

CHILD LABOR IN CAREERS GRAVEL IN THE LOKOSSA DISTRICT: STATE OF PLAY AND FORECASTS

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Abstract: *The objective of this research on the subject “Child labor in gravel quarries in the Lokossa district: State of play and perspectives”, was to study the situation of children in gravel quarries in the district from Lokossa. Through this work, we denounce the exploitation of children in the gravel quarries and we invite parents to raise awareness and adequately ensure their needs. To do this, we made use of the non-probabilistic method based on the principle of reasoned choice. For information gathering, we used techniques such as observation, interview and documentary research. Regarding the tools, we used only the interview guide as a tool for collecting information. Starting from the hypotheses according to which the precarious socio-economic conditions of parents explain the phenomenon of child labor in gravel quarries, the working conditions of children in gravel quarries are deplorable and children are exposed to risks of diseases and injuries in the gravel quarries, we arrived at the results according to which the socio-economic situation of the parents leads to child labor the gravel quarries in the Lokossa district. These results confirm our hypotheses. It is up to these parents or guardians to fight to adequately ensure their responsibilities on the face their offspring.*

Key Words: *Child labor, gravel quarries, Lokossa district*

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUBJECT RATIONALE :

When the child appears, the family circle applauds and expands. Children are a real source of wealth in Africa. According to Keita (1988): “*the child is life. He alone stops death. It is the only and most effective remedy. Thanks to him, life on earth is perpetuated. He is the link between this and the beyond, between those here below and those above and everywhere. Gift of God, he is also the ancestor, the reincarnated missing relative*”. It therefore ensures the continuity of the lineage. This means that the child is a precious member of the family. His education is ensured by the extended family and the community. The social values of the group are transmitted to the boys by the father and the uncles, while the mother and the aunts ensure the education of the girls.

But nowadays, poverty, especially absolute poverty, reflecting the inability of a population or an individual to satisfy their basic needs, that is to say to feed, clothe, educate themselves, house themselves and take care of themselves affects a large part of the world's population (Kanhonou, 2010). The populations of sub-Saharan Africa are generally more affected by this phenomenon, the manifestations of which have a negative and notorious influence on the entire household, particularly on the children; and therefore, on the future of humanity.

Indeed, children have the right to be protected from labor exploitation. But in Benin, one in four children aged 14 works. Many of them are abused. They work on construction sites, work as vendors in markets, are employed as servants or exploited in quarries. They are also numerous in the workshops as apprentices and are often used as free labor. Generally, they are deprived of education.

In Benin, monetary poverty affects nearly a third of the Beninese population and tends to increase from one year to another (Kakpovi, 2012). It is manifested by the non-profitability of income-generating activities, the lack of

access to basic social services such as school, health services and by poor local governance which creates social disparities.

The negative impact of child labor and in particular hazardous work on the health and safety of children no longer needs to be demonstrated. In mines and quarries, in agriculture, in the fishing sector, itinerant children in our traffic lights, in the building sector, etc., they are legion and the risks are great and numerous.

To fight effectively against this scourge, the government has taken both normative and practical actions. On the normative level, Benin has ratified international conventions Nos. 138 and 182 relating respectively to the minimum age for access to employment and the elimination of the worst forms of child labor and has integrated most of their provisions in national legislation.

With regard to practical measures, the Beninese government has adopted, among other things, free nursery and primary education first applied to girls and then extended to all children, without forgetting the actions of withdrawing children from worst forms of work and their reintegration. Also, Benin has ratified international conventions in the field of child protection, as well as several international and sub-regional conventions to combat all forms of violence against children's rights, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child ratified on August 3rd, 1990 and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

The concern of the Beninese government to fight against child labor is to provide them with quality education, to ensure decent work for adults, including social protection for the whole family.

Having no income-generating activity, some parents engage in gravel mining in order to survive. Thus, some children have no choice but to follow them to help them, which explains the presence of children in the gravel pits.

Despite the measures taken by the Beninese government, this phenomenon still persists and is gaining more and more momentum. So many factors that raise questions. What then are the explanatory factors of child labor in the gravel quarries in Lokossa? Under what conditions do they work and what are the risks to which they are exposed? What needs to be done to address child labor in gravel pits? These questions led to the formulation of two hypotheses, namely:

- the precarious socio-economic conditions of parents explain the phenomenon of child labor in gravel quarries;
- working conditions for children in gravel pits are deplorable.

The objective of this study is to study the situation of children in gravel quarries in the district of Lokossa. Specifically, these are:

- determine the explanatory factors of child labor in the gravel quarries in Lokossa;
- analyze the conditions under which children work in these gravel pits in Lokossa;
- highlight the risks to which these children are exposed in these gravel quarries of Lokossa.

2. METHODOLOGY :

2.1. Nature of the study

The nature of this study is qualitative. It aims to report on the situation of children in the gravel pits in Lokossa.

2.2. Target population

The population can be defined as the set of all the elements about which one wishes to make inferences (Tito, 2012 cited by Sossou, 2017). Explicitly, the population is made up of all the subjects, units or objects that are potentially concerned by the survey. As part of this research, the target population is composed of:

- gravel quarry managers from Lokossa;
- parents and children working in the gravel pits of Lokossa;
- the Head of the Social Promotion Center of Lokossa.

2.3. Sampling

2.3.1 Sampling method

As part of this research, we used the non-probabilistic method based on the principle of reasoned choice and that of voluntary choice.

- Reasoned choice was used to identify gravel quarry managers and the Head of the Center for Social Promotion. This choice is reasoned in the sense that these people are unavoidable targets without which we cannot collect reliable information in the context of this research.
- Voluntary choice was used to identify children and parents working at gravel quarry sites. This choice is voluntary in the sense that only voluntary and available subjects were taken into account for the various interviews.

2.3.2 Sample size

The desired sample size for a qualitative study is linked to the saturation of the data collected, which means that the sample is considered complete when the researcher has reached the theoretical saturation threshold (Aujoulat et al, 2014, cited by Aboudou, 2019). Thus, the interviews are stopped when the respondents no longer provide new information on the research topic. Indeed, we hoped to do 50 interviews but we only carried out 27 before reaching saturation.

Table 1: Distribution of the sample

Study population	Effective	Percentage (%)
Children working in quarries	16	59,26
Parents working in quarries	08	29,63
Career managers	02	7,41
CPS manager	01	3,70
Total	27	100

2.5. Data collection techniques and tools

For the collection of information from our target presented above, we used three (03) techniques namely: documentary research, observation and semi-structured interview. The tool used is therefore: the interview guide and the observation grid.

2.5.1. Conduct of the investigation

The survey took place from April 13th to April 25th, 2020. First, we made an appointment with the people concerned. Then at the second access, we proceeded, once in the field, to the complete recording of the speeches using a smartphone (Tecno power 2), then to their faithful transcription. Note that this survey was carried out during our academic internship at the Center for Social Promotion of Lokossa.

2.5.2. Data processing

The treatment consists of playing the collected voices which are nothing other than the various points of view of the different people interviewed in relation to this or that other aspect of the research subject. We then carried out a faithful transcription of these opinions before proceeding to their categorization and then to their rigorous analysis; and all this despite the great similarity of the answers. Depending on the different themes and sub-themes of the interview guides used, we grouped the data. Thus, the analysis of the opinions of all the subjects was done in sequences according to the themes and sub-themes.

3. Presentation of results

The results of the interviews are presented according to the target groups interviewed, the themes and sub-themes discussed and the responses obtained. Thus, our survey results highlight the following themes:

- factors leading to child labor in gravel pits;
- working conditions of children in gravel pits;
- risks to which children are exposed in gravel pits.

3.1 Factors leading to child labor in gravel pits

The exploitation of gravel is a daily activity of the inhabitants of Lokossa, it is practiced by almost all social strata in occurrence the juvenile layer for various reasons. Thus, the subjects interviewed addressed the issue of the causes of child labor in gravel quarries and gave their opinion on the situation. Indeed, according to most of the subjects interviewed, the parents' lack of means is at the root of child labor in gravel quarries. This is what one of the managers told us in these terms:

"The work of children in quarries is driven by several factors: first we must note the lack of means of the parents, then the will of the child to meet his own needs and dropout. I understand the poverty of the parents can lead the child to work to meet his needs and sometimes even help his parents. As soon as the child grows up, reaching a certain age, he seeks to assert himself, needs begin to arise and as the parents are not able to

provide him, he will find himself by working. Most of the children who come to work here are students. Some follow their parents and others come on their own.” A. I., Gravity Quarry Manager, (April 2020).

A child does not say the opposite when he answers in these terms:

“I am 17 years old, I am a pupil in 3rd grade, I have been working on this gravel pit for almost 4 years, that's what I do to be able to support to my needs, if I don't, no one will feed me. My mother is visually impaired and my father does not have the means to properly assume his responsibilities, in addition he has a second wife so I have no choice but to work hard to earn a living. I support my mother with the little money I earn here” A. Y., (April, 2020).

Similarly, B. A. (April, 2020), says: *“Me, I come to work here with my cousins to find money. My mother no longer lives, I am with my father's second wife. My father does not give breakfast to my half-brothers and I therefore accompany my cousins to do this job to have money and support myself”*. As for S. M. (April, 2020), responds in these terms *“I no longer attend, I gave up in Average course first year because I had fallen seriously ill and stayed almost half the year at home. I am here with my mother and my big brother; we wash the gravel to have money to pay the rent and my clothes”*. Another supports her in these terms: *“I am 15 years old, I am a student in 6th grade, I came alone, as the quarry is next to my house, I come occasionally to work to have money for to be able to buy the documents in the program”*. S.F. (April, 2020).

It emerges from these interventions that the children recognize that the poverty of their parents explains their presence in careers. The second reason mentioned by the interviewees is that of dropping out of school, this is what one of them told us in these terms:

“There are several reasons which justify child labor in quarries: we can say the poverty of the parents, the poor academic performance of the children and above all the polygamous situation of the parents. Often the children who come to work on this career site come from a polygamous family. Either the father has 3 or 4 wives and his wives have children in shambles without worrying about what to feed these children. These women to survive take the key to quarries, accompanied by their children to come and get money. The other factor is that in the design of “Kotafons”, if a child fails primary school once or twice the father neglects him and tells him that he is no longer in his plans. So, these children come to work here as a job to have something to eat”. D. F., Gravity Quarry Manager, (April 2020).

The precarious living conditions of parents play a big role in the exploitation of children. The observation is that the worsening of poverty means that most heads of families are no longer able to ensure the social needs of their descendants as required. Some fathers residing in the areas of Takon-Zongo and Houin who till the land have seen their cultivable area dwindle over the years and under the strong push of urbanization. This has lowered their production and therefore their lifestyle. All this means that the parents are no longer able to play their role as providers of goods to the family as they should. This poses the problem of the responsibility of parents vis-à-vis their own children.

In the same way, some parents confirm that poverty leads them to let their children work in quarries to make money. They feel that they do not have the means to meet the needs of the children. This is the case of a mother justifying the reason why she takes her daughter to work with her in these terms: *“I have a daughter; I take her here to help me go quickly to increase the daily gain. It is of capital help if we want to survive. With her help, while I load the mixtures, she begins to sift. Thus, at the end of the day, you can earn 3500f CFA to 4000f”* she rejoices, A. Z., (April, 2020). To add to this, A. M., (April, 2020), intervenes in these terms:

“I am a mother of 4 children, I come to work here with my children, the two eldest (a girl and a boy), they often help me with gravel collection. The boy is 12 and the girl is 16. They are all in high school. I am the 2nd wife to my husband; we are 4 wives for him. Our living conditions do not allow us to provide for the children's needs properly, given the family load, I have to come with the children to work in order to be able to find the little to provide for my children's needs”.

From these interventions, we can conclude that the factors that lead to the presence of children in gravel pits are economic. Moreover, A. M., (April, 2020), does not say the opposite when she says:

“It is the lack of means and the economic situation of parents that lead to child labor in gravel quarries”. Another adds in these terms: *“I am a grower by profession and I have also been working in this career for 4 years, let's say that I do both at the same time. I am a mother of 6 children (4 girls and 2 boys), the first three are already married. I often work here with my three other children. They also come to do small jobs. Even those who are married also come to collect gravel to be paid. It is because of the economic situation of your family that we come to work here”*. A.G., (April, 2020).

Children have the right to be protected from the exploitation of any work regardless of the poverty level of the household.

3.2 Working conditions of children in gravel pits

Speaking of the working conditions of these children in the gravel pits, the subjects surveyed all said that the working conditions are not good. Thus, for A. I. (April 2020), *“the working conditions are not as good as that. See for yourself they work in big holes. To extract the gravels, you have to dig deep. Sometimes while digging the earth can collapse and they get hurt. Coming to work here means taking risks.”* In the same vision, D.F., one of the managers (April, 2020) thinks that: *“They all work in bad conditions. But what can we actually change? Nothing, we can only do with it. It's true, for children it's a bit frustrating because their bodies are not yet mature if I can put it that way. They are the ones most at risk.”* If we stick to these subjects, we can say that children work in deplorable conditions in gravel pits. Still in the same context, J. D. (April, 2020) thinks that *“The working conditions for children are not good. In addition, they work almost all day, they carry heavy loads and they have no rest: first when you think of money you will not accept to rest, the work first of all is at risk, sometimes the earth caves in and the workers get injured”*. G. N. (April, 2020), does not say otherwise when she says *“the working conditions for children are not good. Here, there is no categorization of workers, everyone is together and everyone sticks to their own head. We work all day long.”*

Further on, she touches on the density of the work in the gravel quarries: *“you have to do several rounds of the gravel basin to be able to hope for something significant on the weekend (yes, we pay for weekend evenings). The working conditions are deplorable. The children do it, they really give themselves to work because they want to earn money”*. From these interventions, we deduce that the working conditions of the children in the gravel pits are deplorable. One of the children supports him in these terms: *“We work in very bad conditions; we expose ourselves to multiple risks. Especially in the rainy season, life here is an ordeal, the quarry is not at all passable however, we come and work in it like that”*. F.K. (April, 2020). Similarly: *“the conditions in which children work are degrading and deplorable”*. Z.C., (April, 2020). From these interventions we can say the children work in very difficult conditions in gravel pits.

In the same logic, A. M., (April, 2020), supports it by saying: *“The working conditions are deplorable on this quarry, we inhale the dust, we are exposed to several risks”*. Moreover, F. R. (April, 2020), does not think otherwise when he says: *“The working conditions here are very difficult and degrading”*. Proud of these statements, we can say that children work under difficult conditions in gravel pits. Children have enough difficulty doing this work and do it in spite of themselves. This state of affairs shows that these children do not work in good conditions and perform tasks beyond their age, which could leave scars on their bodies and do not allow their physical development.

The children admit to working long hours, more than 8 hours a day and carrying heavy loads. This work of premature carrier can play a lot on the development of these children and on their schooling. Not only will these children no longer want to go to school, but they will be victims of diseases such as lordosis or kyphosis where the child comes out with a deformed or twisted spine.

3.3 Risks to which children are exposed in gravel pits

Speaking of the risks to which these children are exposed in the gravel pits, A. M. (April, 2020), responds in these terms: *“As risks we have injuries, illnesses and death too. I remember a child who drowned in the bodies of water used for washing gravel. There is also the torticollis (contracture of the neck, which makes it impossible to turn it without pain. All this can prevent the physical development of the child”*. Further, J. D. (April, 2020), thinks that: *“Children are exposed to several risks such as work accidents, injuries of all kinds, malaria, body pain, headaches, etc. Carrying heavy loads can affect their physical development”*. that injuries, diseases of all kinds, stiffness are the exposures that these children face in the gravel pits.

S. D., (April, 2020, thinks that: *“Children's participation in career work is detrimental to their health and physical development. These children grow up with the scars and carry them through their lives.”* From his intervention, it can be noted that risks such as injuries, kyphosis, body aches, torticollis and so and so can affect the physical development of children.

Further on, S.A. I. (April, 2020) responds in these terms: *“As you know, all work has risks. Only that here we are talking about kids, I can talk about pain, aches, headaches. They sometimes wring their necks because of the basins of gravel they carry. Yes, everything I have just told you can leave them with scars and their parents know it too”*.

In the same vein, D. F. (April, 2020), states that: *“Children in gravel pits expose themselves to several risks such as injuries, lordosis or kyphosis (curvature of the spine) because of the loads that they carry. And all this can prevent their physical development”*. From these interventions, we deduce that injuries, muscle stiffness, lordosis, kyphosis are the risks to which these children are exposed.

In the same wake, one of the children declares: *“After work, I hurt everywhere, especially in the joints. I also get sick. In the rainy season, if you are not careful here, you fall into the bodies of water that are used to wash the gravel. Sprains and injuries are common. Yes, we also risk death working the gravel pits”* said (A. Y., April 2020). Another interviewee does not say the opposite that he confirms the facts in these terms: *“As risks, I can say, skin infections, lesions, sprains, these heavy loads that we carry leave us with lifelong sequelae”* (F.K., April 2020).

Similarly, D. H. (April, 2020), thinks that “*children even risk death while working in gravel pits because the heavy loads can cause muscles to contract and lead to cardiac arrest*”. From these words, we can say that children run the risks such as death, injuries, diseases and so and so working in gravel pits.

These interventions show that children raise the risk of disease and injury. These children feel that after work they get sick and they are also exposed to injuries. They believe that these diseases are due to the fact that they carry heavy loads on their heads. These children feel that they get sick from the sun because they work in the sun all the time. These children often fall ill after work because they put in more effort than is necessary at work. Most of these children talked about illnesses like malaria, body aches, body aches, headaches and etc.

4. DISCUSSION :

After the presentation of the results, it is essential to carry out data analyzes in order to be able to discuss them. Generally, this part of the research allows the researcher to take a position and put into perspective their hypotheses and the major results they have reached. This is closely related to the chosen analysis model.

4.1 Factors leading to child labor in gravel pits

According to the analytical model of this research, the main cause of child labor is indeed poverty. Indeed, according to Basu and Van (1998), the participation of children in the labor market only prevails if the household has a standard of living below a critical threshold. Thus, in a poor household, a child can only be freed from certain work to attend school if the household to which he belongs is able to ensure his subsistence without his contribution. Consequently, the participation of children in the labor market depends on the level of poverty of the households to which they belong.

This diagnosis illustrates well what happens in some households where parents neglect minor children in the name of poverty and these children have no choice but to go to work in mines, markets, gravel quarries and so and so. In Benin in general and in the municipality of Lokossa in particular, the exploitation of children in gravel quarries is increasingly observed. It is essential to understand what explains this state of affairs.

Child labor is a violation of basic human rights and has been shown to stunt their development, which can lead to lifelong physical, mental and psychological harm. Evidence shows that there is a close link between household poverty and child labor perpetuates poverty from generation to generation by keeping them out of school and limiting their opportunities for social advancement. Thus, child labor is one of the main obstacles that affects their future. Domestic workers or in mines, child soldiers, agricultural workers, waste sorters, victims of prostitution, among the 152 million child workers in the world, 73 million of them are subjected to the most dangerous forms of work (UNCEF, 2013).

In the district of Lokossa, nowadays we notice a strong attendance of children in the gravel pits. Indeed, almost all of the subjects interviewed affirm that the economic situation of the parents is the main cause of child labor. And for illustration, a career manager says: “[...] we can say the poverty of the parents, the lack of means of the tutors [...]”, D. F., Gravie career manager, (April 2020). Similarly, a mother added: “[...] I take my daughter here to help me go fast to increase the daily gain. It is of capital help if we want to survive. With her help, while I load the mixtures, she begins to sift. Thus, at the end of the day, one can earn 3500f CFA to 4000f CFA”, A. Z., (April, 2020). This state of affairs clearly shows that poverty is the main cause of child labor.

These remarks then confirm the thesis of Manier (2003), who postulates that:

“Child labor is caused by a set of factors acting in common: family poverty, low schooling, the failure or ineffectiveness of social policies as well as certain socio-cultural factors. Among these factors, poverty is regularly identified as the main reason. Child labor has been identified as one of the survival strategies of poor populations: these strategies aim to provide the essentials and first and foremost daily food. Each member of the family being a mouth to feed, all are called upon to contribute to the family income”.

Children from poor families are forced into labor exploitation in order to survive. In the same logic, Basu and Van (1998), in their analysis model, are based on the “luxury axiom” hypothesis to explain the “poverty” factor of families:

“The participation of children in the labor market only prevails if the household has a standard of living below a critical threshold. Thus, in a poor household, a child can only be freed from certain work to attend school insofar as the household to which he belongs is able to ensure his subsistence and more, generally, their “non-work” are luxury goods in the consumption basket of the poor household: they could not afford to consume such goods”.

In this perspective, child labor becomes a necessary evil. The status of children evolves according to the variation in family income. They are sometimes in the labor market and sometimes their time is devoted to leisure and/or education.

4.2 Working Conditions of Children in Gravel Pits

Children perform different activities and this in very different conditions. Thus, we can therefore classify the nature of the work they perform into two categories. At first glance, the first category takes into account work for the benefit of children in the sense that it is beneficial to them. Indeed, it promotes the physical, mental, moral or social development of the child without hindering his schooling, his development. These are household or family activities, small non-binding activities (help with sales, assistance given to relatives in their activities) done during the holidays to earn a little money. These activities allow children to acquire skills. At second glance, the second category is the one that harms the child and harms his development on the above-mentioned plans. Activities can be: learning at an early age, selling, full-time domestic and housework, etc. These activities compromise their education, and sometimes force children to combine school activities and work. The exploitation of children is unacceptable in any situation. The daily life of some working children has been explored, to see in concrete terms how their day at work unfolds. This made it possible to see under what conditions children are employed.

Thus, speaking of the working conditions of these children, the subjects surveyed all affirmed that the working conditions are not good. Thus, for A. I. (April 2020), *“the working conditions are not as good as that. See for yourself they work in big holes. To extract the gravels, you have to dig deep. Sometimes while digging the earth can collapse and they get hurt. Coming to work here means taking risks.”* In the same vision, D.F., one of the managers (April, 2020) thinks that: *“They all work in bad conditions”*. If we stick to these subjects, we can say that children work in deplorable conditions in gravel pits. Still in the same context, J. D. (April, 2020) thinks that *“the working conditions for children are not good. In addition, they work almost all day, they carry heavy loads and they have no rest: first when you think of money you will not accept to rest, the work first of all is at risk, sometimes the earth can cave in and the workers get injured”*. These remarks are in line with the results of the work of Kakpovi (2012), who said that *“the working conditions of children in quarries are deplorable and not authorized by the texts”*. In the same vein, the ILO (2002), reports that : *“working conditions for children are generally harsh. They do not have holidays or free time, the premises are often unsanitary, the children are subjected to ill-treatment, to punishments and the performance demanded is often too excessive; some children work from the age of 5 or 6 when their organism is not adapted and their needs, both physiological and psychological...”*.

ILO Convention No. 138 requires the definition of light and hazardous work. According to this convention, light work must be without danger to the health and development of the child and must not prevent him from going to school or benefiting from his training.

Dangerous work is generally what can compromise the physical or moral health or safety of a child, more specifically, this includes construction trades, in mines, with certain machines, in contact with pesticides and more 43 hours per week. We can deduce through the statement of this child testifying that she carries heavy loads of gravel on her head *“[...] After work I hurt everywhere, especially my neck. Yes, the parents are well aware, [...]”* (Z. T., (April, 2020). They have enough difficulty doing this work and do it in spite of themselves. This state of affairs shows that these children do not work in good conditions and perform tasks that exceed their age, their physical effort, which could leave after-effects on their body and do not allow their physical development.

The children admit to working long hours, more than 8 hours a day and carrying heavy loads. This work of premature carrier can play a lot on the development of these children and on their schooling. Not only will these children no longer want to go to school, but they will be victims of diseases such as lordosis or kyphosis where the child comes out with a deformed spine.

They only have a few hours of rest to resume. The parents also confirm that the children work in very bad and difficult conditions. This is also apparent in the words of the Head of the Social Promotion Center of Lokossa: *“[...] the conditions in which the children work are very bad, they are not yet old enough to do this kind of works [...]”* M. D., (April, 2020). These kids on the quarries can't even eat before they work. All this can make children dizzy and faint and could lead to work accidents, which could compromise their lives.

4.3 Risks associated with child labor in gravel pits

Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of hazardous work as they are still in the process of physical and mental development. Their exposure to physical stress can also interfere with their proper and healthy development. The subjects surveyed highlight the risks of illness and injury. Thus, (J. A., April 2020) affirms that: *“[...] children in gravel quarries are exposed to several risks such as injuries, lordosis or kyphosis (curvature of the spine) because of the loads that they carry. And all this can prevent their physical development [...]”*. Similarly, J. D. (April, 2020), thinks

that: "Children are exposed to several risks such as work accidents, injuries of all kinds, malaria, body pain, headaches. Carrying heavy loads can affect their physical development".

From these statements, we can say that in gravel quarries, children expose themselves to several risks such as diseases, injuries and etc. These results confirm the results of the work of Kakpovi (2012) when she states that: "children are exposed to the risk of illness and injury in quarries because they carry heavy loads and work in deplorable conditions". It is precisely in the same sense that the International Labor Organization, in its convention n°138 affirms that "dangerous work is generally what can compromise the health or the physical or moral safety of the child".

From these results, is there a better future for these children enrolled very early and too young in careers? It is urgent that the Beninese government and the authorities at various levels meet to take decisions in order to alleviate child labor in our communes, hence the need to make some suggestions in their regard.

5. CONCLUSION :

The investigations on the subject "**Child labor in gravel quarries in the municipality of Lokossa : State of play and prospects**" were a good opportunity for us to examine the situation of these minor children who work in difficult conditions. Indeed, our study has shown that family poverty and school dropout are the explanatory factors of child labor in careers. These children work in deplorable conditions not authorized by the texts and are exposed to the risk of illness and injury. The living conditions of their families are not as good, because the parents are poor and experience enormous difficulties in ensuring good living conditions for their children. These children go to work every day, except Sundays, at 6 a.m. and finish at 6 p.m. They carry heavy loads under the sun. This causes them to get sick. All of these situations are factors that limit the development and growth of children.

Child labor in all forms is a phenomenon to be eradicated. We hope by the present study, to draw the attention of the politico-administrative authorities and especially of the parents, on the evolution of this evil which handicaps the future of the children.

When we consider the results from the interviews on the factors leading to child labor in gravel quarries, the surveys revealed that all subjects affirm that parental poverty is the main cause of child labor in gravel quarries. From which we can deduce that the hypothesis that "the precarious socio-economic conditions of parents explains the phenomenon of child labor in gravel quarries" is confirmed. In addition, after analyzing the information from the interviews on the working conditions of children in gravel quarries, we can conclude that children work in very deplorable conditions and expose themselves to enormous risks from which we can deduce that the hypothesis that "the working conditions of children in gravel pits are deplorable" is confirmed.

Far from being an end, this research is the beginning of more substantial work that could develop concrete strategies to change the situation within families so that children can benefit from good family living conditions that contribute to their well-being, -being and above all to a better performance at school.

It is therefore essential that parents understand that poverty does not lead to the extinction of their parental duties vis-à-vis their children.

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