



**2023-2024**

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Supporting community-led  
sustainable development.**

[www.engageglobally.org](http://www.engageglobally.org)



# OUR VISION:

We envision a world in which communities have the educational, economic, and environmental resources they need to develop equitably and sustainably.




# OUR MISSION:

Engage Globally enables community-led sustainable development by engaging local partners in education, job training, small business development, food security, women's empowerment, and environmental conservation.

# CORE VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES:



**Empowering communities to choose, design, and implement programs to pursue their sustainable development goals.**




**Amplifying voices of people and communities who live on the frontlines of under-development, food insecurity, climate change, and declining biodiversity.**



**Promoting equality of opportunity, equitable sharing of resources, and inclusive diversity throughout all of our work.**



**Pursuing the well-being of both people and nature.**



**Engaging our supporters, partners, program participants, and broader communities in mutual learning and collaborative action towards sustainable development.**



**Emphasizing education, youth empowerment, gender equity, and environmental conservation as core drivers of global progress.**

# OUR APPROACH

## COMMUNITY-LED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Engaging in long-term partnerships with local communities, Engage Globally provides resources and builds capacity to ensure that programs are impactful, sustainable, equitable, and community-driven.



Many well-meaning international development efforts face challenges because funding is short-term and projects are designed to address a single issue or need. Engage Globally employs a different development approach, one that builds on the strengths of our community partners and relies on their knowledge and experience to set priorities, shape project designs, and implement programming.

We also emphasize long-term partnerships to address multi-sectoral and intersectional goals. We understand that one cannot just construct a school, drill a well, or plant a garden and then expect to end poverty or achieve community transformation. Instead, effective development requires community leadership and resources for programs that provide paths to educational attainment and economic self-sufficiency for everyone. Working with communities on the frontlines of climate change and environmental degradation we also realize that to be resilient, programs must also be environmentally sustainable.

Finally, we believe that international development depends on building globally connected communities who listen to each other, learn together, and collaborate to collectively pursue sustainable development.



# OUR 2023-2024 STRATEGIC SUMMARY



## Goal 1: Enhance educational quality provided by our community learning centers and increase the number of children attending school.



**The Challenge:** Primary schools, in the area of rural Northern Ghana where we work, can be too far away for children to reach, understaffed, overcrowded, and lacking in resources. In some of the region's schools, children are told to sit on the ground with no teacher or materials. Thus, many children never start school or attend school rarely.

### Our plans:

- Continue to operate our three community learning centers for children ages four to ten in pre-K to second grade.
- Provide regular teacher and staff training on the place-based cultural curriculum, learning through hands-on experiences and play, and environmental education.
- Increase teacher support by providing more educational resources, higher salaries to keep pace with changes in cost of living, transportation options, and assistant teachers for larger classrooms.
- Enhance and create learning opportunities such as outdoor learning in gardens, art and culture classes, football (soccer), and school libraries.
- Upgrade our oldest school to include more classrooms and a kitchen.
- Construct and open a new learning center in a village without a primary school.
- Identify funding sources to ensure consistent serving of high nutrition school lunches and access to clean water.

## Goal 2: Expand long-term educational and economic opportunities for students who complete our community-learning centers.



**The Challenge:** There are no junior high schools within walking distance of our partner communities in rural Ghana and very few children are able to attend school beyond sixth grade. Though school is free in Ghana, required testing, uniforms, supply purchase and other 'hidden fees' can cost \$150 a year, over half of the annual incomes of families in our partner communities. High school entrance exams are rigorous and most students must board to attend.

### **Our plans:**

- Continue to operate our youth education program, placing students in private schools within biking distance of our partner villages.
- Interview and collect feedback from youth participants to identify areas for program improvement.
- Provide English language tutoring to assist with high school entrance exams.
- Promote community building, health education, and youth mentoring among participants in the program.
- Identify new partner private schools for enrollment of larger numbers of students long-term.
- Expand opportunities to transition between youth education and vocational training programs to enable participants to pursue paths to employment after concluding their formal educations.



## Goal 3: Expand vocational training and small business development



**The Challenge:** Formal employment in Ghana's rural north is estimated to be less than 5%. Nearly all residents in our partner communities are subsistence farmers, who earn little to no cash income. Farmers are also increasingly unable to grow enough food due to climate change and soil degradation. Food insecurity is rising, contributing to rising poverty and inequality.

Low-paid employment also leads to young people migrating to urban centers, which can be very risky, especially for girls. Limited economic choices also contribute to early marriage and child birth for many young women.

### Our plans:

- Interview and collect feedback from all vocational trainees to identify areas for program improvement and business opportunities.
- Identify new small business partners who can provide quality training.
- Assist recent graduates with opening small businesses and becoming trainers of new students.
- Support existing small businesses to ensure their continued operation.
- Improve project management including application processes, documentation, monitoring, evaluation, and learning.
- Expand training types to expand job choices for participants.
- Pursue funding to create a vocational training community school.



## Goal 4: Support women farmers and pursue paths to food security



**The Challenge:** Women have limited opportunity to grow their own food as they lack land rights and have many daily responsibilities including water and wood collection, care for family farms, food preparation, and child care. When women have their own land and time-saving agricultural inputs, they are typically successful farmers whose harvests or income from market sales is spent on their children.

### **Our plans:**

- Continue to increase enrollment in our women's agriculture program, adding women from a new village partner each year.
- Seek funding to purchase farming equipment that would significantly increase yields, including king motos for transporting harvest and a tractor for the communities to share.
- Further build on the local knowledge of the women's group to share stories of women farmers and challenges they face living in frontline communities.
- Enhance opportunities by offering classes in literacy, sales, and health.
- Identify funding sources to purchase nutritious foods for our school lunch program from the local farmers.
- Improve school garden harvests through expansion of rainwater catchment systems and, in the future, purchase of additional land.

## Goal 5: Grow and innovate our environmental education programs



**The Challenge:** Environmental education is rare in rural, global communities. This is especially true in frontline communities who are most impacted by climate change, water shortages, soil degradation, and biodiversity decline. Opportunities for girls and women to pursue environmental careers are also limited. Yet, rural youth and women are essential to addressing our local and global environmental challenges.

### **Our plans:**

- Continue to provide environmental education curriculum for our community learning centers and provide additional teacher training.
- Expand our environmental education collaboration with the Children's Eternal Rainforest, our community partner in Monteverde, Costa Rica through increased funding and creative youth story-telling projects.
- Share environmental experiences of our frontline community partners with our supporters and online.
- Identify youth volunteers and interns, in the U.S., to support our environmental education and conservation programs.



**AS AN ORGANIZATION, WE PLAN TO PURSUE THESE GOALS AND CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE BY:**



- 1. Engaging more effectively with our community including our board, volunteers, interns, supporters, and online followers.**
- 2. Improving our ability to share the voices, stories, and experiences of our partners through photography, video, communications, and events.**
- 3. Continuing to ensure that our projects are designed and implemented locally by our community partners and that decision-making is participatory and inclusive.**
- 4. Enhancing the organizational capacity of Engage Globally and our ability to support our partner community-based organizations.**
- 5. Growing and diversifying our sources of funding to enhance our operations and achieve our mission.**



# OUR JOURNEY

Our core strategies were developed after interviewing participants in all our programs and reflecting on their priorities and identified needs. Other community stakeholders providing input included: staff in our partner organizations, traditional leaders, the women's group, and teachers in all of the programs.

Within Engage Globally, our board strategic planning committee drafted our operational and strategic plans. Consultations with the Board of Directors, Advisory Board, interns, and long-term supporters strengthened this process.

This was an initial effort by our small, but growing, non-profit organization. We look forward to engaging in a longer and more thorough participatory process to develop strategies for 2025-2030.

Special thanks to our board strategic planning committee and our interns for their support of this effort. All photos in this document were taken by local staff in our partner organizations, Capacity Rural International in Ghana and Monteverde Conservation League in Costa Rica, and shared with permission.



# PLEASE JOIN US!

Our journey continues with your help. We hope you will join us in supporting programs that enable people, communities, and nature to sustainably develop.

For more information, to join our community, and to help us achieve our goals, please visit our website <https://www.engageglobally.org/> or email us at [engage@engageglobally.org](mailto:engage@engageglobally.org)

Click the logos below to follow us on social media.

