



CHARITY GIVES BACK TO SOCIETY

Having received support from International Needs Ghana (INGH), Charity Goku is now on the mission to give back to others. Charity, a graduate of the Centre for Empowerment and Enterprise Development (CEED) in Adidome; CEO of ChaCha Stitches is committed to empowering more people to be like her.

Charity made a bold decision to leave Senior High School (SHS) and pursue her dreams at CEED briefly after she discovered her passion for fashion. She fully immersed herself in learning the skills in the industry.

She further enhanced her expertise by securing an attachment with a fashion firm in Accra to give her a hands-on experience. Upon completing her attachment, she began working from home, saving diligently toward the goal of opening her shop. INGH supported her by providing an industrial sewing machine, enabling her to improve her production capacity and increase her income.



Charity has made some remarkable strides such as the acquisition of a new sewing equipment and the renting of a well-appointed space for a shop at Accra. In addition to her success, she is empowering two young women in her community through free skills training in fashion; helping them acquire valuable knowledge and become self-sufficient. One of her trainees tells it all;

"I am a mother of 3 who did not have any source of income and livelihood. I depended solely on my husband for my basic needs and that of my children. Charity met me one day and through interactions with her, she encouraged me and offered to give me economic empowerment through skills training in fashion free of charge. I accepted her offer and she has been an amazing teacher.

Charity is deeply grateful for the support she has received along the way, particularly from INGH, International Needs USA, and Northbrook Church, whose contributions have played a pivotal role in making her dream a reality.

FROM HARDSHIP TO HOPE: AN INSPIRING JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE AND TRIUMPH



His future was almost shattered by two mishaps during his childhood but Isaac Effah Ofori has managed to bounce back and is helping others find meaning to life. Born in a small community in Ghana's Eastern Region, Isaac had to move to a new location at the tender age of six when he lost his mother. His aunt who lived in the Greater Accra Region took him in and enrolled him in school. Not too long afterwards, the family had to relocate to a new community, Danfa far away from where his school was located.

On their way to Danfa, their new place of abode, the family discovered Amrahia Community School (ACS). Isaac's aunt inquired about the school, and he was subsequently enrolled there with his cousin. ACS provided Isaac with free meals and books through the International Needs Child Assistance Programme (INCAP). The school's environment was enjoyable, with frequent visits from international guests, beautiful buildings, and well-maintained flowers. The daily walk of about 5km to and from ACS was an arduous task but young Isaac was not deterred.

At ACS, Isaac got actively involved in the Theatre for Change Project which used drama to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS in Amrahia and its environs. Isaac played a major role in its concluding drama performance.

His involvement led to his selection to be part of three trips to Canada in 2008 and 2009 to raise funds to support INGH's work. Isaac met and stayed with his sponsor during these trips.

Isaac's dream of proceeding to Senior High School was shattered when his uncle who had promised to support him passed away but INGH was at hand to help him through Senior High School (SHS). After completing SHS, Isaac volunteered at his Alma mater, ACS as an assistant to the Grade one facilitator for two years before proceeding to the University of Ghana in 2017. He continued to receive tuition support from INGH while at the University.

With a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology with Political Science he fulfilled his mandatory one-year national service with the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, an assignment that helped him develop his skills in social work.

Presently, Isaac serves in the Gender and Empowerment Unit of International Needs Ghana specifically working on the Promoting Adolescents Safe Spaces (PASS) Project; co-ordinating programmes to empower adolescents to live a meaningful life. Looking back on his journey and how far he has come, Isaac is hopeful about the future and committed to helping the vulnerable and less privileged.

CREATING CHANGE:

INTENSIFYING SAFE SPACES FOR ADOLESCENTS IN THE CENTRAL REGION

CREATING CHANGE:

REACHING ADOLESCENTS THROUGH THE EXPANSION OF SAFE SPACES

Adolescents in 95 communities across the Central Region of Ghana, have been touched through the safe spaces established in their communities by International Needs Ghana (INGH).

In 2024, the **Promoting Adolescent Safe Spaces (PASS)** project marked a significant milestone by broadening their scope into two new districts in Ghana's Central Region: Assin Foso and Agona West Municipal Areas. Previously, the project had been successfully implemented in the Cape Coast Metropolis, Komenda/Edina/Eguafo/Abrem, and Mfantiman Municipal Areas, achieving remarkable results over the past five years.

Key successes of the project include; empowering adolescent girls to make informed decisions regarding relationships thereby reducing teenage pregnancies and child marriages in targeted districts and enabling adolescent mothers to leave cohabitation and return to school. Engaging men and boys as active partners in combating adolescent pregnancy and child marriage. These achievements underscore the transformative impact of the initiative in communities grappling with high rates of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage.

The decision to introduce the PASS project to Assin Foso and Agona West, while maintaining its presence in the Cape Coast Metropolis, was informed by data from the Ghana Statistical Service's thematic brief on child marriage. Recognizing the urgency of addressing these issues across the Central Region, stakeholders aim to replicate the positive outcomes achieved in previous districts.

To ensure the successful implementation of the project in the new areas, project officers from International Needs Ghana (INGH) conducted a courtesy visits to key stakeholders. These included: Municipal Chief Executives (MCEs), Municipal Coordinating Directors (MCDs), Development Planning Officers, The Department of Social Welfare (DSW), Ghana Health Service (GHS), Ghana Education Service (GES), and Traditional leaders.

Through collaborative discussions, 18 communities across the three districts were selected to benefit from the project.



As part of the rollout, community-based facilitators were trained to establish safe spaces for engaging boys and girls on crucial topics. These include: Adolescent development, personal and menstrual hygiene, adolescent pregnancy, risks and opportunities during adolescence, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, and child marriage.

The facilitators, drawn from diverse backgrounds such as education, healthcare, and local volunteerism, are integral to driving the project's impact at the grassroots level.

The enthusiasm from government stakeholders, facilitators, and community members is a promising indicator of the project's potential success in these new districts. By fostering collaboration and addressing critical adolescent issues, the PASS project aims to create lasting change in communities where child marriage and adolescent pregnancy remain a pressing challenge.

The PASS project is a partnership between International Needs Ghana (INGH) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), operating under the Global Program to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage. This collaboration continues to empower adolescents, strengthen community structures, and contribute to the broader goal of ending child marriage in Ghana.

PREPARING FOR THE NEXT LEVEL

International Needs Ghana held a mentorship session for 210 INCAP persons who were exiting the International Needs Child Assistance Programme (INCAP) after Senior High School and Vocational Training. Participants were equipped with essential skills and knowledge to help them make informed decisions about life after school and vocational training.



Mr. Isaac Arthur, Head of Programmes of INGH, advised SHS graduates to use their post-exam waiting period to reflect, plan, and set clear goals. He emphasized three key themes: awaiting time, decision time, and no retreat time to guide their next steps. The vocational training participants were also educated on how they could leverage on social media to market their businesses.

There was a health awareness session dubbed 'Ask your medical practitioner' with Dr. Samuel Lamptey, a beneficiary of INCAP, who provided participants with answers to some health-related issues.

Participants were introduced to the INCAP alumni group, designed to keep them connected and offer a strong network, support, and opportunities.

