

REACHING THE UNREACHED

CHALA & KOTOKOLI

UPG UPDATE
Giving voice and hands to the
gospel of Christ in Ghana.

The Gospel, My Life, My All is a program initiated by International Needs Ghana (INGH). The long-term goal of the program is to contribute to seeing transformed lives and changed communities among the Chala and Kotokoli people groups of the Oti Region of Ghana. The specific objectives of this program are:

1. To partner with churches to spread the gospel, plant churches and raise believers among the Chala and Kotokoli people groups of the Oti region.
2. To provide interventions for the socio-economic well-being of the Chala and Kotokoli people groups.

The partnership includes INGH, the Assemblies of God, Ghana denomination, various other churches and para-church organizations in Ghana, Center Point Christian Church and PPC. PPC has pledged to be the primary financial supporter of the program for five years and actively participates through yearly medical missions to the targeted communities in the Oti region. In year four, PPC contributed \$900 each in monthly support for the church planter, Samuel Awiagah and community developer, Peter Adisi, as well as approximately \$60,000 in yearly project and medical support.

As the fourth year (Oct 2022- Sep 2023) of partnership with International Needs Ghana (INGH) on “The Gospel, My Life, My All” project comes to a close, we are beginning to see various project areas take steps to become self-sustaining. This is evident through training of locals, involvement of state, regional and local religious, government and tribal authorities, establishment of oversight committees and just the number of people participating across all the projects. Throughout this report you will see repeatedly that “committees or organizations” were formed. These committees are not only the local governing authority over a particular aspect of this project, they also represent that the project has been accepted as “good” and adopted by the people as their own. They are implementing it in the “Ghana” or “Chala” way.

Livelihood Support

Two primary projects have been implemented under the livelihood support project. Business Advisory Committees (BAC) have been established in each of the four communities. The BACs serve as a link between INGH and the beneficiaries of micro-loans. The BACs train local business people and introduce new business opportunities to members. Beneficiaries receive a micro-loan to make improvements to their businesses. They have used the loans to purchase things such as equipment, bicycles and fertilizers, all in an effort to improve productivity in their business. As they repay the loan, the money is given to another business person. The beneficiaries report that this support has allowed them to improve their businesses, send more of their children to school and live a “more dignified” life.

In addition, in one community, INGH formed two community savings and loan associations. The members go through an initial training, then meet once a week. In the weekly sessions, they learn about good financial practices as they continue to invest and expand their businesses. The members are able to access loans at relatively lower interest rates and they contribute one cedi each week to a welfare fund to benefit members. The concept of saving money has become ingrained within the community, marking a positive shift from the past when saving was challenging.



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Radio program

Samuel and Peter continue to host a weekly radio program in the Chala language. In addition to their own topics on social matters (from a Biblical worldview), evangelism and Bible discussion, they bring in special guests to discuss topics of interest.

Bible Translation

A seven-member translation committee from among the Chala people has been selected to work with the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) to oversee the translation process. This committee will be selecting and recruiting qualified people to serve as translators and validators of the translation. Samuel and Peter are both members of the committee.

In the meantime, development of audio material for evangelism and discipleship in the Chala language has begun. Ten worship and praise songs in the Chala language have been recorded and produced. These are used by the new churches to worship God in their native language.

During church services and house-to-house witnessing, Samuel and Peter use the English Bible and interpret it into the Chala language in order for the people to have in-depth understanding of the scripture in their heart language.

AWANA (Now INGH Bible Clubs)

INGH Bible Clubs are continuing to reach many children with the gospel. Clubs meet in all four villages, all year long, and reach around 500 children.

The children participated in a Bible quiz competition organized by AWANA International at Nkwanta. The preparation for the competition gave them the opportunity to learn more Bible verses and to attain greater comprehension of scripture. They also had the opportunity to experience a new environment and interact with children from different backgrounds.

For the first time, INGH worked with Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) to engage INGH Bible club members in all four of the communities. The children studied the Bible story of the healing of Blind Bartimaeus by Jesus.

INGH and CEF also organized a comprehensive 2-day training workshop for adult leaders of children. The focus was on child evangelism. The workshop brought together twenty-one volunteers from the INGH Bible club, field officers, literacy facilitators and some church leaders. Key topics covered during the training included guiding children towards salvation, salvation invitations, Bible lesson preparation and presentation, Bible verse memorization and understanding the characteristics of different age groups. Participants actively engaged in practical exercises to apply the knowledge they acquired.



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Literacy

Literacy is another major focus of the program. The intent is to teach the Chala language to the children. Each month is a different topic. For example, one month was dedicated to learning about market activities. Children were exposed to various items found in the market as well as their pricing. The lesson focused on the fairness of pricing and profit making and was based on Proverbs 11:1.

Through our financial support to this project, INGH supplied readers, exercise books and writing materials for the children in the literacy classes. Facilitators for the class also attended the Child Evangelism training, noting that skills acquired during the workshop enabled them to effectively engage children of different age groups and use the appropriate methodology in teaching them.

PPC also supplied each group with a Bluetooth speaker and a recording device, allowing the children to listen to lessons, Chala gospel songs, Bible verses and stories. This helps to develop the children's listening skills and enables them to recite Bible verses in the Chala language.

Medical Mission

In February, PPC sent four people as part of a medical mission team to five communities: Keri, Kue, Odormi, Old Agou and Kabiti. A total of 2,400 people benefitted from the medical outreach. Kabiti was a new community which we may continue to serve in the future. The medical outreaches allow many people with minor health conditions to get medical help who could not otherwise afford it. However, each year, we find people with serious conditions. This year, the team encountered a young 16-year old boy with a bladder and genital birth defect. The boy had suffered from not only the physical ailment for his entire life, but also had been ostracized from other children. He had dropped out of school as a result. The team determined that the defect could be corrected with surgery, and set up an appointment with a urologist in Nkwanta. PPC provided the funds (\$4220!) for him to have corrective surgery in May. The latest report was that the surgery was successful and he was recovering nicely. The team also provided first aid, medications, exercise books, writing materials, soccer balls, and other gifts to the schools used as venues for the clinics.

The medical mission also allows us to see all the efforts to reach the Chala and Kotokoli people first-hand. The team worshipped on Sunday morning at the newly planted church in Keri. Afterwards, the children put on a beautiful performance on the wise counseling of King Solomon (1 Kings 3:16-28) and then entertained the team with a Chala cultural dance.



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Evangelism

INGH reports that they can count well over 200 Chala people “visibly committed” to Jesus Christ throughout the country, many through the efforts of this partnership.

House-to-house evangelism by Samuel and Peter continues to be the primary evangelistic outreach to adults. They typically reach around 10 new households each month, as well as go back to visit with new converts. New believers are reported almost every month!

In collaboration with the Assemblies of God church in Nkwanta, a two-day crusade, house-to-house evangelism and Jesus film outreach was held in Keri. Approximately 180 people were visited and 223 people watched the Jesus film. Viewers were exposed to the salvation message. Another evangelistic outreach film showing was held in Old Agou. It was seen by 122 people.

This year, a second Kotokoli was added to the Kingdom of God! We continue to pray that God will soften the hearts of the Kotokoli people and enable them to see that they can be both Kotokoli and followers of Jesus.

Church Planting/Discipleship

INGH’s partnership with the Assemblies of God Church and the True Vine church has resulted in 4 churches planted. Samuel and Peter continue to support and encourage these four new church plants.

Two new church pavilions were constructed in Keri at the site given by the chief last year. One pavilion is for the adults and one is for the children. Churches typically do not have a separate place for children to meet, so the focus on children is unique. This has resulted in many children attending the church. As of June 2023, the church had 21 adults and 82 children as members. Every Sunday, believers from the Assemblies of God Church in Nkwanta join the church at Keri to worship and have fellowship with them. The purpose is to help build the faith of the new converts.

A two-day Church leaders’ training workshop was organized for 25 Chala church leaders from the various churches in Keri, Kue, Odomi and Old Agou. The facilitators were from the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT), Assemblies of God Church, Accra and INGH. The topics of training included the status of the Chala people group in Christianity in Ghana, witnessing to your own people, how to pray, and the processes involved in Bible translation. The participants spent time praying for successful implementation of the Bible translation project, the US partners (including PPC), INGH and each of the Oti communities.

Samuel attended a workshop in Accra focused on how to disciple the Kotokoli people group. The program was facilitated by a Kotokoli pastor from Togo. He specifically taught about their culture, Islam, the Quran, and how to reach out to the Kotokoli people group. Samuel was able to use the information to witness to the (now) new Kotokoli convert in Keri.

Community Child Protection

INGH, with support from the regional government welfare department, formed Community Child Protection Committees in each community. These committees were trained and then tasked with protecting children from abuse, exploitation, violence and neglect. This includes educating and sensitizing communities on their responsibilities for their children.

Thank you for continuing to support this ministry through the Unreached People Group fund and for praying for these people. We rejoice in God’s work among the Chala and Kotokoli and are honored to be a small part of His work there.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Eakins

