

BUSINESS PLAN (2020 – 2025)

MerryKids Foundation (MKF) is a charitable organization providing children and young people in Ghana the opportunity to access Primary, Secondary and Tertiary education. MKF offers financial as well as educational resources to underprivileged children and young people in the Okere Akuapem North District in Ghana.

THE BEGINNING

In 2006, the then chief of Adukrom, the late Nana Otutu Kono III (Justice Asare Korang) commissioned a review of the social and economic status of the Okere Akuapem North District in Ghana. Their findings were very discouraging; highlighting poor access to health care and other social amenities; including unemployment and access to basic level education. Although, the District had a relatively good number of primary and secondary schools, pre-school education was not taken seriously and children were either not attending school at all or starting primary school at a very late age. In our first year, one of our primary school recruits was a 20-year-old orphan who did not think it was too late to get an education.

It was the aim of the Strategic Planning Committee, which was set up to implement the objectives of the 2006 review to:

- Increase access to Basic Education 20% by year 2010.
- Establish an endowment fund to give needy children the opportunity to access basic education.
- Identify and establish criteria for accessing the endowment fund.
- Directly provide financial support to the children who meet the criteria.
- Educate the community on the benefits of educating children.

It was against this background that MerryKids Foundation (MKF) was established in 2007. Being citizens of Adukrom, a town within the Akuapem North District, we the founding members saw an opportunity to give back to our community what most people take for granted; education and to offer underprivileged children, living in the Okere Akuapem North District, the opportunity to access basic education.

Although tuition fees for primary education is free in Ghana, many families in this deprived community struggled to send their children to school. By supporting children and young people through education we believed that we were not only alleviating the pressures and barriers of poverty but also developing their skills and abilities in order for them to reach their full potential.

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Our **vision** was clear and that was; to invest in the future leaders of our community.

Our **aim** was to provide underprivileged children in the Okere Akuapem North District the same level of opportunities in life as their privileged peers in the country.

Our **key philosophy:** Education is a powerful asset by which economically and socially underprivileged children and young adults can get themselves out of poverty and participate fully as valuable citizens of their community and country.

MKF initially embarked on a pilot project in Adukrom to increase access to basic education. We started with twelve (12) primary school pupils in Adukrom in 2007. Since then, we have sponsored a total of over one hundred and fifty children through primary school, Junior and Senior High Schools and currently University.

THE FUTURE

Our primary focus on creating opportunities for children to access basic education changed when we felt it was the right thing to do to support children and young people from Primary through to Secondary School and University depending on their skills, abilities and choice.

Since MKF's inception over ten years ago we have reviewed our policies and evaluated our activities and drawn up a five-year developmental plan that would keep MKF viable into the next five years.

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS (2020-2025):

Our vision

- To equip, empower and create in children and young people a future workforce that would turn the nation's communities into a feasible and vibrant economic force.
- To release well equipped graduates to contribute to the development of their communities and country.

Our Mission

- Financially contribute to the enhancement of the skills and abilities of underprivileged children and young people to become profitable personnel in the economic development of their communities and country.

Aims

- To alleviate the pressures and barriers of poverty and to develop the skills and abilities of underprivileged children and young people in order for them to reach their full potential.
- To give children and young people the opportunity (through basic, secondary and tertiary) to contribute to the communities they belong to and beyond.

Objective:

- Provide financial as well as educational resources to enable children and young people continue to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities from primary school, through to secondary and higher education.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Board of Trustees - London UK	Board of Trustees - Ghana
Esther Donkor Mrs Salome Ahenkora Mrs Audrey Agyeman-Badu Mr Frank Amoah	Mrs Augusta Cameron (Executive Secretary) Mr Dave Cameron Justice Mrs Henrietta Abban Ms Justina Tete-Donkor Mr Blessed Ayisi Ms Barbara Acheampong
Fieldwork Co-Ordinator (Ghana): Mr Kwakye	

Over the past 10 years planning and decision making has been agreed between the London Trustees and Mrs Augusta Cameron, who works closely with the Fieldwork Co-ordinator to implement MKF's vision, mission and overall activities.

For the next 5 years Trustees in the UK will hold quarterly meetings to lead the development and implementation of the overall MKF strategy. In addition, MKF will

recruit the services of a Projects Administrator and a Fieldwork Co-ordinator to assist Mrs Cameron in planning, developing and implementing MKF's vision, mission and activities.

THE OPERATIONAL TEAM (OT)

Currently comprise:
Esther Donkor (London)

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Mrs Augusta Cameron (Ghana)
Fieldwork Co-Ordinator (Ghana)

We plan to appoint a sessional Projects Administrator to join the Team.

Roles, Responsibilities and Duties:

The Operational Team is a functional **role** and is accountable to the Trustees, Partners, Donors and other stakeholders.

The Team will:

- Ensure that the Foundation's activities support our beliefs, core values, objectives and vision.
- Establish the fundamental values, ethical principles and strategic direction in which MKF will operate.
- Manage the Foundation's funding and related activities, and will monitor, evaluate all areas of the Foundation's performance.
- Comply with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements and will seek guidance where necessary.
- Manage the financial and other resources of the Foundation.

The Operational Team has **responsibility** for recruiting volunteers and fieldworkers to carry out specific tasks, including:

- Develop and review policies.
- Plan the activities of MKF.
- Create opportunities for interested groups and individuals to participate in the activities of MKF.
- Organize fundraising events
- Provide financial forecasts and reports.
- Hosting and attending fundraising events.
- Fundraising by encouraging contributions and sponsorship

- Contributing to a strong public image of MKF
- Preparing regular progress reports to stakeholders and the public.
- Planning and convening Board of Trustees meetings.
- Identifying children and young people in need of support across the Akuapem North District

Duties of the Operational Team include:

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- Review, identify and establish criteria for accessing the funding/financial support within the Okere Akuapem North District of Ghana.
- Directly provide monetary as well as other educational resources to the children and young people who meet the criteria.
- Explore, design and deliver a sustainable social network as role models to direct beneficiaries into maximizing their potentials as well as guiding them into secure employment.

PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

Our Partners and Sponsors have no functional role. The commitment is voluntary and there is no obligation to MKF. Individually, they make monthly and/or yearly financial donations to fund our activities in Ghana.

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE: *(See attached Financial Schedule)*

FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

Sources of Income: Our main source of income is from Donors and Gift Aid claims. It is crucial for MKF to embark on / enhance our fundraising if we are to meet our / achieve our 5-year strategic plan.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES and FUNDING Projects/Activities

MKF operates in 12 schools in 9 villages within the Okere Akuapem North District.

Primary Schools:

- Adukrom Methodist
- Aseseeso Presbyterian
- Asenema M/A

Junior High School:

- Adukrom Presbyterian Resettlement
- Adukrom Bethel Presbyterian,
- Abiriw Presbyterian
- Akuni D/A
- Abonse Presbyterian

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- Asenema M/A
- Mintakrom M/A,
- Okrakwadwo M/A,
- Apirede Methodist.

University:

- University of Ghana – Legon - Accra
- Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology (KNUST) - Kumasi
- Koforidua Technical University (Koforidua)
- Ghana Technology University (Accra)

New Entrants:

- University of Cape Coast
- Ghana Technology University
- University of Ghana

Current Funding:**Primary and Junior High School:**

School resources not provided by the government; include:

- Exercise books, Pens, Pencils, Maths Set, Poster colour, Drawing Boards
- Fees and transport for Special Needs pupil
- School Clothing: uniforms and shoes

University:

- Fees
- Accommodation
- Hall Dues
- JCR Dues
- LSU Dues
- Department Dues
- Books
- Printed Articles
- Subsistence

Other Expenditure

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- Processing applications for new University entrants.
- Fieldwork co-ordinator allowance.
- Transportation costs.

LONG TERM 5 YEAR PLAN

Target Group:

Underprivileged, including orphans, children and young people in the Okere Akuapem North District in Ghana.

Selection Criteria:

Resume the recruitment of Primary School candidates:

Identify a maximum of 10 high achieving children in Year 6 Primary School through to Junior High School.

With the Ghana Government offering free Secondary School education, consideration is being given to offer one off financial assistance to MKF beneficiaries starting Secondary School. Funding will continue to beneficiaries who qualify for University placement. Continued funding will depend on maintaining a high academic achievement.

New expenditure:

- Staffing costs: Projects Administrator & Fieldwork Co-ordinator
- Identify successful candidates from previous JHS – SHS to process for University placements.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In our effort to ensure our viability and achieve our aims and objectives we have designed the following procedures to monitor and evaluate our activities:

- Feedback from parents on support offered to their children if any impact has been made?
- Feedback from the direct beneficiaries if support was geared towards assessed needs?
- Periodical Questionnaires for Teachers and Field Worker to complete to evidence the difference MKF's support has made in the life of beneficiaries.

- Video interview of beneficiaries and family to ascertain benefits derived from support received from MKF as well as sharing ideas on future needs.
- Record of course and exams reports evidencing continuous academic performance and/or vocational skills acquisition.
- Securing employment opportunities.

Analysis of MKF's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

A SWOT analysis will create opportunities for MKF to grow as a viable charitable organization and continue to support children and young people access primary, secondary and tertiary education.

Strengths

As citizens of the Akuapem North District and with our knowledge of the challenges inherent in this deprived community MKF were very successful from the onset to gain the trust and confidence of the local Educational Authority, the Church and Headteachers within the District who continue to support our activities to date.

As much as our initial aim was to increase the percentage of children accessing basic education, our decision in 2014 to focus on the quality of education rather than the numbers of beneficiaries, yielded much success. MKF has been successful in providing funding to children from primary school through to University. In addition, flexibility in implementing MKF policies to fit the local as well as changes in Government policies on Education increased MKF successes. Flexibility in implementing policies as well as monitoring and evaluating activities will allow for adjustments in procedures and financial management.

Our dedicated Donors have consistently made generous financial contributions, which have enabled MKF to meet our aims and objectives. Yearly reviews and feedback from our beneficiaries, families and Headteachers have been useful in reviewing our activities to meet the needs of our beneficiaries.

Weaknesses

Our weaknesses lie in our inability to directly influence and improve the standard of learning to a level where more of MKF beneficiaries qualify for tertiary education.

We also have, to date, been unable to identify the resources to design a robust fundraising programme to boost our income.

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Opportunities

The opportunities available to us are the continuous financial support from Donors and the support from local partners to enable strategically plan for the future and organize our activities in order to successfully alleviate poverty and create better futures for children and young people in the Okere Akuapem North District. MKF has the privilege of two beneficiaries graduating in June/July 2021, when they will be in a position to give something back to their community and to support MKF activities.

Threats

The main threat for MKF is the inability to generate adequate funds needed to fully implement the 5-year strategic plan. The outbreak of the Corona virus and lockdown resulting in unemployment has the potential to adversely affect MKF income.

Any change in the Ghana Government's policy on free Senior High School education will mean revising our policies and reviewing expenditure on MKF activities.

As always, our policies are flexible to allow for adjustments due to any external circumstances and to ensure minimum disruption in delivery of MKF objectives.

Esther Donkor
CEO
October 2020