

HERITAGE CHARITY FOUNDATION

Theory Of Change

(Women Empowerment Program)

Background

Much research on financial schemes has shown that women are required to look after their families' best interests and are the most likely the best gateway to their children's overall wellbeing and progress. Furthermore, women have a disproportionately larger chance to live in poverty, compared to men, because they have less access to education, work, and assets.

The described theory of change explains how the intervention will lead to the desired outcomes and long-term impact via cause-and-effect relations. It is a model, a stylized representation of main cause and effect relationships, Reality is always far messier and effects of the intervention don't occur in neat sequence as represented in the model. The overall goal of the program is to sustainably lift women/girls and their families out of poverty.

Poverty is the root cause of many of humanity's troubles. Worldwide, 700 million people still live in extreme poverty. Poverty in itself is a condition of permanent suffering for those who live it. It is a life often without dignity, in shame, and without self-worth. At the same time poverty is the root cause of what many call 'poverty trapped' problems: child labor, stunted growth, deforestation, loss of wild life, rural-urban drifts and conflicts among others. This can keep people trapped in poverty grip across generations. People often just keep their heads above water as they spend all their income on daily needs, unable to invest in the future. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the number of people living in poverty to rise for the first time in decades.

Three main causes of poverty at the individual-household level and the model intervention to tackle them are:

- Simply lack of money to guarantee basic needs and to save and invest in income generating activities.
- Lack of skills and knowledge (financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills, best agricultural practices and life skills) and specific nonfunctional behavior such as a habit incur too high debts. The intervention: training.
- Lack of a supporting environment that offers social capital and a stepping stone for financial inclusion. The intervention: self-help groups.
- The program is designed to be a steppingstone to a better life, out of poverty and with permanent impact. We do stimulate the beneficiaries to invest in income generating activities and save money.

The Women Empowerment program

The Women Empowerment component is target at girls/women in low-income communities in providing them with the training in digital skills to enable them to become employable and start some income generating activities which can become self-sustainable.

The scope of the Women Empowerment Project includes:

- Empowering 500 women and girls from low-income communities.
- Providing digital literacy training to 300 women.
- Supporting 20 innovative projects led by women.
- Establishing a mentorship platform for 100 women.
- Advocating for policy changes to promote gender equality in STEM.

- Creating a community network of women in STEM.
- Providing access to technology and digital sources.
- Developing a sustainable model for long-term impact.

The project scope is focused on promoting women empowerment, gender equality, and inclusive economic growth in the STEM sector. It aims to create a supportive ecosystem where women can develop skills, innovate and thrive.

The Model

As poverty is more complex than just lack of cash, it should be addressed with more than only a monetary solution. Lack of skills and knowledge, certain behavior, social isolation, lack of financial inclusion and no possibility to save money: all these challenges contribute to enduring, structural poverty. The Model has been designed to address different main causes of poverty at the individual level simultaneously. If only one of the causes is addressed the impact will be much smaller than when all three major causes are tackled at the same time. Tackling three causes at the same time is as well mutually reinforcing: the total sum of the three interventions is more than the sum of its parts.

The model of the women empowerment project is based on a holistic approach that combines education, skills development, and community engagement to empower rural women and girls in Ghana. The model includes:

- Literacy and Numeracy: Functional literacy and numeracy classes to improve basic skills.
- Vocational Training: Skills development in areas like tailoring, soap-making, and agriculture.
- Digital Literacy: Basic computer skills and online safety training.
- Gender Equality and Empowerment: Workshops on gender rights, self-esteem, and confidence-building.
- Micro-Entrepreneurship: Training on business management and entrepreneurship.
- Mentorship: Pairing women with successful mentors for guidance and support.
- Community Engagement: Outreach and awareness campaigns to engage men and community leaders in supporting women's empowerment.
- Savings and Loans: Access to savings accounts and small loans to support business ventures.

This integrated model aims to address the social, economic, and cultural barriers that hinder women's empowerment in rural Ghana, promoting sustainable development and gender equality.

The outcome or impact of the women empowerment project includes:

- Improved Literacy: Increased literacy rates among rural women and girls.
- Economic Empowerment: Enhanced economic opportunities through vocational skills and micro-entrepreneurship.
- Increased Confidence: Boosted self-esteem and confidence among women and girls.
- Gender Equality: Promoted gender equality and challenged harmful gender stereotypes.
- Community Engagement: Increased community support and engagement in women's empowerment.
- Improved Health: Improved health outcomes through education on reproductive health and hygiene.
- Leadership Development: Empowered women to take on leadership roles in their communities.

- Social Change: Contributed to a cultural shift towards valuing women's contributions and rights.
- Networking: Established a network of empowered women supporting each other.
- Sustainability: Created a sustainable model for women's empowerment, replicable in other communities.

The project's outcome is a transformative impact on the lives of rural women and girls, their families, and communities, leading to a more equitable and prosperous society.

Sustainability

The women empowerment project will be sustainable through:

- Community Ownership: The community will take ownership of the project, ensuring its continuation and growth.
- Local Partnerships: Collaborations with local organizations, businesses, and government entities will provide support and resources.
- Training and Capacity Building: Women will be trained to become trainers, mentors, and leaders, creating a sustainable cycle of empowerment.
- Income-Generating Activities: Women will develop skills to start income-generating businesses, ensuring financial independence.
- Savings and Loans Program: Women will have access to savings accounts and small loans, fostering financial stability.
- Mentorship and Support: Established mentors will provide ongoing guidance and support.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Regular assessments will ensure the project's impact and identify areas for improvement.
- Diversified Funding: Multiple funding sources, including grants, donations, and partnerships, will be secured to ensure financial sustainability.
- Community Fundraising: The community will be encouraged to contribute to the project's funding through local events and initiatives.
- Replication and Scaling: The project's model will be replicated in other communities, amplifying its impact and reach.

By incorporating these sustainability measures, the women empowerment project will create a lasting impact, empowering women and girls for generations to come.

Key Assumptions

Women know best what their families need: Once out of survival stress and with some training and the support of peers, they make the right decisions to move their families out of poverty.

Selection: Women are willing to work hard and invest in a better life: They seize the opportunity of the intervention with both hands as a steppingstone to a better life.

Theory of Change Model

Graphic display of ToC

