



*We Empower People with Disabilities to Support Themselves*

# ANNUAL REPORT 2011



**VOICE GHANA**

**Voice of People with Disability Ghana**

## Forward



VOICE GHANA is emerging as one of the leading Civil Society Organisations in the Volta Region that supports people with disabilities at the grassroots level to promote their rights. I am enthused of the steady progress and achievements of the organisation this year. I am equally grateful for the initiatives and progress of some of our community based disability Self-Help Groups in championing their own cause.

The ethos of this organization is anchored on “self-help” and “can do” principles and that was why we introduced Self-Help Group Model five (5) years ago into the disability movement in Ghana as Rights Based Approach in empowering people with disabilities at the grassroots level, to champion their own cause and to take charge of their lives. The Self-Help Group (SHG) Model also fosters the principle of independence and sustainability, and makes it possible for persons with disabilities to be included and represented in the community development agendas at a very local/village level.

We will work hard in the coming years to consolidate the gains made so far, in order to achieve our goal of becoming a robust and independent CSO that supports people with disabilities at the grassroots level to promote their rights. We have put in place a sound administrative systems and procedures this year. We have also started building capacity of the board and staff through volunteer support from the British Accounting for International Development and through the technical support from STAR-Ghana (Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana) who is one of our donors. This is to enable us acquire the necessary skills to manage and coordinate our work in a more effective and efficient manner.

We see education as liberating – a way of enabling people with disabilities to break free from constraints such as poverty, prejudice and poor health; hence our strategic focus on promoting access to quality education for children with disabilities. We have implemented some projects that were geared towards this strategic focus as you will read from this report. This was made possible through the funding support from our donor partner, STAR-Ghana.

It's satisfying to see some of our partners in the past such as the Voluntary Services Oversees (VSO) Ghana and Disability Rights Fund (DRF) re-establishing contact with us. I hope this is beneficial for our future work.

Thank you all, particularly our donors, supporters, friends, staff and the Board for helping us to continue pursuing our vision and mandate.

Paul Fiavi  
Board Chair  
VOICE GHANA

## Our Approach

We empower people with disabilities to fish for themselves.



This annual report cannot tell you everything that we do, but I hope it gives you a clear outline of our aims and a taste of our most recent achievements. VOICE GHANA is an independent civil society organization managed for and by persons with disabilities. Our special focus is on people with disabilities who have no or limited access to education, perhaps because of their gender, live in remote areas or are extremely poor.

We have now registered change of the name of our organization with the Registrar General's Department in Accra, Ghana in October 2011, from VOLPHIG to Voice of People with Disability Ghana – VOICE GHANA. This was in pursuant to Section 15(9) of the Companies Code, 1963 (Act 179).

In the year under review, we have created nine (9) new community based cross disability Self Help Groups, bringing the total number of our self-help groups to fifty-one (51) across the Volta Region. This includes Self Help Groups of parents of children with intellectual disability. We also have over 1,000 individual persons with disabilities as members.

After nine (9) years' working experience in development, education of children with disability becomes the cornerstone of our work. This is because education offers the best routes to improved health, financial security and self-confidence for the world's most marginalised people including people with disability. That is why our strategic focus is now on the promotion of access to quality education for children with disabilities. We also aspire to work as a capacity building organization for all disability self-help groups and disabled people's organisations at the grassroots level in Ghana.

The key areas covered in this annual report include:

- ▶ Empowering Persons with Disabilities, Transforming Lives
- ▶ Making Schools Accessible for Persons with Disabilities in Ho Municipality
- ▶ Promoting Inclusive Education for Change
- ▶ Supporting Disabled Kids with Corrective Surgery
- ▶ Partnership with Accounting for International Development (AfID), UK
- ▶ Our Cooperation with Arkitekter Uden Grænser - Denmark
- ▶ The Kind Support by the E.P Church, Ghana
- ▶ Visitors from the University of Education, Winneba
- ▶ Getting more involved in mainstream Civil Society work
- ▶ Three Key Founding Members Honoured at AGM
- ▶ Becoming Stronger
- ▶ Getting more International Exposure
- ▶ Financial summary and
- ▶ Our Appreciation

I hope that the narrative in this annual report will inspire you to help us continue our work, so that together we can make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

Francis Asong  
Director  
VOICE GHANA

## Empowering Persons with Disabilities, Transforming Lives

VOICE GHANA is distinguished by its grassroots disability mainstreaming approach and cross disability Self-Help Group (SHG) model.



6 acres of cassava farm for Unity Disability Club, Ashiabre

The Self Help Groups are made up of persons with disabilities at the grassroots level to support each other in taking collective actions voluntarily. The staff made a field visit to fifteen (15) Self Help Groups in the Nkwanta South and Nkwanta North Districts in May 2011 to ascertain progress of their activities. It is gratifying to note that some of the self-help groups visited have started making progress in championing their own cause. We are pleased to present

a succinct overview of the Self Help Group at Ashiabre (Unity Disability Club) in the

Nkwanta South District. The group has 12 persons with disabilities as members including 3 parents of children with disability. They are cultivating a 6 acre cassava farm and have developed a link with the Agric. Technical Officer at Nkwanta for support in undertaking their farming activities. The cassava, when harvested will be processed into “cassava dough and gari” for sale in the Nkwanta market. The income will be used to maintain the farm and support members of the group. This group has committed members who paid their membership dues regularly. They have their own bank account and are aiming at being self-sufficient in the near future. They have a very dynamic leader who they all support and with whom they cooperate in the administration of the group.

## Making Schools Accessible for Persons with Disabilities in Ho Municipality



Housing Primary, Ho

VOICE GHANA conducted accessibility audit on 216 basic and second cycle schools structures out of a total of 340 basic and second cycle schools in the Ho Municipality between April and June 2011 to ascertain accessibility status of these structures for persons with disabilities (PWDs). This project was funded by STAR Ghana – (Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana) ([www.star-ghana.org](http://www.star-ghana.org)). Analysis of responses from authorities of the schools surveyed indicated that 94.4% of the schools have no provision of

access for persons with disabilities. This indicated a gross abuse of

Sections 6 and 60 of the Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act, 715), which mandates owners and occupiers of public buildings including schools to provide easy access for persons with disabilities. VOICE GHANA has been utilizing the baseline evidence and data to engage key stakeholders in education sector in the Ho Municipality to make their schools accessible for persons with disability in view of the legislative framework. The stakeholders including Ho Municipal Assembly, Ho Municipal Education Directorate, PPMC – (Procurement and Project Management Consultancy), which is the consultant for GETFund school projects in some parts of the Volta Region, E.P Education Unit, R.C Education Unit, Anglican Education Uni, Methodist Education Unit, Salvation Army Education Unit, A.M.E. Zion Education Unit and the Ghana National Association of Private Schools in Ho.



Tsito Senior High Technical (Admin. Block)

VOICE GHANA has also established a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with these stakeholders to commit them to provide access ramps to their school structures. Our intervention has made it possible for PPMC to issue directives to all contractors engaged for GETFund schools projects that they supervise in the Volta Region to “provide one ramp to every two steps of their structures to create access for persons with disabilities”. As a result of this, Twelve (12) completed GETFund School projects in the Ho Municipality under the supervision of PPMC, which had no initial plan of providing access ramps for persons with disabilities, now have access ramps in place. PPMC confirmed to us that Sixty (60) ongoing GETFund school projects, which are at the practical completion stage in the Ho Municipality, have plans in place for access ramps when completed.

Furthermore, some mission schools, community groups and local churches in the Ho Municipality as well as the Member of Parliament for Ho West Constituency, Hon. E.K Bedzrah have so far become committed to making some existing schools structures and health facilities disability friendly in their localities and are arranging to contribute some bags of cement to construct access ramps to these facilities.

### **Promoting Inclusive Education for Change**

VOICE GHANA is implementing a three (3) year project with funding support from STAR Ghana – (Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana). The project seeks to carry out advocacy for implementation of key Sections of the Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715) on education of children with disability. The project will work at three different levels to:

1. Sensitise parents and guardians of children with disability for attitudinal change towards PWDs to send their disabled children to school in line with Section 16(1) of the Disability Act and tackle issues of attitude, derogatory names and inappropriate use of language to insult PWDs in schools within the Ho Municipality and Nkwanta South District in fulfillment of Section 37 of the Disability Act;
2. Partner with the Special Education Division (SpED) of Ghana Education Service (GES) to engage local school authorities in the Ho and Nkwanta South districts to accept admission and integration of PWDs into the mainstream school system in fulfillment of Section 20(1) of the Disability Act and Section 2.3.4 of the Education Strategic Plan for Inclusive Education (ESP 2010-2020 Edition) and
3. Engage Ministry of Education (MoE), GES and SpED to complete the Braille Centre in the Mawuli Senior High School at Ho that has been on the drawing board since 2006 to provide Braille reading and writing for students with visual impairment in fulfillment of Section 17 of the Disability Act.



As part of this work, we will engage the Ho Municipal Assembly (HMA) and SpED and lobby local Business/Industry (B&I) to provide adequate teaching, play and development materials to equip the Special Needs Classes attached to the Anglican Primary School at Ho. The project will also engage GES, HMA and Nkwanta South District Assembly (NSDA) and some Parents-Teachers-Association (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs) to waive payment of PTA dues and other charges for PWDs in the Ho and Nkwanta South Districts to make their education totally free in fulfillment of Section 18(1) of the Disability Act.

VOICE GHANA has so far established a baseline evidence and data on 51 children with disability of school going age who are currently not in school in the Ho Municipality. We have also collated data on another 37 children with

disability in the Nkwanta South District who are currently not in school. We are utilising this baseline evidence and data to start sensitising parents and guardians of these children for attitudinal change towards the education of their children with disability. We have also started engaging parents and guardians to send their children with disability to school in view of Section 16(1) of the Disability Act, and other policy and legislative framework, which give equal right and opportunity to all children in Ghana including children with disability to go to school.

The project partners include:

- Governance Issues Forum Network (GIFNet), Ho, which comprises over 30 Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and traditional leaders from diverse sectors in the Ho Municipality. GIFNet is spearheaded by the Institute for Democratic Governance - IDEG to deepen democratic governance through capacity building and civic participation in governance and decision making in the Ho Municipality.
- Nkwanta South District Disability SHGs Network (NSoDNet) who will support us implement the project in the Nkwanta South District together with SpED at Nkwanta.
- Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) and SEND-Ghana in Accra who will support VOICE GHANA to engage higher level decision makers targeted for the project at the national level.
- Ghana Journalist Association (GJA) and Public Agenda in Accra who will support local media that will be involved in the project to highlight results of our work to the wider community.



Roundtable discussion at Ho for key stakeholders in Education

## Supporting Disabled Children with Corrective Surgery



We have covered six (6) children with disability with Health Insurance Scheme who were identified for corrective surgery during the year under review. This was to reduce the cost of their surgery. One of the children was referred to Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra for an eye operation in November 2011. We are arranging for corrective surgery and calipers/crutches for other children at St. Anthony Hospital, Dzodze and Orthopedic Training Centre at Nsawam respectively. This project was funded by MEND Trust of New Zealand.

## Partnership with Accounting for International Development (AfID), UK

As part of our sustainability strategy, we have developed partnership with the British Accounting for International Development-AfID, ([www.afid.org.uk](http://www.afid.org.uk)). The aim is for AfID to provide VOICE GHANA with a free and impartial volunteer coaching programme, designed specifically to develop the financial management and planning skills of our finance staff. This ongoing strategy is to improve the long term sustainability of VOICE GHANA.



Claire Ford coaching Millicent Denteh, our Finance/Administrative Officer

The first volunteer placement carried out by Claire Ford CPFA was completed and reviewed in November 2011. Claire Ford documented financial management capacity gaps of VOICE GHANA for future volunteers from AfID to address and also made recommendations for the Board to address. As a result of the placement, the management of VOICE GHANA has improved their skills in cash flow forecasting in a more professional and efficient manner to enable the Board make informed decisions in advance to address cash flow problems of the organization.

Rita Agyemang, (Finance Analyst) also a volunteer from AfID followed up in February 2012 to coach our management team and Finance Sub Committee in the effective performance of their roles.

### **Our Cooperation with Arkitekter Uden Grænser - Denmark**

Arkitekter Uden Grænser - AUG, Architects Without Borders is a worldwide NGO and the Danish part (AUG) started in 2008. AUG works both internationally and nationally with projects designed to promote the development of the built environment. Based on the idea that we all have a socially and environmentally sustainable responsibility. AUG is available to those people who do not otherwise have access to architect's skills. An AUG Project Group with enthusiastic architects was established in October 2011 in Denmark and the cooperation began between AUG and VOICE GHANA. As part of this cooperation, AUG will design and deliver the technical drawings, help fundraise and supervise construction of a new office building and training facilities (i.e. Disability Resource and Learning Center) for VOICE GHANA at Ho. The Disability Resource and Learning Center will provide training and services to persons with disabilities in Ghana. VOICE GHANA will carry out the implementation of building the centre with supervision from AUG.



**Elisabeth Joo Jeppesen and Paul Fiavi, Board Chair – VOICE GHANA**

A representative of AUG (Elisabeth Joo Jeppesen) has visited VOICE GHANA in December 2011 to discuss the project with the Board and staff. Elisabeth also visited Abutia Kloe Self Help Group and met with some Self Help Groups from Ketu North District at Dzodze to collate views about the project. A workshop was also held for the Board, staff and some members to collate views and aspirations from members about the project. This connection was made possible by the Friends of VOICE GHANA in Denmark, which was spearheaded by Kirsten and John Moller.

### **The Kind Support by the E.P Church, Ghana**



The Rt. Rev. Francis Amenu, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, (E.P) Ghana, has donated a 1,400 square metres of building plot to VOICE GHANA. The piece of land is located at Ho Kpodzi, near World Vision premises. This is a kind gesture from the E.P Church, Ghana towards VOICE GHANA's new office complex project, which will be designed and financed by the Arkitekter Uden Grænser – AUG in Denmark. The piece of land was donated following an appeal made by VOICE GHANA to the Moderator and his Presbytery in

November, 2011. VOICE GHANA would like to use this medium to express our gratitude to the Moderator, the Synod and the E.P Church as a whole for this kind gesture.

### **Visitors from the University of Education, Winneba**

Thirty (30) students from the Rehabilitation Unit of the Department of Special Education, University of Education, Winneba made a two (2) day excursion to VOICE GHANA on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of November, 2011. The students were led by Messrs. Maamah and Samuel Amoako Gyemah who are lecturers of the University.



The students interacted with the Board and staff of VOICE Ghana as well as with children and resource teachers of the Special Needs Classes attached to the Anglican Primary School at Ho. They also interacted with Madam Dorothy Ketu, the Warden of the Ho Rehabilitation Centre (RTC) and some instructors of the Centre. RTC was faced with financial hardships, resulting in temporary closure of activities of the Centre, so, the students were unable to interact with the trainees.

The students advised VOICE GHANA team to use persons with disabilities as role models in our awareness and advocacy work in order to portray positive image of persons with disabilities to the general public. The students and their lecturers visited our Self Help Groups at Dzodze and Kpetoe on the second day to learn and share with members of these groups.

### Getting more involved in mainstream Civil Society Work



**VOICE GHANA at a capacity building training for CSOs at the national level.**

VOICE GHANA benefited from a number of capacity building events, organized by the Institute for Democratic Governance – IDEG that have made it possible for the organization to lead on GIFNet programmes and governance issues with local government agencies, particularly the Ho Municipal Assembly. VOICE GHANA is also a member of the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition – GNECC, and holds the Regional Secretary post for the Volta Region Branch. GNECC is a network of over two-hundred (200) CSOs, professional bodies and individuals committed to the promotion of free, quality and enjoyable quality basic education as a fundamental human right for Ghanaian children.

Furthermore, VOICE GHANA was elected into the National Steering Committee of the Local Governance Network – LOGNet at the Annual General Meeting in November 2011. LOGNet is a network of over sixty (60) CSOs working to promote effective decentralisation and local governance in Ghana. With this appointment, VOICE GHANA joins other national organisations such as Action Aid Ghana, Ibis Ghana and SEND - Ghana to steer the affairs of LOGNet for the next two (2) years.

### Three Key Founding Members Honoured at AGM



At our Annual General Meetings (AGM), we create a democratic space to allow members to provide us with feedbacks on our work and suggest the way forward. The AGM held in May 2011 approved the Strategic Plan 2010-2013, Annual Report 2010 and Audited Account for 2010. Three (3) key founding members who were also former Board members



namely, Mr. Dehole Dometi (former Board Chair), Mr. MayPaul Dzramado (former Treasurer/Board





Chair) and Miss Beatrice Bannerman (former Board Member) were honoured with certificate of recognition for their meritorious and outstanding contribution to the development and growth of VOICE GHANA. They were among the 15 people with disability who had a vision in 2002 to form an NGO managed and staffed by people with disabilities for the benefit of the disabled community in Ghana.

## Becoming Stronger

There was significant improvement in administrative procedures and systems in the office in the year under review. We have also recruited a Finance/Administrative Officer based on qualification and experience to control our finances. We conduct regular management and staff team meetings.



As a strategy for STAR-Ghana to strengthen its grant partners to become vibrant CSOs in Ghana, VOICE GHANA is benefiting from technical support from STAR Ghana that are delivered through consultants and experts to enhance our work in quality control, planning, monitoring and evaluation and co-ordination. We are also benefiting from the pool of CSOs that STAR-Ghana is funding through learning and sharing and partnerships and networking with some of these CSOs, whom we have common goal and interest with. We have developed a website ([www.voiceghana.org](http://www.voiceghana.org)) to promote our work. The website domain was acquired for us by kind

support of Mr. Gerry McGeoch, a former volunteer and a friend in Scotland. The site was developed for free by Mr. Jim Hekker of MEND Trust in New Zealand.

VOICE GHANA has also developed a three (3) year Step Change Plan for funding consideration by STAR-Ghana. The plan is geared toward making the organisation vibrant independent and autonomous with effective resources and systems to deliver on its mandate. The strategic areas of focus of the step change plan are to:

- ▶ Enhance performance improvement for staff/Board;
- ▶ Develop a well comprehensive, integrated system for on-going measurement of performance and results (input, output, outcomes and impacts);
- ▶ Develop and practice proper administrative and operation system plus PM&E systems;
- ▶ Enhance financial management skills for the organization;
- ▶ Develop/practice communication strategy and
- ▶ Enhance leadership and competency among our self-help groups as a way of sustaining them.

## Getting more International Exposure

The Director of VOICE GHANA was invited together with a representative of Sight Savers International, Africa Office in Accra-Ghana to participate in a Workshop in Lagos Nigeria. The workshop was held in the Airport Hotel, Lagos, Nigeria from 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> December 2011. Participants drawn from Nigeria, Gambia and Ghana were equipped on the legislative and policy framework including conventions, protocols and declarations regarding Torture and Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and Punishment of Persons with Disabilities. The event was jointly organized by the Legal Defense and Assistance Project (LEDAP), Equal Rights Trust of UK and the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria.



## Financial summary

This is a summary of VOICE GHANA's financial activities, extracted from the audited account for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011. Copy of the full Annual Account is available from our office.

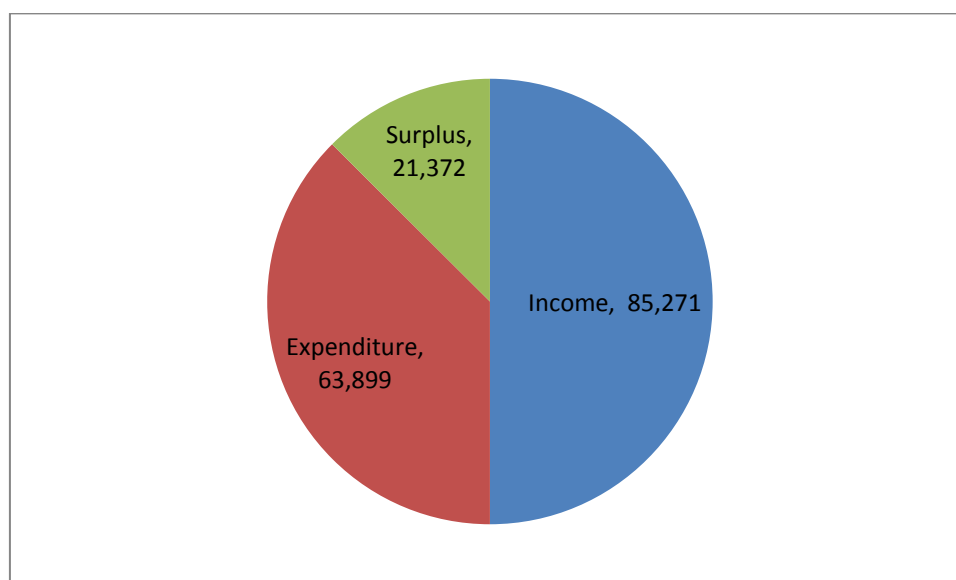
<b>Income Source - 2011</b>	<b>GHC</b>	<b>%</b>
Grant Received	68,771	80.65
Friends of VOICE GHANA	16,444	19.28
Donations	55	0.06
Other Income (Bank Interest)	1	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>85,271</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Expenditure - 2011</b>	<b>GHC</b>	<b>%</b>
Direct Operating Cost	44,839	52.58
Staff	5,808	6.81
Establishment	894	1.05
Finance	1,321	1.55
Administration	11,037	12.94
<b>Total</b>	<b>63,899</b>	<b>74.94</b>

<b>Excess of Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>21,372</b>	<b>25.06</b>
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Our total revenue has increased from GH¢9,040 in 2010 to GH¢85,270 in 2011, representing 943% increase. Our total direct cost has also increased from GH¢9,494 in 2010 to GH¢44,839 in 2011 representing 472% increase. We registered excess of income over expenditure of GH¢21,372 in 2011 as against excess of expenditure over income of GH¢15,449 in 2010.

## Our Appreciation

We are proud of everything that VOICE GHANA has achieved during 2011, and we hope you are too. But we couldn't have done it without organisations and people like you. Achievements like those outlined in these pages are only possible because of the dedication of our Board and staff team as well as our donors, partners and friends. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of people with disabilities. We also want to appreciate the continued support of thousands of people with disabilities whom we serve.

Our network of local groups and national CSOs including IDEG is a valuable source of ideas, inspiration, and practical support for our work. We say thank you.

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We always welcome financial and in-kind support. To find out more about our work or how to support our work, please contact us through

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Website: [www.voiceghana.org](http://www.voiceghana.org)

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT

