



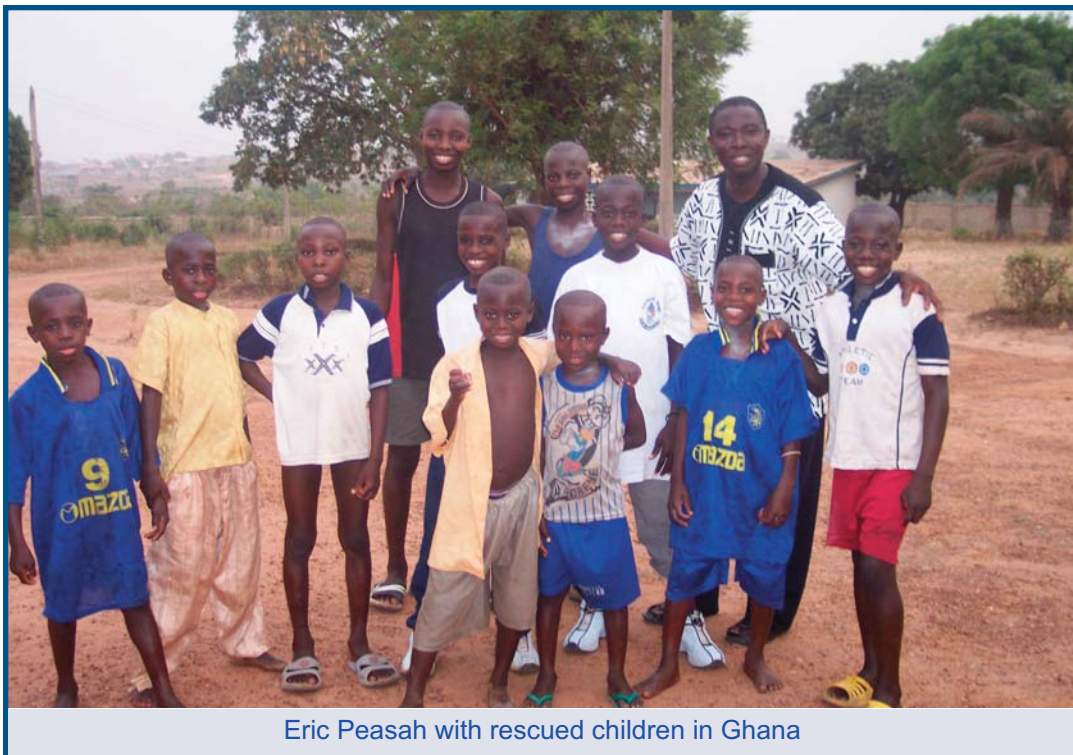
International Organization for Migration

the migration agency

NEWSLETTER

COMBATING CHILD TRAFFICKING IN GHANA *Reuniting Families*

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Eric Peasah with rescued children in Ghana

The plight of children trafficked to work on fishing boats on Ghana's Lake Volta has captured the hearts of people around the world and led to a remarkable mobilization of individuals committed to their rescue.

IOM's ongoing Yeji Trafficked Children Project in Ghana began in 2003 with support from the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM). The project works to rescue and rehabilitate the trafficked children, reunite them with their families, and provide ongoing monitoring to ensure the children will not be re-trafficked.

As of October 2008, individual donors have contributed a whopping \$500,000 to the project, far outweighing individual donations to any other project in IOM history. Many of the donors are young people themselves who are motivated to raise funds in creative ways in order to help another child in need.

This overwhelming show of support has prompted Eric Peasah, IOM Project Manager for the Yeji Trafficked Children Project, to come to the United States to visit some of the project's American donors, participate in fundraising events, speak at schools, churches and synagogues, and gain media attention for the project. Mr. Peasah will also speak at the *Conference on Protection of Unaccompanied and Separated Children*, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State PRM, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - ACF, Department of Homeland Security and George Mason University.

IOM is extremely grateful for the support of generous and compassionate individuals whose donations are improving the lives of trafficked children in Ghana. To find out how you can join the movement please refer to the back page of this newsletter.

2008 Reunification Ceremony for Children Rescued from Trafficking

In May 2008 IOM Accra, in collaboration with its local partners, reunited a group of 36 trafficked children with their families in the South-Tongu District of the Volta Region of Ghana.

These 36 children rescued by IOM in January (9 girls and 27 boys aged between 6 and 16), bring the number of children rescued and reintegrated into their respective communities to 648 since the program began in 2003.

The children were trafficked from communities in the southern part of Ghana to fishing communities in the Kete-Krachi area along Lake Volta.

Following their rescue, the children spent three-and-a-half months in comprehensive rehabilitation where they received psychosocial counseling, medical assistance, educational instruction and creative art therapy at the Department of Social Welfare's Rehabilitation Center near the capital, Accra.



A mother is reunited with her children at the May 2008 ceremony

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The reunification ceremony, which is conducted annually on 15 May, the International Day of the Family, is the next step after rehabilitation. The reunification is significant because of the cultural importance attached to the concept of family.

At the reunification ceremony, IOM Chief of Mission in Ghana, Davide Terzi said, "Reuniting the children with their parents is vital if we are to give these children the opportunity to grow up in a healthy environment, within the family setting."

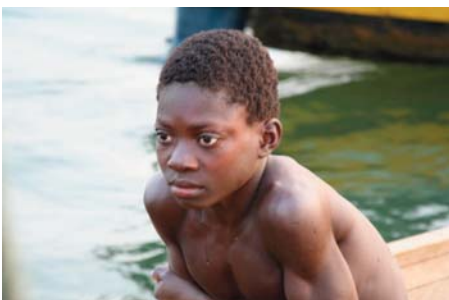
The children are continually monitored by IOM counter-trafficking field officers and IOM's partners to assess their educational and social needs in order to give effective reintegration assistance. IOM accentuates the need to reinforce community surveillance teams to prevent the children from being re-trafficked or exposed to the worst forms of child labor.

The Ghana Police Counter-Trafficking Unit has reaffirmed its commitment to enforcing the statutes enshrined in Ghana's Human Trafficking Act (2005), and encourages citizens to report human trafficking activities so that law enforcement agencies may prosecute offenders.

Karlyn J. Hunter of the United States Embassy in Ghana, said the U.S. is committed to ending the scourge of human trafficking and reiterated the positive results of the partnership between the Department of State and IOM, which has resulted in the identification and reintegration of hundreds children trafficked into the fishing industry on Ghana's Lake Volta.

The U.S. Department of State through its Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) has provided US\$30 million to IOM to support counter-trafficking projects throughout the world.

Kojo's Story



Kojo Tawiah, who hails from Gomoa-Dego in the Central Region of Ghana, was sent by his father to fish on Lake Volta two years ago.

The IOM Accra Rescue Mission Team first spotted Kojo on a fishing expedition on Lake Volta one winter day around six in the morning. Kojo shivered each time he emerged after diving into the freezing lake.

In January 2008, Kojo was successfully rescued by IOM along with 35 other fishing children.

As part of the Counter-Trafficking Reintegration process, rescued children are sent to a shelter to undergo three months of rehabilitation before being reunited with their families and reintegrated into their communities. Kojo, together with other rescued children, was sent to the Madina Social Welfare Rehabilitation Center, near Accra.

At the rehabilitation center Kojo and the other children received medical care, creative therapy and basic education in math and literacy. Kojo made many friends at the center due to his jovial and down-to-earth demeanor.

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The children are taken out to play at a local park to celebrate Independence Day (6 March), which usually falls during the rehabilitation period. This activity allows the children some exposure to the outside world and a fun, celebratory day.

Prior to reuniting the rescued children with their families, “family tracing” activities are conducted to assess the family’s readiness to receive the child, to assess the home environment and to prepare the child for reintegration.

Kojo’s family was traced to Abusenyi, a sub-locality in Gomoa-Dego, Central Region. Sadly, on 15 May, the day of the reunification ceremony, Kojo’s family could not attend. But two days later Kojo was reunited with his family.

Kojo is doing well at home and enjoys being among his peers. Best of all, his dream of attending school has finally come true. At school Kojo is interested and engaged in his classes. According to his teachers, there are occasional looks of profound sadness in his eyes, showing traces of his past experience. But attending school is a great new opportunity for Kojo and he is eager to make up for lost time. He told IOM staff that he aspires to learn as much as possible and grow up to be a responsible citizen and a “*kraakye*” (an educated person in the Fante language).

Challenges still remain for Kojo as a child growing up in an impoverished rural community that still contains the structural elements that often lead to human trafficking. It is important that he remain motivated to stay in school, thus preventing him from being re-trafficked.

Kojo’s guardian and teachers have been counseled and asked to monitor his growth and development carefully and to take a keen interest in his life. Kojo’s guardian has also been assessed for micro-credit assistance.

Additionally, Kojo has been referred to the local NGO Pro-Link, which provides a clinical psychologist and a social worker for monitoring and counseling throughout his reintegration.

Micro-Credit Assistance Put to Good Use in New Bakpa

Madame Jimimah Tutu of New Bakpa was 20 years old when she gave birth to her son William Gidisu. Life became extremely difficult for her when she lost her husband three years later. In her desperation, Jimimah was persuaded to give William away to a fisherman who gave her GH¢100.00 (USD 115) and promised he would take very good care of her son. Not knowing the hazards such agreements often bring, she let William go.

William was rescued by IOM in 2004 and reunited with his mother. To help the family and prevent William from being re-trafficked, Jimimah was given micro-credit assistance from IOM totaling GH¢100.00. The funds were disbursed to her in two installments of GH¢50.00 each.

Before receiving this assistance, Jimimah traded vegetables, fish and akpeteshi (a local drink) on a very small scale. She would walk around the community with the items on her head trying to make a few sales each day.

Jimimah was able to build on her efforts by investing the micro-credit assistance into her existing business. The assistance has helped Jimimah to stock her shop with many new items and to build a cement structure, which acts as a more permanent store in New Bakpa. Now, on Adidome and Sogakope market days, she walks to the market to sell her wares. Currently, she trades in different kinds of items ranging from food to detergents and even sheep!

Although she has five children and her current husband is not well enough to work, Jimimah is doing her best to take care of her family with the help of IOM.



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Background: Lake Volta and its Fishing Communities

Created by the construction of the Akosombo dam in the early 1960s, Lake Volta is one of the world’s largest artificial lakes. A number of fishermen who have depended on the bounties of the lake for many years report that fish stocks are decreasing, making it difficult to survive on fishing alone. Other work is scarce in a country where unemployment is widespread and approximately 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.

The depletion of stocks is the first reason why children are used as workers in the fishing industry. Children represent cheap labor, and are useful in releasing the fish from the tight nets.

FIGHT CHILD TRAFFICKING IN GHANA



MAKE A DONATION

This US\$ Amount	Will pay for
\$5	Food, lodging, and other vital expenses for 1 child for 1 day while in initial rehabilitation (approx. 2.5 months)
\$20 a month	Minimum amount to support a child
\$40	Uniform and school supplies for 1 child
\$230	1 fishing net so that the fishermen do not use children
\$250	Micro-credit assistance to parents so that they can set up a small-scale business
\$400 to \$600	Salary of 1 child counsellor for 1 month
\$2,100	1 fish pond for a group of 4 fishermen to farm fish so that they will not need to rely on child labour
\$4,256	Rescue, rehabilitation, reunification and reintegration of 1 child for 2.5 years

How You Can Help

For a minimum of \$20 per month for at least one year, a sponsor can support a specific child. This sponsorship enables IOM and its partners to provide assistance to the selected child throughout the year, protecting the child from the risk of being re-trafficked.

The key objectives of the Sponsor a Trafficked Child Project are:

- * To provide long-term support to trafficked children in their communities of origin
- * To provide continuous rehabilitation and reintegration assistance to the children
- * To provide follow-up assistance based on each sponsored child's individual needs
- * To ensure that the results and achievements obtained through the Trafficked Children Project are made sustainable
- * To reduce the children's vulnerability to being re-trafficked following the period of IOM sponsorship.

Concrete Benefits:

- * Prevention of re-trafficking: Ongoing monitoring, mentoring, and tutoring protect sponsored children from the risk of being re-trafficked.
- * Improved health care: Each sponsored child receives extra medical attention.
- * Improved academic performance: Each sponsored child works closely with a tutor to catch up and move forward in school.
- * Smooth transition: Social activities with peers help to make the child feel comfortable in the community.

Please visit the IOM website to find additional information about the issue of human trafficking and the program in Ghana <http://www.iom.int>

In the U.S. tax deductible donations may be made by check or money order payable to: U.S. Association for International Migration (USAIM); the 501(c)(3) partner of IOM in the United States.

To donate to USAIM online: www.usaim.org

IOM is an international intergovernmental organization created in 1951 to support humane and orderly migration. Human trafficking is rooted in poverty, lack of opportunities, gender discrimination, social and political violence and demand for services. In many cases, the trafficker is a known and trusted person - a neighbor, an employer, even a relative. Human trafficking often begins with a false promise of an opportunity. Victims are promised good jobs, and then are forced into dangerous, illegal or abusive work. IOM has been working with governments and communities for over a decade to address this challenge. Since January 2000, IOM offices around the globe have provided direct assistance to more than 12,000 victims of trafficking.

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