



Cheerful Hearts Foundation

CHEERFUL HEARTS FOUNDATION

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CHEERFUL HEARTS FOUNDATION

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF NALI HIGH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL,
AND LEAVING A LEGACY**

1. Organisation's History:

Cheerful Hearts foundation (CHF) was co-founded in 2008, by Eric Opoku Agyemang and Bright Fiatsi, as a result of personal experience with difficulty to achieve the education they craved so badly, because the benefits of being educated would be incomparable to the alternative illiteracy. Overcoming undue hardship and surmounting the odds, Eric and Bright were determined to create educational opportunities for the poorest of the poor. Cheerful Hearts has been achieving the mandate, paying forward and weaving dreams for other young people who deserve the right to education in the poorest communities of Ghana.

Cheerful Hearts Foundation was registered as a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) on June 19th, 2009, and operates in two important areas of education and health, with an increasing element of growth in the area of human rights.

We, at Cheerful Hearts Foundation, predominantly research and manage our projects as a hands-on team, with overseas intern and volunteer-participants adding incredible value to the quality of impact that we make in our communities. Our foreign interns and volunteers also gain a range of unique perspectives to their specialties, through their exposure to our work in rural health services and in the schools. This exchange lends enrichment to the organisation and everyone related to our work, and the impact of CHF in the country and our special communities, is significant.

2. Organisational Goals and Objectives (short-term and long-term):

Vision:

The Vision of Cheerful Hearts Foundation is to see healthy, educated and empowered rural communities of Ghana. We want to blend the demarcation line between the rural poor and urban rich. With education as our mandate, the vision is clear.

Mission: To collaborate with the rural dwellers and stakeholders, to advance the educational

standards for their children, and improve health services toward better living conditions for the children, men and women in the indigenous communities in Ghana.

Our Objectives:

- To empower children, youth, men, and women in rural communities through education, job training, and health awareness programs.
- To improve existing rural health facilities and make health support systems available to the rural communities of Ghana.

The odds against longevity for the indigenous members of our rural communities are staggering. Members of these communities are eager to get a hand-up so that they can reach upward and provide for themselves. Opportunities that empower their children and families are critical for their success, and CHF is faced with a litany of issues beyond our focus areas of education and health. We believe that our success in bringing the components of good health and education to the poor communities will lead to the achievement of sustainable development overall.

3. Programs and Services

As indicated, the primary areas of CHF focus are: education and health, with most projects involving the indigenous community of the Awutu Senya District, in the central region of Ghana.

We leverage the talents of our overseas volunteers and match them with our teams to work in local schools and health care institutions. We conduct health education seminars in rural communities (focused mainly on HIV/AIDS & Malaria awareness and prevention, Sanitation), human rights advocacy projects, and we award scholarships for children to attend school. In terms of the adult members of the communities, we empower women and girls about reproductive issues, and are working with the local community leaders to eradicate child labour and trafficking in the Awutu Senya District.

4. Organisational Structure (board, staff, volunteers):

Cheerful Hearts Foundation is made up of a multi-disciplinary team of professionals. Members of our team engage in research and field operations, program implementation, and community awareness projects. Cheerful Hearts Foundation consists of a Board of Directors, an Executive Director (Programs Director), Finance and Administrative Director, Administrative Secretary, Project Coordinators and Field Facilitators (Project Assistants). Cheerful Hearts Foundation is supported by a Board of Directors. This board advises the foundation on the implementation of projects, and formulates policies for the organisation. The field teams is directly responsible to the Board of Directors, and are required to submit costs of projects, proposals, and updates on a regular basis, as well as at General Meetings.

Cheerful Hearts Foundation also receives various interns and volunteers from abroad. In addition to the regular staff, we have a dedicated Fundraising and Development executive, and

a monitoring and evaluation specialist, to ensure that our growth and sustainability are measurable, impactful, and fundable. Senior positions all report to the Executive Director.

5. Description of Program/Project:

Cheerful Hearts Foundation (CHF) is assisting Nali High International School in serving some of the poorest families in the Kasoa community. Our initial project is to construct fresh water access to sanitary drinking water. We also aim to reconstruct the toilet facilities as current ones are near collapse & the leaking sewage is risking the student's health. CHF seeks to provide the school with sustainable resources such as textbooks, storybooks, and learning aids so that children can borrow the materials that prevent the financial burden from keeping them out of school.

6. Description of Need

Nali High International School is failing to provide a quality education to its students because of the poverty in the Kasoa region. School fees are just 30 Cedis (15 \$US) per semester, but many families struggle to afford sending their children to a school with such limited resources, and therefore keep them at home to work. Schools deprived of students and their school fees cannot always offer a wholesome education, resulting in 50% of local children not completing their studies. Uneducated with a high level of illiteracy, these children fail to break free of the poverty cycle due to lack of income generating skills for adult life. The poor water/toilet facilities are also an extremely serious health risk, which can hurt the development of these students at a critical stage in their lives.

7. Specific Activities

Cheerful Hearts Foundation plans to run several inter-related activities that would cumulatively achieve the goals and objectives of the ensuring Nali School is sustainable in its development. The list includes: Facilities upgrade and provision, teaching classes, investment in resources, and parent and teacher Education Sessions.

CHF does not handout donations to parents and teachers, but encourages them to remain committed to school education through quality instruction, sensitization, parental involvement and developing the schools facilities. We know that by displaying a commitment to the long-term development goals of the school the community will take notice and enable Nali High to thrive for future generations. Through experience from some of the Ghanaian members of CHF who have had prior experience of the educational field, we aim to provide a local training background for the teachers to focus their efforts in achieving success with exam results, and also apply the correct discipline with the children.

CHF has already established an emergency Parents Teacher Association (PTA) meeting during the initial phases of the project to invite parents to recognize the ongoing commitment by the school's management to improve prospects at the school. Through informed discussion, CHF helped facilitate as mediator between both groups and speak as well as listen on the

continued efforts of all of those involved to improve school life. The initial meeting was met with tremendous success and resulted in a 10% increase of pupil attendance in the proceeding week. In a typically indigenous society, it is the word of mouth that contributes to the success stories of the school (rather than emails, letters .etc), so by opening up channels of communication and meetings, CHF is able to assist a progressive movement towards the school which involves all parties to make sure the school is co-operative in its united effort to develop.

- Fresh drinking water supply

The current availability of drinking water for the children is limited to a well that is in an unsanitary condition. Most schools in the region have at least some access to pipe drinking water, but Nali School is limited to only a well that is seriously damaging the children's health. The process is also expensive and unsustainable, as the headmaster's concerns has led him to purchase fresh water sachets daily with the school's funds, therefore it is creating a hole in the school's budget which could be better spent on the school's resources and operations. Cheerful Hearts aims to implement either a water piping system connected to the municipal supply, or a poly tank reservoir, that will give a clean water supply to the kitchen as well as the children during the incessantly humid days. This will not only contribute to the better health of the children and limit risk of disease, but also ease financial burden to the poorest families and the school. Children will be able to stay hydrated at school, retain concentration and prevent sickness keeping them absent from school.

- Renewed construction of toilets

The current toilet facilities are in serious need of repair and are proving a very imminent threat to the children's health and well-being. The toilets are decades old and the walls have many cracks on them and are close to collapse. The 'pit toilet', consists of a hole between pieces of wood and has attracted a large amount of flies/insects and a spread of bacteria. The toilets are beside a classroom and are causing a pungent stench throughout the school. Without due care, the toilets could collapse on children at any moment. Currently the children have to go as partners to the toilet in case of a disaster occurring. This is a persistent problem in Kasoa, as detailed on a recent report in 2012 when a man died from a collapsing public toilet <http://www.ghanatoghana.com/man-killed-in-kasoa-toilet/>.

There are only 2 toilets (1 for girls, 1 for boys) provided for the entire school. The sewage drainage is uncontrolled and latrine is causing significant health risks for the school. As a result, many students relieve themselves outside the school, further contributing to the filthy environment. The poorest families in the community do not have a private WC at their home, so this will be a significant development not just for the school but for the community; as this report from Accra underlines: <http://www.ghanatoghana.com/cent-private-places-accra/>. Cheerful Hearts aims to construct a new, safe set of toilets with a sustainable approach to keeping the area clean and enabling an area of convenience for all children (and teachers).

- Further investment in school resources

Nearly all parents can afford the school fees to keep their children in school, but some of the biggest financial constraints are the accompanying materials that go with school such as textbooks, stationery, uniform, and access to resources. At the moment, some classes share just 5 textbooks for a class of 20. Cheerful Hearts aim to provide textbooks and materials for the school so that a borrowing system can be designed to give opportunity for the children

that have serious financial difficulty. This will enable them to come to school without fear of missing out, and give them equal access to learning aids. The new library built by volunteers from the UK and Australia will enable this system to be co-ordinated sustainably and has already been put in place, yet many more resources are required. Since the curriculum does not change significantly over the years, the investment in such books will literally be used for over 10 years, by year after year of students. The books are not expensive either, only 5-8 \$US each – so the scope for complete provision for the school is definitely attainable.

The goals of this project will allow the students to forget the economic hardships outside of school and focus on their studies for a better future. This project is designed to be an educational investment that incrementally also leads to sustainable development of their communities. The students will serve as a role model for other children, and to the entire village. This activity relates directly to the objectives and the main goal of the project. However, it is no more or important than the other activities, and they all work together and complement each other, to significantly increase participation in education for the entire community.

8. Objectives and Goals for this Request

The following objectives are some of the reasons for creating the Nali High School sustainable development project:

- Increase the awareness in the community regarding issues such as child truancy from school, and the importance of education.
- Contribute to empowering men, women and children in the community by providing the children with a formal education. This will give the opportunity to become employed in a future role with a higher income, to break free of the generational poverty cycle.
- Enable families under financial pressure to meet the needs of their children's education by providing an opportunity to borrow resources from the school that can be used year after year.
- Build new facilities that are safe and contribute to the well-being of the school and its students, as well as leaving a legacy in the learning environment.

9. Evaluation

At the completion of this project, we expect to see a greatly increased number of children given access to a quality and full education. Furthermore, there will be a greater understanding of the importance of education, as well as a greater level of literacy and opportunity to use education's skills in adult life. More children will have access to education, and there will be greater support in this indigenous community as parents come to appreciate the value of education, and hope for a better future, once they permit CHF to work with them.

Cheerful Hearts plans to leave the legacy of opportunity in education for over 110 families in the area and ensure stable school infrastructure. . The project will empower the youth to direct their energy towards education while refocusing parents and the community to the lifelong advantages of a quality formal education. For Nali High International School, this

project can be the difference between providing a quality education for the Kasoa community for decades to come, or failing to provide an academic outlet for the wealth of potential which each child holds within them.

10. Other

Cheerful Hearts Foundation has a partnership with the local District Assembly, Social Welfare Department, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health. We collaborate with main stakeholders in order to achieve greater success in our project implementation. We also collaborate with the traditional heads and opinion leaders of the rural communities and they add value every step of the way to ensure that dialogues are on track to approach solutions to problems that directly affect members of their communities.

Cheerful Hearts Foundation has selected its Board of Directors based on their experiences in our main areas of operations and their varied backgrounds add a rich perspective to our collective approach to achieving impact. Among this august group are: District Director of Social Welfare, Deputy District Director of Education, District Director of Health, Head of Revenue Department of Value-Added-Tax (VAT), and the Chief of Gomoa Nyanyano. The CHF board is highly committed to all matters that affect Kasoa, and the rural communities of Ghana.

Cheerful Hearts Foundation continues to receive excellent feedback from our overseas volunteers whose lives have changed as a result of having worked on our projects. Many of our former volunteers stay in touch long after they return to their countries of origins, and they make every effort to motivate us to keep their projects alive. We strive to stretch every dollar and make efficient use of all resources and the investment always pays off.

Finally, since the establishment of CHF in 2008, we have never applied for, nor received, any external funding. Rather, most of our financial contributions come from our own members (Directors and Board) including previous volunteers on our projects. We have made a very positive impact on the communities we serve, even with the little resources available to us, due to our genuine and sincere desire to support the community. Therefore we believe that with additional external financial support, we will be able to accomplish much more and make a greater impact in the community.