



**Orphan Relief and Rescue
Annual Programs Report
September 2020 – August 2021**

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Benin

Summary:

The program year of 2020/21 in Benin was managed by our team of four anti-trafficking staff members. Oversight and direction were provided by Rebecca Pratt, Orphan Relief and Rescue President.

The numerous anti-trafficking projects outlined as: Intervention, Rescue, Restoration, and Empowerment continue to grow and thrive with 1252 direct beneficiaries. This number has almost doubled since last year.

The partnership with the Director of Safe Home for Children continues to be mutually beneficial.

Because of COVID 19 in Benin, we continued to have challenges with lack of food and work. All along we have kept our feeding programs going to ensure our children would not starve during this crisis. Most of the children on our program would not have eaten had we not continued to provide food for them. Most kids on our feeding and school program are ones who were recently intercepted from becoming trafficked. Therefore, not having food, these children would have become at risk to be sold again. We could not allow that to happen.

Another major challenge that villagers faced this year was a drought that had not been seen for over a decade. Every caretaker that relied on farming to provide for their families lost most of their crops. Our team was regularly giving us dire reports from the field.

We intercepted 26 more children this year who would have been sold into slavery had we not put them into our school and feeding program. In every program we have significantly increased how many children and adults we served this year.

Project	Number Served Sept 2019-Aug 2020	Number Served Sept 2020-Aug 2021
Intervention: anti-trafficking feeding and school program	250	276
Rescue: connected to safe homes and foster care	105	102
Restoration: came back from slavery and now living in villages on apprenticeships	6	39
Empowerment: Micro Finance Savings and Loan Program	276	799
Total	637	1216

Anti-Trafficking Initiative (ATI):

Orphan Relief and Rescue's strategy is comprehensive and addresses the many aspects driving child exploitation and trafficking. It is imperative to realize the complexities of the issue in Benin. There are two key elements that create a supply-driven environment. The first, and most prominent, is the extreme poverty in the region. The second is a devaluation of life, especially in members of society that do not contribute to the aggregate good. These elements create abundant supply for traffickers, which keeps the overall costs of purchasing a child low and often times free. Traffickers are able to find enough people who are willing to agree to these terms, mainly because the women/families are unable to provide food, clothes, or education for their children.

Without addressing poverty, and its causes, as well as the value of life, there will be no real change. Beyond the goal of ending trafficking in the region, the Anti-Trafficking Initiative also works to bring children who have already been sold, or given away, back to a safe living situation. **The four elements of ATI are, intervention, rescue, restoration, and empowerment.**

**Intervention:**

The Intervention Project aims to remove the barriers that guardians face in keeping their children home. Through providing food and the ability to pursue an education, guardians have little motivation to sell their children. The Intervention Program depends on collaboration with local leaders, so that ATI team members can identify children at a high risk of being trafficked and engage intentionally to prevent those children from being sold. This is done through first signing a contract with parents stating that the child will not be sold into slavery, then purchasing a birth certificate (when necessary), enrolling the child in school, providing two meals a day while the child is at school, provision of school related expenses, and follow-up to ensure on-going safety.

To ensure that the children receive food and proper schooling, ORR employs 6 cooks for food preparation and 4 drivers for distribution. The ATI Director facilitates purchasing school uniforms, shoes, and supplies for all the children in the program. The team also regularly visit the schools to ensure proper care is given to the children, food is properly distributed, and that education is taking place.

We just recently added one team member to our anti-trafficking staff and an assistant due to the number of children we have on our programs now.

Rescue:

Orphan Relief and Rescue works diligently to identify and bring back children who have been sold into a life of slavery. When possible, these children are placed with their families and are re-enrolled in school and placed in our Intervention Project. However, for many of these children there are no safe options, either their family members have died, or the child is at risk of being sold again. In these instances, the child is placed in foster care or placed in the ORR safe-home. If the child is unable to attend school, because of their age or situation, they are placed in an apprenticeship program.

Safe-home

ORR operates a small safe-home apartment to provide a safe and clean home for young girls who had no place to return after being freed from slavery. The safe-home is in its sixth year of operation. We currently have 3 girls in this home, and due to COVID 19 this year, we have not brought in new girls to this home this year.

Orphanage Safe Home for Children

This home remains a partner in the pursuit of rescuing children. Children in the home receive safe living conditions, three meals a day, education, and psychological care. There are numerous extracurricular projects at the home, including a computer school, hotelerie school, animal husbandry, and sports. There is a total of 61 children at this home.

We also have young adults who have aged out of this orphanage safe home who were rescued from very abusive situations who we provide finances for apprenticeships, trade schools, and University. We have 19 young adults currently on this program, and 20 children who have graduated from their training and now have contracts or full-time jobs.

Foster Care

To date, three children are in foster care. The home provides safe and clean housing for children who have been rescued from trafficking and can no longer live with their parents because of safety conditions, parent(s) have died, or the parent(s) lives far away. Children are currently being fostered by the Country Director and his wife.

Number of Children in trade school, Apprenticeship or University programs who were raised in Orphanage Safe Home	Number of Children at Orphanage Safe Home	Number of children at Girls Safe Home and foster homes	Number of girls in Restoration Program who were rescued out of slavery living in villages overseen by our anti-trafficking staff	Young adults raised in Orphanage Safe Home, graduated from the program, and have contracts or full-time jobs	Young adults who have graduated from our Restoration Program and have contracts or full-time jobs	Total
19	61	6	35	20	9	150

Restoration:

Many of the children who have come back from slavery are too old to begin or return to school. Without an education, there is little hope for a future. With this in mind, our Micro Finance Savings and Loan Program participants are training 35 girls as apprentices in their various businesses. ORR oversees the safety and monitoring of these apprenticeships. 9 girls have graduated from their apprenticeships and have their own businesses.

Empowerment:

The Empowerment Project directly addresses the issue of poverty. By providing community members with the opportunity to improve their situation through micro-loans, basic business training, and an introduction to the savings and loans program. One of the primary challenges of rural Benin is the lack of access to invest in small businesses. Access to capital provides an external solution while combatting the dangers of dependency. While these small loans will not likely pull someone out of poverty, it does provide enough to sustain the necessities of life and allow parents to provide for their children and not sell them into slavery. This year these programs have been duplicated by team members who have started their own savings and loan groups. **We now have a total of 799 men and women in this program. This is the most we have ever had on this program.** 234 people are on 3 original groups, and 565 people are attending other groups being run and led by members of the original group with the oversight of our ORR staff members.



We are seeing members of the Micro Finance Savings and Loan Program helping others as they have been helped. One woman has 28 apprentices working with her as she is teaching them a trade. These are young girls who were at the highest risk to be trafficked.

Microfinance Recipients:

We have 40 members on the micro finance original loan program. An average loan is 5,000 CFA which is equal to \$8.92. We have a 98 % pay back rate

Saving and Loans Recipients:

We have 799 members on the savings and loan program. These loans are between 15,000 – 20,000 CFA which equals \$27.27 to \$36.36.



Liberia

Summary:

The program year of 2020/21 was managed by Rebecca Pratt. September 2020 to August 2021. December 1st, 2020 ORR joined in a partnership with World Hope International in Liberia to help run the Break the Silence program and to oversee the Anti-trafficking and Abuse Hotline ORR is funding in the Ministry of Labor's office. World Hope receives a grant each month from

ORR to run the program and employ our BTS Coordinators. This contract will resume in October or November 2021.

From July to October 2021 BTS Coordinators are making sure all children and young adults on our Greater Opportunity program are enrolled and have what they need to succeed in school.

We closed down our main ORR office in Liberia on December 1st, 2020. We are now working in partnerships with other organizations in Liberia to accomplish our programs. For our Greater Opportunity program, we contract former employees to help us distribute school funds and supplies as needed.

The pandemic brought on immediate hunger and educational challenges for our Liberian friends. We were very thankful for a grant given by God's Kids International to feed and school 39 children at the Danny Feeney Orphanage as well as other children on our program in foster home situations. This was a miraculous gift.

Committee Partnerships:

Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Task Force

Chair: Ministry of Labor

Key Members: US Embassy Political Officer, LNP, Liberia Immigration Service, DCI-Liberia, Ministry of Gender, IDLO

Synopsis: The TIP task force meets once a month to discuss cases, and updates on what is the latest trafficking reports in Liberia. Through efforts that our partnering organization called World Hope International is doing through the ORR anti trafficking grant, and efforts of our Break the Silence Program, we are able to continue to help curb trafficking in Liberia and continue to have an influence in these meetings.

Child Protection Network:

Chair: Ministry of Gender

Key Members: US Embassy Political Officer

Synopsis: The CPN meets monthly to discuss child protection issues in Liberia, the committee is rather disorganized and doesn't achieve much. Not many meetings have been held since COVID-19 came in March of 2020. When they do meet, World Hope International attends these meetings on our behalf.

Break the Silence (BTS):

Prevention: The Flipchart and Awareness

ORR, in partnership with World Hope International, are using a child friendly tool (a flipchart) to teach awareness, prevention education, and aftercare training. With this flipchart, we raise children's awareness of their personal rights, as well as informing them about the Anti-

trafficking and Abuse Hotline number should they find themselves vulnerable to trafficking and/or exploitation. The flipchart also acts as a deterrent to would be perpetrators.

Our Liberian staff, were integrated as employees with World Hope International from December 1st, 2020 to June 30th, 2021, and will resume again in October or November of 2021 to continue these flip chart teachings and trainings in schools and orphanages. This is funded through a grant that ORR sends World Hope each month.

Projected Number of children reached	Actual number of children reached
10,000	10,082



Because of the Break the Silence program, children are more vocal about exploitation and abuse. Our staff shares story after story of children who no longer feel like victims. After hearing our flipchart teaching in school, children often share stories of how thankful they are to learn from this teaching and be able to stand up for themselves when abused or exploited.

We now have this flip chart translated into French, so we will be implementing this training with children on our programs in Benin sometime in 2022.

Total Implementations in schools --- 76

Flip books printed ---- 60 pics

Bumper stickers ----- 3000 distributed

Awareness Flyers ----- 2000 distributed

Training Workshops:

ORR's training workshops inform and improve the skills of caregivers and/or those working with vulnerable children. It gives the trainees a practical tool to teach children about their value, rights, the dangers of sexual abuse and trafficking, and a means to get help. The partners trained in these workshops will continue to help us grow the number of implementations and children reached with the Flipchart.

Two Organizations attending refresher training, Strive Foundation and For Every Girl. Bridge and Rising Academies, who previously took our training, now have their own trainers. They will train their teachers and supervisors on their own with our training materials.

In March 2021 the US Embassy grant for \$23,860 was officially completed. The implementation of this grant took us an extra year to complete due to the pandemic. The US Embassy agreed to extend these grant terms through our partnership with World Hope. We successfully were able to reach most of our goals with this grant in spite of the COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings and school shutdowns.

Our grant goals were as follows: design and print the flip chart, do 4 trainings with implementors (including government officials and police officers), promote the hotline through radio ads, and distribute \$6,000 worth of flip charts to the trainers.

We did all the above goals except for training police officers.

Assistance: The Hotline

The hotline is funded and overseen by World Hope International, but hosted and operated by the Ministry of Labor's office. World Hope International took over this oversight December 1st, 2020. This hotline serves two significant roles. First, it is the only government-run anti-trafficking hotline in the nation and is a critical portion of the government's strategic roadmap to combat human trafficking. Second, the hotline provides abused victims with an outlet to get help from trained social workers and government officials. This hotline has continued to stay up and running even through the pandemic.

Radio spots (1minute spots)	# of calls to hotline Jan 2020 to Aug 2021	Total case referrals from calls Jan 2020 to Aug 2021
1095	1429	7

From Jan 2020 to Aug 2021

Total calls received.....1,429
Conversational calls.....1,111
Non conversational calls...311
Alleged Trafficking in Person calls... 7

Rape calls0
Other Abuse calls0

All the alleged seven Trafficking in person cases were forwarded to the Liberian National Police and currently one of those cases were forwarded to court for prosecution. The one case going to court involves 22 children that were trafficked from the interior to the city.

Every caller to the hotline that reports a serious case of rape, trafficking or abuse has heard about the hotline through the radio jingles that are played weekly and through the flip chart training where the hotline number is shared.

Greater Opportunity Project

The Greater Opportunity Project provides education and trade school assistance for children from the partner orphanages of Frances Gaskins, Danny Feeney, Macdella Cooper, and the Rock of Divine. The children on this program, who would not have access to education unless we help them, are given an opportunity to receive a quality education through the provision of tuition costs and school supplies.

MacDella Boarding School was closed down in December 2019. 7 children who came from this school, were reunified with relatives or put into foster care if relatives were abusive. These children remain on our Greater Opportunity Program.

University students in the program received tuition costs, school supplies, mentorship, housing, a food stipend, and transport costs.

Jr. and Sr. High School Assistance and Mentorship:

ORR provides school fees, school supplies, uniforms, and healthcare costs for 7 **qualified children. 4 kids** are from Macdella Copper school, now in foster care, and 3 children from former ORR staff members.

Through God's Kid's International's grant, 31 kids in the Danny Feeney Children's home were funded in school and fed this last school year.



University School Assistance:

Provision of housing expenses, food, school supplies (including laptop computer and cell phone), tuition, testing fees, and healthcare for **2 University students**. One will graduate from nursing school by this coming November 2021.

Provisions and Special Projects

- Monthly medical provisions were given to children still on our program.
- Monthly school and food provisions for a partner orphanage, Danny Feeney, were provided by God's Kids International through the entire school year (September 2020 to June 2021).
- ORR staff members were given severance packages in November of 2020 to those who will no longer be working for ORR.