child Labor (HCL), Child Sex Trafficking (CST) or Child Marriages to obtain data on their specific household characteristics and to confirm the cases. Project documents were also reviewed as part of the evaluation. Though the focus of the GUF project was on labor and sex trafficking, other forms of exploitation such as hazardous child work and child marriages that are prevalent in GUF communities and could be intrinsically linked to labor and sex trafficking were also explored in the evaluation and have been captured in this report. This is because, while GUF did not focus on these forms of exploitation, the implementation team attempted to address them as they became aware of their occurrence in project communities.

## Acronyms

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| AG     | Attorney General                                      |
| AHTU   | Anti-Human Trafficking Unit                           |
| CCPC   | Child Community Protection Committee                  |
| CHRAJ  | Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice |
| CLT    | Child Labor Trafficking                               |
| CLU    | Child Labour Unit                                     |
| CPC    | Child Protection Compact                              |
| CST    | Child Sex Trafficking                                 |
| DCPC   | District Child Protection Committee                   |
| ERC    | Ethics Review Committee                               |
| FGD    | Focus Group Discussion                                |
| FTS    | Free the Slaves                                       |
| GES    | Ghana Education Service                               |
| GLSS   | Ghana Living Standards Survey                         |
| GUF    | Growing Up Free                                       |
| HCL    | Hazardous Child Labor                                 |
| ILO    | International Labour Organization                     |
| INGH   | International Needs Ghana                             |
| KAP    | Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice                     |
| KII    | Key Informant Interview                               |
| MICS   | Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey                     |
| MoGCSP | Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection    |
| NCCE   | National Commission for Civic Education               |
| NCE    | No Cost Extension                                     |
| NGO    | Non-Governmental Organization                         |
| PDA    | Participatory Development Associates                  |
| PRA    | Participatory Rural Appraisal                         |
| VSLA   | Village Savings and Loans Association                 |

## Definitions and Operationalization of Key Terms

**Child Protection<sup>ii</sup>:** The goal of child protection is to promote, protect and fulfill children's rights to protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights, humanitarian, and refugee treaties and conventions, as well as national laws.

**Trafficking In Persons and Human Trafficking<sup>iii</sup>:** These are used as umbrella terms for the act of recruiting, harbouring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts using force, fraud, or coercion. Compelled service includes involuntary servitude, slavery or practices similar to slavery, debt bondage, and forced labor. Human trafficking can include, but does not require, movement. People may be considered trafficking victims regardless of whether they were born into a state of servitude, were transported to the exploitative situation, previously consented to work for a trafficker, or participated in a crime as a direct result of being trafficked. At the heart of this phenomenon is the traffickers' goal of exploiting and enslaving their victims and the myriad coercive and deceptive practices they use to do so.



**Child Trafficking (CLT)<sup>iv</sup>:** A form of trafficking in persons whose purpose is to subject children to forced labor. Any person who engages in recruiting, harbouring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a child for the purpose of forced labor has committed this crime. Forced child labor includes situations in which:

- a) The child is in the custody of someone (including immediate family members) who requires the child to perform work that financially benefits that person.
- b) Situations in which a parent gives their child away to be subject to forced labor. In these cases, the child does not have the option of leaving the employment and the parent or person put in charge of the child benefits materially and/or financially from their work.

**Hazardous Child Labor (HCL)<sup>v</sup>:** A child performing any work that by its nature or the process of carrying out the work possibly harms the child's health, safety or moral. HCL can also be identified as:

- a) The use, procuring, or offering of a child for prostitution or pornography.
- b) The use, procuring, or offering of a child for illicit activities, especially the production and trafficking of drugs.
- c) Any other form of labor that jeopardizes the physical, mental, or moral well-being of a child, either because of its nature or because of the conditions in which it is carried out.

It is important to note that not all hazardous child labor is child labor trafficking; however, all trafficked children are likely to be victims of hazardous work.

**Child Sex Trafficking<sup>vi</sup>:** A form of trafficking in persons that occurs when a child is recruited, harboured, transported, provided, obtained, or maintained for the purpose of performing a commercial sex act from which the trafficker benefits financially. Children who are prostituted are sex trafficking victims, without regard to whether force is used to make them engage in commercial sex.

**Child Marriage:** The United Nations defines child marriage as any marriage in which at least one of the parties is a child, thus, below the age of consent. Given that child marriage therefore inherently implies a lack of consent, it can also be considered a form of forced marriage, in which at least one party is coerced or made to enter into the union without their informed, "full and free consent".<sup>vii</sup>



## Project Description

The Growing Up Free (GUF) project was a 4-year project, originally implemented in 34 fishing communities from 2016-2019, that has since been extended. It serves the Central, Greater Accra, Volta and Oti regions of Ghana through International Needs Ghana with technical assistance from Free The Slaves to respond to child labor trafficking and child sex trafficking, which are found to be prevalent in Ghanaian rural fishing communities.

The project intended to raise community awareness of these phenomena as well as rescue, rehabilitate and reintegrate survivors back to their families. The project further targeted vulnerable households at risk of trafficking their children with additional livelihood and support interventions to reduce risks.

The GUF project worked with state institutions including the Anti-Human Trafficking Secretariat of the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection, Department of Community Development, Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) of the Ghana Police Service, Attorney General Department (AG), the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), the Child Labour Unit (CLU) as well as other relevant stakeholders at district and local levels.

### Project Objectives

The goal of GUF is to enhance the effectiveness of Ghana's efforts to combat child trafficking. Based on the background outlined above, the program has three objectives.

- **Protection Objective 1:** Increased the number of child trafficking victims in 6 districts and 34 communities in the Volta, Oti, Central, and Greater Accra regions who receive comprehensive, gender-sensitive, trauma-informed care and case management services provided with appropriate community integration and follow up.
- **Protection Objective 2:** Families of children rescued through this program and identified as at-risk in program communities will be able to provide for the basic needs of their children, including shelter, food, healthcare, and education.
- **Prevention Objective 3:** Increase awareness and knowledge of child trafficking in Ghana to prevent child trafficking from occurring and promote appropriate community action when child trafficking is suspected.

### Evaluation Objectives

This evaluation seeks to understand how the GUF project has impacted the prevalence and awareness of child labor trafficking and child sex trafficking in all 34 communities in the Greater Accra, Central, Oti and Volta regions where it was implemented. This endline and summative evaluation, therefore, seeks to assess impact and changes that have occurred in regard to the crimes above as a result of implementing the project. Hence, the specific objectives of the endline and summative study include:

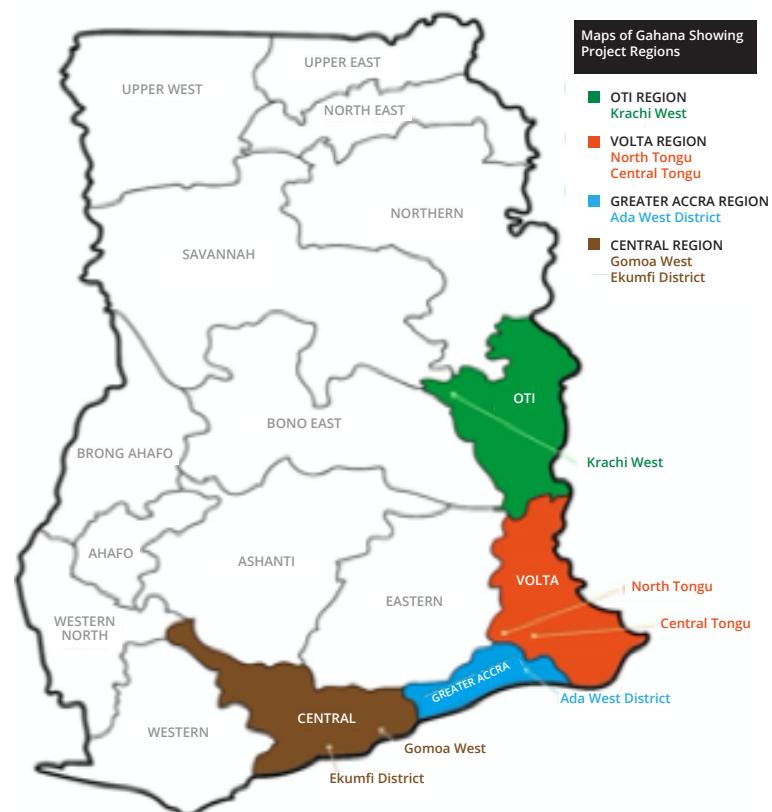
- To measure the change in prevalence of child trafficking and hazardous child labor in 34 communities in the Central, Greater Accra and Volta Regions.
- To assess change in knowledge, attitudes and practice of child trafficking in the project communities.
- To offer lessons and recommendations to FTS as necessary to improve the future design of similar interventions in Ghana and elsewhere.

### Geographic Context

The GUF project was implemented mainly in Ghana's coastal and fishing regions. These regions include Central, Greater Accra, Volta and Oti. While the Oti Region is inland, it is located close to the largest man-made lake in the world, Lake Volta, which is also a major fishing corridor in Ghana. Altogether, the GUF project was implemented in 34 rural communities spread across these regions. Fishing is the main source of livelihood for residents in these communities, followed by agriculture and trading. Rural Ghana, where the 34 GUF project communities are located, comprises the country's poorest regions.<sup>viii</sup> The endemic nature of poverty, coupled with a lack of well-paying jobs, exposes households and particularly children to myriad risks and vulnerabilities, including the tendency to be sold for sexual exploitation and forced labor, which often includes exposure to hazardous work.

Figure 1 below presents the political map of Ghana indicating the GUF project regions and districts.

**Figure 1: Map of Ghana<sup>ix</sup> Showing GUF Project Regions and Districts**



# Methodology

## Evaluation Design and Approach

The evaluation used multiple approaches due to the complex and sensitive nature of identifying child exploitation issues, especially for child trafficking. First, a simple before and after approach was adopted to compare before and post-project findings on the key indicators of interest to the project. Second, the evaluation also used a vigorous participatory rural appraisal (PRA) method to gather relevant community information for the evaluation and to estimate the prevalence of child exploitation cases across the communities. PRA methods used include participatory social mapping and census, rankings, scoring, and guided walks. The evaluation used a traditional mixed-methods approach to gather both qualitative and quantitative data, though more rigorous qualitative data were gathered than quantitative. All project reports were also reviewed to capture project trajectory and evidence of impact on knowledge, attitudes, and practices.



The baseline report captured the prevalence of child trafficking at the community level, household and individual knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) pertaining to child labor trafficking, hazardous child labor, and child sex trafficking before or just at the time of the GUF implementation in all project communities. This endline assessment compares happenings in the project communities regarding child trafficking three to four years after the first implementation of the GUF project with an objective to explore variation and drivers of change (if any) in the communities. In using a mixed-methods evaluation approach, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews were used to gather qualitative data on KAPs using interactive facilitation tools and participatory rural appraisal techniques. Surveys were also carried out at the household level to follow-up on identified or suspected cases of child exploitation.



### Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

There were four focus groups in each community—for adolescent girls, adolescent boys, adult men and adult women. Each FGD had a minimum of six and a maximum of 12 participants to enable varied views but also for researchers to successfully guide discussions. The FGDs asked about participants' knowledge, attitudes and practices, and had questions similar to those asked at the baseline. PRA tools such as ranking and scoring were used to collect some of the information since many FGD participants were non-literate.

### Social Mapping<sup>x</sup>

Social Mapping was also carried out with FGD participants. Three groups of people who participated in the FGDs – adult men, adult women and adolescents (girls and boys together) were shown maps of their community that were drawn during the baseline evaluation and reviewed with CCPC members at the time of community entry and mobilization. The maps include all households, social centers, roads, and landmarks. Participants were then asked to validate all the features already plotted on the map as well as add new information that was not captured on the map. The social mapping also served as a census for the communities, as participants were requested to indicate the household size and socio-economic status of each household they put on the map. The following socio-economic ranking system that was used in the baseline study and was repeated here: "poor", "managing" and "affluent". Each ranking was determined relative to the socio-economic makeup of the community in which it was carried out and is specific to each community.

### Household Surveys

After the social mapping, households identified as having instances of child trafficking and child labor were surveyed to ascertain the validity of the claims. These households were recorded on a data sheet and completed a survey questionnaire of their specific household characteristics and were asked to confirm the instance of exploitation.



### Key Informant Interviews (KII)

In addition to FGDs, 2 KIIs were conducted in each community with opinion leaders, local government representatives, and community-wide informants. In addition, at least one interview was done at the district level with members of the District Child Protection Committee (DCPC) in all the districts where this committee was present (Ekumfi, Gomoa West, Ada West, North and Central Tongu, Krachi).

### Methodological Limitations

- The social mapping approach is a community-led process that fosters inclusion and participation of the community in the research process and in the findings that come from it. However, there are inherent limitations to the use of social mapping in identifying sensitive matters involving trafficking or child marriage and in tracking changes in such phenomena. Some of these limitations are specific to the context and not to the social mapping approach while others are a general limitation to using social mapping. For instance, it is difficult to get information on trafficking and any other exploitation that is clandestine. For this reason, even though sex trafficking and child marriage were anecdotally reported to be prevalent in the communities during the general focus group discussions, very few cases were identified through the social mapping process. Usually, people refer to them as things that used to happen but are no longer pervasive in their communities. Due to the communal lifestyle of the local people, some community members felt hesitant to talk about other people's households, and hence would not point to other households as having any of the cases the evaluation sought to discover.
- Limited accurate information is known about what is happening outside the community. The social mapping process is effective largely for identifying cases within a community but less effective in unravelling what is happening elsewhere outside the community. For instance, sex trafficking was largely found not to be prevalent in the communities. However, many study participants feared the practice may exist in the major fishing areas in Ghana (e.g. Yeji, Half-Assini, etc.) and in neighboring countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Benin and Senegal where children from these communities are usually trafficked to. In all, they are unable to pinpoint which households may have victims of sex trafficking in those places due to the clandestine nature of the trafficking process, particularly for sexual exploitation.

# Challenges and Limitations

## Difficulty Working with Baseline Maps

In most of the 20 communities where the baseline was first conducted in 2016, the maps had to be redrawn from scratch, which was not initially planned as part of the evaluation's design. Community members initially rejected the maps as not being representative of the realities of some communities in the Central and Volta regions. As a result, in communities where the trafficking cases identified at baseline were untraceable, the evaluation had to rely on only cases reported at the endline for analysis in these communities. Thus, qualitative interviews (FGDs, KIIs) were used to gather insight into the prevalence of trafficking at baseline relative to endline. Of the 33 communities where the endline study was completed, 13 had baseline to endline comparison maps.

## Challenges in Identifying Baseline Cases in the first 20 Communities and Households in Larger Communities

It was also impossible to trace some cases of trafficking identified at the baseline. Though tracking sheets<sup>xi</sup> were available for most of the communities, CCPC members in some communities in the Central Region faced significant difficulties in tracing people on the baseline tracking sheets. In some instances, only a handful of households were traced – the rest were done again without access to the baseline information available. This was peculiar in the Central Region, where communal interaction among residents was relatively less. While the team managed to identify households in these larger communities through other means, such as consulting local informants and going house-to-house, this difficulty may have affected the numbers reported from these communities, both in terms of the households counted and the number of cases recorded. In reality, there may be far more cases of child trafficking than we have been able to uncover even though the numbers being reported are believed to provide a reliable sense of the endemic nature of these abuses. This situation of possible underreporting is however not characteristic to the endline study alone; similar challenges were encountered and reported in both the 2016 and 2017 baseline studies.



### Lack of Community Cooperation

Some communities reacted to the study with hostility and would not allow the study to proceed in their area. This was a larger issue during the baseline study of 2016 in the first 20 communities. Although the study was carried out rather efficiently across the communities during the endline in 2019, there were concentrated instances of confrontations by locals, particularly in the Volta Region. In a specific instance in the Volta Region, the team could not complete the study because the locals would not allow it. These community members accused the GUF project leading to the arrest of some fisherfolks in the community who were working with children, hence they viewed the evaluation as an extension of the project that might further expose community members to legal prosecution and arrest. The CCPC members withdrew their support for the study for fear of being targeted for attacks if they participated in it in any form. In spite of this, the team completed two FGDs (adult females; adolescent females) as well as one KII in that community. In the end, the endline evaluation was completed in all but one of the 34 target communities.

### Ethical Clearance

In order to protect the rights and information of research participants, this study sought ethical clearance from PDA's Ethical Reviews Committee (ERC). An application that outlined the methodology and research tools was submitted to the ERC three weeks prior to commencing the training and data collection, which was then reviewed by a team of independent and experienced research consultants with strong backgrounds in ethical research methods. The ERC provided feedback and guidance to prevent the methodology and tools from violating research participants' rights and dignity.

## Key Findings

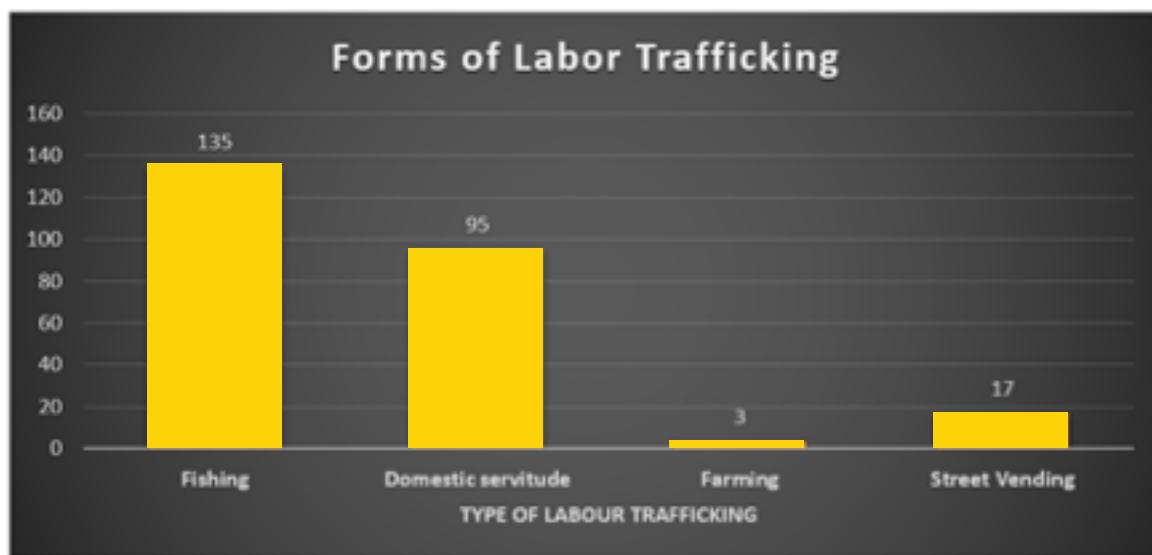
Analysis of the findings from this endline study revealed certain trends, which included the prevalence of child trafficking cases, manifesting in the form of child labor trafficking and sexual exploitation, as well as high rates of hazardous child labor taking place in the regions and communities where GUF operates. There were also high rates of instances of child marriage.

### Prevalence of Child Trafficking

#### Child Labor Trafficking

In all 33 communities where the endline assessment was conducted, child exploitation remains prevalent. However, the prevalence rates recorded across the communities at this time were generally lower than the baseline figures. Exceptions to this are some communities in the Central Region that reported more cases at the endline than were recorded at the baseline. For example, in Asaafa, the number of trafficking cases reported was higher at the endline than at the baseline. Also, communities (e.g. Edumafa and Asaafa) did not see much variation in trafficking cases between the baseline and the endline. Figure 2 below presents a summary of trafficking cases recorded across all project communities.

Figure 2: Forms of Child Labor Trafficking Cases across all GUF Communities

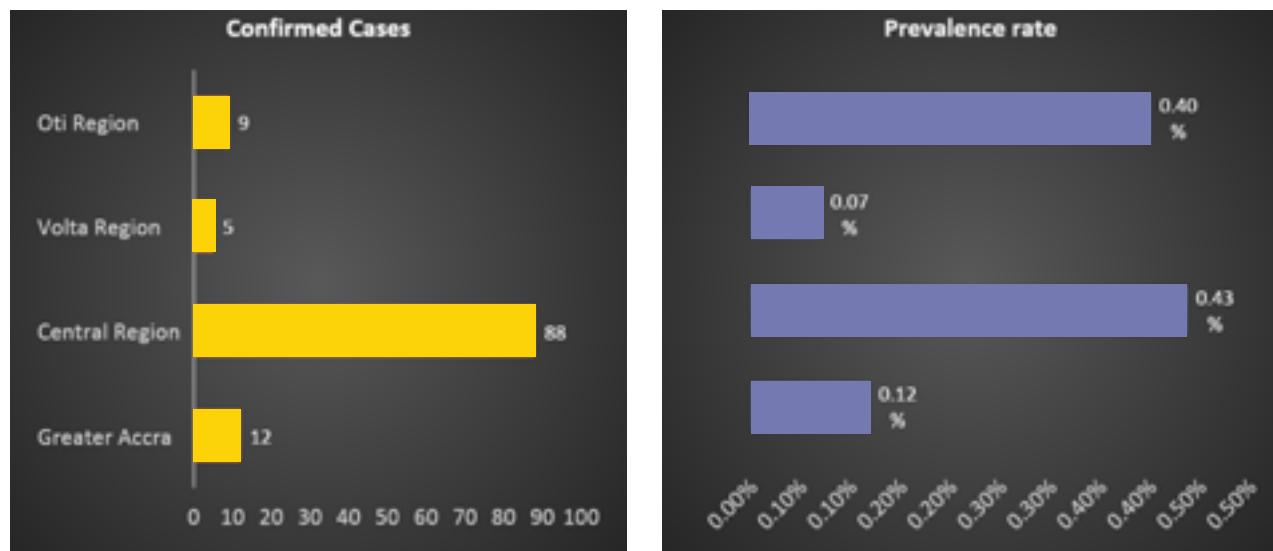


Source: field data, 2019

Child labor trafficking in the fishing industry (54%) represented the dominant form of trafficking perpetuated in the communities, followed by trafficking into domestic servitude (38%). Aside from these dominant forms of trafficking, children were also trafficked into street vending (6.8%) and farming (1.2%) in the GUF project areas.

Figure 3 demonstrates that the highest number of confirmed child labor trafficking cases across the four regions were found in the Central Region, which also had the highest trafficking prevalence rate overall. The lowest prevalence rate was reported in the Volta Region (0.07%).

**Figure 3: Distribution and Prevalence of Child Labor Trafficking, by Region**



### Child Sex Trafficking

Suspected cases of child sex trafficking were only recorded in five communities of the Central Region (Asaafa, n=3; Immuna, n=2; Arkra, n=1; Ekumpoano, n=1; Otuam, n=1). In all other regions, there were no reported cases of sex trafficking. Nevertheless, the lack of reported cases does not necessarily mean that trafficking is not taking place, rather, it reflects the inherent difficulty in identifying sex trafficking since it is carried out clandestinely in communities where children are brought (and therefore not known or identified).

### Hazardous Child Labor

Hazardous child labor still remains the most common form of child exploitation across all of the GUF project communities, despite overall prevalence rates decreasing in the last four years (see sections on regional findings).

The fishing industry comprises the dominant sector in which children are exploited for their labor. Fishing is also the main source of livelihood for most community members within the GUF project communities, and has been a constant characteristic of the project communities since the start of the project.

As per regional comparison, the Central Region reflected the highest numbers of confirmed cases of hazardous child labor (121), followed by the Greater Accra (18), Oti (13) and the Volta regions (3). The Central Region also reported the highest prevalence of hazardous child labor (0.60%), followed by the Oti (0.58%), Greater Accra (0.18%) and the Volta region (0.04%). Figure 4 presents a summary of the distribution and prevalence of hazardous child labor across the project's four regions.

**Figure 4: Forms of Child Labor Trafficking Cases across all GUF Communities**



Source: Field Data, 2019

Overall, the number of hazardous child labor cases has declined since the GUF project began. The qualitative interviews supported that the GUF project has had a positive influence on how the children are treated across the communities in regards to labor.



### Child Marriage

The presence of child marriage remains a complex issue and is quite difficult to identify across the communities. Challenges in identifying child marriage cases have existed since the project baseline, which have also presented issues with the reporting of cases. While there is evidence of child marriage in some of the communities, the element of force is not always so explicitly observed and the formality of the marriage is often culturally defined. Within the project communities, child marriage often results out of girls becoming sexually active, and eventually leads to unplanned pregnancies and cohabitation. As a result, most of the cases of child marriage are not formal marriages because in most instances, marriage rites are not performed even though the child may have moved to live with her partner. Inherently, child marriage is closely linked to teenage pregnancy, which often results due to girls' economic vulnerability and dependence on men, rather than institutionalized cultural practices. In terms of cases of child marriage, 31 unconfirmed cases were reported in the Central Region, five in the Oti Region, three in the Greater Accra Region, and none in the Volta Region. However, only three cases each of child marriages were confirmed to be real cases in the Central and Greater Accra regions, with no case confirmed in the Oti Region.

### Enabling Factors of Child Trafficking

Several factors were determined to contribute to child trafficking, including poverty, large families, deception and trickery, among others. As such, the GUF project has been designed to address these underlying conditions that can make children more vulnerable to exploitation.

#### Poverty

A lack of reliable livelihood opportunities was consistently mentioned as the leading cause of trafficking in all of the project communities. Nevertheless, poverty was not the only cause of trafficking identified in the communities.

#### Large Family Size / High Fertility Rate

Some parents have many children in the hope of engaging them in their business or family livelihood, once they are considered old enough to support. However, parents' difficulties in attending to the needs of each of their children, compounded by poverty and the stress of providing for them, sometimes forces them to give their children away for trafficking to reduce the household burden.



### Deception

Parents and their children are sometimes made to believe that there will be better opportunities for decent employment and better education elsewhere. Traffickers sometimes persuade parents that they will enroll their children in school and have an improved quality of life in the places they will be brought. However, upon reaching their destinations, children are usually subjected to forced labor and harsh living conditions. In some cases, traffickers use child labor as a ploy for parents' debt relief, promising to send children back home as soon as the children have paid it off, but these children end up working many more years.

Table 1 below presents an overview of exploitation cases at baseline and endline across the communities.

**Table 1: Baseline-Endline Prevalence Rates Across Communities (%)**

| Regions       | Communities  | Child Labor Trafficking (CLT) |         | Child Sex Trafficking* (CST) |         | Forced Child Marriage (FCM) |         | Hazardous Child Labor (HCL) |         |
|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------|---------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------|
|               |              | Baseline                      | Endline | Baseline                     | Endline | Baseline                    | Endline | Baseline                    | Endline |
| Greater Accra | Akplabanya   | -                             | 7.14    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | 4.76    |
|               | Anyamam      | -                             | 2.91    | -                            | -       | -                           | 0.49    | -                           | 4.85    |
|               | Lolonya      | -                             | 0.69    | -                            | -       | -                           | 1.39    | -                           | 2.78    |
|               | Wokumagbe    | 2.21                          | 3.39    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | 3.39    |
| Central       | Arkra        | -                             | 4.82    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | -       |
|               | Asaafa       | 5.86                          | 6.43    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | 4.02                        | 13.65   |
|               | Dago         | -                             | 2.52    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | 3.42    |
|               | Edumafa      | 6.11                          | 2.47    | -                            | -       | -                           | 0.41    | -                           | 9.88    |
|               | Ekumpoano    | -                             | 1.90    | -                            | -       | -                           | 0.47    | -                           | 0.47    |
|               | Amissano     | 6.85                          | 1.96    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | 3.27    |
|               | Hweda        | -                             | -       | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | 1.53    |
|               | Immuna       | -                             | 3.13    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | 1.56    |
|               | Narkwa       | -                             | 0.57    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | -       |
|               | Odukum       | -                             | 2.51    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | 7.04    |
|               | Otuam        | -                             | 3.26    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | 0.6     |
|               | Penkye       | -                             | 0.96    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | 0.64    |
| Oti           | Srafa Aboano | -                             | 2.17    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | 6.52    |
|               | Srafa Mpoano | 10.25                         | 7.30    | -                            | -       | -                           | 0.73    | -                           | 7.3     |
|               | Chantai      | 5.94                          | 1.14    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | -       |
|               | Dzilakope    | 32.75                         | 4.11    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | 6.85    |
|               | Mamata       | 13.84                         | 1.67    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | 5       |
|               | Sablakope    | 4.12                          | 4.12    | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | 2.06                        | 5.15    |
|               | Tokpo        | 2.42                          | -       | -                            | -       | -                           | -       | -                           | -       |

Source: Field Data, 2017 and 2019

\*No confirmed cases



## Discussion and Recommendations

Based on these findings, we have developed a few key observations and recommendations, relevant for implementation at the national and institutional levels, and more localized district and community levels, respectively. These are elaborated upon in the following section.

### National/Institutional Level

- Equal emphasis should be given to sex education, family planning and supporting good parenting practices as to spreading awareness of trafficking. Limited knowledge around the enabling factors of trafficking in the project areas further exposes children to vulnerabilities, including being targeted for sex work. Educating and spreading information on these topics would make significant progress in tackling issues of poor parenting, child poverty, and neglect arising from the burdens of child dependency and early parenthood, which are leading risk factors of child trafficking and other related child vulnerabilities in the communities. This could be the responsibility of the appropriate government agencies, such as the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGSCP) at both the national and local levels.

- Children should also be equipped through education to have a greater awareness of their rights to resist forced work and sexual exploitation. As much as the adults who are the perpetrators of child trafficking should be targeted in becoming aware of trafficking prevention, children should also be made aware of these issues to avoid becoming victims. The more that children are empowered with information on child trafficking and their rights under national laws, as well as with the knowledge of how to report traffickers to law enforcement, the more difficult it becomes for adults to exploit them. FTS and INGH could engage the Ministry of Education/Ghana Education Services (GES), the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), and MoGCSP to roll out similar strategies targeting parents and out-of-school children in rural communities. At the community level, the DCPC and Social Welfare, working through the CCPGs could be drafted in to lead awareness-raising strategies in the GUF project areas.
- It is also necessary to strengthen collaboration on the fight against child trafficking at the national, local and community levels. Child trafficking has multiple facets and transcends national borders and therefore more and accurate information is needed at all levels to identify the cases and dynamics of trafficking to design appropriate and holistic responses to address it. It is important to unite efforts of formal and informal authorities and community members. This liaising relationship would promote a joint collaborative fight against child trafficking in communities and beyond. The GUF project's approach of using community level structures to spearhead the fight appeared effective and should be maintained as well as mainstream in future programming designs.
- Collaborations should be strengthened, and enforcement responses expedited from bodies such as the police and legal institutions to deal with cases of child trafficking. The police should be supported to strengthen criminal responses against perpetrators through arrests. Likewise, the legal system should be supported and equipped to prosecute perpetrators and enforce punishment according to the national laws. This should come from strict legislation and enforcement by the Government of Ghana through the relevant state agencies for child protection. With the experiences and insights from the GUF project, FTS and INGH could engage the Parliament of Ghana among other relevant bodies to develop guidelines for strict enforcement of the human trafficking laws, particularly where children are involved.

- There also needs to be further conversation and advocacy for national data on child trafficking. One of the challenges in the fight against child trafficking in Ghana is that it is difficult to access national child trafficking data that is also current, reliable and agreed upon by all parties. Most of the national databases or statistics (e.g. GLSS, MICS) make references to child labor (including hazardous) and other crimes such as child marriage but little information is provided regarding the prevalence of trafficking in Ghana nationwide. While there is some micro-level research and data on trafficking, particularly on Lake Volta by NGOs and private interest groups, some of this data rather heightens debate instead of building consensus on its prevalence and severity. This in a way does not help to mobilize the needed support and resources to fight child trafficking in Ghana. It is proposed that, riding on the back of the GUF project, FTS and INGH will lead a national conversation or advocacy on the need to produce national level statistics on child trafficking prevalence in Ghana.

### District/Local/Community Level

- Education and awareness should be sustained and intensified. There is evidence indicating that awareness-raising and advocacy carried out on child trafficking have proven useful in driving the social consciousness of the communities and mobilizing community support against child trafficking. However, awareness raising and advocacy in the communities should not come to a halt following the end of the GUF project. The CCPCs that have been formed in the communities ought to be supported to operate independently following the project closure and continue to spread awareness of trafficking in the communities. The FTS and INGH teams could work with the DCPC and other district-level stakeholders involved in the project to support the CCPCs to sustain awareness and consciousness beyond the life of the GUF project.
- Access to means of economic empowerment for both children and adults should be amplified, to address the issue of economic vulnerability contributing to trafficking. Through cost-efficient interventions, such as the creation of VSLAs and livelihoods training, adults can be financially empowered to raise their own capital and generate livelihood opportunities for themselves. Children, on the other hand, can be empowered through vocational training. This is especially true for girls and boys who have dropped out of school for several reasons, including early parenting and financial constraints. This would reduce poverty, a major factor attributed to most cases of child trafficking. As VSLA training was part of the GUF project and some groups have been formed already, the scale of VSLAs could be expanded to include more vulnerable households. FTS and INGH could engage the District Assemblies and the above departments to prioritize and scale up such livelihood support interventions.

- Strengthen the collaboration among DCPCs, CCPCs and district-level law enforcement agencies. As the GUF project comes to an end, there is an urgent need to create a sustainable working relationship and collaboration between the structures created by the project (DCPC, CCPC) and various law enforcement bodies and the justice systems at the district and local levels. This will ensure that cases get reported to the right authorities and appropriate action taken even after the GUF project has ended. FTS and INGH could work to introduce the CCPC concept to these district-level law enforcement bodies among other relevant stakeholders that were not directly involved in the GUF project to create a working collaboration that outlives the GUF project. This will support long-term gains and continuity in the fight against child trafficking.
- The CPCCs and DCPCs should be sustained and energized through fixed-term but renewable memberships to promote their community effectiveness. They (particularly CCPCs) could also be given forms of identification (like ID cards) to solidify legitimacy and interest. They could also be supported to work closely with district-level agencies that liaise with communities, such as the Social Welfare and Business Advisory Unit. Lastly, the CCPCs should work in tandem with the traditional authorities (chiefs) and community leaders, including assembly members to ensure their sustainability and legitimacy. These suggestions could be implemented by INGH at the local level, and INGH and FTS at the district level.



## End Notes

<sup>i</sup>A second phase of the GUF project began in September 2019 and is anticipated to conclude in March 2021

<sup>ii</sup>Summary of definition by Save the Children

<sup>iii</sup>Excerpted from the US/Ghana CPC Partnership

<sup>iv</sup>Excerpted from the US/Ghana CPC Partnership

<sup>v</sup> Summary of definition under ILO Convention No. 182

<sup>vi</sup>Excerpted from the US/Ghana CPC Partnership

<sup>vii</sup> 'Child, Early and Forced Marriage, Including in Humanitarian Settings', United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commission, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WRGS/Pages/ChildMarriage.aspx> (Accessed on 14th February 2020).

<sup>viii</sup> Ghana Statistical Service (2018). Ghana Living Standards Survey Round 7; Poverty Trends in Ghana 2005-2017

<sup>ix</sup> This is the new map of Ghana developed in 2019. During the baseline study in 2016/2017, the Oti region (in the end line study) had not been created. The Krachi-West district which was in the Volta Region at baseline is now in the Oti Region.

<sup>x</sup>This activity was mainly carried out at baseline. The maps were duplicated and updated during the endline. However, in the 20 communities where baseline data collection was done in 2016, the maps had to be drawn from scratch as the maps were not true representation of the community and did not have an accompanying accurate tracking sheet

<sup>xi</sup>A simple form that was designed by the evaluation team to capture relevant community data such as number of households, number of women, men and children in the community. It was also used to record the forms trafficking (labor, sex) and other forms of exploitation (hazardous child labor, child marriages) prevalent in each community.



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