

SOCIAL SUPPORT FOUNDATION (SSF) / FREE THE SLAVES

COMMUNITY RESISTANCE TO SLAVERY AND FORCED LABOUR (CRSFL) PROJECT

Outcome Journal: Akrokerri and Manso Asamang

Project Objective: The formation of a task force to protect children, keep them away from mining and help them stay in school.

1. Outcome

The Social Support Foundation has helped small scale miners to form a community task force to help fight child labour in mining, to help children stay in school and to protect rights of the children. The community task force, which currently has a membership of 35 people (with democratically elected leaders), seeks to reduce the incidence of children being used at galamsey sites for gold mining activities in Akrokerri (Adansi North) and Manso Asamang (Amansie West), in the Ashanti region of Ghana.

2. Description *What was the observable change in other social factors that has emerged in the reporting period?*

The decision and the acceptance of the small scale miners in Akrokerri and Manso Asamang to form a task force to ensure that children are not trafficked or brought to the mining site to be exploited/enslaved, but rather should be in school or in an apprenticeship programme, was a clearly observable change. Though this is not full time work, task force members who are also galamsey operators understand that it is inappropriate and illegal to use children in mining and to expose them to hazardous materials and socially inappropriate behaviours. The galamsey operators now ensure that children are kept far away from the mining sites, especially during school going days and hours.

Prior to SSF intervention, all targeted task force members have children they use in their work. Now they have decided to set a good example by letting the children they use leave the sites and go back to school, and are encouraging other galamsey people to desist from the use of children in mining and all other hazardous work. The leaders in these areas are liaising with other leaders within the project area to help address the problem more thoroughly.

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

The significance of this initiative is that the task force members now understand and have accepted that children are supposed to be in the classroom and not at the gold mining sites. This understanding and initiative is very useful in fighting the worst forms of child labour in mining, will help control/eradicate the exploitation of children at

galamsey sites, and will help break down or eradicate slavery practices. This is a big step toward ensuring that the use of children in hazardous mining activities is completely eliminated in the near future. This process is currently effective in stopping both trafficked children and indigenous children from engaging in slavery in mining. The task force members quickly call SSF each time they identify and trace any child involved in mining. They intend to extend their work to also address girls who are exploited (sexually) at the site. The task force confirmed that the sexually exploited girls are very difficult to identify and address since some of them are petty traders. This initiative also sets a good example for other galamsey members at other places. SSF has given the task force members some orientation to help them protect the children better and refer them appropriately.

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

SSF has empowered and encouraged the leaders of small scale miners to form these task forces through series of dialogue and awareness creation. SSF has also given them basic orientation to help them educate others and to keep the children away from the mining sites, and rather make sure they are in school or are learning apprenticeship skills. SSF continues to work with this group on obtaining concessions and providing legal aid to those who require it.