



A TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY TO SELF-DISCOVERY AND SUCCESS



Funded by KTI and
implemented by JA Ghana

About the Project

This photo essay project highlights the transformative growth of students who have participated in the Achieve Skills for School Programme in Ghana. The programme equips young people with essential core skills - communication, confidence, managing feelings, reliability, working with others, and goal setting. The programme is run by teachers in sixteen schools in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, managed by Junior Achievement Ghana (JA Ghana), and funded by King's Trust International (KTI) a UK-based charity.

This project, which was undertaken by JA Ghana, focused on examining how the programme has impacted and shaped the lives of students for the better.

In 2024, in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 students from 7 schools, focusing on how the programme has shaped their lives. This project features stories from six students across five schools. The photos and narratives presented authentically reflect the students' experiences, illustrating how the programme has positively influenced their personal and academic journeys.

Programme Lead: Lorretta Domfeh Owusu (JA Ghana)

Text/Story: Lorretta Domfeh Owusu (JA Ghana)

Copy editor: Jane Parker (KTI)

Interviews & Transcriptions: Fiona Sackey (JA Ghana), Pius Oti (JA Ghana), Zeinab Suleman (JA Ghana) & Sheila Ntori (JA Ghana)

Design, Layout & Photography: Gaddiel Mensah Yamoah (Motion West Africa)

Design and Layout Supervisors: Lorretta Domfeh Owusu (JA Ghana) & Jane Parker (KTI)



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From seeking support to inner strength:
Nii



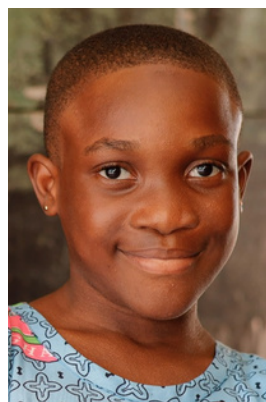
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From seeking support to inner strength: Nii

The Achieve Skill for School programme has been transformative for Nii, a twelve-year-old boy with big dreams of becoming an Architect. He recalls a time not long ago when he quietly prayed for someone, anyone, to help him with his struggles in managing anger and overcoming his fear of public speaking.

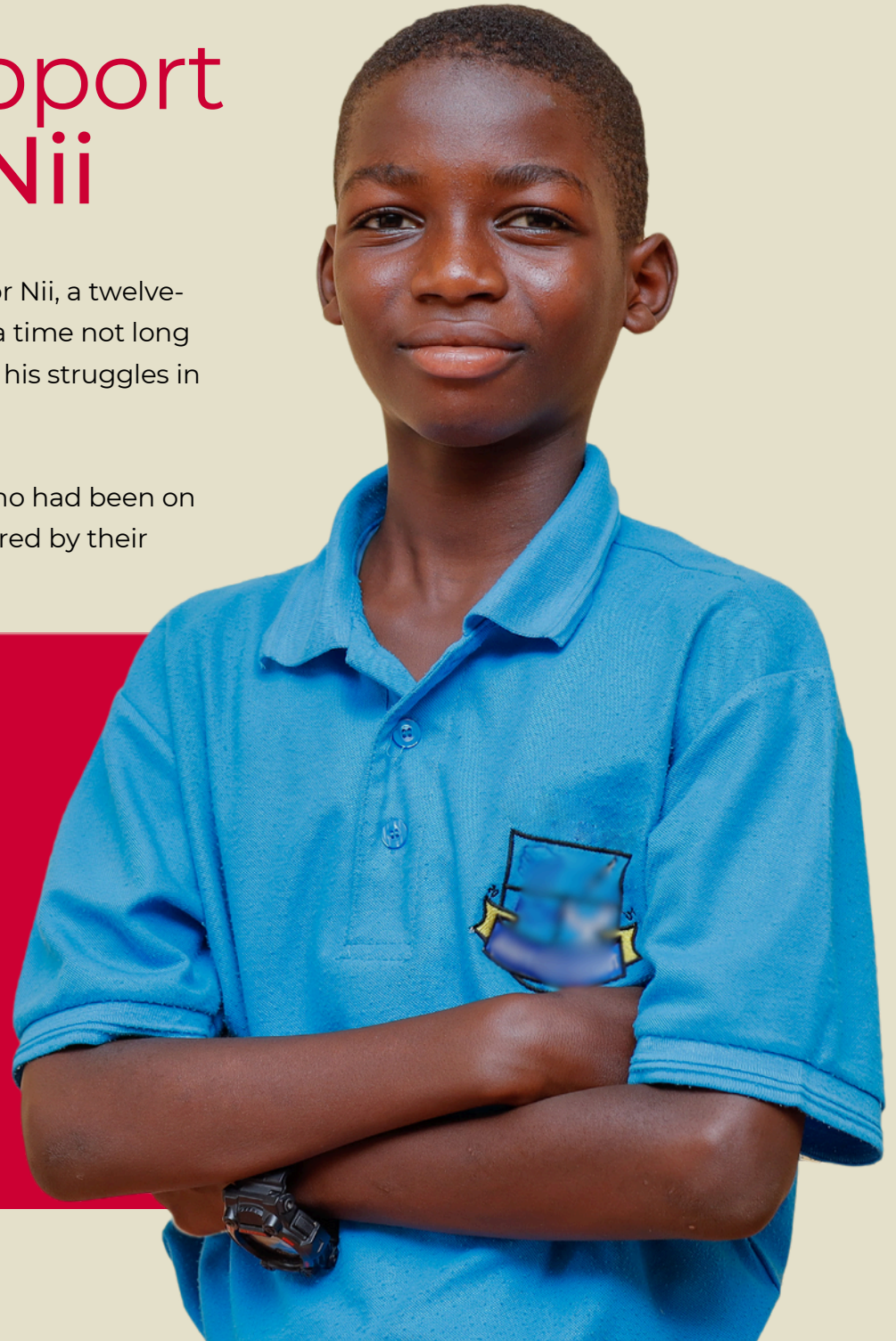
Before joining the programme, Nii had seen how other students who had been on the programme with similar struggles transformed over time. Inspired by their progress, he thought,

“

Maybe I can also change. If Achieve can help them, then it can help me too

So, with a mix of hope and courage, he accepted his teacher's invitation to join the programme.

I hoped someone would help me with these things. I wanted to learn to manage my feelings and speak with confidence. Achieve has done that for me, and I feel so much better now.



In the past, Nii struggled with anger. When someone upset him, his first reaction was often to lash out, even throwing things in frustration. Though he would feel bad afterward, he found it difficult to control himself in the moment. Along with this, his extreme shyness made school a challenge. Though a good student, just the thought of being called on in class filled him with anxiety.

He worried about making mistakes, and the idea of his classmates laughing at him was unbearable. To avoid embarrassment, he often stayed silent, withdrawing into himself.



“

If I had to recite something in front of the class, I would feel so shy. It was really bad. I did not like it at all.

I would worry that I would make mistakes, and people would laugh at me.

So sometimes, I would just keep quiet and not talk. But now, Achieve has taught me to be more confident, to be comfortable with other people around me.



Through the sessions focused on managing emotions, communication, and working with others, Nii has begun to see himself in a new light. With the guidance of the programme advisors and encouragement from his peers, his confidence has grown, and he is learning to stay calm even in difficult moments. These positive changes have extended beyond the classroom, improving his relationships at home as well.





“

My family is really happy about the changes, especially my mom. She always tells me how proud she is. I used to be so quiet at home, but now I talk more with them and share my thoughts. It feels good to be able to do that.



Today, Nii faces the world with a renewed sense of

confidence and self-control



Thanks to Achieve, he's not only managing his feelings better but also finding his voice, one step at a time.





Teacher's Testimonial

Nii is a brilliant student, but initially, his confidence was low. Seeing a bright individual face that challenge was concerning.

One day during class, I decided to address it directly and told him that his lack of confidence was holding him back. However, since joining the Achieve Skills for School programme, Nii has undergone a remarkable transformation. His confidence has grown exponentially, so much that I jokingly told him that now his confidence and energy might be “too much” for me! Beyond this, the programme also helped us uncover another area of growth for Nii, anger management. He has made significant strides in managing his emotions. It’s been incredible to witness his journey of growth.

Clement

Achieve Advisor

From Unsure to Unstoppable: Blessing

Blessing, a 13-year-old student, is deeply grateful to her teacher for recommending her to participate in the Achieve Skills for School programme. Although she initially joined the programme unsure of its purpose, she now values the insights and personal growth she has experienced regarding her behavior and academics.

Reflecting on her journey, she shares,

“

Achieve has made me realise things I never noticed before. For example, the way I speak to others. I used to talk rudely, if it hurt you, that wasn't my concern.

But after Achieve, I understood the impact of my words. I realised that if someone spoke to me the same way, I would not feel happy.



Achieve also helped Blessing identify the root of her struggles in math, which stemmed from her dislike of challenges. She recalls,

“

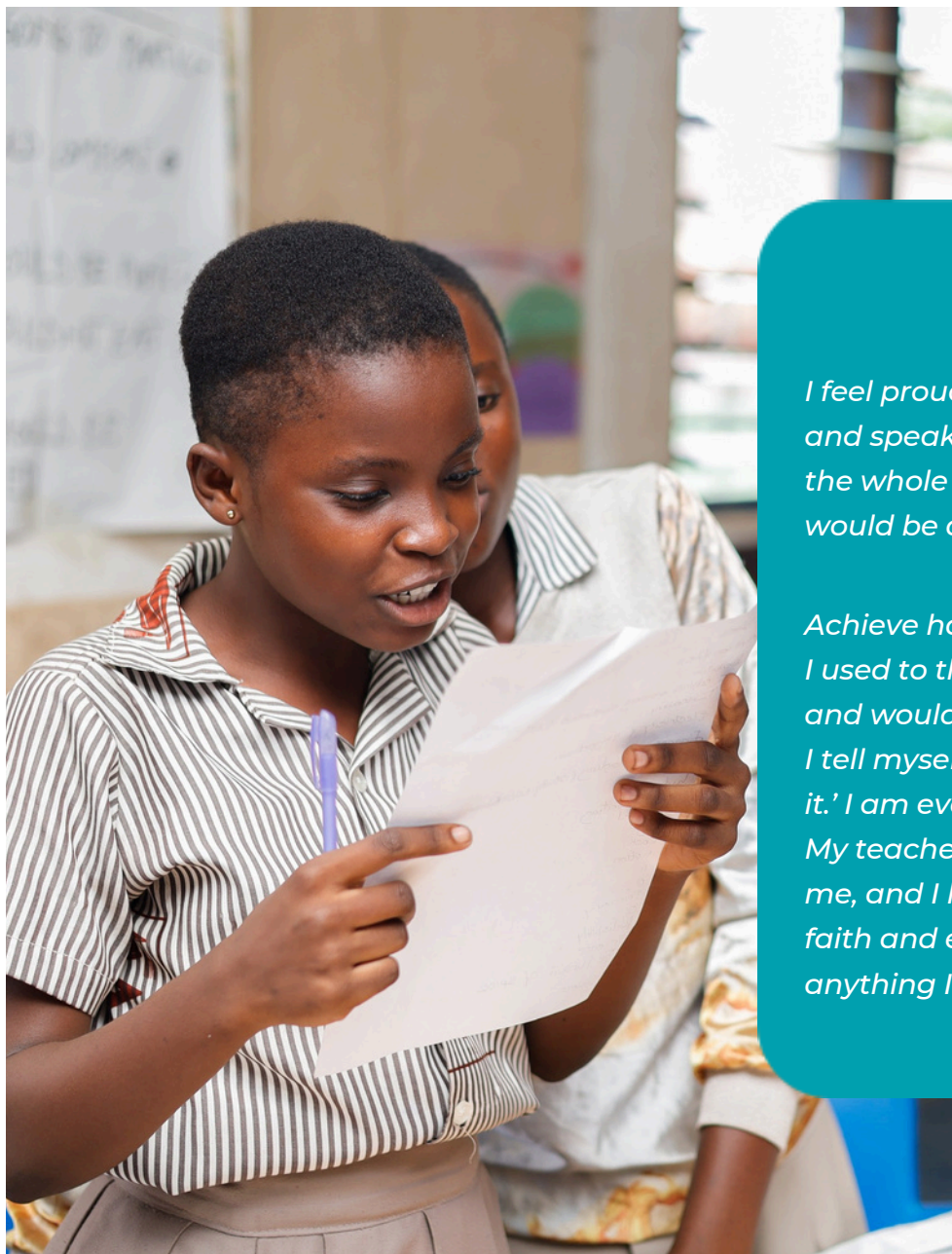
Before, when I would get an exam paper, my first thought was that I would not know the answers, so I should just write anything. But now, Achieve has taught me to look through the questions, think carefully, and see if I can find solutions. I am approaching tests with a new mindset.







Most importantly, Blessing is proud of how her confidence has grown, leading her to discover a passion for creative arts. She now assists her creative arts teacher and takes pride in helping her classmates understand the material.



“

I feel proud that I can contribute and speak in front of my class, even the whole school. I never thought I would be able to do that.

Achieve has really changed me. I used to think I could not do things and would not even try. But now, I tell myself and friends, 'I can do it.' I am even improving in French. My teachers and friends support me, and I have learned that with faith and effort, I can accomplish anything I set my mind to.





Blessing's journey is

evidence of the effectiveness

of the Achieve Skills for School programme in transforming one's outlook on learning and personal growth, through guidance and confidence building.





Teacher's Testimonial

Blessing is someone I observed to be naturally quiet, but there's a side to her that reacts when provoked. While she tends to keep to herself, certain triggers would spark a strong response, almost like retaliation. It was interesting to see this dynamic.

In the past, she sometimes got into fights in class when things did not sit well with her. However, I have noticed a significant change in her behavior recently. Now, even when her friends do something that might upset her, she is more composed and less likely to react impulsively. She has shown remarkable improvement in managing her temper, which is a positive step forward.

Mavis

Achieve Advisor



From Shadows to Spotlight: Iris

When Iris first heard about the experiences of her peers in the Achieve Skill for School programme, she could relate to their struggles. So, when her teacher recommended that she participate, her initial thought was simply,



*He wants me to be someone
great in the future.*

She agreed to join without giving much thought to any personal challenges. As she listened to more testimonials from her friends about the programme's impact, her curiosity grew, and she felt reassured in her decision to participate. Eager to see how Achieve might affect her, she was excited to begin.

Through the sessions, Iris gradually uncovered an array of challenges she had not fully acknowledged before. Topics like confidence and goal-setting highlighted areas where she had been struggling.





“

I was a shy person. When I talked to people, I did not have confidence. I was not brave and always looked down on myself, thinking I could not do things. I also had trouble setting and achieving goals. Before joining Achieve, I struggled with presentations and my math grades were very low.

These challenges weighed heavily on Iris, straining her relationship with her parents and even her desire to continue her education. She remembers feeling dejected:

“

I felt like I did not want to come to school anymore. I thought I will stop school because I was not that good in my studies. Before joining Achieve I used to think that I will not become someone better. My parents always complained that I did not make good grades, so I felt let me stop the school and stop hearing what my parent say.





However, her participation in Achieve marked a turning point. Her mindset and sense of self-worth transformed, and her relationship with her parents improved. Reflecting on the programme's impact, she says,

“

It changed me. Going through the sessions, I realised that I needed to be bold and believe in myself. Now, I come to school with happiness and confidence. I even speak differently with my parents. I used to feel shy and talk like a child around them, but now I speak boldly, like a mature person.





One of Iris's proudest moments came when she confidently solved a math problem on the board in front of her classmates. To their surprise, they exclaimed,

“

Eyy, this is Iris, who we knew could not do math. And now she is solving problems?

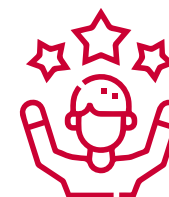
Her friends even came to her for answers and support with their math questions. This newfound respect from her peers is a powerful affirmation of her growth.





Iris's journey showcases how
Achieve has empowered her to

find her
strengths, build
her confidence,



and find a brighter path in her studies and future.



Teacher's Testimonial

Iris struggled with anger issues. This significantly impacted her relationships with others. At times, she may not have even realised how her behavior affected those around her. It became evident during an encounter where several people shared their experiences with us, explaining how she interacted with them. We came to understand that it was a defensive mechanism for her.

However, after going through the Achieve Skills for School programme, her transformation is remarkable. Out of curiosity, I decided to discreetly visit her class and ask her classmates how they perceived her now. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with her peers expressing appreciation for the changes they had noticed in her.

Academically, she was an average student. But now, she is doing well. I teach the science subject, so with my area, she is improving.

Clement
Achieve Advisor



From Zero Scores to Big Goals: Georgina

Georgina, an 11-year-old girl who was once deeply worried about her academics, now beams with confidence and excitement about her future after completing the Achieve Skills for School programme.

Inspired by friends who had participated before, she joined, eager to see if Achieve could help her overcome her struggles. Though she initially felt out of place, she quickly bonded with her peers on the programme and began to feel supported.

Describing her challenges before Achieve, Georgina says,



“

I wasn't good at math. It was very hard for me. Sometimes, even just looking at the numbers would make me feel confused. I did not know how to start or what to do, so I would just sit there. I was really scared of our math teacher. I did not want him to ask me anything because I would feel very nervous.

Sometimes, I scored zero out of thirty on our class tests. It made me feel so bad. My friends would ask how I did, and I would feel too shy to tell them. I would just say, It was not good. And my mom would ask too, and I felt like I was disappointing her.



With mixed emotions,
she hoped Achieve would
be the path to improvement.

“

*I thought maybe if I joined
Achieve, I would get more
confident—maybe I could learn
to be brave and not so scared
of everything. I did not know
exactly how it would help, but
I just had a feeling it could
make me better.*



Georgina knew she needed to improve her math to pursue her dream of becoming a doctor, and she felt Achieve might be her way forward. With the support and encouragement of her advisors and peers, she felt truly seen and cared for, setting her up for personal growth.



“

Achieve has helped me a lot with my confidence, especially with math. Now, I feel like I can try to solve math problems, and I am not so scared of our math teacher. I feel like I can actually become a doctor if I keep working hard.

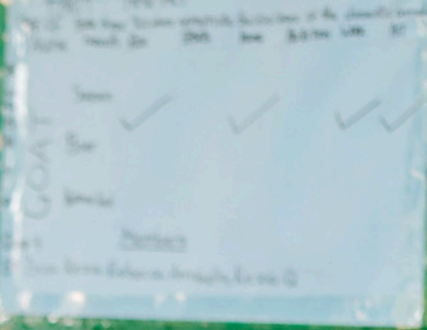
Academically, my goal is to graduate from university with a degree in medicine.

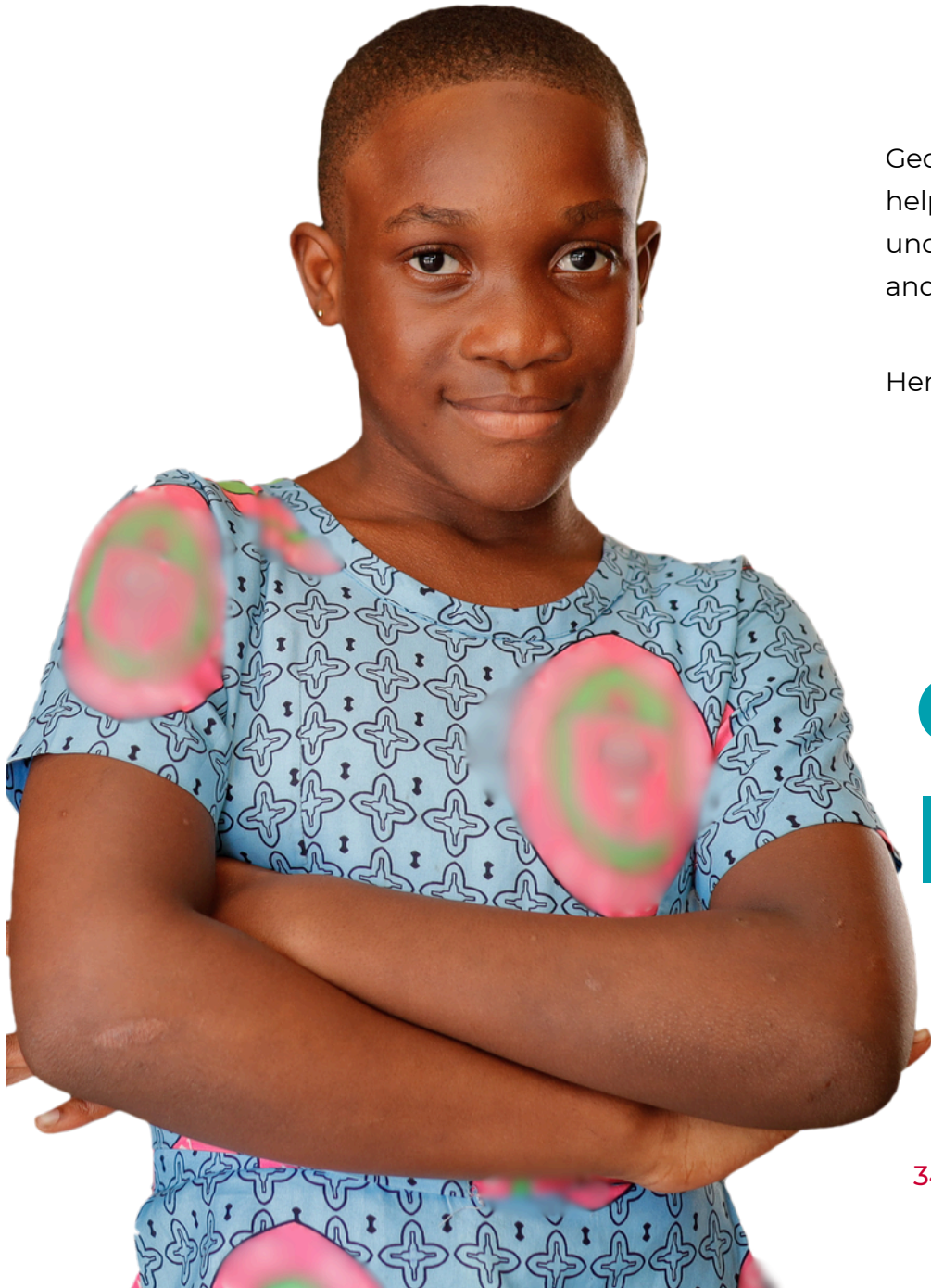
Achieve has made me more confident that I can get there. It made me believe I can actually reach my goal.





Not only has Achieve boosted Georgina's confidence, but it has also helped her recognise her leadership potential. Inspired by her growth, she now plans to run for the position of Nurse Prefect at school, seeing it as an opportunity to develop skills that will support her future aspirations in medicine.





Georgina's story captures the transformative impact of Achieve in helping young students embrace their goals, build self-assurance, uncover hidden strengths, and look toward the future with hope and determination.

Her journey is a testament to how newfound



confidence and leadership skills

can set the stage for achieving even the most ambitious dreams.



Teacher's Testimonial

Georgina is naturally a bit timid. Over time, I have noticed a positive shift in her confidence level. Compared to before, she has become more willing to participate in class. Now, during sessions, she raises her hand to contribute, speaks up, and even shows excitement when we engage in activities or group discussions. Her confidence has improved significantly.

I had the opportunity to mark her end-of-term report for the last term, and I was genuinely impressed by her progress. Her performance has noticeably improved, not just in one area but across multiple subjects. It's encouraging to see these changes, and we are eager to see what this term will bring for her continued growth.

Priscilla

Achieve Advisor



From feeling small to walking tall: Enoch

Enoch's journey with Achieve Skills for School began a year ago when he heard about his friends' positive experiences with the programme. From that moment, he was eager to get involved, hoping it could help him tackle his struggles with spending and self-confidence. Without delay, he reached out to the advisor in charge, only to find out he would have to wait until the next cycle. When he was finally selected, he was excited.

“

*I felt really happy when she selected me.
I was so glad, you know, because I had
been waiting.*



Reflecting on his initial challenges, Enoch shared that he had difficulty controlling his spending of his allowance, and monetary gifts from family. He also felt anxious speaking with people, whether old or his peers.

“

If someone asked me to speak up in front of people, even just a few people, I would start shaking, and my voice would get low. I could not look people in the eyes when I was talking to them. It made me feel small like I was not important.

If you had asked me to talk to you like this before Achieve, I do not think I could do it. I would have been too scared.



Enoch was confident that Achieve would be different from other clubs he had joined. He had heard how supportive and patient the advisors were, how sessions were never rushed, and how people were treated with kindness and understanding

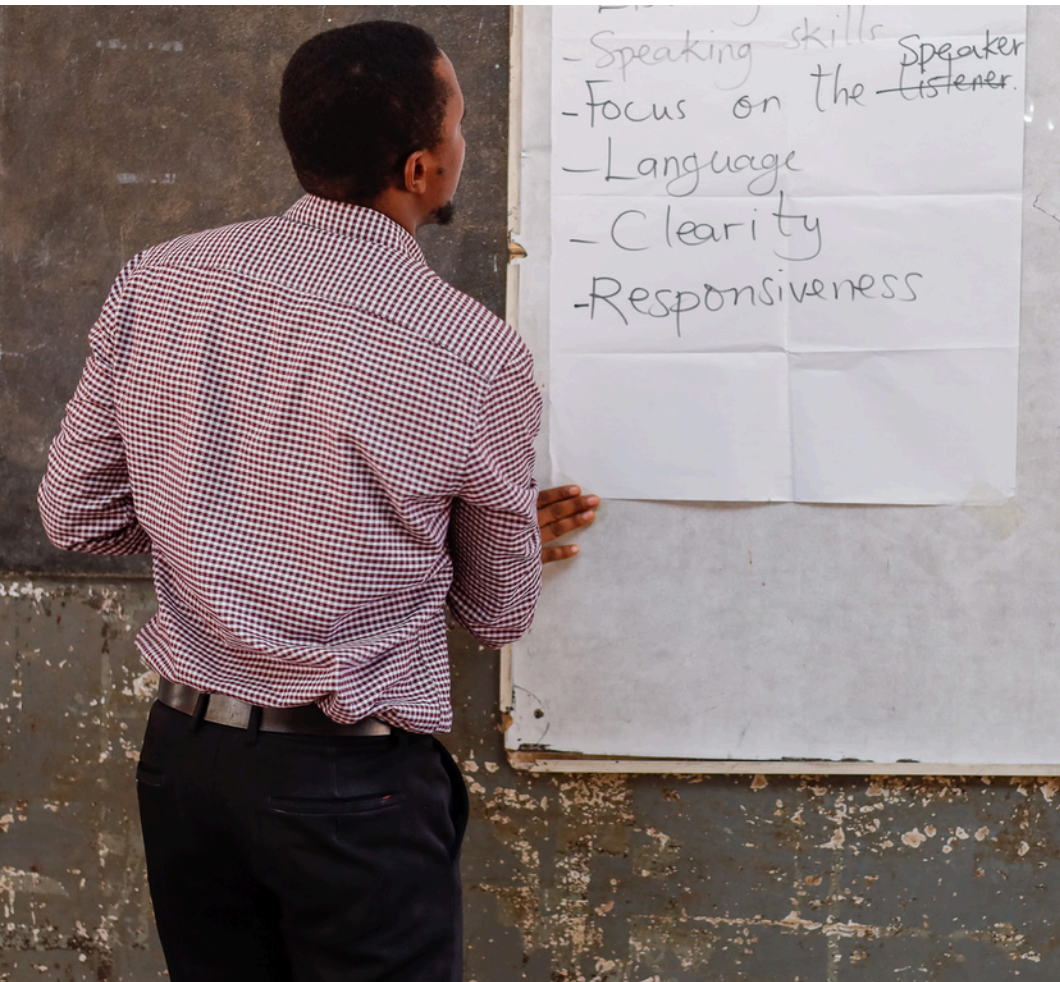
“

It's a safe place to grow and learn

he explained. He knew this kind of environment was exactly what he needed. Fortunately, his expectations were met, and he found the advisors' guidance and gentleness to be a catalyst for his personal growth.



Today, Enoch is setting goals for saving and has developed a newfound confidence, enabling him to take on leadership roles in both his church choir and school. His favorite session focused on building confidence.



“


That one really changed things for me. Confidence is so important, and Achieve helped me build it up. I used to feel so small, like I could not do anything in front of people. But now, I can stand in front of my church and sing. My classmates have noticed, too.

Sometimes, they even come to me for help, especially in English, where I am good. I think they see me as someone they can rely on. It feels nice because I did not think people would come to me for help. It makes me feel like... like I am actually good at something.







A young boy with short dark hair, wearing a striped school shirt, is smiling and resting his chin on his hand. He is standing outdoors with a blurred background of a wall and foliage.

Through his time on Achieve, Enoch has transformed in ways he never expected. His improved confidence and newfound skills have not only made him a stronger individual but also an inspiring figure among his peers.

Today, Enoch is proud of his achievements and is more prepared than ever to take on life's challenges, thanks to the

**safe and
supportive
space** 

Achieve Skills for School provided him.



Teacher's Testimonial

Enoch used to be the kind of student who came to school but rarely stayed in class. Often, he would wander off to play with younger children, even during lessons. When I suggested he join the Achieve programme, I hoped it might make a difference for him. At the time, he lacked confidence and was incredibly shy about speaking in front of others. I still remember when we asked him to speak during a visit from an NGO—he was terrified. It took a lot of encouragement to get him to try.

Now, he is like a different person. Enoch stays in class consistently, and just the other day, he even volunteered to participate in a school event. His confidence has grown greatly. While he is still working on catching up academically, I am optimistic we will see significant progress by the end of the term

Jemima

Achieve Advisor

From self-doubt to self-believe: Sackey

Sackey, a 14-year-old teenager was once carefree with no interest in taking responsibility or setting personal goals. His entire life, he dreamed that he would one day inherit his father's property. This, to him, seemed like enough reason not to invest effort in himself. But everything changed when his teacher saw his potential and enrolled him in the Achieve Skills for School programme.

Sackey admits that before joining Achieve, his behaviour was far from exemplary.

“

I had a lot of issues. I would get annoyed easily, and if someone did something I did not like, I just fought them. I even used to bully others. If someone had a disability, I would make fun of them.

At the time, I did not think it was wrong. But after Achieve, I see how hurtful my actions were, and I have changed a lot.



The programme introduced Sackey to values he had never considered important. Among the lessons, the one on reliability struck a chord.

“

I didn't care if people could trust me or not, I would come to school late, and nobody could depend on me.

But learning about reliability made me realise that if I want others to trust me, I need to be responsible.



Sackey's transformation was immediate and impactful. Not only is he taking up more responsibility willingly, but his parents now trust him to care for his siblings. He recently got a present from his mum as a reward for being a good carer while she travelled.

Achieve also challenged Sackey's previous mindset about his future.



“

Achieve taught me that I need to take my studies seriously. I can not just rely on my father's property. I now understand that if I want a good future, I have to work for it.



“

Before, I didn't really think much about my future. I just thought my father would give me his things, and I did not need to work hard. But now, I feel like I am on the right path. I know I need to plan for my future, and I am excited to work toward my goals. I want to be a banker, and I know that with the things I have learned in Achieve, I can make that happen. I feel more confident now.





Sackey's story is a testament to the transformative power of the Achieve Skills for School programme, turning a boy with no direction into a young man determined to carve out his future.

“

I would tell other students to have confidence in themselves. I didn't believe in myself when I was struggling, so I couldn't even try to do better. Achieve taught me to build my confidence, and now I feel like I can do things I never thought I could. Also, I would tell them not to pay attention to people who try to bring them down. If someone bullies them or makes fun of them, they should ignore it and use the “stop, think, and act” method we learned in Achieve. That has really helped me. They should just keep going and believe they can improve, no matter how hard it feels.





Teacher's Testimonial

Solomon used to struggle with listening and speaking. Sometimes, he would try to express himself, but the words would not come out the way he wanted, which left him feeling frustrated and often angry. He was always angry.

Since joining the Achieve programme, however, we have seen remarkable changes in him. He is now able to express himself much more clearly, and academically, his grades have improved significantly. What is even more impressive is his newfound confidence. He is willing to take on challenges, and he is started speaking up in class, even engaging with his peers.

On a personal level, the transformation is just as striking. Solomon has become more outgoing and has built stronger relationships with his friends. During break time, you will often see him leading his group, chatting confidently, and enjoying himself. It is clear that he is grown both socially and emotionally, and it is wonderful to see him thriving.

Maxwell
Achieve Advisor



WORKING WITH OTHERS

AFRICAN PROVERBS

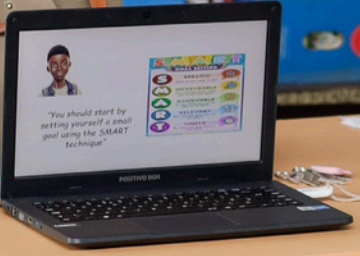
If you want to go fast,
go alone, If you want
to go far, go together.

QUESTION
What do you know
about people with
disabilities?
What types of
disabilities are
there?
What do they
think of people
with disabilities?
How different is
their world to ours?

ASSUMPTIONS
This is a thing that
is accepted as
true or as certain to
happen without proof

Consider the
question
What do they
think people with
disabilities can
and cannot do?
What can we
and others do
to help a person
with a disability
to be a part of
the community?

WORKING WITH OTHERS
- DISABILITY ACCESS
- Together We
Can Build



A TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY
TO SELF-DISCOVERY
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