



GHANA DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES
ASSOCIATION (GDCA)

ANNUAL REPORT

**FOR THE YEAR ENDING
31 DECEMBER, 2015**

**Presented at the 32nd Annual General
Meeting by Gushei-Na Prof. Abubakr Al-
Hassan, Chairman of GDCA, on 13 October
2016, at Dalun**

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**ANNUAL REPORT OF GHANA DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES ASSOCIATION FOR THE
PERIOD ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2015 PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2016 AT DALUN**

1. INTRODUCTION

Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA) has upheld its commitment to meeting its statutory requirements of holding the Annual General Meeting from year to year. GDCA believes that this is an aspect in an organisation's life that must not be downplayed.

Beyond meeting its statutory obligations, GDCA also cherishes its Annual General Meeting (AGM) as a platform for accounting for its stewardship to its important stakeholders in order that they are informed and also provide feedback on the work of the organisation. In this way, the AGM is used to maintain its legitimacy among the various types of stakeholders and to continuously count on their support.

2. VISION VALUES AND GOALS

The vision of GDCA continues to be

An empowered and happy society in harmony with the environment

The mission statement is as follows:

GDCA exists to empower the citizens of deprived communities and the socially excluded in Ghana to work to achieve political, economic and social development and engage in sound environmental practices for sustainable living.

In fulfilling its mission GDCA is being guided by the following values.

- Social equity
- Non-partisanship
- Honesty
- Transparency and Accountability
- Team work
- Grassroots involvement

The specific goals of GDCA are as follows;

1. Organisational development and strategic positioning and engagement

GDCA aims to be a strong and active civil society organisation in Northern Ghana (Northern, Upper-East and Upper-West Regions) with considerable influence in policy change at the national and international levels.

2. Strong Civil society actively promoting participation in Local Governance

GDCA will seek to promote community and citizens' participation in local governance and especially the participation of marginalized groups in decision-making.

3. Improved livelihoods, food & water security, environment and climate change resilience

GDCA will seek to enhance food security and livelihoods of vulnerable households and communities through building capacity for adaptation and resilience to the impacts of climate change.

4. Inclusive access to improved quality education

The aim is to enhance access to quality basic education for all children in Ghana using learner-centred approaches, especially those disadvantaged by virtue of geographical location, cultural barriers and other forms of exclusion.

3. ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

The conditions under which the organisation operated were optimal. At the national level, the economy was characterised by fluctuations in value of the Ghana Cedi in relation to the major currencies and high inflation. These affected the amount of funds available to our programmes, since some of them receive grants in foreign currencies.

In the local front, we have enjoyed relative peace and harmony during the reporting period. There have been a few cases of upheavals in some parts of the programme area, notably in Bimbilla, Nakpanduri and other places, due to lingering conflicts. However, the timely intervention of the security agencies helped to calm tensions. Unfortunately, some of these areas are still under curfew during the time of reporting. It is our hope that all parties and stakeholders would consider the prevalence of peace as paramount and do their possible best to establish permanent peace in these areas to create a favourable environment for everybody to go about their businesses confidently.

4. ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE

GDCA carried out its organisational activities well to satisfaction. The various structures established to ensure smooth flow of communication, decision-making and work flow were allowed to work.

4.1 Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting, which is the highest decision-making body of the organisation was held on 28 October 2015. The AGM received the Chairman's report as well as the reports of the external auditors of the accounts of various programmes and projects.

4.2 Steering Committee

The Steering Committee conducted four meetings during the year under review. This means that the SC has met the minimum requirement of four quarterly meetings in a year. The SC

deliberated and took decisions on various issues. These include approval of new partnerships and projects, review and approval of policies.

4.3 Technical Committees

With exception of SfL most units did not meet the minimum requirement of holding four meetings in a year by the Technical Committees. This has been attributed largely to inadequate funding.

5.0 PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Various programmes and projects were implemented during the period under review.

5.1 Empowerment for Life Programme

The third phase of the programme started from 1 January 2015 for an implementation period of four years. This follows the transition of our Danish partners from being a Programme to a Framework organisation. This has implications for the programme. In the Framework arrangement, the budget will be valid for only one year and any unspent funds cannot be rolled over from one year to another, as used to be the case under Programme arrangement. The programme start-up activities included

- 1) Assessment of the capacities of 297 community groups in 115 communities. This was after an initial identification process that produced 541 groups in 18 Area Councils in six districts.
- 2) Sensitization of Chiefs and elders, opinion leaders and members of the various communities in addition to major stakeholders in the Municipal/District Assemblies (Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana Education Service, Social Services Subcommittee of the Assembly, Youth, Women, other CSOs on the goals and objectives of the Programme
- 3) Baseline data collected from six Programme Districts.

Some results from the programme are elaborated below.

The Programme targeted to work with, and support 300 CBOs in the Programme Area to clearly define their purpose, methods of organisation and internal functioning. As of December, 2015 the following were some of the results.

- 1) CBOs in the Programme Area have carried out various activities as a result of the capacity building the programme supported in delivering to them. The CBOs include farmer groups, women groups, youth groups, Youth Centre Management Committee, Local Committees, PTAs and SMCs. Some of the CBOs achieved the following:
 - defined and articulated their organizational identity, vision, mission and values and developed gender-sensitive constitutions
 - developed resource mobilization strategies, including sustainable Income Generating Activities to support their groups' operations;

- identified relevant activities they intend to implement. Some of these activities include contacting relevant duty bearers (District Assembly, MOFA, GES, YEA etc), activities to contact agencies for marketing, community dialogue, collaboration with Traditional authorities and opinion leaders to find solutions to community development issues among others.
- 2) A total of 90 Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) were operational as at the end of the reporting period. With a total membership of 2,700, VSLAs have been able to mobilize more than GH¢ 100,000 from among their members to enhance access to finances.
 - 3) A research on the application of the Model Standing Orders of MMDAs conducted by GDCA, CDD-Ghana, Institute of Local Government Studies and LogNet was launched in Tamale on 30th June 2015. The research aimed at providing a platform for MMDAs to reflect on best practices as well as challenges in the conduct of General Assembly meetings and participation of the citizens in the meetings.

Budget Cut

The E4L programme faced a budget cut from 1 January 2016. This follows the decision by a new Government in Denmark to reduce development aid by 26% across board. Hence the E4L programme was affected. GDCA together with YEFIL strategized with GV to take measures to implement the budget cut. Consequently, the number of operational districts was reduced from six to five and more than a dozen staff members were sent home. In fact, the position of the newly created full time Programme Manager was scrapped. However, the measures were successfully implemented and the programme has adjusted well to the changes.

PSC Meeting

The Programme Strategic Committee meeting of the cooperating partners of the E4L programme had a successful meeting in May 2016. The meeting approved the annual narrative and expenditure reports as well as the budget for 2016. The meeting also discussed the strategies for co-financing of the E4L programme. From the analysis, there will be no problem in meeting the partners co-financing requirements up to the end of 2017. The PARSAO and Youth Speak Up projects are able to meet the requirement up to that period. However, the challenge will be from 2018. Consequently, the partners will need to obtain new funding from other development partners to be able to meet the co-financing requirement from 2018.

5.2 School for Life

School for Life has continued to implement various programmes during the reporting period. **The Ghana CBE Programme (GCBE)** was implemented in the nine programme districts under SfL. The third cycle of the programme was launched during the reporting period.

The UNICEF supported CBE project came to an end in Savelugu. However, UNICEF has sponsored a continuation of the project, but this time in Builsa North and Builsa South Districts of the Upper East Region.

SfL is also implementing two CBE classes funded with donations from GV.

In all SfL has run more than 500 classes with total enrolment of more than 12,000 learners during the period under review.

The Education Quality Initiative Project (EQUIP) sponsored by Tzedek came to an end in June 2016. The sponsors caused an evaluation to be conducted, and the evaluation team expressed satisfaction with the results of the project.

The CBE Alliance led by SfL has brought about policy change, notably the approval of the CBE Policy, and brought together education stakeholders in the three regions of Northern Ghana to reflect on issues affecting quality education and take steps to improve upon them. Through the Education Sector Working Group from as a result of initiatives of the Alliance, educational monitoring has improved.

5.3 GDCA Micro-Credit Scheme

Loans Disbursements

During the year, GDCA Micro Credit Scheme disbursed a total as below to Savings and Credit Associations within the Tamale Metropolis, Tolon-Kumbungu District and the Savelugu-Nanton District. Beneficiaries were largely women with a minority of men artisans also benefiting.

Source	Amount disbursed GHC	Amount recovered GHC
Fund for social Dev	105,300	43,834
UN Joint HSP	29,000	26,208
Total	134,300	70,042

Loans Recoveries

The recovery rate stands at approximately 52% during the year.

Under the Fund for Social Development, the scheme has been operating with a grant of GHC108,000 from the French Embassy since 2013 with a client base of 536, while the UN Joint Human Security Programme provided an initial grant of GHC 100,000 with a total client base of 190.

5.4 Simli Pong

Simli Pong has faced some challenges of liquidity due to poor loan recovery since 2014. It is therefore recommended that the scheme should be re-structured to diversify activities into other areas such as social enterprise development as well as working with Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs).

5.5 Dalun Simli Centre (DSC)

DSC hosted various training activities and events during the year under review. The Centre accommodated both training events as well as hiring out of the facilities to interested individuals and institutions. The Centre hosted more than 1,000 individuals during the period. The Centre managed to break even on its activities, with incomes being able to cover expenditures.

The Centre undertook some maintenance works on the buildings. Doors, windows and other structures were replaced and painted to give the Centre a face-lift.

5.6 Simli Radio

Simli Radio produced and broadcast 1,968 programmes during the year with the collaboration with several partners on small projects. This represents 97% of the targeted number of programmes of 2,250.

Details of programmes produced and broadcast during the year are indicated below.

Type of Programme	Target	Achieved
Community development	550	524
Religious and cultural	250	240
Agricultural	350	290
Health promotion	650	624
Education	250	184
Sports and Entertainment	200	106
Total	2,250	1,968

Major partners and contributors include

- Ghana Community Radio Network
- District Assemblies (Savelugu-Nanton, Kumbungu and Tolon)
- Youth Empowerment for Life
- Happy Yourself Food Complex
- National Health Insurance Scheme

Sang Community Radio

Sang community radio has been installed for nearly one year now and test transmissions have been carried out. However, the status of frequency application has not changed. The application for frequency has still not yielded the desired results. Consequently, the station is unable to establish a programme for regular transmission.

5.7 Community Life Improvement Programme (CLIP)

a. Programme for Strengthening the Resilience of Agro-Pastoral Systems in West Africa (PARSAO).

The programme kick-started in September 2015 after an orientation workshop in Ouagadougou. Under the programme, MMDAs in Bawku Municipal, Bawku West, Gushegu, Karaga and Tamale have been engaged. Systems have been established for the monitoring of livestock markets and the collection of livestock market data. Community animators have also been selected and given the first training towards enabling facilitate informed debates about transhumance. This is aimed at helping the various stakeholders in the livestock value chain understand the issues involved in transhumance.

b. CLIP-WASTE Project:

CLIP is implementing an alliance project with other partners in the Waste sector in the Tamale Metropolis and Sagnarigu District. The aim of the project is to enhance households' capacity in waste management and promoting the participation of public-private partnerships in waste management. A total of 100 Community Sanitation Development Committees (CSDCs) in the 10 target communities have been trained. The CSDCs work to stimulate behavioural

change and creating demand for household latrines in the communities. The programme came to an end in December 2015. However, the sponsors have agreed to provide bridge funding while a new 5-year project proposal has been made and presented for funding.

5.8 Ghana's Strengthening Accountability Mechanisms project

During the reporting period GDCA entered into an agreement with Ibis-Ghana for participation in the implementation of the Ghana's Strengthening Accountability Mechanisms (GSAM) project. Ibis-Ghana is one of three consortium partners with CARE-Ghana and ISODEC responsible for the project. GSAM is being funded by the USAID. GDCA is implementing the project in East Gonja and Kpandai Districts. The project uses social accountability to enhance engagements between communities and social groups in the execution and monitoring capital projects being undertaken by the District Assembly in the communities.

6. CHALLENGES

The organisation encountered various challenges during the implementation of its programmes and projects as well as its own activities.

E4L Programme Budget cut

The budget cut in the E4L programme has affected programme implementation. Various aspects of the programme had to be adjusted to accommodate the budget cut. The result has been the laying off of some staff as well as reduction in programme area.

Exchange rate

The fluctuation in the exchange rate affected the programme budget. The budget of the programme was constrained as a result of unfavourable exchange rates.

Bad nature of roads

The bad nature of the roads is affecting the health of programme vehicles, resulting in high maintenance costs.

Inadequate funding

The status of funding for programme and organisational activities remains dicey. There is great variability in the level of fund from one year to another. Moreover, most funding sources are reluctant to pay overhead costs or core funding needed to sustain the organisation.

7. CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD

To a large extent, the organisation's objectives are being met. The programmes and projects have contributed in diverse ways to meeting the organisations goals and objectives. The results of the activities show that changes are taking place in the lives of the beneficiaries. The changes include increased knowledge and skills among beneficiary groups and communities to understand their situation and take steps to address them.

CBOs have developed strategies to organise themselves and engage stakeholders to work in the interest of their communities. Women groups have improved their income generation activities with improved skills and access to market outlets. Village Savings and Loans Associations have mobilized tremendous resources to enhance access to financial resources of their members.

PTAs, SMCs and DEOCs are improving their engagement with education authorities to bring about good governance and improvements in education. More than 12,000 out-of-school children who have graduated from CBE classes have gained the opportunity to have formal education under the Complementary Basic Education programmes being delivered by School for Life.

Going forward, we will seek to maintain and sustain the achievements of the interventions that are benefiting the various target groups. Based on the lessons from the other interventions that have not worked so well such as the delivery of micro-credit, measures will be taken to adjust and re-structure the interventions in order to take advantage of potentials that are available. Interventions such as the VSLA concept will be expanded to create more opportunities for women groups, farmer groups and other beneficiary groups to have access to financial resources for their businesses.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Various stakeholders have contributed their quota to the success of the programmes and projects that have delivered the interventions. An attempt to name every stakeholder in this regard would not only be unwieldy, but also nearly impossible. Consequently, GDCA extends gratitude to, but not limited to the following individuals, groups and entities.

Our gratitude goes first and foremost to our long-standing Danish partners, Ghana Friendship Groups in Denmark, who have been standing by us for more than three and-a-half decades. We are confident this partnership will continue to grow from strength to strength in the coming years.

We are very grateful to other development partners who have supported us in our interventions. These include Danish International Development Agency (Danida), the UK Department for International Development (DfID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Acting for Life, UNICEF, Dutch Government through the Ghana WASH/Dutch WASH Alliance, UNDP, Tzedek and the French Embassy.

To our implementing partners YEF, CIKOD and NORSAAC we are very grateful for the cooperation. To our collaborating partners CDD-Ghana, Institute of Local Government

Service, RUMNET, LOGNet, UDS and Ghana Community Radio Network, we say thank you. We are so grateful to our supporting partners including Ibis, CARE International and ISODEC for their support.

Our work would not have been possible without the support of Ministries, Departments and Agencies of state. We recognize the support of MMDAs in our operational areas, the RCC, GES, MoFA and NCCE.

The achievements we have made would not have been possible without the support of our chiefs, community leaders, Magazias, youth leaders and groups. We thank for rooting the organisation and its interventions in the communities.

Finally we thank the Steering Committee, Technical Committees and various committees for their oversight and support as well as the sacrifices they make for the organisations and programmes to realize their objectives. It would not only be injustice, but also ingratitude, if our acknowledgments ignore the key role of Managements and staff members of the organisation. As the implementers of the interventions and the frontliners these achievements would have been impossible without you. Thank you so much.

Thank you all and May God bless us all.

Naa Prof. Abubakr Al-Hassan
GDCA Chairman

Date: 13 October 2016.