

Final report to The Eagle Foundation



House of Refuge vocational training and young mothers' support centre, Accra, Ghana

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Contact Name: Beatrice Cami, Director of Fundraising and Marketing

Email: beatrice.cami@chanceforchildhood.org

Tel: 01483 230 250

Website: www.chanceforchildhood.org

Providing essential residential facilities for vulnerable young mothers to maximize their success in vocational training in Accra, Ghana

Grant: £24,940

Grant period: April 2016 - April 2017

Executive Summary

Street Child Africa with Chance for Childhood has worked with local partner Street Girls' Aid (S.Aid) in Ghana for over 10 years, working together to provide vital protection and education to young street-connected mothers and their children, supporting them to lift themselves out of poverty and rebuild a life away from the streets. Together, we provide them with vocational and business training, as well as counselling and parenting skills so that young mothers have the capacity to provide suitable care for themselves and their families.

Most recent statistics estimate that over 61,492 children and young people live and work on the streets of the Ghanaian capital Accra, 57% of whom are female. To survive, young women and girls are pushed into dangerous trades such as sex work, many falling pregnant, contributing to the headcount of over 11,000 children under the age of six living on the streets. S.Aid provides pregnant and post-natal street-connected women with a safe shelter where they can learn to support themselves and care for their families, ensuring that their new-born child's first glimpse of the world isn't the dangerous streets of Accra, but born in the safety of a shelter, in the arms of their mother.

Demolition and construction of facilities for street-connected young mothers and children

Between 2003 and 2015 our partner S.Aid supported hundreds of young mothers and their babies from the 'House of Refuge', after acquiring a building on the outskirts of the bustling markets areas where most street-connected adolescent girls can be found. In 2015, S.Aid detected cracks in the building that needed to be renovated and sought professional advice in order to have a permanent solution to the problem. The initial plan was to correct the building defects including working on the foundation and pillars of the building to enforce it and to work on the cracks.

However, by the time funding was secured to support the rehabilitation work, the continued erosion and widening of cracks in the beams, pillars, and floors had critically worsened, posing an immediate threat to the safety of the beneficiaries and their babies. It became apparent that it would be more cost-effective and efficient to demolish the current facility at S.Aid due to excessive structural failure, and to reconstruct a stronger, modern facility, taking into consideration how best to maximise the



available space whilst ensuring that there are no structural defects in the construction of the building.

We are delighted to report that, thanks to the generous support of the Eagle Foundation, the essential phases of demolition has been completed and foundation work, started in May, is ongoing.

The project started in December 2016, with the removal of items such as cupboards, wardrobes' windows, doors, roofing and other household items. This took longer than expected as, to ensure cost efficiency, some of the items had to be salvaged. In addition, there was the need to construct an external washrooms and two toilets for the use of the girls living in the facility.

The first phase of the project included the demolition work. During the course of phase 1, additional funds from the Rotary Club were secured to remove more debris to a total depth of 1.8 metres and a width in places of 2.5 metres. The demolition of the building took place from the 5th to 8th March 2017, with the aid of the excavator, followed by 10 days to remove the debris from the site.



2017 'During' picture, House of Refuge
Phase one, demolition of the center, debris and plastic waste buried deep underground

Phase 1 took longer than anticipated due to the overwhelming excess of rubbish and debris, consisting of concrete waste from the demolition, plastic and other waste buried deeply underground. As well as the added hours of labour, the excess debris incurred additional costs. The waste removal tipper truck was initially budgeted at £1,124 - however actual costs totalled £8,165. This was a crucial unavoidable expenditure to ensure that the excess waste was removed properly in order to have a clear area to build on and to avoid added fines. Unbeknown to S.Aid when they purchased the building, the location was a former landfill site, this caused the degradation to the building and now created the need for excavating and rebuilding solid foundations.

Although phase 1 incurred unexpected expenditure due to the unexpected vastness of the task, as well as payment of the demolition costs to the city authorities in charge of construction, it was a vital step in avoiding the recurrence of defects, ensuring that the new building would be long standing and a safe for its residents.

Phase 2 started with a geotechnical study to ensure that the foundations were designed properly to support the new building. This study took almost two weeks based on advice from Greg Hill, a development consultant based in the USA, who is working with us pro bono. This process has been ongoing and discussions will continue as the construction progresses. At the time of

writing, we are delighted to report that the contractor had just initiated the foundational work, which we anticipate will be completed by September 2017.

Challenges

The biggest challenges faced were related to preparation and unpredictable delays. The demolition was delayed and prolonged by the following reasons:

- External works - S.AID needed to build new bathrooms and toilets for the girls and staff or else they had nothing to use. Additionally there was need to prepare stores to accommodate all the property used by the girls.
- S.AID needed to save some of the materials on the building for use in reconstruction such as windows, doors, etc. This will enable the organisation to cut down on costs of reconstruction. The process of careful removal of these materials took a while.
- A permit was needed to demolish the building, which took time to get from city authorities.
- As noted earlier, it was discovered that the old building sat on a former dumping site. On advice from engineers, there was need to excavate the ground much deeper than what was originally planned, generating extra costs and delayed timeline.

Impact of your funding

Funding from The Eagle Foundation was critical in enabling the urgent demolition, excavation and initial works on the foundation of the building. The House of Refuge is a temporary accommodation providing a safe, supportive environment for pregnant and post-natal women and their children. Without the centre, they would be in a very vulnerable position, forced to live without shelter or security and exposed to numerous dangers and abuses on the streets.

The centre gives these women emotional support and access to medical services, as well as educating them on nutrition and parenting techniques. The centre also provides an opportunity for street-connected mothers to receive financial and business management and vocational skills, to empower women to become economically independent so that they are able to earn a sustainable income to support their families. Our highly successful vocational training programme has a 76% retention rate, training young women on market-demand skills such as tailoring, hairdressing, catering and laundry care. The family-friendly centre also provides baby care facilities for children to play and learn, while their mothers are receiving this training.

Once the House of Refuge has been completed, S.Aid will be able to better provide care in a spacious environment, supporting 270 girls a year - a 200% increase in capacity. The new centre will also be equipped with a library and a computer section, which will be open to the community to access in exchange for a small fee, in turn generating a revenue enabling S.Aid to sustain their vital services over time.

Next steps

The foundation work is expected to be completed by September as the foundation will need to harden before it is built upon. In early October, we expect to start the next phase of the project, the construction, using building blocks and bricks to begin to rebuild a home for most

vulnerable women and children in Accra. We estimate that by the end of 2018, parts of the building will be in use.

Due to the set-backs in the first stage of the demolition, the unforeseen over expenditure and additional hours of labour needed to complete phase 1, we spent £16,058 of your grant on the demolition, exceeding the original budget of £7,479. Extra costs incurred during that phase were unavoidable to ensure a thorough demolition so that a building of quality could be built.

£6,723 of your funding were spent on the foundation, with the remaining £2,159 to cover our support and monitoring costs. Due to overspending during the demolition phase, we plan to identify cost savings in other steps of the construction and build in a better contingency for unforeseen expenditure. In order to support the continued work and to compensate for the overspend to date, S.Aid will be launching a local campaign to raise funds. They have also:

- Received £7,490 from the Rotary Club which has agreed to fund a minimum of £15,700. S.AID is working hard to cultivate this donor relationship to raise further funds.
- Received £1,872 from students of the University of Chicago, which have committed to over £7,800 and Street Girls Aid are maintaining a high level of communication to ensure this target is met.
- Received a pledge funds from a group of PHD students from Toronto University who are fundraising for them.
- Received confirmation of in-kind donations, in the form of building materials such as cement, sand and stone which amounts to almost £3,500.
- Chance for Childhood are also exploring options with Global Giving to link Street Girls Aid with a platform to crowdfund for the remainder of the build.

Total budget

Activities	Forecast Cedis	Forecast GDP	Actual Cedis	Actual (total) GDP	Actual (Eagle) GDP
Demolition	39,938	7,479	85,751	16,058	16,058
Foundation	53,846	10,083	50,000	9,363	6,723
Over-Site Concrete	27,867	5,219			
In country total	121,651	22,781	135,751	25,421	22,781
Support & monitoring		2,159		2,159	2,159
Total		24,940		27,580	24,940

We remain extremely grateful for the generous investment of the Eagle Foundation in the House of Refuge, enabling us to safeguard an important building asset essential to the day-to-day work of our local partner Street Girls Aid, offering a safe sanctuary to hundreds of young mothers at risk and their babies.



Before



During



Street Child /
Westmead House, Westmead, Farnborough, GU14 /LP
Charity Registered no: 1013587