



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES

ANNUAL REPORT

20
21



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Shaping Futures Strengthening Families

Welcome to our Annual Report, a showcase of our achievements, progress, and commitment to excellence throughout the year 2021.

SOS Children's Villages in Ghana

National Director: Alexander Mar Kekula

Reporting Period: 2021

Report Compiled by: Monalisa Zawada Obo-Mends

Edited and Designed by: Edith Efua Chidi

Guiding with Purpose, Inspiring Achievement

Dear Stakeholders,

As we reflect on 2021, I am filled with a sense of gratitude and purpose for the collective efforts that have sustained and advanced our mission to support children and young people without parental care or at risk of losing it. Despite the challenges of a rapidly changing world, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to ensuring every child grows up with the bonds they need to thrive.

This year, Ghana, like much of the world, continued to grapple with the socioeconomic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. These circumstances tested the resilience of families and communities, amplifying the critical need for our programs.

Through the dedication of our team and the unwavering support of our partners, we provided relief, protection, and long-term solutions to children in situations of vulnerability.

Highlights of our achievements include the expansion of family-strengthening initiatives, innovations in education and vocational training, and deeper community engagements aimed at addressing the root causes of family separation. These milestones reflect not only our commitment to the children we serve but also our shared belief in their potential to become confident, self-reliant individuals.

As we move forward, I encourage you to continue collaborating with us to create a society where every child's rights are realized, and every family is strengthened. Together, we can foster brighter futures for those who depend on us the most.

Thank you for standing with SOS Children's Villages in Ghana and for your enduring support.



Alexander Mar Kekula

National Director

Our Funding PSAs



**SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES**
THE NETHERLANDS



**SOS
BARNBYAR**



Strategic Leadership, Lasting Impact

Guided by a steadfast commitment to ensuring that every child grows up with the care and support they need, the Board of Directors of SOS Children's Villages Ghana provides strategic leadership to drive lasting impact. With diverse expertise and a shared vision, they uphold the organization's mission, ensuring quality care, advocacy, and sustainable solutions for children and young people at risk of losing parental care



Mr. Christian Appiah
Board Chairman



Mrs. Nana Abena Kwakye
Vice-chairperson & Chair For
Programme Development & Education



Mr. John Abbeo
Ombudsperson



Mrs. Victoria Barth
Legal and Compliance



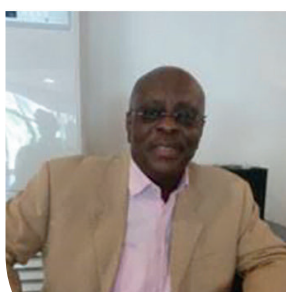
Mrs. Dora G.A. Inkumsah Eshun
Chairperson for Child Care and
Safeguarding



Mr. Peter Mensah-Abrampah
Chair, Audit and Risk Management



Mrs. Truedy Osae
Member



Mr. Isaac Sackey
Board Secretary



Mrs. Constance Swaniker:
Chairperson, Fundraising



Talent Unleashed, Innovation Ignited

Meet our dedicated team of professionals who have contributed their expertise, passion, and collaboration to drive our success.



Alexander Mar Kekula
National Director



Anthony Owusu Gyamfi
National Programmes Development
Manager



Clement Kofi Fosu
Financial Controller



Theophilus Quaye
HROD Admin Manager



Bright Adanusa
Internal Auditor



Monalisa Zawada Obo-Mends
Monitoring and Evaluation Manager



Edith Efua Chidi
Advocacy, Communication
and Brands Manager



Nana Aba Sampson
Fund Development Manager



Prince Opare Anobaah
ICT Manager



George Yaw Boateng
National Alternative Care Advisor



Mavis A. A. Ekpe
National Family
Strengthening Advisor



Godknows Kporha
National Youth Development
Advisor



Josiah Bernard Nartey
National Child Safeguarding
Advisor



Eugenia Serwaah Cobbina
Institutional Partnerships
Development Advisor



Andrew Malm
Senior Accountant



Rosemond Boamah
Programme Director
Tema Location



Daniel Baani
Programme Director
Asiakwa Location



Bernard Amoako
Programme Director
Kumasi Location



Benedicta Pealore
Programme Director
Tamale Location

Our Strategic Values



Our Mission

We build families for children in need, we help them shape their own futures, and we share in the development of their communities.

Our Vision

Every child belongs to a family and grows with love, respect and security.

Our Core Values

COURAGE: We take Action

COMMITMENT: We keep our Promises

TRUST: We Believe in each other

ACCOUNTABILITY: We are reliable Partners

Our Strategic 2030 Pillars



Our 5 Priorities 2020-2024



National Context and Stakeholders

According to the recently conducted census, Ghana's population currently stands at 30.8 million, comprising 50.69 percent females and 49.3 percent males. The results of the census revealed that Ghana has a growing youthful population.

The unemployment rate among the population 15 years and older is 13.4 percent, which is higher for females than males. 32.8 percent of young adults 15-24 years are unemployed.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Ghana's economy had grown at an average of 7 percent from 2017 to 2019, before experiencing a sharp contraction in 2020. The rapid economic growth was halted by the COVID-19 pandemic; the lockdown enforced in March 2020 because of the pandemic, and a sharp decline in commodity exports. The economic slowdown had a considerable impact on households, and increased poverty levels in the country. Headline inflation also remained relatively high at 12.6 percent by December 2021, as compared to the pre-COVID level of 7.9 percent as at March, 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic had both economic and social effects on households in Ghana. The restrictions imposed because of the pandemic affected businesses. Several households had to resort to various coping strategies to deal with the negative financial impact of the pandemic. The most common coping strategies used included relying on savings, reducing food consumption, borrowing from friends and family, and resorting to on-credit purchases.

As part of its relief efforts, the Government provided subsidies on electricity and water and distributed welfare packages in the form of food and first aid kits to vulnerable communities. In addition, the Government is undertaking initiatives to administer COVID-19 vaccines to its populace.

Non-state actors such as CBOs, FBOs, and philanthropists, provided significant support in complementing the Government's efforts to lessen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on families and communities. However, despite the measures and interventions put in place by Government and non-government institutions to alleviate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, not all localities could benefit from the interventions.

The Government of Ghana during the year under review, announced its intention to introduce an electronic transaction levy (E-levy) to widen the tax net, which would increase the country's tax to GDP rate from 13 percent to 16 percent, or more. The proposed E-levy, which is expected to come into effect on February 1, 2022, will impose a 1.75 percent tax on the value of daily electronic transactions above GHc100.00. Sections of the populace however have expressed their disapproval of the decision, indicating that the implementation of the E-Levy would have a negative impact on businesses, and impede the functioning of Ghana's financial system and the real economy. Further concerns have also been raised on the possibility of the E-levy becoming a burden on the rural poor, who have limited financial payment options and often depend on inward means of remittances.



The MA during the year under review, continued to implement locally relevant activities to complement the work of government in the area of child protection. Ten children who required a temporary haven were admitted into short-term care, and 3,295 vulnerable children were supported under the Family Strengthening Programme. Two hundred and thirty (230) vulnerable families were supported with grants for Income Generation Activities, to ensure the care and protection of their children, and three hundred and eight (308) young people under the TVET component of the FS Programme received life and employability skills trainings to facilitate their self-reliance.

As part of the MAs' commitment to ensuring the wellbeing of beneficiaries, a professional counsellor has been recruited to provide counselling services to children and families in need of such services.

The MAs' Youth Development Programme which aims at empowering young people to attain self-reliance, successfully rolled out two new projects; YouthLink and YouthCan! To provide young people with employability and entrepreneurial skills. Through the youth development interventions implemented in the year under review, 440 young people received trainings targeted at increasing their entrepreneurship, employability, leadership and life skills.

Twenty-two (22) young people through the MAs' youth development initiatives, successfully attained self-reliance during the year under review.

In furtherance of the goal to sustain the benefits of project interventions, the MA strengthened its collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare in all areas of operation ranging from strengthening the gatekeeping process to admitting the MAs' target group. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are also being empowered to play lead roles in project implementation, and the capacity of Child Protection Committees established in communities of operation are also being built through targeted trainings in child protection.



Achievements

Targeted trainings were conducted for stakeholders (including children, young people, staff, FS caregivers, and partners) to contextualise the child protection policy in the 4 programme locations.

The national programme team conducted local mapping to document identifiable Legal Instruments and identify key stakeholders engaged in child protection and child welfare work from preventive, responsive and rehabilitative perspectives. This exercise aimed to identify potential partners and services to leverage as an MA

Child-Led Child Safeguarding Risk Assessments were conducted at both the national and programme location levels. The participatory approach employed in conducting the exercise facilitated the identification of potential CS risks in the MAs' programmes and operations. This informed the MAs' mitigation strategy

SOS parents, FS caregivers, and teachers have been equipped with the requisite knowledge and skills on how to use Positive Discipline as a way of preventing child abuse.

The capacity of the National Board, National Management Team, and the 5 CS Teams at the national office and programme locations have been built in child safeguarding. This has resulted in an improvement in the execution of their respective roles and responsibilities in child safeguarding.

A child safeguarding committee set up on the MAs' board to support child safeguarding decision-making processes and to respond to child safeguarding incidents that may involve senior staff

An Ombudsman appointed by the Board

10 beneficiaries were admitted into the short-term care programme as part of efforts to increase the local relevance of SOS programmes.

A Foster Care license was obtained for the MA, and all caregivers trained in Foster Care

MA's Alternative Care Programme aligned to the National Care Reform Initiative, to include other care options (Foster Care, Kinship Care, Short Term Care, and Small Group Homes)

Comprehensive re-assessment of 85 children and their families of origin was conducted to explore the possibility of reunification

3,295 vulnerable children supported in 4 programme locations

308 youth trained in soft and hard skills to improve their livelihood and facilitate their self-reliance

230 caregivers supported with grants for Income Generation Activities to facilitate family strengthening

Capacity development training was conducted for 15 Key Implementing Partners to sustain project interventions

FS Mid-Term evaluation conducted for 4 programme locations

Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan developed for the MA

Twenty-two (20) self-reliant exits made under the Youth Development Programme

Four partnerships were established with youth-focused organizations and corporate bodies to enhance youth empowerment and employability. MOU signed with all four partners.

440 young people trained to increase their entrepreneurship, employability, leadership and life skills.

Two new projects; YouthLink and YouthCan! aimed at empowering young people with employability skills, have been rolled out. Four 4 young people have been enrolled on a cross-border mentorship via the YouthLink community platform.

The National Youth Development User Guide was developed to support the implementation of Youth Empowerment intervention activities

MA Advocacy Strategy and Crisis Communication Strategy developed

A media knowledge management session held and the SOS Media caucus launched with 15 mainstream media outfits
Brand refresh projects to improve MA visibility completed

128 new committed givers recruited. The process of cultivating sporadic donors into committed givers

71% of the targeted income from local donors raised

78% of the targeted amount to be raised through strategic Institutional Partnerships achieved

Local Sponsorship Guidelines for money gifts, local sponsors and visitors developed and rolled out

Donor Management Strategy developed to guide recruitment and retention of committed givers

80% of basic level RBM Implementation achieved

Gender policy developed and rolled out to promote gender mainstreaming and inclusion in all programmes

SOS Care Leavers Network was established to foster sustainable supportive relationships among former beneficiaries

MA National Safety and Security Policy developed

Risk Assessment conducted to review existing Risk Register

Investment in internet infrastructure made in all four-programme locations. All four locations connected to stable 10mbps internet, including the National office with 20mbps through radio and fibre link.

MA Ghana has successfully established ICT4D in all four programme locations; 8 laptops have been provided in each location

Digital villages established in all four programme locations

Recommendations of Internal and External Audit successfully implemented



Challenges

The saturation of the MA's calendar with many planned and unplanned activities (especially workshops) involving the same CS stakeholders, sometimes delayed the commencement of planned CS activities.

Some stakeholders who made inputs into the risk assessment report did not show enough evidence of reliability and validity but insisted their inputs should be considered as key. This compromised the objectivity of reliability and predictive validity if the CS teams in the locations did not insist on empirical evidence of exiting risks.

The rapid spread of the deadly delta variant of the coronavirus affected the engagement of our stakeholders in face-to-face meeting settings. Meetings in the form of dialogue and training sessions had to be segmented to reduce the numbers and to ensure proper physical distancing.

Restrictions imposed by the Government due to the COVID-19 Pandemic affected the admission of beneficiaries, and referral sources became reluctant to refer children to care institutions.

Low remuneration and uncompetitive staff salaries compared to current market trends, coupled with unstable forex rates and high inflationary rates have affected staff morale and productivity in the delivery of programme outcomes.

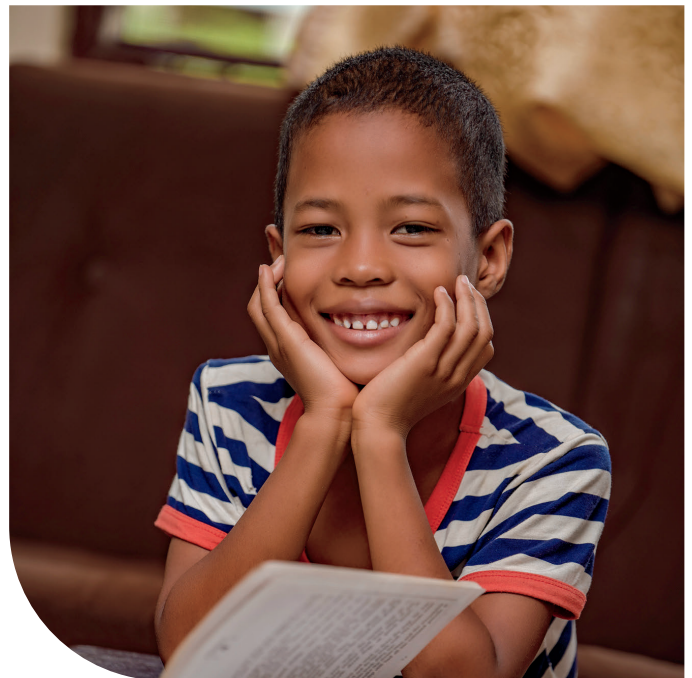
The change in the school calendar affected youth participation in activities organized for young people. Some beneficiaries could not participate in the boot camps and youth day events organized for young people

The instability of internet connectivity affected the quality of virtual meetings organized for young people

Inactive child protection coalitions posed a challenge to the development of partnerships

Lack of human and financial resources to invest in the successful implementation of fund development activities

The unavailability of CRM software continues to affect the quality of donor management in the MA



Lessons Learned

Keeping the child safeguarding commitment means continually improving stakeholders' capacity and existing processes

Involving all key stakeholders in child safeguarding and promoting their commitment and accountability promotes local ownership

Participation of children and young people in the implementation of child safeguarding policies and procedures is key to achieving sustainable outcomes

Improving board and management oversight of child safeguarding is the best way to strengthen our commitment to the sustained implementation of quality care

Making child safeguarding topics and processes open, visible and accessible to all, increases awareness of child safeguarding; easing perceptions that child safeguarding is a feared or "tabooed" topic

Partnership with private entities within the project communities to facilitate attachment, coaching and mentoring for youth beneficiaries could create employment opportunities for some of the youth and caregivers.

It is necessary to build the capacities of all community structures, mechanisms and initiatives instead of focusing entirely on CBOs, as this does not ensure the full sustainability of project interventions

Linking vulnerable FS caregivers to existing creditable micro-financial institutions and other social grants in addition to the Village Savings and Loan Association intervention makes access to financial support more sustainable, and facilitates financial inclusion

The FS project's ability to respond to the immediate needs of the beneficiaries in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to sustaining the momentum of the project.

The provision of direct material support such as school uniforms, school fees, learning materials, clothing and foodstuffs free, though based on the needs and priorities of the beneficiary families, created a dependency mentality.

Difficulty in getting youth to remain committed to the programme module. To attract the interest of youth to the programme, the project's age definition of youth had to be revised from 18-25 years (in the concept note) to 15-35 years to correspond with that of the Youth Policy of Ghana. Sustaining the interest of the youth included considering the recruitment cycle to include their desired trade and skills.

Young people need to be involved in all activities organized for them. This enhances ownership and buy-in of programme objectives

The new post-COVID academic calendar must be taken into consideration when planning events for beneficiaries



Continuous capacity development of the Gatekeeping Committee ensures that project interventions and services are provided to the right target group (beneficiaries).

The introduction of a child-led assessment to enable children to assess and provide feedback on the care and protection they receive provides an opportunity to adjust and improve service provision.

Enrolling beneficiaries into community schools with similar standards to the SOS HGS is a good practice for increasing social integration.

Children who are unhappy about their long stay in the CV tend to put up negative behaviour that is difficult to manage or modify.

Semi-skilled youth in the Programme who were motivated to start up their businesses or find employment, recorded a higher success rate of achieving self-reliance than unskilled youth recruited to learn a trade

The recruitment of an Intern to manage and consolidate donor data across all locations, as well as send out planned communication, had a direct positive impact on the progress made in raising funds for the MA. This, coupled with the aid of CRM software will improve the MAs' fundraising prospects and general performance

Crosscutting

In ensuring gender mainstreaming, the MA ensured that there was a balanced gender ratio at all levels of decision making, at all times. Services provided to beneficiaries and staff were gender-sensitive and barrier free

Sustainability Actions

Improving board and management oversight of child safeguarding is the best way to strengthen the commitment to sustained implementation of quality care

Building the capacities of all community structures, mechanisms and initiatives instead of focusing too much on CBOs only is necessary to ensure sustainability of the project.

Linking vulnerable FS caregivers to existing creditable micro-financial institutions and other social grants in addition to the VSLA intervention makes access to financial support more sustainable.

Empowering Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to play lead roles in project implementation.

Ensuring the independence of Child Protection Committees in the execution of their role of addressing child protection issues in the community.

Collaborating with the Department of Social Welfare to strengthen the gatekeeping process in the location.

Engaging the services of a volunteer professional counsellor to provide counselling support to families in need of such services.

Description of National Context

Population

According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, Ghana has a population of 30.8 million; this comprises 50.69 percent females and 49.3 percent males. Results from the census conducted revealed that Ghana has a growing youthful population. The population age structure is transitioning from one dominated by children (0-14 years) to one dominated by young people (15-35 years): The proportion of children in the country declined from 41.3 percent in 2000 to 35.3 percent in 2021, while that of young people increased from 34.6 percent in 2000 to 38.2 percent in 2021.

Household Income

The mean annual income of a household in an urban locality in the country, during the year under review was GH¢46,902, which is higher than the national average of GH¢ 33, 937, while the mean annual income of a household in a rural locality was GH¢ 16, 373.

The annual average per capita income in urban localities in the country was GH¢16,373 implying an average income of GH¢44.86 per day, while the yearly average per capita income in rural localities was GH¢5,880 which represents an average income of GH¢16.11 per day (Ghana Living Standards Survey 7, 2019)



Unemployment

The unemployment rate among the population 15 years and older was 13.4 percent. This was higher for females (15.5%) than males (11.6%). Among the population 15-35 years, the unemployment rate was 19.7 percent, and was much higher for young adults 15-24 years (32.8%).

More than half (53.3%) of the employed population 15 years and older work in the services sector, followed by the agriculture sector (33.0%). The industry sector has the least percentage of the employed population 15 years and older (13.7%).

Education

Educational levels in the Northern and Savannah regions of the country is relatively low. According to the recently conducted Population and Housing Census (2021), the proportion of the population 3 years and older that have never attended school is 57.4% in the Savannah region, 50.0% in the North East region, 47.5% in the Northern region, 39.4% in the Upper West region, and 37.4% in the Upper East region.

Child Labour

Approximately 3.2 percent of children 5-14 years in the country are engaged in economic activity, with a substantially higher proportion in rural areas (5.7%) compared to urban areas (1.0%). Of this, about 80 percent are involved in agriculture-related activities, with the highest proportion in the Savannah region (89.8%) and the least in Greater Accra region (26.2%). In the Greater Accra Region, children's involvement in economic activity is predominantly in service and sales.

Health Insurance Coverage

Seven in ten persons in Ghana (68.6 %) have health insurance coverage, with higher coverage for females (72.6%) than males (64.5%).

Water and Sanitation

Nine in ten households (92.0%) have access to improved sources of drinking water in Ghana. This proportion is higher for urban (97.8%) than rural (83.0%) households. The average time households without water on their premises spend to access any source of drinking water is 19 minutes. This duration is generally longer in rural (22 minutes) than in urban (13 minutes) areas. In the regions, the time spent to access any source of drinking water is longest in the Savannah (33 minutes), Northern and North East (32 minutes). This duration is relatively shorter in the Central and Ashanti (13 minutes) regions.

Technology

About 17 percent of persons 12 years and older do not own any functional ICT device. This proportion is higher among females (19.3%) than males (14.1%) and in rural (26.6%) than urban (9.8%) areas.

Smart mobile phones (73.1%) are the most widely owned functional ICT devices among persons 12 years and older, and it is 10 times the proportion of persons possessing laptops.

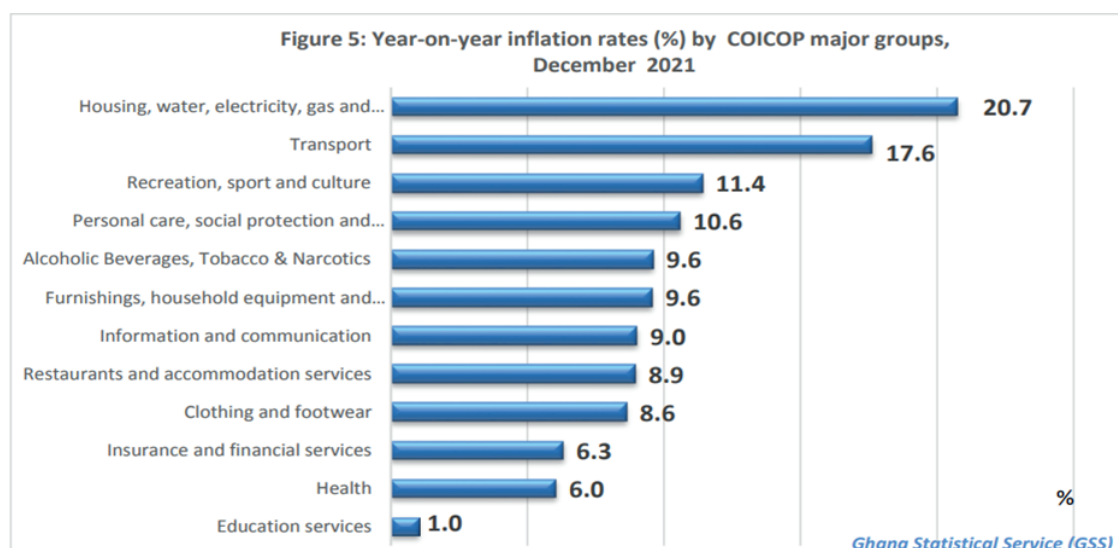
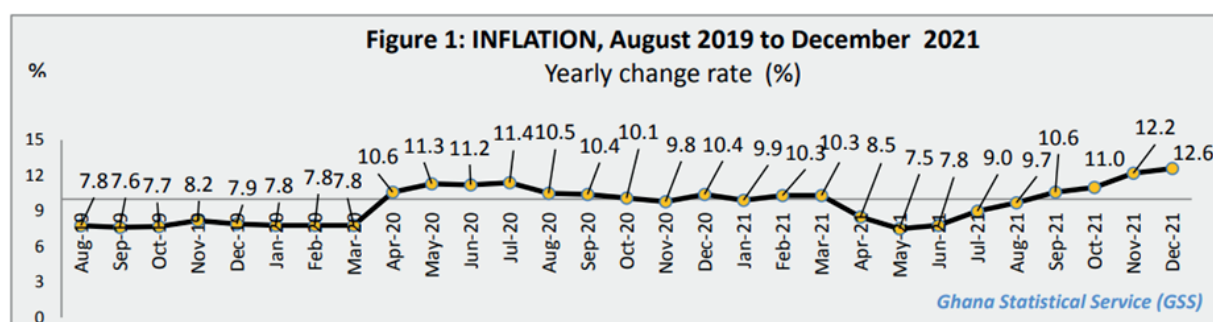
Smart mobile phones have also become the main source of internet access, and this is predominant in the urban areas than in the rural areas. More than two-thirds (68.2%) of persons 6 years and older access the internet with a smart phone. Nearly three in five persons 12 years and older use mobile phones for financial transactions; this is also an urban phenomenon, with proportions above 50 percent in all regions.

Overview of Economic Developments in 2021

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ghana's economy had grown at an average of 7 percent in 2017 to 2019, before experiencing a sharp contraction in 2020. The rapid economic growth was halted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the lockdown enforced in March 2020 as a result of the pandemic, and a sharp decline in commodity exports. The economic slowdown had a considerable impact on households and increased poverty levels in the country.

Headline inflation remained relatively high at 12.6 percent in December 2021. Despite the efforts by the Bank of Ghana in reducing the policy rate to mitigate the pandemic-induced food price shock and support the recovery, inflation inched up month on month peaking at 12.6 percent by December 2021. This was mostly due to higher inflation in Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Utilities; and Transport.





Economic Outlook

The economic outlook for Ghana is positive and is projected to recover gradually in the short to medium term, contingent on an increase in demand for Ghana's exports, improved business confidence, and successful implementation of the Ghana COVID-19 Alleviation and Revitalization of Enterprise Support program. Growth is projected to increase to 4.1 percent in 2022, while inflation is expected to rise from 12.6 percent in December 2021 to 17 percent by December 2022.

Government Policy on Tax (e-Levy)

The Government of Ghana announced its intention to introduce an electronic transaction levy (E-levy) during the 2022 budget statement reading. The intention behind the introduction of the levy was necessary to widen the tax net, which would increase the country's tax to GDP rate from 13 percent to 16 percent, or more. The proposed E-levy, which is expected to come into effect on February 1, 2022, will impose a 1.75 percent tax on the value of daily electronic transactions above GHc100.00.

While the Government maintains that the E-Levy would be a driving force for Ghana's economy, particularly with the country's high debt profile, sections of the populace expressed their disapproval of the decision, indicating that the implementation of the E-Levy would hurt businesses, and impede the functioning of Ghana's financial system and the real economy. Further concerns have been raised on the possibility of the E-levy becoming a burden on the shoulders of the rural poor, who have limited financial payment options and often depend on inward means of remittances.

The minority in Parliament also insist that the 1.75 percent tax would exacerbate the plight of the already burdened Ghanaians heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic had both economic and social effects on households in Ghana. The restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic affected businesses tremendously. Seven to eight out of ten businesses experienced a reduction in production and sales, as well as a reduction in labour supply, resulting in an increase in the prices of goods and services.

68.2 percent of working Ghanaians indicated that their household income decreased in the year under review (COVID-19 Households and Jobs Tracker, Wave 3, 2021). Several households had to resort to various coping strategies to deal with the negative financial impact of the pandemic. The most common coping strategies used included relying on savings, reducing food consumption, borrowing from friends and family, and resorting to on-credit purchases.

The purchasing of PPEs (face masks, hand sanitizers, face shields, etc.) has also become an additional household expenditure. In 2021, the median expenditure on PPEs per household was GH¢ 12.00, with households in urban areas spending slightly higher (GH¢ 14.00) than in rural areas (GH¢ 10.30) (COVID-19 Households and Jobs Tracker, Wave 3, 2021).

The Ghana Police Service during the period under review, reported an increase in crime which they indicated was as a result of increased economic hardships caused by the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic. About three out of ten communities experienced a rise in crime, such as theft and burglary. There was also a reported increase in domestic violence and assaults in many communities.

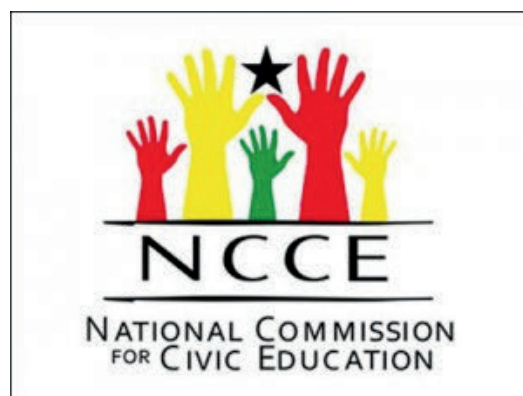
Government, as part of its relief efforts provided subsidies on electricity and water, and distributed welfare packages in the form of food and first aid kits to vulnerable communities.

The Government is currently undertaking initiatives to administer COVID-19 vaccines to its populace. As at December 2021, only 7.5 percent of Ghanaians eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccination had been fully vaccinated.

Non-state actors such as CBOs, FBOs, and philanthropists also provided significant support in complementing Government's efforts to lessen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on families and communities. Seven out of ten localities received some form of assistance including food and personal protective equipment (PPEs) from non-state actors.

In spite of the measures and interventions put in place by Government and non-government institutions to alleviate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, not all localities could benefit from the interventions. Rural communities that did not have access to electricity or water from the national grid were unable to benefit from the governments' subsidies, and this put them at a huge disadvantage.







Programmes Overview

It is significant to note that conducting a Child-Led CS risk assessment, was a major achievement because it allowed children, who are the direct beneficiaries of this exercise, to participate actively in conducting the risk assessment. This approach reinforced to the children, the MAs' commitment to ensuring their safety and protection. In addition, by involving children in this risk assessment, they were empowered to exercise their participatory rights.

Building the capacities of all community structures, mechanisms and initiatives instead of focusing too much on CBOs only, is necessary to ensure the sustainability of the project.

Linking vulnerable FS caregivers to existing creditable micro-financial institutions and other social grants in addition to the VSLA intervention makes access to financial support more sustainable.

The recruitment of an Intern to manage and consolidate donor data across all locations, as well as send out planned communication, had a direct positive impact on progress made in raising funds for the MA. This, coupled with the aid of a CRM software will improve the MAs' fund raising prospects and general performance.



Alternative Care

During the year under review, sixty- seven children were admitted into the various Alternative Care options.

The MA successfully implemented short-term care, and through collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare, admitted 10 children into Short Term Care. The MA has also successfully obtained a Foster Care license. All SOS caregivers have thus received training in Foster Care.

In order to ensure the coherence of all programmes, the MA's Alternative Care Programme has been aligned to the National Care Reform Initiative to include other care options (Foster Care, Kinship Care, Short Term Care, and Small Group Homes). All board members, caregivers, and key staff have thus received training on the National Care Reform Initiative.

The Foster Care Reform Initiative, Guidelines for Short Term Care and Foster Care, as well as the Gatekeeping Guidelines, and Guideline for SOS Families in Communities, have been developed and approved by the board and IOR. The MAs' four programme locations are currently being registered as Residential Care under the Department of Social Welfare.



A comprehensive re-assessment of 85 children and their families of origin was completed during the year under review. Findings from the re-assessment conducted indicated that the majority of the families of origin would like to be reunified with their children if only the support needs of the children are catered for by SOS.

As part of efforts to provide quality care to beneficiaries under the Alternative Care Programme, Fifty-one SOS Mothers and 5 Youth Care co-workers were trained on youth management.

Challenges

Restrictions imposed by Government due to the COVID-19 Pandemic affected the admission of beneficiaries; referral sources became reluctant to refer children to care institutions.



Family Strengthening

The FS Project during the year of review supported 3,295 vulnerable children in four programme locations.

In order to increase access to employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, 308 youth received life skills training.

The project planned to provide grants to 170 caregivers during the year under review. However, 230 caregivers upon assessment qualified to receive support for Income Generation Activities.

In order to ensure the sustainability of interventions, 15 Key Implementing Partners were identified and trained in organizational development.

A mid-term evaluation was conducted in three programme locations to assess project progress, while an end of project evaluation was conducted in one programme location, to assess impact of interventions, and also incorporate lessons learnt into subsequent projects.

A total of forty-nine (49) staff and stakeholders received training on Emergency Preparedness and Response. An Emergency Preparedness Plan for the MA has thus been developed.

Challenges

Despite the achievements above, some challenges encountered during the reporting period, included difficulty in getting youth to remain committed to the programme module.

To attract the interest of youth to the programme, the project's age definition of youth had to be revised from 18-25 years (in the concept note) to 15-35 years to correspond with that of the Youth Policy of Ghana. Sustaining the interest of the youth included giving considerations to the recruitment cycle to include their desired trade and skills.

In addition, the provision of direct material support such as uniforms, school fees, learning materials, clothing and foodstuff for free, though based on the needs and priorities of the beneficiary families, created a dependency mentality.

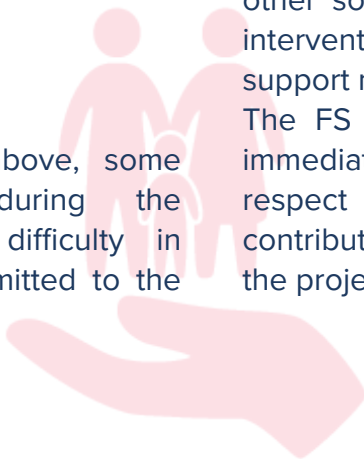
Lessons Learned

Partnership with private entities within the project communities to facilitate attachment, coaching and mentoring for youth beneficiaries could create employment opportunities for some of the youth and caregivers.

Building the capacities of all community structures, mechanisms and initiatives instead of focusing too much on CBOs only is necessary to ensure sustainability of the project.

Linking vulnerable FS caregivers to existing creditable micro-financial institutions and other social grants in addition to the VSLA intervention makes access to financial support more sustainable.

The FS project's ability to respond to the immediate needs of the beneficiaries in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to sustaining the momentum of the project.



Youth Care and Employability

Four partnerships were established with youth focused organizations and corporate bodies to enhance youth empowerment and employability. MOU were signed with all four organisations.

As part of their development, 440 young people in SOS CV Ghana programmes received training on entrepreneurship, employability, leadership and life skills. The trainings conducted were aimed at empowering young people with social skills, employability skills, and entrepreneurial skills to help them make informed decisions concerning their lives and future career path.

French classes were organized for twenty (22) young people from all four programme locations. The classes were organized for the young people because they could not go to Benin for the cultural and exchange learning programmes due to the closure of land borders, as result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Two new projects; YouthLink and YouthCan! which aimed at empowering young people with employability skills were rolled out during the year under review. Four (4) young people were enrolled on a cross border mentorship via the YouthLink community platform.

Although the National Youth Assembly Delegate Conference could not come off as planned, beneficiaries of the MAs' Youth Development Programme were represented at the 2022 National Planning workshop, to make input into the 2022 MA National Plan.

The MA has developed a National Youth Development User Guide to support the implementation of Youth Empowerment intervention activities.

Twenty-two (22) young people in tertiary institutions accessed the internship programmes established with partner organisations including; AmaliTech, Empat-Caiqou Medical Centre and DHL

Twenty two (22) self-reliant exits were made during the year under review.

One young person had the opportunity to join other young people from Bulgaria and Mauritius in the Moonshot Pirate Challenge. This is a global movement of future-oriented talents & young change makers empowered to build on their passion, gain relevant skills, and explore possibilities of the latest technologies. As part of their studies, they identified a challenge facing the world today and generated solutions using technology through a video presentation.

Programme location staff together with the Youth Assembly members received training on the newly developed Youth Participation User Guide. The training was aimed at empowering staff to promote youth participation in all activities for young people.

Challenges

The change in the school calendar affected youth participation in activities organized for young people. Some beneficiaries were unable to attend the boot camps and youth day events organized, as a result of conflicting academic activities.

There was also a challenge of unstable internet connectivity, which affected participation in virtual meetings, and other activities organized virtually for young people.

Lessons Learned

Young people need to be involved in all activities organized for them. This enhances their participation and ownership of the activities

The new school calendar must be considered when organizing events for young people.



Advocacy

In the 2021 implementation year, MA Ghana was involved in strategic partnerships contributing significantly to advocating for children within our target group on varied issues that affect them. One key partnership formed was with the Department of Children.

Advocacy implementation in the MA did not take off totally due to the inability to finalize the MA's advocacy strategy. The draft strategy has to be updated with two more thematic areas since the areas stated were not enough to be implemented for a four-year period. The Regional Advocacy Advisor visited the MA and helped put together other thematic areas, which MA Ghana should start implementing by July 2022.

Achievements

Even though no formal MoU was signed, discussions are far advanced for MA Ghana to lead the process to draft a National Standard Safeguarding manual for caregivers providing Alternative Care in Ghana.

Partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

MA Ghana participated in an introductory meeting with the new Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) to brainstorm on key areas her ministry should focus on. This meeting was attended by key players in the child welfare sector, Government Officials, Civil Society Organizations and Development Partners, as well as Academia. The Minister has indicated her commitment to collaborate with organizations to promote child rights in the country.

Ghana National Household Registry Data Dissemination

In 2020, the Ghana National Household Registry (GNHR) completed data collection in the three Northern regions (Northern, Savannah and North East Regions).

The Registry, a Unit under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) is mandated to establish a single database of all households in Ghana for social intervention programs. The results and key highlights of the data was physically disseminated in June 2021. MA Ghana participated in the dissemination exercise. The session was attended by major stakeholders from the Regional, Municipal, Metropolitan, and District Assembly level, which provided an opportunity to establish partnerships with like-minded organisations.

Social Protection Sector Working Group

MA Ghana participated in the twenty-second session of the Social Protection Sector Working Group in March 2021. The Sector Working Group on Social Protection brings together Government Officials, Civil Society Organizations and Development Partners, as well as Academia and other key stakeholders to share, discuss and identify key issues to be addressed in the area of social protection and poverty reduction in Ghana.

The meeting areas focused on the 2021 annual work plans of the Social Protection Directorate (SPD), Ghana National Household Registry (GNHR), and of the five Social Protection flagship programmes. Discussions were held on increasing access to formal social security and social insurance in the informal sector, as well as shared work on CSO activities on social protection.



Build Capacity of Co-workers

A draft National Advocacy Strategy has been developed, and key advocacy issues are being identified as additional areas to be incorporated into the National Strategy. Since most activities are implemented at the location level, two advocacy workshops for key staff at the Asiakwa and Kumasi locations were organized to identify key child rights issues to be incorporated into the Strategy.

Challenges

Inactive child protection coalitions posed a challenge to the development of partnerships. Insufficient funds to support the efforts of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. For instance in a meeting with the National Director of the Department of Children, she mentioned the Department is not well resourced hence they rely on UNICEF for financial support. If the MA had the resources to support them, we would become their go-to NGO to call on for partnerships.



Human Resources

HR Achievements

The staff Conditions of Service has been revised, and is currently awaiting Board's Approval

Two Alternative Care Advisors were recruited for two programme locations, to replace previous staff who had proceeded on retirement.

A customized SOS Parents Profession Guidelines has been drafted for the MA

Challenges

Low remuneration and uncompetitive staff salaries comparative to current market trends, coupled with unstable forex rates and high inflationary rates in the country has affected staff morale and productivity in the delivery of programme outcomes.

Internal Processes and Digitalization: Internet Infrastructure

Investment of internet infrastructure made in all four programme locations, and the national office. All four locations connected to stable 10mbps internet, including the National office with 20mbps through radio and fibre link.

ICT4D

MA Ghana has successfully established ICT4D in all locations. Eight laptops have been provided in each location.

Digital villages established in all four programme locations





Fund Development

As part of the MAs' efforts to provide efficient donor stewardship, a 3-day donor management workshop was organized for key frontline staff (security officers, administrative assistants and finance officers) to build their capacity in donor management.

A Donor Management Strategy has been developed to guide donor management and recruitment procedures. Additionally, the unit has developed money gift guidelines to regulate the disbursement of 'child money gifts' to children and young people in the process of becoming independent

All Sponsorship, Communications and FS Officers have received an advanced videography and photography training aimed at improving their skills in the production of pictures and videos for content development. Three trainings were also conducted for location IPD teams, to increase their knowledge in fund development

A total number of one hundred and twenty eight (128) new committed givers were recruited during the year under review.

Challenges

The challenges of the department continue to be the limited human and financial resources needed to invest in fund development activities. Additionally, the unavailability of a CRM software reduces the efficiency of the donor management process.

The inability of corporate partners to honour their commitments also affected the projected income for the year under review.

Lessons Learnt

The recruitment of an Intern to manage and consolidate donor data across all locations, as well as send out planned communication, had a direct positive impact on progress made in raising funds for the MA. This, coupled with the aid of a CRM software will improve the MAs' fund raising prospects and general performance.



Economic Outlook and Growth

The economy seemingly lost some steam in Q4 as compared to the steady rise at half year. Available data suggests unfavourable consumption dynamics, as the consumer confidence index deteriorated in the quarter.

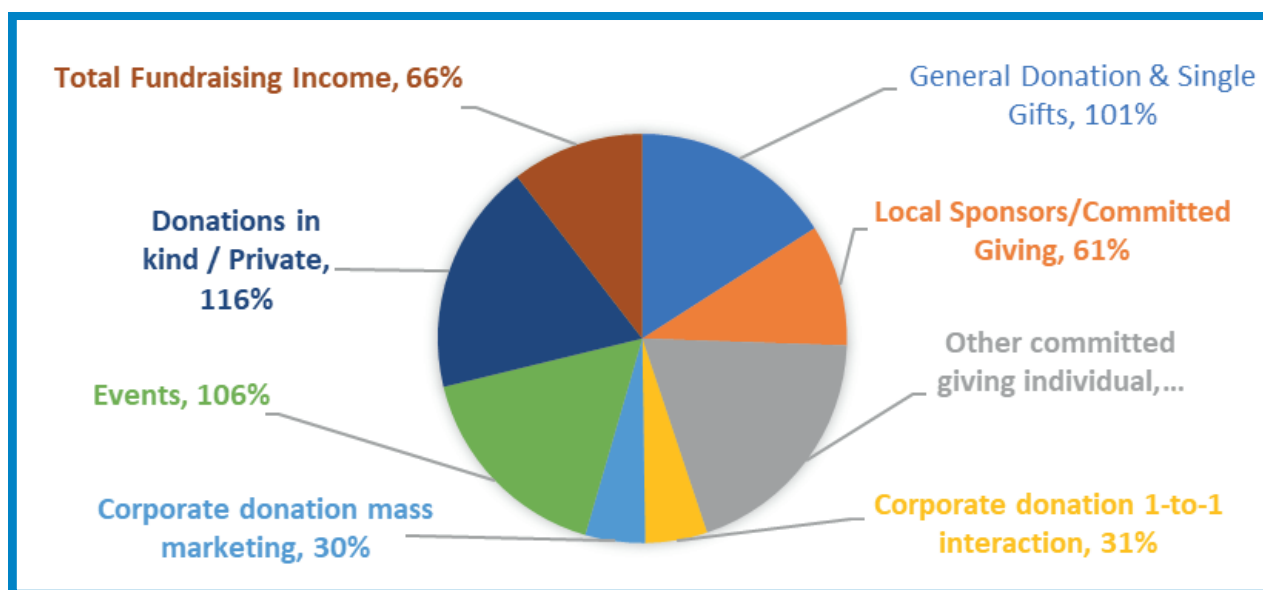
Ghana's ability to push economic growth to its pre-crisis level is expected to be constrained by fiscal and debt risks. The country is only expected to return to its fiscal responsibility budget deficit threshold of 5% of GDP in 2024. The public debt as at the end of 2019 had cost escalation risks because almost 50% of external debt was commercial. It also showed refinancing and foreign exchange rate risks, since 90% of the domestic debt has short- to medium-term maturities, and 70% of the foreign currency debt was denominated in US dollars. The downside risks to the outlook in 2021 emanate from a possible second wave of the coronavirus, and heightened fiscal and debt pressures.

Inflation: Ghana's annual inflation rate accelerated for the seventh straight month to 12.6% in December 2021. That was the highest rate since May of 2017, exceeding the Bank of Ghana's target band of 6% to 10% for a fourth straight month.

Exchange Rate: The Ghana cedi deteriorated against major currencies in the last quarter of 2021. The cedi ended at GHS 6.20 to the US dollar at close of the year under review.

Income: At end of year, out of the projected local income of GHS 9,000,479.06 the MA realized GHS 10,570,287.42 representing 117 percent. The target was exceeded because the MA generated more local income from school fees; this was due to an increase in school enrolment, as a result of the creation of a third stream in the Tema, Asiakwa and Tamale HGS.

Despite exceeding local income raised, the MA could not achieve its planned target of GHS 858,000. Only GHS 568,299.17 was realised, representing 66% of the target. This underachievement occurred because most of the corporate/major donors were still recovering from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and could not commit funds to support the MAs' programmes.



Fundraising Income raised in percentages for 2021



Expenditure

The MA spent GHS 29,413,364.98 out of a revised budget of GHS 28,900,237.14. In percentage terms 102% of the budget was spent. The over expenditure is attributed mainly to cost associated with increase in price of utilities, increase in tonners for printing, high building maintenance costs, and increase in prices of school expenses and school fees. The table below depict the details

Facility Groups	Budget	Actual	Variance	% Budget Spent	Explanation
SOS Family Care & Youth Care	12,533,374.01	12,793,988.01	- 260,614.00	102%	The increase is attributed to high school expenditure and school fees. Also, due to the increase in utility prices
Hermann Gmeiner Schools, Employment Entrepreneurial Training	6,483,575.85	6,945,724.02	- 462,148.17	107%	The increase in expenditure is attributed to an increase in personnel cost, increase in prices of cleaning materials, and high building maintenance cost
Family Strengthening	6,474,552.08	5,790,006.15	684,545.93	89%	The under expenditure is due to staff utilizing more work hours to implement the COVID-19 project, in order to meet the project completion deadline. This affected the dedicated work hours for traditional FS work.
National Office	3,408,735.20	3,883,646.80	- 474,911.60		The increase in expenditure is attributed to an increase in the purchase of toners and hiti papers to print pictures and letters for sponsors. Major renovations made to the National Office building, and an increase in electricity prices also contributed to the high expenditure
	28,900,237.14	29,413,364.98	- 513,127.84	102%	

Investment and Replacements (Assets)

The MA spent GHS 1,934,830.14 out of a revised budget of GHS 2,115,296.00. In percentage terms we spent 91% of the budget. The expenditure mainly include computers, projectors and other ICT materials for the schools' coding for kids programme and renovation of old HGVTC building to create third stream for HGS Tema. Please, find table below:

Item	Budget	Actual	Variance	% Budget Spent	Explanation
Total Investment and Replacements	2,115,296.00	1,934,030.14	181,265.86	91%	Under expenditure was a result of not completing the renovation works for the old HGVTC building

Lessons Learned

Type	Lesson learned	Action(s) to be taken	Status of action
[challenge / good practice / observation]			
Good Practice	Diverse means of identifying programme beneficiaries from the catchment areas	Strengthen involvement of community stakeholders in identifying beneficiaries from catchment areas	Completed
Good Practice	Continuous strengthening of the Gatekeeping Committee will help ensure that, project interventions at all times reach the right target group (beneficiaries).	Ensure the admission committee continue to perform the gatekeeping role for the project to ensure that only qualified beneficiaries are admitted	Completed
Good Practice	Regular assessments and re-assessment are very helpful in the integration and reunification process	Visit the families of origin of children for regular assessment	On-going
Good Practice	There is good mobilization and sustainability at the community level when you engage key stakeholders like the Municipal Assemblies and Community based organizations	The project will continue to engage key stakeholders in mobilization.	On-going
Challenge	The frequent change of contacts of caregivers without due notice to the office has made it difficult to reach out to them.	The project will continuously sensitize Caregivers to inform the office whenever they change their contact numbers.	Ongoing
Good Practice	Engaging key community stakeholders like volunteers, Assembly members, etc. in the implementation of activities increases ownership of the project and promotes participation in general. This in the long run will promote sustainability of the project	Continue to give community stakeholders the lead role in the implementation of the project to ensure sustainability	Ongoing
Observation	Care givers who received substantial grants to do business turn to succeed than those who receive very little support. Caregivers who receive little grants end up using their profits and capital to rent accommodations, pay school fees, and take care of the other family needs	Caregivers who had received relatively smaller grants were called back to review their business plans to be given more grants.	Ongoing

Child Safeguarding

Targeted trainings on child safeguarding, preventive measures, and reporting and responding processes were conducted for major stakeholders (including children, young people, staff, FS caregivers and partners) to contextualize the child protection policy. Participants of the trainings have an increased knowledge of CS reporting and responding processes.

A local mapping was conducted by the national programme team to document identifiable Legal Instruments, Government Institutions, International and Local Non-Governmental Organizations, and Faith-Based and Community Based Organizations engaged in child protection and child welfare work from preventive, responsive and rehabilitative perspectives. The purpose of this task was to identify potential partners and services to leverage in the execution of key activities.

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessments were successfully conducted at both the national and programme location levels. The exercise helped to identify potential CS risks in the MAs' programmes and operations, and to put in place mitigation actions to address them.

It is significant to note that the Child-Led CS risk assessment was a major achievement because it accorded children the opportunity to participate actively in the exercise. The participatory approach employed to conduct the CS risk assessment further reinforced the MAs' commitment to putting children at the heart of all activities. As a result, children have had a better opportunity to exercise their participatory rights. The participatory nature of the CS risk assessment conducted has also gained international acclaim. The National CS Advisor during the year under review was invited to share the good practice on many international platforms through reports, interviews and online presentations.

During the year under review, children participated in trainings and dialogue sessions on their responsibilities and prevention of child-to-child physical, sexual and online abuses. These learnings were made more effective by the children themselves through enactments on the related topics. Going by these innovative processes, child ownership of, and participation in safeguarding awareness creation and preventive measures have been strengthened across the MA.

SOS parents, FS caregivers, and teachers were equipped with the requisite knowledge and skills in Positive Discipline as a way of preventing child abuse in family, school and community contexts. The trainings organized helped SOS parents, FS caregivers and teachers to focus mainly on the positive points of each child's behaviour by reinforcing good behaviour and extinguishing undesirable behaviour, without hurting the child physically or verbally/emotionally.

The National Board, National Management Team and all five CS Teams at the national office and programme locations, received capacity development trainings in child safeguarding. This has resulted in marked improvements in the execution of their respective roles and responsibilities in child safeguarding. For instance, the National Board has established a child safeguarding committee responsible for supporting child safeguarding decision-making processes, and responding to child safeguarding incidents where senior staff members are involved. In addition to that, the Board has appointed an Ombudsman.

Child safeguarding has also been mainstreamed in all functions and departments within the MA. This was achieved through training and implementation of CS sensitive processes.

Challenges encountered

The saturation of the MA's calendar with many planned and unplanned activities involving the same CS stakeholders sometimes delayed planned CS activities.

Some stakeholders who made inputs into the CS risk assessment report did not provide enough evidence of reliability and validity but insisted their inputs be included. This posed a threat to the credibility of the report.

The rapid spread of the deadly delta variant of the corona virus affected the engagement of our stakeholders in face-to-face meeting settings. Meetings in the form of dialogue and training sessions had to be segmented to reduce the numbers, and to ensure proper physical distancing.



Lessons Learned

Keeping the child safeguarding commitment, means continually improving stakeholders' capacity and existing processes.

Involving all key stakeholders in child safeguarding and promoting their commitment and accountability promotes local ownership.

Participation of children and young people in the implementation of child safeguarding policies and procedures is key to achieving desired outcomes

Improving board and management oversight of child safeguarding is the best way to strengthen the commitment to sustained implementation of quality care

Making child safeguarding topics and processes open, visible and accessible to all, eliminates the misconception that child safeguarding is a feared or tabooed topic in our programmes



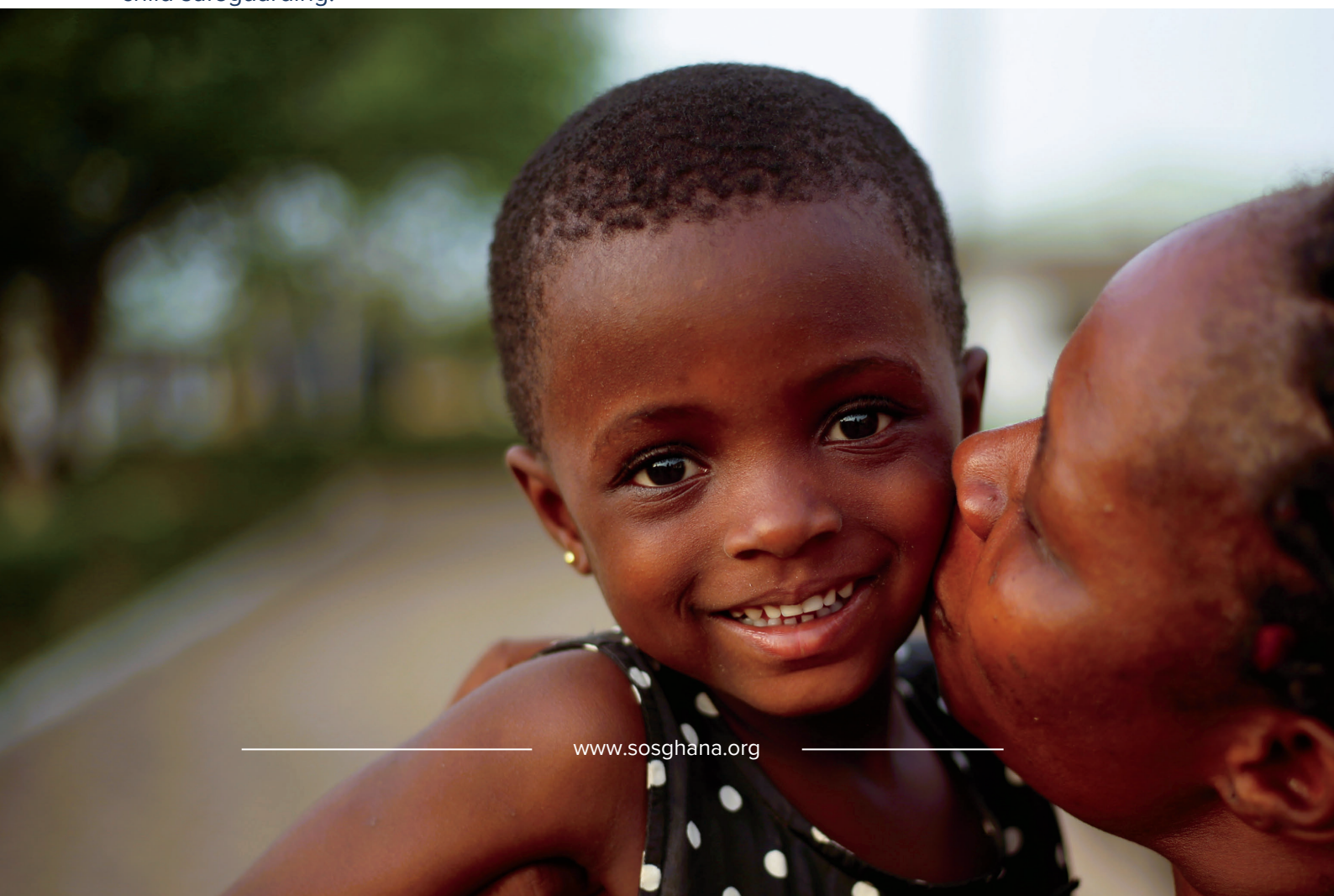
The impact of social intervention programmes should normally outlast the project's life span. Generally, programme sustainability will be achieved when the major stakeholders form an integral part of the implementation. To this end, the Alternative Care programme ensures that children and their families of origin participate in planning the child's path of development; care, education, health and eventually, his/her reintegration into the community. It should be noted that such plans also cater for aftercare situations. In addition, other care options such as kinship care is being explored, as that is widely discussed as being more cost-effective compared to residential care.

In ensuring sustainability, partnerships have also been established with relevant stakeholders, particularly duty bearers such as the Department of Social Welfare, Ghana Education Service, The Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection. Partnerships established with these stakeholders ensure their deep involvement in interventions implemented and prepare and propel them to continue aspects of the project's activities to the benefit of the target beneficiaries after the project has ended.

With regard to Family Strengthening intervention programmes in the communities, sustainability plans include building the capacity of Community-Based Organizations to enable them to continue the implementation of specific interventions when the project ends.

The initiative of VSLAs engaging in income-generating activities as a group has become a sustainable way for the group can raise more funds to issue out IGA support in the form of loans to its members even after the project has phased out.

Community structures such as Emergency Preparedness and Response Committees (EPRC) and Child Protection Committees (CPC) will continue to function when the FS programme ends. EPRC will lead the community in times of emergency and CPC will spearhead all issues concerning child safeguarding.



Tema Programme location

The location was selected to pilot Connect SOS, which integrates a results-based approach, process changes and new IT systems to ensure holistic management of programmes. The Location as part of preparation towards full implementation has developed a Location Concept Note and a unified Results Framework that puts together all units within the location i.e. Alternative Care (SFC, YC) and Family Strengthening as one holistic project to implement programme interventions within a project cycle of 5 years. However, the implementation of the Connect SOS will kick-start in 2022.

During the year under review, the programme location as part of efforts to increase local relevance of Alternative Care piloted Short-term Care as a new Care Option. This Care Option enabled the Location to admit vulnerable children who have lost parental for a maximum period of six (6) months through referrals from the Department of Social Welfare. Twenty-one (21) children were admitted into Short-term care against the planned annual target of five (5) for the year.

The location also reunified six (6) children with their families of origin, against a planned annual target of reunifying two (2) children for the year under review. Fourteen (14) young persons were exited from youth care due to self-reliance, and seven (7) young persons in Youth Care gained employment, with an additional young person becoming self-employed during the year. All eight (8) young persons are currently earning stable incomes.

A Child-led assessment was piloted during the year with the purpose of enabling children to assess and provide feedback on the care and protection they receive, in order to determine areas of service that need to be improved.

To enhance their psycho-social development, the location also introduced a behaviour modification initiative for children, which awards good behaviour.

The purpose of this initiative is to encourage good behaviour among children in the village.

The Family Strengthening Programme in the year under review recorded 225 caregivers who are now engaged in Income Generating Activities. 57% of these caregivers are earning a stable income. The FS programme also recorded that 95% of caregivers now effectively execute their parental responsibilities due to an increased knowledge in parenting gained from trainings on parenting skills, and best practice sharing sessions among caregivers. Children confirmed their parents have improved in executing their parental roles in areas such as the provision of food, health care, education, and child protection.

The employability and life skills trainings conducted to enhance youth development in the Family Strengthening Programme, greatly increased the employment prospects of young people. 63% of young persons in the programme were employed/self-employed during the year under review. 60% of these young persons indicated their source of income as their current employment.

Recommended good practices to be replicated include:

Continuous capacity development of the Gatekeeping Committee to ensure that, project interventions at all times reach the right target group (beneficiaries).

The introduction of a child-led assessment to enable children to assess and provide feedback on the care and protection they receive, to determine adjustments to service provision.

Increasing social integration by enrolling some newly admitted children into community schools with similar standards to the SOS HGS.

Observations made during the year of review were;

Children who are unhappy about their long stay in the CV tend to put up negative behaviours that are difficult to manage or modify.

Semi-skilled youth in the Programme who were motivated to start up their businesses or find employment recorded a higher success rate of achieving self-reliance than unskilled youth recruited to learn a trade.

The major challenges encountered during the implementation of planned activities in communities included male caregivers discouraging their partners from participating in programmes out of fear of their partners becoming too economically empowered. In addition, the frequent change of contacts of caregivers without due notice to the FS office also made it difficult to keep in touch with beneficiaries for follow-up.

Key actions taken to sustain interventions include;

Empowering Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to play lead roles in project implementation.

Ensuring the independence of Child Protection Committees in the execution of their role of addressing child protection issues in the community.

Collaborating with the Department of Social Welfare to strengthen the gatekeeping process in the location.

Engaging the services of a volunteer professional counsellor to provide counselling support to families in need of such services.



Asiakwa Programme Location

Asiakwa Programme Location is faced with a high level of vulnerability across the households within its catchment area. The issue of parental poverty is a major problem in most households as a result of high levels of unemployment among adult caregivers and youth, lack of income generation opportunities, lack of start-up capital to establish sustainable businesses, and lack of employable and entrepreneurial skills, among others. These aggravate the incidence of child abuse and violations, increase in the number of teenage pregnancies, and households' inability to meet basic needs (food, clothes shelter, health, education etc). This situation to a large extent implies that many more of our target group are made the vulnerable and those in need of care and protection.

During the reporting period, the Programme Location experienced significant improvement in the lives of programme beneficiaries, staff and communities within our operational area.

The Location admitted seventeen vulnerable children (12 males and 5 females) who needed the sort of care and protection offered by SOS Family-like Care (SFC).

The Programme Location liaised with the Department of Social Welfare to re-assess 20 children and their families of origin for possible reunification and 2 children were identified for possible reunification. They assessed their living conditions, source of livelihood, accommodation, the safety of the home and others.

In a quest to strengthen child safeguarding and child protection mechanisms in alternative care settings the Location developed, printed and posted child safeguarding messages and committee members' pictures and names at vantage points, trained 13 members child safeguarding committee on the detection of signs of abuse, organised sensitization workshop for 60 children on prevention of child safeguarding incidents.

The capacity of 23 caregivers (SOS Mothers and Aunts, FS field workers, and Youth care workers) were also built on child safeguarding Reporting procedures and Positive Discipline. Again, it is good to mention that, the Location recorded no child safeguarding incident during the reporting period.



In the Youth Development Programme, some young people have experienced significant improvements in their lives. Ten (10) young people (3 males and 7 females) completed Junior High School during the reporting period. Five (5) young people (1 male and 4 females) have completed their secondary (high school) education awaiting admission into tertiary/advanced professional vocational/technical institutions according to their interests and abilities.

32 young people in vocational, technical and tertiary institutions were trained in soft, employability and entrepreneurial skills. One youth has been coached and mentored to establish her own business. In addition, 7 young people were enrolled in internships, 4 in attachments and 4 in national service. Moreover, 25 young people have improved their knowledge of how to make decisions that matter in their lives through Life skills training, and 30 young people who have graduated from JHS/SHS were trained in life skills and career planning through Boot Camps participation.

In the Family Strengthening Services, 65.68% (199) of the total caregivers (303) have small sustainable businesses through which they earn regular income to cater for the needs of their children. During the reporting period, 110 caregivers were supported with grants (individuals and VSLA) to either establish or expand their businesses. In addition, 94.68% of children (889) who were of school age but were not enrolled and/ or attending school regularly have been enrolled and or attended school regularly due to the economic empowerment of caregivers as well as educational supports provided under the project.

Moreover, 30.67% (46) of youth participants out of 150 youth have gained sustainable employment (wage/ self-employment) of which 18.60% of them are into modernised agriculture. 9 TVET youth have been enrolled in apprenticeship training to acquire technical/vocational skills.

One major learning of the period worthy of mention is the fact Youth are taking more responsibility for their lives as a result of involvement in decision-making





Kumasi Programme Location

The Kumasi programme location provided care to 120 children and young people in Alternative Care during the year under review.

As part of initiatives to build the capacity of caregivers to provide quality care for children and young people, 12 mothers and 4 aunts received both soft and hard skills trainings on stress management, how to handle mental health challenges, Case Management and Short Term Care guidelines.

Forty-five (45) children from 26 families of origin were re-assessed for possible reunification and integration. The assessment conducted revealed that 2 children qualify for possible reunification. All co-workers in the programme location received training on child safeguarding and protection during the year under review.

The location conducted a health screening exercise for One hundred and seven (107) children, 16 caregivers and 9 staff. Caregivers also received consultations on how to manage their health.

Eight (8) young people made up of 6 females and 2 males gained admission to Senior high school, whilst 2 girls gained admission to Tertiary Institutions. Seven (7) young people gained admission to HGIC, and Five (5) young people from the location also completed Senior high school.

To increase their employment and entrepreneurial skills, twenty-one (21) young people comprising 10 males and 11 females received 5 life skills trainings on topics such as financial literacy, cyber security, and mobile phone application development.

A total of 34 young people made up of 15 males and 19 females also received entrepreneurship training and career guidance. Young people were taken through topics such as financial literacy, time management, decision making, and ICT. Thirty-six (36) out of the 77 young people through focus group discussions indicated an increased knowledge of educational choices, and are currently discovering their career path.

The FS project, during the year under review, supported a total of 321 caregivers and 1,074 children. A total of 152 TVET youth were also supported. One hundred and twenty-five (125) caregivers have received grants from the project. 674 children are enrolled in formal education, of this number, 598 have satisfactory performance. 150 young people received traditional and innovative employability and entrepreneurial skills training. Additionally, 48 young people have successfully set up their businesses.



In order to facilitate access to subsidised healthcare, the project renewed the National Health Insurance Cards of 488 children. Children under the project are also showing an increased awareness of sexual reproductive health and rights. 68% of adolescent children in FS families are now aware of their sexual reproductive health and rights, and are now confident to access youth friendly centres.

The Green Project, during the year under review, supported 379 beneficiaries (118 males and 261 females) with Life Employability Skills and Technical orientation. The 379 beneficiaries after graduation, will be enrolled onto the SNV OYE project where they will be supported with employability and entrepreneurship skills training.



Tamale Programme Location

The Tamale programme location successfully achieved basic-level RBM implementation during the year under review. An internal Needs Assessment was conducted to examine; the care situation of SOS Children's Villages' target group, community assets and needs, and the presence of stakeholders in the Tamale metropolis. Based on the findings of the Needs Assessment, a Concept Note and Results Framework was developed to guide the development of appropriate interventions and enable subsequent monitoring of the progress of said interventions.

A monitoring plan and activity schedule were developed to detail how change concerning the achievement of intended results would be monitored.

At the end of the reporting period, the location supported 114 children and young people in SFC and admitted 5 children into Short-Term Care as part of efforts to increase the local relevance of programmes. Four children were also reunified with their families of origin.

The location additionally, conducted a re-assessment of the families of origin of 26 children. Findings from the re-assessment conducted indicated that majority of the families of origin would like to be reunified with their children if only the support needs of the children are catered for by SOS. 2 out of the 26 families of origin were assessed to be capable of providing care to their children should they be reunified with them.

The location also conducted extra classes for children who exhibited weak academic performance. 28 children (12 males, 16 females) showed improved academic performances through the provision of the extra tuition. As a result of this exercise, three children (2 males, 1 female) in the preschool improved their writing skills, and 16 out of 25 children in the primary school exhibited satisfactory academic performance.

Measures taken to improve the educational performance of young people in the Alternative Care Programme yielded positive results. Through the supervised prep studies organized, the after-school classes, and the peer support provided by older siblings in HGIC, 68% of young people in the Alternative Care Programme recorded satisfactory educational performance. 44 young people (25 males and 19 females) received life skills and employability skills training aimed at increasing their ability to think critically, increase their awareness of harmful practices, and empower them with knowledge of their responsibility as Ghanaian citizens. In addition, 15 Junior High School graduates received life skills and employability skills training through participation in the Go Teach boot camp Programme.

To increase their employment opportunities, 4 young people participated in internship programmes as teaching assistants. A beneficiary of the internship programme confirmed that she had gained better communication and human relations skills through her internship. The location also facilitated increased access to the community, to enhance social integration. 2 young people (1 male and 1 female) took part in the "Clever Reality Show" organized in the Tamale metropolis.

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The location additionally, conducted a re-assessment of the families of origin of 26 children. Findings from the re-assessment conducted indicated that majority of the families of origin would like to be reunified with their children if only the support needs of the children are catered for by SOS. 2 out of the 26 families of origin were assessed to be capable of providing care to their children should they be reunified with them.

The location also conducted extra classes for children who exhibited weak academic performance. 28 children (12 males, 16 females) showed improved academic performances through the provision of the extra tuition. As a result of this exercise, three children (2 males, 1 female) in the preschool improved their writing skills, and 16 out of 25 children in the primary school exhibited satisfactory academic performance.

Measures taken to improve the educational performance of young people in the Alternative Care Programme yielded positive results. Through the supervised prep studies organized, the after-school classes, and the peer support provided by older siblings in HGIC, 68% of young people in the Alternative Care Programme recorded satisfactory educational performance. 44 young people (25 males and 19 females) received life skills and employability skills training aimed at increasing their ability to think critically, increase their awareness of harmful practices, and empower them with knowledge of their responsibility as Ghanaian citizens. In addition, 15 Junior High School graduates received life skills and employability skills training through participation in the Go Teach boot camp Programme.

To increase their employment opportunities, 4 young people participated in internship programmes as teaching assistants. A beneficiary of the internship programme confirmed that she had gained better communication and human relations skills through her internship. The location also facilitated increased access to the community, to enhance social integration. 2 young people (1 male and 1 female) took part in the "Clever Reality Show" organized in the Tamale metropolis.





**SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES**

Contact Us

Postal Address:

SOS Children's Villages in Ghana
P O Box AN 16657
Accra North

Telephone:

+233 302 222867
+233 302 233089
+233 241 936673

E-mail:

sos.ghana@sosghana.org

Website:

www.sosghana.org

Our Social Media Handles:

Facebook- SOS Children's Villages Ghana

Twitter- @SOSCVGhana

Instagram- SOS Children's Villages Ghana

YouTube: SOS Children's Villages Ghana

LinkedIn: SOS Children's Villages in Ghana