

#ShiftThePower

UNLOCKING THE DOORS TO INDIGENOUS RESOURCE MOBILISATION

*The Case of Resource Link
Foundation, Ghana.*



By Christopher Dapaah





Photo from Resource Link Foundation



Resource Link Foundation

INTRODUCTION

As we witness donor fatigue in the global economic context, some civil society organisations, including Resource Link Foundation (RLF), still depend on international partners for more than 70% of their funding.

RLF is a not-for-profit, located in Kumasi, Wenchi and Banda and other 12 Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies in Ashanti, Bono, Bono-East and Ahafo Regions. RLF works to ensure that the living standards of the deprived are transformed and improved through advocacy and capacity building. This is done by strengthening the capacity of people and partner organisations, as well as advocacy for sustainable development, to ensure that people and communities can drive their own development.

The rationale behind RLF’s mission and objectives is to innovate sustainable strategies that drive sustainable income at domestic or local levels, in order to fuel and

facilitate the development agenda. By considering the dwindling sources of donor support, it has become imperative to diversify RLF’s sources of funding to identify local partners to ensure sustainable and all-inclusive support in the promotion of education in the community.



Photo from Resource Link Foundation





Photo from Resource Link Foundation

ISSUES JUSTIFICATION

In 2008, RLF observed the performance of schools in the Basic Education Certificate Examination results at Junior High School communities (GES Reports 2001 – 2007); school community performance rate was not at its best.

There was enough evidence from a survey taken by RLF-Ghana which indicated that most pupils and students were not able to comprehend or understand the questions due to pupils' inability to read. Having realised that their inabilities to read and learn effectively depended on availability of reading materials, strengthening of supervision and weak parental controls among others, necessary steps were taken to bring stakeholders onboard.

To address this challenge by improving examination results, the participation of RLF was seen as timely and critical, relying on a multistakeholder collaborative approach. Having realised that multistakeholder collaboration is imperative, RLF had supported the

Wenchi, Tain and Banda districts to improve academic performances by providing school logistics such as 16,000 exercise books per academic year, library/reading books, dictionaries, ICT books, and 12,000 copies of My First Copy books 1 – 6 per year, pencils, desks and chairs, water facilities like rain water harvesting, mechanised boreholes, toilet facilities, as well as school management engagement sessions.

At 10 years (2008 – 2018), based on the 2017 data analysis of the Ghana Education Service, basic education examination results in Banda and Wenchi school communities improved. However, more efforts were needed since Banda and Wenchi community schools' performance in the basic education examination and senior secondary results in the West Africa examinations were still lagging behind other schools in the districts.

To showcase the impact of the efforts over the years (10th anniversary), the first reading festival was organised to demonstrate achievements that have been made in the schools, identify the gaps and advocate for an all-encompassing approach to address the educational challenges. It was therefore necessary to mobilise resources to organise the event. It was also realised that stakeholders' participation in supporting children's education was low, leading to weak foundations, poor examination results, school dropouts and termination of educational careers at early stages; therefore, needing solutions from all stakeholders.

PROJECT INITIATION

In 2018, RLF- Ghana, as partner of Resource Link Foundation in Netherlands participated in the Change the Game Academy Programme organised by the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI), in collaboration with the Wilde Ganzen Foundation. This training focused on Local Fundraising. RLF's participation in this training enabled the organisation to enhance its capacities in local fundraising, resource mobilisation through collaboration and partnership for sustainable development.

Three staff of RLF Ghana participated in this training. They organised a step down training for two staff. This enabled the five-member fundraising team of RLF-Ghana to have the required technical skills and knowledge to mobilise resources locally (in Ghana).

The active and influential fundraising team with RLF's staff redefined roles and responsibilities in line with the purpose of the events. The team was taken through orientation by RLF's staff who had acquired some level of fundraising techniques and skills. The fundraising team profiled indigenous donors including the local government (District Assembly, Ghana Education Service, etc), individuals (youth volunteers, community leaders and queen mothers with advocacy and leadership traits and skills) and corporate institutions (Vodafone Ghana, BiBlionef Ghana), to support the projects at various levels.

The identified stakeholders or indigenous partners/ collaborators were targeted on specific needs for RLF's 10th Anniversary to showcase the organisation's impact through the reading festival. This event was designed to showcase the achievements to date and, motivate stakeholders to promote reading and improve academic performance of schools at BECE levels.

This domestic fundraising concept started in January 2018. In six months, the team was able to work with key stakeholders to accept the agenda as multistakeholder, mobilised resources locally to improve the performance of the schools. To make the team work effectively, active communication strategies were used. Effective



Photo from Resource Link Foundation

communication helped to attract partners and collaborators or likeminded volunteers to support in the mobilisation of resources.

PARTNER ANALYSIS STRATEGIES AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

For the fundraising intervention to succeed, best practices of the RLF served as a roadmap for the team. The fundraising team made a donor-partner search to identify likeminded partners and policy-related organisations to attend some events like the reading festival and other education improvement projects like water and sanitation.

Networking efforts of the team established relationships (formal and informal) with local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and representatives from the government and community groups. Also, corporate organisations like the Vodafone Ghana, etc had the zeal and enthusiasm to support. Furthermore, indigenous partners like traditional authorities (gave financial and moral support), Ghana Education Service (mobilisation and technical), teachers and parents (mobilisation), WACSI (technical support), Resource Link Foundation (technical and material support), Vodafone Ghana Limited (material support), etc.

The team collectively developed and reviewed an action plan. Individuals among the team were known and identified with special skills and expertise to engage partners for support. The team also conducted research on potential local collaborators and partners as well as defined a Thank You plan/package post-event.

Both face-to-face, remote contacts, concept notes and proposals with letters were sent out to the identified partners like Biblionef Ghana, Pen and Paper Foundation among others. Even though RLF did not receive donations from all partners, about 80% of resources targeted were received from partners for the event.

The 10th Anniversary and reading festival was colourfully attended by traditional authorities, parents and teachers, school children, Ghana Education Service, Members of Parliament, Telecoms like Vodafone Ghana Limited, Biblionef -Ghana Foundation, etc.

Books were donated by Biblionef Ghana foundation, Pen to Paper Foundation, etc.

The donations from Nananom and queen mothers supplemented the payments for lunch and refreshment.

Individual contributions were used for hiring canopies, chairs and decorating the durbar ground with support from the youth voluntary services. The Banda and Wenchi District Assemblies as well as the Members of Parliament's donations and presence to deliver speeches added value to the celebrations.

The media also played critical roles including education, entertainment and publicity of the programme to the public.

RESOURCES RAISED OR ACHIEVEMENTS/ CHALLENGES

RLF's fundraising team raised the following

contributions (cash and in-kind):

- 1. Cash Contributions – 3,000 dollars (GHC18,000)
- 2. Non-monetary support/service – 1,034 dollars (GHC6200)

TOTAL – 4034 dollars (GHC 24,204)

Breakdown

- 1. Members of Parliament (GHC 10,000 = USD 2,000)
- 2. Chief Nana Non (GHC 1,000 = USD 200)
- 3. The Banda District Assembly (GHC 4,000 = USD 800)



Photo from Resource Link Foundation





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4. Canopies and chairs, water, venue, etc. donated by community members (worth GHC 800)
5. Communal labor – youth support (valued at GHC 1,000)
6. Banda District Assembly released means of transport with fuel to convey logistics for the reading festival celebrations (valued at GHC 600)
7. Vodafone Ghana (Telecommunication Company) also supported the events with waist bands, 30 t-shirts, 100 keyholders, pens, digital education at the well-decorated exhibition grounds (worth GHC 1800)
8. Biblionef Book donations for the celebration of the Reading Festival in Banda and Wenchi Districts – Ghana in May 2018 (GHC 2000)
9. Donation of 100 Advocacy messages, Pens, Refreshment of the Two districts 25 participatory schools for the 10th Anniversary celebration – By Resource Link Foundation- Netherlands and Ghana (valued GHC 10,000) with delegation of Partner Member organization -RLF- Netherlands.

The event educated the public on the relevance of reading as a tool for education and life-long learning. These contributions attracted like-minded organisations

to support the school communities, improve their performances, network among key stakeholders and know the interest of collaborators for future interventions. Talents and skills were discovered by school pupils, which served as motivation for others. Awards to teachers and pupils, as well as citations were very motivational in promoting reading and for stakeholders supporting education, etc.

Challenges

Despite the mentioned donations, the team was not able to achieve all that was planned.

Some of the trained staff in local fundraising had moved to other organisations, hence, RLF faced personnel deficits.

The difficulty to attract initial resources and logistics was faced and RLF had to motivate team members to invest their time and energy on pro bono basis. The theme for the occasion was very attractive and motivational and therefore as a sense of encouragements to motivate the fundraising team.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Resource mobilisation is the responsibility of all with credibility. RLF's website and previous projects contributed a lot in attracting the attention of partners to donate to the event. The recognition of individual roles and with special references motivated the team and key sector units to contribute effectively. The involvement of stakeholders in planning of events created a sense of ownership and sustainability. Collaborative work was also seen as critical in resource mobilisation. Enhancing visibility and making use of social media platforms, information, education and communication materials, networking in formal and informal associations, learning and sharing of information, were some of the best practices that attracted the attention of partners to support the event. In the wake of donor fatigue, indigenous or local resource mobilisation is critical for supporting development projects to ensure ownership and sustainability.

Document your Local Philanthropy Practice: What's your Story?

The West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) is inviting individuals, organisations, associations and groups from across Africa to submit stories or cases of existing community or local philanthropy models or practices they are engaged in.

The overall goal of this call is to identify, document and disseminate information on existing innovative, indigenous practices and or models of philanthropy or giving in Africa. It further seeks to explore, where possible, how these philanthropic approaches, practices and models interact with other existing practices within the African philanthropy ecosystem.

For more information, click here: <https://bit.ly/3CfuMeZ>

For enquiries, write to research@wacsi.org

NB: Submissions made will be done for the sole purpose of documenting indigenous praxis on local philanthropy and are therefore not subject to attracting any financial benefits.

Submissions are accepted all year round and will be reviewed and published on WACSI's website in close collaboration with authors.



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