The Role of Mentoring in Child Labor Trafficking Prevention in Ghana

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Abstract

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There are 152 million children in the world who are victims of child labor, while 73 million are involved in hazardous labor. Almost half of child labor (72.1 million) is found in Africa. Moreover, 1 in 5 children in Africa (19.6%) is a child laborer, whilst prevalence in other regions such as Arab States, Asia, and Europe is between 3% and 7% (ILO, 2017). This dissertation evaluates the implementation of a community-based paid group mentoring (MCBC) intervention in West Africa to address the problem. The implementation outcome suggests the project contributed to increased school attendance (1.5 days), school engagement and participation (MD =6.57), and an associated decrease in child labor trafficking involvement six months after implementation. Paired samples t-test between mentees' average attendance pre-and during-intervention showed a significant effect ($t(110)=15.54$; $p<0.001$; 95%CI: 1.39 to 1.80). It also discusses various limitations, implications, and future directions for the study.

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Finally, I owe this dissertation to all mentors, organizations, and grassroots heroes who are working to advance human trafficking prevention globally.

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my parents, Daniel Opoku Agyemang (in memorial), Evelyn Danso, and my wife, Angelina Sackey for their endless love and support.

Chapter 1. BACKGROUND

1.1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

There are 218 million children between the ages 5 and 17 years engaged in employment worldwide. Among them, 152 million children are victims of child labor; while 73 million are involved in hazardous labor. In absolute terms, almost half of child labor (72.1 million) is found in Africa. In terms of prevalence, 1 in 5 children in Africa (19.6%) is a child laborer, whilst prevalence in other regions such as Arab States, Asia, and Europe is between 3% and 7% (ILO, 2017).

The term "child labor" is often defined as work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling (ILO, 2017; IJM, 2016). Child trafficking, however, is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation (UNICEF Ghana, 2001). For example, children being sold for labor or commercial sex work. Child labor is concentrated primarily in agriculture (71%), which includes fishing, forestry, livestock herding and aquaculture, 17% in services and 12% in the industrial sector, including mining (ILO, 2017).

Child labor and trafficking remain one of the major forms of abuses against children in Ghana. There are currently about 11.8 million children in Ghana between the ages of 5-17 (Ghana 7th Standard Living Survey; Ghana Population 2022, World Population Review). There is currently about 21% prevalent rate of child labor in Ghana (Pugmire, 2022). About 1.9 million children are engaged in child labor and out of this number, 1.4 million are engaged in hazardous work (Ghana 7th Standard Living Survey; Pugmire, 2022). In Ghana, though there is a prevalence of child labor and trafficking in various industries, the fishing community pose the greatest risk. This is partly

due to a large number of children involved in hazardous fishing and the risk of losing their lives to drowning. According to the ILO/Ghana Government study 2013, 29,000 children are working on the Volta Lake. Boat paddling, hauling nets, sorting of fish, and diving to disentangle fishing nets are some of the task assigned to children. Aside from losing their lives to drowning, they work long hours with little or no salary, are sleep deprived, often malnourished, are at risk of getting bilharzia, and often do not attend school.

A study on the role of social workers in the prevention of child trafficking (Sambo & Spies, 2012) showed that child trafficking has traumatic and devastating effects on the victims, affected families, communities as well as the country. Further, effects suffered by victims include psychological, physical, emotional, social, and economical. Therefore, it is imperative to embark on primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in order to defeat the phenomenon.

The prevention of human trafficking is of critical importance in social sciences, and yet there remains a significant dearth in empirical literature (Donohue-Dioh, Otis, Sossou, & Lawson, 2020). However, given its significant social, physical, mental, and moral impact on victims, there has been growing interest to explore preventive measures to reverse the phenomenon. Preventing human trafficking and assisting survivors are stated priorities of the United Nations, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Justice (Greenbaum & Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2017; U.S Department of Justice, 2017; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2018).

Furthermore, the United Nations and United States continues to invest resources to advance trafficking prevention global. Consequently, the Office of Justice Programs awarded several grants to advance its trafficking prevention goals. For example, in 2018, the department awarded $1.8 million to Commercial Sex Exploitation (CSE) service provision programs to “develop or enhance

their mentoring capacity" for trafficking survivors through "Survivor-Mentoring", (U.S. Department of Justice, 2018). "Survivor-Mentoring," is the term used in the field of CSE services to describe the pairing of a CSE survivor with a person who has survived sexual exploitation and can function as their mentor; that is, can help them recover from trauma and re-stabilize. Interestingly, emerging studies on trafficking prevention have made recommendations to explore mentoring as a preventive tool (Balfour, Okech, Callands, & Kombian, 2020; Dagostino, 2022).

Similar to most problem behaviors, child labor and trafficking does not exist in isolation. There are factors that increase the likelihood of children being trafficked while others reduce trafficked risk. Factors that increase the likelihood of problems are known as risk factors. Those that mediate or moderate exposure to risk or directly decrease the likelihood of problems are known as protective factors (Catalano et al., 2012). Major risk factors that contribute to child labor and trafficking in the fishing community include poverty, unplanned teenage pregnancy, weak law enforcement, limited knowledge of child rights, and less knowledge about the long-term importance of education (Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997; GOIO, 2005; CHF, 2017). Protective factors, on the other hand, can help reduce the extent of the labor and trafficking problem. These include educational coaching parenting skills, family planning knowledge, community knowledge on child rights, positive adult role models, community religious values, financial management knowledge, and community value for education (CHF, 2017).

In efforts to reverse child labor trafficking trends in Ghana, the Cheerful Hearts Foundation, a local community-based non-profit, implemented an intervention from 2015 to 2017 dubbed "My Right My Future (MRMF)". The MRMF is a rights-based approach that explores the relationship between increased knowledge of child rights and increased school enrollment. Specifically, the intervention educated community members, teachers, students, and various

stakeholders on the rights of children and the long-term benefits of education. The results from the MRMF study showed an increased school enrollment by 8% after 1.5 years of intervention. (Agyemang, 2018). However, the study acknowledges that increased school enrollment may not reflect sustained school attendance. Consequently, the study suggests that future studies should investigate not only enrollment, but actual school attendance rate (Agyemang, 2018).

This study evaluates a paid group mentoring intervention implemented in Ghana, West Africa, specifically the Nyanyano fishing village, which aims to reduce child labor and trafficking through increased and sustained school attendance. The My Community Beyond Covid-19 (MCBC) project is a follow up intervention to the MRMF implemented by the Cheerful Hearts Foundation to investigate the relationship between mentoring and child labor trafficking prevention. The Nyanyano fishing community is one of the two control groups that received the MRMF intervention implemented by the Cheerful Hearts Foundation (Agyemang, 2018). At a growth rate of 3.9 percent and a population of 20069 in 2014, more than half of its population from 11 years and older are people who are illiterate. Similar to most central regional fishing communities in Ghana, the Nyanyano fishing industry is a host of child labor and trafficking (US TIP Report, 2020; Agyemang, 2018)

Mentoring has long been considered an evidence-based practice for promoting positive youth development. Mentoring provides opportunities for the youth to receive support from caring adults who positively influence various facets of their lives. The involvement of a caring adult has long been recognized as a significant resource in the lives of vulnerable youth (DuBois et al., 2002; Dubois et al., 2011; Rothman, Bair-Merritt, & Farrell, 2019; Rothman, Preis, Bright, Paruk, Bair-Merritt, & Farrell, 2020).

Despite the potential impact of mentoring on child labor trafficking prevention, literature or study is absent on this subject. While the benefits of mentoring to child trafficking prevention could be beneficial, an unanswered question remains how has mentoring been used to prevent child labor trafficking, and how effective are mentoring interventions in the prevention of child labor trafficking? Given that there is no study on the relationship between mentoring and child labor trafficking prevention, this paper borrows literature on mentoring from other fields of study.

1.2 Overview of MCBC Intervention

The My Community Beyond Covid-19 (MCBC) is a group mentoring program designed by the Cheerful Hearts Foundation. This local non-profit that works to address the issues of child labor and trafficking in the Ghanaian fishing industry. The foundation implemented MCBC as an intervention to address the problem in Nyanyano. The MCBC intervention is an after-school mentoring hosting 120 students (mentees) and three teachers (mentors) recruited from various schools within the Nyanyano fishing community. Each mentor is assigned 40 mentees under their supervision, coaching, and guidance. Students recruited for the MCBC mentoring program are children experiencing low school engagement and participation and low school attendance ranging from one to three out of five days a week.

The project goal is that, through increased interaction with positive role models and caring adults with these vulnerable students, they will make better life choices and shift social norms that contribute to limited school participation and attendance interest, and make healthy life decisions to facilitate better life outcomes.

Related to evaluation goals, this study focuses on measuring implementation outcomes of the MCBC group mentoring program. Given the limited literature between child labor trafficking

and mentoring, the interest in implementation outcomes is to facilitate the design and implementation of robust mentoring programs that advance child labor trafficking prevention.

Studies have shown that the quality of implementation plays a significant role in its intended outcomes. Programs that are implemented poorly or even moderately well, their goals are unlikely to be achieved, or the results will be less significant. In other words, effectively implemented programs have better chances of achieving intended outcomes and producing positive outcomes for children (Kagan, Tarrant & Kauerz, 2012; Durlak, 2011; Durlak, 2013; Pacana & Ulewicz, 2020; Verhey, Ryan, Scherer & Magidson, 2020). Additionally, program implementation is critical for obtaining intended outcomes relevant for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers.

Evidence for the importance of implementation has been obtained in multiple areas, including mentoring, education, mental health, health care, community-based initiatives, technology, industry, and management (Durlak & Dupre, 2008; Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005; Torrey, Bond, McHugo & Swain, 2012; Carlson, Goscha & Rapp, 2016; Gandhi et al., 2019). Moreover, implementation is relevant regardless of the target population, the type of program, and specific program goals.

Research emphasizes that quality implementation is a critical factor associated with program outcomes and is relevant to the aspect of implementation, including fidelity, adaptation, and dosage. For example, a review of school-based prevention programs found that implementation quality was the most important program feature associated with outcomes (Wilson, Lipsey, & Derzon, 2003; Payne, Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2006). In addition, evidence suggests that, in some cases, programs fail to achieve their intended outcomes for youth when implementation is poor. In other cases, programs observed higher impact when there were reports

of more effective implementation (Durlak & Dupre, 2008). These findings suggest that participants may receive more benefits resulting from better program implementation or an insignificant benefit if program implementation is poor.

Furthermore, implementation outcome measure creates opportunities to compare outcomes when the level of implementation has varied systematically for different subgroups of participants receiving the same intervention. (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002; Smith, Schneider, Smith, & Ananidou, 2004; Weiner, Lewis, Stanick, Powell, Dorsey, Clary & Halko, 2017). This presupposes that it is worthwhile to strive for more effective implementation. Summarily, implementation is important throughout child and youth programs and services, whether the goal is to treat children with adjustment issues, prevent later problems, promote young people's personal and social development, improve academic participation and engagement, or increase students' academic performance. The major point is that quality implementation is necessary to increase the chances of being successful.

Consequently, a pilot program is often a good idea. Doing something new requires time and practice to achieve mastery. Trying a new program on a small pilot basis instead of launching it into a large-scale project is a good idea. In addition, a pilot program can help an organization "work out the kinks" regarding implementation and plan more effectively for a later more extensive program (Blase & Fixsen, 2013; Fixsen, D. L., Van Dyke, M. K., & Blase, K. A. (2019).

While there are several implementation frameworks, this study draws its evaluation framework from Greg Arron's EPIS Framework for implementation science (Aarons, Hurlburt & Horwitz, 2011; Moullin, Dickson, Stadnick, Rabin & Aarons, 2019). EPIS has four distinct components, including Exploration, Preparation, Implementation, and Sustainment (EPIS). However, this study is specifically focused on the implementation measurement pillar.

Moreover, EPIS was selected for three main reasons. First, it is considered an influential framework and has been cited in over 1600 publications (Moullin et al., 2020; Moullin, Dickson, Stadnick, Rabin & Aarons, 2019). Secondly, EPIS is highly flexible and neutral regardless of topic, setting, population, and program scope, making it a useful framework for investigating implementation outcomes in diverse contexts (Aarons, Hurlburt & Horwitz, 2011; Moullin et al., 2020; Moullin, Dickson, Stadnick, Rabin & Aarons, 2019). Lastly, EPIS is one of few implementation frameworks that provides guiding steps from inception through project completion, including measuring implementation outcomes and strategies for developing a more robust and sustainable program outcome. (Becan et al., 2018; Moullin et al., 2020; Moullin, Dickson, Stadnick, Rabin & Aarons, 2019).

Therefore, the first six (6) months of implementation of the MCBC group mentoring program are evaluated to inform subsequent robust studies relevant to child labor trafficking prevention and mentoring, as further explained in the purpose of the study and throughout the paper.

1.3 PURPOSE OF STUDY

This study evaluates the implementation effectiveness of the MCBC intervention, youth group mentoring intervention, implemented in Ghana to address child labor and trafficking within the fishing industry. Specifically, this study evaluates the implementation of a youth mentoring program, MCBC, that seeks to shift cultural and social norms to advance healthy youth development and choices in high-risk child labor trafficking communities of Ghana using mentoring. The primary implementation measure is changes in school attendance during the intervention. However, the secondary implementation measure is change in class participation and engagement. The primary component of the implementation study uses school attendance data

(record) from the local schools attended by each participant (mentees) while the secondary measures of the study will use mentees self-report (pre/during questionnaire) data from the MCBC project, a community-based youth group mentoring pilot project implemented between May 2022 through November 2022 in Nyanyano community, Ghana. However, the during-assessment survey was collected at the end of the intervention period. Hence post-intervention and during-intervention are used interchangeably throughout the study and mean the same. Given the limited literature on child labor trafficking and mentoring, the pilot study aims to assess the implementation of the mentoring program during the intervention period. The results will inform the design and implementation of robust mentoring programs that advance child labor trafficking prevention. Details of the MCBC data are explained in the data source section. The study hypothesizes that at posttest, participants enrolled in the MCBC intervention will evidence higher rates of school attendance and increased school participation and engagement.

Aim: Test the relationship between change in cultural and social norms and child labor trafficking prevention. Specifically, the study seeks to address the questions:

a) Does mentoring at-risk trafficking youth lead to increased and sustained school attendance?
b) Does mentoring at-risk trafficking youth lead to increased school participation and engagement?

The development and testing of the MCBC program are guided by the review of the literature on mentoring summarized in the next chapter.

Chapter 2. LITERATURE REVIEW ON MENTORING

Mentoring has long been considered an evidence-based practice for promoting positive youth development. Mentoring provides opportunities for youth to receive support from caring adults who have a positive influence on various facets of their lives. The involvement of a caring adult has long been recognized as a significant resource in the lives of vulnerable youth (DuBois et al., 2002; Johnson & Lampley, 2010; DuBois & Karcher, 2014). Subsequent studies reaffirm mentoring as a significant resource for vulnerable youth. A present study involved a comprehensive meta-analysis of all outcome-based studies of youth mentoring programs between 1975 and 2017, using a rigorous inclusion criterion designed to align with developmental theories. The results from 70 outcome studies with a sample size of 25,286 youth averaging 12 years old showed a statistically significant effect of mentoring programs across all youth outcomes. The effect ranged between medium to moderate according to empirical guidelines derived from universal prevention programs for youth and was consistent with past meta-analyses of youth mentoring ($\bar{g} = .21$ ($p < .001$; 95% CI: .14–.28). However, moderation analysis suggests that programs serving larger proportions of male youth, deploying a higher percentage of male mentors or mentors with helping professional backgrounds, and having shorter meetings yielded higher results (Raposa, Rhodes, Stams, Card, Burton, Schwartz, & Hussain, 2019).

Most recent studies continue to see a positive relationship between mentoring and healthy youth development (Cammack & Suglia, 2023; Dubois, Herrera, Rivera, Brechling, & Root, 2022; Herrera, DuBois, Heubach, & Grossman, 2023; Ross, 2023; Wong, Tsang, Wu & Zhang, 2023). For example, a randomized controlled trial assessed the effects of a Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) Community-Based Mentoring Program on the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes of participating youth over a 13-month period. Report on examined

composite indices reflecting the average of youth outcome measures suggests that mentoring had a significant effect (Cohen's *d* ranging from 0.138 to 0.253) on the treatment group ($n = 379$) compared to the control group ($n = 385$) (Herrera, DuBois, Heubach, & Grossman, 2023). Similarly, a recent study assessed the impact of a community-based mentoring program on the personal development and future pursuits of Black urban youth. The assessment of the community-based mentoring program (Infinity Mentoring Program) showed that participants in the program had improved feelings or self-concept about themselves and that participants gained increased motivation toward college, career, and future aspirations (Ross, 2023).

The growing interest in mentoring and the colossal number of youth mentoring programs across the United States and global speaks volumes (DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011). An estimated 413,237 youth are served through structured mentoring by 1,271 mentoring agencies across the United States. Out of this number, 79% of youth mentoring agencies are nonprofits, 9% are K-12 schools or districts, 3% are government agencies, 3% are higher education institutions, and the remaining 6% are religious institutions, for-profits, healthcare facilities, and others (Garringer, McQuillin & McDaniel, 2017).

Consistent with the growing global interest in mentoring, Ghana-related literature suggests the need for formal mentoring to support children and youth to facilitate their achievement of goals within the educational system (Scottie, Dubus, & Sossou, 2013). An Accra-based study (Scottie, 2011) focused on public schools and investigated why children drop out of the basic educational level. Findings suggest that children yearned for mentors or individuals they could talk to about significant education-related challenges they faced at school and home. Schools have no social workers or counselors. Hence, students had expectations that teachers play the role of providing them with advice. While some teachers try, it is challenging to balance their busy workload. On

the other hand, parents were swamped with work schedules, struggled to make ends meet, and were often left with the least time to provide emotional and school-related support needed by the children.

The primary goal of the MCBC study is to test the relationship between paid group mentoring and youth school attendance, school participation, and involvement. The secondary goal is to test the relationship between paid group mentoring and labor trafficking involvement. The development and testing of the MCBC mentoring have been guided by the review of the mentoring literature. Extant literature has shown a positive relationship between mentoring and several healthy youth outcomes, including school enrollment and attendance, school participation and involvement, prevention from the criminal legal system, delinquency, alcohol use, and commercial sex trafficking secondary prevention (Alliance, 2014; Kremer, Maynard, Polanin, Vaughn & Sarteschi, 2015; Leos-Urbel, 2015; Curran & Wexler, 2017). However, despite the potential impact of mentoring on child labor trafficking prevention, literature or study is absent on this subject. Consequently, this paper borrows literature on mentoring from other fields of study.

Studies have shown that the effects of risk factors can be partially countered by positive, supportive, and enduring adult-child relationships (Eddy et al., 2017; Parnes et al., 2023). Across cultures, adult support and guidance are considered the cornerstones of healthy child development (e.g., Reid et al. 2002, 21). Parents and other caregivers are often the primary providers of this support, but some children lack the full amount of family guidance they need to journey through youth and into adulthood successfully. For these boys and girls, the involvement of nonfamilial adults may be critical for increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes. In addition, researchers have noted that some children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and succeed as adults are those who were able to connect with "natural mentor" adults (Eddy et al., 2017). Unfortunately,

not all children living in challenging situations have the opportunity to develop relationships with natural mentors. Consequently, similar to the MCBC mentoring program, some of these children might benefit from interventions, such as professional or organized mentoring programs, that proactively connect them with such adults over a period of time (Eddy et al., 2017).

Mentoring has shown a positive correlation with secondary sex trafficking prevention. A study evaluated a Boston-based mentoring program, My Life My Choice (MLMC), implemented to reduce at-risk children and youth between the ages of 11 and 18 years from being commercially sexually exploited (CSE). MLMC pairs exploited adolescents, or youth at very high risk of CSE, with a trained adult mentor who is a survivor of exploitation. The mentor's role is to support mentees in their exit from commercial sex and recovery from the trauma of being exploited (i.e., "being in the life"), and in finding safety and stability as they move forward. The results suggest that at baseline, 72% out of 41 participants could be characterized as CSE-experienced, while at six (6) months, the percentage decreased to 24% ($p < 0.001$) and at 12 months to 14% ($p < 0.001$). After six (6) months of receiving survivor-mentor services, youth were less likely to have experienced CSE, engaged in sexually explicit behavior (SEB), used illicit drugs, engaged in delinquent behavior, been arrested or detained by police, and they had better social support and coping skills (Rothman, Bair-Merritt, & Farrell, 2019; Rothman, Preis, Bright, Paruk, Bair-Merritt, & Farrell, 2020).

Similarly, a multi-state version of the MLMC program with a large study participant (n=354) were recruited from four U.S. sites and trained to use the My Life My Choice prevention program model, including My Life My Choice (Boston, MA), Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey (New Brunswick, NJ), Selah Freedom (Sarasota, FL), and The Village for Families and Children (Hartford, CT). The results showed that at baseline, 20% reported some prior exploitation in the

past three (3) months, but at posttest, only 9% had experienced that (which is a 55% decrease), and at the six-month, only 12% had (which is a 40% decrease). The effects were even more striking for those who participated in the group in a residential facility, who were Latina, and who were not alcohol or drug users at baseline (Rothman, Bair-Merritt, & Farrell, 2019).

Consistent with the MCBC program's goal, extant literature demonstrates a correlation between mentoring and school attendance. Truancy officers in schools primarily were helpful increasing school attendance. However, in response to budget problems, many urban school systems reduced resources for getting students to come to school, including truancy officers. For instance, in Chicago, truancy officers decreased from 150 to zero in 1991. Consequently, a structured mentoring program named Check and Connect (C&C) tested the effects of increased support of students by a pro-social adult, or "social capital" delivered through CC program. A large-scale randomized control trial with C&C in partnership with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) was experimented with students in grades 1 to 8. Results showed that program participation decreased school absenteeism in grades 5 to 7 by 4.2 days, or 22.9 percent, though had no detectable effects on students in grades 1 to 4 (Heppen, Zeiser, Holtzman, O'Cummings, Christenson & Pohl, 2018; Guryan, Christenson, Cureton, Lai, Ludwig, Schwarz, & Turner, 2021).

The testing of the relationship between MCBC mentoring and school participation and engagement were informed by literature. For example, an impact study was conducted on a Big Brothers Big Sisters School-based mentoring program involving 1,139 students ranging nine (9) to 16-year old in 10 cities in the United States. The youth were randomly assigned to either a treatment or a control group and followed for 1.5 years. The results show that the after the first school year, relative to the control group, the treatment group performed better academically, increased positive perception of their academic abilities, and were more likely to report having a

"special adult" in their lives (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, & McMaken, 2011; Herrera, DuBois, Heubach & Grossman, 2023).

Additionally, other studies confirm that school-based mentoring programs such as Big Brothers Big Sisters yield small effects but statistically significant improvement in the academic performance of mentored students and their scholastic efficacy. A randomized control trial involving over 1000 students from over 71 schools across the United States investigated further into the benefits and effectiveness of school-based mentoring programs. Unlike the control group that didn't receive mentoring, the findings suggest that the relationship between a mentor and a mentee (protégé) appears to play a key role. Evidence suggest that the development of close relationship between the mentor led to better academic outcomes of mentees (Bayer, Grossman, & DuBois, 2013).

Furthermore, a similar group mentoring program to the MCBC showed a positive relationship with school participation measured by academic outcomes. A study measured the association between a school-based group mentoring program (Project Arrive) and academic outcomes of 9th-grade students who were identified as at high risk of high-school dropout (n=239). During the academic year of 2014-15 and 2015-16, Project Arrive was implemented at a large urban school district in California. Similar to the MCBC program, program participants met weekly with their mentors. However, unlike the MCBC program, which met 2 hours weekly with their mentors, the Project Arrive participants met for 50 minutes weekly with their mentors and peers. Though implemented in 9th grade, the immediate and intermediate impact of Project Arrive was assessed in grades 9th and 10th. Using the inverse probability of treatment weighting (IPTW), a propensity score to reduce selection bias, and nonindependence of data among program students, the study results showed that Project Arrive students earned more credits by the 9th and 10th

grades. They reported increased instructional hours by the end of 9th grade, relative to comparison students (Chan, Kuperminc, Seitz, Wilson, & Khatib, 2020).

Group mentoring, however, has varied definitions, partly resulting from the wide variations of program implementation (Karcher et al., 2006). Subsequent studies differentiate group mentoring (2 to 4 people) and team mentoring as a group involving 2 to 32 with one or more mentors at a time (MENTOR, 2009, p.25). In practice, the number of youths per group could range from 2 to as many as 32, and may include a mentor or two or more mentors working together in teams (Herrera et al., 2002). Groups may also consist of multiple mentor-mentee pairs who come together for some activities (e.g., Deutsch, Henneberger, Wiggins, & Lawrence, 2010). Beyond these studies, empirical research is yet to examine how mentoring processes differ as a function of ratio of mentors to youth. Consistent with Kuperminc, G. P., & Thomason, J. D. (2013), though the number of people working together is appreciated, the term group mentoring used throughout this study refers to "natural" or programmatic mentoring in which one or more mentors work with at least two youth.

Lastly, consistent with the design and implementation goals of the MCBC, the literature suggests that community-based group mentoring programs such as MCBC could have a significant positive relationship with healthy youth development outcomes. Furthermore, mentoring has a positive association with school attendance, participation and engagement, similar to the MCBC goals. The next chapter (Methods) provides details of the MCBC program, including its theoretical framework, intervention model, intervention approach, measures, and design for assessing its impact on mentee's school attendance, participation & engagement, child labor involvement, and educational aspiration.

Chapter 3. METHODS

3.1 THEORETICAL MODEL

This study uses Developmental Model as its implementation framework (Patterson, & Yoerger, 1993; Lemery, et al. 1999; Eddy et al. 2017; Catalano, Hawkins, Kosterman, Bailey, Oesterle, Cambron & Farrington, 2021). MCBC is intended to dissuade children with high levels of multiple risks of trafficking away from a developmental path that leads to problematic life outcomes, and towards a path that leads to conventional successes, such as participation in class activities, academic achievement, healthy relationships, and higher school attendance. The developmental model of child problem behaviors that underlies MCBC is consistent with the conceptual models that prevention researchers have most commonly used in recent years to describe the development of a variety of youth problem behaviors, including conduct problems and academic failure (Reid and Eddy, 1997; Taylor et al. 1999; Rhodes, 2005; Eddy et al. 2017; Cammack & Suglia, 2023; Dubois, Herrera, Rivera, Brechling, & Root, 2022; Herrera, DuBois, Heubach, & Grossman, 2023; Ross, 2023; Wong, Tsang, Wu & Zhang, 2023). At the heart of these models are the social interactions that occur each day between the child and others, such as parents, adult mentors, teachers, siblings, and peers (Olds et al. 1997; Taylor et al. 1999; Catalano & Hawkins, 1996; Catalano, Jisuk, Harachi, Haggerty, Abbott, & Hawkins, 2017; Hawkins & Weis, 2017; Catalano, Hawkins, Kosterman, Bailey, Oesterle, Cambron & Farrington, 2021). These interactions are hypothesized to be a force not only in aggravating child problem behaviors once they begin, but also in stopping them from occurring in the future, most notably through the shaping of a competing repertoire of positive behaviors. Early childhood difficulties arise when children are confronted by challenges, and when parents and other mentors are unable to assist the child in adequately negotiating the prevailing environment. If such a situation continues,

unfortunately, a tendency to make life choices inconsistent with positive life outcomes may become increasingly likely (Klaw et al. 2003; Eddy et al 2017). Upon school entry, high rates of these types of negative behaviors by a child often lead to social rejection by teachers and peers and, less academic involvement and poor academic outcomes. With decreasing access to normative situations, the central social influence in the child's life often becomes his or her "deviant" peers—acquaintances who are having similar types of problems as the child. Surrounded by such peers, unsupervised by parents and other adults, and rejected by prosocial classmates and adults, the child is now in a situation conducive to learning new types of antisocial behaviors, and eventually begins to exhibit other behaviors that are problematic at young ages, such as limited interest in education, poor school attendance, labor involvement, truancy, and poor academic participation. This developmental model describes the route that a significant number of the high-risk children identified as eligible for MCBC are likely to take without strong social connections to prosocial adults (Eddy et al. 2017). The MCBC program places a caring, trained, and supervised adult in the position to provide social and academic support, empowerment, and presence all along the pathway—to be there when challenges arise.

3.2 INTERVENTION MODEL

The primary mechanism of change in the MCBC design is hypothesized to be the relationship between the mentor and mentee (Rhodes, 2005). The mentoring relationship is hypothesized that when children are given opportunities to develop relationship with caring adults, it provides a child with social support as well as the opportunity to observe, learn, and practice emotion regulation skills, which include traditional interpersonal problem-solving skills (Taylor et al., 1999). Additionally, it opens up opportunities for a child that he or she otherwise might not

have had, from concrete opportunities like access to academic assistance, coaching and counseling, to more abstract opportunities like the chance to participate in enriching experiences that enhance their ability to envision a positive future.

The model posits that the establishment of a strong, close interpersonal connection between a mentor and child leads to positive gains for the child in three interconnected areas: social-emotional development, cognitive development, and identity development. In the social-emotional sphere, by effectively communicating with a child, and providing them with caring and support, a mentor can provide a child with the opportunity to experience what positive relationships with adults are like, something which Olds et al. (1997) refer to as a "corrective experience." Mentors can also help children to learn to better express and manage their feelings through modeling and active teaching, a phenomenon referred to as "emotion coaching" (Gottman, 2001).

These types of experiences may lead a child to view themselves and others in both different and more precise ways. In the cognitive realm, a positive, ongoing relationship between mentor and child that is skillfully managed by the mentor is hypothesized to provide a child with the opportunity to learn a variety of cognitive problem-solving skills. Opportunities to verbally interact with a caring adult within a safe relationship provide a child the chance to express themselves, to verbally investigate their thoughts and feelings, to hear a different perspective, and to receive guidance (Rhodes 2002). In the identity sphere, the support for exploration provided by the mentoring relationship, and the increased number of activities that a child participates in as a result of the existence of the relationship and the connection to the MBC program per se are hypothesized to provide a child with multiple avenues to explore and shape their identity. A strong sense of identity develops along with feelings of self-worth and confidence.

The benefits in each of these areas are hypothesized to lead to an increase in the likelihood of positive outcomes (increased school participation and engagement, attendance and reduced child labor trafficking involvement) for the youth. Central to the model, and congruent with developmental models of problem behaviors, is that improvement in these three areas of development are hypothesized to lead to improvements in the other social relationships a child has, not only with peers but also with parents, teachers, and "natural" mentors (Klaw et al., 2003). In turn, these relationships are hypothesized to further shape the social-emotional, cognitive, and identity development of a child toward an increased likelihood of positive outcomes (such as increased school attendance, school participation and engagement, and less labor involvement) and a decreased likelihood of negative outcomes (as shown in Figure 1).

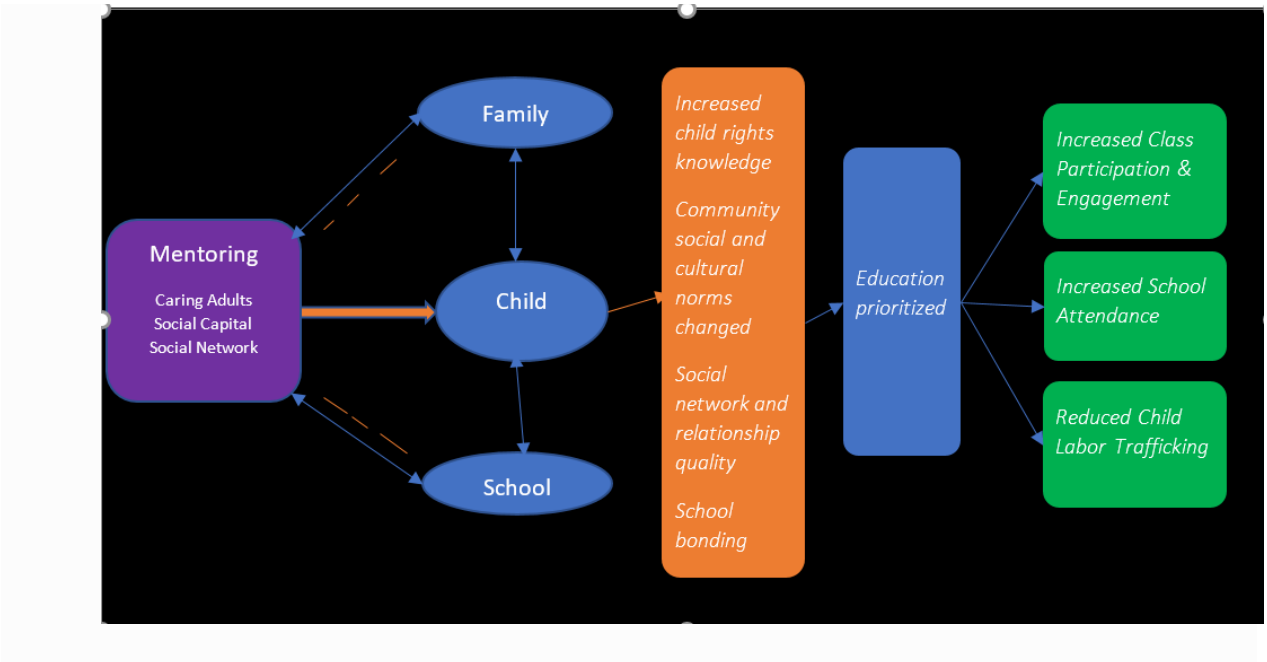

Figure 1. MCBC Implementation Logic Model

3.3 MCBC MENTORING INTERVENTION APPROACH

The MCBC is a community-based paid group youth mentoring model designed to contribute to increased school attendance, class participation and engagement, and reduced labor involvement of mentees (program participants). The 6-month mentoring project was designed and implemented in a labor-trafficking-prone fishing community named Nyanyano in the central region of Ghana. To achieve program goals, different activities were implemented, including mentee and mentor recruitment, mentor training, computer-assisted reading sessions, spelling bee sessions, and mentor-mentee check-ins. The intervention also includes an active evaluation plan and monitored implementation fidelity. Each of these components is further described below.

Program participants were recruited from six (6) local schools within the Nyanyano community in the Gomoa East School District of Ghana. Participants ranged from ages 9 and 15 in grades four (4) to eight (8). Participants selected as part of the program had an average weekly school attendance record of less than 3 out of 5 school days (Monday – Friday). Program directors wrote letters to the local schools to express the intent and potential impact of the MCBC program on their students who may be experiencing attendance and class participation or engagement challenges. Based on school attendance and class participation records, the school recommended a list of student names that could benefit from the mentoring intervention. Out of over 136 students recommended by the schools and equally qualified, the program director selected 120 students that met the age requirement of eight (8) and 15 years. Additionally, out of 15 teachers who applied to be considered for the mentor role, three teachers were selected based on their availability to fully participate in the program, cultural awareness and community knowledge, knowledge of child labor issues, and demonstrated passion and leadership abilities to serve the youth, furthermore, out of the three mentors, two identified as males and a female, and an average age of 28 years.

Prior to the start of the mentoring relationship, mentors received a 2-day intensive orientation and training on MCBC program goals and expectations, reading curriculum, computer-based reading support, the significance of group mentoring, and roles and responsibilities as an MCBC mentor (Bergen & Beckett, 2008). The training was a hybrid of a virtual and an in-person experience to facilitate mentors' increased access to the training and exposure to the use of computer-based teaching and learning experience – a primary component of the mentoring activities.

By design, the MCBC is an after-school program implemented at a community youth development center (Fieldhouse) built by the Cheerful Hearts Foundation for the Nyanyano community. Programmatically, using a team mentoring approach, two or three mentors meet once a week for 3 hours with a group of 20 students (mentees) per session on a given schedule (MENTOR, 2009, p.25). This translates into a mentor-mentee ratio of 1:7 at any given group session. During these group sessions, mentors introduce new topics (such as how to stay engaged in class activities, effective reading strategies, and long-term benefits of education) and guide mentees to discuss, share their opinions and reflections about the topic and receive input from the mentor.

Additionally, each mentor was assigned a group of 40 mentees for external (out of regular group sessions) check-in purposes. The check-ins are intended to create opportunities for mentors and mentees to deepen relationships outside of the group and for mentees to receive individual support as needed. For example, during check-in, the mentor may visit the child at school, learn more about their progress and growth areas, and develop a plan that supports the mentee's ongoing development. Mentors also visit mentees' homes and take them out on walks (connect and talk) as needed. Alternatively, mentees can reach out to their mentors when they need feedback or advice

on issues related to their personal development. Aside from counseling on the importance of education, the dangers of child labor trafficking, and child rights, mentors provide tutoring on reading and basic computer skills. For example, mentors introduced various activities to advance their reading skills, including watching and reviewing phonetic videos on YouTube, group reading sessions, and organized bi-monthly spelling bee competitions, including awards.

3.4 Data Source and Sample

This study uses quantitative and qualitative data collected on 115 (93% of the total) program participants of the My Community Beyond Covid-19 (MCBC) project who are between the ages of nine (9) and 15. Specifically, mentoring is used as a vehicle to advance mentee's reading skills, facilitate school bonding through class participation and engagement, and increased school attendance. Participants include mentees (n = 112), and mentors (n = 3). Baseline and posttest survey data were collected from mentees only. Pre and posttest surveys were administered by the Cheerful Hearts Foundation team and the three mentors of the program. Then, through a one-on-one interview with the mentees, the interviewers entered the mentee's responses into an online questionnaire. Broadly, data collected from mentees included their demographics, family information, educational level and aspiration, labor involvement history, class participation, and engagement. Baseline data was collected in March 2022, while posttest was collected in November 2022 (at the end of the intervention). Participants included in the study have an average school attendance of one to three out of five days a week. Selected participants were between the ages of nine (9) and 15 years, had below average reading and class participation performance.

As part of the program evaluation, 24 weeks of administrative data on school attendance for each study participant prior to the start of the MCBC program was collected by the foundation to serve as a baseline measure of school attendance. Additionally, 24 weeks of matched attendance

records were collected during the MCBC intervention to facilitate evaluation. Additionally, teacher/mentors serving on the project participated in a post assessment virtual interview to share their experiences on the mentoring project, the processes, impact on mentees, and ways to improve these outcomes in future mentoring programs. Translation of the survey questions was made for all students with limited English proficiency. Interviewers are all local teachers and mentors who can speak both the local language (Twi) and English. For ethical values, all participants were informed that surveys and interviews are voluntary and their refusal to participate in the interview would not affect their ability to participate in the program, future CHF programs or work with a mentor.

Consistent with research ethics, this study received IRB approval through the Washington State Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the secondary data collected by the Cheerful Hearts Foundation as part of their ongoing evaluation efforts and the primary qualitative data collected through the interviewing of mentor participants.

3.5 MEASURES

Participant's school bonding is measured using the **school participation and engagement** scale. As shown in Table 1 below, the school participation and engagement was measured using a 5-item scale with the questions, “How often do you read your school or story books?”, “How often do you do all of your homework that your teachers assigned you?”, “How often do you hate or dislike being in school?”, “How often do you enjoy being in school?”, and “How often do you participate in class discussion?” coded Almost always=7, Often =6, Sometimes =5, Seldom =4, Never = 3, Don’t know = 2, Prefer not to answer =1. To understand **participants’ labor involvement**, participants were also asked “Have you ever been involved in labor or fishing work?”, “Have you

been involved in labor within the past year?" coded Yes =1, No =2, Don't know = 3, Prefer not to answer =4. Additionally, to understand participants perceived labor involvement, participants were also asked "Do you ever have thoughts of being involved or working at the fishing shore?" and responses were coded Yes =1, No =2, Don't know =3. Participant's change in school attendance was measured using a 48-week multiple baselines to examine the trend of school attendance data prior and during MCBC mentoring project. Furthermore, participants **educational aspiration** was measured using the question "Eventually, what is the highest level of schooling you would like to achieve?" and responses were coded Junior High School =1, Senior High School =2, College =3, University (Bachelors) = 4, Masters =5, PhD =6, Other =7, Don't know =8, Prefer not to answer =9. Mentors' experiences of the MCBC project was measured using the questions "What has been your personal learning experiences on the MCBC project, if any?" "In your opinion how has this project helped the students?", "What do you think can be done differently to improve the mentoring experience in future mentoring programs?" responses were coded into themes and summarized descriptively in terms of frequencies.

Table 1. *Implementation Measures*

Variables	No. of items	Measures	Reference
School participation and engagement	5	• How often do you read your school or story books? • How often do you do all of your homework that your teachers assigned you? • How often do you hate or dislike being in school? • How often do you enjoy being in school? • How often do you participate in class discussion?	Eddy et al. (2017) and FOTC Survey

School Attendance	24	• 24 weeks of school attendance administrative data before and during MCBC.	Agyemang (2018)
Labor Involvement	4	• Have you ever been involved in labor or fishing work? • Have you been involved in labor within the past year? • Have you been involved in labor within the past 6 months? • Have you been involved in labor within the past 3 months?	
Educational Aspiration	1	• Eventually, what is the highest level of schooling you would like to achieve?	

Note. Scale and single items used in implementation outcome measurement

3.6 STUDY DESIGN

Multiple statistical tools and approaches were used to analyze and evaluate the implementation of the MCBC program. First, a five-item Likert scale referenced in the measures section was used to measure the program's implementation on **school participation and engagement**. SPSS was used to test the **scale's internal reliability** by measuring the intercorrelations between scale items on the overall sample of the pre-intervention and during-

intervention survey responses, using **Cronbach's Alpha (α)**. Reliability analyses were also conducted on the pre-intervention and during-intervention by grade and gender (binary).

Second, using R, a series of Paired Sample T-tests and linear mixed effect models was conducted to measure the change in average attendance and school participation and engagement pre and during the intervention to assess the program's implementation impact on these outcomes. Additionally, **interrupted time series analysis** was conducted to evaluate attendance trends pre and during the intervention. Descriptive analyses were conducted to analyze the overall average attendance of mentees before and during the MCBC intervention.

Third, logistic regression and descriptive analysis were used to measure the program's implementation impact on secondary outcomes, including labor involvement and the educational aspirations of mentees. Specifically, using R, Logistic regression was used to measure the relationship between ever being involved in labor and attendance and school participation and engagement (pre-intervention). Descriptive analyses were used to assess changes in categorical variables (educational aspirations) pre-intervention and during the intervention.

Finally, thematic qualitative analysis and frequencies of themes was used in evaluating open-ended questions assessing mentors' experiences. Specifically, participant's responses were coded and the key themes that emerged from the interview responses were summarized and reported.

Chapter 4. RESULTS

4.1 Overview and Demographic

Overall, 112 mentees selected for the study were included in the analysis. The study focused on children between the ages of nine (9) and 15. Of the 112 mentees, 66 (58.9%) identified as females, and 46 (41.1%) identified as males. Additionally, the mentee's grade levels include grade four (36.6%), grade five (23.2%), grade six (22.3%), and Junior high (17%). Mentee's religious status indicates that 106 (94.6%) identified as Christian, 4 (3.5 percent) as Moslem, and 4 (1.7 percent) identified as non-religious.

4.2 School Attendance

Overall, the MCBC implementation appears to have contributed to an increase in mentees' school attendance. The mean and median scores suggest a symmetrical distribution. Mentee's average school attendance was 2.6 days (SD=0.95) six months before MCBC compared to an average of 4.2 days (SD=0.70) during the six months of intervention. Additionally, a higher minimum attendance was observed during-intervention (2.16) compared to pre-intervention (0.25). A paired samples t-test between mentees attendance pre-and during-intervention attendance showed a statistically significant difference ($t(111)=15.54$; $p<0.001$). The mean difference observed in their average attendance was 1.59 days (95%CI: 1.39 to 1.80). Additionally, a paired samples t-test observed a higher mentee average attendance (4.49 days) during the weeks identified as high-risk for child labor (11 – 16) compared to other weeks (4.1 days), and was statistically significant ($t(111) =16.82$; $p < 0.001$). Time series analysis suggests an increase in school attendance trends during implementation compared to pre-intervention. However, a relatively

lower attendance was observed during week 16 of implementation when higher rainfall reportedly impacted school attendance, as shown in Figure 2 below.

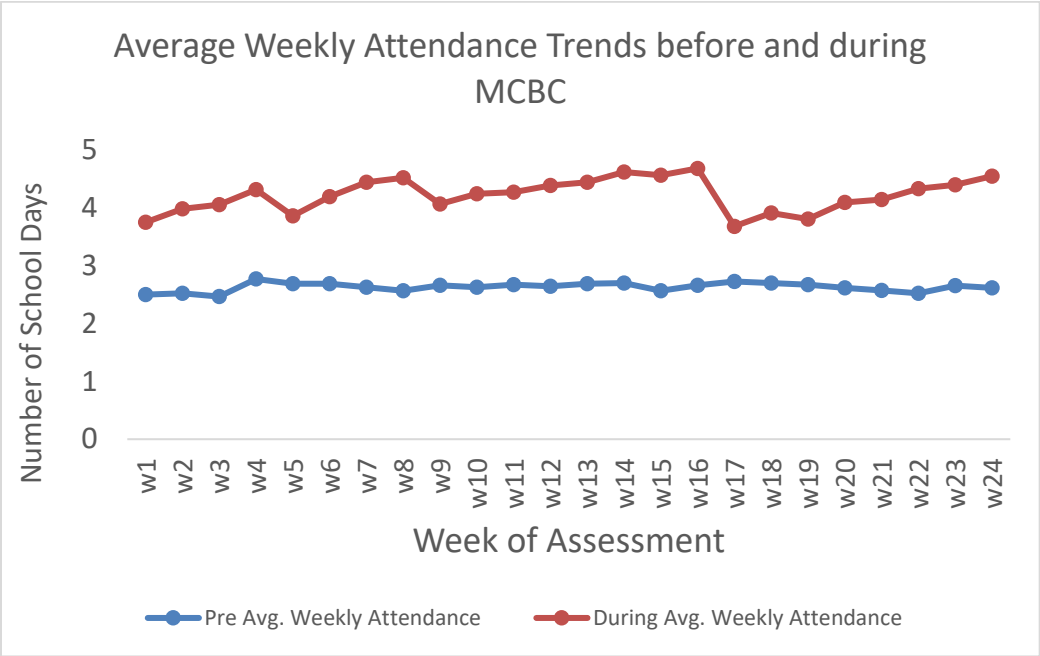

Figure 2. School Enrollment Trends Before and During MCBC.

4.3 School Participation and Engagement

Overall, the MCBC program appears to have contributed to an increase in mentees' school participation and engagement. A reliability test conducted on the 5-item scale measuring the overall sample at pre-intervention ($\alpha = .797$) and during-intervention ($\alpha = .815$), using Cronbach's Alpha, observed acceptable to good levels of consistency, respectively. Similarly, acceptable to good (all above .75) reliability was observed when the analyses were stratified by gender and grade levels (See appendix F).

Paired samples t-test between participants' overall sum of participation and engagement scale pre- (M=13.69) and during-intervention (M=20.25) showed a significant effect ($t(106)=18.22$; $p<0.001$). The mean difference in participation and engagement was 6.57 (95%CI:

5.85 to 7.28). Of note, five cases (four primary and one junior high) of missing data were observed in post-intervention responses (one or more questions on the participation and engagement scale). Missing data was less than 5% and follow-up analyses that included the five participants with partially missing data and mean imputation yielded similar results.

Examining single scale item descriptively was also instructive. Mentees' responses to how often they enjoy being in school increased during the intervention, as shown in Figure 2 below. While mentee responses ranged between "almost always" and "often" at post-assessment, pre-intervention responses ranged from "almost always" to "seldom." Specifically, mentees observed a 46% increase in regular school attendance ("almost always") during intervention compared to pre-intervention. Similarly, while 14% reported that they seldom enjoy being in school at pre-intervention assessment, none was recorded at post-assessment, as shown in Figure 3 below.

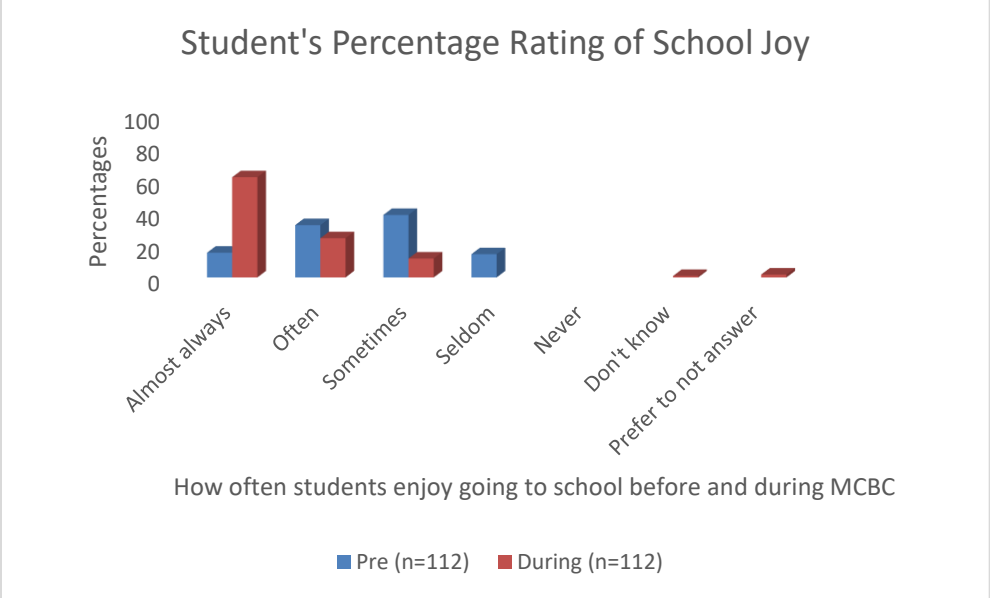

Figure 3. Mentee's rating for how much they enjoy going to school.

Conversely, the mentee's responses to "how often they hate being in school" show that MCBC contributed to reducing the mentee's hatred for school. As shown in Figure 4 below, the

mentees often hated going to school pre-intervention compared to during intervention. Notably, in post-intervention, 70.5% (79) reported they seldom hate going to school compared to 25.8% in pre-intervention, as shown in Figure 4 below. Additionally, the mentee's rating for "often" (13%) hate going to school was only observed during the pre-intervention assessment.

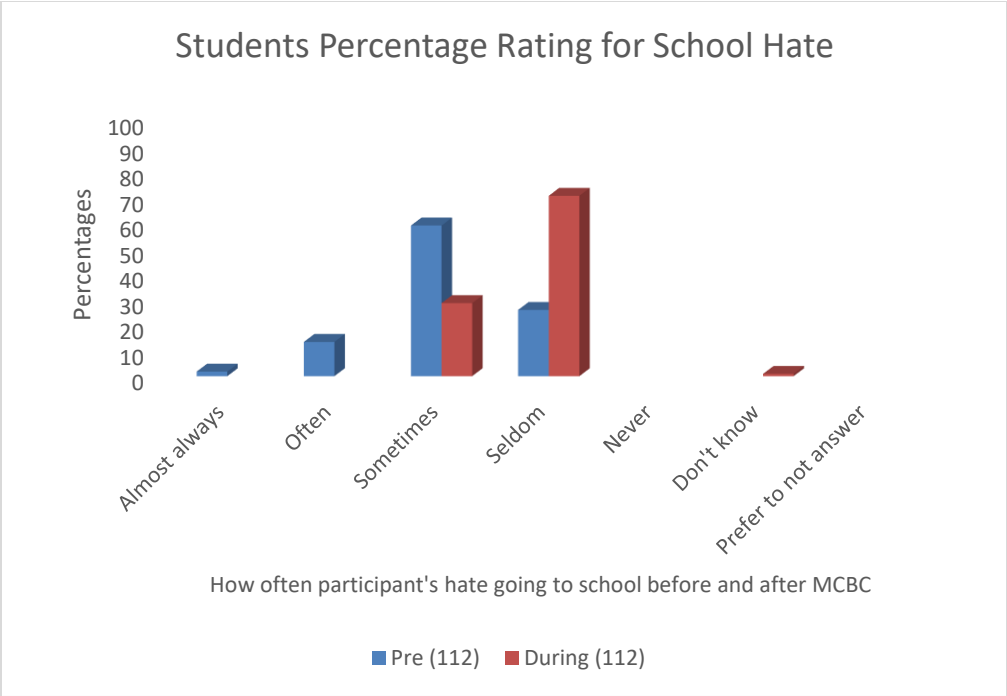

Figure 4. Mentee's rating for how they much the hate going to school pre and during intervention.

Based on the pre and post-intervention assessment, a positive change was observed in the mentee's participation in class discussion. As shown in figure 4 below, most mentees reported increased regular ("almost always" = 69.6%) participation in class discussions post-intervention compared to pre-intervention (3.5%). Similarly, the number of mentees who "often" participate in class discussion increased at post-intervention (21%) compared to pre-intervention (14%). Lastly, mentees who "seldom" participate in class discussions only emerged pre-intervention.

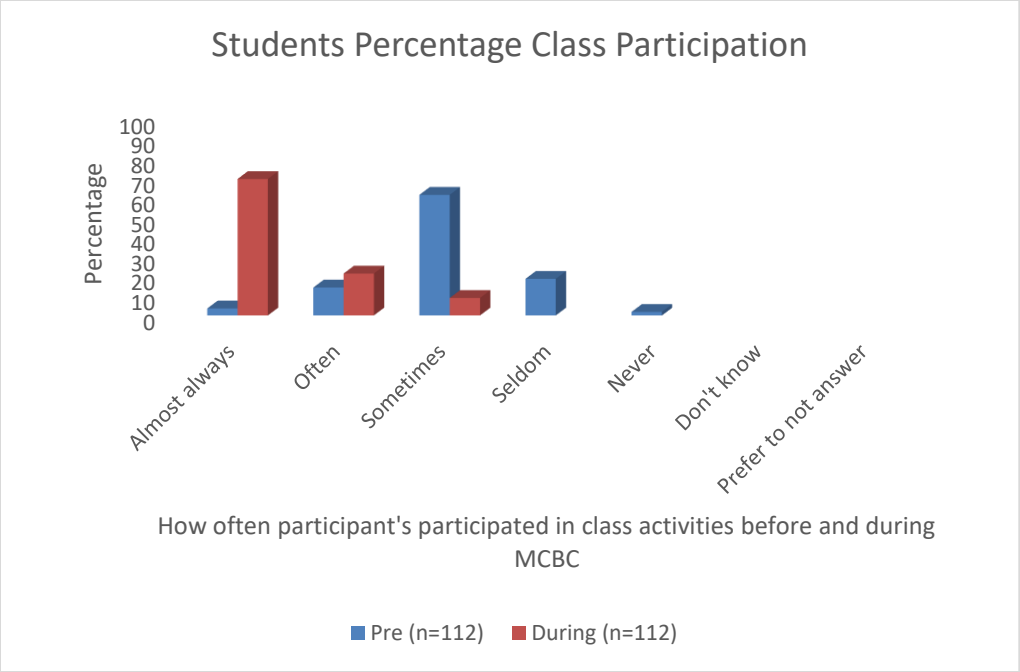

Figure 5. Mentee's rating for how often they participate in class activities.

Similarly, mentees' responses to how often they perform assigned homework showed a positive change based on pre and post-intervention assessments. Notably, mentees who attempted to complete school homework increased from 13% (pre-intervention) to 69.6% (post-intervention). Additionally, as shown in figure five below, the number of mentees that "sometimes" do their homework decreased from 48% (pre-intervention) to 1.7% (post-intervention).

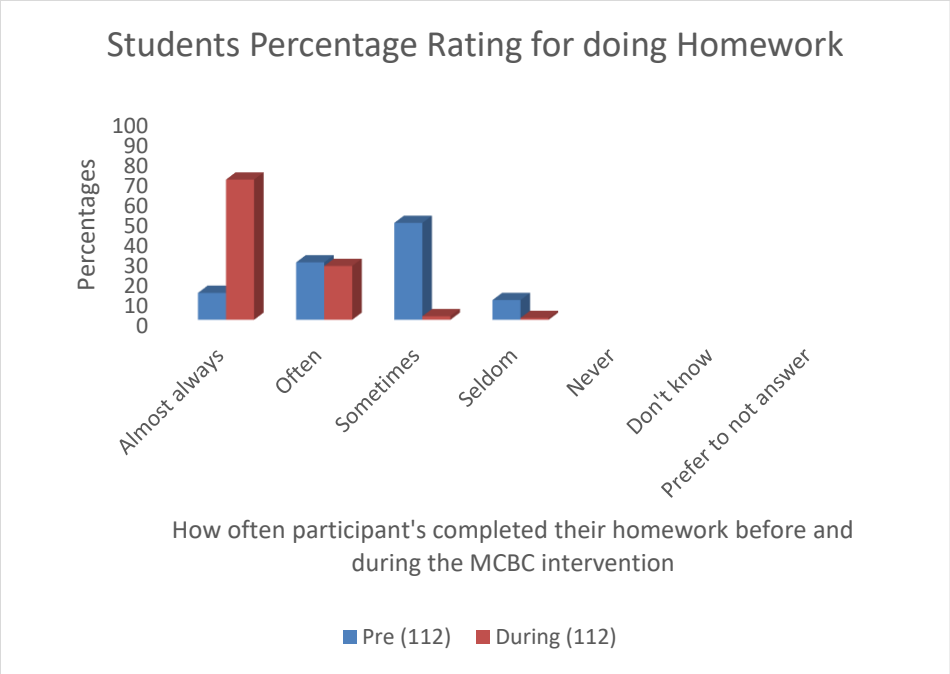

Figure 6. Mentees Rating for how often they do their homework

Lastly, MCBC appears to have contributed positively to the mentee's reading habits. Out of 112 responses, 25% reported that they regularly ("almost always") read a school or storybook post-intervention compared to none at pre-intervention. Additionally, the number of mentees who "often" read increased from 5% (4) to 34% (39) in pre and post-intervention, respectively. However, there was still a significant number of mentees who "sometimes" read a school or storybook, as shown in figure 6 below.

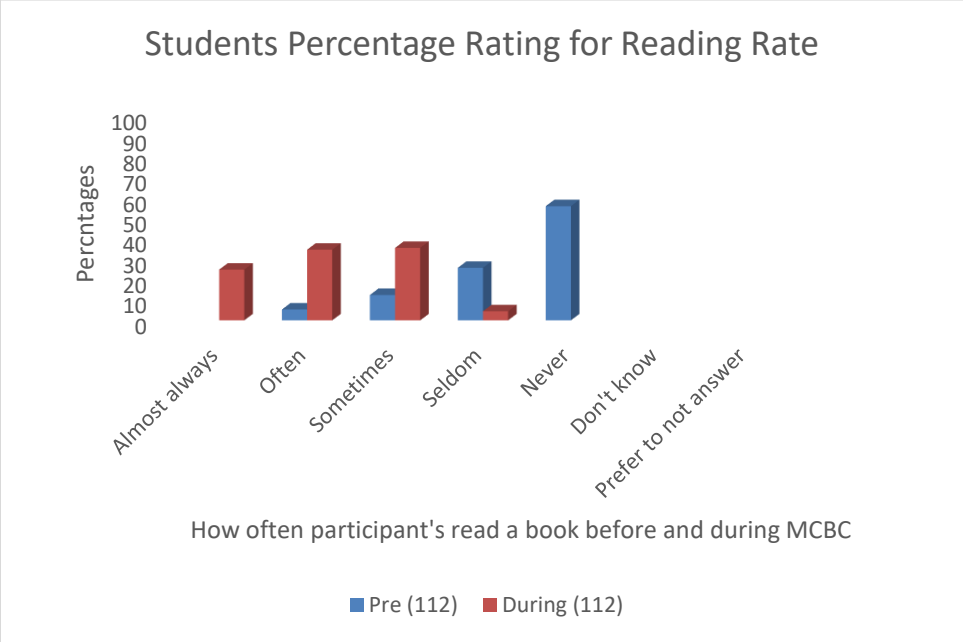

Figure 7. Mentee's Rating for how often they read their books

4.4 Child Labor Involvement

Overall, MCBC appears to have the intended impact in moderating a reduction in mentees' labor involvement during implementation. For example, at pre-intervention, the mentee's responses to the question "have you ever been involved in labor or fishing in the past" suggest that 23% of mentees reportedly have been involved in child labor in the past, as shown in figure 6 below.

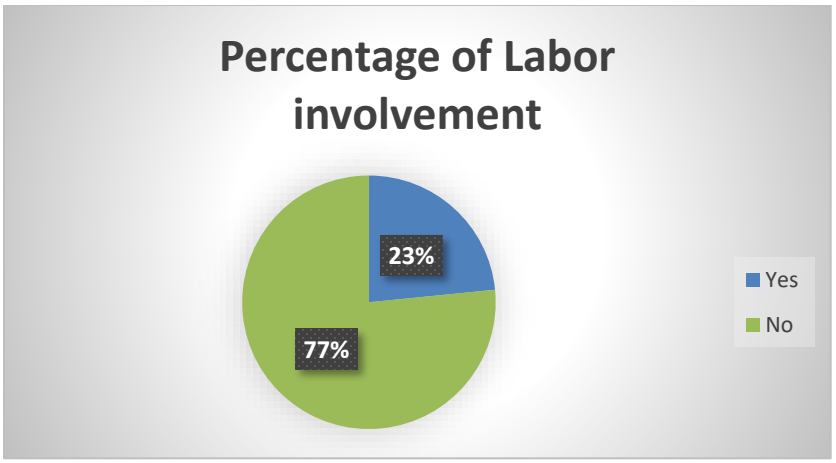

Figure 8. The prevalence rate of mentees ever Labor Involvement

Participants (mentees) were further assessed on their labor involvement within a year pre-intervention, 3 and 6 months during-intervention. Pre and during-assessment results suggest that the mentee's labor involvement reduced over time as MCBC progresses, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. *Decrease in mentee's labor involvement before and during MCBC*

	Pre (N=110)		During (N=112)	
Variable	Yes	No	Yes	No
Labor Involved year 1	22	90		
Labor Involved Month 6	16	94	4	108
Labor Involved Month 3	11	99	0	112

Note. The decrease in mentee's child labor involvement between the pre and during MCBC

Generalized and general linear regression models examined the association between child labor involvement and the primary dependent variables in this study: school attendance and participation and engagement. This association was assessed using the pre-intervention measures

of the school outcomes and having ever labor been involved in labor. The results suggest that labor involvement was negatively associated with school attendance (b=-0.79; p=0.005) and school participation and engagement (b=-2.34; p=0.001). Future analyses that will involve longer-term follow-up will focus on change in school attendance, school participation and engagement as well as the prevalence of labor involvement and the longitudinal likely bi-directional associations among these outcomes.

4.5 EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION

Similar to other reported outcomes, MCBC appears to have had a positive impact on mentees' reported future educational aspirations. Primarily, mentees with future aspirations of pursuing a bachelor's and Master's degree increased considerably during intervention compared to pre-intervention. Additionally, as shown in Table 3 below, mentees interested in pursuing a doctoral education are at post-intervention.

Table 3. *Change in mentee's educational aspiration before and during MCBC*

	Pre (N = 112)		During (N= 112)	
Variables	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Junior High	20	17.86	0	0
Senior High	31	27.68	5	4.46
College	11	9.82	7	6.25
University (Bachelors)	39	34.82	77	68.75
Masters	5	4.46	22	19.64
PhD	0	0	1	0.89

Note. The change in mentees educational aspiration before and after MCBC

4.6 Qualitative Impact Analysis

Consistent with program improvement goals, all three mentors of the MCBC were interviewed by the study investigator over Zoom to evaluate the achievement of the goals of the MCBC program. Using a semi-structured interview, assessment questions ranged from program impact on mentee's attendance and school participation, mentor's personal and professional development, and recommendations for program improvement (see Appendix E). Key themes that emerged from the interview responses were coded, and the investigator reported summaries. During the interview, the investigator sought the mentors consent to record the Zoom conversation on a secure UW Zoom account, transcribed the conversation, and deleted the video afterward. Next, mentors were asked questions under pre-generated themes (for example, mentee attendance, participation, and mentor development). Mentors' similar answers to each of the specific questions were initially grouped. Afterward, most recurring responses of interest to this study were grouped into the major themes reported below.

Mentee Attendance and Participation

All three mentors expressed that the program positive impacted the mentee's school attendance. They shared that in one of their check-in visits to the schools, some teachers made inspiring comments about their observations with their mentee students. One of the mentors recalled a teacher who appreciated what the mentors were doing when they said "You (mentors) have done really well; ever since you started this program, she (mentee) has never absented herself from school, and then the teachers were praising us, so I was so happy".

Mentor Development

All three mentors shared that the MCBC program helped them to be more patient and deepened their bonds with the children, assuming roles as mentors. Besides improving their pronunciation skills through the phonics curriculum and advancing their time management skills, mentors shared that the program challenged them to learn more teaching techniques, especially for children, since most mentors were used to teaching young adults. Surprisingly, two mentors shared that until the MCBC program, they had never used computers in their teaching of kids. Consequently, the MCBC program improved their skills in computer-assisted teaching. Two mentors also mentioned that they learned a lot from the program curriculum, especially the phonics used to assist their mentees in advancing their reading skills. One of the mentors noted that “In fact, I have never used computers in teaching at all until this program, and it really challenged me to learn more”.

Program Challenges and Improvement

All three mentors confirmed that the mentee's program attendance was average at the start since most families and mentees had a limited understanding of the purpose of the program. However, program participation increased significantly after the third week, when the mentors hosted a session on program objectives. Additionally, incorporating fun indoor games suggested by the mentees would be great in subsequent mentoring sessions. As one mentor noted "When we made time to explain the purpose of the program and shared the importance of education and the impact of child labor on their future aspirations, they (mentees) were always at the Fieldhouse (reading center), and coming to the Fieldhouse was like Heaven".

Chapter 5. DISCUSSION

Overall, the MCBC implementation outcome suggests it achieved its intended goal of facilitating mentee school bonding measured through increased school attendance and school engagement and participation. Specifically, in answering the study questions, does mentoring at-risk trafficking youth lead to increased and sustained school attendance? does mentoring at-risk trafficking youth lead to increased school participation and engagement? Consistent with the study intervention model and developmental theories that informed the study, the MCBC implementation created opportunities for the mentees to develop relationship with caring adults (mentors) who provided the mentees with social support as well as opportunities to observe, learn (academic support), and practice emotion regulation skills (through coaching and counseling), which include traditional interpersonal problem-solving skills (Taylor et al., 1999) that is intended to facilitate school bonding and mentees healthy choices of increased school attendance and school engagement and participation. Additionally, the MCBC implementation opened up opportunities for mentees participate in enriching experiences conversations with mentors that enhance their ability to envision a positive future (Reid and Eddy, 1997; Taylor et al. 1999; Rhodes, 2005; Eddy et al. 2017; Dubois, Herrera, Rivera, Brechling, & Root, 2022; Herrera, DuBois, Heubach, & Grossman, 2023; Ross, 2023).

5.1 PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION IMPACT

Similar to other studies (Heppen, Zeiser, Holtzman, O'Cummings, Christenson & Pohl, 2018; Guryan, Christenson, Cureton, Lai, Ludwig, Schwarz, & Turner, 2021), the MCBC mentoring program appears to have contributed to an increase in mentees school attendance. This was evident in the mentee's average school attendance. Out of a 5-day week of school, an increase

of one and half days was observed between pre- and post-assessment. This result is promising given the implementation period of intervention assessment (6 months period of program intervention). However, mentees are more likely to improve significantly during an intervention period relative to post-assessment. Contextually, referencing the excitement from mentors following praises from teachers of mentee schools will create opportunities for more mentors to see how little effort (short group mentoring) could encourage mentees to impact their school attendance significantly. Consequently, this could increase the number of mentors in the Nyanyano fishing community.

Additionally, the increase in school attendance is more important to the Nyanyano fishing community and Ghana. International labor regulations stipulate 15 years as the minimum working age, and Ghana was among the first countries to ratify the United Nations Child Rights Convention (UNCRC). According to the 1998 Children's Act of Ghana, children under 15 are not supposed to be employed (Ghana Living Standard Survey 7 report). Interestingly, the prevalent rate (23%) of children involved in Child labor in the Gomoa Nyanyano community was consistent with the 2020 report on the Sub-Saharan projected rate of 24% (Ortiz-Ospina, 2022; Pugmire, 2022). According to a 2020 UNICEF report, a projected 9 million children worldwide will be at risk of child labor involvement by 2022. Therefore, these promising implementation findings serve as an opportunity for community-based organizations, government agencies, local community leaders, and international stakeholders to partner, invest, and develop interventions and strategies to advance child labor trafficking prevention through mentoring.

The MCBC mentoring program also appears to have positively influenced mentees' school engagement and participation during implementation. This impact is consistent with other studies (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, & McMaken, 2011; Herrera, DuBois, Heubach & Grossman, 2023).

This was evident through mentees reported increased reading habits, homework completion, and class participation. This implementation result was expected due to the modeling of the group mentoring program. Specifically, mentees were provided opportunities to participate in group mentoring conversations, and especially those who were shy and less confident in their academic performance were encouraged and supported by mentors to participate. Some mentors shared during the virtual interview that this mentoring program structure helped model similar experiences for the mentees in their respective schools. Specific to increased reading habits, two of the mentors shared during the virtual interview mentioned that they could confidently rate the mentee's reading improvement by 70% (estimate). Their assessment was based on the fact that some mentees needed help even to spell three-letter words at pre-assessment. However, mentees who especially had problems with spelling improved significantly halfway through the program and toward the end.

The MCBC mentoring program also appears to have had a positive effect on the number of times mentees were involved in labor during-intervention (implementation) compared to pre-intervention. Consistent with other studies (Boateng & Dako-Gyeke, 2022), there was a negative association between the mentee's labor involvement and school attendance (b=-079; p=0.005), as well as participation and engagement (b=-2.33; p=0.001). In other words, school attendance and participation and engagement decrease as child labor involvement increases. These relationships support the premise of using group mentoring approach as a strategy for increasing school attendance, participation and engagement in order to decrease child labor.

While this effect (impact of MCBC) is moderate and a distal outcome of the MCBC program, it was encouraging to observe some positive changes within six (6) months during the intervention. On the other hand, studies such as (Eddy et al., 2017) and (Parnes et al., 2023)

confirm that the effects of risk factors can be partially countered by positive, supportive, and enduring adult-child relationships. Furthermore, the MCBC weekly mentee-mentor check-in attendance record suggests that the mentee's program participation ranged between 65% to 95% of the total number of weeks (24) designed for the program. Based on mentor feedback, some factors contributing to the difference in participation rate include a limited understanding of the program's purpose at the start and heavy rainfalls on some days that caused the cancellation of some check-ins.

Keeping children from labor involvement indirectly advances mentees future economic opportunities. According to (Jafarey & Lahiri, 2001), children who do not work at a young age earn three times higher wages in the future compared to children who work. Additionally, consistent with the poverty cycles in the Gomoa Nyanyano fishing community (Agyemang, 2018), children with limited opportunities to develop their talents and skills are more likely to remain poor throughout their lives (Lambon-Quayefio, Puoma, & Owoo, 2021). Furthermore, child laborers in Ghana were about 9% more likely to remain poor in the future and even worse (18%) for children involved in hazardous labor such as fishing (Lambon-Quayefio, Puoma, & Owoo, 2021).

Therefore, it was important to observe the initial positive impacts of the MCBC on mentee's future educational aspirations. Primarily, mentees with future aspirations of pursuing a bachelor's and Master's degree increased considerably during intervention compared to pre-intervention. This is inspiring, and hopefully, it will continue to motivate mentees to work towards their dreams and potential escape from poverty in the future.

Mentors expressed that the MCBC mentoring impacted their time management, pronunciation, and teaching and mentoring skills. This impact is more encouraging and essential

for subsequent program enhancement, primarily when recruiting more mentors for the program. Culturally, most adults are not paid a stipend to provide mentoring for mentees. Hence, through a small compensation of 200 Euros over the program period, the MCBC mentors put a lot more effort into supporting their mentees than they would typically do. This could contribute to the success of the MCBC program, especially during a pilot period of six months.

Lastly, when mentors were asked to share their opinion about a good mentor, they shared terrific and inspiring comments that suggested their professional growth and learning through the program. To mention a few, one of the mentors shared that a good mentor must be approachable "sometimes they (mentees) will do things that could be upsetting, but we still need to be kind to them and help them to grow". Another mentor noted, "A good mentor must understand the situation of your mentee, be compassionate, and create an enabling environment that will allow the mentees to share their issues freely and be able to support them".

5.2 Program and Policy Implication

This study provides an opportunity for anti-trafficking organizations and mentoring-focused organizations to partner, design, implement, and evaluate ongoing mentoring programs to advance healthy youth development through child labor trafficking prevention. The cross-collaboration creates learning opportunities to combine field knowledge from both disciplines to facilitate the design of robust mentoring for child labor trafficking prevention, especially in the fishing industry. The implementation of continuous program evaluation of similar mentoring programs will help better understand what works and what does not. The knowledge gained from this study could serve as an opportunity to redesign programs to serve better the goals of the human trafficking paradigms (prevention, protection, and partnership). This study also contributes to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4, 8.7. Specifically, to

"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, and to is to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labor in all its forms." The project also facilitates human rights advancement, peace, and justice for trafficking victims and affected families while strengthening effective and accountable institutions (social welfare, schools) at community levels.

The study supports extant studies that affirm group mentoring as evidence-based. Consequently, the study suggests that implementing group mentoring programs within Ghanaian fishing communities similar to the Nyanyano community can lead to increased school bonding and attendance, engagement and participation, and labor involvement. Increased school attendance means reducing child laborers and vulnerable children at risk of forced labor and trafficking. Though there is an increase in school attendance, a follow-up study that measures program impact after 12 months or sustained impact after two years of program implementation may have a different outcome.

Additionally, consistent with the mentor's recommendation, an MCBC program that incorporates intentional efforts to communicate the program's purpose at the start of the program could yield better results. Furthermore, though mentoring is culturally organic, a similar or hybrid mentoring program that combines the concept "it takes a village" and compensates mentors could have a better outcome.

Finally, it is vital for organizations to involve community members in developing programs from their inception and to serve as facilitators or collaborators and not as 'community saviors.' To serve as a facilitator means creating an opportunity for the community to take ownership and

leadership, suggest solutions, and allow involvement in the project's decision-making process. This will reduce dependency, increase community contribution, and potentially save costs.

5.3 LIMITATIONS

Despite its promise, this study has several limitations to consider. Notably, the data was only collected from a fishing community in Ghana and can only be generalized within this setting. In addition, there are some limitations to self-report data. Data were collected by mentors introducing potential reporting bias, for example, students may have reported increased participation in class to please their mentor and it may not reflect actual participation.

Data collection at the end of six months of program implementation may not reflect sustained program impact, we might fully expect to see an attenuation of effect after the program is completed. Longer term follow-up is warranted to examine possible attenuation impact. Finally, because this is not a randomized controlled trial, there may be sampling bias and we cannot make causal inferences. A more robust study, such as longitudinal and randomized control trials (RCT), will help establish causality.

5.4 RESEARCH IMPLICATION AND FUTURE DIRECTION

Future studies should consider measuring program impact after 12 months of program implementation. Additionally, future studies that measures sustained school attendance rate after two years of program implementation could yield different outcomes. Furthermore, a future mentoring program that employs robust study designs such as longitudinal and randomized control trials (RCT) is recommended to facilitate program improvement and better results.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The often-cited African proverb – it takes a village to grow a child —well illustrates the power of community coming together to mentor their youth to address child labor issues and positively impact school attendance, engagement, and participation. While child labor and trafficking are endemic in Sub-Saharan Africa, resulting in lost opportunities through education and health, community-based group mentoring programs can have a robust impact on increasing school attendance, participation, and engagement in African communities.

These findings suggest that increased interaction between a caring adult and the youth (mentees) opens up opportunities for mentees to participate in enriching experiences and conversations with mentors that enhance their ability to envision a positive future, increases school bonding, and facilitate their prioritization of education and associated involvement in child labor trafficking.

Findings also suggest that mentors provided the mentees with social support as well as opportunities to observe, learn and receive academic support, coaching, and counseling, which facilitated mentees' healthy choices of increased school attendance and school engagement and participation.

It also suggests that when mentors (teachers), mentees, and parents increase their understanding of the program's purpose, it can increase mentees' program participation and better outcomes. Therefore, programs that incorporate the intentional involvement of mentors, parents, and mentees in the design and implementation of the program could result in better program outcomes and overall healthy youth development. Finally, implementing recommendations from this study may help develop robust interventions to increase school attendance and participation and reduce vulnerability for child labor trafficking in high child labor communities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Baseline and After Intervention Survey for Mentees

Introduction

Cheerful Hearts Foundation in Ghana is educating the public on child rights, child labor, child trafficking, the importance of education, etc. Our new mentoring program is designed to assess the role of mentoring in child trafficking prevention. We are conducting a baseline study to gather key information early in the project to provide us with the basis for subsequent assessment of our intended goals and the actual results achieved.

In terms of research questions, we seek to answer the questions 1) Does mentoring increase and sustain school attendance among children at risk of labor trafficking? 2) Does mentoring prevent children's involvement in labor trafficking?

CONSENT: INTERVIEW WITH STUDENTS (PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS)

I ……. understand the following issues that have been clearly explained to me:

- The purpose of the interview;
- The content of the interview;
- The intended use of the interview information, including use in local and/or global reports/publications;
- Confidentiality and whether it can be provided;
- My ability/right to refuse to answer any question;
- My ability/right to withdraw my consent and terminate the interview and any reporting/publication at any time; and
- My ability/right to request referrals for any issues raised by the interview;

I have not been pressured or otherwise influenced to participate in the interview or to agree for its content to be reported/published; AND SO
I agree to participate in the interview and for its content to be reported/published*.

Signed: _____ Date: _____ At: _____

Demographic Information

Q1
CNAME
Participant assigned code? _____

Q2
CAGE
How old are you? a) 4-5 b) 6-7 c) 8-9 d) 10-11 e) 12-13 f) 13-14 g) 15-16 h) 17-99.

Q3
CDOB
For verification purposes, what is your date of birth (month and year)?

Q4
CSEX
What is your sex (participant's gender)? 1) Male 2) Female 3) Other

Q5
CREL
Do you practice any form of religion? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Don't know

Q6
CRELQUAL
If you answer yes to Q5, what is your religion? 1)Christian 2) Moslem 3) Traditionalist 4) Other

Family

Q7
GRIDFAMILY
The questions will now focus on your family.

	Yes	No	Don't know	Prefer to not answer	
a) Do you have a mother or someone who is like a mom to you?					**HAVEMOM**
b) Do you have a father or someone who is like a dad to you?					**HAVEDAD**
c) Do you have a grandfather or someone who is like a granddad to you?					**HAVEGRAND**
d) Do you have a grandmother or someone who is like a grandmom to you?					**HAVEGRANM**
e) Do you have an uncle/aunt or someone who is like an uncle/aunt to you?					**HAVEUNAUNT**
f) Do you have any brothers or sisters, including step-brothers or step-sisters?					**HAVESIB**

Q8
CSIB
Number of siblings, if any? _____

Q9
PAREDUF
What is your father's highest level of education? 1) Elementary School 2) Junior High 3) Senior High 4) College/University 5) None

Q10
PAREDUM
What is your mother's highest level of education? 1) Elementary School 2) Junior High 3) Senior High 4) College/University 5) None

Labor Involvement

Q11
CLABORINV

	Yes	No	Don't know	Prefer to not answer	
a) Have you ever been involved in labor or fishing work?					**HAVELABOR**
b) Have you been involved in labor or fishing work within the past year?					**HAVELABOR1**
c) Have you been involved in labor or fishing work within the past 6 months?					**HAVELABOR6**
d) Have you been involved in labor or fishing work within the past 3 months?					**HAVELABOR3**
e) Do you work at the fishing shore at least once a week?					**HAVELABORWK**
f) Do you often work at the fishing shore when absent from school?					**SCHLABOR**

Rate of Labor Involvement

Q12
RCLABORINV
Within the past 6 months, how often, or how many times a week do you work at the shore, if any?

1 Never
2 1 or 2 times
3 3 or 4 times
4 5 or 6 times
5 7 or more times
8 Don't know
9 Prefer to not answer

Perceived Labor Involvement (Risk of Labor trafficking)

Q13
PCLABORINV

a) Do you ever have thoughts of being involved or working at the fishing shore? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Don't know

b) If yes, how often in a week do you think about going to work at the shore while in school.
PRCLABORINV
1) Almost always (5 – 7 times)
2) Often (4-5)
3) Sometime (2-3)
4) Seldom (1)
5) Never
6) Don't know
7) Prefer not to answer

School Bond/Academic Growth/Improvement

Q14
GRIDSCHOOLBOND
This section focuses on your your time in school.

	Almost always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	Don't know	Prefer to not answer	
a) How often do you enjoy being in school?								**SCHENJOY**
b) How often do you hate or dislike being in school?								**SCHHATE**
c) How often do you do all of the homework that your teachers assigned to you?								**SCHHMWRK**
d) How often do you read your school or								**READJOY**

story books?								
d) How often do you participate in class discussion?								**CLASSPART**

Q15

EDULEVEL

What is your current level of schooling?

1 Class 4 (4th grade)
2 Class 5 (5th grade)
3 Class 6 (6th grade)
4 JHS (7th grade)
5 JHS2 (8th grade)
12 Other (*specify)* _____
13 Don't know
14 Prefer to not answer

Q16

EDULEVELH

Eventually, what is the **highest** level of schooling you would like to achieve?

1 Junior High School
2 Senior High School (SHS)
3 College
4 University (Bachelors)
5 Masters
6 PhD
7 Other
8 Don't know
9 Prefer to not answer

Appendix B: Phone Screening Consent Protocol (Script)

Dear participant,

This is Eric Agyemang, a PhD candidate at the University of Washington and former Executive Director, Cheerful Hearts Foundation. I hope you are doing well today. I am calling in connection with the recently ended MCBC mentoring program in which you served as a mentor. Specifically, to explore if you may be interested in participating in a program evaluation study – broadly, I am seeking to understand your experiences with the project, its impact on the mentees, and your feedback or recommendation on what could be done differently or what could improve in future similar projects.

- Please don't feel pressured to participate in the study because I do understand that you may be busy or may have other engagements.
- Additionally, this interview (request) is purely voluntary, and your unavailability to participate in it has no implications on your relationship with the Cheerful Hearts Foundation or any future projects of theirs. You can decide not to participate at any point in the interview or study.
- This project evaluation study is primarily for my dissertation and also for Cheerful Hearts Foundation's program advancement.
- Additionally, this study may be published in the Journal of Human Trafficking.
- This evaluation/interview will be held over Zoom.
- Zoom interview will be held using a HIPAA compliant Zoom account. Zoom interviews will be recorded and stored securely.
- Interviews will be transcribed and de-identified. Video recordings will be deleted when transcription is completed and backed up.
- We do not have any plans of sharing results with you directly, but with the Cheerful Hearts Foundation, who may decide to share with you.
- This phase is a screening only to find out if I may send you a written consent to review before saying yes or no to the study.
- The consent is a one-page document and should take about 15 – 20 minutes to review. And you do have two weeks to a month to decide if you are interested or not. The Zoom interview will last 30 minutes.
- If you have any questions after today, or after the study, feel free to contact me at eagyeman@uw.edu or my Supervisor/Advisor, Dr. Kevin Haggerty at haggerty@uw.edu or the Human Subject Division at the University of Washington Seattle.
- Again, please don't feel pressured to participate in the study. This interview (request) is purely voluntary and your unavailability to participate in it has no implications on your relationship with the Cheerful Hearts Foundation or any future projects of theirs.
- Please do you have any questions for me?
- Given the information shared, please do I have your permission to send you a written consent for your review and consent (signature)?

Thank you so much for your time today talking with me – very much appreciated.

Appendix C: Email content for Zoom Interview Consent Protocol (Script)

Email Content

Dear participant,

"This is a follow up on our phone conversation about your interest in participating in the MCBC Evaluation study. Please find attached written consent for your review and consideration."

Many thanks,
Eric Agyemang

Zoom Interview Consent

My name is Eric Agyemang, a PhD candidate at the University of Washington and former Executive Director, Cheerful Hearts Foundation. I hope you are doing well today. I am emailing in connection with the recently ended MCBC mentoring program in which you served as a mentor. Specifically, to explore if you may be interested in participating in a program evaluation study – broadly, I am seeking to understand your experiences with the project, its impact on the mentees, and your feedback or recommendation on what could be done differently or what could improve in future similar projects.

- Please don't feel pressured to participate in the study because I do understand that you may be busy, may have other engagements, or other personal reasons.
- Additionally, this interview (request) is purely voluntary, and your unavailability or no interest to participate in it has no implications on your relationship with the Cheerful Hearts Foundation or any future projects of theirs. You can also decide not to participate at any point in the interview or study.
- This project evaluation study is primarily for my dissertation and also for Cheerful Hearts Foundation's program advancement.
- Additionally, this study may be published in the Journal of Human Trafficking.
- This evaluation/interview will be held on zoom.
- Zoom interview will be held using a HIPAA compliant Zoom account. Zoom interviews will be recorded and stored securely.
- Interviews will be transcribed and de-identified. Video recordings will be deleted when transcription is completed and backed up.

- We do not have any plans of sharing results with you directly, but with the Cheerful Hearts Foundation, who may decide to share with you.
- This Zoom interview will last 30 minutes.
- If you have any questions after today, or after the study, feel free to contact me at eagyeman@uw.edu or my Supervisor/Advisor, Dr. Kevin Haggerty at haggerty@uw.edu or the Human Subject Division at the University of Washington Seattle.
- Again, please don't feel pressured to participate in the study. This interview (request) is purely voluntary and your unavailability to participate in it has no implications on your relationship with the Cheerful Hearts Foundation or any future projects of theirs.

- Given the information shared, please sign below and date to confirm interest/consent to participate in the interview, and return a copy to me via email.

Participant Name_____

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix D: Zoom Interview Consent Protocol (Script)

Dear participant,

Thank you for the opportunity and interest in participating in this study. Before we proceed I would like to remind/repeat what this study is about and seek your permission/consent. I hope that is okay with you?

My name is Eric Agyemang, a PhD candidate at the University of Washington and former Executive Director, Cheerful Hearts Foundation. I hope you are doing well today. I am meeting with you today in connection with the recently ended MCBC mentoring program in which you served as a mentor. Specifically, to explore if you may be interested in participating in a program evaluation study – broadly, I am seeking to understand your experiences with the project, its impact on the mentees, and your feedback or recommendation on what could be done differently or what could improve in future similar projects.

- Please don't feel pressured to participate in the study because I do understand that you may be busy, may have other engagements, or other personal reasons.
- Additionally, this interview (request) is purely voluntary, and your unavailability or no interest to participate in it has no implications on your relationship with the Cheerful Hearts Foundation or any future projects of theirs. You can also decide not to participate at any point in the interview or study.
- This project evaluation study is primarily for my dissertation and also for Cheerful Hearts Foundation's program advancement.
- Additionally, this study may be published in the Journal of Human Trafficking.
- This evaluation/interview will be held zoom (as it is)
- Zoom interview will be held using a HIPAA compliant Zoom account. Zoom interviews will be recorded and stored securely.
- Interviews will be transcribed and de-identified. Video recordings will be deleted when transcription is completed and backed up.
- We do not have any plans of sharing results with you directly, but with the Cheerful Hearts Foundation, who may decide to share with you.
- This phase is a screening only to find out if I may send you a written consent to review before saying yes or no to the study.
- This Zoom interview will last 30 minutes.
- If you have any questions after today, or after the study, feel free to contact me at eagyeman@uw.edu or my Supervisor/Advisor, Dr. Kevin Haggerty at haggerty@uw.edu or the Human Subject Division at the University of Washington Seattle.
- Again, please don't feel pressured to participate in the study. This interview (request) is purely voluntary and your unavailability to participate in it has no implications on your relationship with the Cheerful Hearts Foundation or any future projects of theirs.

- Please do you have any questions for me?
- Given the information shared, please do I have your permission to proceed with the interview?

Thank you so much for your time today talking with me – very much appreciated.

Appendix E: Mentor Qualitative Interview Protocol

- Participants will be recruited from Cheerful Hearts Foundation's MCBC project for a total of three (mentors).
- Participants will sign a consent form agreeing to participate in a virtual interview.
- Interviewers will confirm that the consent form has been completed and then contact participants and set up a Zoom interview using a HIPAA compliant Zoom account. Zoom interviews will be recorded and stored securely.
- Interviews will be transcribed and de-identified. Video recordings will be deleted when transcription is completed and backed up.
- The PI (trained coder) will qualitatively code interviews for analysis.

Demographics Questions

Age (in years) _____
Gender

- Male
- Female
- Nonbinary
- Other _____

Length of Residency in Nyanyano

- Below 5 years
- 5 – 10 years
- Over 10 years

Highest Level of Education

- Less than a High School Diploma
- High School Diploma, GED, or equivalent
- Some college
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree (e.g., PhD) or Professional degree (e.g., MD)

Interview Questions for Qualitative Interviews with Mentors/Teachers

Background Information

1. When did you first hear of MCBC?
2. What did you think about MCBC Reading mentoring when you were first told about it?

3. How has been your experience with MCBC mentoring compared to your expectations when you joined the program? Was there anything that was unexpected or different than you were told?

Mentorship Experience

1. Over your time with MCBC program, what has been your observation of your mentees related to their school attendance and participation? Can you tell me a little bit about that?
2. How was your observation about your mentee's participation in the MCBC program related to weekly attendance and participation?
3. What was your observation about your mentee's participation in labor activities during their participation in the MCBC program?
4. How was your observation about your mentee's change or improvement in reading been?
5. Did any of your mentees had program attendance and participation issues? if yes, could you share a bit around what factors led to that?
6. What qualities do you think make for a good mentor?

Mentor

1. Did the program help you as a mentor in any way?
2. Is there anything the program could do to be more supportive to mentors, specifically?

Logistics

1. How was the use computers with the program as a whole?
2. The program is supposed to be consistent, offering mentoring to your mentees each week. Is this generally what happened? Was there ever an ongoing period of time where this did not occur? What happened during that time?
3. The reading aspects of the program required the use of internet, how easy or challenging was to regularly access internet?

Reflections

1. What are the best parts about the MCBC program?
2. What about the program do you think should change?
3. What feedback do you have for the program as a whole?
4. Is there anything else you would like to say about the program?

Appendix F: Participation and Engagement Internal Reliability

Table 2. *Participation and Engagement Reliability, by Overall, Gender and Grade, using Cronbach's Alpha*

	Overall Sample	Gender		Grade	
		Boys	Girls	Primary	Junior High
All 5 items Pre-intervention	.797	.790	.807	.780	.865
Without ReadJoy (How do you read your school or story books?)	.810	.805	.812	.803	.821
All 5 items During (post)-intervention	.815	.785	.852	.827	.754
Without ReadJoy (How 3 do you read your school or story books?)	.803	.761	.843	.826	.643
Without ySCHHMWRK ('How 3 do you do all of the homework that your teachers assigned to you?)					.850

Note. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability shows that the scale is good at measuring participation and engagement and the items are highly correlated.

Vita

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Education

BBA., Business Management, 2015, Methodist University Ghana, Accra, Ghana
MSW., Social Work (Policy & Administration), 2018, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington
Grad Cert, International Development Policy & Management, 2022, University of Washington, Seattle
Ph.D., Social Welfare, 2023, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington

Honors and Awards

2017 – 2018: Social Impact Scholarship and Farber awards, University of Washington
2016 – 2017: MSW Fellowship, University of Washington
2016 – 2017: Frances M. Burnley Fellowship, University of Washington
2016 – 2017: Excellence in Social Impact award, University of Washington
2016 – 2017: International Full Tuition Scholarship, School of Social Work, University of Washington

Positions and Scientific Appointments

2022 – 2023: Research Tutor, Undergraduate Research, School of Social Work, University of Washington
2022 – Present: Member, Society for Prevention Science (SPR)
2021 – 2022: Teaching Assistant, Social Work Research, Graduate Research, University of Washington
2017 – Present: Graduate Research Assistant, School of Social Work, University of Washington
2017 – Present: Reviewer, Journal of Human Trafficking, Taylor and Francis Online
2017 – Present: Member, National Association for Black Social Workers

Research Interests

Broadly my research interest spans healthy youth development, leadership development, and community-based prevention of human trafficking. However, I am interested in any research areas intersecting with my broader interest areas across the globe.

Current Research

Currently, my research is focused on community-based prevention of child labor trafficking in Africa. Specifically, I am focused on prevention science, testing the relationship between mentoring and child labor trafficking prevention in Ghana, West Africa. This dissertation examined the implementation outcomes of my current research interest and potential recommendations to develop more robust interventions and impact evaluation research within the next 5 to 10 years.

Teaching Experience

- SOC W 513 A, Macro Social Work Practice, Sole Instructor
  Foundational skills in assessment, intervention and evaluation with groups, organizations, and communities, using anti-oppression lens. Spring/2022 and Spring/2021

- SOC W 505 C, Social Welfare Research, Teaching Practicum Research process/methods in social work, with focus on consuming and performing practice-related research and evaluating one's own practice. Winter/2021

- SOC WF 200, Introduction to Social Welfare Practice, Teaching Associate Introduction to the field of social work, including the theoretical concepts and institutional framework that guide practice Winter/2021 Winter/2022

Professional Presentations

- **Presenter, Agyemang, E. O**. (2022) Virtual Mentoring Best Practices. Society for Prevention Research (SPR) 30th Annual Meeting, "*Realizing the Power of Prevention Through Equitable Dissemination & Implementation Science*", Seattle Washington, May 31 – June 3, 2022.

- **Presenter, Agyemang, E. O**., Haggerty, K. P (2021) Community-Based Prevention of Child labor and Trafficking in Sub-Saharan Africa. 25th Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR), Virtual, January 19 – 22, 2021.

- **Presenter, Agyemang, E. O**., Haggerty, K. P (2020) Community-Based Prevention of Child Trafficking in Sub-Saharan Africa. CSWE 66TH Annual Program Meeting, Denver Colorado, November 12 – 15, 2020.

- Presenter, **Agyemang, E. O**., Haggerty, K. P (2020) Community-Based Prevention of Child Trafficking in Sub-Saharan Africa. Society for Prevention Research Conference, Washington DC, May 26 – 29, 2020.

- **Presenter, Agyemang, E. O**., Haggerty, K. P (2020) Virtual Mentoring Best Practice: Lessons Learned from Implementing Evidence-Based Programs in a Virtual Environment. Northwest PTTC Webinar Series, July 16, 2020.

- **Presenter, Agyemang, E. O**., Hawkins D. J., Wilhelm Liz (2019) "Unleashing the Power of Prevention: Evidence from the Social Development Strategy." Impact Science Series, University of Washington, May 14, 2019.

- **Presenter, Agyemang, E. O**. (2018) Power and 'Culture' in Encounters across difference: Pitfalls and Possibilities for Global Partnership and Student Learning. 5TH Global Summit on Dignity and Justice in Global Service Learning, University of Notre Dame, April 16, 2018.

Publications and Papers

Agyemang, E. O., Haggerty, K. P., Guttmannova, K., Spencer, M. S., & Spearmon, M. L. (under review). Community-based child trafficking prevention in Ghana: A rights-based approach. Journal of Human Trafficking.

Agyemang, E. O., & Haggerty, K. P. (2020). Best practices for virtual mentoring (White Paper).

Agyemang, E. O. O. (2018). Community-based Approach to Ending Human Trafficking: The Effectiveness of "My Right My Future" in Addressing Child Labor and Trafficking in Ghana, West Africa (Master's Thesis).