



CONCERNED HEART FOUNDATION GHANA

Thematic Development Framework (2026–2031 Strategic Programme Overview)

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About this Document

This Thematic Programme Framework outlines the strategic programme direction of Concerned Heart Foundation Ghana for the period 2026–2031. It provides a structured roadmap to guide the design, implementation, coordination, and sustainability of impactful interventions within deprived communities in the Central Tongu District and beyond. The framework builds on the Foundation’s existing interventions in education, child protection, and community support, while introducing more structured and integrated programming in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Climate Action to enhance long-term community resilience and sustainable development. Each thematic area within this framework is presented with clearly defined programme goals, strategic objectives, key interventions, target beneficiaries, expected outcomes, implementation approaches, and sustainability measures. The document also serves as a strategic resource mobilization and partnership tool to support collaboration with governmental institutions, donor agencies, development partners, civil society organizations, and community stakeholders.

Background

Concerned Heart Foundation Ghana is a registered non-governmental, non-partisan, and non-denominational organization based in the Central Tongu District of the Volta Region. The Foundation is made up of dedicated professionals, including social workers, teachers, health personnel, and community development practitioners, who are committed to improving the lives of children and vulnerable populations in deprived communities. Since its establishment in 2023, the Foundation has implemented a range of community-based interventions aimed at addressing the educational, social, and welfare needs of children. These include literacy and reading improvement programmes for early childhood education, training of teachers using locally available teaching and learning materials, and the promotion of girl-child education through menstrual hygiene support and reproductive health education. The Foundation has also supported access to education through the donation of exercise books, school uniforms, desks, and payment of examination fees for children at risk of dropping out.

In addition to education-focused initiatives, Concerned Heart Foundation Ghana has actively engaged in child protection and community advocacy. Through partnerships with organizations such as Child Marriage Free World and other development partners, the Foundation has led campaigns to combat child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and sexual abuse of children, while promoting life skills and behavioral change among young people. The organization has further demonstrated its commitment to social inclusion by supporting persons with disabilities and vulnerable households through targeted assistance and community outreach.

Despite these impactful efforts, many of the communities served by the Foundation continue to face significant challenges, including inadequate school infrastructure, limited access to clean water and sanitation facilities, and growing environmental concerns. These issues directly affect children’s health, school attendance, and overall wellbeing, reinforcing cycles of poverty and vulnerability. In response to these challenges, this Thematic Development Framework (2026–2031) has been developed to provide a structured and strategic direction for the Foundation’s work over the next 5 years. The framework builds on existing achievements while introducing an

integrated approach to development through three core thematic areas which includes Education, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and Climate Action. This document serves as a roadmap to guide programme design, implementation, and partnerships, ensuring that all interventions are aligned with the Foundation's mission and responsive to the real needs of the communities it serves. It also provides a platform for resource mobilization and collaboration with stakeholders, development partners, and donors. Through this framework, Concerned Heart Foundation Ghana seeks to strengthen its institutional capacity, scale its impact, and transition into a more coordinated and results-driven organization, committed to improving child wellbeing, promoting inclusive development, and building resilient communities for the future.

Vision Statement

To envision a society where every child has access to quality education, essential resources, and the support needed to thrive, create positive change, and break the cycle of poverty and hopelessness for future generations.

Mission Statement

To empower children, schools, and vulnerable communities in deprived areas of Ghana through the provision of educational resources, promotion of literacy and reading programmes, support for girl-child education, advocacy for child protection, and inclusive interventions that enable persons with disabilities to reach their full potential and build brighter futures.

Strategic Pillars (Thematic Areas)

Concerned Heart Foundation Ghana's work is organized around three core strategic pillars that guide all programme design, implementation, and impact delivery. These pillars reflect the Foundation's priority areas of intervention and ensure a focused, coordinated, and results-driven approach to community development.

All programmes under these pillars will be professionally coordinated and managed under the leadership of the Head of Programmes, who will provide overall technical oversight, ensure quality implementation, and align all interventions with the organization's strategic goals.

The three strategic pillars are:

- Education Programme
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Programme
- Climate Action Programme

Programmes Under Each Thematic Area

Thematic Area	Programme Name
Education	Learning Enhancement and Access Programme (LEAP)
WASH	Water, Innovation, Sanitation and Hygiene Programme (WISH)
Climate Action	Resilience, Innovation and Sustainability for the Environment Programme (RISE)

Each of Concerned Heart Foundation Ghana's thematic programmes is designed to operate as a long-term development framework. However, every year, programme managers will design and implement one or more targeted projects that translate programme objectives into practical, community-level interventions. These annual projects will be based on identified community needs, emerging opportunities, and available funding partnerships. They will ensure that each thematic programme remains dynamic, responsive, and impact-oriented. To support implementation, programme teams will actively mobilize resources through proposal development, donor engagement, corporate partnerships, and community-based fundraising initiatives. A successful year under each programme will be measured by the extent to which planned activities are implemented effectively and the degree to which programme objectives are achieved within targeted communities.

A. EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Programme Name: LEAP (Learning Enhancement and Access Programme)

Programme Overview

The LEAP Programme is the flagship education initiative of Concerned Heart Foundation Ghana, designed to improve access to quality education, strengthen literacy outcomes, and support vulnerable children in deprived communities, particularly within the Central Tongu District and surrounding areas of the Volta Region. The programme builds on the Foundation's existing interventions, including literacy and reading support programmes in basic schools, teacher training using locally available teaching and learning materials, provision of educational resources such as exercise books and school desks, and targeted support for girl-child education and children at risk of school dropout.

Despite these ongoing efforts, many schools in deprived communities continue to face structural and resource-related challenges, including limited instructional materials, inadequate learning environments, and gaps in teaching capacity, which affect learning outcomes and school retention. LEAP therefore adopts a structured, inclusive, and community-driven approach to strengthening foundational learning, improving teaching quality, and promoting equitable access to education for all children.

Specific Objectives

The Programme Seeks to achieve the following objectives by 2031;

- i. Support the construction, renovation, or furnishing of at least 5 basic school infrastructure projects in selected schools within the Central Tongu District aimed at improving the quality and safety of learning environments for children by 2031.
- ii. Enhance access to quality learning materials by providing textbooks, exercise books, teaching aids, and other instructional resources to at least 15 basic schools, benefiting approximately 3,000 learners by 2031.
- iii. Increase school enrolment, attendance, and retention among vulnerable children by directly supporting at least 3,000 children in deprived communities through school retention initiatives, follow-up support, and community-based education engagement activities by 2031.
- iv. Promote girl-child education by directly supporting at least 1,500 girls in basic education through targeted interventions such as mentorship, menstrual hygiene support, and school retention activities by 2031.

Key Components

The key components of the LEAP Programme outline the practical processes through which programme objectives will be achieved. These components describe how activities will be planned, implemented, monitored, and reviewed across a defined project cycle to ensure consistency, accountability, and measurable impact at both school and community levels.

i. School Infrastructure Delivery Process (Objective one)

The school infrastructure component will operate on a structured project cycle that begins with annual or biannual needs identification. At the start of each cycle, baseline assessments will be conducted in selected communities to identify schools requiring urgent infrastructure support, guided by clear selection criteria such as classroom shortages, unsafe learning conditions, and overcrowding. Following this, selected schools will undergo validation with the District Education Office and community leadership to confirm priority needs and ensure alignment with district education planning. Once validated, the planning phase will begin, during which site assessments, simple designs, and cost estimates will be developed with local technical partners.

This will be followed by a resource mobilization phase, where proposals are developed and submitted to partners and funding agencies to secure implementation funding. Upon confirmation of funding, procurement and contracting will take place, and construction or renovation works will be executed within a defined implementation period. During implementation, monthly monitoring visits will be conducted to track progress, manage quality, and address implementation challenges. At the end of each project cycle, completed facilities will be formally handed over to schools, and community maintenance committees will be established to ensure sustainability beyond the project period. Each cycle is expected to run within a defined timeframe, after which new schools are selected for the next implementation cycle.

ii. Learning Materials Supply Process(objective two)

The learning materials component follows an annual delivery cycle aligned with the academic calendar. At the beginning of each cycle, learning needs assessments will be conducted in all target schools through head teacher submissions and enrolment verification. Once consolidated and validated, procurement planning will be undertaken to source approved materials based on quality standards and budget availability. This phase is followed by packaging and allocation of materials according to school-specific needs.

Distribution takes place at the beginning or mid-point of the academic year, ensuring timely access to learning resources. Each delivery is formally acknowledged by school authorities, and follow-up monitoring is conducted within the same academic cycle to assess usage and identify gaps. At the end of each cycle, a review is conducted to determine replenishment needs and to inform planning for the next academic year.

iii. Child Identification and Retention System (Objective three)

The child identification and retention component operates as a continuous tracking system embedded within each academic year. The cycle begins with the identification of out-of-school children and those at risk of dropping out through collaboration with teachers and community volunteers. Once identified, children are registered into a tracking system that is continuously updated throughout the academic year. The programme then engages families through home visits and structured community dialogues to understand barriers and agree on reintegration pathways.

Support interventions are implemented within the same cycle, and children are monitored monthly through school attendance records and teacher reports. Absentee cases are treated as urgent and followed up within a short response window to prevent permanent dropout. At the end of each academic cycle, progress is reviewed to determine retention outcomes and to inform planning for the next cycle.

iv. Girl-Child Support Implementation Process (Objective four)

The girl-child education component follows a term-based cycle aligned with school academic terms. At the beginning of each term, girls at risk of absenteeism are identified through attendance records and teacher referrals. Targeted support is then provided, including menstrual hygiene materials and structured mentorship and health education sessions delivered once or twice per term depending on school scheduling. Throughout the term, designated focal teachers monitor attendance and wellbeing, while parents and guardians are engaged periodically to reinforce support at home. Where attendance issues arise, immediate intervention is triggered within the same term to prevent prolonged absence. At the end of each term, a review is conducted to assess participation, attendance trends, and support effectiveness, which informs the next term's interventions.

Target Beneficiaries

The LEAP Programme is designed to directly benefit children in deprived communities within the Central Tongu District, with a particular focus on learners in basic schools who face barriers to quality education. These include pupils affected by inadequate school infrastructure, lack of learning materials, financial constraints, and limited parental support. The programme will also engage teachers and school administrators by strengthening their capacity to deliver inclusive and learner-centered education, while supporting District Education authorities and community stakeholders to improve coordination and oversight of education delivery. In addition, vulnerable groups such as out-of-school children, at-risk learners, and girls facing socio-economic and cultural barriers to education will receive targeted support to improve enrolment, attendance, and retention in school.

Expected Outcomes

By 2031, the LEAP Programme is expected to contribute to improved learning environments and stronger educational outcomes across targeted communities. Specifically, more children will have access to safe and functional classroom spaces, improved teaching and learning materials, and better-supported teachers. The programme will also contribute to increased school enrolment and sustained attendance among vulnerable children, with a reduction in dropout cases in supported communities. In addition, girls in basic education will experience improved participation and retention due to targeted support systems. The programme is expected to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes while promoting greater equity and inclusion in basic education.

Personnel Required

The successful implementation of the LEAP Programme will require a small but well-structured team with clear roles and responsibilities at both programme and community levels. At the programme level, a Programme Manager will provide overall leadership, coordination, and strategic direction. This role will be responsible for planning, partner engagement, resource mobilization, and ensuring that all programme activities are implemented effectively.

A Field Coordinator will support day-to-day implementation in the communities. This person will oversee school-level activities, coordinate with head teachers, and ensure that programme interventions such as infrastructure support, learning materials distribution, and child tracking are properly executed. The programme will also require a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer to track progress, collect data from schools, document results, and prepare simple reports on programme performance and outcomes. At the community level, Community Education Volunteers will be engaged to support child tracking, follow-up on absentee learners, and assist in community engagement activities. These volunteers will work closely with schools and local leaders. In addition, Technical Advisors or Consultants (as needed) will provide specialist support in areas such as education planning, infrastructure design, and teacher training to ensure quality implementation. Where necessary, the programme will also work with local contractors and service providers for infrastructure development and supply of learning materials. Through this

structure, LEAP will maintain a balance between professional coordination and strong community involvement to ensure effective and sustainable implementation.

Sustainability Approach

The sustainability of the LEAP Programme will be based on strong community ownership, use of existing education structures, and building local capacity so that activities can continue beyond the programme period. From the beginning, the programme will work closely with the District Education Office, School Management Committees, Parent-Teacher Associations, and school leaders. This will ensure that all activities are well integrated into the normal school system and become part of regular school planning and management.

A major focus will be on training and supporting teachers, head teachers, and community members so they can continue key activities on their own. This includes areas such as tracking learners, improving school attendance, managing learning materials, and supporting vulnerable children. The programme will also encourage communities to take responsibility for maintaining school improvements, especially classroom facilities and learning environments. This will help reduce dependence on external support over time. In addition, LEAP will use simple tools and systems that schools can easily continue using, even after the programme ends. These systems will be designed to be practical, low-cost, and easy to manage. Finally, the programme will document and share successful approaches with education authorities and partners so that they can be repeated in other schools and communities. Through this approach, LEAP will not be a short-term project, but a long-lasting system that strengthens education delivery in communities over time.

B. WASH Programme

Programme Name: WISH (Water, Innovation, Sanitation and Hygiene)

Programme Overview

The WASH Programme, known as the Water, Innovation, Sanitation and Hygiene (WISH) Programme, is a core intervention of Concerned Heart Foundation Ghana. It is designed to improve access to safe and reliable water, promote dignified sanitation, and strengthen hygiene practices in schools and communities within deprived areas of the Central Tongu District in the Volta Region of Ghana. Central Tongu is largely rural, with scattered farming communities where access to basic WASH services remains a challenge. Many households and schools depend on unsafe or unreliable water sources such as rivers, streams, shallow hand-dug wells, or non-functional boreholes. In several communities, functional piped water systems are limited or absent, making water access inconsistent, especially during dry seasons.

Sanitation infrastructure in many basic schools and communities is also inadequate. Some schools operate without proper toilet facilities, while others rely on poorly maintained or overcrowded structures. This situation often leads to open defecation practices in surrounding areas, increasing environmental and health risks. Hygiene practices are further constrained by limited access to handwashing facilities, soap, and clean water in schools. As a result, preventable illnesses such as diarrhea, typhoid, and skin infections remain common among children, contributing to school absenteeism and reduced classroom performance.

Girls are particularly affected due to the lack of gender-sensitive sanitation facilities and insufficient menstrual hygiene support, which can lead to missed school days and reduced participation in education. The WISH Programme responds to these challenges through practical, community-based interventions that focus on improving WASH infrastructure in schools and communities, promoting sustainable hygiene behavior change, and strengthening local systems for operation and maintenance. The programme is grounded in community ownership, ensuring that local stakeholders are actively involved in planning, implementation, and long-term management of WASH facilities.

Specific Objectives

The WISH Programme seeks to achieve the following objectives by 2031:

- i. Support the construction, rehabilitation, or restoration of at least 6 functional boreholes and community water systems in underserved communities within the Central Tongu District to improve access to safe and reliable water for households and schools.
- ii. Improve sanitation conditions in at least 8 selected basic schools by facilitating the construction or renovation of gender-responsive toilet facilities and the installation of functional handwashing stations with regular water access.
- iii. Implement structured hygiene education and community sensitization activities that will directly reach at least 3,500 school children, teachers, parents, and community members

with practical knowledge on handwashing, sanitation, menstrual hygiene, and disease prevention practices.

- iv. Establish or strengthen WASH management structures in at least 8 schools through the formation of School Health Clubs and the training of focal teachers and community representatives on hygiene promotion, facility management, and basic maintenance systems.

Key Components

The key components of the WISH Programme outline the practical implementation processes through which programme objectives will be achieved. These components describe how activities will be planned, funded, implemented, monitored, and sustained at both school and community levels to ensure effective service delivery and long-term impact.

i. Water Supply Development and Management Process

The implementation of water supply interventions will begin with baseline assessments conducted in targeted communities and schools to identify areas with limited or unsafe access to water. Data collected will include the condition of existing water sources, population size, school enrolment levels, distance to water points, and prevalence of water-related challenges.

Based on the assessment findings, priority communities and schools will be selected using clear criteria developed in collaboration with the District Assembly, District Education Directorate, and community leadership structures. Technical feasibility studies will then be carried out by qualified personnel to determine the most appropriate water solution for each location, including boreholes, mechanized systems, or rehabilitation of existing facilities. Following the assessment stage, the programme team will prepare project proposals, budgets, technical specifications, and implementation plans to support resource mobilization and partnership engagement. Procurement processes will then be conducted transparently to engage qualified contractors, suppliers, and technical service providers.

Construction and rehabilitation works will be supervised through scheduled site inspections, progress reporting, and quality assurance checks to ensure compliance with approved standards and timelines. Community representatives and school authorities will also be involved in monitoring implementation progress to strengthen accountability and local ownership. Upon completion of works, functionality testing and final inspections will be conducted before facilities are officially handed over to beneficiary communities and schools. Water management committees will then be established or strengthened and trained on basic operations, preventive maintenance, fee collection where necessary, and reporting procedures to support long-term sustainability.

ii. School Sanitation Improvement Process

The sanitation improvement process will begin with school-level assessments to identify institutions with inadequate, unsafe, or non-functional toilet facilities and handwashing stations. The assessment will also examine pupil-to-toilet ratios, accessibility for girls and children with

disabilities, and general environmental sanitation conditions within schools. Based on identified needs, schools will be prioritized in consultation with education authorities and School Management Committees. Designs and cost estimates for sanitation facilities will then be developed to ensure that interventions are practical, child-friendly, gender-sensitive, and aligned with approved public health standards. Funding proposals and partnership engagements will be undertaken to mobilize resources for implementation. Once resources are secured, contractors and suppliers will be selected through transparent procurement processes to undertake construction, rehabilitation, and installation works.

Throughout implementation, routine supervision visits will be conducted to monitor progress, adherence to technical standards, and proper use of materials. Schools and community stakeholders will be actively engaged throughout the construction period to promote ownership and protect facilities from misuse. After completion, schools will receive orientation on facility usage, cleaning schedules, and maintenance procedures. Follow-up monitoring visits will be conducted periodically to assess functionality, cleanliness, and usage levels, while corrective actions will be taken where gaps are identified.

iii. *Hygiene Education and Behavior Change Process*

The hygiene promotion component will begin with community and school-based assessments to identify key hygiene knowledge gaps, behavioral challenges, and priority health concerns affecting children and households.

Based on assessment findings, the programme will develop practical hygiene education materials and behavior change activities tailored to the needs of schools and communities. Topics will include proper handwashing, menstrual hygiene management, safe water handling, toilet hygiene, environmental cleanliness, and prevention of common water-related diseases. Structured hygiene education sessions will be conducted regularly in schools through classroom engagement, demonstrations, campaigns, and interactive activities. School Health Clubs will be established or strengthened to promote peer-to-peer learning and sustain hygiene awareness among pupils. Teachers, focal persons, and community volunteers will receive orientation and practical training to support continuous hygiene promotion within schools and communities. Community outreach sessions, household engagements, and public sensitization campaigns will also be organized periodically to reinforce behavior change beyond the school environment. Monitoring tools such as attendance records, observation checklists, and feedback sessions will be used to track participation levels and assess changes in hygiene practices over time.

iv. *WASH Governance, Monitoring, and Sustainability Process*

To ensure long-term sustainability, the programme will support the establishment and strengthening of WASH governance structures within schools and communities. This process will involve collaboration with School Management Committees, Parent-Teacher Associations, community leaders, and local government institutions. WASH committees and focal persons will be identified and trained on facility management, hygiene monitoring, preventive maintenance, record keeping, and reporting procedures. Schools will also be supported to develop simple WASH

operation and maintenance plans that clearly define responsibilities, cleaning schedules, and reporting channels.

The programme will implement routine monitoring and evaluation activities, including facility inspections, progress reviews, beneficiary feedback sessions, and data collection on usage and functionality of facilities. Findings from monitoring activities will guide maintenance support, corrective actions, and future planning. Community participation will remain central throughout implementation, with local stakeholders encouraged to contribute labor, local materials, and oversight support where feasible. This shared responsibility approach will strengthen ownership, improve accountability, and increase the long-term sustainability of WASH facilities and behavior change interventions.

Target Beneficiaries

The WISH Programme is designed to directly benefit school children in deprived communities within the Central Tongu District, particularly those affected by inadequate access to safe water, poor sanitation facilities, and limited hygiene support systems. Special attention will be given to children in basic schools where water and sanitation challenges continue to affect health, attendance, safety, and learning outcomes. The programme will also support girls of school-going age who face difficulties related to menstrual hygiene management and inadequate sanitation facilities within schools. Through targeted hygiene and sanitation interventions, the programme seeks to create safer and more inclusive learning environments that support the continuous participation of girls in education.

Teachers, head teachers, School Health Clubs, and School Management Committees will also benefit through training and capacity strengthening in hygiene promotion, facility management, and WASH monitoring systems. These stakeholders will play a key role in sustaining programme interventions at the school level. At the community level, households, community leaders, water management committees, and local volunteers will benefit from improved access to water facilities, hygiene education, and community-led sanitation initiatives. The programme will further collaborate with District Assemblies, the District Education Directorate, and local health institutions to strengthen coordination and long-term WASH service delivery within targeted communities.

Expected Outcomes

By 2031, the WISH Programme is expected to contribute to improved access to safe and reliable water supply in targeted schools and communities across the Central Tongu District. The programme is also expected to improve sanitation conditions within beneficiary schools through the provision and rehabilitation of gender-sensitive toilet facilities and functional handwashing systems. Improved hygiene knowledge and behavior among school children, teachers, households, and community members is expected to contribute to reduced cases of waterborne and sanitation-related diseases within targeted communities. The programme further aims to contribute to improved school attendance and participation, particularly among girls, through better sanitation facilities and strengthened menstrual hygiene support systems. In addition, strengthened WASH

committees, School Health Clubs, and community-based management systems are expected to improve local ownership, routine maintenance, and long-term functionality of WASH infrastructure provided under the programme.

Personnel Required

The successful implementation of the WISH Programme will require a multidisciplinary team to support programme planning, coordination, implementation, monitoring, and sustainability activities. Overall technical oversight and strategic coordination of the programme will be provided by the Head of Programmes, while the day-to-day implementation of activities will be led by a dedicated WASH Programme Coordinator. The programme will also engage Project Officers to support field implementation, supervision, reporting, and stakeholder coordination across targeted communities and schools. Community mobilization activities will be facilitated by Community Mobilization Officers and field volunteers who will support community entry processes, sensitization activities, household engagements, and coordination with local leaders and school authorities. Hygiene Promotion Facilitators and School Health Club Coordinators will lead school and community-based hygiene education activities, behavior change campaigns, and student engagement interventions.

To ensure accountability and effective programme tracking, a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer will support data collection, progress monitoring, impact assessment, and reporting. Financial management, procurement, and logistical coordination will be supported by the Finance and Administrative Officer together with the Procurement and Logistics Officer. Where necessary, the programme will also engage Technical Consultants and Engineers to conduct feasibility assessments, develop technical specifications, supervise infrastructure works, and ensure compliance with quality and safety standards. In addition, community-based WASH committees will be established and trained to support local management, routine monitoring, and maintenance of facilities to ensure long-term sustainability of programme interventions.

Sustainability Approach

The sustainability of the WISH Programme will be driven through strong community ownership, local capacity strengthening, institutional collaboration, and continuous stakeholder engagement.

From the initial stages of implementation, the programme will work closely with District Assemblies, the District Education Directorate, School Management Committees, Parent-Teacher Associations, and community leadership structures to ensure that interventions are community-driven and aligned with local development priorities. Community members and school authorities will be actively involved throughout project planning, implementation, supervision, and facility handover processes to strengthen accountability and encourage long-term ownership of WASH facilities. To support continuous functionality of infrastructure, the programme will establish and strengthen WASH committees and School Health Clubs responsible for routine monitoring, hygiene promotion, basic maintenance coordination, and early reporting of faults. Training will be provided to committee members and focal persons on simple preventive maintenance practices and facility management systems.

The programme will also promote low-cost and locally manageable maintenance approaches to ensure that schools and communities are able to sustain facilities beyond the project period. Where feasible, communities may be encouraged to make small local contributions toward minor repairs and upkeep to strengthen shared responsibility. In the medium to long term, the programme will continue to build partnerships with government institutions, NGOs, corporate organizations, and development partners working within the WASH sector to support expansion and continuity of interventions. As implementation progresses and programme impact becomes well documented, Concerned Heart Foundation Ghana will position the WISH Programme for larger donor support and long-term funding opportunities focused on water, sanitation, public health, and community resilience.

Concerned Heart Foundation, Ghana

C. CLIMATE ACTION PROGRAMME

Programme Name: RISE (Resilience, Innovation and Sustainability for the Environment Programme)

Programme Overview

The Climate Action Programme, known as the Resilience, Innovation and Sustainability for the Environment (RISE) Programme, is a strategic intervention of Concerned Heart Foundation Ghana aimed at promoting environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and community participation in environmental protection within deprived communities in the Central Tongu District.

Communities within the district continue to experience increasing environmental challenges such as deforestation, poor waste disposal practices, flooding, soil degradation, and the growing effects of climate variability. These challenges affect livelihoods, public health, agriculture, water sources, and the overall wellbeing of vulnerable households, particularly children and young people. Many schools and communities also have limited awareness of climate change, environmental conservation, and sustainable environmental practices. Inadequate environmental education and weak community systems for waste management and environmental protection continue to contribute to environmental degradation and increased vulnerability to climate-related risks. The RISE Programme responds to these challenges through practical, community-based environmental interventions that promote climate awareness, environmental restoration, waste management, and local resilience building. The programme places strong emphasis on community participation, youth engagement, environmental education, and sustainable local actions that contribute to long-term environmental protection and climate adaptation.

Specific Objectives

The RISE Programme seeks to achieve the following objectives by 2031:

- i. Support the planting and maintenance of at least 8,000 trees in selected schools and communities within the Central Tongu District to promote environmental restoration and climate resilience.
- ii. Implement community and school-based environmental education and climate awareness activities reaching at least 4,000 children, youth, and community members on climate change, environmental protection, and sustainable environmental practices.
- iii. Support improved waste management and community sanitation initiatives in at least 10 communities and schools through clean-up campaigns, waste segregation education, and environmental sensitization activities.
- iv. Establish or strengthen environmental clubs in at least 10 basic schools to promote environmental stewardship, climate education, and student-led environmental activities.
- v. Promote community participation in climate resilience and environmental sustainability activities through stakeholder engagement, local partnerships, and community-led environmental action initiatives.

Key Components

The key components of the RISE Programme outline the practical implementation processes through which programme objectives will be achieved. These components describe how environmental and climate-related interventions will be planned, coordinated, implemented, monitored, and sustained at both school and community levels.

i) *Environmental Restoration and Tree Planting Process*

The implementation of environmental restoration activities will begin with baseline assessments conducted in targeted schools and communities to identify degraded areas, erosion-prone locations, and spaces suitable for tree planting and environmental restoration activities. Following the assessment, priority sites will be selected in consultation with community leaders, schools, District Assembly representatives, and relevant environmental stakeholders. Suitable tree species will then be identified based on environmental conditions, survival potential, and community needs.

The programme will mobilize seedlings, tools, and technical support through partnerships with forestry institutions, environmental agencies, and development partners. Community sensitization activities will be organized prior to planting exercises to encourage local participation and ownership. Tree planting exercises will be implemented through school campaigns, community volunteer activities, and environmental action events. Regular monitoring visits will be conducted to assess survival rates, provide maintenance support, and replace damaged seedlings where necessary. Environmental clubs, schools, and community volunteers will be supported to maintain planted areas through watering, weeding, and protection activities to ensure long-term survival and environmental impact.

ii. *Climate Education and Environmental Awareness Process*

The programme will conduct baseline awareness assessments within schools and communities to identify key knowledge gaps relating to climate change, environmental degradation, sanitation, and sustainable environmental practices. Based on identified needs, practical climate education materials and awareness activities will be developed for use within schools and communities. Topics will include climate change adaptation, environmental protection, waste management, flooding prevention, tree conservation, and sustainable community practices.

Structured awareness sessions will be organized through school programmes, community forums, radio discussions, environmental campaigns, and public sensitization activities. Interactive learning methods such as demonstrations, debates, quizzes, and environmental competitions will be used to encourage active participation. Teachers, community volunteers, and focal persons will receive orientation and training to support continuous climate education and environmental advocacy within their schools and communities. Monitoring tools such as attendance records, observation visits, and participant feedback sessions will be used to assess knowledge improvement and participation levels throughout implementation.

iii. *Community Waste Management and Sanitation Improvement Process*

The waste management component will begin with assessments to identify major sanitation and waste disposal challenges affecting targeted schools and communities. Particular attention will be given to illegal dumping sites, drainage challenges, plastic waste accumulation, and poor waste handling practices. Following the assessment stage, the programme will engage local authorities, community leaders, and schools to develop practical community sanitation action plans. Awareness activities on proper waste disposal, waste segregation, recycling practices, and environmental cleanliness will then be conducted.

Periodic community clean-up exercises and school sanitation campaigns will be organized with support from volunteers, environmental clubs, and local stakeholders. Waste collection materials and basic sanitation tools may also be provided to support activities where feasible. The programme will further encourage simple community-led waste management approaches and promote environmental responsibility among children, youth, and households. Routine monitoring visits will be conducted to assess sanitation conditions, community participation, and adoption of improved waste management practices.

iv. *School Environmental Club Strengthening Process*

The programme will support the establishment or strengthening of environmental clubs within targeted basic schools to encourage student participation in environmental protection and climate action activities. Schools will be engaged through head teachers and designated focal teachers to identify club coordinators and student leaders. Environmental clubs will then receive orientation, activity guidelines, and practical support to organize environmental activities within their schools.

The clubs will lead activities such as tree planting exercises, school clean-up campaigns, environmental debates, climate awareness campaigns, and peer education sessions. Teachers coordinating the clubs will receive basic training and mentorship to support effective club management and student engagement. Periodic inter-school environmental activities may also be organized to encourage learning, collaboration, and innovation among participating schools. Monitoring and support visits will be conducted to assess club functionality, participation levels, and the sustainability of activities within schools.

v. *Climate Governance, Community Participation, and Sustainability Process*

To strengthen long-term sustainability, the programme will work closely with community leaders, schools, local government authorities, environmental agencies, and community-based groups throughout implementation. Community stakeholders will be involved from the planning stage through implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes to ensure local ownership and accountability. Environmental committees and community focal persons will be identified and trained to support local coordination, environmental monitoring, and mobilization for climate-related activities. The programme will also promote partnerships with government institutions, NGOs, environmental agencies, and private sector actors to support technical assistance, resource mobilization, and continuity of interventions. Routine monitoring and evaluation activities will be conducted to track implementation progress, participation levels, environmental improvements,

and sustainability outcomes. Lessons learned and community feedback will be used to improve future interventions and strengthen programme effectiveness over time.

Target Beneficiaries

The RISE Programme will directly benefit school children in deprived communities within the Central Tongu District by engaging them in environmental education, climate awareness activities, and practical environmental actions such as tree planting and school-based conservation activities. These interventions are designed to build environmental responsibility from an early age and encourage long-term behavior change. Youth groups and community volunteers will also benefit through active participation in environmental restoration activities, waste management campaigns, and climate resilience initiatives. The programme will equip them with practical skills and knowledge to become environmental advocates within their communities.

Teachers, head teachers, and environmental club coordinators will benefit through training and support that enable them to integrate environmental education into classroom teaching and to effectively guide student-led environmental activities within schools. At the community level, households, traditional leaders, and community-based organizations will benefit from improved environmental awareness, cleaner surroundings, and reduced environmental health risks associated with poor waste management and environmental degradation. Local government institutions and environmental stakeholders will also benefit through strengthened collaboration, improved community engagement, and enhanced capacity to support local climate action and environmental sustainability efforts.

Expected Outcomes

By 2031, the RISE Programme is expected to contribute to increased tree cover and improved environmental restoration in targeted communities and schools within the Central Tongu District. The programme is also expected to improve climate change awareness and environmental knowledge among school children, youth, and community members, leading to more responsible environmental behavior and practices. Improved waste management practices and increased community participation in clean-up and environmental protection activities are expected to contribute to cleaner and healthier communities. The establishment and strengthening of environmental clubs in schools is expected to promote sustained student engagement in climate action and environmental stewardship activities.

Personnel Required

The successful implementation of the RISE Programme will require a multidisciplinary team to support planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring, and sustainability activities. Key personnel will include the Head of Programmes, who will provide overall strategic oversight, and a dedicated Climate Action Programme Coordinator responsible for day-to-day implementation and coordination of activities.

Project Officers will support field-level implementation, community engagement, and reporting, while Community Mobilization Officers will facilitate stakeholder engagement, sensitization

activities, and local participation. Environmental Education Facilitators and School Environmental Club Coordinators will support schools in delivering climate education, student engagement, and environmental activities. A Monitoring and Evaluation Officer will track progress, document outcomes, and support reporting and learning processes, while a Finance and Administrative Officer will manage budgeting, procurement, and financial accountability. Where necessary, Technical Consultants and Environmental Experts will be engaged to provide specialized support for tree planting design, environmental assessments, and climate resilience planning. Community Environmental Committees, School Environmental Clubs, and local volunteers will also form an essential part of the implementation structure, ensuring grassroots participation and long-term sustainability.

Sustainability Approach

The sustainability of the RISE Programme will be anchored on strong community ownership, continuous environmental education, and active collaboration with local institutions and development partners. From the outset, the programme will work closely with District Assemblies, the District Education Directorate, schools, traditional authorities, and community leadership structures to ensure that environmental interventions are locally owned and aligned with district development priorities.

Environmental clubs and community environmental committees will be established or strengthened to take responsibility for ongoing activities such as tree maintenance, environmental monitoring, and community clean-up exercises. These structures will be trained and supported to ensure continuity beyond programme funding cycles. The programme will also promote low-cost, community-led environmental practices such as voluntary tree care, local waste management initiatives, and school-based environmental campaigns to ensure sustainability without heavy external dependence. Partnerships will be developed with government agencies, environmental NGOs, and private sector actors to support technical expertise, resource mobilization, and long-term environmental programming. As the programme progresses and impact evidence is documented, Concerned Heart Foundation Ghana will position the RISE Programme for expanded donor funding, climate finance opportunities, and strategic partnerships focused on environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

Personnel Required

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