



international needs
transformed lives, changed communities



**CELEBRATING GROUP
EMPOWERMENT**

GHANA | Summer 2022

Dear friends,

I'm pleased to bring you this semi-annual report on the International Needs Group Empowerment Program in Ghana.

Thank you so much for your ongoing support over this last period! Your gifts were used to provide **hundreds of children with education** and a strong support system. As you will find in the report, the children are developing new skills for both the classroom and beyond. There are **many encouraging signs of success** around this program, and you – our amazing donors – have been behind this every step of the way. **We can't thank you enough!**



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EDUCATION AND NUTRITION

In addition to tuition support, your **gifts provided** 375 participating children, who attend Amrahia and Kpogede Community Schools (ACS and KCS) with exercise books, textbooks, notebooks, and a nutritious meal **every day**.

Access to these impactful resources have directly contributed to **growth in class attendance and participation**, and an overall sense of security in the children, who no longer have to worry about whether or not their parents can afford their school fees. We are also happy to report that it has reduced the burden on parents too, allowing them to put their wages and efforts into providing their children with other at-home necessities.



Marvin is one of these children who has benefited greatly from your generosity. Speaking with his teachers, it was clear that his parents – who have five other children in addition to Marvin – were struggling to pay for school fees and class materials. Marvin’s teachers have noted that **his grades and social skills have improved** since joining the Group Empowerment Program, thanks to his active involvement in extracurricular activities with his group, “The Brainy Bunch”. Right now, Marvin is in grade 5 and wants to be a scientist when he grows up.

WEEKLY GROUP MEETINGS

We're pleased to share news about the **thoughtful dialogue** happening between students and mentors, and the profound impact it is having on the children.

On top of their regular classroom work, all program participants engaged in **weekly group meetings** to discuss important topics and life lessons.

They had a wide range of subjects, but some highlights we'd like to share are:

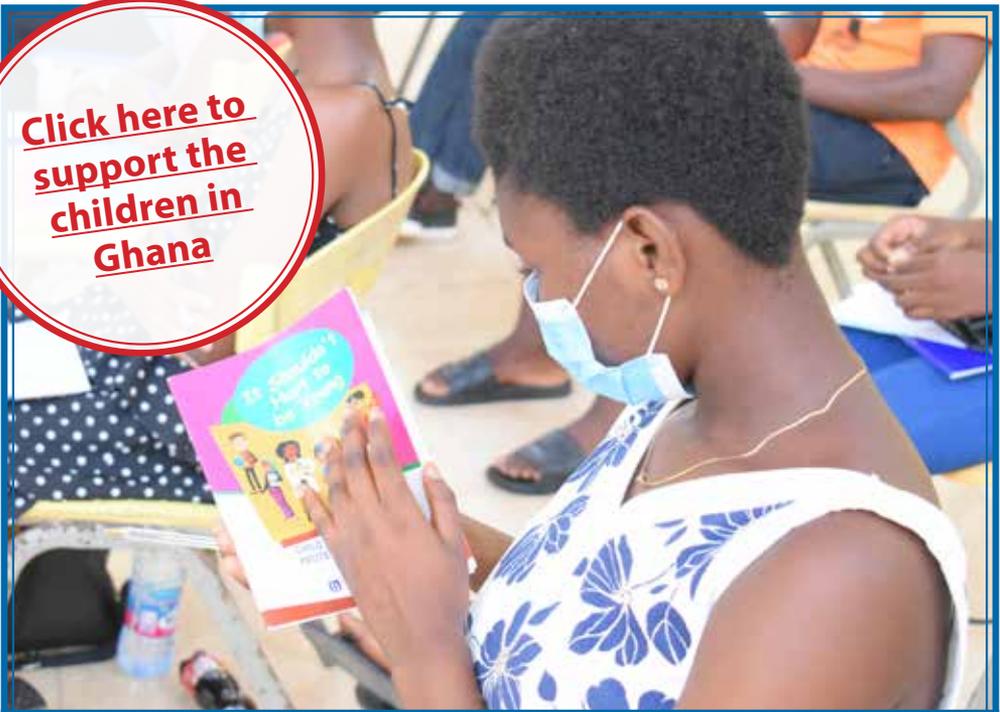
- o Bible trivia, verse finding, and discipleship support
- o Learning how to tie shoes
- o Math and word problems
- o Health and hygiene
- o Gender equality
- o Keeping the environment clean
- o The rights and responsibilities of a child



WEEKLY GROUP MEETINGS

Mentors observed that these weekly meetings have improved the students' confidence to express opinions and offer suggestions about future topics and activities. One student who has thrived from these group discussions is Akos, currently in grade 8. Akos was very shy before enrolling in the program and joining her group, "The A Team". Though hardworking, she opted to sit at the back of the class and avoided answering questions, which negatively affected her class participation and performance marks. However, over time, she has taken her mentor's encouragement and **developed great confidence**. As a result, Akos doesn't hesitate to speak up, and regularly participates in school activities.

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Akos said of her experience: "I love the activities I participate in with my group. With their help, **I now feel bold**. It has really helped me. I also cannot forget the session on online child protection and rights and responsibilities. I know through the session that I should not accept friend request from strangers and never to share private pictures with anyone. Also, I now know that my rights as a child comes with responsibilities."

HEALTH

Much growth has taken place in the health department of this program as well starting with close collaboration between International Needs Ghana and the National Health Insurance Authority. We registered and renewed health insurance for all children in the program, and created better access to hospital and medical care.

Also, with the assistance of the Ghana Health Service and the District Health Directorate, **192 students** attended a day of personal hygiene education. The nurses used a participatory approach to help the children feel safe and comfortable. This helped them share their experiences and ensure they left with better understanding of personal hygiene. The day also featured age-specific breakout sessions, which especially helped the adolescent boys and girls.



THE ROLE OF BOYS AND GIRLS

For children in Ghana, inequality between boys and girls is, unfortunately, the norm. Girls are typically responsible for all the household chores on top of school and homework, while boys are able to focus their attention on their studies. During this last period, participants, parents and mentors were engaged to discuss the negative impacts of gender discrimination.

Fafali, a participant, shared her excitement about her parents' willingness to engage in these discussions. "I am happy my parents have heard and seen the challenges we go through doing house chores," she says. "I hope and pray I begin to see an evenly shared work load among the girls and the boys, so that girls can equally have the opportunity to study and become somebody great in future."





BUSINESS & SAVINGS TRAINING FOR PARENTS

Not only is your generosity helping children while they're at school, but the **positive changes are going beyond the classroom**, right into their homes and families.

In collaboration with The Ghana Enterprise Agencies, the program facilitated educational sessions for parents of assisted children in the areas of financial management and business registration. It is clear that they learned lots and are eager to become economically independent which, in turn, will allow them to better provide for the basic needs for their children. On top of the training, parents were connected with credible local banks in their communities. This new link has **yielded positive results** so far, as 35 parents have opened savings accounts.

One of the parents who has benefited from this aspect of the program is Regina. She has two children enrolled in the Group Empowerment Program. She works as a petty trader at the community market, and says: "Before this training, I thought that my attitude towards saving was okay, but I did not mind spending out of my sales without considering the effect on my business. I also felt that business registration and having an operational bank account was only for the literate. I will now put my new **knowledge into practice**, and I am confident my husband and I can better save for our children's futures."



MENTOR COUNSELLING TRAINING

Mentoring has risen to the surface as a key part of the program. During this last period, mentors attended monthly reflection meetings, where they were given training on basic counselling so they can better support the emotional and psychological needs of students. The last session spanned two days and was facilitated by a professional counsellor.

Micheal was a participant mentor. He has this to say in his reflections after the training sessions: "Whiles at the university, I took a course on guidance and counselling. I had second thoughts about participating in the training because I had been "counselling" students and other people for some years, and I felt I knew a lot about basic counselling. Little did I know that my knowledge was limited. It was very beneficial for me to learn more about consent, active listening, and setting goals for the students to whom I provided guidance. I am committed to the change and I will work at it until I make the needed shift."



THANK YOU!

The changes taking place in the lives of children through the Group Empowerment Program continue to inspire us, and we hope you feel the same way. We are so lucky to have such great teachers, mentors, and staff who work tirelessly to give these children and their families hope, encouragement, and opportunity to reach their potential. We also feel so blessed to have such generous donors like you who make all this transformation possible.

Sincerely,

Festus Addei

Director of Programs and Projects