

Policy plan Stichting Help Ghana

Goal of the Help Ghana Foundation:

Improving the living conditions of especially vulnerable population groups in Ghana such as women, (street) children, the disabled and young people.

The Help Ghana Foundation aims to achieve this goal by supporting vulnerable groups in Ghana by means of a one-off financial injection based on a project proposal submitted by a local organisation. These organizations are not always officially registered with a local chamber of commerce but are formed by community consensus by members of that community. The underlying idea is that the traditional formal structure exerts social control over these organizations. This is important because they often consist of illiterates. Moreover, if the chief and elders are aware of the individuals representing the organization, they can derive authority from that. This increases the necessary support within the own community for the desired project.

In order to achieve the most efficient use of resources, a ceiling has been set for each application and a time period. This means that an organization may not submit a project proposal for two consecutive years. The application must be such that the purpose of the application is achieved with a one-off capital injection. In practice, this means that the foundation does not finance operating costs, personnel costs or fixed costs. Coordination is also sought with the local government and agreements are made with them, for example that they guarantee salary costs for teachers if Help Ghana pays for the costs of refurbishing a school. In addition, the geographical and demographic context is taken into account because groups in remote areas often have more difficulty finding their way to funding opportunities. To determine the validity of the application, references are requested for each application from government, semi-government and other public organizations that are aware of the initiative and can endorse the social relevance of the application to a certain extent. The applicants are also asked how they know HG and who referred them. The referrer is often a good point of reference.

The foundation currently uses two local contact persons, each of whom is responsible for their own region. They are familiar with the language and culture of this region. These contact persons are not affiliated with a project but visit the local organizations referred to as an intermediary for the foundation. They are also accountable to the board in written reports. They only receive an expense allowance for their work, which is based on the local costs incurred by them.

The theme is usually determined by current events, but the definition of vulnerable groups has so far mainly led to support for projects aimed at (disabled) children, women (unmarried mothers), street children, (underprivileged) young people and local NGOs or to initiatives aimed at were on health care (clinics), education (primary or special), day care centers or kindergartens, small businesses or cooperatives (small and medium scaled Enterprises). Income-generating projects are also increasingly being submitted and supported. In the allocation of aid, no distinction is made according to religion, race, origin or political affiliation.

Activities:

The work of the foundation consists of the following main tasks.

- A. identifying current issues
- B. selecting the project applications
- C. verifying the local organization
- D. transferring the resources
- E. testing results and evaluating the projects (in the field)
- F. fundraising
- G. filing
- H. accountability of spending by means of publications

Fundraising:

The foundation raises funds through:

- private donors
- institutional sponsors
- legacies
- co-financing by other foundations

The fundraising costs are limited to the publication and sending of the newsletter and the maintenance of the website.

Managing, spending and paying out the assets

When transferring funds, remittances are always made through official channels (bank accounts) with a view to tracing the actual transfer. Ideally, the foundation receives an account of the expenditure, while in incidental cases, depending on the time frame of the project, an inflation correction is granted.

The local organization sends a signed acknowledgment of receipt to the board.

The foundation uses 3 bank accounts (2 current and 1 savings account) and publishes the financial accountability to the tax authorities, in the newsletter and on the website. The treasurer, the vice-chairman and a board member are authorized. The annual budget to be spent is approximately 20,000 euros, with 95% directly benefiting the projects to be supported. On average only about 5% is spent on overhead costs.

The board members perform their work on a voluntary basis and the evaluations in the field by board members are also done at their own expense.

Future

The foundation strives to shift the emphasis to the current economic situation when allocating resources. This means that donations have traditionally focused on infrastructure and that recently more attention has been paid to small-scale commercial initiatives that increase the self-reliance of the population, empowerment of vulnerable groups.

The consequences of the ever-increasing urbanization are also noticeable in the nature of the project applications. The traditional focus on the countryside is increasingly being supplemented in the form of applications from typically urban problems (street children, underprivileged young people, refugees). The foundation recognizes the importance of both, views the projects on their own merits and is not tempted by an intrinsic preference.

The Board (as of 1-1-2023)

Chair	Mr. Iede Koffeman
Vice President	Mr. Hans de Bekker (in memoriam)
Secretary and Bursar	Mrs. Viola Stoppels
Board member	Mrs. Ellen Vianen
Board member	Mrs. Bilge Mühürdaroğlu

To support communication, an annual newsletter is published and there is a website: www.helpghana.info. This website also provides information about current projects.

