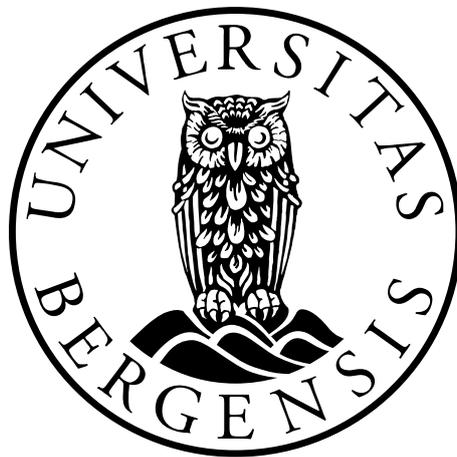


Child Protection in Upper Manya District of Ghana: Caregivers Perspectives

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Philosophy in Health Promotion

Spring 2014

Faculty of Psychology
Department of Health Promotion and Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Associate Professor Marguerite Daniel for the constant support of my master study and research, for her patience, motivation, enthusiasm and immense knowledge. Her guidance helped me in all the time of the research and writing up of the thesis. I could not have imagined a better advisor and mentor for my Master study.

Besides my supervisor, I would like to thank the teaching staff of the Department of Health Promotion and Development Professor Maurice Mittelmark, Professor Elizabeth Fosse, Professor Torill Bull and all the tutors. I am grateful for the quality lectures, insight and training that were offered during the course session of the programme.

My sincere thanks also go to Professor Ragnhild Hollekim of Faculty of Psychology, Department of Child Welfare, Equality and Inclusion (Barnervern) for her interest in my work and the opportunity to present my research in one of her class and to teach in the other.

I thank my fellow research mates (The 'A' Team) Benedict Claussen, Dashkati Reddy and Dana Hamad; for the stimulating discussion, constructive criticism and for all the time we spent together.

I would like to thank all the 33 participants who took time of their busy schedules to contribute data to my study. Special thanks go to Manye Korlekuor and Mrs Faustina Henaku-Adu

I also thank the 2012 class of Health Promotion and Development my friends at Fantoft Student House for their smiles and encouragement. I thank my friend Alva Melane Bjonsdotter for taking time of her busy schedule to show me Bergen and her home; Alva the constant interest you showed in my activities really helped me to settle in Bergen.

I thank the Norwegian Government and the student loan scheme (Lånekassen), a fantastic facility without which it would have been difficult to undertake aspects of my study.

I would like to thank my junior brother Kofi Atta Yeboah and all my siblings for helping to take care of my affairs whilst I was away from Ghana.

Finally I would like to thank my mother Comfort Addobea Yeboah for her constant support, prayers and encouragement throughout the period of my studies.

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Abstract

Introduction and Objectives: Ghana was one of the first countries to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and has since then nationalised it into a local law known as the Children's Law 1998 Act 560. However, almost two decades since the law came into effect, reports suggest that the situation of children has not improved. Ratification of international treaties such as UNCRC, and partnership between developed countries and Ghana a developing country maybe inevitable because much needed development aid for Ghana is tied to Human Right Treaties (HRT) and partnership agreements. Conditions attached to such partnership could go as far as agreements to allow the international community to influence and monitor implementation of Western developed policies in Ghana without much contextual consideration. These Western developed HRTs such as the UNCRC when implemented end up been less effective due to lack of local participation in these policies. Using the concept of partnership and participation this qualitative study explores the roles of the local community, national governments and international organisations on the issue of child protection. It tries to understand perspectives of caregivers on child protection through their experiences in a small rural community setting of Asewewa in the Upper Manya district of Ghana. Specifically it focuses on the perspectives of caregivers and how these perspectives are in consensus or otherwise with the Ghana Children's Law 1998 Act 560 and the UNCRC.

Methods: Qualitative phenomenology was the strategy of inquiry for this study. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data from participants. Participants were of three main groups; group one consisted of Highly Educated Professionals (HEPs) these were professionals whose duties mainly include working to protect children. All HEPs had university level education and worked at the administrative level of child protection institutions. The second group consisted of Technically Trained Professionals (TTPs) these were professionals who have had tertiary education but not to the level of university education such as teacher training or nursing training. The third group consist of parents with children 12 years and below. All members were located in Asewewa. Interviews and focus group discussions were facilitated with an interview guide and audio recorded. They were conducted in English where the participants were educated, and *Dangbe* the local language where necessary. In total 33 purposefully selected participants contributed data. Discussions in the local language were translated into English before transcription. OpenCode computer software was used to manage data during analysis.

Findings and Discussion: Findings suggest that the understanding and practice of child protection are largely a contextual issue.

Participating parents identified physical survival and some cultural practices as important to child protection; the practice of *dipo* a rites of passage for girls for instance was identified as a traditional custom that has protected girls from teen pregnancy although its effectiveness was waning. Extended family system was identified as a cushion for orphans and vulnerable children. Poverty and other socio-economic issues such as lack of resources to women, Poor education and health facilities etc were identified as challenges to child protection.

Participating parents although did not have much knowledge about the law; however when they did they disagreed and were not ready to abide by it. The top-down approach professionals adopted in educating parents on child rights was identified as an issue that has made parents distance themselves from professionals. Parents for instance did not see children working as child labour neither did they think children must have their own opinion.

Professionals also varied in perspectives whilst HEPs such as the Directors of Social Welfare Department and National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) thought child protection should be about ensuring the rights of the child, TTPs such as teachers and nurses were of the opinion material welfare of children and families were more important when it comes to child protection. Deep poverty in general and the lack of resources to government institutions has caused government institutions to depend heavily on Plan Ghana a UNCRC based international NGO working to ensure children's right in the community. Plan Ghana had significant influence on the activities of government agencies in the community.

Implications of findings indicate that the different perspectives between parents and professionals are evidence of lack of participation of parents in issues of child protection. Structural issues such as poverty although identified as a challenge to children rights and protections almost two decades ago are largely neglected by the government and civil society and is currently the major challenge to child protection.

Conclusion: That local perspectives on child protection do differ and not in consensus with Act 560 or the UNCRC. Main objectives of parents are for children to be respectful responsible and obedient. Whilst a section of professionals thought children material welfare was most important to child protection, others thought child rights discourse should be the key to child protection.

ACRONYMS

NCCE – National Commission for Civic Education

SWD - Social Welfare Department

DOVVSU - Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit

CHN - Community Health Nurse

HEP - Highly Educated Professional

TTP - Technically Trained Professional

CRC - Child Rights Club (Local club at research site)

UNCRC - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

FCUBE - Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education

EFA - Education for All

FGC - Female Genital Cutting

VEP - Village Empowerment Programme

UMKD - Upper Manya Krobo District

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background

Child protection has become a significant area of concern during the past couple of decades, due to the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989. The document is ratified by all nations in the world with the exception of Somalia and the United States of America (Montgomery, 2009; Reynaert, Bouverne-de-Bie, & Vandevelde, 2009; UNICEF, 2006a). The 54 legally binding articles of the UNCRC aim to promote child protection and rights in the fields of health, education, nationality and the family. UNCRC defines child protection as “preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children”(UNICEF, 2006b). Although modern times have seen much discussion on child protection Ellen Key, a Swedish reformer, suggested the “need for radical changes to perspectives on children and greater attention to their upbringing and welfare in 1900” (Montgomery, 2009, p. 1). International Child protection discourse and implementation also referred to as the 'globalisation of childhood' is championed by UNICEF with UNCRC as the instrument. The aim is to modify group norms and those ways of doing things perceived to be “disadvantageous” to a child (UNICEF, 2010). 'Globalization of childhood' is explained to mean expansion of Western concepts of childhood and what a ‘good’ and ‘proper childhood’ should be (Thelen & Haukanes, 2010). However, for those with values of collective existence, acceptance of UNCRC with its undertones of Western individualistic norms has come with much social conflict and contention (Burman, 2003). Research suggests the wholesale adoption of child rights designed in the developed Western world might not yield desired results in other cultures (Nsamenang, 2009; Pupavac, 2001, 2007). Countries that ratify UNCRC are required to incorporate it into their national legislation and governmental structure. A National programme for action is one instrument used to include children’s rights in social policy. A second strategy is to disseminate knowledge on children’s rights among young people and adults. Thirdly, information on children’s attitudes towards their rights is a significant step to respect children as citizens and to protect them from breach of their rights (Ledogar, 1993; Reynaert et al., 2009).

1.2 Problem Statement

Ghana has ratified the UNCRC and adopted it into local laws. The realisation of these laws in practice however is sometimes problematic due to differences in ideologies of local perspectives on child protection and ‘UNCRC-adopted-laws’ (Afua Twum-Danso Imoh,

2011; A. Twum-Danso Imoh, 2012; Pupavac, 2001; Snipstad, Lie, & Winje, 2010). Deep poverty and AIDS in some parts of Ghana has increased the incidence of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in sections of the country. Lack of resources has caused Government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) of Ghana to partner with international organisations such as IMF, World Bank, UNICEF etc. These international agencies are advocates of the UNCRC and Western ideals of child protection, which recognise a child as a “rights-holder” separate from his/her parents (Pupavac, 2001). To qualify for and access more funding, Third World NGOs and Government agencies must ratify and work with UNCRC and other Human Rights Treaties (HRTs)(Magesan, 2013). In communities where individualism, autonomy and western norms are not valued much, the insistence on rights for children have created tension between caregivers and children and in some cases more problems for the child that UNCRC seeks to protect (Snipstad et al., 2010). Little is known about perspectives and challenges of caregivers in Ghanaian rural communities on child protection. This study is important because it is intended to reveal these perspectives, thereby providing vital knowledge for Government agencies, and NGOs working to protect children.

1.3 Context

Ghana was the first country to ratify the UNCRC and subsequently adopted it into a law known as The Children’s Law 1998, Act 560 (hereafter referred to as Act 560) (Twum-Danso, 2009a). The Government of Ghana since then has taken steps to develop legislation that aims to improve the lives of children. However, efforts to imbibe the idea of child protection and rights as stipulated and obligated by the law on caregivers and in families where children are socialised, seems to be lacking. Hence, decades after its enactment, although it was forecasted that the Children's Act would represent a positive transformation in the lives of children in the country, the situation of children's lives remain in complete contrast to the picture the legislation envisioned. Using, the UNCRC and Act 560 as a yardstick, reality on the ground points to an unreceptive environment for child protection and implementation of children rights. Research on challenges to child protection in Ghana may be limited. However, data from secondary sources such as media reports, court cases and the police service and others points to a number of violations of child rights and a lack of protection of children. Exploitative labour, child trafficking and abandonment and physical punishment often feature in these sources. (Woll, 2000). Implementation of Act 560, in itself faces numerous challenges; easily observed are the low levels of political will, resources and

public dissemination (Laird 2002). This could be because in cultural and social terms, the convention and its domesticated Act 560 are at odds with the local ways of doing things, which leads to lackadaisical efforts at implementation on the part of government and to limited dissemination. Hence to understand the limited impact of the law it is important to understand the perspectives of local caregivers who are to exercise the stipulations of Act 560 on child protection.(Twum-Danso, 2009a; Woll, 2000).

Implementation of Child Protection by Government Agencies and NGOs: In Ghana the Department of Social Welfare is the probably the most important of all the state agencies with a mandate to ensure child right and protection. Others are the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and other non-governmental organization. (GNCRC, 2005). At the research site the most active of the NGO is Plan Ghana. The principal document that Plan-Ghana works with is the UNCRC and the Act 560 this document heavily adopt the principles of the UNCRC and only came into being after Ghana had ratified the UNCRC in 1990 (Manful & Manful, 2010, p. 120). Act 560 is divided into five sections. Among other things it obligate and discusses issues on rights of the child, judicial and child adjudication, child custody, fosterage and adoption, and employment of children and institutionalized care (G.O.G, 1998).

Observation and interview with officials of Plan-Ghana and other government agencies suggests child protection programs implemented by these organizations are aimed at creating awareness of the rights of the child. Marketing strategies are usually employed to create awareness by these agencies. This is done by displaying posters at vantage points in the community, public engagement and discussion on child rights, civic education programs on radio and cinema vans. Mostly a top-down approach is adopted a resource person meets with caregivers and educates them on child rights. Research shows that such marketing strategies benefits the affluent in society and ends up widening the inequality gap (Baum, 2007, pp. 90-91). In Ghana especially in the rural areas it is generally believed that adults educate the young therefore in a situation where young and probably childless professionals are the resource person caregivers might not be comfortable and not take such professionals serious and might not practicing what resource persons educate them on.

1.4 Literature on Child Protection

Broader literature on child protection in Sub-Saharan Africa has documented economic and structural challenges, and cultural differences that makes UNCRC problematic in African settings (Burman, 2003; Lachman et al., 2002; Nsamenang, 2004, 2009; Snipstad et al., 2010). Documented studies on child protection in Ghana are few. However, existing ones have looked at the legal provisions within the act (Manful & Manful, 2010; Manful & Manful, 2013; Manful & McCrystal., 2011), socioeconomic factors impeding implementation of child protection and problems of adaptation by communities to provisions of the UNCRC (Laird, 2002, 2012b). A few studies have also looked at perspectives of staff working at institutionalised care homes, and staff working with the children's Act 560 (Afua Twum-Danso Imoh, 2011; A. Twum-Danso Imoh, 2012); however the settings for these studies were mainly in the urban communities where challenges to child protection are significantly different from rural communities.

Few studies exist on caregivers' perspectives in rural areas a gap which needs attention. This thesis will attempt to fill this gap by looking at the perspectives of local caregivers, and how these perspectives can be harmonised through participation with NGO-provided programmes based on the UNCRC. This is vital because although most NGOs and INGOs such as Plan-Ghana, The Hunger Project etc, are situated in the capital a good number of their programmes are rolled out in the rural areas where local caregivers are perceived as uneducated and therefore with the least knowledge on child protection. Therefore a study on their perspectives will reveal their ideas on child protection and their views on programmes on child protection rolled out by Government agencies and NGOs. The findings of this study will be useful to NGOs and government agencies in designing programmes that include the participation of caregivers in a meaningful way.

1.5 Aims and Objectives

This study explores various perspectives on child protection in a rural area of Ghana.

Objectives

There are two main objectives to the study

- To understand the degree of consensus between local perspectives on child protection, the UNCRC and Act 560
- To explore how child protection is implemented by government and non-governmental agencies

Research questions

- 1) What do local people understand on child protection?
- 2) What do they see as challenges to child protection?
- 3) How do they understand Act 560?
- 4) What child protection services exist and who takes charge (Government, civil society or tribal authorities)

1.6 Terminologies

The term 'caregiver' usually refers to an unpaid relative or person who helps another person with daily living. Caregivers In this study refers to parents, siblings and guardians who care for children. Professionals whose line of duty obligates them to work for the welfare of children are also referred to as caregivers such as teachers, community health nurses and social welfare staff. However, throughout the study I refer to such carers as professionals. I have also categorised professionals into Highly Educated Professionals (HEPs) who are administrative level professionals and have a minimum of university education. I also refer to TTPs who are Technically Trained Professionals. These professionals work directly and personally with children and usually have technical level education such as nurses, teachers etc. I also refer to Queen mother in the findings and discussions chapters; this is a traditional authority figure, in charge of women's and children's issues in Ghanaian traditional communities.

1.7 Structure of thesis

Chapter 2 follows the introduction above, and sees a review and identification of gaps in literature on child protection from a global perspective to the situation in Ghana. I also discuss the concept of partnership and participation as a theoretical framework that can be applied in improving child protection. In chapter 3 I go through methodology for data collection and analysis, followed by the empirical chapter in chapter 4. In chapter 5 I discuss and reflect on responses from participants by juxtaposing my findings with existing literature and discuss how participation on child protection issues when encouraged from grassroots can lead to improve circumstances for children. A critique of the study is discussed in this chapter as well. In chapter 6 I draw conclusions based on findings of the study

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

As part of my literature review, I examine both empirical and theoretical studies on child protection. I commence by reviewing literature on global child protection initiatives followed by literature on the poor economic situation in Sub-Saharan Africa. I then continue with literature that discusses local understanding of child protection and the gaps in research on child protection. I also review literature on child protection instruments in Ghana and sexual violence against children and child labour. In the last part of the chapter I explain the concept of partnership and participation for health development and how the dynamics of power play has led to a less effective impact on programmes for social wellbeing and health development.

2.1 Literature Review

Child Protection a Global Initiative

Child protection and care has become a topic of much discussion and controversy in recent times, with scholars having divergent opinions on the subject. 'Global text' on child protection which is mainly standard of measure set by international organisation such as the UN is championed by UNICEF. UNICEF is guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and strives to establish children rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children. The main focus of the UNCRC is autonomy and the right to participation of the child. It portrays the image of the child as competent, as opposed to the image of the incompetent child.(Reynaert et al., 2009; UNICEF, 2014). UNICEF aims to achieve its goals of protecting the world's children by influencing nations to adopt UNCRC into national policies that affect children. Today, international NGOs and institutions such as the WHO, World Bank, and the IMF use a rights-based approach; nations working with these institutions must adapt to this approach in order to fit into the working plan of these institutions (Snipstad et al., 2010). UNICEF's influence on national policies towards children focuses on child survival, nutrition and environmental intervention, free compulsory quality education for all children, protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse, policy analysis and child participation. (UNICEF, 2014).

Article three of the UNCRC obligates that in every situation concerning the child, "the best interest of the child" must be paramount (UNICEF, 1989). However, one important question being asked by moral agents is who determines the 'best interest'?(Snipstad et al., 2010). Scholarship on Sub-Saharan African families shows that parents prefer their children to be a

useful part of the family as a group. Parents value traits such as obedience, respect, reciprocity and responsibility in children while autonomy in children is eschewed (Twum-Danso, 2009a). The deep poverty that faces most African families dictates that the priority for children is shifted towards activities that ensure survival and subsistence in the short run, which may include children contributing to family income. Formal education might be less effective in such a situation. (A. Twum-Danso Imoh, 2012; Laird, 2012a; Nsamenang, 2004, 2009; Pupavac, 2007).

Challenges to Child Protection in Africa

Literature has pointed out poverty as the leading factor that makes it impossible for African countries to protect and ensure the rights of the child. A closer look at the global economic situation reveals rising trends in the level of poverty. Poverty is seen as the inability to meet basic nutritional, health, educational, shelter, social and recreational needs. These circumstances are becoming more entrenched across the developing countries, including those of Africa. (Friedman & Schady, 2013; Headey, 2013; Heltberg, Hossain, Reva, & Turk, 2012; Mulinge, 2010). In sub-Saharan Africa despite decades of work by governments, NGOs and foreign governments' aid programmes, extreme poverty is prevalent with women and children being most affected (Chen & Ravallion, 2013; Mulinge, 2010). The situation has been made severe by the current global economic crisis and trade terms which are in some cases unfavourable to Sub-Saharan Africa. These have affected African economies in terms of fall in trade and decrease in donor aid. The situation affects directly and increases hardship and poverty on children and families (Arieff, Weiss, & Jones, 2010; Friedman & Schady, 2013; Mulinge, 2010). Poverty enhances the maltreatment of children by undermining the capacity of poor families to provide for their members economically. This in turn denies children the right to a good standard of living. Overall severe poverty in many developing countries is responsible for eroding the capacity of millions of children. (Lachman et al., 2002; Laird, 2002, 2012b; Mulinge, 2010).

The UNCRC in trying to protect children focuses on the rights of the child. However it is quiet on the conditions necessary for the realisation of these rights (Laird, 2002). For instance the UNCRC and its domesticated national laws obligate right to health and education for children and yet it's silent about the need for governments to provide these facilities in proximity to communities for this right to be realized (Woll, 2000). Research on the construction of a child in Sub-Saharan African families suggests that effectively it is the

environment that children need to be protected from but not family arrangements.(Lachman et al., 2002; Nyandiya-Bundy & Bundy, 2002).

In Ghana, research points to poverty amongst families (Laird, 2002), lack of personnel and financial resources within government agencies charged with child protection (Laird, 2002; Manful & McCrystal., 2011), and corruption among government officials and agencies such as the police (Tankebe, 2010) as major challenge to child protection. However, these studies were in the urban cities and fall short of engaging caregivers in rural areas challenged with deep poverty to know the challenges they encounter in protecting children.

African Understanding of Child Protection

The ratification of the UNCRC by most African countries may probably be inevitable, and its implementation may face a number of socio-economic challenges. However, its adoption has brought about issues that cannot be ignored (Pupavac, 2006; Snipstad et al., 2010). Research on African families suggests that the idea of individual rights and child rights cannot easily be infused into a local sub-Saharan African setting. For instance, studies illustrate how families in Tanzania value obedience and responsibility in their children whilst independence and autonomy are the values esteemed in Western families (Snipstad et al., 2010). Similarly parents in Ghana are reported to aspire to obedience and responsibility in their children. (A. Twum-Danso Imoh, 2012).

Research shows child rights implementation strategies end up side-lining caregivers thereby widening knowledge gap between caregivers and children Snipstad et al. (2010) and Pupavac (2006) report this as a reason why African parents thought discourse on child rights undermine their authority and ability to supervise their children. Juxtaposing the ideals of UNICEF on child right which focus on autonomy and participation and literature on African families, one can fairly conclude there is a divide in perspectives when it comes to child protection. Foster (2002), suggests implementation problems of child rights can be avoided if the best interest of the child is defined in the African context but not by donor countries. Studies on efforts to promote respect for international human rights standards in Sub-Saharan Africa has concluded that these efforts will be less effective until these efforts relate directly and where possible are promoted through local culture, religious and other traditional communities (Diop et al., 2004; Monkman, Miles, & Easton, 2007). Human rights stand a better chance of implementation if they are perceived to be legitimate with various cultural traditions of the world (Harris-Short, 2003; Afua Twum-Danso Imoh, 2011). An approach of this nature to child rights strengthens their implementation by legitimizing them in the eyes of

those who will be most affected by them in the local community (Afua Twum-Danso Imoh, 2011, p. 382).

However, a critical look at the level of understanding of local parents about national and international laws on child protection suggests that, although parents might have knowledge of these laws there is no guarantee they will practice it. For instance a study by A. Twum-Danso Imoh (2012, p. 129) on physical punishment in Ghana claims adults though aware of laws in other societies, they insisted physical punishment is key to child-rearing process within their particular context. This study demonstrates that while awareness creation is important it is not a surety to practice. Harris-Short (2003) Suggests cultural values and communal principles of traditional African communities may lead them to perceive in disbelief at the individualistic right-based of the Western world and may further strengthened their own traditional values and belief. A study by Burman (2003) on UNCRC, Laws and families in South Africa concludes that the heterogeneity of South African communities at best make the adoption of UNCRC problematic. According to Burman (2003, pp. 33-38) some communities prefer customary law. In such families, interest of the extended family overrides those of individual members in customary law. For such communities UNCRC and its value is a "foreign import that distorts the operation of their legal system and perverts the way society provides for its members".

Effect of HIV/AIDS on Child Protection

Research shows that the increasing numbers of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) been left behind and the challenges to the protection of them is one of the most tragic results of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. UNAIDS/UNICEF (2002) In the 1980s recorded that about 2% of children were OVCs in developing countries; however, by 2002 a total of 14 million children in sub-Saharan Africa were reported as total orphans .(Yarney, Mba, Asampong, Darko, & Yarney, 2012). A number of challenges have been documented to show the vulnerability of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS; for example the psychological and emotional torture they have to endure during the lengthy illness and eventual of parents (Daniel, 2011; Nyandiyamba-Bundy & Bundy, 2002) Extra duties that children have to take on due the death of parents (Bauman et al., 2006; Nyandiyamba-Bundy & Bundy, 2002), The impact of children wellbeing when they care for sick parents and caregivers Skovdal (2009) Others have also pointed to the abuse and injustices that OVCs have to endure in the care of foster parents (Daniel, 2005; van Blerk & Ansell, 2007). However, a review of literature on mental health of children affected by HIV/AIDS by Skovdal (2012) points to the fact that whilst there are a growing number of

literatures on the situation of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS, majority of these focuses on the psychological distress of these children as opposed to pathways of wellbeing rooted in global and universal understanding of mental health and childhood.

In Ghana children in Manya Krobo can be said to be the worst hit when it comes to orphaning due to HIV/AIDS in the country. Literature indicates that Manya Krobo Municipality comprising of Lower and Upper Manya are widely recognised as the area with the highest HIV prevalence and where HIV/AIDS originated from in Ghana (Agyei-Mensah, 2001; Ray, 2011). However, according to Ray (2011) The Manya Krobo Queen Mother Association an association of tribal women leaders are one group working hard to develop and implement widespread HIV¹/AIDS and prevention programme.

Child Protection Instrument in Ghana

Although research is few on child protection instruments in Ghana, Ghana was one of the first countries to ratify the UN Child Rights Convention 1989 (UNCRC). Act 560 enacted by the parliament of Ghana is the legal document for child protection. It came into being after Ghana had ratified and streamlined its existing child protection laws, to conform to the international standards of the UNCRC (GNCC, 1996). Among the government agencies charged to promote child protection and wellbeing, the Social Welfare Department is the most important. Others include the Commissioner for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVSU) of the Ghana Police Service, and the Ministry of Gender and Social Development. These agencies are mandated to work with Act 560. The Act operates on four general principles namely 1) Non-discrimination, 2) The right to life, survival and development, 3) Civil and political rights, freedom and parental responsibilities, 4) Family, environment and alternate care.

The Act 560 provides that no person shall deprive a child of access to education, immunisation, adequate diet, clothing, shelter, medical attention or any other thing required for his development (G.O.G, 1998 S(1)). The act also prohibits any cultural practice which dehumanizes or is injurious to the physical and mental wellbeing of a child (G.O.G, 1998 S(13)). The Act further stipulates that no person shall force a child to betrothed, to be subject of a dowry transaction or be married (G.O.G, 1998 S(14)). In all cases, the best interest of the child shall be paramount in any matter concerning a child (G.O.G, 1998 S(2)) while this

¹ Although AIDS prevalence is currently high in the district the availability of ART has reduced the death rate and deteriorating effects on HIV positive members of the community.

legislation is in harmony with UNCRC on the rights of the child, it is worth observing that it confronts a lot of structural and socio-economic challenges to its enforcement, (G.O.G, 1998; Laird, 2002). A study by Manful and McCrystal. (2011) and Laird (2002) on the perception of children's rights by those who apply Act 560 and the ability of the law to protect children respectively, concludes there is a gap between legal intent and practical application of Ghana Act 560 and that for better child protection the provision of legal rights is only an initial step. While Act 560 may seem to be an excellent document on child protection, the exclusion of local perspectives in its provisions makes it problematic to local caregivers.

Sexual Violence against Girls and Child Labour

Sexual violence in schools is described by Proulx and Martinez (2013) as sexual activity which is obtained by force. It includes sexually explicit verbal comments and repeated unwanted sexual advances on victims. Child protection challenges that are particularly relevant in Ghana are sexual violence against girls and child labour.

Research though few, shows that girls from deprived economic backgrounds are more prone to being victims of all types of violence including sexual,(Coker-Appiah & Cusack, 1999). Sexual violence often is regarded as a shameful act and a social taboo (Proulx & Martinez, 2013). A nation-wide study conducted in Ghana shows females between ages of 10 and 18 are most at risk of all forms of sexual violence (Coker-Appiah & Cusack, 1999; Proulx & Martinez, 2013). Article 1 of UNCRC describes a child as a person below the age of 18 years (UNICEF, 1989); however, among some tribes of Sub-Saharan Africa such as the Krobo of Ghana maturity of a woman is determine by her physique, the start of her menstrual cycle or her initiation as a woman through the celebration of *dipo* a rite of passage for women (Adjaye, 1999; Kole, 1955). Using chronological age as the yardstick UNCRC will categorise the majority of sexual activity among the Krobo as sexual violence, which might not be the case for the Krobo. The different perspective on maturity makes it difficult for UNCRC standards to be applied in such communities. Whilst most people discuss sexual violence from the perspective of a female victim, Sivakumaran (2010, p. 269) reports boys could also be victims of sexual violence especially during armed conflict and also in times of peace. However, Proulx and Martinez (2013) contend that schoolgirls who are mostly thought to be safe ironically, remain compromised through rape, bullying and other types of abuse in school and on the way home.

Another major child protection challenge in Ghana is child labour. Lack of formal sector employment opportunities for parents and guardians and the need to provide financial support

to their impoverished families, has led tens of thousands of children to take up work (Admassie, 2002). Secondly to strengthen family ties in Ghana children are sent to live with paternal or maternal relatives as part of local culture; however, the erosion of social norms has seen children often exploited by relatives and engaged in labour, which in some cases could be detrimental to them (Keilland & Tovo, 2006). The majority of this work is tied to agriculture, which generates employment opportunities that involves moderate skills and limited supervision, ideally suited for young boys and girls (Hilson, 2010).

Poverty is a principal cause of child labour in many rural areas of Ghana. Poverty brings about unavoidable effect of hardship the participation of children in the workforce contributes positively to rural household income, eases economic hardship, and meets the consumption requirements of the family (Togunde & Carter, 2006). However, Nsamenang (2004) writing broadly on the African child explains that children working should be seen as part of educational process meant to develop the child socially, mentally and culturally which should not be necessarily termed as exploitative labour. Although the Ghanaian government has ratified the ILO's Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), which prohibits children working, traditionally the idea of children 'going to farm' is generally acceptable because it has long been a part of daily life in many rural communities in Ghana (Keilland & Tovo, 2006) and indeed Africa.

Relevance of Western Education in Traditional African Communities

The UNCRC and national laws that adopt it such Act 560 states education as a right for children (G.O.G, 1998; UNICEF, 1989). The form of education required is usually Western styled education, with this type of education a teacher instruct learners in a school settings and its commonly referred to as formal education (Rogoff, 2003; Serpell, 1993). Relevant research on the other hand points to the fact that among indigenous and traditional Sub-Saharan African communities such as the Krobo of Ghana, children acquire knowledge through involvement and participation in cultural and economic activities. According to Nsamenang (2004, p. 94) "This is often done without or with minimal instruction but with encouragement from parents and siblings mentor and peers". Participatory learning which is indigenous to traditional African communities is known to empower its students by demanding of them to be active participants in the heart of the teaching and learning process by which a child gradually acquires knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to life in his or her community. (Nsamenang, 2004; Rogoff, 2003). However, growing numbers of literature suggests that the need for rural traditional parents to engage children in household chores and productive work

retards children's progress in formal education. (Bass, 2004; Bourdillon, 2006; Keilland & Tovo, 2006; Porter et al., 2011; Serra, 2009) These literature though useful, fail to seek the perspectives of parents to determine which form of education is more useful to them formal education or indigenous one. This study intends to fill this gap by seeking the perspectives of parents on education.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study uses the theoretical approaches of partnership and participation to explore the interaction of international donors and Sub-Saharan African governments and the role of local people in child protection.

2.2.1 Partnership for Health Development

Global trends in disease and illness demand joint efforts to promote population health (Jemal et al., 2011). It demands the harmonized action of a number of different sectors and agencies (WHO, 1986). There is an increasing need for partnership between different stakeholders such as government, social services, and environmental protection agencies for population health and wellbeing (Kickbusch & Quick, 1998).

World Health Organization (WHO) in 1986 defined promotion of health as the process of “enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their health. It moves beyond a focus on individual behaviour toward a wide range of social and environmental interventions” (WHO, 1986). Agenda for action for the UN and the WHO include forging global partnership between governments, international organisation, NGOs, civil society etc. These important alliances are meant to stimulate vital health campaigns and increase the response to global health campaign and wellbeing (Pinet, 2003, pp. 561-562). Guiding principles for partnership design and implementation have been elaborated to ensure quality, accountability and transparency and mutually agreed roles and principles. Partnership are not meant to substitute commitments made by government but to complement them (DAC, 1996, p. 13). Working in partnership or at least using the term in recent times has become a central feature in development welfare. It is seen as fundamental to taking a "middle ground". (Barnes & Brown, 2011, p. 173; Greig & Poxton, 2001).

An important requirement outlined by WHO and literature discussed above for the success of partnership is shared aims and visions. However, literature points to political and economic gain to the donor (Fleck & Kilby, 2010; Lancaster, 2007, p. 3), morality and the obligation to do good (Busby, 2007) and a combination of moral obligation and self interest (Stokke, 2013)

as the requirement driving modern day partnership. However to the extent that morality is based on right or wrong the question is on whose values and ideas of what is right or wrong, form the bases of partnership for development, donor or developing partners? Pupavac (2001) Attempts an answer and explains that the aims of development donor partners from the north seem to be paramount and take little consideration for concerns of their partners. This initial stance of donor partners often bring about unintended harm to local ways of doing things and is often designed to portray the economic and political might of development partners.

Effects of Assumption of Power of Global North on the Policies of Global South

Equal power and respect among partners is what seem to endear partnership to development agendas and recommended by WHO for realisation of global health. However, there is often no recognition from the North that unequal power relations can be the greatest obstacle to economic, social and political change. Progress for the resource weak groups requires that these groups be strengthened politically in relation to those in power. Absence of this recognition often leads to the weakening or less effective impact of foreign aid (Degnbol-Martinussen & Engberg-Pedersen, 2003). This is because development partners from the South try to find ways to avoid aims of partnerships largely developed in the north or do not exert needed political will for such aims to be realised (Whitfield & Fraser, 2010). Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen (2003) Further suggests that partnership between global North and South takes a top-down approach they explain that partnership cooperation is a process that begins with background for involvement by the donor actors. It is then developed further into donor formulation of development goals. After which it is handed down to development partners for implementation. Although equal power is imperative to partnership research shows unequal power is the trade mark of modern day partnerships and most donor agencies reserve the right to such power, leading to development partners implementing aims of such partnerships half-heartedly (Whitfield & Fraser, 2010).

Effects of Development Aid on Partnership Agreements

Ratification of international treaties such as UNCRC and partnership between developed countries and developing countries maybe inevitable on the part of developing countries because much needed development aid is tied to Human Right Treaties (HRT) and partnership agreements (Magesan, 2013, p. 175). The difficulty in monitoring the effect of such agreements on ratifying governments and the ordinary citizens of developing countries makes the ratification of such treaties a mere gesture with no real consequence for child protection and rights. However the promise of economic benefits is what motivates developing countries

sign onto such agreements without considering the perspectives of its locals. (Magesan, 2013). Whitfield and Fraser (2010, p. 342) On the other hand concludes that development relations between the North and the South is nowhere near partnership but rather retain important elements of negotiations. Ghana is a developing country in great need of development aid (WorldBank, 2014). This implies policies and social interventions funded by donor agencies and rolled in the country are mostly determined and negotiated by donor agencies; examples of such policies are Act 560, Education For All (EFA), Early Childhood Care and Development Policy 2004 etc (Laird, 2012b). Whitfield and Fraser (2010, p. 342) Explains the overriding agenda of donor agencies can be summed up as “how western countries can get African countries to adopt economic and social policies that are similar to that of the west” and therefore, a cooperative relationship, even a partnership between donor and recipient is thus often taken for granted. Whilst the central theme of partnership in health promotion and indeed WHO definition for health partnership is based on mutually agreed roles and principles (WHO, 1986). It is apparent that in recent time’s development partnerships between international organizations such as the UN, World Bank, and INGOs, with the developing nations have taken a hegemonic form, where western advanced truths in the form of global texts such as the UNCRC are a necessary condition to partners of third world countries to benefit from donor funds. Partnership of this nature adopts a top-down approach and aims to regularize behaviours without considering local ways of solving problems(Pupavac, 2001). Writing on the children's right regime Pupavac (2001, p. 109) concludes that the attrition of individual autonomy of southern countries and the promotion of dependency on authorized professionals entails "the infantilisation of citizens and the renunciation of the political and moral capacity of the South." She claims impact of globalized Western advanced truths such as the UNCRC is not to improve the prospects of the world's children but to "signal an authoritarian turn which aims to legitimizing unequal power."(Pupavac, 2001, p. 110). These forms of transfer of knowledge have often resulted in culture clash and unintended harmful effects, rendering them in some instances less effective. Consensus between local perspectives on child protection and that of international communities such as UNCRC can be achieved if WHO definition on partnership which centres on mutually agreed roles and principles are adhered to. However, the reality of partnership discussed in these more critical articles shows that collaboration between global North and South is nowhere near WHO principle. Rather the motive is paternal intents. This form of 'partnership' is top-down and does not allow participation of southern governments in identifying issues of importance to them; The attachment of partnership agreements to

development aid has caused governments of developing countries to roll out Western styled policies which is less meaningful to its citizenry causing a resistance of such policies in some instances.

2.2.3 Participation for Sustainable Community Transformation

Community participation has been in existence and practiced in different ways for many years, not only within health but more broadly within social practice and development. WHO (2002, p. 10) Describes the ideal form of community participation as one where people are empowered or enabled to become actively and truly involved in outlining issues of concern to them, and making decisions about factors that affect their lives. This should motivate them to formulate and implement policies for planning development, and delivery of service, and action to achieve change.

Initiatives for health and wellbeing which actively involve community members in a form of partnerships and participation are consistent with health promotion principles and the empowerment model. Empowerment encourages health workers to gradually exit themselves out of a community by enabling community members through participation to take control of their affairs (Green & Tones, 2012, p. 423).

Participation therefore seems to be ideal in achieving community led health promotion practices and wellbeing. However research points out different forms of participation, usually progressing from poor to genuine; to achieve success it is important health promoters adopt genuine forms of participation. The following paragraphs discuss the various forms of participation.

Types of Participation

Participation is at its best when community members have a clear sense of direction and are empowered to take initiatives to solve issues of concern to them (Arnstein, 1969; Pretty, 1995; White, 1996). However as noted by Cornwall (2008), various actors have different meanings and agendas in participation. Hence in some cases, merely informing people about decisions taken could be termed as participation. This has led scholars to categorize participation mainly based on the degrees of involvement.

Arnstein (1969), and Pretty (1995 p.1251) are important writers on participation both of them look at participation from poor to genuine forms of participation. However, whilst Arnstein (1969) discusses participation from a point of view of power relations and control, she mainly takes into consideration the perspectives of those on the receiving end of participation to develop her ideas on participation. Pretty (1995) on the other hand, analyses participation,

from the perspectives of the external agent implementing participation. Cornwall (2008, p. 270) expresses it as “the user of participatory approaches”. Both of them see the worse form of participation as where there is close to non-participation from grass roots. Arnstein (1969), refers to these as nonparticipation and tokenism whilst Pretty terms it as manipulative and passive. At the second category of participation that is tokenism/passive, some form of information and consultation is sought from community members; however this is an illusionary form of participation and not effective. External agents are not obliged and often do not include the views of participants it is usually “A-feel-good-exercise”. Cornwall (2008, p. 270) Explains, the World Bank uses this level of participation to gain moral authority on already taken decisions. In the end the highest forms of participation for both Arnstein (1969) and Pretty (1995) is where the grass roots takes initiatives, decisions and control of issues of concern to them. Arnstein (1969) refers to this as citizen power, whilst Pretty (1995, p. 1251) calls it interactive and self-mobilization; it is in the form of power delegated to citizens. At this level people are expected to take initiative independently of outside agents (Cornwall, 2008). Partnership and citizen control of projects and objectives is its feature.

White (1996) Identifies a third form of participation and looks at the motives for adopting various forms of participation. She sheds light on why and how participation is been used at a particular time. Understanding and adopting the highest and genuine forms of participation is imperative to achieving successful community led initiatives.(Cornwall, 2008).

Partnership and Participation between INGOs, Governments and Communities: The conceptual framework discussed above has been used to explore the degree of partnership and participation between Ghanaian Governments institutions and international donors on one side, and participation between Ghanaian agencies and local communities.

At the international level as explained above the need for Ghana to supplement its development with donor funding has caused it to partner with international organisations and ratify agreements and policies where her participation to the aims of such agreements can be categorised as non-participatory on Arnstein (1969) ladder. Laird (2012b, p. 94) writing on the effects of these policies on the Ghanaian child, explains. In recent times the Bretton Woods institutions together with the United Kingdom and the United States where Ghana gets most of its funding, have protracted their reach beyond macroeconomic issues of Ghana to health, education and poverty reduction. Implications: The provision of grants, loans and debt forgiveness is based on the ability and willingness of Ghana to comply with conditionality which is in the form of policies devised at the international level under the auspices of

UNICEF, UNESCO, UNAIDS and UNFPA. Jenks (2005) Cited in (Laird, 2012b, p. 95) refers to the collective aim of these institutions as to extensively promote globalized western ideas of one particular vision of childhood as “correct childhood”.

On the national level UN and the international community requires the monitoring of progress on policies such as UNCRC. Ghana is encouraged to adopt internationally Agreed set of indicators devised by multilateral agencies at the national level further extending the hegemonic childhood into the implementation of early childhood policies of Ghana. The policies of Education for All (EFA) and the UNCRC advanced by the World Bank and UNICEF can be seen in national policies. Laird contends that this shows the resolve of these institutions to advance Western hegemonic truths without much consideration of different perspectives of Ghanaians and other African countries (Laird, 2012b).

At the community level the monitoring of the implementation of Western adopted policies means that the Government agencies are under pressure to implement these policies without meaningful participation from local citizens. A top-down approach is adopted by agencies that implement child protection programs at the community level thereby sidelining parents in the important issue of child protection.

In sum economic benefits and conditions attached to partnership agreements has led Ghana to ratify agreements with the international community where she has not contributed meaningfully to the aims of the partnership. Monitoring of these policies at the national level by international agents means a top-down approach is adopted at the community level by Government agencies. This implies participation of Ghanaian parents in programmes and policies to protect their children is at best consultation.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Methodology

Qualitative research methods, seek to answer questions on 'What', 'Why' and 'How' of a phenomenon, (Green & Thorogood, 2009). This study seeks to understand the perspectives of caregivers on child protection hence the qualitative approach. Qualitative methodology has different approaches to its inquiries. Phenomenology which focuses on experiences, meanings, and their uniqueness to people is used in this study. The approach is a popular and contemporary one which is used by many researchers, and recommended for understanding perspectives of small groups (Creswell, 2009). In this research I am interested in the perspectives of caregivers in caring for and protecting children in a small rural community setting.

3.1 Upper Manya as a Study Setting

Upper Manya Krobo District, Eastern Region of Ghana is the site for the study. Upper Manya is the twin district of Lower Manya, these two forms Manya Krobo Municipality. It is located between latitudes -6.2-6.50N and Longitudes -0.3-0.00W of the Greenwich Meridian.(U.M.K.D, 2012). Settlements in Upper Manya district include Asesewa the district capital where I collected Data, Akateng and Sutapong. The population of the district is about 72,092 (G.S.S., 2010).

Upper Manya Krobo was chosen because the author of this study had developed a relation with the community members following a work period in the district; where he worked with parents and children and experienced the challenges to child protection in the district.

A second reason why Upper Manya Krobo Municipality was chosen as a study area is because it is a district with one of the highest HIV prevalence in Ghana, which has major implications for child protection. Agyei-Mensah (2001, p. 455) fingers the Krobo as the group that brought HIV/AIDS to Ghana. As at 2006 the prevalence rate was at 8.5% about four times the national prevalence rate of 2.2%; this has increase cases of Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in the district. Currently the composite budget of Upper Manya Krobo shows that HIV/AIDS infection rate is 7% (U.M.K.D, 2012, p. 9).

A third reason Upper Manya district is appropriate research site for my study is because families there face high levels of poverty which affects child protection. The economic and rural settings of the area can make poverty very severe especially when there is bad harvest. The major occupations in the area are farming and fishing; farmers depend mostly on simple tools and family including children for labour (M.O.F.A, 2013; U.M.K.D, 2012).

Also the Krobo are traditional people who observe a number of customs, some meant to protect children. The most important being the *dipo* which is an initiation rites of Krobo girls into womanhood (Adjaye, 1999; Kole, 1955). Among the Krobo tribal leaders the activities of the traditional Queen Mother is very important to child protection, they are known to take care of Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVCs)(Steegstra, 2009). Also Plan Ghana an NGO, partners with Child's Right International (CRI) to run a programme known as Child Rights Club (CRC)². The aims of the club are to have Children rights protected and respected by adults and authorities (U.M.K.D, 2006). By conducting the research in this community, I had the opportunity to interview and sought the perspectives o f parents whose children are in the child rights club to find out their perspective about child rights in relation to parents whose children are not in the club.

3.1.1 Participants

My study is a phenomenological one, which demands that I explore in-depth perspectives of participants on child protection. I did this through purposefully sampling participants which means I deliberately selected participants whose perspectives are of importance to the purpose of the study.(Creswell, 2009). In all there were 33 participants

Inclusion, Exclusion and Gatekeepers

Included in the study were caregivers and officials who cared for children. These caregivers comprised parents, guardians and workers whose duties demand that they take direct care or protect children. Also included were parents whose children were members of the CRC and others whose children were not members of CRC.

Excluded, were adults who did not take care of children, professionals whose duties meant they did not have to work with children. Also children were excluded. For the second focus group parents whose children were not members of the child rights club were also excluded.

Gatekeepers: These were instrumental in the selection, recruitment and gaining access to potential participants for the focus group discussion (Green & Thorogood, 2009). The first and second focus group discussions were with two groups of caregivers whose children were in and out of the child rights club respectively. These discussions were done in *Dangbe*, the local language of interviewees. The gatekeeper for both group discussions was a female teacher who also served as the coordinator of the Child Rights Club (CRC). As a teacher for

² CRC here is not connected to the UNCRC in anyway but rather it is a local children's club in a basic school at the research site.

about 12 years and a native of the community, she knew the community well and was very resourceful as a gatekeeper in selecting participants who were relevant to the study, she also served as one of my translators. Her extra duties as coordinator for the CRC made her the best gatekeeper to help in recruiting parents whose children were members of the club. Also with years of service as a teacher she knew enough families in the community and was instrumental in recruiting caregivers whose children were not members of the CRC. The gatekeeper for the third focus group was the principal of the local school. The rationale for using the principal was because the third focus group was with teachers who were in charge of children 12 years and below. As a principal he was in the best position to help in recruiting teachers in this category.

Interpreters: The use of the local language which I did not understand made interpreters very crucial to the collection of data. I employed the services of two seasoned interpreters; one was a teacher and the other a community nurse they both use English when discharging their official duties at work, and *Dangbe* the local language when interacting outside work. Both were natives of the community and therefore understood the humour, metaphors, phrases and sarcasm carried in the language when spoken by native speakers (Creswell, 2009; Green & Thorogood, 2009).

Participants Selection

In order to get a cross section of people in the community as participants to my study, I categorised potential participants into three groups. Group one comprised of government officials whose duties demand that they give care or work with children. This group was further divided into two sections. Section 'A' comprised of district level authorities namely a police inspector in charge of Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), a Director of Social Welfare Department (SWD) and a Director of National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE). Section 'B', comprised of local level authorities under this section, I conducted an in-depth interview with, a Community Health Nurse (CHN) and a focus group discussion with teachers of the local school. Although not a government worker, the importance and influence of the tribal Queen mother demanded that I place her under local authority category. The second group of participants were caregivers in the community. This consisted of guardians and parents who cared for children 12 years and below. Under this group I did an in-depth interview with a couple, a focus group discussion with caregivers whose children were members of the CRC, and caregivers whose children were **not** members of the CRC. The third group of participants were members of civil society under this group I

interviewed the coordinator of Plan Ghana in the district the organisation is the most active NGO in the community. A total of 33 participants were involved, 20 women and 13 men.

Table 1: Research participants and methods

Level	Specific Role	Place	Interview Method
Government			
District Level	Police (M)	Asesewa	In-depth
	Social welfare Director (F)	Asesewa	In-depth
	NCCE Director (M)	Asesewa	In-depth
Local Level	Queen-mother	Sutapong	In-depth
	Teachers (6 F, 2 M)	Asesewa	Focus group
	Community Nurse (F)	Asesewa	In-depth
Caregivers (Parents and Guardians)	With children in the CRC (5 F, 3 M)	Asesewa	Focus group
	With children not in the CRC (6 F, 4 M)	Asesewa	Focus group
	Couple	Asesewa	In-depth
NGO (Civil Society)	Director Plan-Ghana (M)	Asesewa	In-depth

F = Female M = Male

Participants Selection In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were used to collect data from individuals. It is an instrument that allows the interviewee enough time to develop their own accounts of the issue important to them (Creswell, 2009; Green & Thorogood, 2009). To gain access, I made a list of all my potential participants. The first individual I contacted was the Director of NCCE who happened to be my former boss. Because there was a mutual trust between us he immediately agreed to an interview, after he had gone through my informed consent and an information sheet explaining my research for potential participants that were highly educated. Using the snowballing method, I asked to be introduced to other officials who met my inclusion criteria. As the Director of NCCE, he had dealings with Department of Social Welfare and wrote an introductory letter³ to be taken to the Director of Social Welfare and also a community nurse. This helped in recruiting these two officials.

In recruiting other officials I made contact by walking into their places of work and respectfully asked for the official. Due to the lack of internet facility, telephones and fax, I

³ This letter is not indexed in the appendices because it was a single hand written letter. Electricity outage at the time the letter was written meant that I could not photocopy it.

had to visit an office several times before I had the opportunity to meet the official of my interest. On meeting them I discovered handing out an information sheet and been honest about the educational purpose of my study really helped in recruiting such individuals. With such individuals I introducing myself, my research topic, and my status as a master student from University of Bergen, showing my student identity card and a letter from Norwegian Social Sciences Data Services (NSD) also helped in the recruitment process.(Green & Thorogood, 2009).

Focus Group Discussion: for focus group discussion parents and guardians, whose children were members of the Child Rights Club (CRC), were the first to be recruited. After securing verbal permission and an introductory letter from the Director of Plan Ghana branch at the study site I approached the coordinator of the club. This was important because Plan Ghana is the patron and sponsor of the CRC in the school. I also contacted the principal of the school and explain my research to him for permission, before I contacted the coordinator of the CRC because she worked as a teacher in the school.

With the assistance of the coordinator who doubled as my gatekeeper, I prepared invitational notes and gave it to children who were members of the CRC to be given to their parents. In this way I recruited caregivers who cared for children in the club only. Since the parents had busy and different schedules, getting them all together for a focus group was a challenge. Most of the children whose parents had been invited for the focus group returned to inform the coordinator that it will be difficult for them to come to the school at the scheduled time. The coordinator however suggested that since speech and prize giving day was about a week away, I schedule the focus group discussion to this day, because most parents will be in the school on the day. This was done before I had parents consenting to the interview. Caregivers whose children are members of the CRC are important to the study because the programme adopts Western ideals of child protection. Children in the club are trained on child protection and rights; occasionally parents are invited to some of the training. I wanted to know if this education has impacted on their child protection practices.

I had the coordinator of CRC and the principal of the local school as my gatekeepers for the second and third focus groups respectively. For the second focus group we went from house to house and invited potential participants to be part of the focus group. This was very effective because potential participants' questions were immediately answered. Also the fact that I was with a widely known member of the community gave them an assurance which really helped in the recruitment exercise. In all 15 households were visited out of that eight

responded positively. My gatekeeper suggested that we choose Wednesday for the discussion, because traditionally people take a day off farming activities on this day. A time and venue was communicated to all confirmed participants. With the third focus group all eight teachers approached by myself and the gatekeeper agreed to the discussion. Friday after school, was scheduled for the third discussion.

3.2 Methods (Tools and Procedures)

The facility for the actual data collection was semi-structured interviews. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006, p. 315) Explain semi-structured interview as an “interview strategy which is generally organised around a set of predetermined open ended questions. It allows follow up questions where necessary”. It also afforded me the flexibility over how to and in what order, to ask the questions.

Translating all instruments for data collection into *Dangbe* was vital because although official language of Ghana is English, people in the rural areas do not express themselves adequately in it. I hired a translator to translate all instruments for data collection namely informed consent, interview guide and written consent into *Dangbe* (Local language of interviewees), and back into English by a second translator to ensure that the translated text had not change in meaning from the original English version.

Piloting: I conducted a pilot study with two caregivers in the nearby district of Lower Manya, to test the meaningfulness and adequacy of research instruments. For instance during the piloting I realised that it was very easy to ask indirect leading questions, especially when following up on a comment. For examples during piloting I will ask do you think western style of child protection is better than how you do it here. I noted this and resolved not to repeat this during the actual interview. I observed all necessary ethical obligations, with the trial group.

Data procedures Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews: Understanding the perspective of caregivers was crucial to the study; hence there was a need to allow enough space and time for participants to develop and relate issues about child protection relevant to them. In-depth interview helps to examine into detail that which is often seen but ignored (H. Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The settings for interviews were mostly in the offices of individuals, which were comfortable quiet and private. The privacy of the offices ensured confidentiality, comfort and a relaxed atmosphere these really helped interviewees to develop their story. The only exception was an in-depth interview with a couple where the interview was set in their

house, getting a quiet place for the interview was challenging, since they had a house with lots of kids playing about. Although we eventually did the interview, the recorder picked a lot of background noise but this did not affect the data collected.

During the entire process of in-depth interviews, I built a sense of trust with the interviewees by being genuinely interested and non-judgemental of what they say. I also avoided follow up questions that suggested disagreement. For instance when interviewing the queen mother, I made conscious effort not to ask too many follow up questions since young people are really not expected to question elderly ones in the community. I have expounded on this in the section reflexivity. In all interviews I avoided asking respondents leading questions. I also actively listened to the stories of interviewees by occasional nodding of my head to show agreement and to boost the morale of interviewees to continue. I wanted to hear into details the story of participants therefore I avoided interrupting participants when they were telling their stories. I allowed silence where necessary for participants to develop and continue their stories, I always asked at the end if there was anything that they would like to add just to be sure. Questions asked bordered on the state of affairs of children, the best ways to raise children in the community and knowledge of parents on national laws regarding children (Please refer to appendix for interview guide).

Data Procedures Semi-Structured Focus Group Discussion: I used focus group discussions because its nature allows me to explore the attitudes, beliefs and motives of participants. It is commonly used in qualitative studies when researchers seek to understand phenomenon or the world view of others. Comparison of participants' response is possible and it has the potential to overcome the poor response rate of quantitative survey, when it comes to understanding phenomenon. (Barriball & While, 1994; Creswell, 2009; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; H. Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Also using a semi-structured interview guide with a focus group helped me and the participants to encapsulate and confer about a broad range of ideas bordering child protection. Participants respond to each other's ideas and contributed to a rich discussion, this interaction provided even more understanding of the perspective of caregivers. Also participating in a group was more natural, which facilitated an honest discussion. The first and second focus group interview consisting of caregivers with children in and out of the CRC respectively were scheduled to take place at the local school premises and a community centre. In all participants were relaxed at the venues chosen. In both focus groups an initial banter and refreshment of soft drinks at the beginning, after the gate keeper had identified the parents, helped to break the ice. During refreshment, I introduced myself,

passed informed consent to them and explained my status as a student from the University of Bergen. The explanation of my status as a student was very important to the exercise, I have expounded on this in the section reflexivity.

Informed consent explained and signed, I verbally asked permission to record both interview sessions. I explained to them that the recording was purely for an academic exercise and that it will be transcribed, and the recording erased. Also I and probably my supervisor will be the only ones with access to the transcribed data. I have detailed this in the section ethics. I assured them that there is no right or wrong answer to this interview and that we were all on a learning process. My translator/gatekeeper started by asking questions and operating the recorder, whilst I took notes. These two focus groups were done in the local language *Dangbe*. The themes of both focus groups centred on the situation of children in the community, how best to protect children in the community and the local apparatus designed to take care of children. A single interview guide was used in all discussions.

The third focus group were teachers of the local school. The venue was the teachers' common room; procedures of FGD were followed as described above. The principal positively identified teachers present as those who took direct charge of children. I told them about my research and explain the themes of my study to them. I verbally asked permission to record the interview session. Since this interview was in English my assistant who also happened to be the gatekeeper operated the recorder whilst I asked questions and took down notes.

3.3 Data Management and Analysis

All interviews in the local language *Dangbe* were played back to two independent translators; I then recorded their English translation before singularly transcribing the translated text. I used two independent translators for reliability; there was no significant difference between the two translations. I kept a field notebook to record memos of both verbal and non-verbal expressions of interviewees. A secret password was used to secure the transcribed interview and saved on my laptop. A back-up of the transcribed data was then saved on a memory stick, which was always stored in a safe and secured place. After transcribing, the recordings were erased. All names were coded in the transcription making it impossible to trace the identity of participants, except for leadership position like Queen Mother, Director of NCCE etc. I explain to these individuals I could not grant them total anonymity due to their uniqueness before I asked them to participate. The transcribed data were marked with alphabets that

correlates with a participants list stored separately on another storage device this will be deleted by May 2016.

Thematic Network Analysis (TNA) and OpenCode, was used to manage data. TNA is an instrument that “seeks to unearth the themes salient in a text at different levels, and aims to facilitate the structuring and depiction of these themes”(Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 387). I used OpenCode computer software to condense raw data into codes. I deduced a label to represent similar re-occurring codes. These labels served as the basic themes. I then used procedures of thematic network analysis as explained by Attride-Stirling (2001) to analyse data. In brief, I structured basic themes into organising themes. An organising theme comprises of many different basic themes with several ideas. A group of organising themes come together to form a global theme. A global theme in effect is the principal theme of the data.

Step 1: Coding Data

I first accustomed myself to the data by reading transcriptions and listening recordings that were in English several times. Using my theoretical framework and research question as a base I formulated a coding framework on, local understanding of child protection, challenges to child protection, existence of child protection services and understanding of Act 560. I also coded issues on partnership and participation between parents and child protection agencies. These guides are my research questions and theoretical framework respectively. I divided the data into three main groups, data of caregivers in government institutions, data of caregivers in the community, and data of caregivers in civil society. I then looked out for recurring issues in line with my research questions and theoretical frame work. To avoid codes overlapping, I restricted codes to specific issues in the data, and wrote the explanation of each code by them. At the end of this exercise I had generated 93 codes. A table of list of basic, organising and global themes can be found at the appendix.

Step 2: Theme Identification

After coding, I went through the text explanation I have given to each basic code, in order to draw out the common and important themes in the coded text. This enabled me to recognised “the underlying patterns and structures” (Attride-Stirling, 2001) of participants answers. After a thorough examination of the 93 basic codes, I deduced 19 organising themes from the transcribed data. I went through all organising themes to ensure that they were not repetitive of each other thereby rendering them redundant, but rather broad enough to capture all the important areas of the data.

Step 3: Constructing Networks

In constructing a thematic network for my study, I grouped the organising themes into meaningful sections, for instance themes on education were grouped under one section whilst themes on culture were under another section. After I critically examined the main points and claims of the organising themes in each group and deduced a word or phrase to form a global theme. Using basic organising and global themes, I drew thematic networks, by connecting meaningful lines between the various themes. This helped me to get a better overview and further explore into the meaning of the transcribed text.

3.4 Validity, Reliability and Generalisability (Trustworthiness)

These are terms relevant in quantitative research and not so useful in qualitative research. However, the need to demonstrate specific strategies used in qualitative research sometimes call for the borrowing of these terms. Qualitative research refer to the meanings giving to these terms as trustworthiness or rigour, for the purposes of this work I will be using the above mentioned terms.(Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013).

Validity: is determination of whether a measurement instrument in qualitative research has "credibility" and measures what it is supposed to measure (Kvale, 1996; Long & Johnson, 2000, p. 31). Validity strategies outlined by Creswell (2009), Long and Johnson (2000), include member checking; this refers to taking aspects of the interview back to participants to establish the accuracy of meanings you have given to themes and descriptions. I conducted member checking through a follow-up interview. During the follow up interview with the Director of NCCE, I had to amend his definitions on child delinquency and also child labour. The follow up interview with him was particularly useful because it helped me to clarify some of the things he said and he was very grateful for that. For the first focus group I manage to get the gatekeeper who was also a key informer, and three members to listen to parts of the interview to ensure I have captured their exact thoughts and meanings.

A second strategy for validity is triangulation. This broadly refers to using different data sources to reach the same conclusion. In the data analysis, I have examined and compared data and perspectives from different participants, for example perspectives of teachers to perspectives of social worker and caregivers. Also I used observation and secondary data to source out information. Since same themes were reached it adds validity to my study. I was present during all data collection, facilitating the process. Considering the aims and

phenomenological nature of my study the research instrument of in depth interview and focus group discussions were the most appropriate instrument for validity.

Reliability: refers to “the extent of dependability, with which instances assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions remain constant”. Reliability can be achieved through accuracy of reporting, consistency of reporting, consistency of coding and data collection, and thoroughness of analysis. (Green & Thorogood, 2009, p. 287; Hammersley, 1992) However, I recognise the fact that in qualitative studies this might be a challenge because participant’s response to a question might be different when transcribed from one language to the other or from one interviewer to the other. To make sure that this problem is reduced, I used the services of two independent translators, as explained earlier. Other strategies I employed to ensure reliability include peer debriefing. I explained my initial analysis and conclusions to colleagues. Emerging findings in my study were discussed with my supervisor and colleagues at periodic intervals. I also communicated the decision I was taken on the research field, by presenting of details of all procedures to the final conclusion of the data collection to colleagues. This was to allow others to decide the merit of the study by following the lines of action. For this research, all procedures and decisions have been declared to my supervisor for verification (Creswell, 2009, p. 192; Long & Johnson, 2000). I conducted all interviews and asked same questions from one interview to the other to increase reliability.

Generalisability: This refers to the extent to which one can project the account of a particular population to other persons, or settings than those directly studied (Green & Thorogood, 2009; Maxwell, 1992). In a qualitative study, it is assumed that generalisability should aid in developing a theory or reaching conclusion that may be useful in making sense of people in similar situation. (Long & Johnson, 2000). There are two forms of generalisability. Internal, this is generalising within the community been studied, and external which is inference to other communities outside the research site. External generalisability, comes about when qualitative researchers, study additional cases and compare their findings with the wider literature (Creswell, 2009). Although I don’t intend to generalise; externally my findings maybe be compared to wider child protection literature in Africa.

3.5 Reflexivity (Role of the Researcher)

The action and inaction of a researcher can influence the quality of qualitative studies. High quality analysis of qualitative data depends on the skill, vision and integrity of the researcher

(Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000). It is therefore imperative for the researcher to take his role in the research seriously. Prior to master studies I worked as Principal Education Officer, with Ghana National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE). My duties included educating the citizenry on their rights and responsibilities. The research site for my study is a familiar community where I have worked and organised workshops on civic education for three years. Going into the site as a student and a researcher, I dissociated myself from the role of a civic education officer. This is crucial to the quality of data I collected from participants, and will also determine how I will be able to balance power. If participants perceive me as a resource person, they will be reluctant to contribute to discussions during focus groups and also in-depth interview sessions. I informed participants who recognised me that I was no longer a worker of NCCE but a student, and was there to learn about their perspectives on child protection. I also made a conscious effort not to dominate or influence discussions.

My cultural sensitivity and awareness at the research site, and cordiality with the director of NCCE who happened to be my former boss aided me to get vital information for my research. But for this cordiality, it would have been difficult to get any data from him due to a terrible experience he had had with an interview he granted a journalist. Carrying letters of introduction to potential participants and allowing my gatekeepers to guide me in the proper procedures expected at research site contributed immensely to my data. For instance but for my gatekeeper I would not have known the proper procedures expected when in the presence of the Queen-Mother.

As a young student/researcher there is a tendency older participants will not feel comfortable or take interview seriously. To avoid this, I employed a matured female teacher as translator and assistant who was with me at all sessions. Respect for adults by young people is nonnegotiable in Ghana. At the research site questioning an adult is deemed disrespectful; I knew this could affect the quality of data. Therefore to overcome this challenge, I made questions conversational and indirect. This was particularly the case with interview with the tribal Queen Mother. In Ghana people usually associate others with university education as all knowing, and therefore are careful when engaging with them in order not to look less intelligent. I assured participants I had no experience in caring for children whatsoever. This made them contribute more freely in discussions. To avoid women in the focus group feeling uncomfortable been questioned by me (male and young), I trained my matured female translator to take lead in asking questions. For example I emphasized on how to avoid leading questions.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

The study proposal was submitted to National Social Sciences Statistics Data (NSD) Norway, and Ministry of Gender, Children and social protection formerly Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Ghana for approval before data collection was embarked on. NSD gave me a letter of approval whilst the Ministry of Gender, Children and social protection gave a verbal permission to proceed with my research after an official had gone through my proposal and realised that I will be dealing with adults and not children. At the community level I sought permission from the tribal Queen Mother before I commenced.

An informed consent form detailing the reason and nature of the research, which was in both English and the local language of the interviewees were explained to all participants. The document assured participants of confidentiality, anonymity, explained likely risk, and asked for their consent. I asked permission before taking photographs. Freedom to participate or quit was made clear. The issue of care given could be very sensitive; sometimes topics that could bring rather unpleasant memories might be discussed. Therefore it was absolutely important that participants were made aware of the freedom to quit during interview sessions with no negative consequence. Also the choice of not answering a question if they felt it was too difficult emotionally was made available. Participants were informed about interview sessions a minimum of one week before the actual interview date. I made all attempts not to disrupt schedules of participants.

In all interviews I assured participants of anonymity. However in the cases of some individual in-depth interviews partial anonymity was assured, namely the Director of NCCE, Director of social welfare, Inspector of the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the police department, and the tribal Queen mother. This is because these individuals were the only ones occupying the position in the community. Therefore even though I had promise not to use their names and personal details in the write up of my theses, it will be relatively easy to identify them when they are quoted due to the uniqueness of their positions. I explain the situation to them clearly when I was assuring them anonymity. They understood the situation and gave the go ahead to be interviewed.

No payment or gift were given out or expected by participants, since I explained to all that it was voluntary. However, I gave out refreshment of soft drinks at the start of focus group interviews to help break down tension. Also I felt obliged to compensate caregivers who had travelled and taken time of their schedules to be part of focus group discussions. This compensation however was only given to participants at the end of the sessions. Therefore all

participants contributed, on their own free will not because of a gift or some monies they had received. No participants was coerced or felt coerced to participate.

I informed participants on informed consent and verbally that the study may not directly benefit them however, the results of the study may possibly contribute to new knowledge and understanding on caregivers perspectives on child protection. This knowledge may help NGOs and other agencies in planning programs that will be useful and beneficial to caregivers in the community and beyond. Copies of this study will be sent to NCCE and also Plan Ghana.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Situation of Children in the Community (Findings)

4.0 Introduction

Changes in culture, socio-economic circumstances have impacted negatively on family structures and the whole process of child care and protection in rural Sub-Saharan African communities. In this chapter I relate the experiences and perspectives on child protection of local caregivers and professionals in a rural community, and how contextual challenges have negatively affected protection of children. The quotes selected in this chapter typically represent experiences and perspectives of several participants.

Cultural practices and structural challenges affect families and the quality of protection available to children. In poor rural areas structural challenges can lead to lack of adequate healthcare and education for children. In Ghana lack of resources to government agencies that are charged with child protection means that the government offers little support to children and families. Government intent on child protection is laudable as demonstrated in Act 560; however there is little political will to achieve goals of the Act.

4.1 Contextual Factors and Challenges to Child Protection

Culture in brief can be defined as the way of life of a group of people. In the following paragraphs, I present caregivers stories on culture and how this affects child protection and the situation of Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Upper Manya. I also present the situation of local authority and their efforts at child protection.

4.1.1 Cultural Practices and Children

Marriage, family and extended family relations are highly valued by most tribes in Ghana. It is common for a child to refer to his uncle as father and expect fatherly responsibilities from him. In traditional maternal tribes of Ghana such as that of the Krobo, maternal uncles have substantial responsibilities towards a child. They could be as important as biological fathers. A family in traditional Ghana is by no means seen as a nuclear family; therefore a child who through some circumstances becomes orphaned or vulnerable all things been equal should always have someone to fall on. However, in few instances this could be disadvantageous to a child because there is no clear-cut person responsible for his upkeep.

The Krobos practice patrilineal family and inheritance systems, which though have many good sides, can also be disadvantageous to a child. For instance a man among the Krobo

could be denied authority and responsibility over his own children, if at the time of impregnating a woman all customs have not been performed; according to a professional⁴

...because children and large families are cherished, a child who is born out of wedlock is in no way illegitimate among the Krobos. The baby is happily received by the woman's family. There are several reasons for this including the fact that affluence is measured by the size of one's family. The labour intensive agriculture practiced by the Krobo means more people to help on the farm. Although the Krobos are a patrilineal tribe, a child who is born to an unmarried mother belongs to the woman's father. The baby's maternal grandfather therefore names him, and assumes rights and responsibility towards the child as his legitimate son or daughter hence the child sees him as his father... (Director NCCE)

The above quote explained some positives of the Krobo culture and how it could be beneficial to OVCs. However, the denial of children born out of wedlock to their fathers could also be disadvantageous to children because they have only their mothers and extended family members for protection. Teachers of the local school discussed this issue when they tried to explain why there were so many single parent children in the community.

...A lot of children do not know their fathers because women are encouraged by their fathers to give birth for them... I mean not to marry but to take a lover and get pregnant so that the child will be for him. When an unmarried woman gets pregnant, her family is not interested in finding out the father.... The thing is whilst the maternal grandfather is alive everything is relatively ok when it comes to care of the child but they become vulnerable when the grandfather dies... (Teacher FGD)

These grandfathers, who maybe looking for additions to their extended families for reasons such as labour for agricultural purposes, encourages their daughters to get pregnant for them, are advanced in years. Eventually they pass on when the child is still young, and the child is left with the mother only for care.

This means children born out of wedlock can only benefit from their maternal side of inheritance

...However they will have to compete for inheritance with maternal uncles who are first in line for inheritance because they are the direct children of the child's

⁴ Professionals not categorised into Highly Educated and Technically Trained in this chapter because prior to data collection, I did not expect there will be differences in opinions among professionals. However this became necessary during data analyses because the responses of professionals who work at the administrative level were clearly different from those who work directly and physically with children.

grandfather. This is a source of great conflict among the Krobos' and leaves many children without any form of inheritance, which is usually in the form of land...
(Director Social Welfare Department)

Local Customs for Child Protection

Traditionally a family among the Krobos is made up of the nuclear family and members of the extended family comprising kinfolks from both maternal and paternal lineage. This to a large extent, has helped to care for OVCs in the community the tribal Queen mother explain

... In the past families were very united this was good for children and the community as a whole. Hardly will you see a child, who did not have someone to rely on. Traditionally if a Krobo man or woman dies, the most senior next of kin is supposed to perform a customary rite where he or she swears an oath pledging to take care of the deceased persons children, like his biological children. It was believed that a person would experience bad luck in life and from spirits if he does not keep this promise. Now, people do not care about the customs and traditions of our ancestors some will say they are Christians or they are educated so they cannot take the oath. When they do not take the oath then they can neglect their duties towards orphan children without worrying about a curse... (Queen mother IDI)

The extended family system is a traditional and effective custom for child protection among the Krobos. However, due to changes in culture, education and other factors, believe in these traditions and customs are waning to the disadvantage of children. A social welfare officer explain the reason for this

...making ends meet for many families in this community is very challenging. It is difficult for most people to take on the additional responsibility of fostering children. The poverty in this community is severe as you are well aware and the government does not give any substantive assistants to families or vulnerable children in this community. It is only NGOs who aid them also children have to fend for themselves sometimes... (Director Social Welfare)

The view was that the extended family is becoming less effective in child protection due to difficult economic situation that families face.

A second local custom which was mentioned by almost all participants interviewed as a means for child protection and explained in detail by the tribal Queen mother was the rites of passage for girls which are known locally as *dipo*. According to the Queen-mother

...this custom was performed for girls when they were of age and about to get married. Girls at this stage are camped together at a place for about a month and taught how to take care of a home and other skills necessary for a woman who is ready to get into a family life. Before dipo is performed on a Krobo girl, it is a taboo and a shame to her family for her to engage in sex. The punishment could be as severe as banishment from the village. This really helped us to keep the girls from getting pregnant in their teen years. Parents keep a strict eye on their girls before the ceremony to avoid shame and the possibility of banishment from the community...

(Queen mother IDI)

She further explained that men will not get close to a girl who has not gone through the *dipo*. They would not want to be the cause of a girl's shame by having sex with such a girl.

Although some officials such as the police and the community health nurse agreed the *dipo* is a great mechanism for curtailing teen pregnancy, they insisted that changes in the nature of the *dipo* now, has rather made it a tool for sexual exploitation and promiscuity among girls. According to the police officer

... The dipo is good. However, in recent times, the rites are performed for children as young as three years old. Among the Krobos when the dipo is performed for a girl, it means it is no more a taboo for her to have sex before marriage so she is no more protected. This change in the rites in my opinion has increased teen pregnancies in the community... (Police Officer DOVVSU)

A community health nurse further explained that the protracted fanfare which has recently been added to the celebration of the *dipo* has made it expensive; causing parents to perform the rites for all their daughters during a single ceremony. Young girls become sexually active after the rites and could be the reason for the increase in promiscuity among young girls.

Views of participants indicate that customs of the Krobo although still in existing and practiced, are less effective than they used to be. Most of the interviewees have referred to the past when telling their stories and concluded by complaining about how things have changed for the worst recently. Some have put the blame on formal education modernization and laws that the government have passed.

4.1.2 Effects of Socio-economic Context on Child Protection

There are several other challenges to child protection among the Krobo. These include the non availability of resources to women who are mainly responsible for daily protection and upkeep of a child, health and nutrition, water and sanitation and education in the community.

Lack of resources to women and its effects on children: Parents, especially women are responsible for caring and protecting children at the research site they are tasked with the daily welfare of children including providing food, clothing, and healthcare. Women are expected to farm or trade to raise income for this responsibility. The difficulty here is that women have limited access to land an important resource in the community. Men, on the other hand take important decisions that affect the future of the child such as the pursuit of formal or vocational training. A social welfare official explains.

... Both male and female have the right to inherit property. However the share of the female is usually smaller...Also in a situation where a husband and a wife work on a farm together, the labour of the wife is often unpaid. Income from her hard work when the crops are sold often goes to her husband. However, if a woman cultivates her crops on a different piece of land, little of the produce is sold since she is expected to use majority of it for household consumption... (Director SWD)

He further explained that most women farmers in the community only source of credit to expand their farms or business is from the informal sector that is relatives, friends, traders and money lenders these sources are unreliable and could be very costly venture since some money lenders and micro finance could be ruthless and insensitive to the plight of these women. When women lack resources children suffer most since they are the more important caregivers.

Health and nutrition of children: This is crucial to child protection and growth. The health status of the majority of Ghanaian children especially those living in the rural areas are poor. A community health nurse explained that children in the community suffer from poverty related sickness such as malnutrition, malaria; intestinal parasite etc., partly because parents lack resources and knowledge on nutrition.

... The ratio of health officials to the population is very poor because most officials refuse posting to the village. Health facilities and equipment are obsolete and great distances from most of the communities. For example, there is only one hospital here in the district. This makes the delivery of basic health care to the community especially children a real challenge. Also the nutritional state of children, pregnant and nursing mothers is generally low and worse during the rainy, and the months to the harvest season. In addition, the avoidance of certain nutritious foods in the community is very unfortunate. It is a taboo for Krobos to eat snails, especially a child or pregnant women although snails provide a hefty dose of protein and is great source of iron and

potassium. Incidentally, snails are very common in this community during the rainy season. Heavy and over dependence on cassava the staple food of this community (a starchy crop), has led to a high rate of Kwashiorkor⁵ among children. In addition, when children are sick, the parents keep them in the house trying all sort of concoction to cure them. It is only when the sickness persist and becomes severe then they rush to the hospital sometimes we are able to save the children other times we are not ...
(Community Health Nurse, IDI)

A teacher in a focus group discussion further adds that the quantities of food available to children are usually inadequate. According to one teacher

... Most children do not eat before coming to school. Sometimes you see a child sitting quietly uninterested about what you are teaching, when you find out why he will tell you that he is hungry or has not been given any food. They eat very early in the morning and do not eat again till 2pm when they go home from school so this neglect and denial of food by caregivers really is a big problem to their development and academic progress. (Teacher FGD)

Poverty, some cultural practices and inadequate provision of health facilities has affected children negatively in the community.

Child, Maternal Health and Family Planning: Availability and accessibility of healthcare for children and family planning clinics are very limited in the research area. This in no small way affects the protection of children health. A good number of participating parents had never access such facilities. A community health nurse explained

... In this community women are dependent on traditional birth attendants and therefore do not attend maternal and child health clinics which can provide them practical information on child protection, antenatal, postnatal and family planning. The use of traditional birth attendance has resulted in the high incidence of maternal mortality in this community and has ended up making a lot of children vulnerable in this community... (Community Health Nurse, IDI)

The situation really is that the lack of health care facilities makes it difficult for families to access health care.

⁵ A malnutrition disease mostly of children caused by severe deficiency in proteins and vitamins; characterised by retard growth and potbelly

Rural water and sanitation: Access to potable water is a challenge in most rural communities in Ghana. The relationship between rural poverty and lack of access to potable water and adequate sanitation was clearly visible at the research site. The lack of pipe borne water means that most children spend considerable number of hours at the river side and wells collecting water. Most of the local community caregivers and the teachers agreed to the fact that lack of portable water brings disease and impact negatively on child protection. One teacher explained it this way

... Most people in this community do not have access to clean water or effective sanitary facility. This is a problem for us because most parents send their children long distances to the riverside or well to get water. Some children have to go as much as six times before they can get ready for school. This makes them late and tired to school. It really affects their studies because they find it difficult to concentrate. Also this same river which is source of water for people is used to refresh animals; it is common to see herds of cattle drinking from one side of the river whilst children collect water from the other side. Also some of the children swim and play in the river, this has made typhoid and other intestinal worm disease common among children in this community...(Teacher FGD)



Fig 2 Children carrying water to their homes in the morning before getting ready for school

Apart from the difficulty in accessing potable water for most caregivers one other challenge to child protection is the disposing of solid waste in the community a teacher explained it this way

...It is common to see huge piles of rubbish heaped up in the community. The main forms of latrine in this community are the pit and bucket latrine; and are in limited supply. For instance it was recently that Plan Ghana built a pit latrine for this school. There have been two instances where girls have been harassed sexually when they had gone into the bush to attend to nature. The lack of knowledge about the causes of disease has made a lot of people resort to bad sanitation practices which has led to diseases such as bilharzias and typhoid to children and adults alike... (Teacher FGD)

4.1.3 Education of Rural Children

Every Ghanaian child by law is entitled to basic education, which comprises six years primary education and three years junior high school education. At the research site, most participants did agree that the enrolment of children at the primary level is high. However, they also related other factors which have led to low standards of education. In this paragraph I relate the caregivers' perspectives to the problems children face when it comes to formal education.

Age at enrolment: The Ghanaian law for first enrolment at school is six years. However, in the rural communities it is common for children to enrol at different ages for their first day at school. This age disparity among children in the same class is an obvious problem to education. A participant expressed it this way

... In this community, most girls enrol at age six whilst most of the boys enrol at a later age the problem here is that the older children expect the younger ones to respect them as their seniors even though they are in the same class. This is the culture around here, and because of the physical differences in age, younger ones who are perceived as not being respectful enough are bullied. Younger children may be expected to serve older colleagues and are called on to sweep the class and collect water etc. This bullying can be so severe that younger children sometimes refuse to attend school. Also the older children who sometimes feel embarrassed for being in the same class with younger ones may drop out to engage in trade or some form of occupation mostly farming or fishing... (Teacher FGD)

Among other things that were discussed were the fact that dropout rate were very high in the community because when children grow older they prefer to spend their time in income generating activity than spending long hours in school.

Physical size of children: Another reason given by the principal of the local school for the late enrolment at the primary level is the small physical size and poor state of nutrition of children in the community he explained.

... Most children suffer from stunted growth and malnutrition. It is common to see a child who is nine years but physically looks like a four year old, sometimes I have asked some parents why their children are not in school and they will tell me the child is not ready. However the child will be past the legal age of six but because physically they might look so small parents keep them away from school most parents relate school readiness to size and not age so by the time they enrol they will be way older than his colleagues... (Principal FGD)

During a focus group discussion a major reason cited by parents for keeping their children in the house until they were physically matured was the long distances that children have to walk before they get to school. Participating teachers also made same assertion.

Girl child education and sexual harassment: In general even though a sizeable proportion of children are not likely to complete nine years of education in the community, girls are likely to stay more than boys. This was because boys are sent off to farms and fishing canoes earlier than girls. Teachers said they had more girls in their class than boys. However the few girls who are able to complete nine years of basic education are often sent off to cities where they work as house helps or engage in trade. Another challenge to girl child education mentioned by participating professionals was sexual harassment and teenage pregnancy in the community. According to the Director of Social Welfare

...Girl child sexual abuse is very common in the community. The unfortunate thing is that most of the incidences are resolved secretly at home and not reported to the police therefore a habitual sex offender can go about without anybody knowing. In addition, most girls are on their own, fending for themselves at an early age.

Caregivers also send young girls on errands to sell petty things to households in the community, some irresponsible adults lure these innocent young girls into their rooms with food and money when they come to sell to them and abuse them sexually. This result in early pregnancy and dropping out of school... (Director SWD)

Participants added that teachers and people in authority are sometimes responsible for sexual harassment of girls in the community. A professional relates

... in order to get more sexual abuse cases in the community reported, Plan Ghana took it upon itself to train some volunteers in the community to report child sexual abuse cases to us and the police when they hear of it. However, can you believe that one of the people, a teacher for that matter we trained to lead in reporting such cases abused a girl sexually...(Director Plan Ghana).

Poverty and children's education: Participating teachers claimed that enrolment at the basic level of schooling was high, however I did observe that a good number of children did not attend school at all because they could be seen loitering about during school hours. Also responses of participants about the importance of children working shows that schooling must be on the lower side.

Poverty was one major factor cited by participants for not sending their children to school. A couple explain poverty is the reason why six of their eight children were not in school.

... Two of the younger ones go to school but the older ones because now things are so expensive the cost of buying uniforms, shoes, exercise books and the likes have tripled. These hikes in price have simply made it impossible for all eight children to go to school. The government says basic education is free but you send your child to school and the teachers give you a tall list of things you need to do all costing money. Also teachers are always demanding monies from parents; for instance the teachers' ask us to pay printing fees for exams, P.T.A dues, sports fees and a whole lot. Imagine all eight children were in school I will probably have to sell my land to service the never ending demand of teachers. Hence, I send only two to school, although it is not easy, I manage... (Couple IDI)

This sentiment was repeated by most caregivers in the focus group discussions for not sending their children to school.

4.1.4 Child Labour

Child labour was a major reason given by the district professionals for children not attending school. Teachers, the Director of NCCE, and a police officer of the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) mentioned child labour, as an obstacle to educating children in the community. Although local parents will not directly refer to work given to children, as the reason for them not being in school, it was clear from their responses that children

working, was a cause to the lack of formal education amongst children. A police officer explained it this way

... Farming, fishing and trading on the market are the major occupation in this community all these are labour-intensive occupations. Most parents depend on their children for labour to assist in this work thus denying the children education. The worst offenders are the fishing communities, where children work as labourers on canoes. Some of these canoes with children on board can be on the White Volta for days this means children aboard these canoes cannot go to school or get any meaningful education. Parents are integral part of this problem because it is the parents who give the children to the fishermen for a number of years and collect money from them. Therefore, these fishermen because they have paid money to the caregivers for the children, abuse them and make them work for long hours. Children in the custody of these fishermen do not get any form of protection or care. They are denied most of their rights, namely proper healthcare, accommodation, clothes, and education, and are physically abused most of the time. Just recently, two children drowned on the White Volta whilst operating a canoe all by themselves. I am in the process of prosecuting the fisherman who sent them out on the river and the parents of the deceased children. With the farming communities, it is a common practice to see young children been tasked by their parents to prepare land for cultivation. This is no easy task; you will find young children carrying heavy loads of firewood and farm produce that I am sure even you will find it difficult to carry. I can confirm that child labour is very intense in this community and it is retarding the development of children... (Police Office IDI)

In focus group discussions, caregivers related experiences on how they go about to make ends meet. These experiences confirm the intensity of child labour in the area as reported by secondary sources such as newspapers police reports etc. A woman puts it this way

... I enrolled the children at school in the first few years but withdrew them when they become physically matured and more useful on the farm moreover am not able to bear the cost. I need them to help me on the farm, if I will be able to cultivate enough crops to feed the whole family... (Woman FGD)

Most caregivers weigh the opportunity cost of keeping their children in school to engaging them in work and in most situations; they prefer to engage them in income generating activity since this results in much needed economic gains.

Another woman adds

... Two of my girls were in school but I withdrew them because my sister in Accra (Capital of Ghana) needed them to help her at her restaurants. She pays them to work as waitress and sometimes they do send me some money even though not much...
(Woman FGD)

Caregivers' low value of formal education: Participating officials were of the view that lack of education on the parts of parents is the reason for children not been in school. The Director of NCCE explains it this way was of the view that parents lack interest in formal education and rather concentrate on their occupation. To him parents prefer short-term gains than investing in the long-term education of their children.

The principal of the local school on the other hand was of the view that children are not able to make the transition to senior high schools because for a very long time schools in the district have been recording zero percent passes in the Basic Education Certificate Exams (B.E.C.E). This could also be a reason why parents are not so interested in formal education.

Distance to school: Another issue raised by participating teachers and parents in focus group discussion as an obstacle to education of children is the distance that most children have to travel to go to school. The principal puts it this way

... Some children as young as eight years have to walk for miles to school every day. They are overly exhausted by the time they get to school and mostly very late. They therefore are not able to concentrate on what is been taught. Although you can find primary school in most communities the junior high school are only in few communities this make it difficult for children to continue their education after primary education. Those who continue have to travel long distances every day and this can be dangerous to the little children and girls who are sometimes harassed sexually. To me because of the distances involved, the lack of boarding facilities in communities with junior high schools is one-reason children are not able to continue their education in this community...

During my stay in the community, I constantly observed children walking by the roadside in groups going to school or coming home, some of these children carried firewood and farm produce on their heads. A teacher explained to me that the next task for most children after walking long distances to home was to go straight to the farm and collect food stuffs and firewood for use at home. Thus, most children are not able to complete their academic

homework. The distance home, coupled with household chores for the children impact negatively on their education.

Seasonal attendance of school and absenteeism: An important issue, discussed in focus group discussions with teachers, and raised in most in-depth interviews with district authorities, was the seasonal nature of attendance to school by children. According to one teacher,

... Some children quit schooling during the planting and harvesting season to work on their parent's farm or work as hired labour. In addition, some parents need their children to take care of animals during these periods so they do not destroy other people's crops because there is a penalty in such situations...

Another factor, which contributed to school absenteeism and according to some officials, almost a norm in the community was children absenting themselves from school on Fridays and working on the market as porters and petty traders the Director of NCCE explained

...Children do not attend school on Fridays because it is the market day in the community. Most of these children fend for themselves so adults do not reprimand them for not been in school because they have to engage in this trade in order to care for themselves. For instance, some parents neglect their girls too early and these girls need money to take care of themselves especially when they get to the puberty stage so they have to trade to make some money. Friday is a very busy day at the market; people from all the surrounding villages come here to trade so it is an opportunity for some of these children to make some money... Some parents go to the extent of going to classroom to call their children to the market. Compounding on the problem is the fact that some teachers do not come to school on Friday because children are mostly absent... (Director NCCE)

During data collection, it was common to see children in their school uniforms engaging in petty trade at the market this issue had been reported in some newspapers and by local authorities as an obstacle to teaching and learning in the community.

School settings: The school environment or settings was another reason giving by teachers and parents for children not enrolling in school the principal of the local school in a focus group discussion explained that

... The structure of the school especially the JHS (Junior High School) is in a deplorable state there is shortage of furniture for the children to use and the roof of

the building leaks so badly when it rains heavily we sometimes have to close the school. Therefore, most children and some teachers do not come to school when it rains. In addition, some trained teachers refuse postings to the rural communities. In addition, there are no proper toilet facilities in the school. This is a big challenge especially to the teen girls and could be a reason why some of them absent themselves for days. Some teachers also treat the children too harshly when they do not do their homework and the likes... (Principal Local School, FGD)

To sum up the above responses from participating caregivers shows that at Upper Manya district, poverty and unfavourable socio-economic circumstances have impacted negatively on the situation of children in the community.

4.2 HIV/AIDS and situation of Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC)

Losing one or both parents is a common situation world over. However, it is the provisions that is put in place to take care of orphans and vulnerable children by society, that will determine whether they become a burden to society or otherwise.

4.2.1 Incidence of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS in Upper Manya

Orphans are found all over Ghana. However, the incidence is a lot more prevalent in Manya Krobo municipality. At Upper Manya the district where data were collected, various factors are cited as the cause of this situation. The most repeated by participants were the high incidence of HIV/AIDS due to labour migration of Krobo women to neighbouring country Ivory Coast, and the ineffectiveness of government authority tasked with protecting orphans and vulnerable children. A teacher in a focus group discussion explains the incidence of HIV/AIDS in the community.

... During the early 80s and 90s, many women from this community migrated to Ivory Coast in search of work. Most of them ended up working as commercial sex workers, which caused them to contract AIDS and getting pregnant with unknown fathers. Thus, most of the orphaned children were born outside the community mainly in Ivory Coast and other communities and returned to this community when their mothers had fallen too sick to take care of them or died of AIDS. Hence, most of these children do not know their fathers and their mothers are dead...

Vulnerability of AIDS orphans: Children who are orphans through their parents dying of AIDS are particularly more vulnerable in society than those whose parents die through

curable disease. A community health nurse and other officials raised this concern. According to the community health nurse

...AIDS orphans may live with likelihood of HIV and are usually cared for by older relatives often grandmothers. These caregivers in most cases are terminally ill and may lack the strength to work long hours to provide for their orphaned grand children. AIDS orphans are expected to work to bring in income. This may cause them to drop out of school. Poverty in homes of AIDS orphans is mostly much more severe because the parents who but for AIDS would have been more productive will be too ill to contribute to household income or dead. In addition, children known to have HIV parents, or whose parents have died of HIV, face severe stigmatization and discrimination. They usually do not have many friends and are often at home with their caregivers... (Community Health Nurse IDI)

A teacher further explained that the situation of AIDS orphans and vulnerable children in the community is very bad. Government support for these children is almost non-existent. The patrilineal system practiced by the Krobos adds to the plight of the OVCs because under the system children are suppose to inherit and be taken care of by their fathers kinsmen, in a situation where they are orphaned. However, because most of them do not know neither their father nor the father's family, due to some of their mothers working as commercial sex workers, and a traditional system that does not recognize men who impregnate women before marriage. Most children in the community are on their own when their mothers die.

4.3 Child protection

Parents in general want to protect their children and care for them however, strategies for child protection differs substantially based on the individual, society or population offering the protection. In some societies individualism and self-centeredness are viewed as a virtue whilst in others these same values are eschewed. Rather being part of a group or communal living is much more encouraged. These differences are usually due to the world view, culture, education, values and aspirations of the society in question. The following paragraphs will present perspectives from Upper Manya.

4.3.1 Local perspective on child protection: Parents vs Professionals

During data collection, I observed two groups of adults in the community. Professionals who were mainly employed in government institutions and formal organisations, and adults who were self employed. I had the opportunity to interact with the two groups.

Local parents' perspectives on child protection: Participating parents were mainly self employed farmers, related similar experiences on what child protection should be. These were mainly on the care of children, right from pregnancy by observing certain customs such as not eating foods like snails. Women were generally responsible for the survival of a new born child.

.... Women in this community raise children. We feed them by growing our own food and also buying some from the market with the money we get from our husbands or trading some of our farm produce. When the children are old enough, we expect them to help in cultivating crops, and food processing especially turning cassava into gari. We also expect them to engage in household chores fully. For instance, I expect my children to collect water every morning and bring home firewood and food for cooking when they go to the farm. In addition, my older children do look after the younger ones so that I can get time to work on the farm to produce enough food for the family... (Woman FGD, not in CRC).

In a separate focus group a woman who is a member of the Child Rights Club adds that

... It is important that children participate in household chores and on the farms from their early years so that they can learn important skills necessary for life. This will prevent them from becoming lazy and unproductive in future. Children are useful to their parents if they are obedient and responsible this is important to their future career. Young girls are expected to be very obedient to their parents it is up to her parents to train her well in household chores and also protect her from getting pregnant until she is old enough to go through the dipo rites This will ensure that she gets a responsible man as husband in future... (Woman FGD in CRC)

When a child is born parents are concerned greatly about the physical survival of the child. This concern of the parents is understandable because infant mortality is high in the community. Practical measures they believe can help their children survive are what they are preoccupied with.

Secondly most of the parents especially the women, worry about how they can secure enough food to feed their children. Hence child protection in a poor rural community to parents is about food security and physical care. To secure food most of the parents work long hours on the farm and obligate older children to work on farms alongside or make them look after young ones whilst they work. The need to contribute to food provision, for participating parents was such a serious issue that children who refuse to contribute to it are seen as unruly. On the other hand children, who contribute labour on the farm, are seen as learning an

important skill for life. For instance parents view obedience and taking responsibility as virtues that protect the child into adulthood.

The third thing most parents mentioned as important to protecting children and ensuring their future especially for teen girls is making sure they successfully go through a rite of passage called the *dipo* rites. Participating parents thought this is necessary if the girl will get a responsible man to marry in future.

To most of the parents physically ensuring the survival of a child, providing food and training children in an occupation and observing customary rites, is what child protection is about.

Professionals' perspectives on child protection: Participating professionals in talking about child protection made references to Act 560, and then discussed the welfare and rights of the child.

... Child protection is about ensuring the welfare and rights of a child. It is important that parents in making decisions about a child always consider the interest of the child first. Children should also be assured and indeed entitled to their welfare, whether the parents of the child are married or not at the time the child was born. Child protection is also about ensuring the rights to education, health, shelter, clothing and food; in addition children should not be engaged in any form of exploitative labour. (Director NCCE)

Rights of the child seem to be of utmost importance to professionals.

4.3.2 Local perspectives on child rights

Local parents' perspectives on child rights: Participating parents believed that children have right to their welfare but attached to this right is **responsibility** to be respectful to adults. For example parents will say children have rights but these rights had nothing to do with their individual selves, but rather the right to be cared for by the whole extended family and indeed the community not just their biological parents, if they are respectful. According to the tribal Queen mother

... When a child is born, he or she is born to the whole community especially to the extended family of the parents. This is because everybody feels the child is an addition to the extended family and the community at large. The child has the right to demand help from his kinfolks as he would from his biological parents. In return, the child has to be respectful and obedient to all kinfolks who are older than he is and indeed to every older member of the community if he expects to get help from them. In this

community, it is proper training for a child to greet, bow, show curtsies and other gestures of respect at all times to elderly persons. A child is not expected to start a conversation with an elderly person and must only talk when he is talked to. In addition, it is improper for a child to call attention to himself in social gathering.

When a child is respectful it serves him or her well in future... (Queen mother IDI).

The Queen mother further explained responsibilities that parents and adults have towards a child in the community. This view was repeated by most of the participants in other sessions. She explained it this way

Caregivers of a child are expected to provide shelter, clothes, accommodation, and food for the child and make sure the child go through all the necessary rites and customs of this community. In addition the caregivers are expected to send the child to school or train him or her in an occupation that will benefit him in future. It is proper that children are disciplined when they are disrespectful to elderly people in order to correct them and make them responsible adults in future. Also just as parents are expected to care for children, when they are young, children are also expected to care for their parents in their old age in this community.

The rights of a child as explain by the queen mother shows that the construction of the child is centred on respect, reciprocity, responsibility and obedience. As a member of a group and a child will thrive when the group thrives and vice versa. It seems individualism is not encouraged among the *Krobos*.

4.4 Understanding of Act 560: Professionals vs Caregivers

4.4.1 District professionals

In all interviews with the local professionals it was clear that they had fair knowledge and understanding of the law and what it obligated. A police officer explained his understanding and how he acquired knowledge of the law

Act 560 this is the law on child protection and rights. I get information about it through books that are supplied to me in my official duties. Also before we are sent on a mission such as peace keeping, we usually go through a course on child rights and protection. Hence we are updated on new development on this subject. For instance just recently I was on a mission for the United Nations abroad; before we were dispatched, we went through a one month course on child protection and rights. Act 560 is a very detailed document on child protection and it's divided into five parts. It

covers all aspect of children's welfare. We try our best to educate parents on the law but unfortunately most of them do resist the law and do as they please. Cases of child abuse are common and rampant in this community even though the law states clearly parents should not abuse children... (Police Inspector DOVVSU)

Participating teachers on the other hand had learnt of the law on children when training as teachers. Also, the law is in most of the text books that they use as teaching aid for the children. However, during focus group discussions, I realized they did not have much knowledge on Act 560. Most of them were much more concerned about the impoverishment of families in the community. They complained about the poor state of social determinants of children wellbeing, which was having a negative impact on children's education than the rights of children not been realized.

A social welfare official also tells me about the law and the resistance they face from caregivers when they go into the community to educate them. This was representational of most professionals

Parents dislike it when we tell them that the law prevents them from exploiting child labour, degrading treatment such as making girls go almost naked during the diporites and parading them through the whole community. They dislike it most when we tell them children have rights and do not emphasize also on their responsibilities.

Parents argue that children having a right to an opinion only make them disrespectful and unruly, a vice which is unacceptable among the Krobo. Parents sometimes also say children are becoming uncontrollable because they are been taught this laws at school and other places. Caregivers frown on many parts of the law, especially when it goes against their customs and norms... (Director SWD)

In general professionals seem to have appreciable knowledge of the law, due to their education or as a requirement to their duties.

4.4.2 Caregivers Understanding of Act 560

Responses suggest that caregivers knew parts of the law even though they might not necessarily know they were referring to Act 560. Most of them admitted they have heard parts of the law from informal sources such as on radio, at church, from teachers, and also some government officials, when they visit them at community meetings and durbars during festivals. A man in a focus group discussion says he has learnt part of the law at parents' teacher association meeting

At the last PTA meeting a government official came to talk to us about the law on children among other things, he said physical punishment of children was wrong. I wondered to myself how we were supposed to correct children then. He also said we should not let our daughters go through the dipo rites. A woman in the group asked him how the young girls will get husbands if they don't go through the dipo rites since most men prefer women who have gone through the rites. I did not agree with his explanation and I am sure other parents also did not (Man FGD).

Informal sources parents rely on for information on the law means that they do not get enough information. Also responses from participating parents indicate that they do not contribute much to child protection discourse when engaging professionals but rather they are told what to do. Professionals instruct them and expect them to adopt their ideas on the issue.

4.5 Contribution of Civil Society and Government Institutions to Child Protection

Civil society here refers to local NGOs and the traditional leadership namely the tribal queens and chiefs, and Plan Ghana an NGO. Within the community the government institutions available for child care and protection are the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), Department of Social Welfare, Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the police service.

Government Institutions and Child Protection: The main government department charged with the provision of social security in Ghana is the Department of Social Welfare. However, most rural people do not have access to any form of social welfare intervention neither is any form of social security available to them. They usually rely on the support of kin, church or the services of NGO. In most cases the government institutions established to provide these services lack equipment, funding and personnel to make meaningful impact on communities. Officials tasked with child protection attributes their inability to effectively dispatch their duties to lack of funding. A social service official describes the situation

... The welfare of children is in their own hands and that of their caregivers, the government offers little assistance. We try our best to educate caregivers on child protection but the simple truth is we don't have the funding to go to the surrounding villages so we are forced to do most of our work in Asesewa. For instance this social welfare office is supposed to serve the whole district of Upper Manya but we do not have a single vehicle to transport staff to other parts of the district. We are supposed to get funding from the district assembly but the assembly itself is a young one with its

own financial issues. However, we take advantage of the least opportunity we get for instance we have arrangement with the local hospital to talk to mothers, when they come for antenatal and postnatal meetings with the nurses, we talk to them about child protection issues. I admit this is not enough, but the current budget we have, is woefully inadequate... (Director SWD)

Participating professionals' responses seem to suggest that the government is quick to make laws on children but the needed resources to go along with implementation hardly come along. This means children do not get a good enough protection from the government, a situation that has contributed to the vulnerability of children in Upper Manya.

Efforts of Civil Society at Child Protection: Participating parents repeated that traditional authority especially the chiefs are only interested in the adjudication of farm land; however an association of Queen mothers does a lot more for children welfare. Efforts of civil society in terms of child protection also, are in the form of NGOs offering assistance which is mainly a top-down education of parents on child protection. Below is a quote that suggests how Plan Ghana an NGO goes about its education,

Occasionally we write letters to the tribal chiefs who assemble people in the community for us to educate on child protection we also take advantage of festivals, Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A) and most gathering where we get opportunity to meet parents. We serve as resource persons at such meeting. At big gatherings such as durbar of chiefs and other festivities we use public address system; however there is more interaction at small meetings such as the PTA sometimes they ask questions but most often they listen to what we have to say... (Coordinator Plan Ghana)

The educational approach where professionals serve as resource persons and address parents on how they have to care for their children is also used by police and the social welfare department and could be among other things a reason why the efforts of these professionals are sometimes not well received. Participating parents seem to have strong conviction on the virtues of their child protection practices, such as the importance of respect, obedience responsibility and physical punishment. Professionals instructing them to adapt a different approach to child protection, without parents participating and owning that approach will most likely not yield the needed results.

Professionals seem not to engage parents because there is a notion that parents are illiterate and need to be told what to do; hence they do not seek their perspectives on child protection.

This is evident in a response professional gave when I asked about how best they try to involve the caregivers when they meet them

...well not really most of the parents don't know much about child rights as stated in the constitution so it is our duty to teach them and then maybe when they have come to an appreciable level of understanding we can engage them in a dialogue or something...But I don't know if that will ever happen... (Coordinator, Plan Ghana).

Aims of Plan Ghana: Plan Ghana is a subsidiary of Plan International; a prominent children development organisation that works mainly with the UNCRC. It operates in several countries across Africa and concentrates in the rural areas of such countries. The usage of UNCRC by Plan International in several African countries, and implementing same programmes suggest a lack of appreciation of diversity among African people. Coordinator of Plan Ghana at the community explained the activities of the organisation.

...Our aim as an NGO is to promote child rights and to improve on the economic situation of children in this community. We work to ensure first and foremost the rights of children in communities such as Asesewa is respected, and also for children to have an opinion in their development. We strive to improve on basic education, health and food security for children. Our activities on child protection include supporting the capacity of government institutions charged to enforce and implement laws in favour of children. Our work is mainly based on the UNCRC and most of the local institutions we work with support the UNCRC. This helps us to work effectively with them to promote the rights of children. On education we work with the Ghana Education Directorate in the community to improve teaching and learning in schools. We support teachers through in-service training we also work with Ghana health service to improve health of communities... (Coordinator Plan Ghana)

Plan-Ghana is very important in the community. Participating professionals recommended the organisation and talked about the assistance it gives various institutions in the community when it comes to child protection. Plan Ghana works closely with the UNCRC, and with institutions that recognise or whose principles are based mainly on it. The UNCRC champions the rights of children and among other things, asserts that in all matters concerning the development of a child, the opinion of a child should be of prime consideration. This assertion on which Plan Ghana operates is the direct opposite of what parents in the community seem to believe in. Most parents in the community believe that children do not have an opinion even in matters concerning them, since they might not have the requisite experience to make the

right decision for themselves. This leaves Plan Ghana in a difficult situation in the implementation of some of its interventions.

4.6 Summary

Responses from caregivers suggest they, like most parents are responsible and want the best for their children. However, the unfavourable nature of social determinants of child wellbeing namely poverty, unfavourable environmental conditions, some cultural practices and the poor delivery of basic health, have made it almost impossible for most parents in the community to protect and give their children appropriate care.

The cultural practice where biological fathers are barred from their children because they had not performed all the required customary rites on a woman before a baby is conceived has made a lot of children vulnerable in the community. The poor sanitation delivery in the community has made a lot of children unhealthy. Children suffer from cholera intestinal parasites and bilharzias and kwashiorkor due to malnutrition.

The deep poverty in the community changes priorities of parents towards children. Parents depend on the labour of children to make ends meet. However, parent in the community believe that children learn important skills and lessons for life by working. They do not see children working as exploitation. A good child is expected to be respectful to adults at all times. The poor state, cost, and lack of educational facilities in the community have caused a lot of parents to withdraw their children after few years of schooling. When they consider, the opportunity cost of children working to schooling. Most parents believe that child protection is about physically protecting a child from sickness and death, but not about ensuring the rights of a child. Child rights to a local parent are about a child been entitled to care from most members of the extended family aside the biological parents. To most parents it is wrong for children to call attention to themselves or demand personal rights. Rather the collective good of the group should affect a child's wellbeing.

Participating professionals on the other hand are of the opinion that child protection is about the rights and welfare of a child. A few maintained children have the responsibility to be of good behaviour. Participating officials have appreciable knowledge of the children's law Act 560. Teachers and parents had less knowledge about the law, although teachers were better off. Officials believe that parents turn a blind eye to the law especially when it is in conflict with what they believe in. Civil society offers little in terms of child protection. Lack of resources and personnel has made most of them less effective.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

5.0 Introduction

Prior to data collection, I expected that local parents' perspectives on child protection will differ from some parts of the Children's Act 560. My past experience as a civic educator in the community informed that conviction. However, during analysis and discussion of the data, interesting and unexpected findings emerged that suggest that even professionals trained to ensure children's right had different perspectives on child protection. Also the top-down approach used by government agencies and civil organizations was frowned upon by participating parents. These unexpected findings buttress suggestions that child protection is diverse and a construct of individual societies. This chapter is structured into three sections. Section 1) looks at challenges to child protection under this section I will look at issues that Highly Educated Professionals (HEPs), Technically Trained Professionals (TTPs) and parents perceive as challenges. Section 2) will look at the views that these three categories of participants prefer as solutions to child protection; and section 3) will look at the implications of the challenges and solutions raised by caregivers. I will also discuss services that exist for child protection and the usefulness of Act 560.

5.1 Challenges to child protection

Several factors were raised by both professionals and parents as challenges to child protection. Some of these were structural causes such as poverty, incompetent institutions responsible for child protection, lack of political will by governments etc. The following paragraph discusses the responses of HEPs on challenges to child protection.

5.1.1 Challenges to Child protection, HEPs

These categories of professionals were frustrated by the conditions of children in the community and seem to blame parents for not ensuring the rights of the child. Among the issues mentioned by HEPs as challenges to child protection include;

Child labour: HEPs, labelled children working as child labour and illegal. Parents were often blamed for making children work at the expense of their formal educational. These professionals however, seem not to consider the intellectual and occupational skills that children acquire when working, as a form of education. Indeed perspectives of caregivers

seem to be relegated to the background by HEPs. In some cases these professionals see children working as denying them their childhood, an abuse of children rights by adults.

For instance a police officer in charge of Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVSU) stated categorically that "parents are integral part of child labour" in the community (Findings chapter page 43) Interestingly Pupavac (2001, p. 101) suggests that the idea of child development as carried by global text such as the UNCRC is one in which a child thrives in a happy atmosphere with love understanding and free from responsibility. However, observing the hardship caregivers face in the community it was obvious that the conditions necessary for child protection as carried by the UNCRC were not present in the community. Parents were going to insist on children working and contributing to family income. By blaming parents for child labour, HEPs does not seem to consider the circumstances under which families live in the community. Research shows that child right campaigners more often than not, see adults in developing countries as child abusers, because their children's experience violates the image of childhood held in the West (Nsamenang, 2004; Pupavac, 2001). A social welfare director for instance explained that children seem not to have any rights in the community because they cannot for instance insist on their right to play when their parents need them for errands. These errands he claims sometimes leave children exposed to abuse; such as girls being abused sexually by unscrupulous adults when on errands.

Low value of formal education: This was seen as a challenge to child protection by HEPs and also discussed by TTPs. HEPs seem to suggest that the high illiteracy rate of parents in the community should also be blamed for the low levels of child protection in the community they claim parents will rather spend their money on expensive cultural celebrations such as the *dipo* (Initiation rights for girls) than spend it on children education. However a critical look at the reason why parents attach more importance to celebrations such as the *dipo* rather than formal education is because, whilst they can see the direct and tangible benefit of their daughters getting responsible men as husbands due to the celebration of *dipo*, and children getting income by engaging in economic activities, the same cannot be said of formal education. Although, formal education can be of great importance, the need for families to work for daily sustenance in the community seem to be a much pressing need (Findings chapter p.44 Woman FGD) Nsamenang (2004, p. 94) suggests that formal education is of no importance if it cannot put food on the table; the length of years education requires before it becomes useful seem not to be a viable alternative for parents. Perhaps it is not lack of

education that is the cause of parents not been interested in formal education for children but rather the pressure to provide for the household makes the lengthy gestation period of formal education less of an option.

Poverty: It was the third issue raised by HEPs for the poor state of child protection in the community. HEPs were very concerned about lack of resources within government agencies charged with child protection as a major challenge to child protection but not poverty among parents in the community. The economic deprivation of government agencies charged with child protection at the research site was of such proportions that most professionals admitted they were not able to perform their duties as they would have wished to. In the words of a social service director "the welfare of children is in their own hands and that of their families". This frank admission is an indication of the low level of help that government gives to vulnerable children and their families in the community. HEPs admitted that the government makes laws and signs international agreements on children's right but does little in the form of funding to support these laws. For instance, they felt that Act 560 is a good legislation to protect children; however, the government has done little to educate caregivers on it as the funding for capacity building of officials is unavailable Manful and Manful (2010, pp. 120-121) claims there is a huge gap between legal intent of Act 560 and its realization. Responses from a participating couple indicate parents wish to protect children and give them the best of education but could not afford the cost of it. Therefore, for such parents it is intolerable poverty levels in the community that have caused their children not to be educated. Hence acknowledging poverty that families face as well as that of agencies charged with child protection will be a more complete way of identifying poverty as a challenge to child protection. Other issues identified by HEPs but not into detail include physical punishment of children and HIV/AIDS

5.1.2 Child Protection Challenges TTPs

Technically Trained Professionals (TTPs) discussed challenges which centred around single parenting and orphaning, material welfare of children, poor state of determinants of health such as sanitation and environmental conditions.

Single parenting: This was a major issue raised by TTPs as a challenge to child protection. They suggest that the cultural practice where men are deprived of access to their children has left the care of children to women only. This has resulted in a lot of families ending up as

single parent households in the community. Men were denied access because they had not performed all necessary customs required at the time of conception of a child. Children in such women headed households usually do not have any inheritance from their biological fathers and have to compete with their maternal uncles for the right to inherit maternal grandfathers. (Findings chapter p.34) This source of tension deprives children from much needed care from maternal extended kinfolks.

Orphaning and HIV/AIDS: was a second issue raised by TTPs as a challenge to child protection. According to these professionals the most affected are orphans and vulnerable children especially children orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS. This disease has unleashed suffering and pain on the lives of children and families in the community. Participating TTPs suggests that extended kinfolk which served as a form of refuge and cushioned children in times of distress were now overstretched due to economic hardship. A community nurse claims caregivers do not have enough money to care for their children and those of others. Teachers in focus group discussions suggests, the *Krobo* have a cultural practice which in a way deprive women the primary caregivers of children from resources and has indirectly brought about HIV/AIDS. They explain the lack of resources made women migrate to look for jobs some end up working as prostitutes which can bring about HIV/AIDS. This assertion is corroborated by Agyei-Mensah (2001, pp. 455-459) according to him, young female *Krobos* had gone to Ivory coast either to trade in smuggled diamonds from Eastern region or to look for jobs but ended up as prostitutes. Indeed many studies have linked the origin of HIV/AIDS in Ghana to migrant workers especially those who travelled to Ivory Coast namely the *Krobos*.

Additionally the stigma and psychological torture that children in the community whose parents have died of HIV/AIDS had resulted in some cases where relatives are reluctant to take in orphaned children. Nyandiya-Bundy and Bundy (2002, p. 598) Writing on the broader African HIV/AIDS situation, asserts orphans who lose their parents through HIV/AIDS are most likely to suffer from loss of income as parents become sick and die, endure parental death and the associated emotional stress and finally care for sick and dying parents and younger siblings as they become "parentized" themselves. At the research site, most orphaned children were left with maternal grandmothers who were often not able to render proper care for these children. Although the current AIDS situation is not as pronounced as it used to be, orphans left behind by parents who have died of HIV/AIDS will be present for many years to come in the community, their protection not really assured by families or the government.

Thus it is important that whilst teaching and campaigning on child rights and preventive strategies to HIV/AIDS; donor and government agencies should support the economic and physical wellbeing of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) and the families that take care of them. Supporting such families can be in the form of development of interventions that take into consideration cultural, family structures, and the settings of targeted groups. This is of much importance to caregivers.

Poverty, Malnutrition and Preventable Disease: These were also raised by TTPs as challenges to child protection. They suggest economic deprivation at all levels from family to government agencies at the research site was very severe. Lack of funds in its worst form makes the economic burden of caring and protecting children and OVCs a real and daily challenge in the community. Lachman et al. (2002, p. 590) Support the claim of TTPs by suggesting that the poverty that faces the population of Africa negates against any realistic prospects of effective child protection. According to TTPs parents in the community were mostly farmers and fishermen. These farmers work long hours however the labour intensive work and over dependence on obsolete tools, make it impossible for them to earn a decent income. In addition most of these occupations are seasonal; during the lean season families have to endure hardship which causes children to be malnourished. Children suffer preventable disease such as Kwashiorkor due to malnourishment. Poverty within families has also led to lack of basic health care and malnourished children. Teachers were very concerned about the poor state of families and its consequence on children. They asked for NGO help to lift children from their poor economic situation. In addition the labour migration of parents during the dry season means children are left to grandparents or are fostered out to other kinfolks for upkeep; this further deteriorates the situation of children since foster parents have their own responsibilities. In summary, TTPs suggest deep poverty in the community forces parents to make choices on necessities that affect child protection.

Low patronage of health service: was another issue raised as a challenge to child protection in the community. TTPs blamed both parents and inappropriate health facilities as the cause of the poor state of children in the community. Parents were blamed for not sending children to hospitals at the first signs of illness rather they try to cure them in the house with traditional medicine. Also, the community health nurse blames parents especially women for using traditional birth attendants thereby increasing maternal mortality rate. TTPs further blame parents for not being knowledgeable enough about nutritional dishes for children and not

insuring children on the national health insurance scheme. However, they also suggest that parents do not frequent hospitals because health facilities are few in number and at great distances from most of the community.

Thus it seems that parents, who would like to visit the hospital with their children when they are sick, cannot frequently do this because of the few facilities available.

5.1.3 Child Protection Challenges, Parents

Child rights discourse: was an issue raised by participating parents as a challenge to child protection. Participating parents were of the view that in recent times raising children has become a lot more difficult because of modernity, education and new laws of raising children. Parents had the view that children will become irresponsible and lazy if they were left alone to do as they please, which is how they perceive child rights discourse. This assertion of parents is supported by studies that suggest in sub-Saharan Africa caregivers attribute the undermining of their authority and capabilities to socialize children to the influence of child rights discourse. The pluralistic worldview of families in upper Manya, is in contrast with the individualistic one of the of the global West; this implies the UNCRC and its domesticated national laws such as the Act 560 cannot easily be infused into the study setting. However, continuous presentation of the rights of the child as a universal truth without borders, has in some cases brought about tensions between parents and children. It is argued that obligating the rights of the child is tantamount to recognising their moral equality with adults. (Pupavac, 2001; Snipstad et al., 2010) The idea of children being equal to adults carried by child rights discourse is something which is frowned upon in no small terms among the *Krobos* and most Ghanaian tribes. Local parents in the community from their response believe that a child must rely wholly on his or her parents for directions, and must desist from drawing attention to him or herself. Most parents seem to suggest that a child who insists on his rights will only be seen as disrespectful and will end up suffering untold hardship in the community.

Another issue raised by caregivers which suggests that they regard child rights as a challenge rather than a solution is that although they listen to government agents and NGOs on child rights, they had no intention of practicing what they have been told. (Finding chapter p.52 Man FGD) Participating parents were of the view that; officials were suggesting they were incapable parents. Pupavac (2001, p. 101) in a similar argument suggests that, " International children's right paradigm fundamentally challenges the rights of states (parents) to govern their own affairs Boyden (1994, p. 256) further claims that the international children's right regime assumes there is a model of childhood development that is universally applicable, and

that there is a consensus both domestically and internationally on what policies should be in place, to realize the best interest of the child. This is manifested in participating professionals' assertion that even though they do their best in educating caregivers on the rights of the child, they were not impressed with the outcome of their interventions since parents continue to stick to their old ways. They assume parents in the community have previously agreed to child rights as ideal to child protection.

Loss of Cultural Values/Customs: Participating parents raised this as a major challenge to child protection. For instance the tribal Queen mother suggests guardians and kinfolks no longer take seriously the oath to protect Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), as their own biological children. According to her they use education, Christianity and enlightenment in general as excuse to refuse to take the traditional oath that obligates them to take care of OVCs. Also the loss of cultural values such as respect and obedience expected from children could also be as a result of poverty and economic hardship. This is because as explained by participating parents, children have the right to care if they are respectful and obedient to parents and adults in general. However, the poverty that faces parents in the community means that children have to engage in economic activity at an early age to fend for themselves. The fact that children provide for themselves make them loose respect for adults which further leads to poor child protection from parents.

Poverty: was an important issue to child protection in the community this was raised by all three groups of participants. In the case of parents, deep poverty has impacted negatively on their ability to be proper carers of children in the community. It has caused lack of formal education for children, as a couple explained that the deep poverty they face, means that they can only send two out of their eight children to school. Also poverty has caused a majority of the parents to oblige their children to contribute to family income as explained earlier; this is a major cause of child labour. Impoverishment of parents also means that most of them are not able to access health care for their children, a reason for the poor state of children health in the community. Poverty has impacted negatively on the academic progress of children as teachers explained that most of the children eat only in the morning whilst at home and do not feed again until they return back. This makes them hungry at school and unable to concentrate on what is been taught.

In summary the three categories of participants identified different issues as being challenges to child protection. This could be because of the different world view and different

circumstances that face each group of participants. Implications of these different challenges are that child protection is indeed a contextual issue; a universal standard might not be appreciated. Parents think children must work because it is a sure way of earning income and surviving. TTPs from the challenges they raise think that structural challenges must be addressed. HEPs because of their duties as administrators of institutions charged with child protection are much concerned about how they can succeed in implementing child rights and think mostly about improving on capacity for their organisations.

5.2 Participants Views/Solution to Child Protection

After identifying challenges to child protection in the community, participants suggested solutions to these challenges; the three groups of participants ‘prescribed’ different solutions to improving child protection. The differences in ideas on improving child protection points to the importance of a need for a top-down, bottom-up pressure in solving community challenges Baum (2007) explains the importance of bottom-up pressure in community development. In the following paragraphs I will look at solutions suggested by HEPs, TTPs and parents.

5.2.1 Child Protection Highly Educated Professionals (HEPs)

Participating HEPs raised a number of issues which in their view were solutions to child protection in the community these include the following.

Child rights discourse: Participating HEPs talked about child protection as educating and ensuring the rights of the child. For instance they referred to Act 560 as a good document for the protection of children, although they admitted not much had been done about educating caregivers on it which makes it difficult for parents to be guided by it. Professionals on the other hand get information on child rights through courses they attend and books provided to them in their line of work. Responses of HEPs suggest they were in favour of child rights discourse as a solution to child protection. This was to be expected because as discussed in chapter three development aid attached to partnership conditions has caused the Ghana Government to agree to partnership with international community that enjoins her to ratify, domesticate and implement the principles of the UNCRC (Laird, 2012b; Reynaert et al., 2009) this implies that HEPs working with the government on child protection are the ones who are supposed to ensure that the governments part of such partnership agreement is kept by educating and enforcing child rights at the community level. Indeed there is a lot of pressure on these professionals to insist on child rights because Ghana agrees to a set of international

indicators which are monitored at the national level by international agents (Laird, 2012b, p. 95) Therefore, even if a professional did not believe in children's right as a solution to child protection, their job dictates that they implement it.

Another reason why HEPs insisted on child rights could be the assistance that they get from Plan Ghana. Plan Ghana works strictly with the UNCRC and funds government agencies working with UNCRC to ensure child rights in the community. Hence to keep the sponsorship coming in, these under resourced government professionals must insist on principles of UNCRC which is the main document used by Plan Ghana in the community.

Secondly HEPs may not be in tune with the real situation or needs of children and families in the community, since their work is more at the administrative level. As a former civic education worker in the community, I know most of the child protection programs implemented in the community are designed at NCCE headquarters in Accra or elsewhere and sent to district offices to implement strictly. Therefore even if officials were knowledgeable of challenges to child protection in the community, they were under obligations to implement programmes rolled out from headquarters. These professionals may respond differently about child rights and protection if they were not talking in their official capacity.

Thirdly, the high education of most of these top officials, have made them much more inclined to Western ideals and ways of doing things, and probably explains why they blame parents for child protection challenges in the community. A study by A. Twum-Danso Imoh (2012) on how parents prefer to train children in Ghana suggests that highly educated people such as doctors were much more receptive of Western ways of raising children.

Formal Education for Children: participating HEPs were of the view that the best ways to protect children is to educate them to the highest level. They believe that education especially formal education is known to affect a person's life positively in many areas such as increase income, choose healthy lifestyle and acquire critical skills to help them better provide for themselves and their children. The community according to these professionals have educational aims for children but parents are not committed to these aims. HEPs were of the view that parents blame inability to give their children formal education on poverty. However, as discussed earlier they believe parents spend substantial amount of money on “unnecessary” ceremonies such as *dipo* and the likes other than formal education. They further blame the lack of will by parents to educate their children to the fact that majority of parents are themselves illiterate and therefore do not see the essence of formal education.

Professionals from their responses see formal education as essential to child protection and see a role model as perhaps an educated person working with an organized institution. This claim by HEPs that parents spend their money on traditional ceremonies instead of education could be because of their strong belief in culture and customs. Beliefs in life after death are important among the *Krobo*. For instance caregivers swear an oath to deceased parents to care for their children. This is beneficial to children, because parents believed that failure to take care of children of a deceased person has harmful consequence for the living. This perhaps explains why parents will spend a substantial amount of their money on funerals and traditions rather than on formal education. Thus for professionals to get parents to keep their children in school, it is important that they engage parents in a participatory approach for them to come to the realisation of the importance of education. This will be more useful, because currently parents seem not to be aware of the importance of formal education. Even if they are, the success that formal education brings cannot be readily seen in the community.

Resourcing government agencies to be effective: Participating HEPs were of the opinion that child protection in the community was poor because government agencies charged with child protection were under resourced in terms of finance and personnel to meaningfully impact on promoting child protection. According to these professionals a sure way to improving the situation of children in the community is to provide resources to professionals in order for them to reach parents in every part of the district with information on child protection. Resourcing agencies charged with child protection is important but it must go hand-in-hand with an effort to improve on the impoverishment that confronts parents in the community.

5.2.2 Solutions to Child Protection: Technically Trained Professionals (TTPs)

Although TTPs work with institutions that are to ensure children's rights, they had different suggestions on the solutions to child protection challenges in the community. The following are their suggestions.

Material wellbeing: Participating TTPs were of the view that the physical wellbeing of children and the eradicating of poverty in the community, so were of utmost importance to their protection. TTPs worked directly with children in the community the daily contact with children probably inform their decision on material wellbeing for children. They mentioned

children's rights only in passing and not with the emphasis of HEPS. For instance the general consensus of teachers on proper ways to raise a child was to provide food, health care, clothes and bus ride for children to school. Responses from teachers suggest they prefer efforts to be intensified to ensure the material welfare of children in the community, and also to increase the knowledge of parents on children's rights through respectful engagement. Laird (2002) corroborates the suggestion of TTPs when she claims that effectively improving conditions in the environment is what is important not protecting children from families. Although I did not engage children in my study, the deep poverty facing them will inform any observer that ensuring their material welfare was of utmost importance. From the responses women are mostly tasked to care of children and yet have limited resources; providing material resources for women especially resources for trading will perhaps lead to an improved lives for children Wrigley-Asante (2012) suggests that where credit are made available to women children are the end beneficiaries. A community health nurse on the other hand was rather concerned about the poor health status of children. To her proper care of children should begin with educating parents on nutrition and making them aware of the nutrition qualities of foods readily available in the community. In effect although TTPs are to be guided by children's rights principles in their work, they were more concerned about the physical and material welfare of children than their individual rights.

Social Provision of Services: Participating TTPs thought that the lack of social amenities such as potable water and proper sanitation is a source of distress to children in the community. Children in the community have to collect water several times for the house hold before they can be ready for school. In the estimation of TTPs by providing social amenities such as pipe borne water, electricity, good roads, boarding facilities at schools etc in the community the burden on children will reduce. Laird (2002) suggests that the lack of such amenities in the rural areas of Ghana has caused children to provide the services that these amenities are to provide to household. This may include providing energy, water and sanitation service to the house, by collecting firewood and water from rivers and emptying chamber pots where there are no toilets in the house.

Understanding the situation of parents: Participating TTPs suggests that understanding the plight of parents and children is important to child protection. They were a lot more receptive of parents and how they handle their children. Teachers seem to understand why parents are more interested in engaging their children in occupation than enrolling them in school. For

instance a teacher explains that for a considerable number of years the local school has recorded no pass in the final exams which means children are not able to continue to senior high institutions. The situation described by the teacher, in effect buttresses the parents' view that occupational training has become more important than schooling. This suggestion was probably what a couple had considered when they mentioned that they only keep two out of their eight children in school. Parents are not able to afford the cost of formal education their responses suggests. A remark by a teacher that she refrains from punishing children who absent themselves from school in order to work as petty traders explains the tolerance level of teachers to the situation of children and parents. She explains further that children duck when they see her, meaning the children are aware they should not be on the market during school hours. However, necessity and a need for daily sustenance is what has caused them to be on the market. These emotional situations that teachers observe and children relate to them every day and their daily contact with parents seems to make them much more respectful of parents and perhaps has made them more tolerant of children contributing to family income. Even though teachers admitted that it affects children's academic work. By making an effort to understand the situation of parents and children in the community, teachers are able to discern and seem to come to the conclusion that the provision of material welfare is paramount to child protection. In effect they try to find a middle ground or an access point into the community. Afua Twum-Danso Imoh (2011) suggests that finding a middle ground with communities that have their own set of practices when it comes to child protection is a better way to transformation.

5.2.3 Solution to Child Protection Local Parents

Participating parents also had different ideas on solutions to child protection challenges. These diverse ideas within a small community points to the fact that a global text on child protection is not appreciated, they articulated the following as solutions to child protection challenges.

Physical Care of Children and Observing traditional customs: Among the *Krobo* and most African traditional families, child protection is about physical care and traditional customs. Primarily among the *Krobo* and traditional African communities it is the duty of biological parents to ensure this, although members of the extended family are expected to contribute when called upon (Nsamenang, 2009, pp. 47-50; Oppong, 2012). Usually women are responsible for the daily upkeep of a child such as feeding and physical care. Whilst the decisions that affect the long term future of a child are left to the man such as formal

education or occupational training. Participating caregivers viewed care of a child as ensuring the physical survival of the child. Among the *Krobo* this includes observing all customs and taboo associated with child birth and child rearing. There are many practical things that *Krobo* caregivers do to ensure the physical survival of a child For instance most *Krobo* refrain from eating snails because it is a taboo (Findings chapter p.37). However, pregnant, lactating mothers and women in general are a lot more passionate about this, because it is believed that consumption of snails by women will cause saliva to drop from the mouth of their children right into adulthood. Nsamenang (2004, p. 102) Suggests In most African tribes south of the Sahara, cultural practices demand that pregnant women are subjected to behavioural taboos. For instance the eating of specific foods to prevent illness, promotes health of unborn child and mother. Subsequently the care for children among Africans starts from the imagining of unborn children, as "buds of hope and expectation" which implies a woman has to start taking good care of herself, immediately she plan on having babies. *Krobo* women consider the long term wellbeing of their children and take steps to ensure it even before they are conceived. Although some of these practices might not have scientific backing understanding and showing respect for these practices that parents believe deeply in, will open a door for positive dialogue and adaptation of better ways of child protection. It demands meaningful participation of parents in programmes on child protection.

Dipo rites key to child protection: Participating parents viewed *dipo* as an important local custom for child protection especially for preventing teenage pregnancy. As explained by parent in the findings chapter a girl can only be sexually active after she has gone through the rites and thus ready for marriage. Parents found it disgraceful if their girls do not qualify for the rites because of sexual activities. Due to this they keep a watch full eye on young girls in the community until they go through the rights. *Dipo* then becomes a very important local custom for child protection Adjaye (1999) and Kole (1955) explains further the importance of *dipo* among the *Krobo*. A young girl who is sexually active after the *dipo* rites although not married, will not receive as much condemnation as one who has not gone through the rites.

Participating parents in general were of the view child care is about ensuring the physical survival of a child and the adherence to required cultural practices and customs.

Vocational/Occupational Training: This was important to participating parents in ensuring the protection and survival of children into responsible adults in the community. They reasoned occupational training leads to quick employment and the generation of income.

Although, they will add that formal education is essential, the enthusiasm with which they defended the need to acquire practical skills suggests they were much more in favour of occupational training. For instance, a participating woman explains she had to withdraw two of her girls from school and send them to work as waitress. In the end she received remittances from her daughters for her upkeep. The kind of response where participating parents were of the view that an economic activity which generates immediate income was more useful to formal education was representational of participants. This line of reasoning of parents points to the fact that high level of poverty changes priorities. Parents clearly were more concerned about occupation that ensures quick return on income and guarantees daily survival. Nsamenang (2004, p. 111) claims that among traditional African families responsible intelligence is of much more importance than conceptual thinking. It seem that, although participating parents wish they could give their children formal education, the need to secure the future of children to them lies in learning practical or occupational skills.

Child Labour or Occupational Training: Considering the importance that participating parents attach to occupational/vocational training, the question to ask is; children working, should it be considered practical occupational training or child labour?

The general idea carried in the UNCRC and Act 560 is that children working are a form of abuse and unwelcomed (G.O.G, 1998, p. 5(1)). However, participating parents talked about engaging their children on the farm, fishing canoes or fostering them out to kinfolks, as a way of teaching the child how to acquire occupational skills. When I suggested that making children work at a tender age was illegal according to Act 560, the general response from participating parents was the law will only end up making children lazy and irresponsible in the community. For instance according to the Queen mother as a child she learnt bead making from her mother at a very young age, now a professional bead maker, her lively hood is assured. Participating parents viewed children working, as an all-round training aimed at not only developing the child and youth physically and intellectually, but also at forming and inculcating moral qualities and responsibility.

Participating parents seem to suggest that the older a child gets the more duties are assigned to him or her. Hence, by undertaking these responsibilities children indirectly pick up occupational skills. As a parents explains that she only takes her children to school when they are young but withdraw them when they are old enough to contribute labour. (Findings chapter p.43)

Oppong (2012) Suggest that through working, children become active and increasingly knowledgeable participants in social responsibilities and in their own development in Ghanaian communities. Similarly Nsamenang (2004, p. 111) argues that children working are “ the principal conduit by which they learn the rule system ... and productive skills of their culture”.

Reflecting on the perspectives of the local parents on children working there is no doubt it is very important. Parents who do not engage their children in work, and therefore do not help the child to develop their intellectual and occupational skills probably are seen as irresponsible parents. The above discussion shows that parents in the community obviously do not view children working as child labour but rather an essential training for their survival. A clear opposite of UNCRC and Act 560 principles on child labour and yet this is what participating parents believed in. This issue was a major point of conflict between parents and professionals especially HEPs who blame parents for abusing children by engaging them in work.

Respect and Obedience: This was seen as an important quality by parents for child protection and survival. Among the *Krobos* a child will gain occupational skills if he is respectful and obedient to adults. This is because the teaching of occupational skills is dependent on these two virtues, and not payment of fees as done in formal education. Practical and oral instruction is the mode of tuition. Children who are obedient to instructions therefore gain an occupation. For instance the Queen mother (Finding chapter p.49) suggests that children who are obedient, hardworking and helpful learn a lot from adults because adults teach them whilst working with them. Participating parents had similar views and thought that children ought to listen and not heard. Nsamenang (2004, p. 106), emphasizes the importance of obedience to occupational skills acquisition in traditional African families. Hence the survival and transformation of a child into a responsible adult in traditional Krobo society depends mainly on respect, obedience to instruction and participatory learning which will lead to acquisition of occupational skill. These seem to be one of the reasons parents encourage their children to be respectful and obedient to adults at all times.

Implications of an insistence on the right to opinion of children, by child right campaigners in the view of parents, were that professionals were encouraging them to be disrespectful. This in effect will make it difficult for children to acquire occupational skills. Base on this point of view parents seem to have a legitimate reason not to be enthused about child right discourse.

Implications of the different solutions and challenges articulated by participants' suggest that it is important for all stakeholders to participate meaningfully when it comes to interventions on child protection. This will make such interventions sustainable and much more successful. For instance professionals especially HEPs were in favour of children's rights discourse as a solution to child protection. This was in direct opposition to participating parents who thought children's rights discourse was a challenge to child protection. Also parents thought children working were good training whilst HEPs thought it was an abuse of children's rights. Participating parents were concerned about how they can physically care for children (Pelto & Armar-Klemesu, 2011); and orient them to be responsible members of the community (Afua Twum-Danso Imoh, 2011). TTPs however were in favour of the provision of social services. They were of the opinion it will reduce the burden on children.

5.3 Implications of Challenges to Child Protection

Implication of challenges to children's rights in the community is based on my reflections on the challenges and solutions articulated by participants as issues to child protection.

Neglect of structural challenges to child protection: In the year 2000 the Government of Ghana Identified poverty levels as one of the major challenges to child protection (G.O.G, 2000). However, challenges outlined by participants in the community generally points to the fact that structural issues and social determinants of health and wellbeing mainly poverty, identified almost two decades ago are not receiving much attention by the government or social services.

Children rights are being demanded from parents by Government agencies and NGOs; due to the ratification and domestication of the UNCRC; the document has come to be recognised as a vehicle for enhancing the situation of poor and marginalised children in Ghana. It is seen as a means of improving the livelihood of children in the poor communities. However, this right regime is particularly weak when it comes to providing welfare rights. The state is under little or no pressure from the UNCRC to provide the infrastructure that is necessary for the realization of children's rights that it demands of parents. Grugel (2013) explained that the UNCRC is particularly weak when it comes to the delivery of welfare rights to children.

Reflecting on responses and observing the conditions of parents in the community, it is obvious that the lack of assistants from government has caused an over dependence on basic seasonal agriculture. It has led to low and irregular incomes of families' for instance inadequate access to credit for farmers from either government or private sources means

parents cannot mechanise agriculture which has caused them to depend heavily on manual labour including that of children. This has a major effect on child protection. Other structural challenges which seem to be neglected by government are poor conditions of road, inadequate electricity supply and the lack of sustainable and meaningful employment to parents. The deficit in these structural issues needs to be addressed, before a meaningful demand of children's rights can be made of parents.

Top-down Imposition of Rights by Government and Civil Society

Ghana in principle is doing its best to ensure child protection and rights. However, the lack of participation from community members but rather top-down imposition of children's rights by professionals, seem to be a challenge that has not been observed or largely ignored. Parents were not ready to listen, because they imagine by telling them how to protect their children professionals were implying they are not capable parents. Several challenges have been documented as reasons for child protection. However, the implementation tactics of organizations ensuring child protection is seldom discussed. At the research site the top-down approach was frowned on by participating parents. Perhaps challenges of child protection such as poverty notwithstanding, if professionals will adopt a more participatory approach and encourage grass root participation. Parents will be able to identify more with these programmes and make them more welcoming to parents. Currently top-down impositions of children's rights by professionals in a way has made it difficult for parents to accept children's rights and has caused them to ignore the law.

Services that exist for child protection: Whilst government and civil child protection services organizations exists in the community, participating parents largely ignore them and look to extended family members and tribal leaders such as the Queen mother for advice on children. Therefore the services of kinfolks or the help they offer in protecting children was of much more importance to parents than what organized institutions offered. Ray (2011) and Steegstra (2009) have documented how Queen mothers in the Manya Krobo Municipality have formed an association that offer help to HIV education and care for orphan and vulnerable children. These associations are what parents prefer to associate with. This could be because these sources allow much more participation on issues that affect children and families, and are also concerned about the material welfare of children which is the major preoccupation of parents. Also parents in the community expect their kinfolks to provide for their children welfare when they are deceased. However, government social service facility

for orphans that parents can rely on in case they are deceased is weak and nonexistent. To win over parents on issues of child protection, it is important on the part of professionals' to demonstrate tangible reasons as to why parents should accept their principles on child protection

Usefulness of Act 560: Whilst UNCRC and Act 560 may have the best of intentions for children in the community, the culture, poverty and other socio-economic conditions that confront families in the community demands priorities of parents and children will change. For instance an insistence on the right to opinion of children as discussed earlier will make parents perceive children as disrespectful. An insistence on children not working will also mean they will not be able to acquire any occupational training which will be a tragedy for the child growing up. Therefore an insistence on UNCRC and Act 560 considering the circumstances of families will cause unintended harm to children than good. It will bring tension between parents and children and might cause parents to withdraw care and protection from children. Participating parents in general thought the law was a distraction to how they socialize their children. These views of participating parents on children's rights is similar to a study by Snipstad et al. (2010) where they claim in Tanzania parents were of the opinion child right were rather worsening their efforts to protect children.

Inadequate Education and Impact of Act 560

Parents' responses show that they have very little knowledge on Act 560. This is indeed unfortunate considering the fact that Ghana has had the Act close to two decades. The formation of Child Rights Club (CRC) in schools (U.M.K.D, 2006), information on children's rights in pupils text book, and the activities of Plan Ghana in general shows a more determined effort on the part of government and civil society to educate children on children's rights than parents. However, considering participating parents belief that knowledge must come from adults to children not the other way round, this approach might not be the best in the community.

Also education offered by NGOs in the community might not be having the desired impact on parents because there was not much difference between responses of participating parents whose children were members of the CRC and those who were not. For instance a participant woman contributing during the focus group for parents with children in the CRC, insist children must participate in household chores and work on the farms from their early years (Findings Chapter p.48). Stronger efforts must be made to educate parents on child protection

and rights through meaningful participation. The general lack of knowledge of Act 560 however, points to the fact that government probably lacks the political will or interest in the principles of Act 560 or the UNCRC but rather had ratified it due to international pressure or as partnership condition to access funding Magesan (2013) explains that developing countries often sign up to human right treaties because of funding attached to such funding and might not necessarily be because of belief in such treaties.

Schooling and Healthcare

Act 560, Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and Education for All (EFA) are all policies that make basic education compulsory for all children in Ghana. The existence of these policies empowers law enforcement agencies and child protection professionals to demand children's right to education from parents. However, responses from participating teachers and parents suggest infrastructure needed for the education of children is unavailable or in deplorable state (Findings chapter p.45). Where it is available it is too costly for parents to afford even though by law basic education is supposed to be free (Findings chapter p.42). Healthcare even seems to be more difficult to access than education; a community health nurse claims there is only one hospital that serves the whole district of Upper Manya. This has caused high maternal mortality in the community due to expectant women using the services of traditional birth attendants. The infrastructural effort of the government to provide easy access to health care free education for children is woefully inadequate at Upper Manya. This makes their demand for children's rights rhetoric. Parents realize this, and could be a reason they do not take government officials serious.

In summary, there is a need for quality, meaningful, affordable and accessible education and healthcare for right of education and health to be realised.

5.4 Partnership and Participation for Sustainable Child Protection

The current globalised world makes partnership between nations and international organization inevitable. Health Promotion encourages partnership between organizations and nations for the realization of global health. The ideal form of partnership is where partners come together to agree and have a mutual understanding of the aims of the partnership, this type of partnership leads to a win-win situation (Green & Tones, 2012; WHO, 1986). Therefore if the governments of developing countries such as Ghana have the wellbeing of their nationals at heart, it is incumbent on her when signing international agreements

especially development aid agreement, not to think of the monetary gains only but also the consequence of such agreement on the wellbeing of its citizenry. Considering the contextual values of its people will lead them to aims of partnership that are in line with the needs of people which will lead to sustainable and positive community transformation. Also the Ghanaian Governments must partner with its local communities to provide the necessary infrastructure which will lift its people from poverty and bring about child protection. Unfortunately responses from participants show that the government does little to partner with parents in the community to provide a conducive environment to support families and for that matter protect children. A social welfare system for families in the community is close to nonexistent though this is necessary for child protection.

The contrasting views that parents have about child protection as compared to professionals especially HEPs, is indeed evidence to the fact that there is little genuine participation when it comes to child protection. Participation of parents in programmes meant for the protection of their children by Government agencies and civil society at the moment can be said to be tokenism. This has caused as explained earlier parents to distant themselves from these programmes and the education offered by these institutions. However, meaningful participation of community members can cause entrenched position and customs to be abandoned and lead to transformed societies. An instance of meaningful participation that brings about positive transformation is the Village Empowerment Programme (VEP) developed by *Tostan* an NGO in Senegal. The basic principle of the VEP also known as the *Tostan* approach is to situate the analysis of issues and decision for change at the village level, with integral participation by community members. The approach situates power to change in the hands of individual residents, particularly women and in the local community. The teaching method of the *Tostan* approach is nonjudgmental and focuses on participatory and social change strategies. Resource persons encourage active engagement and transformative learning. This has led to whole communities changing to adopt hygienic lifestyle and abandon entrenched cultural practice such as the Female Genital Cutting (FGC) which hitherto was seen as necessary for women if they intend to get married. (Diop et al., 2004; Monkman et al., 2007; Tostan, 2014). Surely the villages that transformed through the Village Empowerment Programme (VEP) probably had other challenges such as poverty. However meaningful participation is what caused them to transform. If NGOs such as Plan Ghana and Government agencies such as Social Welfare Department implementing child protection programs in Upper Manya will adopt the participatory approach it will empower communities and bring about positive transformation.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The small number of participants in this study means findings cannot be generalized; however it does provide insight particularly into contrasting understandings and experiences of child protection that may act as barriers to effective implementation of Act 560.

The time set for data collection was limited, however in most parts saturation was achieved during data collection.

Since the study is primarily about children at a point in time, I felt I should have had a focus group with children to seek their perspective on care and protection. This could be taken up in further research. Some parents in my opinion were economical with the truth about the situation of children in the community since a thorough disclosure will be an indictment on their capabilities as parents. This could have affected the data they provided on children.

The fact that I could not ask the tribal Queen mother direct questions and also had to agree with most of the things she said as a sign of respect also means I could not probe into some of the responses she gave on issues pertaining to children.

The use of two translators although largely was advantageous, there were some flash points where they had different meanings to what has been said this however was in the minority.

During translation into English the nature of responses of some participants also made me wonder whether my translators had asked the question as stated on the interview guide or had reframed to suite her understanding.

I singularly asked same questions and recorded all steps during data collection to increase reliability; however the interview with the Director of NCCE was not recorded since he objected to it. Although he agreed to a lengthy almost two hours interview where I manually wrote down his responses some parts of the interview were not captured.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 Conclusion

This study has demonstrated two important points that need to be considered by government agencies and NGOs 1) local perspectives on child protection do differ and are not in consensus with the Children's Act 560 or the UNCRC. Indeed professionals working together had different perspectives on child protection. 2) The implementation strategy of government agencies and NGOs takes the form of top-down approach where participation is at the level of tokenism; this is not appreciated by caregivers.

Divergent opinions on the local perspective on child protection exist; there was a deep and clearly demarcated divide depending on whom you engage. Participating parents and guardians were of the view that parents must provide physical care and also socialise children to be responsible members of society. The main objective of these parents is for children to be responsible, respectful and obedient to elderly people in society. These qualities in a child they believe give him or her right to care and protection. They were also of the opinion that occupational training was of much more importance than schooling if children were to survive under circumstances of deep poverty that face them although they also thought formal education was useful. Technically Trained Professionals, (TTPs) on the other hand although tasked to ensure the rights of the child, believed that material provision was of much more essence to child protection due to the impoverishment of families in the community and suggested the best way to protect children was to provide adequate food, clothing and health care which they felt the government must assist families in doing this. It is only then that children's rights can be insisted on they seemed to suggest. This opinion of the TTPs could be because of daily and direct contact with children. Highly Educated Professionals (HEPs) on the other hand explained child protection as ensuring the rights of the child. They seemed to be much more concerned about the rights than the deep poverty and harsh conditions that negates the insistence of children's rights.

On challenges of child protection participants had different views. Participating parents were of the view that children's rights discourse was undermining their ability to socialise their children to be responsible and respectful. They also attributed their inability to properly care for their children to impoverishment. TTPs on the other hand talked about deep seated poverty as the main challenge to child protection in the community. Whilst HEPs faults parents by attributing child protection challenges to the disregard of parents to children's rights, illiteracy and poverty.

Knowledge of the Children's Act 560 depends on who is discussing it. Highly Educated Professionals had much knowledge about the law and what it obligates and seem to upgrade their knowledge as part of their job requirements; when engaging parents in child discourse HEPs hold onto power and adopt a Top-down approach where little participation from parents is allowed. Technically Trained Professionals had just an appreciable level of knowledge on the law and seem not to or have opportunities to upgrade. Participating parents had little knowledge about the law and seem to get their information from informal sources. Information from TTPs indicates that even children might have more knowledge on the law than parents since they learn about this in text books at school and also in children clubs. This is ironic because parents are to abide by the law in caring for children and yet children were more knowledgeable on it.

Child protection agencies active in the community includes government and nongovernment agencies. Apart from few local customs that aim to protect children such as the *dipo*, there was little defined community led initiative on child protection. State agencies charged with child protection were heavily under resourced and lacked the capacity to impact meaningfully on parents. Plan Ghana, an NGO is the most active in the community. It works and sponsors other government agencies that work with the UNCRC to protect children.

In summary this study has successfully established that different perspectives on child protection exist. Indeed professionals working together had different perspectives. Different cultural perspectives and deep poverty changes priorities, children's rights discourse demonises parents and undermines parents' abilities to guide their children, and children's rights taught to children not parents does not persuade parents to change their practices. Parents dismiss role of the state due to little support. The state lacks resources and the will in implementing children's rights. Developing countries should look beyond economic or financial gains but critically analyse implications of conditions attached to partnership agreements before ratifying. Meaningful participation is important if communities will accept and own transformation.

Recommendation

Government agencies and civil society must come to the realisation that in order to bring about transformational change in child protection, one must first make a conscious effort to understand childhood and its construction in specific settings. I will suggest that government agencies and civil society engage communities fully in designing programmes for child protection indeed they must serve as auxiliary guide to the identification of needs and aims of

a community by the community itself. Government agencies and civil society must aim to establish common grounds on child protection that could be used as access point for meaningful discussion on child protection. For instance agencies should commend parents for their efforts at providing daily sustenance, some form of formal education and health care in the mist of deep poverty instead of vilifying them this could serve as entry point.

Further research could be on how agencies can find a middle ground to engage parents, and also children's perspective on children's rights discourse.

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Appendices

Interview Guide

1. Can you tell me about the state of affairs of children in this community?
2. Are there any peculiar issues with children in this community worth mentioning?
3. In your opinion what is the best way to raise children in this community?
4. Can you tell me some difficulties adults face in rearing children in this community?
5. What goals or aims do you think the community should have for children?
6. What comes to mind when you are asked about child protection? Can you illustrate with examples in your community?
7. What are some of the issues to child protection in this community? What do you think causes this?
8. What local customs are used to protect children? How effective are they?
9. What do you think can be done to intensify child protection in this community?
10. What do you know about national laws on protecting children? How did you find out?
/ Where did you get the information?
11. How is the community, including children, informed about national laws?
12. How are national laws implemented at community level?

Informed Consent

The purpose of this study is to understand the perspectives of caregivers on child protection. Some programmes on child protection may try to dictate to caregivers how they should go about their duties. This study will seek the perspectives of caregivers and advocate their perspectives to be included in planning and implementation of child protection programmes. The study is part of a Master's degree in the Department of Health Promotion and Development at the University of Bergen and funded by The Lånnekasse of The Norwegian Government. Information gathered will be given to the University of Bergen and organisations that implement child protection programmes in Ghana.

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be a member in a group interview in which some personal questions might be asked (e.g. age, number of people you care for etc). This interview will last about 45 minutes to one hour.

Interviews will be audio recorded with your consent. Any information about you will be kept confidential on a personal laptop with a password. Audio recordings will be kept in a room under lock and key. To protect your privacy your name will be coded and any other information about you will not appear in the study or any other publication that results from the study. All information about you will be destroyed a maximum of two years after the study end.

The potential risk of this study is minimal to none. However, there might be some emotions when answering questions on caring for children.

It is not likely that you will benefit directly from this study. Nevertheless your participation in this study will help organisations to come up with child protection programmes that are meaningful to your culture and way of life.

You are free to withdraw at any time or may refuse to answer any of the questions asked of you if you agree to participate.

Written Consent

If you agree to participate in this study, read and sign the statement below.

I have read and understand the Information in this form. I have been assured that my name or personal information will not be used in this study or publications resulting from it. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction. I have also been informed that I can withdraw from the study at any time.

By signing this form, I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Name

Signature.....

Date.....

Codes and Themes Emerging from Analysis of Data

Codes	Basic Themes	Organizing Themes	Global Theme	
Lack proper healthcare Lack proper accommodation Lack proper feeding HIV/AIDS	Basic needs not met	Scio Economic Challenges to child protection	Poverty & Structural Context	
Labour intensive farming Unemployment Farmers depend on rain Farmers earn irregular income	Impoverishment			
Standard of education low No family planning Illiterate care givers Migration of caregivers	Illiteracy			
Children fend for themselves Children left alone HIV/AIDS and parental death	Guardian negligence	Challenges to Child Protection (Cultural and Contextual)		
Caregivers contributing to child labour Child trafficking Child labour	Caregivers benefiting from child labour			
Few healthcare facilities Poor school facilities Long distances to school	Inadequate child protection facility			
Teenage pregnancies Child Labour Sexual Abuse	Interruption to education			
Caregivers unable to discipline children Caregivers too busy and old Long distances to school	Difficulty in raising children			
Education Contribute to family income Respect elders Learn and practice customs	Aims for children	Cultural Context of Child Protection		Implementing Act 560
Provide basic needs Vocational training Survival of a child	Local understanding of child protection			
Families settling sexual abuse cases Disgrace when a child is sexually abused Children not questioning adults	Customs			

Media Teachers Civil society Text books	Informing on the law	Act 560 Local Knowledge	Implementing Act 560
Local authority not doing enough Local apparatus not strong Changes in culture	Local customs for child protection		
Professionals lack funding Professionals not working Professionals unable to work	Lack of resources		
Provide orphanage Provide food in schools Provide healthcare facilities Provide pipe borne water	Caring for children	Act 560: Civil Society & Government Institutions	
Strengthen civil society to work Ensure child rights No child labour Provide orphanage Provide basic needs	Intensifying child protection		
Ensuring child rights Parts of law appropriate Parts of law not appropriate	Understanding on the law		
Education not producing results Caregivers not happy about education Using public address system to educate	Poor education on Act 560		
Patrilineal inheritance Marriage customs	Family systems	Local resistance to Act 560	

Norwegian Statistical Services Approval

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
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Vår dato: 07.05.2013

Vår ref:33989 / 3 / AMS

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 22.03.2013. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

33989	<i>Child Protection in Upper Manya Krobo District of Ghana: Caregivers Perspectives</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	Universitetet i Bergen, ved institusjonens øverste leder
Daglig ansvarlig	Marguerite Daniel
Student	Sampson Yeboah

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

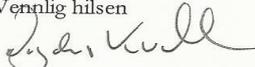
Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 28.05.2015, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen


Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim


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