



1 MILLION SMILES

Making Ghana a beacon for child rights
Our 2021-2025 Strategy



Over the next five years our education,
child protection and health projects
will reach a million people in northern
Ghana, giving more children than ever
happier childhoods and brighter futures



Contents

Executive summary	6
Where we work	9
How we work - our model	10
How we work - our principles	11
Our focus - priority issues	12
The challenge - why our work is needed	13
The root causes	14
The opportunity - what we will do	15
Strategic Goal 1: Ensure Means with secure families	17
Strategic Goal 2: Build Motive with Child Champion Communities	19
Strategic Goal 3: Create Opportunity with improved education, child protection and health services	21
Strategic Goal 4: Advocate for wider change	29
Strengthening AfriKids	31
Helping more children than ever - taking our work to scale	32
Timeline and budget	33
How you can help	34

How we developed this plan

How did we decide what we should do over the next five years? In order to develop this plan, we conducted extensive research and consultation to gather as much information as possible on the environment AfriKids will be operating in over the next decade, and to give all of our stakeholders a say in what AfriKids will be doing. We spoke to children, families, communities, traditional authorities, other NGOs, official authorities and funding partners. We explored what the key issues facing children are; what other actors, including the government, authorities and other NGOs will be doing, and how AfriKids can make the biggest difference to ensure every child in Ghana's rights are met. This information has been used to shape the following strategic plan, ensuring our work is needed, relevant and will have maximum impact. Read more about our findings and the context of our work here: www.afrikids.org/externalsituationanalysis

A full list of sources can be found in the Bibliography, available here: www.afrikids.org/1millionsmilesbibliography

Executive summary

By 2025, hundreds of thousands of lives will have been improved through over a million cases of support and Ghana will be on the road to becoming a beacon for child rights.

For almost two decades, AfriKids has worked with dedication and commitment for the rights and wellbeing of children in northern Ghana. AfriKids is a unique and multiple award-winning partnership between a UK charity and a local organisation embedded in the communities of northern Ghana. This successful partnership is well respected by the communities in which it works, as well as by a wide variety of partners and supporters in Ghana, the UK and around the world. It has helped make a life-changing difference to hundreds of thousands of children, many of whom have now grown to adulthood and are seizing their life chances – their moving stories are the story of AfriKids. Now we are looking forward to an exciting future in an environment of new challenges and opportunities.

This new strategy is built on a thorough analysis of the changing environment, globally, in the UK and in Ghana, in which AfriKids will need to succeed in the next decade. The world in the 2020s will be challenged by a changing climate and charged with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UK fundraising environment is now more tightly regulated than ever and the demands on charities and their trustees are ever increasing. They must work to address the challenges of safeguarding, fundraising ethics and data protection, whilst negotiating the needs of those they work with and their responsibilities to supporters. In Ghana, rapid economic growth has not yet brought sustainable development to all as inequalities remain deeply embedded, but it has altered the dynamics of international development partnerships as Ghana seeks to move “beyond aid”. Northern Ghana in particular remains significantly disadvantaged and its children and young people continue to face immense challenges. Yet, the environment also yields new opportunities, to work and advocate for children’s rights. This plan embraces the strategic change demanded by this new operating environment.

Over the next five years, we will expand our projects working to give poor rural communities the means, motive and opportunity to protect their children’s rights. We will focus on districts of northern Ghana facing the most significant challenges in keeping their children healthy, safe and in school, and where we believe we can make the biggest difference. We will work with each new district for five years, delivering a holistic and cost-effective programme of projects that bring the best of AfriKids’ experience and expertise together with locally-specific challenges and opportunities for change.

We will carefully monitor and record the difference these programmes make to sustainably improve education, child protection and health for all children, and use this data to produce case studies and a body of evidence to influence others. This sharing and advocacy of interventions that really work for Ghana’s most vulnerable and disadvantaged children will offer solutions to some of the most pressing and complex issues facing children across Ghana. By doing this, we hope to reach more children than ever by informing public policy and resource decisions and enabling others to replicate our success more widely, all helping to accelerate Ghana’s progress towards achieving the SDGs and becoming a beacon for child rights.

To make this ambitious plan possible, we will strengthen and grow the capacity of AfriKids through a set of organisational development projects. These projects, in areas like smarter use of technology and growing our partnerships and collaboration with others, will enable the achievement of our strategic goals for Ghana’s children.

By 2025, we will be a strong and effective champion for the rights of Ghana’s children, a major development actor in Ghana, and a powerful advocate for children’s rights and the SDGs. As a result of our efforts alongside others’, hundreds of thousands of lives will be improved and Ghana will be on the road to becoming a beacon for child rights.

Our Vision

A prosperous and thriving world where the rights of every child are valued, protected and met by all.

Our Mission

To ensure that every child in northern Ghana is afforded their rights as outlined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and to do this by building the capacity and resources of local people, organisations and initiatives in such a way that they will be able to continue their efforts independently and sustainably in the future.

Our ultimate goal: Ghana is a beacon for child rights

We recognise that our direct programmes with communities in northern Ghana will only reach a minority of the children whose rights are not yet fully met. We also recognise that there are children in other regions of Ghana who face similar challenges. Therefore, we seek to maximise the leverage of our programmes through demonstration of impact, evidence-based advocacy, and partnerships, to ensure that all of Ghana's children can benefit from a society that values and respects all their rights. Our central strategic goal therefore is to enlist the engagement and support of Government, civil society, business and the wider international development community, to galvanise a shared commitment to the ambition of Ghana as a beacon for child rights.

To make real progress towards this ambition by 2025 our programmes have been carefully selected and designed with this central goal in mind – to demonstrate through practice, the power and impact of child rights-focused development, for the benefit of the whole community. Progress will have to be measurable and evidenced through first class monitoring and evaluation, in close partnership with communities. The results will inform partnerships for replication and scale-up, and will together with other relevant research and data, inform powerful and effective communications and advocacy, mobilising the public and institutions of Ghana behind our shared vision.

This central goal will be the benchmark against which our work in programmes, advocacy, fundraising and communications will be designed and evaluated.



How our work contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals

Our definition for Ghana as a beacon of child rights is rooted in the mission of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Global Goals; a collection of 17 interlinked goals for all countries, designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". The SDGs were set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030.

This strategy has been carefully developed to maximise the impact AfriKids will have in helping Ghana achieve the SDGs directly affecting children, and therefore becoming a beacon for child rights. Our work specifically aims to contribute to the following goals:



Where we work

AfriKids works in Ghana, West Africa. It is here that our story began - with a handful of local heroes working to support vulnerable children in their communities. Their work inspired our simple but effective approach to aid: listen to local people and empower them to make sustainable changes themselves. This is still our philosophy today.


We are deliberately focused on Ghana's northern regions, where a significant majority of the country's poorest people live and child rights are especially at risk. Since 2002, we have been dedicated to working in these regions to make a difference, for as long as we are needed. The people who design and deliver our award-winning projects are all Ghanaian and most of them are from the North, so they have deep understanding and personal commitment to improving life for children here, and are known and trusted by the communities they work in.

The map of Ghana on the right shows its five northern regions in colour.

Over the next five years, we will expand our projects into more communities across Ghana's five northern regions. The specific districts we work with will be selected based on where the need is greatest and we can make the biggest difference. Read more about our projects under Strategic Goals 1-3.

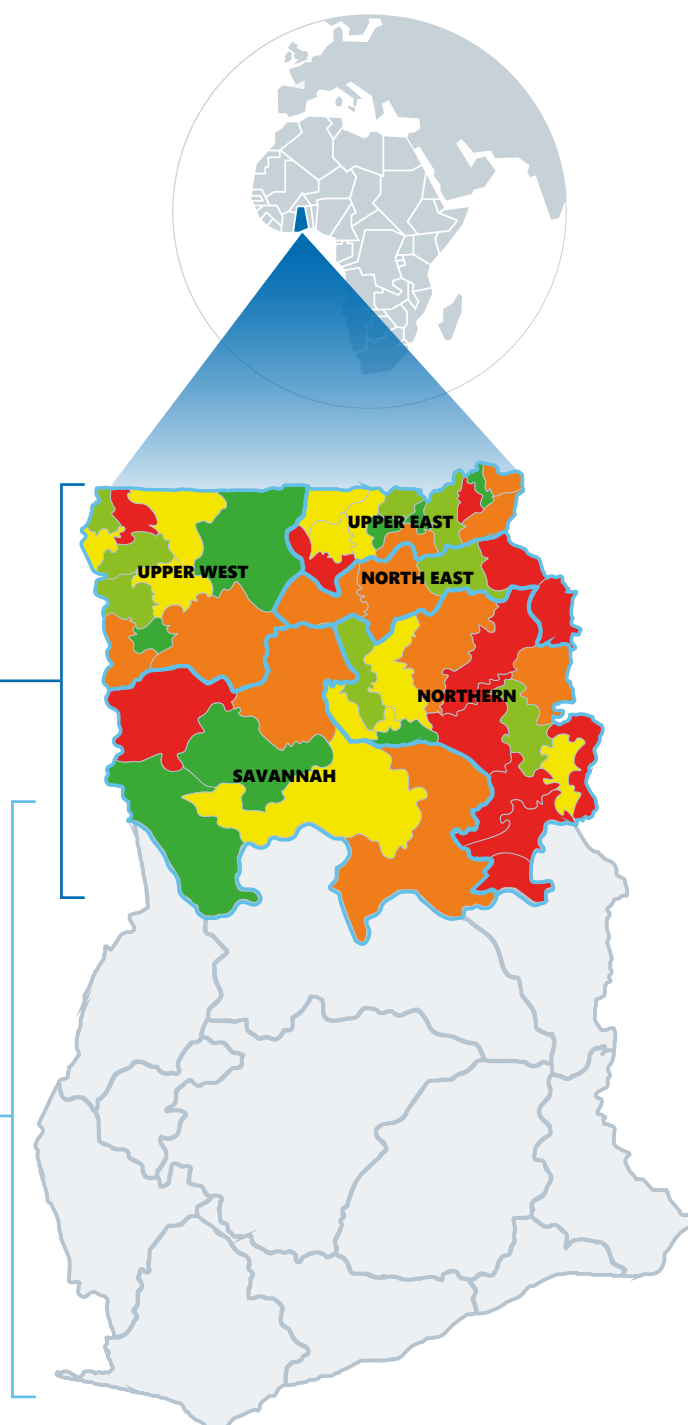
Our advocacy work aims to influence and mobilise others to affect change in other locations across the country using our approach. Read more about our Advocacy work under Strategic Goal 4.

Key

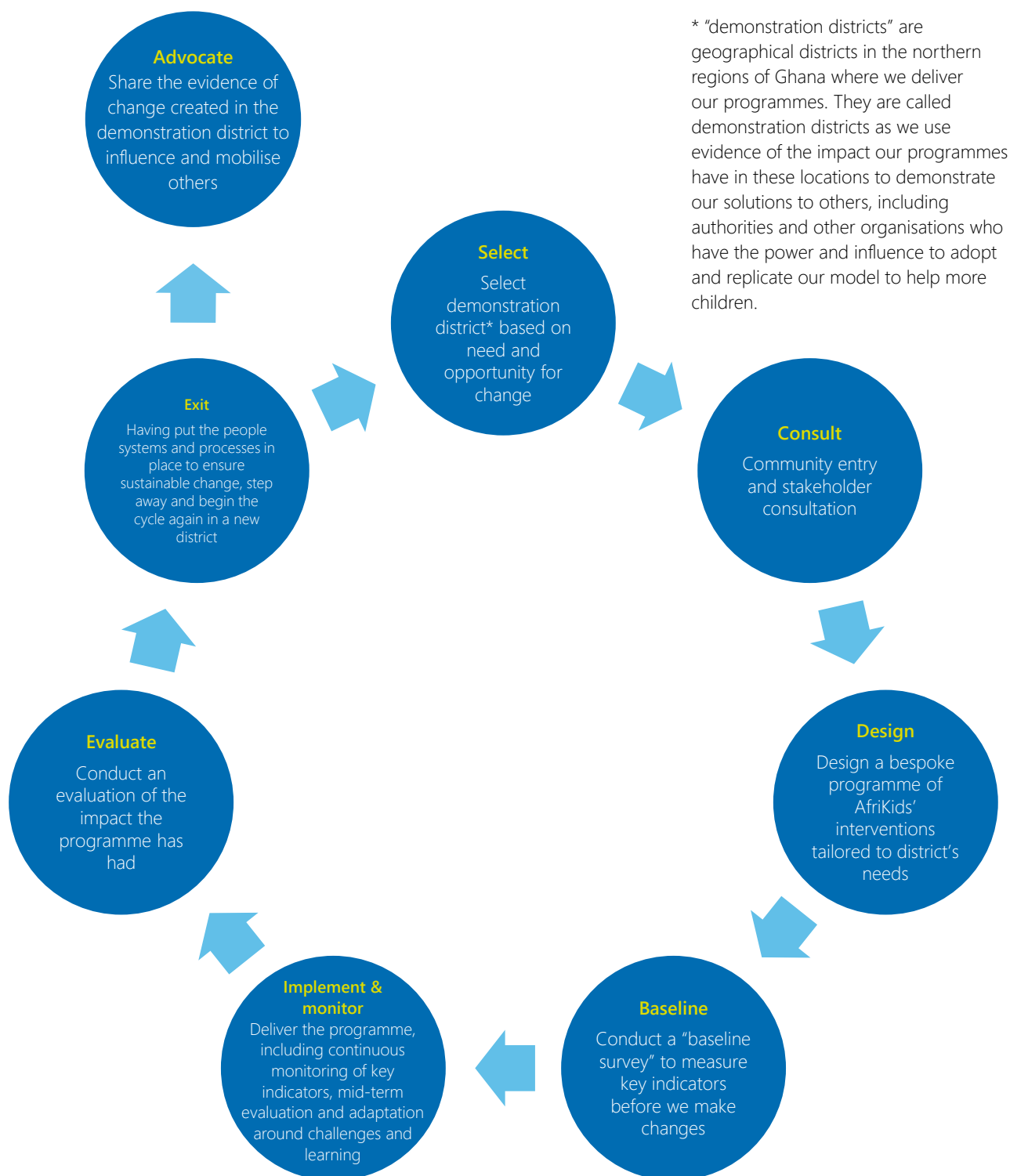
Highest  Lowest



District ranking by level of development (based on indicators of health, education, water, sanitation, security, governance and child protection).



How we work - our model



How we work – our principles

We keep children safe

Ensuring the protection of children and their rights is the reason AfriKids exists and our up most priority. We have robust measures in place to protect people, particularly children and vulnerable adults, from any harm that may be caused by AfriKids' work or people involved with it.

We Say No to Pity

We will not trivialise the injustice of poverty or compromise the dignity of anyone we work with through 'pity advertising' or by using inappropriate images or language when discussing sensitive issues. We hope sharing the positive stories of how our work is making a difference will inspire people to help us do more.

We are truly local

Our team of local staff in Ghana design and run all of our life-changing programmes from start to finish. Qualified, experienced professionals, they have a deep, personal commitment to improving life for children in their communities, and being known and trusted by the communities they work in is what makes them so effective, especially with some of our most complex work changing traditional beliefs. Fundraising and donor due diligence is led from the UK, but all to support local people delivering the right solutions in their own communities.

We share and collaborate

By working with others, we can have a greater impact. We collaborate with partners across the NGO, public and private sectors to maximise the reach and impact of our projects. We continuously develop our knowledge and skills by working with and learning from others, sharing what we know so that they too can learn from us.

We listen

Our programmes are developed by listening to what local people tell us they really need. Our exceptional stakeholder consultation gives every level of society a say on what we do, and gives us a clear view on what the government and other actors are doing. This ensures our projects are always truly needed, wanted and bought into by everyone it takes to make them work.

We empower

Our approach is always to help children, families and communities help themselves. Our projects bring people together, equip them with knowledge and show them how to make and demand the changes needed for all children to have a better life in northern Ghana.

We sustain

If it's not sustainable, it's not development. For us, this means two things:

Addressing the root causes of issues as well as the symptoms

As well as providing direct support to children at risk now, we are also improving the education, child protection and healthcare systems of northern Ghana, to stop suffering in the first place, and improve every child's start in life.

Creating changes that are sustainable without ongoing aid

All of our projects create change by educating local people and empowering them to make changes themselves. This way the changes we help make with each new project become permanently embedded and continue to benefit children long after our involvement ends. While there is a lot of work to be done and making permanent changes take time, our projects will evolve and move, rather than creating a dependence on us and aid for changes to be sustained.

We are transparent and accountable

We are fiercely committed to 100% accountability for all of the money we receive and spend in the UK and Ghana. We maintain robust governance policies and procedures including regular internal and external audits to ensure this. We publish independently audited accounts annually and encourage donors to ask us anything, anytime.

We respect people and planet

We work together with communities to end harmful traditional practices and protect children, while respecting local culture, heritage and environment.



We are conscious to minimise the impact of our operations on the environment and employ a reduce, reuse and recycle approach.

We always want to do better

An ethos of learning and improving is ingrained in everything we do, from continuous staff training to robust Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning tools that measure our impact and show us how we can do better. We actively invite feedback from all of our stakeholders.

Our focus - priority issues

Our work aims to ensure all children's rights can be met, though we specifically focus on making changes to uphold their rights to quality education, protection from harm and the highest attainable standard of health. These are among the most critical issues affecting children in northern Ghana and where AfriKids' knowledge and experience can make the biggest difference. Our research also shows a number of cross-cutting issues that have a strong influence on children's rights to education, health and protection being met, so they are also considered in our project activities.

PRIMARY ISSUES			
CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES	Education 	Child Protection 	Health 
Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment/climate change education Eco solutions for schools - toilets, energy, supplies Reusable sanitary kits for girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child protection risk arising from environmental pressure on livelihoods (child labour, marriage) Climate-resilient livelihoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Cleaner cooking and energy
Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removing barriers to girls' education Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights education (SRHR) Adequate toilets and handwashing in schools Sanitary products for girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child, early and forced marriage Child trafficking and sexual exploitation Gender-based discrimination and violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public sexual and reproductive health education and services Adequate toilets and handwashing in health facilities
Digital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) learning in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child protection helpline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public health education via mobile technology
Livelihoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical and vocational education and training Increasing progression in education Student loans and access to further study Improving learning outcomes Promoting public welfare initiatives (e.g. school meals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child protection risk arising from poverty (street and working children, child marriage) Increasing livelihood security for poor families Alternative livelihoods for traditional healers linked to "spirit child" belief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upskilling healthworkers Access to healthworker training for young people Livelihood support for families of children with disabilities
Child Rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe schools - ending corporal punishment and abuse in schools Promoting right to education for children with disabilities Educating and empowering children on their rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harmful traditional beliefs and practices (including "spirit children", child marriage) Support and care for children with disabilities and their families Violence against children Safe homes for children at risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health services for children with disabilities Promoting maternal and child health

The challenge - why our work is needed

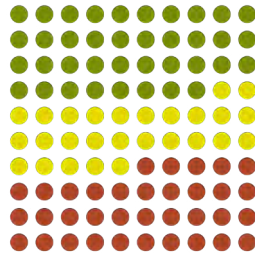
Under-5 mortality



1 in 16

children die before their 5th birthday‡

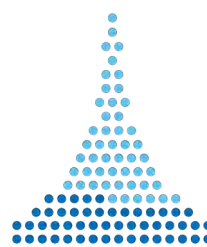
Poverty



62% **35%**

of people are poor‡ are extremely poor‡

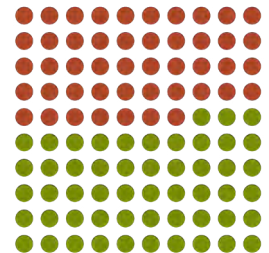
Age



50%

of the population are children (under 18)‡

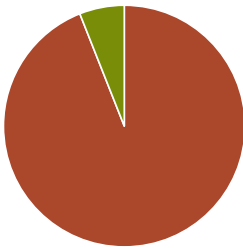
No education



47%

of the population over 15 have never been to school‡

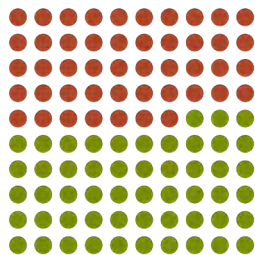
Violence



94%

of children experience violence at home and in schools

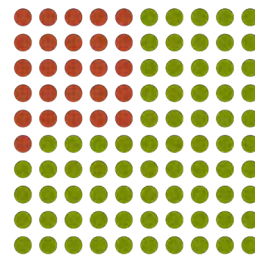
Child labour



47%

of 5-17 year old are engaged in child labour‡

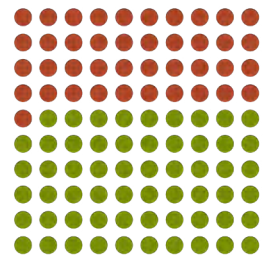
Child marriage



26%

of girls are married before their 18th birthday. 18% of 15-19 year old girls are mothers‡

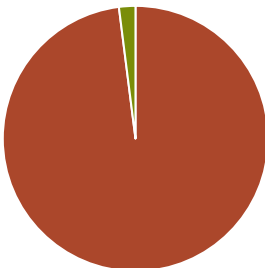
Unsafe deliveries



41%

of babies are born without a skilled attendant*

Child literacy



2%

of primary school children can read§

Out-of-school children

450,000

children are out of school‡

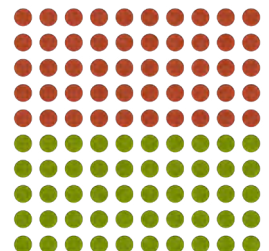
Children of appropriate age not attending school



25% **76%** **92%**

primary school‡ junior high school‡ senior high school‡

Disability



50%

of rural people with disabilities have no education. 1 in 5 children with disabilities are not in school§

* in the "Northern Region" | ‡ across Ghana's 5 northern regions | § across Ghana

The root causes

Only by tackling the following root causes of challenges faced by children can we ensure the changes we make will be sustained.



MEANS

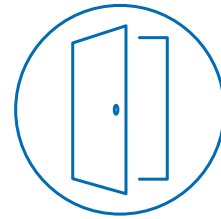
Poor livelihood security (poverty) makes it difficult for families to:

- prioritise their children's education over more urgent issues like feeding the family, which can be alleviated by children working instead of being in school
- avoid putting their children's safety at risk. Financial pressure increases the likelihood children will be put at risk in situations like child labour, living on the streets and child marriage
- prioritise the time and costs relating to maintaining good mother and child health over more urgent priorities like feeding the family



MOTIVE

- Poor parents often didn't go to school themselves. They may see the education system as closed to them and under-prioritise their children's education, instead encouraging them to follow traditional customs like child marriage
- Lack of education and healthcare in poor communities has failed to challenge harmful traditional beliefs and customs that put child safety at risk. Harmful practices like child marriage, gender-based violence, abuse of perceived "spirit children" and corporal punishment in schools are widely accepted and reinforced by traditional authorities, opinion leaders and people whose livelihoods depend on them
- Limited public health education means people do not know enough about how to protect maternal and child health. Barriers to accessing quality healthcare services mean traditional practices (like using unqualified birth attendants and traditional healers) are still widely used, and can put mother and child health at risk.



OPPORTUNITY

- A lack of quality schooling means children do not have access to quality basic education, even if they have the means and motive
- Public services that are critical to keeping children safe are lacking in availability and quality. Negative attitudes on child protection matters (e.g. stigma around supporting disabled children) prevent opportunities for community-based support systems
- Healthcare provision is limited in quality and coverage; support like National Health Insurance concessions are not adequately promoted. Communities and environments for children (e.g. schools) lack infrastructure and good practices for maintaining child health (e.g. lack of toilets/running water; corporal punishment)

The opportunity - what we will do

Over the next five years we will listen to local people and empower them to make sustainable changes themselves in order to:



ENSURE MEANS

Ensure families and young people have secure livelihoods to meet children's needs and protect their rights



BUILD MOTIVE

Create Child Champion Communities that understand, value and protect the rights of all children



CREATE OPPORTUNITY

Improve education, child protection and health services to ensure all children can be healthy, safe and learn



ADVOCATE FOR WIDER CHANGE

Collect and share evidence of the impact our work has to mobilise decision makers and other actors to extend our successful approach across Ghana and protect more children's rights

IMPACT

32,420
Secure Families



235
Child Champion Communities



320
Communities with improved Education



224
Communities with improved Child Protection



232
Communities with improved Health





"I have been able to greatly improve my trade.

With my business thriving, the living standards of my family have improved greatly. My family, especially my kids, are all very happy since I can now buy the materials they need to go to school.

The community where I live is also benefitting because I can now buy from other traders which is helping to boost my local economy which I am very pleased about."

Paulina, a mother of three supported by AfriKids' livelihoods project to grow her small business



Strategic Goal 1: Ensure Means **ENSURE FAMILIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE SECURE LIVELIHOODS**

62% of people in northern Ghana live in poverty and just 15% are in secure employment. Most families rely on vulnerable employment like subsistence farming and petty trading to meet their needs - livelihoods that are particularly prone to shocks like climate change and economic depression. Poverty, at the family and community level, brings significant risk to children's rights. Families lacking secure livelihoods are under more pressure to marry their daughters off early or send children to work or to the street to help make ends meet. Therefore, ensuring families have secure livelihoods is critical to helping them protect their children's rights.

32,420
Secure
Families



OBJECTIVE:

Help families and young people secure their own livelihoods to meet children's needs and protect their rights to quality education, good health and protection from harm

WHAT WE WILL DO:

- Support families and young people with credit and skills training to improve their livelihood security
- Support extremely disadvantaged children with school supplies
- Promote and help poor families to access public welfare initiatives like Ghana's National Health Insurance Scheme and livelihood support programmes (e.g. LEAP, NHIS, etc.)
- Partner with other organisations specialising in livelihood improvement initiatives to bring them into the communities we serve. Examples include organisations working in agriculture, water, sanitation & health and youth skills & employment.

TARGETS:



76,386

support packages to help families improve their livelihood security



9,350

young people supported to access higher education/skills training to improve their livelihood prospects



231,575

people benefitting from improved livelihoods and social security



"It pained me very well because how can you force a girl to be married? You don't even know how she feels. I rode my bicycle from house to house in my community and told everyone that Doreen has been forced to marry so they should help me rescue her."

Elvis, an AfriKids Child Rights Club member, who after learning about child rights, took action when his friend Doreen was abducted for forced child marriage. He immediately rallied his club members who made placards and formed a protest. Their actions led to her rescue, and with Doreen's testimony, the offender was prosecuted. Doreen is now back in school and dreams of becoming a nurse.



Strategic Goal 2: Build Motive

CREATE CHILD CHAMPION COMMUNITIES THAT PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF ALL CHILDREN

Sustainable change can only happen with community support and understanding. While livelihood security is the first step in enabling families to protect their children's rights, it is also critical that those rights are understood and valued by all. Communities that have long endured poverty and limited access to education and healthcare, might not value education as a priority, know how to optimise mother and child health or challenge traditional beliefs and practices that are harmful - especially for children with disabilities and girls. By showing people the difference child protection, education and health can make to their children's futures, and empowering them with the roles and responsibilities to make change happen themselves, we will create "Child Champion Communities" that celebrate the rights of all children.

235
Child Champion
Communities



OBJECTIVE:

Inform and empower children and communities to understand, value and protect the rights of all children

WHAT WE WILL DO:

- Educate and empower children on their rights and provide platforms for them to be heard through Child Rights Clubs, youth parliaments/debates, extracurricular activities, radio programmes and public events.
- Deliver social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) programmes in communities to:
 - promote knowledge, attitudes and practices that improve chances of child survival and development (antenatal health, birth registration, immunisations, breastfeeding, nutrition, WASH, sexual and reproductive health, etc.).
 - end harmful traditional beliefs and promote knowledge, attitudes and practices that keep children safe, especially those most vulnerable to abuse (e.g. focus on preventing gender based violence, child marriage and abuse of children with disabilities/"spirit children").
 - promote the importance and value of ensuring every child's right to education, including children with disabilities.
- Support adults from the most under-represented groups to become role models and mentors, promoting the case for investing in the education of the most marginalised children.

TARGETS:



235

Child Champion Communities informed and empowered to understand, value and protect children's rights

96,938

children educated and empowered on their rights

349,487

people with improved knowledge, attitudes and practices towards child rights

"I started my teacher training with AfriKids two years ago to improve my methods. It is one of the best things that has happened to me.

Now teaching has become more fun and interesting to me. I am able to control my class better, my pupils' attendance has improved and their academic performance too."

A primary school teacher





Strategic Goal 3: Create Opportunity

ENSURE ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION, CHILD PROTECTION AND HEALTH SERVICES

Even if people have the means and motive to protect their children's rights, they are only able to do so when they have access to decent institutions and services like quality schools and professional healthcare facilities. Schools, healthcare and child protection services serving poor rural communities are often under-resourced, poorly governed and struggle to retain skilled staff. These communities often lack the knowledge, voice and power they need to demand better from the public services they and their children are entitled to. By setting up community based systems and working with professional services to bring them up to a gold standard - making them Child Champion services - we will open doors to more children being healthy, safe and educated.

OBJECTIVE:

Improve education, child protection and health services to ensure all children can be healthy, safe and learn

320

Communities with improved
Education



224

Communities with improved
Child Protection



232

Communities with improved
Health





IMPROVING EDUCATION SERVICES



THE CHALLENGE:

450,000

children are out of school

50%

of people with disabilities have no schooling

around 1/2

of schools don't have toilets or running water

Just 2%

of primary school pupils can read

92%

of senior high school-aged children are not in senior high school or higher

Ghana, as a whole, has made enormous advances in enrolment of children into primary school, as well as achieving gender parity in access and completion rates at primary level. However learning outcomes are low, few children progress beyond primary level and over 450,000 children remain out-of-school, most of whom come from the poorest households and the northern regions. The challenge for education systems now is reaching those children still excluded - including children with disabilities - and improving the quality of education provided to all children.

Access and retention

Access issues include children not starting school at the right age, distance to schools, teacher absenteeism and pressures on children to skip school or drop out for work and marriage. Around half of all schools do not have toilets or running water and that figure is getting worse, as those that do are unable to maintain them. This presents an extra barrier to girls, who regularly miss school during their period.

Though corporal punishment is banned, it is still commonplace, and most children report verbal abuse and humiliation from teachers - all cited as some of the reasons children miss school and drop out.

Quality

For those who do attend, there are chronic issues with the quality of education provided and consequently, learning outcomes are very low. Teachers, especially in early years education, are underqualified and undertrained. Outdated and ineffective "chalk and talk" teaching methods are commonly practiced, failing to engage students and ensure meaningful learning. In some cases, just 2% of primary school children are able to read at the right level and 50% cannot read a single word.

Children in northern Ghana are especially disadvantaged, as the region struggles to attract and retain skilled teachers and schools are under-resourced, with poor maintenance and a lack of teaching and learning materials. Poor governance and lack of parent and community engagement reduces the impetus and opportunity for schools to improve.

Exclusion of children with disabilities

There are severe barriers to children with disabilities accessing education. Almost no schools have handrails, just 8% have access ramps and there is little inclusion training for teachers. Mothers of children with disabilities report being turned away by schools who cannot accommodate their children's needs or have concerns about them being disruptive to other students. 50% of people with disabilities in rural Ghana have had no schooling at all.

WHAT WE WILL DO:

We will work with schools, education authorities and communities to tackle these issues and strengthen education systems, ensuring more children complete a quality basic education at the right age and can progress further in their studies. Specifically, we will:

- Make schools inclusive and safe with WASH facilities, disabled access and removal of corporal punishment.
- Support schools to offer a range of learning opportunities including in STEM and extracurricular activities.
- Support teachers with training and CPD (including learning and sharing with peers and education stakeholders) in modern and effective teaching methods relevant to their student age group/level.
- Equip teachers and schools with learning materials and resources
- Help education providers put people, systems and processes in place to ensure effective management within and between schools.
- Help schools and communities put people, systems and processes in place to govern the availability, quality and impact (learning outcomes) of education provision, including parent/community involvement.

TARGETS:



320

communities with improved education services



233,161

school pupils benefitting from improved education services



7,822

people engaged and upskilled to improve education services

320

Communities with improved Education



What do improved education services look like?

- Continuous training, conferences and events for basic education teachers, head teachers and school governing bodies
- Teachers and classrooms equipped with teaching and learning materials
- Effective School Management Committees and Parent Teacher Associations
- Use of School Performance and Improvement Plans
- Compliance with Ghana's "Safe schools" model
- Teacher Focal Points for guidance and counselling, sports and culture, girls and disability inclusion and STEM
- Sanitary and accessible toilets and handwashing facilities
- Community Education volunteers conducting home and school monitoring
- Community/mobile libraries
- Holiday classes for children
- Child Rights Clubs in schools for children
- STEM clubs
- Events including "My First Day at School" celebrations, community festivals and education policy fairs
- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights education





IMPROVING CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES



THE CHALLENGE:

94%

of children
experience violence

47%

of 5-17 year olds are
engaged in child
labour

90,000+

children are on the
streets

957,398

children work in the
cocoa industry

26%

of 20-24 year old
girls were married
before they turned
18

The majority of our work protecting children from harm is preventative: tackling the driving forces that put children at risk of neglect, abuse and exploitation in the first place. We do this by improving family livelihood security to reduce the pressures of poverty and by ending customary practices that put children in danger, like corporal punishment, child marriage, child labour and discrimination of children with disabilities. However, child protection systems also need to be in place to identify children at risk now and protect them.

In Ghana, child protection laws and policies, though perhaps disjointed, are there; Ghana was the first country in the world to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, it has ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (2005), it has the Children Act (1998) and many other standalone policies. However, since 2010, official analysis and mapping of the child protection systems in place to enable and enforce these policies have been found to be inadequate.

There are many bodies involved in preventing child abuse and promoting child welfare including official departments dedicated to children, gender and social welfare. Though the reality of widespread poverty in northern Ghana means children living on the streets, working dangerous jobs and marrying are commonplace and culturally normalised. Authorities are only able to protect a minority of children, often only the most extreme cases and are limited in the solutions they can provide. Links between systems that need to work

together such as welfare support, community development, violence prevention, justice and health are weak, limiting what each service can do in silo. While care reform initiatives have been introduced to promote fostering and reduce the risks of harmful institutional care, financial barriers to families being motivated to foster and able to meet the required standards remain.

The work of social welfare and community development officers is not being documented or monitored, meaning the impact and importance of this work is not being prioritised. Underinvestment means there are not enough officers and skills and training are lacking.

Though data is scant, there are an estimated 90,000 children living and working on the streets of Ghana's capital region alone - a figure that has tripled in five years. The majority of children on the streets and engaged in hazardous labour across the country (including nearly a million children in the cocoa industry) are consistently found to be from the northern regions. These children are constantly exposed to risks of violence, abuse and exploitation.

As with education and health, our work strengthening child protection systems includes "informal" systems like community volunteers, campaigners and support groups; initiatives which involve the people who are in the settings that child protection issues occur every day, and so are best placed to lead prevention and act as first responders.

WHAT WE WILL DO:

We will work with child protection services, authorities and communities to tackle these issues to prevent and respond to children facing neglect, abuse and exploitation. Specifically, we will:

- Establish community-based child protection initiatives, including volunteer networks, to prevent and respond to child protection issues (e.g. cases of neglect and abuse).
- Work with child protection services to remove children from situations where they face or are at risk of facing abuse, and support them into safe environments - with family/community wherever possible.
- Upskill and resource public child protection services, strengthening their capacity and resolve to keep children safe.
- Support and incentivise children's care homes to maintain the highest standards of safeguarding and ensure community-based rehabilitation wherever possible (i.e. minimising the number of children in care).

TARGETS:



224

communities with improved child protection services



69,126

at-risk children protected from harm



2,418

people engaged and upskilled to improve child protection services

224

Communities with improved
Child Protection



What do improved child protection services look like?

- Community Child Protection Committees
- Community Child Protection volunteers
- Child Protection festivals, conferences and workshops
- Child Protection education and training for social welfare staff; traditional authorities; religious leaders; women's groups; youth leaders
- Safe homes and rehabilitation for children at risk





IMPROVING HEALTH SERVICES

THE CHALLENGE:

1:20,000

doctor:patient ratio
(WHO recommends
1:1,320)

41%

of babies delivered
without a skilled
attendant in parts of
northern Ghana

18%

of 15-19 year old
girls have begun
childbearing

310

women die for every
100,000 live babies
born (the SDG target
is 70)

9 in 10

unmarried
adolescents say
their family planning
needs are not met

up to 15%

of child deaths
might be caused by
"spirit child" related
infanticide (mostly
affecting children
with disabilities) in
communities that
hold these beliefs

Northern Ghana is vast and sparsely populated with limited road, energy and water infrastructure, making even basic healthcare coverage a major challenge. There are around 300 doctors, each serving around 20,000 patients - 15 times more than the World Health Organisation recommends. Healthcare facilities are limited, under-resourced and struggle to attract and retain skilled workers. Emergency and specialist healthcare is extremely limited, usually requiring travel to major cities in the south, with high private healthcare and accommodation costs, making them prohibitive to most families in the north.

While the country has made significant investments in its healthcare system, including the introduction of a National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) offering basic healthcare free of charge to those paying an annual fee to register, huge challenges remain, especially for the poorest families. While the NHIS is offered free to children, pregnant women and those living in poverty, this is not widely promoted and the process for applying not easy or well understood. Treatments for many common ailments are not covered by the NHIS, availability of drugs covered by the NHIS is poor and barriers like the time and costs of travelling to facilities deter many people from using professional health services, including during childbirth. In parts of northern Ghana, as many as 41% of babies are born without a skilled attendant and across the country, 310 women die for every 100,000 live babies born - more than 4 times higher than the SDG target of 70.

At the local level, Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) were introduced in 2003 to bring healthcare closer to the people - basic healthcare clinics in communities working with community leaders and social groups. CHPS are now a vital part of the healthcare system, but more needs to be done to train healthworkers and ensure safe practices at these facilities - most do not have toilets or running water. Use of traditional healers, self medication and dangerous practices like "DIY abortions" are still commonplace, especially in rural settings.

Key child survival and development indicators like under-5 and maternal mortality and malnutrition are especially high in the poorest northern regions and these risks are higher still for the many children born to underage mothers. Sexual and reproductive healthcare is a particular area for concern. More than a 1/4 of girls in northern Ghana are married before they turn 18, 18% of 15-19 year old girls in rural areas have begun childbearing and 9 in 10 unmarried adolescents say they do not have access to the family planning services they need. Adolescent girls in rural areas and those among the poorest and least educated are at higher risk of child marriage and early childbearing.

45% of under-5 deaths are caused by malaria, diarrhoea and pneumonia, cases which could be significantly reduced by increasing public health education and access to basic healthcare.

In 2011, the Ministry of Health discontinued the collection of data on persons with disabilities, despite them being among the most marginalised and underserved by the healthcare system. Stigma and harmful practices linked to disability like abuse of "spirit children" and "prayer camps" are a major problem. Healthcare for people with disabilities is severely lacking and less than 1% of the country's health budget is spent on mental health. High prevalence of conditions like cerebral palsy could be reduced through improved education and access to maternal healthcare. Specialist care for children with disabilities is desperately needed to improve quality of life and as part of the solution to ending harmful traditional beliefs.



WHAT WE WILL DO:

We will work with healthcare providers, authorities and communities to tackle these issues and strengthen health systems serving women and children, ensuring more children enjoy their right to the highest attainable standard of health. Specifically, we will:

- Install and improve accessible, inclusive and sanitary WASH facilities (WCs, hand washing stations, potable water) at schools and CHPS compounds (community health clinics).
- Upskill and resource public health providers serving marginalised communities.
- Help public health providers put systems and processes in place to monitor the availability and quality of public health services and ensure stakeholder relations are effective.
- Establish community-based initiatives to promote and support health in the community (eg support groups and clinics).
- Establish and improve adolescent health centres to ensure access to stigma-free, quality sexual and reproductive health services for young people.
- Establish and improve support services for children with disabilities and their families.
- Deliver mobile health screenings in rural communities and schools.
- Support children from poor families to access emergency and life-saving medical treatment.

TARGETS:



232

communities with improved health services



392,218

people benefitting from improved health services



1,515

people engaged and upskilled to improve health services



232
Communities with improved Health



What do improved health services look like?

- Community Health Management Committees
- Upskilled CHPS compounds (community health clinics)
- Parent support groups
- Clinics and support groups for children with disabilities
- Sanitary toilets and handwashing facilities at CHPS compounds
- Community Health Volunteers
- Adolescent Health Centres (sexual and reproductive health)
- Mobile clinics/health screenings
- Public health education festivals, conferences and events
- Public health education for rural communities in accessible formats like radio and pictorial posters







Strategic Goal 4:

ADVOCATE FOR WIDER CHANGE

OBJECTIVE:

Collect and share evidence of the impact our work has to mobilise decision makers and other actors to extend our successful approach across Ghana and protect more children's rights

Our programmes in northern Ghana will only reach only a minority of the country's children whose rights are not being met. There are children in other regions of Ghana who face similar challenges and our ultimate goal is to see Ghana become a beacon for child rights - a place where all children's rights are met. Therefore, through evidence-based advocacy, we will enlist the engagement and support of Government, civil society, business and the wider international development community, to replicate and expand our solutions across Ghana and move faster towards this goal.

WHAT WE WILL DO:

- Publish reports on AfriKids' programmes including their impact, success and challenges for shared learning.
- Engage in consultations and discussions on child rights to contribute our knowledge and experience where it has value and can influence positive change.
- Collect and publish data to increase and improve understanding of issues affecting children, especially in poor and rural settings.
- Give guidance and make recommendations on policy and interventions needed to improve the protection of child rights across Ghana.
- Actively grow our network and partnerships to increase our profile, influence and impact.





Strengthening AfriKids

We are committed to best practice standards that our communities, partners, staff and supporters rightly deserve and expect from us. The following projects will strengthen our organisational capacity as we grow, enabling us to deliver our strategic goals to help many more children while maintaining the standards and quality we are known for.

STRENGTHENING PROJECT 1:

Funding

Reaching more children and advocating for wider change will depend on us significantly growing our income. A new Global Resource Mobilisation Plan will bring our UK and Ghana teams together in this mission and increase fundraising, especially in Ghana. Diversifying our income sources and increasing flexible (unrestricted) funding will reduce risk and make it possible for us to test new ideas and adapt our plans to navigate challenges. We will increase financial security and make our fundraising more cost-effective by working with multi-year, strategic funding partners committed to supporting projects through to completion.

STRENGTHENING PROJECT 2:

Leadership and Governance

We will grow our leadership capacity and equip the Boards of AfriKids UK and AfriKids Ghana to effectively govern a larger operation. We will work more “as one”; streamlining operations, improving communication and working together to embed shared culture and values. We will invest in the continuous development of our leadership staff and ensure systems are in place to monitor progress against our strategy, make good decisions and manage risk/compliance.

STRENGTHENING PROJECT 3:

People

Our staff in the UK and Ghana are the key to our success. As we grow, we will do more to attract, develop and retain exceptional staff. We will make sure AfriKids is a great place to work; a positive work environment where everyone is supported and motivated to give their best. Staff will have continuous training, be encouraged to share their ideas and be supported with their health and wellbeing.

STRENGTHENING PROJECT 4:

Data, systems and processes

We will make improvements to all of our policies, systems and processes and upgrade our use of technology to work smarter

and reduce risk. Key focus areas will be financial management, impact measurement (monitoring the difference we are making to people's lives) and risk/compliance. More accurate and reliable data will enable us to spot problems earlier, reduce time spent on reporting, improve our transparency & accountability and make more informed decisions. We will also be exploring ways to harness technology for greater impact in our projects, like providing e-health and child helplines.

STRENGTHENING PROJECT 5:

Communications

We will develop a higher public and media profile internationally through effective “storytelling” for different audiences. We will improve our transparency and accountability; setting clear expectations with all of our stakeholders, including our beneficiaries, and systematically accounting for them. We will publish more evidence-based information and use it to mobilise partners, policymakers, influencers and actors to benefit more children, now and in the future.

STRENGTHENING PROJECT 6:

Keeping children safe

We will make continuous improvements to our safeguarding policies, systems and processes, ensuring we are doing everything we can to keep children safe as we do our work. We will actively prevent, report and respond to safeguarding concerns and ensure everyone we work with knows and trusts our safeguarding measures. Our leadership and governance teams will closely monitor that these measures are active and working effectively at all times.

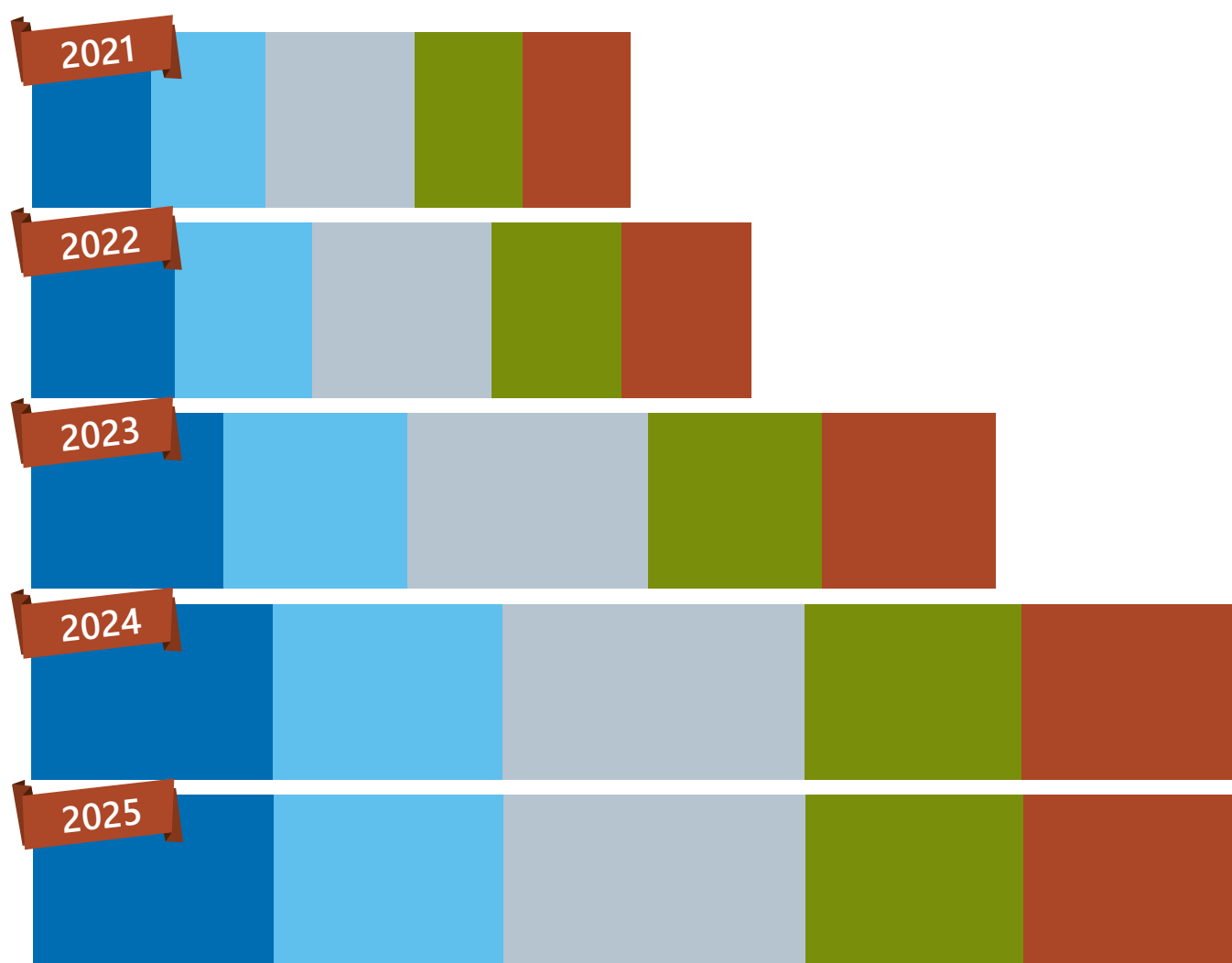
STRENGTHENING PROJECT 7:

Partnerships

Working with others we can make a bigger difference. We will proactively seek more partnerships with other NGOs, authorities, civil society and funders to accelerate, strengthen and extend the reach of our work. Working collaboratively, we will share knowledge, skills and experience, and together have greater power to affect change.

Helping more children than ever - Taking our work to scale

Over the next 5 years, AfriKids will be growing to bring our life-changing projects to 220 new communities across 6 new demonstration districts in northern Ghana. We will work with each new district for five years, delivering a tailored programme of our education, health and child protection projects that will empower families and communities and improve schools, health and child protection services to benefit more than a million people.



32,420
Secure
Families



235
Child Champion
Communities



320
Communities with
improved
Education



224
Communities with
improved
Child Protection



232
Communities with
improved
Health



Timeline and budget

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Budget (GBP)	£ 1,665,073	£ 2,243,561	£ 3,493,674	£ 4,531,936	£ 4,827,491
Strategic Goal 1: Ensure Means					
Secure Families					
Support packages to help families improve their livelihood security	4,921	8,730	15,910	23,169	23,656
Young people supported to access higher education/skills training to improve their livelihood prospects	156	1,983	5,637	9,195	9,195
People benefitting from improved livelihoods and social security	34,402	64,889	123,595	182,444	185,368
Strategic Goal 2: Build Motive					
Champion Communities					
Child Champion Communities informed and empowered to understand, value and protect children's rights	35	67	145	220	220
Children educated and empowered on their rights	5,108	20,508	57,208	93,775	93,775
People with improved knowledge, attitudes and practices towards child	125,442	70,221	152,261	237,069	237,556
Strategic Goal 3: Create Opportunity					
Champion Schools					
Communities with improved education services	120	60	140	220	220
School pupils benefitting from improved education services	39,161	58,200	135,800	213,400	213,400
People engaged and upskilled to improve education services	1,162	1,650	4,310	6,960	6,960
Champion Child Protection Services					
Communities with improved child protection services	24	62	140	220	220
At-risk children protected from harm	10,136	18,489	34,673	50,928	51,993
People engaged and upskilled to improve child protection services	1,466	456	756	950	950
Champion Health Services					
Communities with improved health	32	65	145	225	220
People benefitting from improved health services	71,218	108,096	232,400	356,800	356,800
People engaged and upskilled to improve health services	975	232	430	630	630

These figures are not cumulative, they show the numbers of people we will be working with each year. As we will work with some people for more than one year, please refer to the targets throughout this document for total numbers of people we intend to reach over the course of 2021-2025.

How you can help

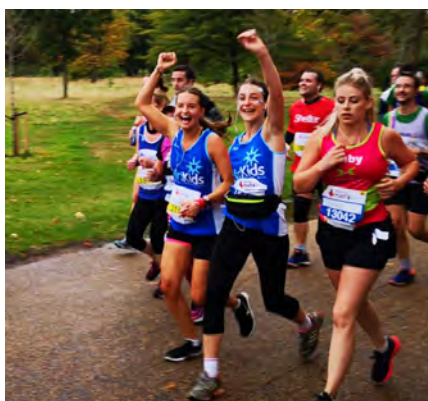
Join us on our journey over the next five years and make a transformational difference to children's lives.



Donate

We rely on donations to deliver our life-changing projects. Make our work possible with a one-off or regular gift and receive our acclaimed feedback showing you how your money was spent and the difference it made.

[Donate](#)



Fundraise

Take on a challenge, organise an event or get your workplace, community group or school involved. There are lots of great ways to help raise funds for our work and we'll support you all the way.

[Fundraise](#)



Spread the word

As a small charity making a big impact, our friends and supporters helping to spread the word about us makes a huge difference. We can help with resources and arrange to speak or meet with people interested in finding out more and supporting us.

[Contact us](#)

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