

# CHILD VOICE

2024 ANNUAL REPORT ISSUE

## POSITIVE DISRUPTION

Children Believe is breaking barriers to education —  
with your help

### **How *Gifts for Good* works**

See how your donations create impact through our  
holiday catalogue

### **Power to the people**

Solar energy brings safety and hope to a remote village



[childrenbelieve.ca](https://childrenbelieve.ca)



# Global challenges to learning continue to mount



☺ Fred Witteveen, Children Believe CEO, learns a new dance with children at a school in rural Ghana. Photo: Brett Tarver

## A year of disrupting barriers, thanks to you

We are proud of the impact of our programs over the past year, which saw us improve the lives of more than 1,456,000 vulnerable people in hundreds of communities across Africa, Asia and the Americas. It is truly an exciting time for Children Believe as we transition into a new strategy that will see us double the number of people we reach over the next seven years.

But we know global challenges continue to be daunting. Billions of people around the world face devastating combinations of conflict, political instability, economic uncertainty and climate shocks, which perpetuate the cycle of poverty and prolong humanitarian crises. These barriers to education have robbed so many children of their choices, one by one, until they have none.

An ongoing concern is that access to learning continues to be under attack. Education Cannot Wait, a global education steering group, reports that over 75 million children aged three to 18, in 35 crisis-affected countries urgently need educational support. These statistics are more than just numbers; they represent lost potential, shattered dreams and a dimmer future for millions of children.

Children Believe, working alongside local partners and communities, continues to navigate these macro and local challenges effectively. Together, our holistic programs promote and protect the well-being of the most vulnerable children and adolescents, especially girls, at every life stage. And we'll never stop working to help ensure that healthy newborns can grow up to attend school and become productive adults. We believe that access to education creates a lifetime of choices because education is the most powerful resource children can use to change their world for the better.

My most sincere congratulations and acknowledgement to all of our dedicated staff at Children Believe with heartfelt gratitude to our local partners and program participants. And of course, a special thank you to our many donors and supporters who make all of this possible.

Sincerely,



Fred Witteveen is Children Believe's chief executive officer. [ceo@childrenbelieve.ca](mailto:ceo@childrenbelieve.ca)

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Cover: Children in an Early Childhood Centre benefit from safe spaces created through renovated school facilities. Photo: Brett Tarver

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YOU ASK. WE ANSWER. HAPPILY.

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**OUR VISION**  
We dream of a world where every child has a voice and the ability to achieve their full potential.

**OUR MISSION**  
Children Believe creates a future of hope for children, families and communities by helping them develop the skills and resources to overcome poverty and injustice. For 60+ years, we have followed the example of Christ by serving the poor regardless of their faith, and cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

**OUR VALUES**  
Across our work, we aim to uphold the values of results, respect, integrity, teamwork and excellence.

Member of  
**ChildFund**  
Alliance

**ACCESSIBILITY**  
We seek to recognize and remove the obstacles faced by persons with disabilities. All communications are available in alternative formats upon request.



# What's happening

## Every Week Counts: PERIOD.

To mark Menstrual Health Day, May 28 was a critical day to raise awareness about how period poverty is a barrier to education for adolescent girls. Our partner, Carefree Liners, matched all donations dollar for dollar. Thanks to donors like you, we raised over \$10,000 for female hygiene kits through the *Gifts for Good* catalogue. Over 100 girls have been empowered with the choice to stay in school.



Find out more and get involved <sup>Ⓐ</sup> by scanning the QR code.



By Brett Tarver

<sup>Ⓐ</sup> A project is underway to help improve the lives of marginalized women and families in Ghana and Ethiopia.

### INSIGHTS FROM FIELD RESEARCH

Launching the Education Upfront Publication Series



## Children Believe's advocacy for early childhood education and learning through play highlighted in a new report and online event

On Sept. 25, 2024, Children Believe held a webinar to launch the *Education Upfront* publication series. These ongoing reports and webinars help reveal insights from field research to influence and enhance education policy and programs at local, national, regional, and international levels. This 2024 edition was the first and focused on cross-comparative research on play and early childhood education in schools, specifically in Ghana and Ethiopia. It is grounded in durable programming support for play and early childhood education across the six countries where Children Believe operates.

<sup>Ⓐ</sup> To see the webinar and hear from experts in this program scan to watch on YouTube.

## Cheers to Team Believe at the TCS Charity Challenge

Team Believe returns as an official charity partner for the **2024 TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon**. On October 19-20, we had 19 fearless team members #MoveWithPurpose who crossed the finish line, raising over \$12,000 to support children around the world in overcoming barriers and accessing education. Participants made each step count as they entered the marathon, half-marathon, and 5K walk or run events throughout the weekend. Thank you to Team Believe for walking alongside vulnerable children around the world this year.



<sup>Ⓐ</sup> Scan to support our team and donate today.

The holidays are a time when many donors, like you, look through the *Gifts for Good* gift catalogue in search of the perfect way to support those in need — in a way they need it most. Whether you've given chickens or school supplies, have you ever wondered where exactly your money went and who it helped? You're likely not alone.

Children Believe's *Gifts for Good* truly are a lifeline for thousands of people in the places where we work.

We make the most of each and every dollar you give, though it may not work exactly as you think.

After the Christmas season each year, we sum up all donations and then look at how, where and who your gifts will help. Funds are pooled together into specific projects that you've chosen to ensure they are used efficiently. Sometimes it's a brand-new project, or sometimes the funds provide critical support for ongoing projects.



## Joining a big Canadian initiative

For example, some of the more popular gift catalogue items like Goats, Ultimate Gardening Pack and Revitalizing a Health Clinic, all support nutrition, health and gender equality work in communities across Ghana and Ethiopia. This project is already beginning to disrupt the cycle of poverty by ensuring women are equipped to overcome some of the biggest barriers their families face: malnutrition, poor healthcare and discrimination. It's an opportunity for Canadians like you to take part in a Canadian multimillion-dollar initiative to help improve the lives of an estimated 385,000 of the poorest and most marginalized women and their families over the next five years.

*"Because of hunger, I've been anemic for all my pregnancies and couldn't afford the medications. As a result, one of my birth complications was so bad I had to be in a hospital for two months. This project will help us so that we have enough to eat to be healthy and can send our children to school. I hope to grow enough livestock so we can sell some of them to pay for what we need."*  
—Alhassan Saadia, 36, mother of four children





# The problem: water shortages, malnutrition and stolen choices

By Brett Tarver

Ⓒ Alhassan skims for drinking water from a dirty pond, the same source the community shares with their animals. Later she has porridge with her family, one of their only food options during the dry season. Dasuyili, northern Ghana.

**E**arlier this year, I had the opportunity to visit the Dasuyili community in northern Ghana, a focus of this new project. In this area on the edge of the Sahara Desert, increasingly inconsistent weather is making access to water a life or death struggle. While there is typically enough to eat and drink during the rainy season, the dry season can be dangerous as food runs out and people are forced to skim a few inches of dirty water for drinking, alongside their livestock. With family food intake dropping to barely one bowl of porridge a day, malnutrition and health complications run rampant.

**Hunger and compromised health are also a huge barrier to education.** Families in Dasuyili are forced to decide whether they eat or pay for their children’s education. And even while at school, malnutrition limits the ability to concentrate on their studies.

**Gender inequality makes every community issue worse.** In communities like this, women and girls plant the food, work the fields, harvest the crops and cook the meals. Yet, they typically eat the least and last. Because

# The solution: empowering women & girls to protect choices

The project focuses on women because the data proves that empowering them is the best way improve the lives of everyone. According to the Clinton Global Initiative, when educated women have opportunities, they invest 90 percent of their income back into their children’s health and education, creating a big and positive ripple effect for others in the community.

of traditional and harmful gender roles, an issue being addressed through the project’s activities, women are often barred from decision-making in how to best use precious resources. For single moms in particular, it is almost impossible to find ways to earn their way to a better life. If unchanged, this cycle of poverty will persist for generations.

Healthcare investments also don’t do enough to reach women and girls, especially mothers and babies. Poor health and nutrition puts expecting women at high risk of complications which directly affects their young children. Their futures are limited before their lives even really begin.

## How change happens: examples of the gift catalogue in action

It was very hard to meet people in this community who are struggling with malnutrition and living on barren land whose choices have been taken from them. To tour the health clinic and see old and broken equipment, a barren pharmacy cupboard and barrels of unhygienic rainwater that is their only option to use during childbirth.

But, after talking with families and walking through their community, I was given a glimpse of the positive things that

are possible through groundbreaking activities led by Children Believe. And how Canadian generosity is able to improve the nutrition and health of this community and its people.

**Donors who provide the Ultimate Gardening Pack** support women farmers here with garden equipment and supplies to grow more food and in a sustainable fashion. This includes how to store it to last through the lean times.

**Donors who buy a Goat or other animals** support

them with animals and training to care for them. This leads to them growing a healthy herd that will improve their nutrition and provide income.

**Donors who choose to Revitalize a Health Clinic** support health workers like Alhassan with new equipment, training and medication she needs to treat the most at-risk members of the community, especially pregnant women.



# Ready to be change champions

*“We only eat a few types of food in the dry season. Most of the time, our children are hungry and underweight. Their energy is so low they can’t study or do chores. Teachers say they are often unresponsive in class. I’m really looking forward to having this project start, the gardens and animals will reduce our poverty and improve our health.”*  
—Ziblim Afi, 35, six children



*“Because of our money issues, one of our children had to drop out, and one never went to school at all. It was a decision between a son and a daughter. I’m really eager to get the livestock from this program, it’s very hard for women to get the resources to start earning an income, and I think it will solve a lot of our problems”*  
—Issah Munira, 40, five children

*“Pregnant women come to our clinic anemic, with low energy because of their poor diet. We prescribe medications, but we are out of stock, and they can’t afford to buy them elsewhere. The risk of complications is very high. We just have to hope for the best. The project will equip us with what we need most.”*  
—Alhassan Amira, health worker





# DISRUPT the status quo



## Break through the noise of the holiday season and focus on what truly matters.

Children Believe is determined to DISRUPT the biggest barriers children in poverty face: hunger, unsafe water, violent conflicts and more. In the stories to follow, read how donor support is having a positive impact on these issues and making it possible for children, families and communities to thrive.



# How a gift of chickens turned Jerome's life around

*Disrupting child labour with a family farm*

Returning from the gold mines where he was abused, Jerome is now making the most of an opportunity to raise chickens to generate income.

By Brett Tarver

Jerome's life was changed forever when his friend showed up one day with a new motorcycle. The friend had come from working in a gold mine and told Jerome of the money he could make. It looked like a dream ticket out of grinding poverty, and as a 17-year-old boy, that motorcycle symbolized freedom and a better life for him and his family. But it wasn't.

"I wanted to grow up to be a government administrator, but my family didn't have enough money to look after our basic needs like food, clothing and school," Jerome remembers. "My father was ill and I wanted to help my family buy food and a small house. I didn't want to drop out of school, but I had no choice."

Choices have become more and more limited in Jerome's community of Burkinabe, Burkina Faso. Growing conflict has forced millions of people from their homes. Access to food, shelter, water, healthcare and education have been in short supply for both the displaced and the communities that host them. The ongoing insecurity has pushed over 40 percent of the population into abject poverty. It's a crisis that has driven many youth out of classrooms into jobs like mining, that have dirty, dangerous and degrading working conditions.

Jerome went to work in a gold mine alongside

children, aged 14 and older, all hoping for a better future.

"When I arrived, I realized that what my friend told me was false," Jerome says bitterly. "The work was very hard, there was little food, no water to wash yourself and you sleep where you work. There was so much dust, diseases and incidences of rape. I became very sick."

One day Jerome's boss dismissed him and his co-workers because he had spent all their pay on drugs. He returned home under a cloud of shame, penniless and without an education.

## Chickens hatch choices

But Jerome soon found hope in a new Children Believe program directly funded by Canadian donations to Children Believe's gift catalogue.

Canadians who bought the "Three Hens and a Rooster" gift had made a valuable contribution to a project designed to improve the living conditions and income opportunities for some of the most vulnerable people in Burkina Faso.

After recognizing Jerome's difficult situation, Children Believe staff and partners invited him to participate, providing 60 young entrepreneurs with the hens and rooster, training and materials to start small poultry farms to make a living.

"The day we were given the hens to raise, I was so happy because I knew we could now support ourselves," Jerome remembers. "Livestock is very important because it provides my family with money, food and manure to grow more food."





# Protecting mothers and babies in Ghana

Disrupting maternal and infant mortality with healthcare access

By Samuel Abdul-Rahaman and Allison Swanson

Gladys, a young mother from rural Ghana knows all too well that access to proper healthcare can be a matter of life and death for pregnant women and their children. Many of her friends have lost their babies because of how far it is to the nearest clinic. But they had no choice.

"Most of us didn't go to the checkups and other appointments because of the long distances we had to travel to get to the health centre," she says. "Even though we knew its importance for our health"

Having to walk up to 20 kilometers is simply too far for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under five to reach a health professional. Critical appointments for antenatal care, child vaccinations and other health checks were regularly being missed, posing a serious threat to the health of mothers and their babies. Something had to be done.

🕒 Gladys and her baby are healthy and benefit from access to healthcare.

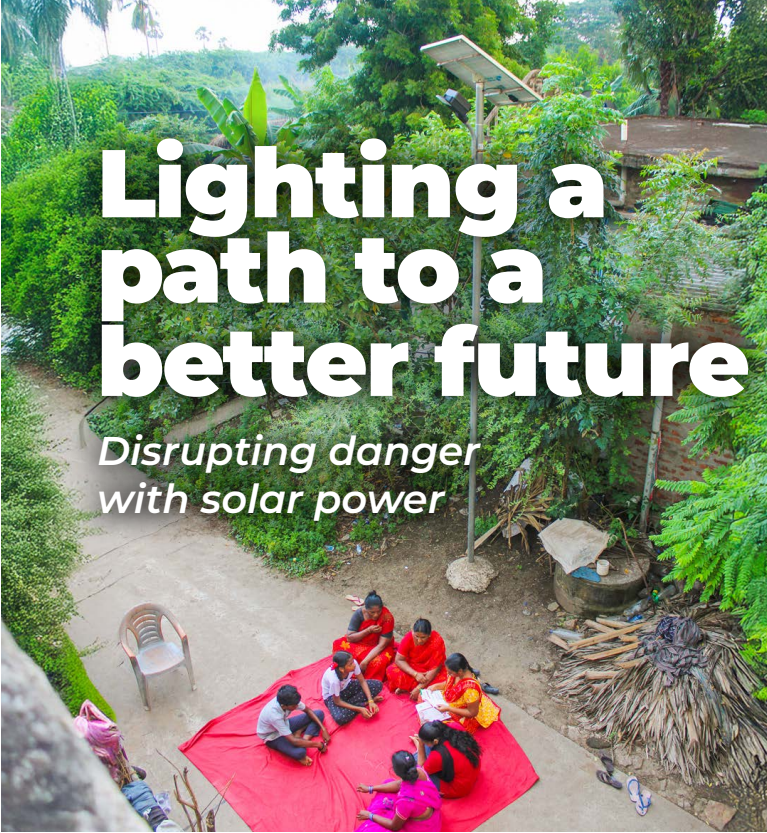
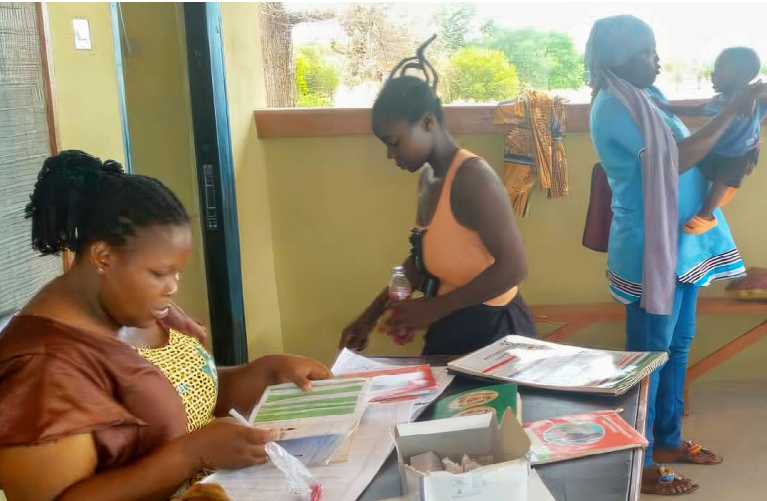
**Bringing hope and solutions to Jaata**  
Ghana Health Service and local leaders developed a number of solutions to improve maternal, newborn and child health services. They formed mother-to-mother support groups and held group discussions with them to understand their views and needs to ensure a comprehensive approach that works.  
The most transformative step was the construction of the Child Welfare Centre, which became a local, accessible hub for healthcare in the community. Children Believe and local partners worked to ensure that health workers and essential equipment were provided. Community trainings were also held to stress the importance of antenatal care and community participation in healthcare.

**Disrupting the future for better health outcomes**  
The results of these interventions have been striking. In just one year, antenatal visits increased by over 53 percent, and the number of skilled deliveries rose from zero in 2022 to 15 in 2023. Exclusive breastfeeding rates also improved, climbing from 36 to 64 percent.

"Our child welfare service is now very effective due to the comfort the women and children get at the facility," says the resident nurse. "We are now in a position to conduct deliveries due to the construction of the clinic and therefore no more dangerous home deliveries by community members."

This work has been a priority for Children Believe because healthy mothers and babies lead to healthy futures for everyone. Many maternal and child health complications can be prevented or managed with access to proper and functional healthcare facilities, equipped with life-saving medicines, resources, and trained personnel.

🕒 Healthcare access closer to home has made a world of difference for safe deliveries and follow-up meetings.



Disrupting danger with solar power

By Jins Joseph and Allison Swanson

Bobberlanka, a remote village surrounded by forested regions and riverbanks, has always faced significant challenges due to poor infrastructure and environmental risks. Night time used to shut everything down in this marginalized Dalit tribal village of India. The lack of electricity and proper lighting, coupled with the fear of dangers like venomous snakes and insects kept families confined after sunset.

This lack of infrastructure was also a barrier to education for children who had to study under dim kerosene lamps, straining their eyesight and creating fire hazards. Evening hours meant for play and learning were cut short. Outside there was increased stranger danger.

It was stealing the choices of children like Kokila, 14, who often miss school, especially during the monsoon and winter seasons when darkness comes early, waiting to start her day and make the trip to school when the sun comes up. She and her parents were afraid of safety issues.

"The roads were filled with darkness, making it dangerous to walk from school," she says.

Bobberlanka was, in many ways trapped, with fewer options to improve life in the community.

**A beacon of hope for bobberlanka**  
Recognizing the urgent need for change, Children Believe, through its partner, the Child Rights Advocacy Foundation (CRAF), initiated a solar lighting project in May 2023. Initially planned for ten communities, the project expanded to include 19, resulting in the installation of 56 solar streetlights and portable solar lamps for 65 families.

Solar lighting has transformed daily life, especially for children's education. "Earlier, parents were reluctant to send their children to school," shares Ramkrishna, a teacher in the village. "Today, it's encouraging to see a growing number of students, particularly girls, attend school regularly and with renewed enthusiasm."

**For Kokila, these lights have been life-changing**  
"Now, with the lights guiding us, I feel safe and determined to achieve my goals," she says. Kokila dreams of becoming a veterinary doctor, a future attainable thanks to this new safety that supports access to education.

**Lights break through the darkness**  
Children, adolescents and women have gained a new sense of freedom and security through improved lighting, which allows them to step out for various activities and safely access necessary services that were previously limited to daytime. Solar-powered lights have disrupted the harsh realities once faced in Bobberlanka, creating pathways to a brighter future.

"We can now meet in the evenings, discuss our savings, and plan for collective growth," shares Lakshmi, a member of a local self-help group.





# Gelete gets her chance

Disrupting poverty with equal opportunity

By Gezahegn Gebremariam

Gelete was always looking for ways to help her family climb out of poverty. But she was never viewed as being anything more than a wife and a mother because of traditional views about men and women in her community in Ethiopia. Husbands and wives were locked into separate roles and as a result, her ambition and skills were going to waste. Her choices taken from her.

"It was very difficult for me to earn a living," Gelete says. "Lack of knowledge was our biggest problem."

But life for Gelete and her family changed for the better when she joined a savings group created by RATSON, a Children Believe partner to help people start small businesses, manage finances and increase their net worth.

"At first, only the women were taking training and men spent money going to the bar," Engida explains.

But after learning what his wife was being taught, her husband Engida joined in. He had some serious doubts at first — cultural norms discouraged husbands and wives from working together — but Gelete and the program changed his mind.

## Life partners, business partners

As a team, they started a new business refurbishing stoves and have also found ways to improve their farm's productivity.

"We used to live a poor life and it was difficult to educate our children," Engida says. "I used to have only one plow for agriculture work, but now I have two and we have chickens and sheep. We are doing much better."

Gelete and Engida are now shining examples of the positive change that is possible in their community.



Gelete and Engida are a team as a married couple, sharing duties in the home and working together to assemble and sell stoves to improve their income.

Together, their entrepreneurial spirit has increased and diversified their income and empowered Gelete to break societal barriers, attend meetings and assume leadership roles in community associations that were once dominated by men.

Where once their children would have faced the same challenges with their life choices stolen from them due to illiteracy and poverty, now they too have hope for the future. The skills included managing finances effectively, together.

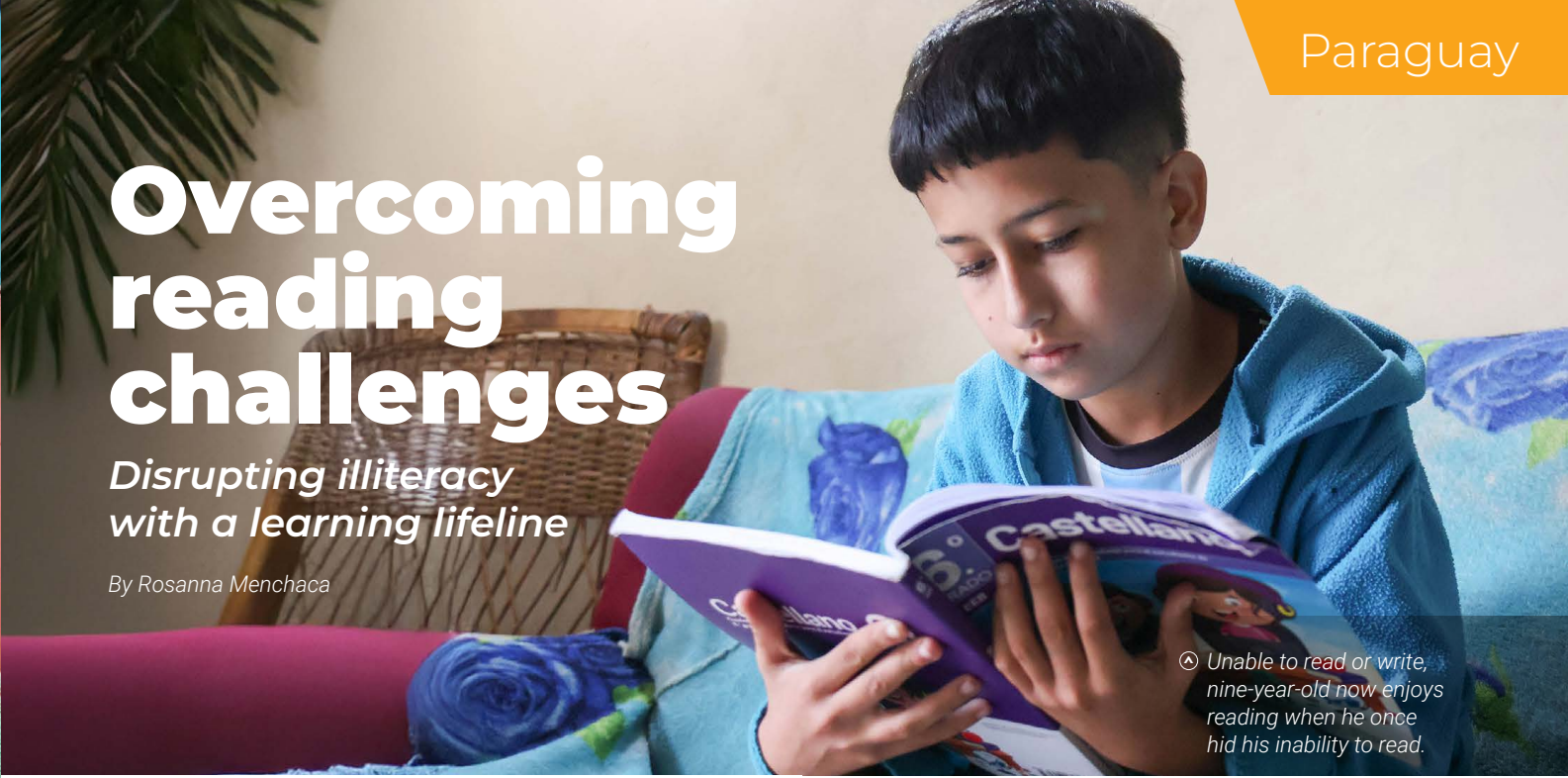
"Self-help savings and loans (lessons) developed our financial habits and changed our lives," Engida says. "I have educated my children, seen some of them get married and now we have grandchildren. It has changed our lives."

The program Gelete and Engida participated in is just one of the community development benefits funded through child sponsorship. Income-generation for parents empowers them to pull themselves out of poverty and removes other barriers to education like malnutrition, child labour and child marriage.

# Overcoming reading challenges

Disrupting illiteracy with a learning lifeline

By Rosanna Menchaca



Unable to read or write, nine-year-old now enjoys reading when he once hid his inability to read.

Unable to read or write, nine-year-old José Miguel was at serious risk of falling through the cracks of Paraguay's education system. Illiteracy would eliminate nearly every possible career choice and his ability to build a better life. José Miguel suffered from low self-esteem and was having trouble relating to his peers.

"José barely recognized letters," recalls Lida Ayala, his school principal. "He felt insecure and cried each time he was asked to read something."

## Lifeline of learning

Staff from a Children Believe partner in the community welcomed José Miguel into a program for children with learning difficulties. Where he once felt excluded due to his disability, today at 12, he marvels at the simple details others take for granted.

"When I go to a store or a supermarket, for example,

José and his mother Estefani.



In Paraguay in the past year, 16,209 CHILDREN were enrolled in primary school education for girls and boys in Children Believe-supported programs.

now I can read the signs, know where the fruits and other things are," he says. "That's what helped me so much."

## Career choices open wide

Now that José Miguel can read, he's dreaming fearlessly about the many different options he has for when he grows up.

"I want to be a mechanic, to work and feed my family when I grow up. I'm going to have my workshop at home, and I'm going to work there," he says, but adds "I'd also like to be a doctor, to help people and save lives."

With just a little help needed to get him on the right path, Children Believe donors have disrupted what might have been a life of poverty and few choices. He has new confidence and a sense of security made possible by having control over his life.

José's transformation is "impressive" in his teacher's words. "Seeing him read in front of the entire school was emotional," explains Lida, with tears in her eyes.

"I never imagined this result. I am very happy to see how much progress has been made," shares Estefani, his mother. She knows first-hand the importance of education. She could not finish school, but fights to give her children opportunities she didn't have.

"Imagine if we could provide this to all children in the country," adds Lida. "We would give many more children the opportunity to feel safe and fulfilled."

This program was implemented in partnership with Children Believe partner, Foundation Alda, with the support of TFCF International.





# Inmer finds his voice

Disrupting fear by building confidence

37,161 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES directly benefited from Children Believe's sponsorship program in 2024.

By Dianca Massiel Corea Pulido

Inmer had always been terribly shy in public and even at home. His family believed it was due to lack of opportunities and the vulnerable conditions in which they lived.

But that difficult life path was disrupted when he received a sponsor from Canada through Children Believe Nicaragua. Today this energetic 11-year-old child enjoys playing sports, studying and simply experiencing childhood to the fullest. Once unwilling to speak, Inmer's transformation has been remarkable his mother, Yajaira, says.

"The changes have been so very positive, he has improved in each of the workshops he attends as part of a network of communicators," she says. "I have seen his evolution since he joined and now I see him talking with other children, with adults, without being afraid of what people will say, because he feels confident."

## Nurturing Confidence

It is communication itself that has given Inmer confidence. He remembers taking part in a program activity with a group of young speakers who encouraged him. Immediately he wanted to learn more about how to get involved. Inmer was finding his voice.

"I remember the materials they were presenting and it was a new world for me," Inmer remembers. "I was excited

Once terribly shy, Inmer is now a confident speaker in presentations.

and surprised by everything I saw, so that same day I told my parents that I wanted to be part of this network of communicators. They were surprised because they knew me and how shy I was, but I really saw a whole new world."

The program Inmer participated in is just one of the benefits of the child sponsorship program designed to overcome the barriers to education. Sponsorship enables families to cover basic household expenses, motivating parents and caregivers to keep their children in school.

Inmer has come a long way from his shy start, he is now a regular presenter on a children's radio programme that airs once a week on a Christian radio station. Sharing biblical themes aimed at children, his goal now is to continue perfecting his communication skills and continue sharing his knowledge.

"For children, there are no limits to what we can do, but it is very important to have the support of our families and to have safe and reliable spaces where we can develop," Inmer says. "It is also necessary that they believe in us, that we have a lot to contribute and that they can learn from us."

His mother has been inspired by her son's transformation.

"I have faith that Inmer will become someone important in this life, both in his spiritual life and in his professional life," she explains.

# Christine's unforgettable visit to meet Francisco

Disrupting hardship with friendship

By Aderonke Idowu, communications intern

The moment was filled with emotion — deep joy, a nervous smile, a profound sense of fulfillment. After nine years of exchanging letters and photos, Christine and Francisco's meeting was unforgettable.

"When I first saw him, it brought me so much joy to see his face, even if it was a little bit of a shy smile," Christine Bowerman says, of meeting the young man she supports as a sponsor through Children Believe. "It brought me so much joy to finally get to meet him."

Reserved at first, Francisco gradually opened up and engaged with Christine at their first in-person meeting.

"There were so many favourite moments in this visit. The most important was when we had the opportunity to ask questions — I discovered more about him, his family, his likes and dislikes," she said. "We discovered that we have a lot of similarities, like our love for drawing."

Francisco, accompanied by his grandmother, spent the day with Christine in Managua, enjoying breakfast, bouncing on trampolines together and shopping at a local mall.

Christine travelled to Nicaragua from her home in Nova Scotia for this experience in April, and says she had great satisfaction in witnessing the positive impact of sponsorship, not just for Francisco but also his community. "I cherish sharing letters and watching him grow healthily while seeing his community benefit from the sponsorship," she says. "My hope is for Francisco to remain well, continue his studies, finish high school, and pursue his dreams."

Christine started out as a sponsor with a goal to leave a legacy and be a part of his life journey. "He is part of my



Francisco was delighted to go into a plane on the Managua boardwalk and dreams to fly in one someday, Christine learned.

family. We are together, even miles apart," Christine said. She also hopes to come back to attend his graduation and hopes "to speak to him more in Spanish next time."

## Sponsorship makes a difference

Francisco is currently in elementary school — Grade 5. At 14 he is full of dreams and aspires to be a policeman. He loves sports, especially soccer. He is one of over 6,800 children sponsored in Nicaragua, benefitting from Children Believe programs that promote equal access to opportunities and resources, such as clean water, healthcare and quality education.

For thousands of other children in the country, life looks very different. Without this type of support, their choices are often stolen from them. Thanks to the generosity of sponsors like Christine, and the educational resources made possible, children like Francisco are empowered to choose their own path.

The two had fun at a trampoline park, one of Christine's itinerary picks for her visit with Francisco.





# Children Believe making an impact for children and families

As we reflect on the past year, I am continually inspired by Children Believe’s commitment to maximizing every resource’s impact. Efficiency and effectiveness are at the core of our work, as the staff of Children Believe ensure every donation, effort, and partnership delivers lasting results for the children and communities we serve.

During my visit to our programs in communities in Ghana last year, I witnessed the power of collaboration and thoughtful planning. Our efforts extend beyond traditional education, integrating creative curricula that foster cognitive, emotional, and social growth through play. This comprehensive approach prepares children for lifelong learning.

Our commitment to holistic development inside and outside the classroom, focus on strengthening family capacity by improving access to clean water, and enhancing health outcomes continues to free up time for women and children to pursue education and economic opportunities. Our child protection programs, which include psychosocial support and birth registrations, provide essential safeguards, with just \$1.80 invested per participant to help them realize a lifetime of protection and rights.

Moreover, our early education programs are estimated to yield a minimum five-fold return on an investment of \$17.50 per child. These programs provide a strong start with lifelong benefits. We have also enabled nearly 590,000 children, young women, and men to access preschool, primary education, and vocational training for just \$7.20 per direct beneficiary.

In Ghana and across all the countries where we



Time in Ghana provided opportunities to meet and learn from kids in Children Believe’s programs.

work, Children Believe staff collaborate closely with local leadership and communities. This partnership strengthens our stewardship by ensuring accountability at every level, which in turn helps achieve sustainable, long-lasting outcomes from our programs.

The support and generosity of our donors make all of this possible. Your contributions help us dismantle the barriers of poverty and create long-term solutions for children and their families. Together, we are building a brighter future.

I am filled with hope as I reflect on the past year and look forward to the future. Thank you for walking with us on this journey. I am excited to continue this important work with you, with a shared commitment to making a lasting impact.

Through the generosity and support of our many donors and partners, Children Believe breaks down barriers to education to create a future of hope for children, families and communities, giving them the ability to make their own choices and determine their own future, so they can dream fearlessly, stand up for what they believe in, and be heard.

## Summarized Statement of Revenue and Expenditures

Year ended March 31, 2024  
[in thousands of dollars]

	2024	2023
REVENUE		
Cash donations	21,130	22,915
Grants	6,074	5,786
Gifts-in-kind	3,595	6,711
Investment & other income	741	565
TOTAL REVENUE	31,540	35,977
EXPENDITURES		
Programs		
Education	11,580	12,368
Health, Wash and Nutrition	5,862	9,808
Cross-Cutting Themes	2,656	4,332
Child Protection	1,631	317
Partnering with Children and Youth for Change	1,181	-
Gender Equality	656	274
Emergency Response & Disaster Risk Management	252	712
Total programs	23,818	27,811
Fundraising	5,198	6,526
Administration	3,850	3,940
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	32,866	38,277
Excess (Deficit) of revenue over expenditures	(1,326)	(2,300)

Children show their appreciation at a school in Ghana where they have access to school classes thanks to generous donor support through Children Believe.

## Expenditures



75% Programs  
15% Fundraising  
10% Administration

This chart is based on a five year average of our annual expenditures.

CHILDREN BELIEVE is an independent, autonomous organization that directly funds programs and projects in our country offices, working with trusted national partner organizations. We proudly support local communities, employing passionate, highly qualified national personnel to manage and lead our work.

## Our Board of Directors

As of November 1, 2024

- AKLILU MULAT, CHAIR
- KAREN FONSETH-SCHLOSSBERG, INTERIM VICE CHAIR
- GABRIEL OLLIVIER, PAST CHAIR
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- WINSTON WU, DIRECTOR
- JASON WILSON, DIRECTOR



We appreciate the generous support of donors, whose gifts make positive change possible.



# The numbers tell a story

Real change made possible through your donations



## OVERALL REACH

**1,456,000** vulnerable children, families and socially marginalized members were reached through Children Believe programs in **762** communities across six countries.



## EDUCATION Improving access to education

- 589,699** boys and girls, teachers, caretakers and parents benefited from sustained access to inclusive and quality education.
- 43,351** children (36 to 59 months) were enabled to access early childhood education and care services.
- 84,758** young women and men accessed vocational-life-skills training and appropriate employment opportunities.
- 11,729** teachers, parents and caregivers were trained on inclusive education and appropriate teaching methodologies, including Learning Through Play and early childhood development.
- 504** early childhood education centres were built, renovated, equipped or supported in targeted communities.



## HEALTH & NUTRITION Supporting thriving communities

- 509,910** children, young women and mothers accessed maternal and child healthcare services.
- 65,389** childbirths were attended by skilled health personnel and delivered in health facilities.
- 71,601** women aged 15 to 49 received two or more antenatal care visits during their pregnancies.
- 29,687** girls were supported with hygiene kits and menstrual health education to address period poverty.
- 41,458** men and women benefited from emergency food, child nutritional support or cash for relief assistance.



## CHILD PROTECTION Keeping kids safe

- 417,028** children, youth, women, parents and leaders from 466 community groups benefited from efforts to prevent violence, neglect and abuse.
- 91,347** births were registered with relevant authorities to ensure a child's identity, citizenship and protection — essential for safeguarding access to social services and human rights."
- 240** school communities were equipped with extracurricular and recreational facilities essential for creating safer and conducive learning environments.
- 395** partner community groups have established strong child-protection systems to protect children from abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence.



## CHILDREN AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT Involving youth in decision-making

- 248,484** children and youth meaningfully participated in community actions and grassroots decision-making.
- 27** local development partners strengthened their capacity to address child rights and support actions in fragile and underdeveloped communities.
- 78,445** youth and women organized and formed 4,827 Village Savings and Loans Associations to promote self-employment and business entrepreneurship.
- 11,267** young women and men mobilized to advocate against harmful environmental policies affecting their communities.



## GENDER EQUALITY Promoting equal opportunities

- 386,808** children, youth, parents and caregivers were enabled to stand for the rights of girls and women, taking legal and community-focused measures to prevent child marriage and other forms of gender discrimination.
- 745,582** targeted family members and community leaders adopted favourable attitudes toward the upbringing and well-being of their children, including positive parenting, violence prevention and gender equality.
- 16,782** women assumed leadership roles and actively participated in community decision-making to influence gender equality.





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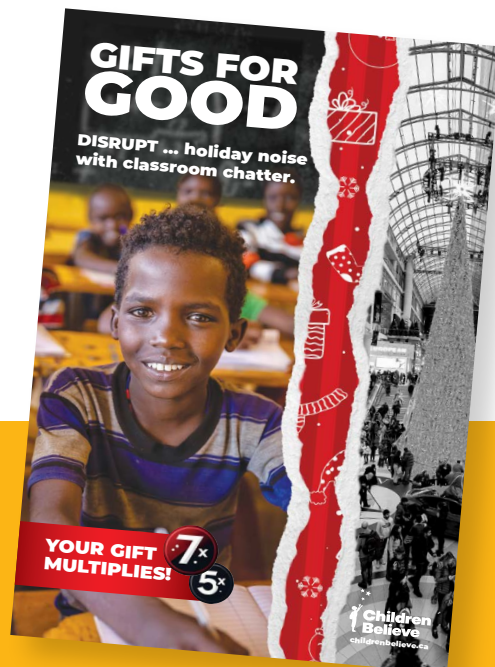
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