

Our work in: **CHILD PROTECTION**



THE CHALLENGE - WHY OUR WORK IS NEEDED:

94%

of children
experience violence

The majority of our work protecting children from harm is preventative: tackling the driving forces that put children at risk of neglect, abuse and exploitation in the first place. We do this by improving family livelihood security to reduce the pressures of poverty and by ending customary practices that put children in danger, like corporal punishment, child marriage, child labour and discrimination of children with disabilities. However, child protection systems also need to be in place to identify children at risk now and protect them.

47%

of 5-17 year olds are
engaged in child
labour

In Ghana, child protection laws and policies, though perhaps disjointed, are there; Ghana was the first country in the world to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, it has ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (2005), it has the Children Act (1998) and many other standalone policies. However, since 2010, official analysis and mapping of the child protection systems in place to enable and enforce these policies have been found to be inadequate.

together such as welfare support, community development, violence prevention, justice and health are weak, limiting what each service can do in silo. While care reform initiatives have been introduced to promote fostering and reduce the risks of harmful institutional care, financial barriers to families being motivated to foster and able to meet the required standards remain.

The work of social welfare and community development officers is not being documented or monitored, meaning the impact and importance of this work is not being prioritised. Underinvestment means there are not enough officers and skills and training are lacking.

90,000+

children are on the
streets

Though data is scant, there are an estimated 90,000 children living and working on the streets of Ghana's capital region alone - a figure that has tripled in five years. The majority of children on the streets and engaged in hazardous labour across the country (including nearly a million children in the cocoa industry) are consistently found to be from the northern regions. These children are constantly exposed to risks of violence, abuse and exploitation.

957,398

children work in the
cocoa industry

As with education and health, our work strengthening child protection systems includes "informal" systems like community volunteers, campaigners and support groups; initiatives which involve the people who are in the settings that child protection issues occur every day, and so are best placed to lead prevention and act as first responders.

26%

of 20-24 year old
girls were married
before they turned
18

There are many bodies involved in preventing child abuse and promoting child welfare including official departments dedicated to children, gender and social welfare. Though the reality of widespread poverty in northern Ghana means children living on the streets, working dangerous jobs and marrying are commonplace and culturally normalised. Authorities are only able to protect a minority of children, often only the most extreme cases and are limited in the solutions they can provide. Links between systems that need to work

THE OPPORTUNITY - WHAT WE DO

Over the next five years we will listen to local people and empower them to make sustainable changes themselves in order to:



ENSURE MEANS

Ensure families and young people have secure livelihoods to ensure all children are safe and protected from harm

- Livelihood support packages of microloans and skills training for poor families
- Create alternative livelihoods and train traditional healers linked to "spirit child" belief
- Helping families access welfare support like national health insurance and free school meals



BUILD MOTIVE

Create Child Champion Communities that understand, value and protect the safety of all children

- End the belief in harmful traditional beliefs and practices (including "spirit children", child marriage)
- Promote knowledge, attitudes and practices that keep children safe, especially those most vulnerable to abuse
- Informing and empowering communities to support every child to be safe and protected from harm



CREATE OPPORTUNITY

Improve child protection services to ensure all children are safe and protected from harm

- Establish community-based child protection initiatives, including volunteer networks, to prevent and respond to child protection issues
- Strengthen capacity of public child protection services
- Support and incentivise children's care homes to maintain the highest standards of safeguarding and ensure community-based rehabilitation wherever possible (i.e. minimising the number of children in care).

TARGETS

76,386

support packages to help families improve their livelihood security

9,350

young people supported to access higher education/skills training

231,575

people benefitting from improved livelihoods and social security

235

Child Champion Communities informed and empowered to protect children's rights

96,938

children educated and empowered on their rights

349,487

people with improved knowledge, attitudes and practices towards child rights

224

communities with improved child protection services

69,126

at-risk children protected from harm

2,418

people engaged and upskilled to improve child protection services