

ANNUAL REPORT

2022





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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

I hope this report finds you well.

I am here, this year too, to share with you our report for the year 2022. The year 2022 was exciting but challenging too. We continued with our important work of supporting children affected by modern slavery/human trafficking and the worst forms of child labor on Lake Volta.

A total of 210 children in that category were supported in 2022, bringing the total number of children Challenging Heights has rescued so far in its history to over 1,800.



James Kofi Annan (President of Challenging Heights)

We have been able to strengthen our livelihoods empowerment project which targets vulnerable families, especially women. In the year 2022, we had over 600 women in relevant categories through our weekly cash transfer program, cooperative credit program, and caregivers support program.

The Challenging Heights Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) program continued to serve 115 young girls in three projects; the Halsted's Women Center, the Max Stenbeck Mother, and Child Recovery Center, and the fast-track model which supports young persons to have technical skills for life.

The Challenging Heights school (Odobirba Academy) continued its impressive rebound, with over 1,000 children between the ages of two and 17 enrolled.

Again, together with our partners, we supported a total of 137 in child domestic work. Over the years evidence had shown that most of the children who fell victim to trafficking had a history of child domestic work. Therefore, effective prevention work is needed to target children in domestic servitude. We subsequently succeeded with our partners to get some selected district assemblies to incorporate child domestic work remediation efforts into their medium-term development plans.

In the year 2022, Ghana experienced one of the worst macro-economic challenges in its history, making it extremely challenging to plan, and implement programs. However, we are proud of what we have achieved together, with our partners; you were there with us every step of the way when it mattered most, so thank you.

I would also like to thank our board and staff for living the spirit of the organization, despite all the challenges that came our way. We made it together.

We go into 2023 with a lot of hope. Our partnership with Many Hopes continues to consolidate itself. Thanks to that partnership we can now implement a longer reintegration program, supporting our children to high schools and universities starting from the year 2023. The year 2023 also presents Challenging Heights with the opportunity to address issues of due diligence in business supply chains, creating awareness for businesses and the government of Ghana to put in place measures to hold businesses accountable for forced labour and slavery in business supply chains.

Once again, thank you!

James Kofi Annan
(President)

MISSION AND VISION

Approximately 20,000 children are working in the fishing industry in Lake Volta, the largest man-made reservoir in the world.

Torn from their homes, and forced into slavery, these children are robbed of their potential, access to education and rights. Our goal at Challenging Heights is end this inhumane practice and ensure a better life for Ghana's future generations.

Mission Statement

To prevent child trafficking, reduce child slavery, and promote children's rights.

Vision Statement

A country in which child trafficking is a thing of the past and children's rights are celebrated.



Where We Work

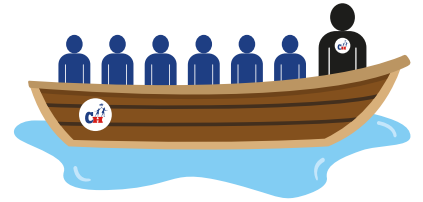
We work in underserved coastal communities in Ghana, providing support to women and children in hard-to-reach areas that are at risk of child trafficking.

With our offices based in Winneba, Central Region, we are a part of the communities that we aim to serve, including Senya, Apam, Mumford, Emmuna and Winneba.

137 **rescued** from child domestic work



210 **rescued** from child trafficking



Field team capacity built with new technology



87

children successfully reintegrated

255

children lived in the recovery centre

342

children actively monitored

50% of Youth Empowerment Programme students in direct employment upon graduating



The remaining 50% utilise their soft skills training in outside employment opportunities

600 **women** trained in business, financial management, and life skills



RESCUE, REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION

Summary

1. Field staff had their capacity built in data collection using KoboCollect software which has helped our research team to facilitate data collection and storage capacity. This has been put into practice during the last 12 months in the field.
2. We had a case of child marriage, two cases of crossed-border sexual exploitation, and five cases of Nigerian boys engaged in internet fraud, all of which were brought to the Challenging Heights recovery shelter for rehabilitation.
3. Challenging Heights' Hovde House expanded its facility for dormitories, classrooms and washrooms to improve sleep, teaching, learning and sanitation in the recovery centre.

Key Stats

	Girls	Boys	Total
Total Children Rescued From Child Trafficking	51	159	210
Total Children Rescued From Child Domestic Work	74	63	137
Total Children Who Lived in the Recovery Centre	177	78	255
Total Number of Children Reintegrated	35	52	87
Children Actively Monitored	121	221	342
Total Number of Checks Conducted			30



AMA's STORY



This beautiful young lady you see above is called Ama.

She is a young energetic lady whose mother left when she was just a baby, leaving her father to take care of her alone.

Through the advocacy program on our radio station, Nyce FM, he heard the announcement about our Max Stenbeck Vocational Training Center project.

Naturally, he enrolled Ama in our fashion design course at the first opportunity but tragically he passed away just 3 months into her studies.

With no other family to turn to, we have taken Ama into our care where she has been able to continue her vocational training.

As a smart, hardworking, and intelligent young woman, we are glad she's learning a skill for her future.

We look forward to a brighter future for Ama.

LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMMES

Youth Empowerment Programme (TVET)

Courses Offered	Cosmetology, fashion design
Complementary Courses	Business and financial management, computing and life skills
Total Number of Youth Trained	115 young women
Age Range of Participants	15-35 years
Duration of Courses	Dependant on the course
Rate of Employment	50% for past graduates



Women Economic Empowerment Programme

Courses Offered	Business and financial management, life skills
Total Number of Women Trained	600 women
Age Range of Participants	15 years+
Rate of Employment	50%

FORGIVE'S STORY



Forgive entering the Challenging Heights school bus

In the picture above you can see a 14 year-old girl, named Forgive.

Forgive stayed with her father before she was trafficked to a town called Yeji. Her tasks on Lake Volta were as follows: fishing, smoking the fish, and feeding animals (such as pigs, chickens, sheep and goats). She was also involved in domestic work, like sweeping the floor of the traffickers' house. While staying with the trafficker (a woman), Forgive was abused several times. The woman threatened to not give her food anymore.

One day, when Forgive cooked her own food, the woman took it away and threatened to poison her. She was really scared. The next morning there was a boy in the house that told Forgive, that he saw, how the trafficker poisoned her food. That was the reason why Forgive decided to run away to the main town Yeji. Running around in the town, some people noticed her situation and reported it to Challenging Heights.

Forgive was really afraid when Challenging Heights rescued her, because she didn't know them and had no idea where they would take her. As soon as she got to the Recovery Centre though she wasn't afraid anymore. Forgive saw a lot of children there and one of them was her friend, who told her that she doesn't have to be afraid and nobody will maltreat her in the shelter and that she can go to school.

Forgive says that life in the shelter is much better than on the lake. She already has a clear idea of what she wants to be when she grows up: a fashion designer!

We truly look forward to supporting her on this journey.

ODOBIRBA ACADEMY

First established as Challenging Heights School, Odobirba Academy started as a way to ensure education was accessible to the Sankor community in Winneba. At the time of setting up the school, it was estimated that over 80% of the population of Sankor were illiterate, whilst illiteracy amongst children was estimated at 65%. Within the first 6 months of classes, almost half of the unschooled children from the community had enrolled in the school, and in 2017 this number reached over 90%.

In addition to achieving success in its core goal, a number of unique attributes set Odobirba Academy apart from other basic schools (both public and private) in its locality. Firstly, it is the ONLY school that strictly enforces a “no caning policy” and management takes deliberate steps to monitor its enforcement. Building on this, Odobirba Academy is the only school that has a fee policy that favours female students. Whereas other schools in the municipality give a discount to parents based on the number of children enrolled, Odobirba gives an additional discount for female students. Odobirba also stands out as the most affordable private school that provides quality education for its children. In fact, the average fees of three comparable schools in the municipality were found to be 108%, 162% and 285% more than that of Odobirba Academy.

Figure 1: Proportion of boys and girls at Odobirba Academy

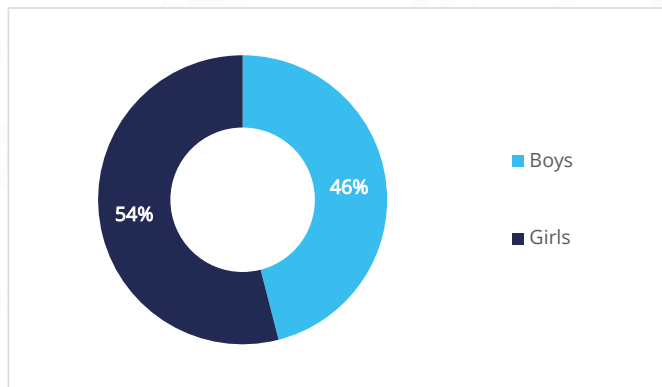


Figure 2: Sex disaggregated enrolment at Odobirba Academy

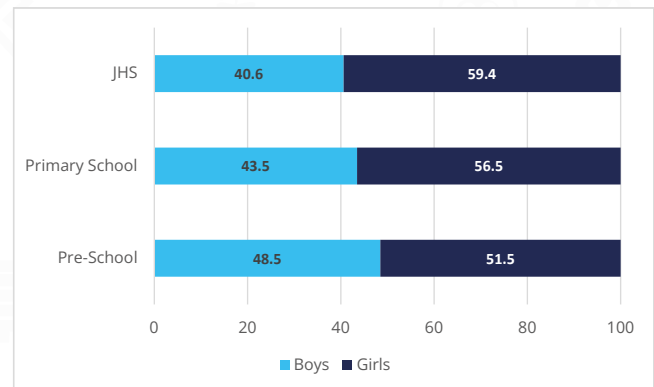


Figure 3: Percentage of boys and girls in school within the Effutu Municipality

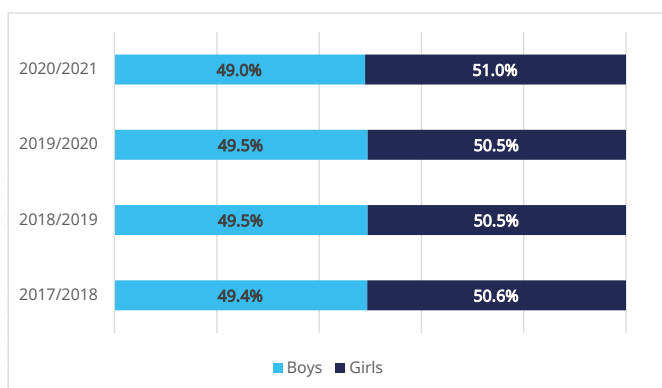
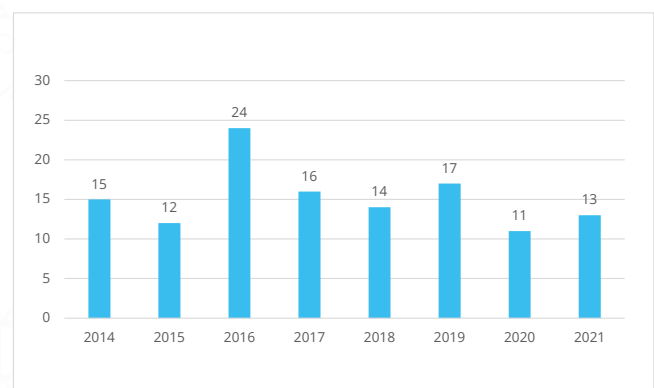


Figure 4: Number of students who have graduated from Odobirba Academy



As we look to the future, there are still key challenges to address across infrastructure, sanitation, fee payment defaults and teacher attrition. While affordability lies at the heart of the school’s ethos, this naturally makes reinvestment more challenging. Likewise, the promise of better working conditions and higher salaries at other private schools are contributing to high teacher attrition of 32% at Odobirba. We will embrace these challenges as we look to expand the impact this institution makes on its community, setting an important example for the wider education system in Ghana.

Key Developments in 2022

- Challenging Heights participated and contributed to the revision of the National Plan of Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in 2022.
- Challenging Heights in collaboration with its national level partners, LAWA Ghana, and Anti-Slavery International, led the advocacy drive at the national level, for the inclusion of Child Domestic Work as one of the key domains of child protection in the revised National Plan of Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.
- Challenging Heights participated and contributed significantly to the development of the Revised Early Childhood Care and Education Policy, and its associated Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) Framework in 2022. The organization's representative was the Rapporteur for the Technical Working Group on Social Policy.
- Challenging Heights provided relevant data to the Child Labour Unit of the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, for the compilation of the annual Child Labour Report. The draft report, shared with Challenging Heights for review, captures the significant contributions of Challenging Heights in the fight against Child Labour in Ghana.
- Challenging Heights, with support from SOS Children's Village Ghana, supported the Coalition of NGOs against Child Trafficking to develop its advocacy strategy for 2022 to 2024 at Gloriaka Hotel, Winneba, from November 3-4, 2022.
- Family for Every Child worked with Challenging Heights on its campaign dubbed: "supporting the implementation of effective and efficient kinship care programme in Ghana". We were able to support 190 children under kinship care in school or apprenticeships and educated the radio audience to increase knowledge on strategies to provide effective and efficient kinship care. We empowered stakeholders (Department of Social Welfare staff, Chief Imam from Winneba, and media men) to acquire knowledge and provide effective and efficient kinship care services.

Challenging Heights in the News

\$4bn Tourism Ministry revenue target achievable — Challenging Heights President

By Emmanuel Koforouto

Challenging Heights, a child rights organization, has expressed confidence that Ghana's tourism industry will meet its \$4 billion revenue target for 2023, despite the challenges posed by the global economic downturn.

The organization's president, James Bull Annon, said the target is achievable because of the resilience of the tourism sector and the government's commitment to attract more tourists.

Annon said the organization will continue to support the tourism industry through various initiatives, including promoting Ghana as a tourist destination and providing training for tourism professionals.

Wara Bala

Challenging Heights is a child rights organization that has been active in Ghana for over 15 years. The organization has been instrumental in the fight against child labor, child marriage, and child trafficking in Ghana.

Testimonial

"I believe Ghana's competitive advantage is in the tourism industry, where our history, our cultural practices and our creative talents put us ahead of other countries."

Ministerial

Ministerial officials have been keen to see the tourism industry flourish, and many have been instrumental in the process. The organization has been instrumental in the fight against child labor, child marriage, and child trafficking in Ghana.

James Bull Annon, President, Challenging Heights

Challenging Heights rescues 24 trafficked children

By Elizabeth Koforouto

Challenging Heights, a child rights organization, has rescued 24 trafficked children from Volta Lake, Ghana. The children were rescued from a fishing boat on the lake and taken to a safe haven.

The organization's president, James Bull Annon, said the children were rescued from a fishing boat on the lake and taken to a safe haven. The children were rescued from a fishing boat on the lake and taken to a safe haven.

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More investment

The organization has received more investment from the government and private sector to support its work. The organization has received more investment from the government and private sector to support its work.

James Bull Annon, President, Challenging Heights

Challenging Heights supports BECE candidates with transportation

By Emmanuel Koforouto

Challenging Heights, a child rights organization, has supported BECE candidates with transportation. The organization has provided transport for candidates who are unable to reach the examination centers.

The organization's president, James Bull Annon, said the organization has provided transport for candidates who are unable to reach the examination centers. The organization has provided transport for candidates who are unable to reach the examination centers.

Examination

The BECE examination is held annually in Ghana. The organization has provided transport for candidates who are unable to reach the examination centers. The organization has provided transport for candidates who are unable to reach the examination centers.

James Bull Annon, President, Challenging Heights

Gender

Challenging Heights welcomes Zuweira Abudu, her deputy

By Emmanuel Koforouto

Challenging Heights, a child rights organization, has welcomed Zuweira Abudu as its new deputy president. Zuweira is a former member of parliament and has extensive experience in public administration.

The organization's president, James Bull Annon, said the organization is pleased to have Zuweira as its new deputy president. Zuweira is a former member of parliament and has extensive experience in public administration.

James Bull Annon, President, Challenging Heights

The Telegraph

17 November 2022

I was sold at the age of six

How climate change is driving modern slavery

The Telegraph

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International Day Against Child Labour: Study reveals widespread use of child labourers on Volta Lake

By Emmanuel Koforouto

A study conducted by Challenging Heights has revealed the widespread use of child labourers on Volta Lake, Ghana. The study found that many children are working on the lake to support their families.

The organization's president, James Bull Annon, said the study has revealed the widespread use of child labourers on Volta Lake, Ghana. The study found that many children are working on the lake to support their families.

James Bull Annon, President, Challenging Heights

Gender

Enact bye-laws against child domestic work

By Emmanuel Koforouto

Challenging Heights, a child rights organization, has urged the government to enact bye-laws against child domestic work. The organization has identified several cases of child domestic workers in Ghana.

The organization's president, James Bull Annon, said the organization has urged the government to enact bye-laws against child domestic work. The organization has identified several cases of child domestic workers in Ghana.

James Bull Annon, President, Challenging Heights

Pay Capitation Grant arrears for effective running of basic schools — Challenging Heights

By Emmanuel Koforouto

Challenging Heights, a child rights organization, has urged the government to pay capitation grant arrears for the effective running of basic schools. The organization has identified several cases of schools that have not received their capitation grants.

The organization's president, James Bull Annon, said the organization has urged the government to pay capitation grant arrears for the effective running of basic schools. The organization has identified several cases of schools that have not received their capitation grants.

James Bull Annon, President, Challenging Heights

EXITING COVID-19 AND ADDRESSING NEW CHALLENGES

In the mission to end child trafficking and slavery, we regularly face new challenges.

Since 2020, Covid-19 has been one of the most prolific factors halting progress on this issue. It has forced businesses to close, sent shocks through entire industries, and caused many to lose their jobs. For individuals, families and communities already financially vulnerable, it has pushed them over the edge.

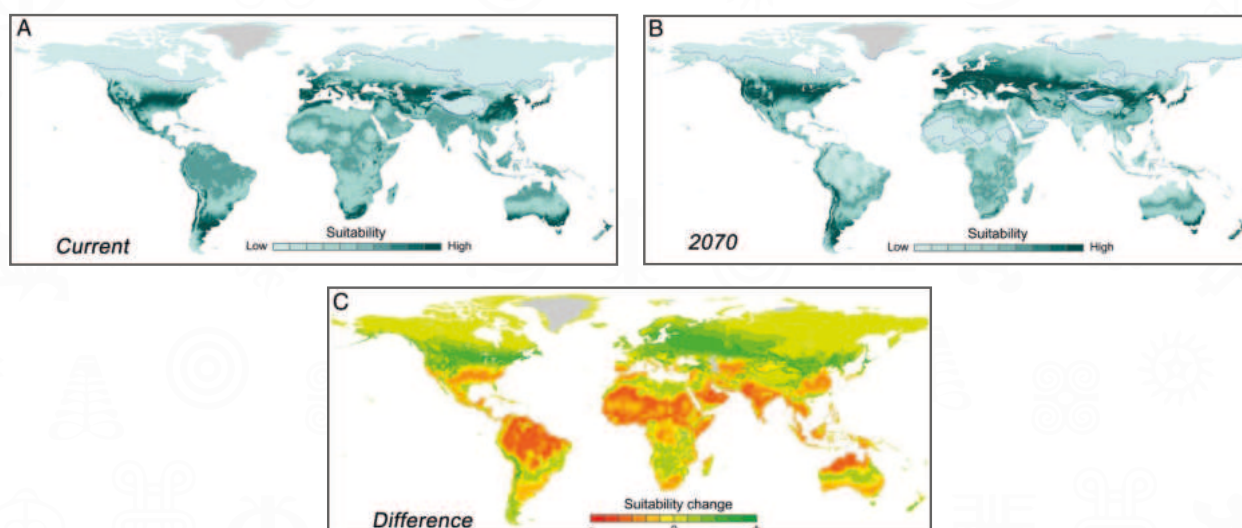
For the first time in years, poverty increased in Ghana during 2020 and 2021 (Statista). This came after a strong period of economic growth that saw the country's GDP grow 2.3% per year on average between 2012 and 2021, ranking Ghana as one of Africa's fastest-growing economies.

While there are already signs of Ghana's economy bouncing back from the impact of the pandemic, there are new threats on the horizon, namely climate change. A 2022 BBC article involving Challenging Heights President, James Kofi Annan, states that "the impact of rising temperatures on trafficking has been overlooked", going on to report on the rural communities now facing greater challenges than ever before. Extended dry periods have left many unemployed, while rivers drying out have obliterated a fishing industry which typically employs 2.7 million people and amounts to £425 million annually (BBC).

For fringe communities, these trying times make the allure of better-paid employment for their away from their towns and villages ever stronger. Unfortunately, these prospects are very often lies told to exploit children and families and are a typical route into slavery, forced labour, and prostitution.

While we will undoubtedly continue our work in the rescue, recovery, prevention and advocacy on this issue, we need a stronger effort from the global community of countries to address the environmental impact that has the potential to reverse years of progress. As soon as 2070, it's estimated one-third of the global population could be living in conditions outside of humanity's comfort zone, with the vast majority of this impacting sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America. With the crops, livestock and irrigation, that make up the foundation of our food system, designed to work within these constraints, climate impact will continue to cause the most harm to the parts of the planet that are least financially capable of mitigating these threats.

That is, unless we pull together and address the issue, cooperatively, thoroughly, and responsibly. We call upon those reading this both to take action within their own lives and hold their governments accountable for policies and choices that will affect the course of our planet over the years ahead.

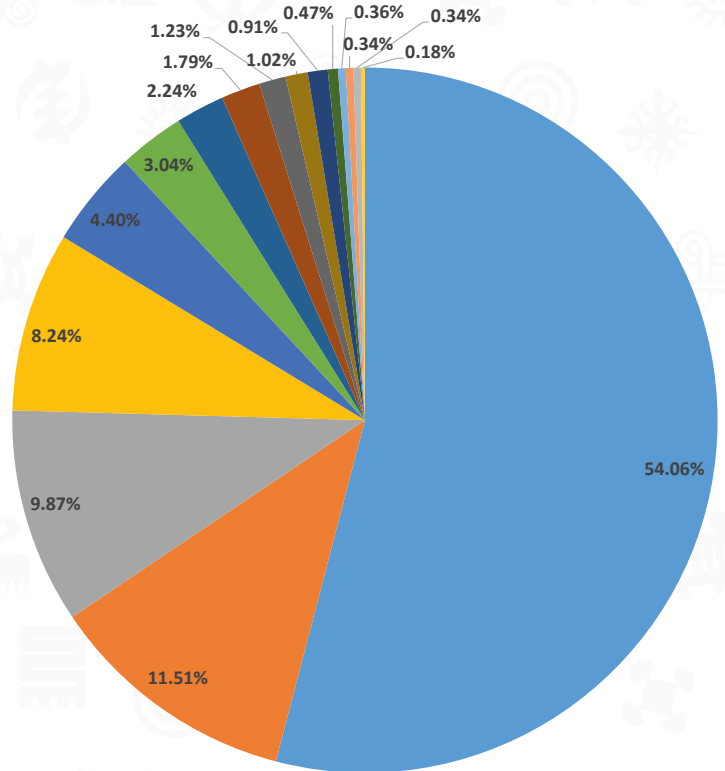


FINANCES

Total Income Raised (GHC) - 11,446,958

Total Expenditures (GHC) - 10,960,378

- Recovery/Rehabilitation
- Rescue Operation
- Administration
- Special Projects
- Livelihoods
- Reintegration & Monitoring
- Depreciation
- Educational Support
- Advocacy
- Partners In Development-PID
- Transport
- Awareness / Sensitization
- Presidential Project
- Bank Charges
- Accured Expenses
- Audit Fees



Donors

Many Hopes

Hen Mpoano (EU)

Partner in Development (PID)

Friends of Challenging Heights

NORAD / Anti Slavery International

Freedom for All

Mercy Project

KGL Foundation

Kirk in Actie

Family for Every Child

Max Stenbeck Charitable Fund

GlobalGiving

SOS Village

Beauty for Freedom (BFF)

Bindon Foundation (Lisa Halsted)

All our individual supporters

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