

From Passion to Purpose: Nana Adwoa Tutuwaa Named Global Humanitarian of the Year 2026

Nhyiramma Foundation founder recognised for more than a decade of grassroots humanitarian service

What began in 2014 as a personal passion to help people in need has grown into more than a decade of humanitarian service, touching lives across communities in Ghana. For Nana Adwoa Tutuwaa, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Nhyiramma Foundation, that journey reached another significant milestone when she was honoured as **Global Humanitarian of the Year 2026** at the 5th Global Women Leadership Summit & Awards. The recognition, presented by renowned broadcaster and women's rights advocate Akumaa Mama Zimbi, celebrates a humanitarian journey built around compassion, personal sacrifice and a sustained commitment to vulnerable people and underserved communities. But for Nana Adwoa Tutuwaa, the award is not simply about recognition. It represents years of quietly doing the work. *"What started as a passion project has grown into something I never imagined. I give God all the glory,"* she said.

A decade of service

Established in 2014, Nhyiramma Foundation has undertaken a range of humanitarian interventions, particularly in deprived communities in Ghana's Eastern Region. Among its interventions are the provision of boreholes to communities with limited access to potable water, educational support for children, healthcare assistance and economic empowerment programmes for women. The foundation says it has supported children by paying their school fees and helping them remain in school, while also providing micro loans to 250 women engaged in petty trading, enabling them to strengthen their businesses and provide for their children. In healthcare, the foundation donated hospital items valued at approximately GH¢50,000 to Tetteh Quashie Memorial Hospital and has supported less privileged mothers by paying hospital bills. The foundation has also facilitated two major surgeries for children living with hydrocephalus, interventions that Nana Adwoa Tutuwaa describes as among the many experiences that have deepened her commitment to humanitarian work.

A personal commitment to philanthropy

One of the distinctive aspects of Nana Adwoa Tutuwaa's humanitarian journey is the extent to which she says she has personally financed the work. According to her, approximately 85 per cent of the projects undertaken by Nhyiramma Foundation over the years have been funded from her personal resources. She explains that proceeds from her businesses have often been channelled into charitable interventions. Her commitment has also taken her beyond conventional office based philanthropy. She recounts occasions when she has personally travelled to remote communities, sometimes even renting vehicles to reach areas that are difficult to access, to spend time with vulnerable families and understand their circumstances. For her, humanitarianism is therefore not merely about making donations. It is about being present. *"It takes someone with a deep passion to continue doing this. I have always had a love for humanity, and when it comes to vulnerable people, I am selfless,"* she said.

Empowering widows and single mothers

Nhyiramma Foundation has also begun placing greater emphasis on economic empowerment. In 2025, the foundation launched the Widows and Single Mothers Association in Akuapem North, with the aim of creating a structured platform through which vulnerable women can receive support, empowerment and opportunities to improve their livelihoods. The initiative has already provided seed capital to 20 women, with plans to expand the programme across the Eastern Region and eventually to other parts of Ghana. The long term vision is to move beyond one time charitable assistance and create sustainable pathways through which vulnerable women can become economically stronger and better positioned to care for their families.

A growing list of recognition

The Global Humanitarian of the Year 2026 award adds to a growing list of recognitions received by Nana Adwoa Tutuwaa for her humanitarian and philanthropic work. Her previous honours include: • Shero of the Year, 2019 • Woman in Philanthropy Award, 2019 • Best Humanitarian Award, 2020 • Africa Peace Advocate Award, 2024 • Triumph Change Maker Award, 2025 • Global Humanitarian of the Year, 2026 The latest honour, she says, is particularly humbling because it reflects a journey that began without a grand institutional plan. It began with a desire to help.

From individual passion to institutional impact

With Nhyiramma Foundation now entering a new phase, Nana Adwoa Tutuwaa says her ambition is to build a more structured and sustainable organisation capable of reaching many more vulnerable people. The foundation's growing focus on widows, single mothers, children and deprived communities is expected to form part of that expansion. The goal is to move from interventions largely funded personally to building partnerships with individuals, organisations, corporations and other stakeholders who share the foundation's vision. For Nana Adwoa Tutuwaa, the journey of the past 12 years is therefore not an ending, but a foundation for something bigger. From travelling to remote villages to support families, to helping women start small businesses, supporting children in school, assisting mothers with medical bills and providing life changing medical interventions, her story reflects a simple belief: humanitarian work begins with a willingness to care. And as she receives her sixth major recognition, she remains focused on the same purpose that started it all in 2014. **To serve humanity, empower the vulnerable and give hope where it is needed most.** For Nana Adwoa Tutuwaa, the recognition may belong to her name, but the purpose belongs to every life touched through Nhyiramma Foundation. And for all that has been achieved, she gives God all the glory.