

CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT ANNUAL REPORT

1st April 2023

to

31st December 2023



Giving kids a brighter future

<https://chidrenofthelightghana.org>

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Mission Statement

Children of the Light (CotL) impacts young lives by providing creative, holistic, child-centred education in order to build lives that influence society.

Description of CotL

CotL is a dynamic organisation that brings education to life for numerous children and teenagers aged 5 to 17 years in Ghana, West Africa.

It's educational program is unique in that it nurtures children in all areas of learning:

- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Social Studies
- Science
- Physical Education
- Environmental Issues
- Visual and Performing Arts
- Character Building



CotL meets with the children after-school, on Saturdays, and during school holidays. Additionally, a refreshment or a hot meal is served during Saturday classes.

The children enjoy a lively educational experience which is conducted in a safe and non-threatening environment.

Our Vision

- 1) To have a fully equipped, easily accessible learning centre that provides quality education to many children in Ghana.
- 2) To become an educational training resource provider in Ghana and create CotL branches of the organisation.



Our Achievements

Over the years, we have witnessed significant improvements in all our classes and special programs, many of which take place at our Learning Centre. The centre proudly showcases colorful boards displaying the children's work, ranging from environmental, science, art, language, and history projects. It also features a bright, ever-growing library that holds a delightful selection of children's books and valuable teaching resources.

Road access to the centre has improved significantly due to the construction of a large culvert over the deep gutter near the CotL property. Thanks to the efforts of local residents, we now have a concrete road that almost reaches the centre.



Progress at the centre is steadily advancing. By the end of December 2023 we now have 20,000 litres of water storage from rainwater collection. Our borehole is now primarily used for construction purposes, as mineral removal proved too costly. We have also walled and gated a large portion of the property. With still some way to go on this we have now managed to secure a good portion. Also, by the end of 2023, we invested in more batteries for our solar energy, but we do need to upgrade this necessity for there to be an ongoing supply of electricity.

The 1.316 acres of land owned by the organisation has seen significant development. A large area has been cleared and grassed, with numerous trees, including fruit trees, planted. Additionally, we've designated areas for gardens and vegetable gardening. Our composting areas continue to benefit the garden, demonstrating to the children how organic waste breaks down into rich, fertile soil when properly separated. We regularly collect substantial amounts of organic waste from the village's fruit and vegetable sellers.



The CotL branch that opened in October 2021 continues to thrive. We now provide quality education to six groups of children, meeting with them on different days throughout the week. A group of Fulani children is also part of these sessions, and we meet with them twice a week.



Our director and another staff member have made several visits to support the full-time staff member working there. This branch actively participates in special programs.

To support the classes near our small library at our branch in Northern Ghana, we have constructed a pavilion, which also serves as a meeting point for special programs.

Many of our past students have ventured onto higher education and careers and our current students continue to benefit with the program, acquiring a vast amount of knowledge and skills.



1st April 2023 to 31st December 2023

Weekly classes were ongoing at the Children of the Light Learning centre in Kitase and at our branch in Northern Ghana.

Special Programs throughout the Year

APRIL 2023

Earth Day Celebration: A tree-planting session was held at the Learning Centre in Kitase, Eastern Region (E/R), and in Dibisi, North East Region (NE/R). The children in Kitase also performed a musical called 'The Humming Bird' at an Earth Day festival in Aburi, E/R. On 'Save the Frogs Day' (28th April), the children learned about these amazing amphibians and created frog pop-ups.



MAY 2023

The children made beautiful cards to give to their mothers for Mother's Day.

JUNE 2023

Annual Reading Month: The theme was 'Reading Makes Your Mind Bloom!' We were blessed to have Rosa Bodu, the founder of 'Beads for a Reason' from America, and her family with us during this time. They volunteered their services and generously donated a large amount of school supplies, art materials, children's clothing, and shoes.





JULY 2023

An Awards Banquet for Reading Month was held on Saturday, 1st July, at the Learning Centre in Kitase, E/R. A Mathematics Competition was organised at both centres, with great prizes awarded to the winners. Every participant received a gift, and refreshments were shared.



AUGUST 2023

We celebrated our 18th Anniversary on 7th August with cake and drinks.



SEPTEMBER 2023

World Cleanup Day on Saturday, 16th September: We participated in this global event, collecting plastic waste in Kitase (E/R), Dibisi, and Bulbia (NE/R). Much of the waste was sent for recycling. On 30th September, we held a Folktale event, a Recycling Competition, and an Art Display. During this month, we also hosted a Sisterhood program and provided hygiene packs to all attendees.



World Cleanup Day
 Recycling Competition
 Sisterhood Program





OCTOBER 2023

This month, we held a Sisterhood program at our branch in Northern Ghana,

During that month, we also delivered all the plastic waste for recycling. This waste was collected before, during, and after World Cleanup Day.



NOVEMBER 2023

This month at the Learning Centre in Kitase, we organised a Career Day where the children had the chance to dress up in various attire and share who they are and what they do.



DECEMBER 2023

In Kitase, we held a Christmas Parade on Saturday, 23rd December. The children, dressed in Christmas attire, sang carols and walked from the centre through the Springfield Community, along the highway and back. They stopped at the former President of Ghana's gate and sang at his entrance. In Dibisi, Northern Ghana the children performed a Christmas Play about the birth of Jesus. The children enjoyed a meal, drinks, and each went home with a Christmas gift. Once again, we distributed colourful hygiene parcels to the elderly in Kitase and Dibisi, with a total of 100 parcels given



TEENS PROGRAM

Throughout the year, a Teens Program is held monthly at the Learning Centre in Kitase, typically led by Paulett Opoku, a CotL Board Member. The program provides a safe and engaging environment where important issues relevant to teens are discussed. It also fosters open dialogue, empowering the youth to voice their opinions and develop valuable life skills.



ROAD SAFETY

One evening, a Road Safety class was held outside the Learning Centre on the quiet road in Kitase. Vehicles were driven out to aid in teaching. We have an excellent flip chart, donated years ago, this has been extremely useful in covering all the topics for this discussion.

PARCELS TO NORTHERN GHANA

The Director visits the centre regularly to support and provide guidance to the senior staff, ensuring smooth operations and addressing any challenges he faces. In addition to these visits, we frequently send various essential items, such as educational materials, supplies, and equipment, to keep the centre well-stocked and functioning efficiently.



The Team

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

CotL is managed by a Board of Directors/ Management Committee. The Management Committee meets three times a year.

STAFF

CotL has a staff of four:

- Director
- Three full-time teachers



VOLUNTEERS

We were fortunate to complement staffing with the help of wonderful volunteers. All our volunteers are required to fill an application form and read and sign our 'Child Protection Code of Conduct'. Volunteers are an immense support in all areas of the organisation.



CHILDREN

This year we had close to 60 children including teenagers registered in our program in Kitase, Eastern Region and we worked with close to 200 children at our branch in the North East Region.



SUCSESSES

- The on-going programs continue to be enjoyable and beneficial to those involved.
- We continue to serve healthy snacks and meals to the children we work with.
- The teens program continues to empower those who attend.
- We have now walled more of the land, improving security and defining the property boundaries.
- There has been a vast improvement in our water collection. In addition to the 10,000-litre polytank purchased earlier in the year, another 1,800-litre polytank was acquired. All pipes and the pump have now been installed, and we now have running water flowing through the centre.
- Our composting area continues to be of great benefit for the garden and continues to show the children how organic waste breaks down to fertile rich black soil when separated.
- We had volunteers throughout the year, helping with various tasks and programs.
- Our branch of CotL in Northern Ghana continues to thrive and we are now working with six groups of children. We have constructed a pavilion, which supports classes and serves as a meeting point for special programs.



CHALLENGES

- As the work at the centre increases and we rely solely on solar energy, we need to add additional batteries and solar panels, as well as upgrade the inverter. By doing this, we will be able to use all electrical appliances and have lighting 24/7.
- Even though progress has been made on the wall, the entire land still needs to be fenced to secure the property, ensure the safety of those living there, and prevent thieves from stealing our farm produce
- We only have only one laptop, which is used for all administrative tasks. A second laptop is needed for the CotL staff to assist in preparing lessons for the students.
- We still need another 10,000-litre polytank to ensure sufficient water supply all year round.
- We are in need of a kitchen, as meals for the children are currently being prepared outside.
- We are outgrowing our library and storage space in Northern Ghana.



Planning Ahead

- Build up our monthly donor support to help us with the monthly operational costs, special programs and our ongoing work in Northern Ghana.
- Complete the entire Learning Centre in the Eastern Region
 - 1. Upgrade the solar system**
 - 2. Invest in more water storage**
 - 3. Purchase and install all the upstairs electrical fittings, specifically the lights and fans**
 - 4. Build and furnish an outside kitchen**
 - 5. Secure the entire grounds with a fence wall**
 - 6. Complete the landscaping work on the grounds and grow more fruit trees, vegetables and flowers**
 - 6. Purchase additional classroom furniture and IT equipment**
- Build a library and living quarters at our branch in Northern Ghana



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- **IMPACT FLUID SOLUTIONS, AMERICA**
- **HOSANNA TRUST FOUNDATION, NEW ZEALAND**
- **THE HAZEL DICK TRUST, NEW ZEALAND**
- **WOFORO, USA**
- **TOP CHOCO, GHANA**
- **FLORA TISSUE, GHANA**
- **TANGO PRIME WASH, GHANA**
- **BEADS FOR A REASON, GHANA**
- **GEODRILL GHANA LIMITED, GHANA**
- **PFC AUDITING SERVICES, GHANA**
- **ASANTEWAS CREATIONS, NEW ZEALAND**
- **GROUNDUP GHANA**
- **MS BEADS AFRIK, UK**
- **ONE SEED, GHANA**
- **SHOPRITE, GHANA**
- **TEMA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL - CAS PROJECTS, GHANA**
- **AND ALL INDIVIDUAL COTL SUPPPORTERS**

THANK YOU, MAY GOD RICHLY BLESS YOU!



Message from the Founder

We are so grateful for another wonderful year. We thank God, our donors, staff, volunteers, and children, all of whom have played a major part in making it a success.

May God richly bless them all.

Jeanette Brown Opoku



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