



GHANA DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES
ASSOCIATION (GDCA)

ANNUAL REPORT

**FOR THE YEAR ENDING
31 DECEMBER, 2016**

**Presented at the 33rd Annual General Meeting
by Alhaji A. M. Baba, Acting Chairman of
GDCA, on 26 October 2017, at Dalun**

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**ANNUAL REPORT OF GHANA DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES ASSOCIATION FOR THE
PERIOD ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2016 PRESENTED AT THE 33RD ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING HELD ON 26 OCTOBER 2017 AT DALUN**

1. INTRODUCTION

It is with deep regret that we meet in today's Annual General Meeting without the presence of the founder and Chairman of our great organization, Gushei-Naa, Prof. Abubakr Al-Hassan, who was called by his maker nearly one year ago. The tireless and selfless effort and commitment of this great son of our land is what we are all benefiting from today. It is our conviction that we will all uphold his vision for this organization, so as to keep his name alive through our commitments towards this organization success.

It is a requirement that as an organization, Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA) upholds its commitment to meeting its statutory requirements of making sure that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held every year. It is our belief that the AGM is a critical activity in the organisation's life that must be given utmost importance. This will ensure the continuous confidence and support enjoyed by the organization among its stakeholders.

Apart from meeting its statutory obligations, GDCA also cherishes its Annual General Meeting (AGM) as a platform for accounting for its stewardship of the resources made available to the organization to its important stakeholders in order that the stakeholders are informed and also provide feedback on the work of the organisation on how the work has impacted on the communities, groups and others. 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;

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. 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.

d. 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 year under review presented conditions that were favourable for GDCA to carry out its mandate. The political environment remained favourable. The 2016 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections came to pass peacefully, the New Patriotic Party led by Nana Addo Dankwah Akufo-Addo taking on the reins of government. GDCA would like to congratulate Nana Addo as the new President and his Government. Many policies are being rolled out in fulfilment of promises made. We see that the policies are going to impact positively on the lives of Ghanaians. Significant among the policies are the Free Senior High School programme and the Planting for Food and Jobs, which many Ghanaians have started to benefit from. We want to commend Government for these bold initiatives.

While these policies and programmes are being rolled out, we must expect challenges to confront us. We want to make an appeal to Government not be shy of this, but to accept mistakes when they are made. In this way we can all learn and work to perfect the programmes and policies. Approaching errors with high handedness is likely to kill initiative and innovation on the part of those who seek to help and improve the system, as well as keep challenges buried due to the fear. At the same time lack of flexibility will discourage other stakeholders to contribute their quota to the ensure the success of the policies and programmes.

At the local level, there has been peace and harmony prevailing to a very large extent during the reporting period. There have been a few cases of disturbances in some parts of the programme area, notably in Bimbilla, Nakpanduri and other places due to lingering

conflicts. However, with the intervention of the security agencies the situations were brought under control. It is unfortunate due to these disturbances some of these areas are still under curfew, even at the time of reporting. We would like to appeal to all feuding parties and other stakeholders to consider the prevalence of peace as paramount and do their utmost best to re-establish permanent peace in these areas to create a favourable environment for development to take place and for everybody to go about their businesses without fear.

4. ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND CORE ACTIVITIES

The organisational activities of GDCA were carried out satisfactorily. 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 13 October 2016. The AGM received the Chairman's report presenting the major achievements as well as the reports of the external auditors of the accounts of various programmes and projects. The reports were approved and discussed by the AGM and passed on to the various Technical Committees and Managements to deal with.

4.2 Steering Committee

The Steering Committee held four meetings during the year under review. This means that the SC 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

While some Technical Committees were able to meet quarterly as required, others could not do so for various reasons. This has been attributed largely to inadequate funding. The TCs performed their roles of overseeing the work of management and giving direction to the management teams.

4.4 Board self-assessment

The Steering Committee also undertook a board self-assessment to review its practices and discussed measures to improve the functions of the governing bodies of the organization. The assessment was the second, following one carried out in 2014. The results of the assessment were used to identify areas for the improvement of the performance of political bodies as well as issues for dialogue between Management and the political bodies.

4.5 Denmark Seminar

The Denmark Seminar for 2016 was organized on the theme "Ghana's electioneering and violence: challenging the status quo". The seminar examined the challenge of threats to violence, which has come to characterize general elections in Ghana. The seminar examined various aspects of the issue and called on various stakeholders to play their roles effectively to ensure peaceful, free and fair elections.

5.0 PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

The core mandate and mission of GDCA was realized through the implementation of various projects and programmes during the period under review.

5.1 Empowerment for Life Programme

The third phase of the programme started, which from 1 January 2015 for an implementation period of four years had continued. However, during the period of reporting, the funding agency, DANIDA introduced a new funding regime. This is barely after our Danish partners Ghana Friends (GV), had transitioned from a Programme organization to a Framework organisation. The new mechanism of funding NGO activities came with conditions that our partners could not meet, e.g. be operating in at least two countries. For this reason GV had to re-join the league of Danish CSOs at the Danish Civil Society in Development (CISU). Under this new arrangement, the Empowerment for Life programme was extended by one year to end in December 2019. Consequently a revised programme document was made and submitted to CISU for evaluation. The good news is that programme passed the assessment with excellence with some minimal upward review of the programme budget.

The immediate objectives of the programme are:

- 1) Civil society groups and organisations have **organisational capacity** to mobilise their communities to address community issues and rights;
- 2) Civil society groups and organisations have **technical capacity** to drive social and economic development processes;
- 3) Civil society groups and organisations have **access to and influence** democratic processes and advance their interests and rights through advocacy, dialogue and networking and
- 4) Partner organisations have the **institutional capacity** to be strong and active players in civil society and promote the interests and rights of local CSOs and groups locally, nationally and internationally through advocacy, partnerships and networking.

Some results from the programme are elaborated below.

The Programme targeted to work with, and support 240 CBOs in the Programme Area to clearly define their purpose, methods of organisation and internal functioning. As of December, 2016 the following were some of the results.

- 1) More than 90% of CBOs in the Programme Area have carried out one activity or another as a result of the capacity building the programme supported in delivering to them. The CBOs include famer groups, women groups, youth groups, Youth Centre Management Committees, Local Committees, PTAs and SMCs. Some of the CBOs achieved the following:
 - Have defined and articulated their organizational identity, vision, mission and values and developed gender-sensitive constitutions
 - Have developed resource mobilization strategies, including sustainable Income Generating Activities to support their groups' operations;
 - Have 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.

- Are using different tools and skills to identify community development issues and are proposing solutions and taking action to address them using community dialogue processes.
 - CBOs have identified community development issues that were raised by the CBOs were acknowledged and responded to/supported by duty bearers and service providers.
 - CBOs are applying technical skills learnt through the programme and are imparting the skills in their communities. Farmer groups who benefited from Farmer Field Schools are applying the knowledge they gained from the Programme on their farms and others are learning from them. PTAs, SMCs and Local Committees are influencing the provision of quality basic education in their localities through engagement with school authorities at the community and district levels.
 - Ten (10) REFLECT Circles have been established and engaged in community dialogue to identify and address community issues. At the same time 10 REFLECT classes have been established alongside and are running and benefiting community members. About 250 community members have been enrolled in the E4L REFLECT Circles who have begun to improve their functional literacy skills.
 - CBOs are advocating through relevant channels to advance their interests and rights. One third of CBOs carry out advocacy activities. Some of the advocacy activities that the CBOs have carried out included Reduction in teacher absenteeism in Demong and Jimli Primary Schools, Teenage pregnancy in Sang, improved revenue collection in Pishigu and working to stop charging of fees of pregnant women during delivery also in Pishigu.
- 2)** Thirty Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) were added to the 90 from the previous year, bringing the total to 120. All VSLAs have been operational as at the end of the reporting period. With a total membership of 3,600, VSLAs have been able to mobilize more than GH¢ 360,000 from among their members to improve their savings and enhance access to credit to finance their enterprises.

PSC Meeting

The Programme Strategic Committee meeting of the cooperating partners of the E4L programme had a successful meeting in April 2017. The meeting approved the annual narrative and expenditure reports for 2016 as well as the budget for 2017. 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 maintain its lead in implementing Complementary Basic Education (CBE) in the Northern Region. It continued to implement various programmes during the reporting period.

i. The Ghana CBE Programme (GCBE)

This project was implemented in the nine programme districts under SfL. The third cycle of the programme was launched during the reporting period.

ii. UNICEF supported CBE project

The 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.

iii. The CBE Alliance

The 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 as a result of initiatives of the Alliance, educational monitoring has improved.

5.3 GDCA Micro-Credit Scheme

The scheme is going through some challenges including inadequate cash flow, high default rate and reducing portfolio quality among other challenges. During the period a number of proposals were made to various agencies such as MasterCard Foundation. Results of these have not been positive.

During the period however, Financieros sans Fronterios, a Spanish NGO, organized a team of students from the IE Business School in Spain to carry out an assessment of the scheme. The report of the assessment has been presented to GDCA and the Steering Committee has discussed it. The recommendations of the report are being used to take the necessary steps towards reviving the scheme.

5.4 Simli Pong

Since 2014 the scheme has not been functioning. Consequently, the Steering Committee set up a committee to investigate the operations of the scheme together with GDCA Micro-credit scheme. The committee found that both schemes were facing serious challenges of loan recoveries and deterioration of the portfolios. In the present state the schemes are not able to fulfil the Bank of Ghana requirements for certification as Financial NGOs.

The committee recommended that the schemes 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)

The Centre played host to various training, catering and accommodation activities and events during the year under review. The Centre accommodated both training events as well as hiring out to interested individuals and institutions. The Centre hosted more than 853 individuals for various durations during the period.

The Centre again undertook some maintenance works on the buildings to upgrade the facilities. Doors, windows, air conditioners and other structures were replaced and painted to give the Centre a Face-lift.

5.6 Simli Radio

Simli Radio has produced and broadcast Two thousand and thirty(2,030) programmes per the station programme line-up. This represents ninety-eight percent (98%) of annual target of two thousand, two hundred and fifty (2,250) programmes.

Details of programmes produced and broadcast during the year 2016

Type of Programme	Annual Target	Achievement
Community Development	550	530
Religious and Cultural	250	240
Agricultural	350	290
Health Promotion	650	635
Public Education(Gender, Politics and Governance)	250	185
Entertainment	200	150
Total	2,250	2030

Major Partners/Collaborators

- Ghana Community Radio Network(GCRN) and UNICEF
- District Assemblies(Savelugu/Nanton, Kumbungu and Tolon)
- Youth Empowerment For Life(YEFL)
- National Health Insurance Schemes(Savelugu/Nanton and Tolon and Kumbungu)
- Ghana Trade and Livelihood Coalition(GTLC)
- Empowerment for Life(E4L)

Sang Community Radio

Sang community radio was installed for nearly two years now and test transmissions have been carried out. However, the status of frequency application has not changed. Follow-ups have been made to the National Communications Authority, but the application for frequency has still not yielded the desired results. The process was further affected by the change in the governance structure at the authority as a result of the new government. Consequently, the station is unable to establish a programme for regular transmission. However, contacts have been made at the authority and other powers are being persuaded to assist.

5.7 Community Life Improvement Programme (CLIP)

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

The programme is on course. 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. Twenty Community Animators were selected and given the second training after they had the first training the previous year. The community animators have carried out assisted debates in Bawku and Karaga. The assisted debates are to prepare them towards enabling them carry out the facilitation of informed debates about transhumance on their own. The informed debates are aimed at helping the various stakeholders in the livestock value chain understand the issues involved in transhumance, and to take the needed actions on their part to ensure mutual benefits of all stakeholders.

ii. Agricultural Policy Support Project:

The Agricultural Policy Support Project was implemented with funding from USAID Ghana Feed the Future Programme. Under the project CLIP carried awareness creation on the Plant and Fertilizer Act 2010, Act 803. Farmers, input dealers, MoFA staff, security personnel and other stakeholders increased their knowledge on the Act, as well as understanding of their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the agricultural inputs such as planting materials, fertilizers and pesticides are produced, packaged, handled and distributed in ways that ensure their effectiveness and safety to the end users, while complying with the provisions of the law.

iii. CLIP-WASTE Project:

CLIP is keeping contact with community level committees to ensure the continuous adoption and monitoring of interventions in the Tamale Metro and Sagnarigu District. The 5-year project proposal presented to the EU for funding is still under review.

iv. Communities United in Fighting Child Hunger project

GV and GDCA have secured funding for the implementation of the Fighting Child Hunger project with funding from the Danmarks Indsamling. The project will run for two and-a-half years up to August 2019. The project is aimed at raising awareness among the stakeholders about child malnutrition and taking the needed actions to reduce child malnutrition. The project will operate in Mion, Saboba and Karaga Districts. One important aspect of the project is to set-up a soya beans processing factory that will take the excess soya beans from producers, especially women farmers and process into foods that will improve the nutrition of children and at the same time increase incomes of women beneficiaries.

5.8 Ghana's Strengthening Accountability Mechanisms project

GDCA's agreement with Oxfam (formerly Ibis-Ghana) for the implementation of the Ghana's Strengthening Accountability Mechanisms (GSAM) project is still in force. Oxfam is one of the consortium partners with CARE-International 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. During the period the dissemination of the findings of the Ghana Audit Service of the performance audit were disseminated in Kpandai, as well as the training of community mobilizers who supported in the dissemination

in 30 communities in the District. In the East Gonja District, three capital projects were monitored by the citizens.

GDCA underwent a partner assessment by Oxfam under GSAM after Year 1 of implementation. GDCA was assessed to be one of the highest performing partners under the project, scoring 81.3%. This presents GDCA with brighter prospects of continued collaboration with Ibis on the project and even on other initiatives.

5.9 Strengthening Community-led Participation in Elections project

GDCA participated in the Strengthening Community Participation in Elections project (SCOPE) in a coalition led by NORSAAC. The project was funded by STAR-Ghana as part of the support for successful 2016 general elections in Ghana. The main outcomes of the project included the increased awareness among beneficiaries on the way to cast a ballot to reduce the level of rejected ballots. The project also included some level of election observation by CBOs to contribute to the transparency, credibility and fairness of the elections.

6. CHALLENGES

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

Inadequate funding

The availability of funding remains the biggest challenge confronting us as an organization. This is coupled with the uncertainties that have arisen with some of our existing funding sources. In recent years there have been some changes in funding modalities introduced by the DANIDA for instance, our major supporter through GV. The changes in donor modalities so frequently has given rise to fears on the reliability and predictability funding.

Exchange rate

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

Bad nature of roads

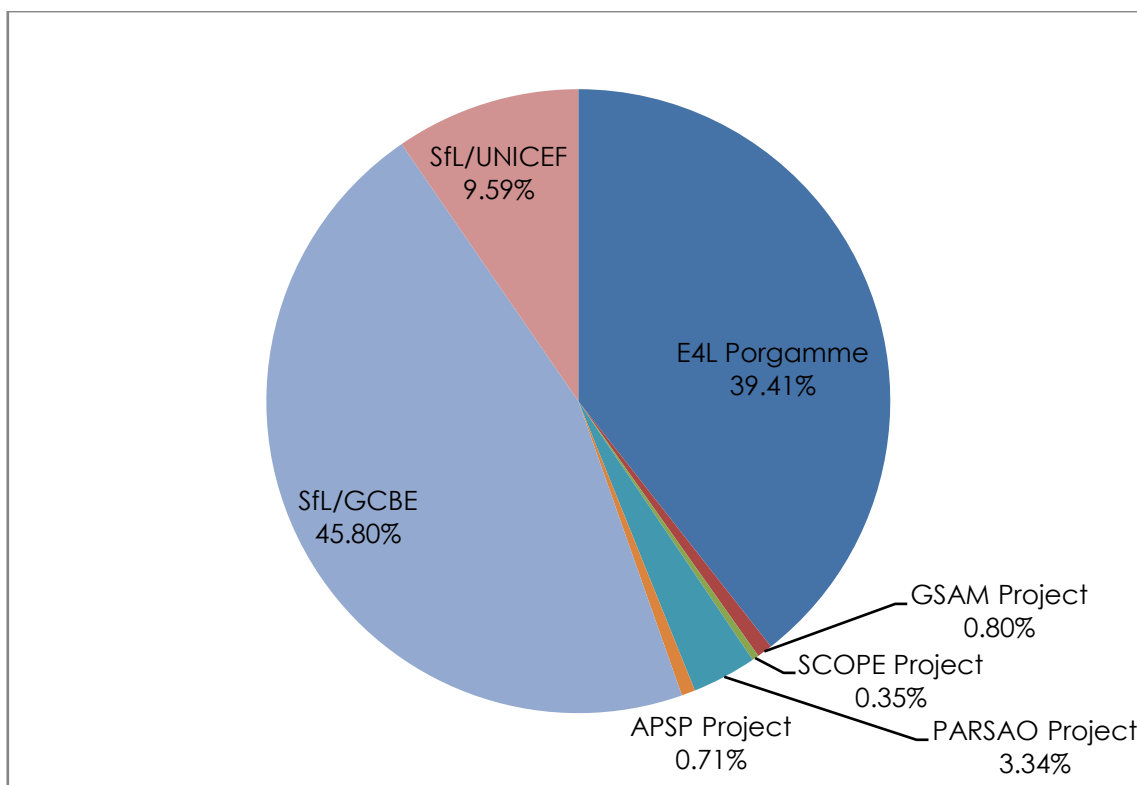
The bad nature of the roads is affecting the health of programme vehicles, resulting in high maintenance costs.

7. PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES PORTFOLIO

For the reporting period an estimated nearly GHS 9.4m was spent on various projects. A summary of the project and programmes portfolio is presented below.

Project/ Programme	Duration	Start	End	Total Budget GHS '000	Estimated turnover 2016, '000	Financiers
Empowerment for Life (E4L)	5 years	Jan 2015	Dec 2019	18,500	3,700	GV/Danida
Ghana's Strengthening Accountability Mechanisms (GSAM) Project	4 years	1 October 2014	30 September 2019	300	75	USAID through Oxfam Ibis/ CARE- ISODEC Consortium
Strengthening Community Participation for Peaceful Elections (SCOPE)/ in partnership with NORSAAC, ILGS, NCCE	9 months	1 st April 2016	31 st December 2016	33	33	STAR-Ghana/
Communities United in Fighting Child Hunger	2 years, 6 months	1 March 2017	31 Aug. 2019	800	0	GV/DI
PARSAO Project	3 years	1 st July, 2015	30 June 2018	1,150	314	AfL / GV
APSP Project	6 months	3 rd August, 2016	December 2016	66.5	66.5	USAID/APSP
SfL/GCBE	2 years	May, 2015	July 2017	8,228	4,300	DFID & USAID
SfL/UNICEF	2 years	May, 2015	July 2017	1,823.6	900	UNICEF
Total				30,901.1	9,388.5	

The chart below summarizes the contributions of the different programmes and projects to the total turnover of GDCA for 2016.



8. CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD

The organisation's objectives are being met through the various programmes and projects, which 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 target groups. The changes include increased knowledge and skills among beneficiary groups and communities to understand their situation and take steps to address them.

CBOs are developing strategies to organise themselves and taking actions to 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 opportunities. 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 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.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Various stakeholders have contributed their quota to the success of the programmes and projects that have delivered the interventions. Every contribution has been greatly appreciated and considered critical for the success of the programmes and projects. While not attempting to name all those who have lent support in one way or another, our gratitude goes first and foremost to our long-standing Danish partners, Ghana Friends NGO in Denmark (GV), who have been standing by us for more than three and-a-half decades. We are confident this partnership will continue to be strong in the coming years.

We are very thankful to other development partners who have provided us support in our work. Some of these are the Danish International Development Agency (Danida), the UK Department for International Development (DfID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Acting for Life, UNICEF, UNDP, Tzedek and STAR Ghana.

To our implementing partners YEFL, CIKOD, CDD-Ghana, Institute of Local Government Service, RUMNET, LOGNet, UDS, Ghana Community Radio Network and NORSAAC, just to name a few, we are very grateful for the cooperation. We are so grateful to our supporting partners including Oxfam, CARE International and ISODEC for their support.

Our work would have come to naught 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 among many others.

The successes we have chalked would not have been possible without the support of our CBOs, chiefs, community leaders, Magazias, youth leaders and groups. We thank you for anchoring the organisation and its interventions in the communities.

Finally, we thank the Steering Committee, Technical Committees and various committees for exercising their oversight responsibilities very well and the sacrifices they make for the organisations and programmes to realize their objectives. We cannot ignore the key role of Managements and staff members of the organisation have played in realizing the desired outcomes.

Thank you and May God bless us all.

Alhaji A. M. Baba
Acting GDCA Chairman

Date: 26 October 2017, Dalun