

B.A.S.I.C.S
International

Ending Cycles of
Illiteracy and Poverty

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NEWSLETTER

July - August 2024

It truly takes one to help one



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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR
by Laila Wheeler

There is no doubt that B.A.S.I.C.S International is a special place to be. From the caring Facilitators who raise the children as their own to visitors who come from all corners of the globe, B.A.S.I.C.S radiates a deep love and care for youth like no other.

For three months, I had the wonderful privilege of serving as a Global Ambassador Intern and joining the B.A.S.I.C.S family. From the moment I walked through Chorkor on my first day, it became evident that B.A.S.I.C.S is dedicated to life-changing public service. Situated in a community experiencing extreme poverty, B.A.S.I.C.S is a safe haven for many children to dream big, exercise their fullest potential, and receive the support they need to not only survive but thrive.

My transformational time at B.A.S.I.C.S taught me about the immense power of education. From the chef who cooks meals for the children everyday after school to the donors who pay their school fees, I learned that it truly does take a village to raise a child.

As a student journalist at UCLA, I wanted to help amplify student voices and provide a platform to raise awareness of issues facing Chorkor. By facilitating a writing class, I guided ambitious students through the process of drafting articles regarding topics

they were passionate about, such as sanitation, teenage pregnancy, and unemployment. Along with gaining valuable writing skills, students helped capture the daily routine at B.A.S.I.C.S through photography – with some of the featured photos being taken by youth themselves. I couldn't be prouder of the remarkable work they have created.

During the past few months, B.A.S.I.C.S held exciting events and welcomed visitors from across the world. Whether it was the Australian High Commission donating numerous football supplies or COSI inspiring children to engage in fascinating science experiments, these partnerships contribute to the long-lasting success of B.A.S.I.C.S for nearly 25 years.

I would like to deeply thank everyone at B.A.S.I.C.S for giving me and many others a home away from home. As you turn the page, I hope this newsletter leaves you inspired with more hope in the future generation to be changemakers than ever before.

SCIENCE IS FOR EVERYONE.



engage. inspire. transform.

WHAT IS COSI?
The Center of Science and Industry is an interactive science museum in Columbus, Ohio. Consistently ranked the #1 science museum in the U.S., COSI inspires children of all ages and backgrounds to become interested in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math).

My most fulfilling part of being here at B.A.S.I.C.S is watching kids blossom and really enjoy the activities and get excited about learning.
**- DR. VALERI AVENI
COSI TEAM MEMBER**



making bubbles!



To increase access to science education globally, COSI donated hundreds of kits to B.A.S.I.C.S, ranging from fun activities focusing on human body, nature, engineering, to space. For a few weeks, COSI team members supported our facilitators to best utilize the kits and optimize the children's learning experience.

SANITATION COMPLICATIONS

by Edward Tagoe & Abdul Malik Lamptey



As we walk through Chorkor, we see an abundance of trash, people defecating at the seaside, along with individuals throwing rubbish in gutters and clogging the sewage system.

Sanitation encompasses a wide range of practices and systems designed to manage human waste and maintain clean living conditions. This includes the collection, treatment and disposal of waste, as well as hygiene practices like handwashing. In Chorkor, there are many causes to the lack of sanitation our community encounters on a daily basis. For instance, we undergo air pollution, water contamination, and inaccess to sanitation facilities. As a community, we can take various steps to solve these detrimental issues and create a clean environment for Chorkor.

To begin, air pollution contributes to sanitation in a multitude of ways. Air pollution is the contamination of the indoor or outdoor environment by any chemical that gets into the atmosphere. In Chorkor, many activities cause air pollution and harm the population. Fumes are mostly produced by the fishmongers in the community, which is a common occupation here. Consequently, these fumes root harm to human health.

In addition, water pollution is also one of the major causes that is a threat to public health and safety in Chorkor.

Water pollution is the act of releasing substances and chemicals into water that can be toxic to the body. As a result, this contributes to the spread of diseases and can have long term health effects. This issue can be severe and even fatal. Based on research conducted by the World Health Organization in Ghana, "7,653 deaths were caused by WASH related illness in 2019. 21 people per day, almost one person every hour, die from preventable WASH-related diseases." Given the prevalence of water pollution, this contaminates the water content at the seaside and destroys the cleanliness of the beaches.

On top of this, some harmful activities can easily cause flooding in Chorkor like throwing trash and defecating into gutters, which can worsen diseases in our community. In order to prevent these health complications, we must clear all choke gutters in our area to avoid spreading malaria. Every few months, we should have community gatherings to collectively clean the gutters to make it attractive and prevent diseases.

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Moreover, the lack of sanitation facilities significantly contributes to the poor hygiene in Chorkor. Most homes do not include washrooms so the entire community shares few public facilities, which are often unkempt and not cleaned regularly. According to the United Nations Ghana, “only 25% (of Ghanaians) have access to basic services, about 57% use shared or public facilities and 18% still defecate in the open.”

Furthermore, the demand for washrooms exceeds the supply, meaning that there are extremely limited washrooms to compensate for the population. It is important to acknowledge the socioeconomic disparities that arise from public sanitation facilities since people must pay a fee of 1.50 cedis each to use them. For some families, this cost is unaffordable because they must pay for themselves and their children, possibly totaling up to 10 cedis per person everyday.

Looking toward the future, there are many activities that can help us solve sanitation problems in Chorkor. This includes facilitating proper education about sanitation and clearing choke gutters. Community members should be educated about the safety measures they should take to maintain cleanliness in the environment. In addition, the younger generation must be taught how to exercise caution and promote better hygiene in their daily lives.



All in all, the leaders in the community must enforce laws that can help improve the quality and enhance the beauty of Chorkor. From air pollution, water contamination, to the lack of sanitation facilities, these are critical issues that deserve our utmost attention. We must come together to ensure that everyone in the community abides by the rules and regulations. With all of our help, we can build a Chorkor that is clean and healthy for all.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Edward Tagoe is a 19-year old student who recently graduated from Hope Christian Academy. In the future, Edward aspires to be a Programmer working with information technology (IT).

Abdul Malik Lamptey is a 14-year old student who recently graduated from Great Nkrumah Memorial School (Shalom-Shalom). In the future, Malik aspires to be an Electrical Engineer.



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION

A Long Lasting Partnership



On July 12, B.A.S.I.C.S was honored to welcome the Australian High Commission, Berenice Owen-Jones and our forever H.E Billy Williams, to Ghana. To support our children's love of sports, Owen-Jones and Williams provided a generous donation of football equipment including jerseys, shoes, balls and more.



TEENAGE PREGNANCY

by Amanda Lamptey & Emmanuel Owoo



Teenage pregnancy is a global problem affecting communities of all socioeconomic statuses, but girls living in Chorkor are especially vulnerable due to lacking resources and support.

From 2016 to 2020, Ghana reported over 542,000 girls who were pregnant between the ages of 15-19 years old, according to the Ghana District Health Information Management System. In Chorkor, it is common to see many girls giving birth at young ages. While there are numerous causes of teenage pregnancy, it is important to highlight parental neglect, lack of education, and poverty as main contributors to this phenomenon. Unfortunately, teenage pregnancy may lead girls to repeat harmful generational cycles of drug use, dropping out of school, and ultimately becoming a liability in society. Nevertheless, there is still hope in reducing the high rates of teenage pregnancy in Chorkor.

To start with, teenage pregnancy occurs for a multitude of reasons depending on the specific situation. For instance, parental neglect is a type of neglect when parents are not paying sufficient attention to their children. From our experience, we have seen children abandoned by their parents to roam aimlessly around the community. Therefore, they are easily influenced by peers to involve themselves in numerous immoral acts.

What happens when a 15 year old girl is pregnant? When teens are deprived of early parental care, they are often unable to receive adequate and quality medical attention, risking a higher chance of an unhealthy and complicated pregnancy. As a result, they are either unable to engage with social service groups, attend school, or receive any form of assistance from the community. This may contribute to the death of the child, the mother, or in a worse scenario, both.

In addition, there is inadequate education on teenage pregnancy, resulting in high birth rates, less employment opportunities, and growing health concerns. According to a 2013 study, 86% of teenage pregnant girls in Ghana dropped out of school before or after getting pregnant. Parents should be aware of the value of education for their children and encourage them to achieve higher grades in school. This can be accomplished by providing necessary resources for a quality education.

Moreover, poverty in Chorkor plays a pivotal role in increasing teenage pregnancy rates.

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Due to the lack of money and other essentials for a good standard of living, young girls are left with limited resources to engage in positive activities that benefit them and help them succeed. In many cases, their parents may not have a stable income so they are left alone and must fend for themselves. For instance, teenagers may indulge in prostitution to earn money for themselves and buy basic needs like food to survive.

On top of that, the government and community organizations must establish more educational facilities and financial aid scholarships to support disadvantaged students. Furthermore, implementing policies like gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive education can promote inclusivity, thereby increasing the number of young girls getting quality education and reducing the likelihood of teenage pregnancy among them.

To conclude, pregnancy in adolescents should be considered high risk pregnancies. It is essential to emphasize the need for comprehensive parental care, quality education, and addressing poverty for pregnant teenagers. While young girls should remain chaste until marriage, we can all come together to prevent teenage pregnancy in Chorkor and provide them with valuable resources they need to thrive.



HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT OUR GIRLS AND HELP PREVENT TEENAGE PREGNANCY?

Increasing Girl Access Program (IGAP) is an initiative by B.A.S.I.C.S International to empower girls and provide the resources, mentorship, and education to succeed. *Support a girl today with a one-time or recurring donation.*



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Amanda Lamptey is a 15-year old student who recently graduated from Great Nkrumah Memorial School. In the future, Amanda aspires to be a lawyer and writer.

Emmanuel Owoo is a student who recently graduated from Hope Christian Academy. In the future, Emmanuel aspires to be an engineer.





FIRST COHORT OF CHORKOR DIGITAL LAB

Graduation



On August 1, the first cohort of students from the Chorkor Digital Lab, a registered Cisco Networking Academy, graduated from a 3-month course focused on networking and hardware skills. Every student gained invaluable skills they can utilize in the global workforce and beyond. Given the widespread lack of access to technology in Chorkor, we extend our deepest gratitude to Cisco for providing this remarkable educational opportunity to our community!



EMPOWERING THE FUTURE

The Chorkor Digital Lab (CDL), situated in the heart of Chorkor, offers transformative classes in networking, hardware, and cybersecurity through the Cisco Networking Academy®.

These programs equip students with essential digital skills needed for the global workforce, including identifying different computer systems, managing networks, and troubleshooting hardware. In a community where students would typically need to travel over two hours to access such programs, CDL brings these opportunities directly to them, providing free, high-quality education. Students are not only gaining valuable technical knowledge but also overcoming barriers to access, empowering them to build brighter futures in the digital world.

Thank you for this opportunity, Cisco team and the Chorkor Digital Lab, for giving us such a great place to learn cyber security skills. The class was very interesting and interactive. Everything was practiced very well.

**- JOY ADEVU
 FIRST COHORT GRADUATE**



UNEMPLOYMENT: WORKING TO LIVE

by Prince Asante and Diana Tagoe



It is a harsh reality that many people in Chorkor are unemployed, leaving hard-working individuals with little source of income to support themselves and their families.

Most African countries and nations across the world are facing these challenges. Unemployment occurs when people who want to work are unable to find jobs. Students attend high school and/or university only to return to a failing job market where there is difficulty securing a position. Unemployment has been negatively affecting Chorkor and produces harmful generational cycles of poverty. According to data from 2023, the unemployment rate in Ghana was 14.7%, which indicates a struggling economy. This phenomenon is caused by many elements including inadequate economic growth, lack of education and training, and a high rate of migration from rural to urban areas.

Foremost, economic growth in Ghana is inadequate and the economy is underdeveloped. When the population exceeds the supply of jobs available, this contributes to the underdevelopment of a nation. The economy in Chorkor fails to keep up with the insistence for employment, leading to an increasing share of people unable to secure work. This results in poor levels of unemployment from coast-to-coast across the African continent.

However, the inaccess to education and training also contributes to unemployment in Chorkor. If a person lacks a strong educational foundation, they have the smallest possibility to be hired for a good job that pays well. Without quality education, children face considerable barriers to employment later in life. They are more likely to suffer adverse health outcomes and less likely to participate in decisions that affect them, threatening their ability to shape a better future for themselves and their societies.

In addition, a high rate of migration from rural to urban areas may play a role in unemployment. Migration refers to the physical movement of people from one place to another. In Ghana, people often leave their towns for urban areas to create their own business, become married, and live a better life overall. For instance, a majority of people living in Chorkor are not originally from the community but instead, migrated from outside regions.

Moving forward, while unemployment is a major issue in Chorkor, there are still ways to lower the unemployment rate in the future. **READ MORE >>>**

The government and individuals should create additional employment opportunities. The individuals should state some business with their skills and capabilities without waiting for the government. Moreover, education should be a starting point in promoting trust, respect, and understanding among us to reduce unemployment rates. Education is the key to success by opening doors for low-income communities and increasing financial opportunities. Without education, people may be able to achieve their goals, but it can be difficult to hold higher positions in the workforce with the absence of a degree. For instance, B.A.S.I.C.S International helps prevent unemployment in Chorkor by helping children go to school, acquire skills, and build upon their talents and capabilities.

Moreover, training is the process of acquiring specific knowledge and skills you need for a particular job. In order to improve training for employees, the employers must create metrics to measure progress and develop a formal program. Practice makes a man perfect, so the more we are being trained, the more we become perfect in our daily lives.

Unemployment does not affect only the individuals but also the growth of a nation. It has a negative impact on the economic and social growth of Chorkor. We encourage all of you to help one another to build upon their talents and capabilities. With this, we can all build a stronger Chorkor and Ghana overall. Together, we stand!



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Prince Asante is an 18-year old student who recently graduated from Hope Christian Academy. In the future, Prince aspires to become a security agent and farmer.

Diana Tagoe is a 17-year old student who recently graduated from Hope Christian Academy. In the future, Diana aspires to become a navy doctor.



FUN WITH THE FACILITATORS

The Facilitators play a major role in the children's development and success at B.A.S.I.C.S by tutoring children core subjects, leading extracurricular activities, and motivating them to achieve their goals.

The team leads of our Facilitators, Obed and James, reflect on their highlights serving at B.A.S.I.C.S.



Obed Tagoe

My most fulfilling experience working with children is remembering when I was once in their shoes, receiving help from facilitators like myself. Now, as a team lead, I ensure every beneficiary receives the support they need from staff. Seeing children benefit from our efforts and grow brings me joy.

I have many fond memories from my time at B.A.S.I.C.S. Participating in various activities and learning opportunities when I was a beneficiary has come full circle. Now, witnessing children embrace those same experiences, pouring their hearts into creating better lives, fills me with happiness and a sense of fulfillment.

I'm thrilled to have grown from a beneficiary to a Team Lead within B.A.S.I.C.S. Being part of this organization, which I fondly call a 'Home', has been a transformative journey. B.A.S.I.C.S nurtures and grooms future leaders, empowering them to shape their communities and families.

I'm delighted to share my story and experiences with staff, interns, volunteers, and anyone interested. It's heartwarming to see families thrilled with the progress their children have made. They have high hopes for their children to become positive change-makers, and I'm proud to be part of an organization making a lasting impact. Auntie Pat's Children we are ONE.

James Kwaku Boamah

One of the most fulfilling parts of working with the children is witnessing their transformation — seeing them grow in confidence, embrace learning, and begin to believe in their potential. There's nothing quite like the moment when a child, once timid and unsure, lights up after mastering a new skill.

One unforgettable moment was when the children met Vice President Kamala Harris. Her words reinforced the belief that they can achieve anything if they work hard toward their dreams and goals. Seeing their joy and pride in that moment reminded me just how capable they are when given the right opportunities. It strengthened my conviction in the power of education to open doors and shape brighter futures for them.



EMPOWERING WOMEN

one stitch at a time



HEDZOLE is a West African word derived from the Ga Language which means FREEDOM.

Hedzole is a social impact program empowering women through skill training and sustainable economic growth. Products are individually, creatively, and skillfully made by a woman of HEDZOLE. Our Eco-Friendly products are made with plastic waste, textile waste, local fabrics and creating ZERO WASTE.

We love to recycle, upcycle, and create new products you will love for a lifetime.

100% of the proceeds of a product is making an impact. Women are earning fair wages and creating sustainable individuals.

THAT'S FREEDOM!

BEDSPREADS, BAGS, BOTTLE HOLDERS, AND MORE!



HOW YOU CAN HELP

PURCHASE A BAG

Each handcrafted HEDZOLE bag supports both artisans and children in need.

SPREAD THE WORD

Share HEDZOLE's story with your network.

PARTNER WITH US

Collaborate to expand our impact

INSTAGRAM: @IAMHEDZOLE

WWW.BASICSINTERNATIONAL.ORG

WAYS TO SUPPORT

MAKE A DONATION:

Contribute directly to our cause through a one-time or recurring donation. You can set up a recurring donation for as low as \$10.00. Visit our [donation page](#) to make your contribution.

SPONSOR A STUDENT:

Support a student's education by choosing a sponsorship level that fits your commitment. Options range from basic supplies to full academic year support. Details available on our [sponsorship page](#).

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP:

Partner with us as a corporate sponsor to enhance your community impact. Explore our [corporate sponsorship opportunities](#) and join us in making a difference.

IN-KIND DONATIONS:

Donate goods or services that are valuable to our programs. Contact us for more information on how your in-kind contributions can support our mission.

PARTICIPATE IN FUNDRAISING EVENTS:

Join our fundraising events or organize your own to support our initiatives. Check our website for upcoming events and ways to get involved.

LEGACY GIFTS:

Consider leaving a legacy gift to support future generations. For information on including BASICS International in your estate planning, visit our [donation page](#).

GET INVOLVED:

Join us as a volunteer for short and long term placements. We welcome those who are seeking a way to give back, and those seeking connection with other fellow humans.

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