

CHALLENGING HEIGHTS

SUMMARY OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT ACTIVITIES

Research Activities on Climate Change and Environment:

In 2021, Challenging Heights, in collaboration with Anti-Slavery International and the International Institute for Environment and Development conducted research on the impact of climate change on migration and modern slavery. The report dubbed: “Climate-induced migration and modern slavery – A tool kit for policymakers” had findings indicating that:

- i. Contemporary forms of slavery are often categorised as slavery, slavery-like practices, bonded labour, debt bondage and forced sexual exploitation;
- ii. Climate change and climate-induced migration heighten existing vulnerabilities of slavery;
- iii. Climate-induced displacements are becoming unavoidable;
- iv. Climate change policies increasingly recognise climate-induced migration and displacement as an issue.

Challenging Heights was part of the dissemination of the research report on several global platforms, including the World Bank. Challenging Heights signed a petition for the Chair of COP 26, seeking to draw his attention to the need for the recognition of the impact of climate change on modern slavery. The organization has since received several contacts from like-minded researchers seeking its insight on the issue of climate change and modern slavery especially in the Ghanaian context.

Among the several recommendations to address the nexus between climate change, migration and modern slavery are:

- i. Incorporate slavery into climate and development planning
- ii. Take action on displacement and risks of modern slavery
- iii. Coordinate international efforts based on existing initiatives
- iv. Shape policy interventions based on local research and evidence
- v. Integrate slavery issues in National Determined Contributions (NDC) and ensure climate finance commitments
- vi. Strengthen social safety nets for climate risk management
- vii. Develop skills and create safe migration pathways
- viii. Develop preventive measures and plan to relocate and resettle displaced communities

Challenging Heights has commissioned research activities aimed at exploring the impact of mining on forests in the forest zones, - Yenku Forest and the area around Dunkwa and Assin Fosu - of the Central Region, and the management and utilisation of the aquatic ecosystem. The research is dubbed Challenging Heights’ BlueGreen Project and will be undertaken by two independent research consultants.

Climate Change Activities Implemented

- i. *Tree planting exercise on Green Ghana Day in 2021: The Challenging Heights shelter team planted up to 1000 seedlings at the recovery centre at Gomoa Achiase with the seedlings at different stages of growth. This has helped in tree cover restoration at the Centre.*
- ii. *Radio sensitisation on Nyce FM, 90.7: Green Ghana Day and distribution of seedlings. Challenging Heights through its media wing, Nyce FM, 90.7 supported the Forestry Services Division with airtime on Nyce FM to conduct radio sensitisation. This was able to reach Nyce FM listeners, over 100,000 on causes of deforestation, strategies to combat deforestation and how citizens can partner with the Forest Services Division to receive and plant thousands of seedlings.*
- iii. *National Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa in Forest Zones - In 2009 and 2010, Challenging Heights worked with the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations on the National Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour in Cocoa in Agona West and Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa Districts, forest zones. The project educated residents on strategies to protect children from the worst forms of child labour, how to recover those in severe traumatic conditions and how to protect forest vegetation from over farming.*
- iv. *Support for citizens' protest against Lithium Mining in the Aboakyer Hunting Forests and the Ramsar site: In 2022, Challenging Heights through its affiliate entity, Nyce Media supported a series of community-based and citizens-led protests against the issuance of mining licenses to companies to undertake lithium mining in the Winneba Ramsar site and the Winneba forest, which serves as the hunting grounds for the Aboakyer festival of the Chiefs and people of Winneba. Nyce Media used its platform to give a voice to the community leaders and protesters who granted various interviews on the issue. Following the protest, key state institutions including the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the Minerals Commission came out to clarify that there would be no mining in this enclave.*