

Helen Denyer- Global Giving UK, Ghana, Summer 2013

I spent the entire summer from 12th July until 25th September 2013 working as a Project Evaluator for Global Giving UK (www.globalgiving.co.uk) in Ghana.

Global Giving is an online fundraising and networking platform for grassroots charities across the globe. This means that on their website there are charities from all over the world, working in all areas, from education and health to animal protection and the environment. To get onto the site charities have to go through an online application process, which involves an examination of their project material, reference letters, charity certificates, financial statements and budgets. Once they have been approved all charities have to go through a Gateway Challenge, during which they have to raise £2000 from 50 unique donors within a month. If all of this has been completed successfully, charities have a permanent spot on the Global Giving UK site, through which they can create a project description outlining what their charity does, add photos and start collecting donations. On the site charities can update their supporters on their progress. In addition, Global Giving UK provides its project partners with training at least once a month, through the peer learning network calls on a variety of topics, such as how to do local fundraising and they have a platform for online volunteers to help their partner projects from home, called Global Giving Time (<https://globalgiving.sparked.com/signin>). They also spread awareness about their project partners work through their newsletter and social media.

Even though Global Giving UK has a strict vetting process and charities have to renew these documents, e.g. budgets and financial statements every two years, they have in the past not always been able to send people to visit these projects to see how donations are actually being used on the ground and if they are used in the most effective way possible. This was my role for the summer. I visited eight Global Giving UK Partner Projects across Ghana and spent a week with each of the charities.

During this week I focused on examining these areas of the charities work: Governance and Accountability, Finance and Administration, Use of technology, Communications, Innovation and Flexibility, Networking and Collaboration, Development of staff and volunteers, Inclusion and Access, Delivery and Impact.

This involved speaking to all staff members and volunteers, meeting the beneficiaries, observing the running of the projects and speaking to other members of the community. I spent a lot of my time out in the field, but also in the respective offices, going over budgets and financial statements and examining if the donations were spent correctly. I was also investigating if I could see where the money has gone and if it has helped those outlined on their project description on the Global Giving UK site. At the end of my one week visit, I then wrote up an audit report for the project, outlining their strengths and weaknesses and then my ideas for improvements. But I was also trying to help them with social media updates, connecting them with new donors and establishing areas in which they would benefit from Global Giving UK training. I also helped them create a media file, by taking photos and videos of interviews with the beneficiaries and staff, which they can now use for their social media or their website. In addition, I tried to support them in any area I could see that immediate help was needed, such as, creating facebook pages and twitter accounts in order to reach more people, creating an Excel spread sheet for budgeting or organising volunteer placements for international volunteers, who could work with the charity in the future. In addition, my visit hopefully also created a better relationship between Global Giving UK and their partner projects, as it meant that they now had met somebody representing the organisation and could, thus, also ask any questions that were still unanswered.

The most rewarding part of the work I was doing was definitely to meet those that benefit from the donations sent through Global Giving UK. There were so many inspiring stories and it would take an entire book to list them all, but it definitely made me aware of all the good being done around the world!