



Education

Free and compulsory basic education was adopted by Ghana in 1961.¹⁸ However, for many people, the pressures of poverty and the reality of everyday living mean they never get to attend school. While almost three quarters of Ghana's national population aged eleven years and older are literate, literacy varies greatly across regions, and is much lower in rural areas. At 37.2%, the literacy rate in Ghana's Northern Region is the lowest in the country.¹⁹ Gender inequality in access to education remains an issue, with literacy rates for males being higher than those for females in every region across the country.²⁰

According to the 2010 census, more than half of the females aged six years and older across the Upper East, Upper West and Northern Regions had never attended school.²¹ The World Bank has identified the education of girls as being a key strategic development priority because, "better educated women tend to be healthier, participate more in the formal labor market, earn higher incomes, have fewer children, marry at a later age, and enable better healthcare and education for their children, should they choose to become mothers."²² When these elements occur an education can be seen to have a powerful effect on helping households, communities and countries to put an end to poverty.



Clockwise from top left: Schoolchildren in northern Ghana; a teacher marking papers; and teachers in training in Yendi

18 Ghana Statistical Service, 2010 Population & Housing Census, June 2013

19 *ibid.*

20 Ghana Statistical Service, 2010 Population & Housing Census, National Analytical Report, May 2013

21 *ibid.*

22 The World Bank, Girls' Education, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/girlseducation>

Centre for Child Development



90%

of the Bolgatanga population live on less than \$1 per day



1/3

of the population in Bolgatanga is aged under 15 years



Watch

project video



Location: Bolgatanga, Ghana **Project duration:** Three years **Funding required:** \$105,551¹

“The Centre for Child Development has a great vision of bringing young people who are at risk to livelihood and security.”
- Fred Amenga-Etego

Background

Established in 1997, the Centre for Child Development (CCD) is in Bolgatanga, the capital of the Upper East Region (population 131,550).²⁶ With over 90% of its population living below the poverty line, including many surviving on less than US\$1 a day, the region is one of the poorest in Ghana.²⁷ While the region has seen rapid growth and urbanisation in recent years, around half of its population still lives rurally.²⁸ The area’s population is also very young, with more than a third of its people aged under 15 years.²⁹



Children working as head porters in Bolgatanga walk at least 3km and might make \$1.50 on a good day

Driven by poverty, children travel from the rural north to live on the streets in the urban south where they may earn enough to eat by working as head porters (carrying small loads on their heads in the marketplace in exchange for money) or selling food. As the capital of the region, Bolgatanga is generally the first town these children go to on their journey south.

In the Upper East Region, high rates of youth unemployment and underemployment,³⁰ combined with large numbers of young people who have never attended school, mean children in the area are at greater risk of living on the streets, taking dangerous jobs, and enduring tough working conditions. These children may also be vulnerable to exploitation or trafficking.

²⁶ Ghana Statistical Services, 2010 District Analytical Report for Bolgatanga Municipality

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ Bolgatanga Municipality UN Human Development Report 2011, http://www.gh.undp.org/content/dam/ghana/docs/Doc/Inclgro/UNDP_GH_INCGRO_DHDR2011_Bolgatanga-Municipality.pdf

In 1997, the Navrongo-Bolgatanga Diocese set up the CCD to protect child rights and contribute to sustainable community development in the Upper East Region. The CCD not only provides shelter, food, healthcare and education for vulnerable children from across the large diocese, but it also seeks to reintegrate children from the streets back into their families and home communities.

Run by Felix Frederick Amenga-Etego, a local social worker who is known by all as “Fred”, the Centre is home to children of all ages, from those in early primary school to late high school. After completing secondary studies, the children leave the Centre to pursue further study or enter employment.

Augustine's Story

Augustine Atule is known to his friends and family as “L.C.”, or “little computer”, a nickname he received as a child because of his love for video games. L.C. grew up in a farming family in a remote part of Navrongo-Bolgatanga Diocese. When he was very young, his father passed away and his mother raised the children. As he grew older and stayed at home to support his mother in the house and the farm, L.C.’s twin brother went to Bolgatanga town to beg for food and money. There, L.C.’s brother met Fred Amenga-Etego, who runs the Centre for Child Development. Fred and the staff provided the boy a safe place to stay off the streets and an opportunity for education. It was three years later that Fred and the CCD discovered L.C. was still back at home, and they convinced him that an education would be the best thing for him and his family. Now, he has just completed studies at one of Ghana’s best schools and has been resettled back into his family. He plans to undertake further study and, inspired by Fred’s care for young people, eventually teach. He has a strong, positive influence on his younger siblings and the youth in his small home community, encouraging them to pursue their education.



About the Project

As well as providing services daily to over 200 children, the CCD facilitates the enrolment of children in local schools and delivers intervention programs, including vocational training and the ‘Drop-in and Child Trafficking Support Program’. The ‘Drop-in’ initiative allows children and young people who live on the streets to visit the Centre for shelter, a shower and a hot meal, as well as providing protection from the dangers of living on the street. The vocational training program offers a selection of apprenticeships and gives participants the tools and skills to gain employment. It is designed for young people who may have left school early with no option of return, or those with no formal schooling.

Another innovative element of the Centre is its Street Bank. Often, children and young people who live on the streets have no safe place to store their money and as result can end up losing it to bullies or thieves. In partnership with a local bank, CCD has set up a system that allows these children and young people to make deposits into accounts, helping them live day-to-day and build savings for the future.

To build future sustainability, the CCD is establishing a farm, located thirty minutes’ drive from its Bolgatanga premises. The farm will raise pigs, goats, guinea fowl and cows to sell. In turn, the proceeds from the farm will support the work of the CCD, while also benefiting the local community.

Thanks to the farm, young people at the Centre will have the opportunity to learn agricultural skills and traditional farming practices in preparation for their reintegration to their home communities. While they may see the importance of education, families living with the pressures of poverty are often reluctant to send their children away for schooling when they could be helping at home instead. By returning and contributing to their communities, these young people will demonstrate the long-term value of education and open doors for successive generations.



Felix, one of the farm managers

Project Activities

Project activities include:

- Construction of fencing for the farm perimeter.
- Provision of adequate water systems through additional boreholes.
- Purchasing 300 cattle and sheep.
- Purchasing 4,000 guinea fowl and poultry.
- Construction of a staff building for farm management.



A local woman milks a cow on the farm

Project Aims

This project aims to:

- Contribute to CCD's work and its sustainability by generating income from the sale of livestock.
- Engage and train unemployed youth to acquire skills in livestock and poultry production.
- Provide enterprise training for young people who come to the CCD and their guardians, who will go on to supplement their income through farming or develop careers in agriculture.
- Improve the livelihood and food security for people in the Navrongo-Bolgatanga Diocese.
- Contribute to the reduction of youth homelessness in the region and the development of communities in the diocese through the upskilling and reintegration of young people.

How you can make a difference

By contributing to this project through Catholic Mission, you will be playing a vital role in ensuring the continuation of the Centre for Child Development (CCD) and its life-changing work. This project will help the CCD realise its sustainability plan, as it aims to secure self-sufficiency into the future.

This project will support the CCD to continue to provide its existing assistance and intervention programs for vulnerable young people across the Navrongo-Bolgatanga Diocese, as well as enable it to innovate and respond to the changing needs of the community it serves.



A child from CCD at a local school



Children in the classroom at a local school

Project Cost^{ii,iii}

This project will cost a total of \$105,551 over three years, including \$69,150 for Year 1, \$16,094 for Year 2 and \$20,306 for Year 3. Key project costs include:

Project Activities	Cost (AUD)
Construction of fencing	\$24,211
Staff salaries	\$23,867
Solar lighting	\$13,474
Construction of farm staff building	\$6,579
Additional boreholes	\$4,474

ⁱ Inclusive of accountability and administration costs.

ⁱⁱ Costs are in AUD unless otherwise stated, and are rounded to the nearest dollar.

ⁱⁱⁱ These are examples of costs relating to this project. Donations cannot be allocated to specific items, only to a project.