

## **SOCIAL SUPPORT FOUNDATION (SSF)/ FREE THE SLAVES**

### **COMMUNITY RESISTANCE TO SLAVERY AND FORCED LABOUR (CRSFL) PROJECT**

#### **Outcome Journal: *Manso Asamang***

##### **1. Outcome:**

The Social Support Foundation has been able to mobilise community members and small scale miners of Manso Asamang, Amansie West District of the Ashanti Region to develop their community action plan and to raise both their own local resources (such as stones, sand and unskilled labour) as well as support from other sources to enhance educational infrastructure in the community. They also have a better understanding of slavery/debt bondage and the process of obtaining concessions. They have obtained a lot of useful information and have regained their self-confidence.

##### **2. Description: *What was the observable change in another social actors that has emerged in the reporting period?***

Through the sensitization and awareness creation under the SSF/FTS Community Resistance to Slavery and Forced Labour project, the first significant change story or success story is in Manso Asamang. The small scale miners and community members have been able to come together to understand that trafficking, debt bondage and children in small-scale mining must stop and that they must improve upon education and all children of school-going age must be in school and not mining. In that regard, SSF guided the community through several meetings to design their community action plan and to mobilize both internal and external resources to renovate their dilapidated primary school and build a new Junior High School block. Community members now appreciate formal education better than before, they now understand the need to better protect children from engaging in gamamsey activities and work closely with NGOs, including SSF, to rescue those who are currently engaged in any of the worst forms of child labour. The gamamsey team in this community now has a better understanding of what slavery, debt-bondage and the worst forms of child labour in mining are and are working to obtain their own concessions, formalise their operations, have democratically elected leadership and to eliminate children in mining.

In addition to helping the groups democratically elect their leaders, SSF also assists them in generating simple code of conducts to guide their operations. Though concessions have not been obtained yet, they now understand the concession process and the issues involved as well as where to go for what, and this makes them feel very confident. The gamamsey group told SSF that they would inform them when they are ready for the legal aid on issues regarding illegal debt. There seem to be still a lot of fear among gamamsey operators for the moneylenders. SSF believes that this fear would go away gradually, especially when they obtain more information to build their self-esteem. One gamamsey young man stated, "Even if we do not obtain concessions now, we now know we are also humans and know where to go to demand what we want, we thank SSF for this eye-opening opportunity".

### **3. Significance: *Why was the change significant for your struggle to free slaves?***

The significance is that prior to SFF's engagement, most gamsey people had little or no self-esteem and confidence. They seem to feel and believe that there is nothing they can achieve and no one regards/respects them. But this perception is changing very fast. This is helping them to also understand the issue of slavery and debt-bondage as well as the issue of children in mining and the fact that it is illegal and not good for them. Now people know and ensure that children must be in school, not mining sites.

It must also be noted that once the school (JHS and Primary) are in good shape it will promote school attendance and effective teaching and learning processes, and will thereby encourage parents and guardians to put their wards in school and reduce children in mining. In the long run, this reduces the incidence of the practices of child labour and slavery in the community and the children will also have an access to a good school in their locality.

Also, once the small scale miners have initiated the process of formalising their operations, it will reduce the use of children in small scale mining activities and help fight the incidence of debt bondage among miners. One significant point is the fact that gamsey operators democratically elect their leaders and understand that even if concessions are not obtained any time soon, they have learnt a lot and they will follow through the process on their own. They also believe that their community action plan, if well implemented, would help to improve upon the status of their community and help address the issue of slavery and debt-bondage.

### **4. Our Contribution: *How did you contribute to the change?***

Social Support Foundation contributed to the change through several sensitization and awareness creation meetings with participatory community mobilisation activities. With guidance and direction from the FTS coordinator, SSF had a series of one-on-one meetings and trainings for the community and the gamsey group. SSF also assisted the group in democratically electing their leaders and generating simple/basic code of conducts to guide them.