Challenging Heights
2018 Annual Report
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Dear friends,

It is this time of the year again when I write to you, expressing not only my gratitude for your solidarity, but also for walking the journey with us in pride. The year 2018 was definitely a good one, with a lot of successes coming our way. But it equally came with good amount of challenges.

In all we impacted the lives of over 800 (please add the Senya project numbers, as well as the support for children during the action research program) children and youth, with a total of 183 boys and girls rescued, and passing through recovery/rehabilitation at our rehabilitation center, exceeding the target we set for ourselves in the year under review. In addition, a total of 66 women were supported under our women’s economic empowerment program, unfortunately unable to meet our target on our support for women in 2018 due to a major mechanical challenge with our cold storage facility.

Two significant events took place in the year 2018. The film, The Rescue List, which was based on the work of Challenging Heights, was premiered, and shown in several cities in America, including San Francisco, North Carolina, New York, Telluride, and many others. This film which has already started winning awards was done by our friends, Alyssa Fedele, and Zac Fink, both of who are based in San Francisco. Next year we will report on the impact the film has started having on our work.

At this point I will like to personally express my deep felt appreciation and admiration for two individuals, Mark Hamilton of Iowa, and Lisa Halsted of San Francisco, California, for believing in this project, and standing by the film makers throughout the three years that it went through production.

The second significant event in the year 2018 was a significant review of our five year strategic plan, resulting in a new ten years plan. This was done in line with the UN’s SDG goal 8.7, as well as lining ourselves with the global emerging trends in the fight against human trafficking.

I have decided to no longer mention funding as one of our challenges. This is because funding seem to be the major challenge every single year, since our inception, becoming a clique in this report.

Apart from funding, political interference and persecution continue to be a frustrating obstacle in our work. This has manifested itself through various ways such as obstruction of justice, smear campaign, and threats of arrest.

We go into the year 2019 with significant optimism, having exceeded our goals in two straight years in delivering our strategic plans, and in bringing hope to those we serve, and continuing to make impact on the lives of those who make us who we are.

I am grateful to the Board of Challenging Heights, for continuing to give guidance, and support. To the staff of Challenging Heights, you own every success that has been mentioned in this report. Your incremental passion keep amazing me. To our supporters, I say thank you, for your continuous investment, and believe in what we stand for.

We continue to count on you to continue standing with us through this strategic journey, as we both continue to believe in our common humanity.

Thank you.

James Kofi Annan
Our Mission

To prevent child trafficking, reduce child slavery, and promote children’s rights.
The Issue

Currently, an estimated 40.3 million people are being trafficked with an estimated 24.9 million of those in forced labour! It is estimated that 1 in 4 victims of human trafficking are children under the age of 18. In Ghana, 133,000 people are currently the victims of human trafficking and of those 20,000 are children in forced labour on Lake Volta.
Who We Are

Challenging Heights is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation in Ghana that works to protect children’s rights and end child trafficking. Founded by James Kofi Annan in 2005, our main efforts focus on addressing trafficking of children to Lake Volta, where they are forced to work in the fishing industry. 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.
January
22 Children Reintegrated

February
On the 14th we celebrated the birth of all of the children at the Hovde House

March
14 Children Rescued

December
42 Children Rescued

November
James Kofi Annan attended "The Rescue List" screenings in New York City for Q&A

October
Hosted 24 participants from Deloitte to help Challenging Heights strategize 2019

2018 In Review
April
The film "The Rescue List" made its debut at the San Francisco Film Festival.

May
Began our Youth Economic Empowerment Programme with the inaugural class.

June
Completed community sensitization.

July
Family visit with soon to be reintegrated children & caregivers.

August
Phase 1 of the Shelter Expansion completed.

September
11 Children Rescued.
What We Do
Rescue & Recovery

We rescue children in forced labour and offer a holistic programme of rehabilitation and reintegration. With support from the Hovde Foundation, we built the Challenging Heights Hovde House, a rehabilitation centre, that provides continuous survivor care. Also, we work with communities to help survivors and other children to live in freedom. As part of this, we train Community Child Protection Committees in child protection.

Prevention

We have identified a number of the root causes for child trafficking in the source communities where we work and are addressing them through community engagement through a variety of programmes. The key root causes that we’ve identified are poverty, naivety, and family separation. Through economic empowerment programmes for women and youth we are addressing poverty. We’re tackling naivety through community sensitisation and awareness campaigns. Our presence in the community through Community Child Protection Committees and Alternative Dispute Resolution gives people a chance to address family disputes and prevent trafficking.

Advocacy

We are vocal advocates of human rights and engage with governments, civil society organisations, media and other stakeholders to protect them. A participatory and integrated approach to decision making is important to us when it comes to children’s needs. Assessing the impact of social and economic policies on women and children at the local, national and international level is central to this. We campaign for children’s rights and seek to promote the prosecution of traffickers.
Over the last 16 years, Challenging Heights has supported over 1,700 children rescued from slavery and has rehabilitated, reintegrated and monitored over 400 children with their families in their communities in several parts of Ghana.
118 Children rescued in 2018

Referred By:
3 International Justice Mission
5 Free the Slaves
20 Mercy Project
24 Ghana Anti-Human Trafficking Unit
66 Challenging Heights

135 Families Supported

119 Children reintegrated in 2018

183 Children cared for at the Challenging Heights’ Hovde House
35 Girls + 148 Boys

196 Children monitored in 2018
Meet K! He is approximated to be 15 to 16 years old and arrived at our shelter on the most recent rescue. He was sold in the Ivory Coast along with his brother and has been trafficked throughout West Africa. Two years ago Challenging Heights rescued K’s brother off from Lake Volta, his brother told the staff at Challenging Heights that he had been sold with his brother and was persistent to remind us. After 2 years of hoping to find K and reunite the brothers, K is at the Challenging Heights Hovde House Shelter! When K came to the shelter initially, he was shy and reserved, would often sleep in class, and talked about going back to the lake and of the promise his trafficker made to him to give him a room in a house on the lake after he turned 18. K is now doing better and since meeting with his brother on Family Day, understands that he has the opportunity to attain so much more than what his slave master promised him. K is achieving so much! He now know’s his ABCs, 123s, can do basic addition and subtraction, has stopped sleeping in class and has improved in his handwriting! He has even tested into KG 2! K is also the president of the Child Counselors Programme! We are all so proud of K (and all of our kids) for making such great strides!
CHALLENGING HEIGHTS' COMMUNITY LIBRARY IMPACT

11 Schools Served

550 Library patrons

19,000 Books available through the library & E-library
YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME IMPACT

5 Vocational Education Training Modules
- Digital TV Installation
- Driving
- Phone Repairs
- Interior Decoration
- Beauty Therapy

68% Of participants employed within 3 months of graduation

93 Individuals trained  = 45 Females + 48 Males
Meet Emmanuel, he graduated from our YEP skills training in August 2018 with a certificate in Mobile Phone Repair! In November 2018, Emmanuel was able to open his very own shop to service phones here in Winneba! Emmanuel says he’s able to make between 50-100 GHC doing repairs per week but hopes to increase sales. He says the most challenging part of his work is that he lacked accessories to fix some phones and must go to town to get them.
Meet Sena, she is 21 years old and studying to be a seamstress with the Challenging Heights’ Women’s Skills Training Center. The Programme lasts for 2 years and upon completion students receive a nationally recognized certificate, which will increase their employability or allow them to continue their education. Sena began the Programme in February of 2018. Her favorite article of clothing to sew is fitted dresses and she loves to work with polished cotton! Sena really loves the course, but explains does not always have enough money to purchase all of the course materials that are not provided and that because the facility lacks electricity they are forced to use a box iron which is difficult and dangerous. Sena hopes to finish her courses at Senya and go on to the second level certificate. She hopes to become a fashion designer one day!
SENYA WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME IMPACT

Things to know:
- Participants are ages 14-29
- Courses offered in Sewing & Catering
- Each course is 2 years
- Each graduate receives an NVTI certificate

73% of past participants are employed

44 Individuals Enrolled
12 Catering + 32 Sewing
ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT IMPACT

65
Community Child Protection Committee members retrained in identifying and reporting cases of child trafficking

94
survivors monitored in school & apprenticeship

100
teachers trained in child protection models

106
careers trained in horticulture and fish preservation
Support Income

We are extremely grateful for all of our funders who make this work possible. Here's a breakdown of our funding sources for 2018.

Financials

Using our funding in the most effective and impactful way is important to us, which is why more than 90% of our funding goes towards programming.

Expenditures
We gratefully acknowledge the generous support we received from all of our partners and supporters. With their passion and commitment, all of them helped us to achieve so much in 2018.

Abolish Slavery Now
Amazade
Australian High Commission
Beauty for Freedom
Blindon Foundation
Breaking the Chain through Education
Breslaff Foundation
Butterflies/Child Development Khazana
Castle View High School
Douglas County School District
EMpower
Engage Now Africa
Family for Every Child
Free the Slaves
Freedom for All
Grand Valley State University
Heritage High School
Hovde Foundation & Sunwest Bank
Charitable Foundation
Inter Church Organisation for Development Corporation
Made in a Free World
Mercy Project
Micah 6:8
UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery
UNICEF
Women in Social Enterprise
Amanda Anduiza
Anderson Technologies
Ann Campbell
Blauvelt Foundation
Chuck & Kathy Glatz
Curt & Jen Sidden
Doug Edwards
Elizabeth Jaffe
Eric Vroegop
Heather Picerne
Jeff & Ilana Kashdin
John Caulkins
Julia Spangler
Kathleen DeRose
Lisa Halsted
LuAnn Thum
Lynn Watkins
Meemee Sharry
Miles Macleod
Peter Gartland
Peter Daniolos
Regis Jesuit High School
Tom & Kari Klein
Toni Watt