



*We are most grateful to God for bringing us to the end of another quarter of 2014. We share with you, how God has transformed the lives of two people in special ways through the work of International Needs Ghana.*

## Rescued Vulnerable Girls Receive Employable Skills

Hundreds of children have received employable skills through International Needs Ghana's (INGH) anti child labour projects. From July 2011 to June 2014, INGH implemented two anti-child labour projects targeted at 1000 children and 400 parents/caregivers to protect, prevent, rescue and rehabilitate children from commercial sexual exploitation in thirteen communities in Accra.

Funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) of New Zealand, the projects were implemented in the following 13 communities: Osu, La, Agbogbloshie, James Town, Chorkor, Nima, Maamobi, Accra New Town/ Malam Atta, Madina, Bubiashie, Korle Gonno, and Korle Wonko.

Participants of the projects have received training in fashion designing (dress making); hair dressing; pedicure and manicure and interior decoration among others. Many of them can testify to how INGH has impacted their lives. During a monitoring visit by INGH project team to some participating communities, a participant, Mercy Vanpee, had this to share: *"I am eternally grateful to God that through INGH, I have acquired a skill with which I can earn a decent living and also cater for my younger sister in school"*.

Mercy lost both parents within a spate of six months, at the age of fifteen years. This was at a critical time when



*Mercy displaying some bags she had made*

she was preparing to write her Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Despite her plight, she passed her examination with distinction. Unfortunately however, Mercy could not further her education because she had no one to neither pay for her fees nor provide her educational materials. Mercy's hope was further shattered when her uncle made it clear to her that it was impossible for him to assist her since he was already supporting her (Mercy's) sister in school. In her frustration, idle Mercy associated herself with her peers who advised her to sleep with multiple men for money to sustain her.

Mercy, who did not take her friends' advice intimidated: *"After about two years, of idling, I was fortunate to have met INGH. They counseled me after they heard my story and asked what I wanted to do with my life. I told them I wanted to learn how to design and produce dressing bags and they supported me with all I needed to learn that trade"*.

Mercy has completed her training, producing not only beautiful bags and purses but sandals as well. She was full of praise for INGH and has decided to train other girls in similar situations that she had found herself in. Mercy's testimony is just one of the thousands of lives transformed through the ministry of INGH, made possible with your partnership and unflinching support to our work. We are indeed grateful to God for this wonderful partnership, which has resulted in transforming lives and changing communities.



*Mercy receiving a sewing machine from INGH*

## Gifty Dede Ashirifi

Gifty Dede Ashirifi, twenty-seven (27) years old university graduate has a lot to share about the transformation that has crept into her life after she had gained support for her education through the International Needs Child Assistance Programme (INCAP). She was enrolled into class five at Amrahia Community School in 1995 at the age of 10. Prior to her enrolment in Amrahia, she had attended a near-by school under a big shady tree with the blackboard nailed into it. She went to school each day carrying a table and a chair on her head as the school had no furniture. Gifty's father was a subsistence farmer, using rudimentary implements such as hoe and machet just like other farmers in the community and her mother was a bread baker. The family income was barely GHS 90.00 (\$30.00) per month; hence they could not have afforded any higher level of education for Gifty and her six other siblings.

Gifty and her family live in Amrahia, a community barely 30km from the city of Accra, yet experience challenges of unclean water, low education standard, deplorable road and extreme poverty. Before the establishment of the Amrahia Community School in 1993 by International Needs Ghana (INGH,) most children in the community labored daily either on the farm or in the rock quarry to cater for their basic needs and sometimes for the needs of their families. Malnutrition and skin diseases were common. INGH rescued children working at the rock quarry, farms and those attending classes under the trees by providing a school structure, quality education, hot lunch and medical care. Doctors and nurses came in periodically to treat both the children and members of the community of all the skin diseases.

Gifty who could barely write her name then was privileged to be enrolled in the INGH School and had the opportunity to improve on her academic performance tremendously. She was selected as one of the brilliant students to travel and represent INGH in Canada and New Zealand on deputation programs.

She graduated from Junior High School with a distinction during the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E). She was one of the first girls in Amrahia community to continue her education through senior high to the university level. The solid foundation laid for her in INGH School precipitated attainment of high grades in her final exams (West Africa Certificate Examination) enabling her to gain admission to the University of Ghana, Legon where she graduated with a degree in sociology, making her the first girl from Amrahia community to further her education to the university level. Gifty has not relented in her efforts in pursuing further education. Currently she has gained admission to do a Masters Degree program in Gerontology (the study of aging) in Miami University (USA).

Gifty gave back to society what she received; she got the opportunity to do her National Service with one of the UN agencies in Ghana, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). She continued to work as a volunteer at the INGH head office for one year till she was offered employment as a Program Assistant in the Child Rights Unit, on the 3 year project "Protection of Children from Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Accra (CSEC)". She worked in three communities (James Town, Korle Wonko and Madina). She also had gone on many deputations in the USA to raise funds and sponsorships to bring transformation in the lives of other children.

In her expression of gratitude to her sponsor, Gifty says: *"If not for the work of INGH, I am sure I would have been married to one of the village champions with about six or seven children and working at the rock quarry with my family to make a living. The vicious cycle of poverty in my community would have continued. My story has changed. I thank INGH and my sponsors from Australia (Grag and Janet Coulson) for their great support"*

*Gifty in the school library*



*(Insert) Gifty addressing Senior High School Students after a debate.*