

2023
ANNUAL REPORT

IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTS, TRANSFORMING LIVES

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List Of Acronyms

FoN	Friends of the Nation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMF	Gender Model Family
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
PwDs	Persons with Disability
ReDIAL	Research for Development Innovation Agriculture and Learning
U. S	United States
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
WEACT	Women Economic Advancement for Collective Transformation

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Chairman's Letter

The year 2023 was challenging in that it tested our resilience, but our commitment to our mission and values remained unwavering.

These challenges served as valuable learning experiences, prompting us to review and strengthen our policies and actions, ensuring our continued relevance in the development space. Despite these challenges, we continued to deliver on our programs and services, positively impacting the lives of over 6,000 people in Ghana.

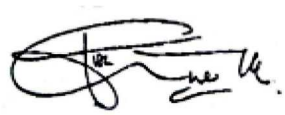
Our staff demonstrated remarkable dedication and commitment to our cause, thanks to their tremendous teamwork. We are grateful for the support of our partners, like-minded organizations, constituents, and stakeholders who have stood by us throughout this journey.

We recognize that trust is earned through transparency and accountability, and we are committed to upholding the highest standards. As we move forward, we remain focused on our core values of participation, accountability, gender-inclusiveness and self-reliance. We are committed to learning from our experiences and emerging stronger through integrated approaches and innovative pathways.

In this annual report, we share our achievements, impact stories, and financial statement. We hope you will find it informative and reassuring.

Thank you for your continued trust and support.

Together, we can make a difference.



Delasi Amable

Chairman – Council of Directors

Executive Director's Letter

"Difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations," and this aptly encapsulates Friends of the Nation's 2023 experiences, which presented opportunities for growth, resilience, and strengthening of our organization.

As we reflect on the challenges we faced and the incredible strength we gathered to overcome them, I am proud to report on Friends of the Nation's actions, successes, and prospects as a resilient socio-environmental advocacy organization.

In 2023, our actions deepened our commitment to open governance, resulting in greater transparency, improved accountability, and increased revenue generation in sub-national governance agencies. Our efforts to strengthen fisheries governance bore fruit, with the strengthening of prosecutorial chain actors, improved fishers' voices, and enabling spaces for engagements as well as boosting the organizational capacities of fisher associations, and the creation of innovative national digital reporting platform for cetacean landings.

We also initiated actions for youth in climate justice and citizen science, enhanced climate resilience among smallholder farmers by promoting the 'farmsense' technological tool, climate-smart agriculture practices, and promotion of the multi-crop threshers; all contributing to improved soil fertility and reduction in post-harvest losses for cereal and grain farmers in some districts in five regions of Ghana.

Furthermore, we improved livelihoods of smallholder farmers through self-managed local savings and loans schemes, empowered women cocoa farmers in western and western north regions of Ghana and built trust and confidence through the Power of Voices initiative, empowering mining catchment communities and promoting fairness in the emerging lithium mining industry's dealings with communities.

Looking ahead to 2024 and beyond, Friends of the Nation (FoN) will continue to strengthen its resilience, driving growth and unlocking potential for a brighter future. We will work tirelessly to ensure a thriving planet where nature and humanity coexist in harmony. We will strive to empower communities, amplify marginalized voices, and drive systemic change to protect the environment and promote sustainable development.

Through collective action, innovative solutions, and inclusive decision-making, we will aim to galvanize local actions that foster a resilient, just, and regenerative future for all.



Donkris Mevuta

Executive Director

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Profile of the Organization

History, Vision, and Mission

Friends of the Nation (FoN) is a socio-environmental non-profit advocacy organization established in 1993 and registered in 1994. It is headquartered in Sekondi-Takoradi in the Western Region of Ghana and has field offices in Accra, Keta, Yendi, Ejura, Sefwi-Wiawso, Techiman, and Donkorkrom. FoN works in coastal, forest, transitional, and savannah regions, and the mining hubs of Ghana.

FoN envision the management of the environment in a sustainable and healthy manner and with equal access to and use of natural resources by communities.

FoN advocates and initiates vibrant campaigns against environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources; builds and strengthens the capacities of peoples, local communities, and institutions; and networks with like-minded organizations locally and globally. In addition, the organization undertakes and disseminates research findings and facilitates knowledge transfer to inform actions and campaigns.

OUR CORE VALUES

- **Participation:**
  FoN believes in a people-centered development and rights-based advocacy that involves and enables inclusivity in our actions. We consider diverse perspectives and consciously mainstream those perspectives in our works.

- **Accountability:**
  FoN is accountable to all stakeholders and society at large. Our works and records are open to public scrutiny especially through our actions and with proper regard for the confidentiality of private information.

- **Gender Inclusivity:**
  FoN abhors discrimination in all forms particularly based on sex, gender, and social identity; and we guarantee and offer equal opportunity for both males and females in any endeavor. We treat one another with the respect that one desires for oneself in the affirmation that unless everyone does that, society cannot flourish.

- **Self-reliance:**
  FoN is self-reliant, and we maintain our independence and focus on the vision of the organization.

1.2 2023 Interventions under Programme Areas

Table 1: 2023 Interventions under Programme Areas

Programme Area	Project Name	Donors / Partners
Natural Resources and Assets Governance	Improving Fisheries Governance in Ghana (IFG).	Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, Inc. through Oak Foundation and Ocean 5, Environmental Justice Foundation, Hen Mpoano, Trygg Mat Tracking (TMT), Fisheries Committee of the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC).
	Power of Voices (PVP Fair for All) - Agriculture and Extractive Value Chains in Ghana	Oxfam

Climate Change and Environment	Research for Development and Innovation Agriculture and Learning Action (ReDIAL)	European Union, Implementing Partners: FRNR- KNUST, Tropenbos Ghana, SESI Technologies and SAYeTECH Company Limited.
	Climate Media Collaboration for Economic Justice and Community Rights	Oxfam
Community Development	Strategic Partnership Initiative for Ghana and West Africa	Oxfam
	Promoting Progressive Taxation and Tax Compliance in Ghana.	
	Women Economic Advancement for Collective Transformation (WEACT).	

1.3 Beneficiaries Engaged in 2023

In 2023, FoN physically engaged a total of 6,430 beneficiaries of which 2495 were females, and 3935 males, representing 39% and 61% respectively. The distribution of beneficiaries by sex and thematic area is respectively illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 below.

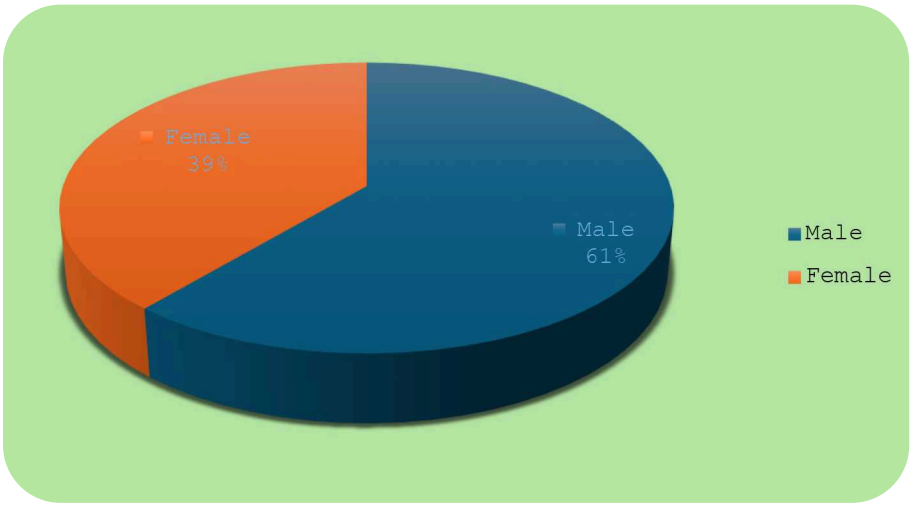


Figure 1: Total number of beneficiaries engaged disaggregated by gender.



Figure 2: Beneficiaries engaged per thematic area

2.0 SUMMARY OF SOME KEY ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER THE VARIOUS THEMATIC AREAS

2.1 Natural Resources and Assets Governance

Key results:

- Increased public awareness on the implementation of Moratorium under the 2022-2026 National Marine Fisheries Management Plan the Western and Central Regions of Ghana.
- 15 journalists' capacity enhanced on United Nations guiding principles of UNGP and FPIC to demand the adherence to these principles by companies in the agriculture and extractive industries.
- 662 residents of lithium-impacted communities empowered to demand better compensation and influence the business practices of Atlantic Lithium and its subcontractors in the Mfantseman Municipality of the Central Region.

2.2 Climate Change & Environment

Key results:

- Increased awareness of Ghana National Climate Change Policy and adaption plan in Shama and Ellembelle District
- Increased awareness among 300 students in Senior High School on climate change and its mitigation measures.
- Increased stakeholder awareness and enhanced capacity of farmers on the use of the FarmSense soil testing technology.
- Increased knowledge of 768 farmers on the soil fertility deficiency status of their farmlands, and Climate Smart Agriculture practices to enrich soil fertility.
- 521 Smallholder farmers' access to loans enhanced through Village Savings and Loans Associations
- Increased stakeholder awareness and enhanced capacity of young local artisans on the Multi-crop Thresher Technology.
- Post harvest loss reduced, and productivity increased among 409 smallholder grains and cereal farmers due to improved threshing services.

2.3 Community Development

Key results:

- Enhanced capacities of 122 citizens and youth on monitoring of mineral revenue at the sub-national level.
- Increased awareness and interest of the citizenry in the utilization of minerals revenue through town hall meetings
- Increased awareness of the negative impacts of women's time poverty, unfair distribution of unpaid work, and socio-cultural norms that hinder women's rights and economic empowerment.
- Enhanced women's time saving in domestic work through the adoption of improved technologies.
- Four hundred (400) women had their capacity built on entrepreneurship, leadership, and financial management, and were empowered to launch their entrepreneurship activities.

3.0 DETAILED DISCUSSIONS OF OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The section describes in detail the key achievements by highlighting the contextual background, the methodology, target groups, the key results, and the impact on the primary change agents.

3.1 Natural Resources and Assets Governance

3.1.1 Increased public awareness on the implementation of Moratorium under the 2022-2026 National Marine Fisheries Management Plan

Landings of the small pelagic fishery have been in sharp decline since 2000, reaching their lowest level in 2016 at 19,608 tonnes. This represents about 86 percent reduction in volume compared to the highest landings recorded in 1996 of 138,955 tonnes. The current free and open access regime for the artisanal fisheries has been identified as the main culprit resulting in the near collapse of Ghana's fisheries under the business-as-usual scenarios due to overcapacity (influx of canoes), overfishing, low productivity, and low profitability. To address the open access regime, the National Marine Fisheries Management Plan 2022-2026 envisaged implementing a Moratorium on new entrants of canoes to address the issue of Open Access and to regulate fishing pressure to revamp the fish stock. The Moratorium represents a major shift in Ghana's fisheries policy and has the potential of addressing the overcapacity and dwindling stocks. Like every management measure adequate engagement, sensitization, and coercion is needed to ensure full ownership of the process.



Figure 3: Central Region Director of Fisheries Commission, Mr. Kwame Damoah sensitizing fishermen on moratorium at Dutch Komenda.

It is against this background that FoN in 2023 supported the Fisheries Commission and Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council to increase public awareness on the implementation of the Moratorium through community sensitization meetings, dialogues, and one-on-one conversations in Coastal communities in Central and Volta Regions and Aboadze community in Western Region as well as National Television and Radio. These platforms helped increase public awareness to have a public discourse to ensure high compliance with a ministerial directive to all canoe owners to register and emboss their canoes and verify their registration numbers in line with section 55(1-3) of the Fisheries Act 2002 (Act 625).



Figure 4: Discussions on Moratorium by Executives of GNCFC at Radio 360.

3.1.2 Fifteen (15) journalists' capacity enhanced on United Nations guiding principles of UNGP and FPIC to demand the adherence to these principles by companies in the agriculture and extractive industries.



Figure 5: Journalists at the capacity enhancement workshop on United Nations guiding principles of UNGP and FPIC.

Within the year, 2023, 15 Journalist from Western and Western North regions had their knowledge enhanced on the United Nations Guiding Principles on Businesses and Human Rights (UNGP), United Nations Women Empowerment Principles (UNWEP), Free, Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) and Gender concepts in Extractive Governance. The journalists are expected to use the acquired knowledge to demand adherence to these principles by companies in the agriculture and

extractive industries. The training also served as a platform for participants to identify ways to address the harmful impact of the non-adherence to the United Nations guiding principles by companies in the agriculture and extractive industries. Journalists from the Western region after this training are also expected to advance discussions on human rights and gender.

3.1.3 Residents of lithium-impacted communities empowered to demand better compensation and influence the business practices of Atlantic Lithium and its sub-contractors.

The Ewoyaa lithium project developed by Atlantic Lithium is expected to be the first lithium-producing mine in Ghana, West Africa. The project is located approximately 100km south-west of Ghana's covers two contiguous licenses, namely Mankessim (RL 3/55) and Mankessim South (PL3/109). The first production of lithium concentrate from the mine is expected in the second quarter of 2025 and will mine 2.7 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) spodumene. The life of mine is projected to be for 12.5 years.



Figure 6: The Ewoyaa community, bearing the name of Ghana's first lithium mine.

Citizens' participation has been one of FoN's core values – empowering citizens to be actively involved in decision-making on issues that affect their lives. Accordingly, in 2023, FoN through its interventions with the lithium catchment communities has empowered 662 residents to understand the operations of such mines on the environment, social and cultural life of the people, and demand for better compensation. The empowerment was also meant to help community members influence the business practices of the mining company and its sub-contractors, whilst supporting them to co-create equitable mineral revenue-sharing principles at the sub-national level. This was achieved through community engagement with traditional leaders in the lithium catchment communities, the Municipal Assembly, Landowners, Women, and other



Figure 7: Community engagement at Krofu on FPIC principles for landowners, traditional leaders and other identifiable groups.

mineral revenues to advance the cause of women and the marginalized in society.

On resettlement and compensation, traditional leaders, landowners, and Assembly members' knowledge was enhanced through a three-day intensive capacity training on provisions on crop and land compensation and resettlement in the LI 2175, the Land Act



Figure 9: A woman shares her views on the lithium find and expected impact on residents of Abonko and their livelihoods during capacity building training of community members on the LI 2175 (compensation and resettlement)

identifiable groups. FoN has also facilitated exchange visits for selected leaders in the lithium catchment communities to learn from other mining communities such as Tarkwa and Obuasi, mining companies such as AngloGold Ashanti Iduaprim Mine, and the Goldfields Ghana (Tarkwa) Limited. Other state institutions such as the Tarkwa and Obuasi Municipal Assemblies have also shared their lessons on subnational revenue-sharing principles with the Mfantseman Municipal Assembly on how to use



Figure 8: Learning and sharing exchange visit to Anglogold Ashanti Iduaprim mine by some members of the Ewoyaa Compensation Negotiation Committee and leadership of the Mfantseman Municipal Assembly.

of Ghana, and Environmental and Social Impact Assessment procedures in the mining sector. With lessons from Tarkwa and Obuasi and other mining areas in the background, FoN is committed to providing the capacity needs of the people within the lithium catchment communities to make

choices that will benefit communities using the Free Prior Informed Consent [FPIC] Principles.

3.2 Environment and Climate Justice

3.2.1 Increased awareness of Ghana National Climate Change Policy and Adaption Plan in Shama and Ellembelle District



Figure 10: Group discussion at the stakeholder workshop on climate change in Ellembelle District.

Climate change impacts are already being felt everywhere in the world and increasingly adaptation is required. FoN in 2023, increased awareness of the National Climate Change Policy and the adaptation plan among key stakeholders in Ellembelle and Shama Districts, climate change issues within these districts were discussed and an action plan was drawn. Key issues in the Action plan included the enforcement of byelaws, continually planting trees, and increased public awareness of climate change and its impact through radio discussions.



Figure 11: Participants at the stakeholder workshop on climate change in Shama.

3.2.2 Increased awareness among 300 students in Senior High School on climate change and its mitigation measures.



Figure 12: Murals and artwork developed by students.

The knowledge of 300 students from Shama Senior High School (Visual Art Students) was enhanced on climate change and have developed murals and artworks showcasing the dangers of climate change. Additionally, youth academics were guided and supported to develop Murals and Artwork to showcase the dangers of climate change. The murals and artworks were showcased at an exhibition and stakeholder forum in Shama to create awareness of the dangers of climate and inspire community members to join the global fight against climate change by speaking up on emission of greenhouse gases by companies; developing adaptation and mitigation solutions and implementing actions such as replanting forest; restoring the ecosystem; resorting to effective and proper planning of settlements; and promoting the use of renewable energy and low carbon fuels, to enable people respond to current and future climate change impacts.

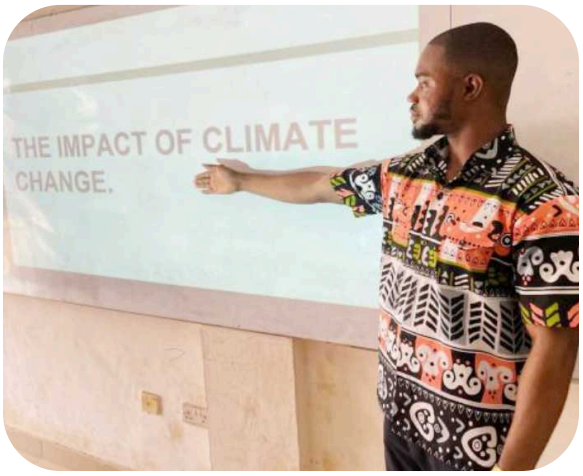


Figure 13: FoN staff facilitating a training session on climate change in Shama Senior High School.



Figure 14: Murals and artwork developed by students.



Figure 15: Cross section of Visual Arts students of Shama High School in a training session on climate change.

3.2.3 Increased stakeholder awareness and enhanced capacity of farmers on the use of the FarmSense Soil Testing Technology.

Within the year 2023, FoN under the ReDIAL Project continued to introduce the FarmSense soil testing technology to farmers and stakeholders through community information sessions, national policy dialogue sessions, and participation and distribution of visibility materials at national and international programs such as AFRIWOCC 2023 exhibitions, National Farmers Day and CoP28, etc. This was expected to enhance awareness among stakeholders and encourage uptake of the technology, and an estimated number of over 5,000 people were reached.



Figure 16: Participants at AFRIWOCC 2023 Conference picking up ReDIAL visibility materials at the exhibition stand.

Additionally, FoN undertook capacity building and skills transfer training for farmers in project districts on the use of the FarmSense soil testing technology. Using a 'training of trainers' approach, 24 agriculture extension officers were trained on the use of the FarmSense device and deployed to transfer the knowledge to targeted farmers in their operational areas (communities) by conducting one-on-one training for them. Cumulatively, 768 (540 males; 228 females) smallholder grains and cereal farmers (including 203



Figure 17: AEO showing a farmer how to insert the sensor and capture soil nutrient data with the FarmSense device at Donkorkrom

youth farmers) were reached and trained across the five project zones. The training was conducted on their individual farms and involved both theoretical and practical demonstrations. The farmers were trained on what the FarmSense soil testing technology is about, how the test kit works, and how to operate the test kit to capture and record soil nutrient data, as well as the interpretation of the results.

3.2.4 Increased knowledge of 768 farmers on the soil fertility deficiency status of their farmlands, and Climate Smart Agriculture practices to enrich soil fertility.

Within the year, FoN through the agriculture extension officers in five project districts conducted free soil testing for a total of 768 (540 males; 228 females) smallholder grains and cereal farmers (including 12 PwDs farmers) across the five project districts using the FarmSense soil testing kit. Agriculture extension officers who are experts in soil nutrient enhancement were trained and deployed to provide soil testing services



Figure 18: AEOs interpreting soil fertility data to a farmer at Techiman (left) and Ejura (right)

to targeted farmers, interpret the results to them, and educate the farmers about the soil fertility deficiency status of their farmlands as well as alternatives they can adopt to enhance the soil fertility of their farmlands. Depending on the outcomes of the test, each farmer was advised on what soil nutrient enhancement practice to adopt including lanting of nitrogen fixation crops, crop rotation, intercropping, application of organic fertilizers, application of inorganic fertilizers with higher proportions of either potassium, nitrogen or phosphorus, etc.

3.2.5 Smallholder farmers access to loans enhanced through Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA)

In the year 2023, FoN continued with the mobilization of smallholder farmers and the introduction of the VSLA module to them to facilitate local resource mobilization and access to financial resources for investment in their livelihood activities. Thus, FoN facilitated the formation of 6 VSLA groups (1 in Ejura, 1 at Yendi, and 4 at Techiman), with a total membership of 193 farmers including 51 males, 142 females, and 28 PwDs. In addition to those formed in 2022, the organization has established a total of 18 VSLA groups across the five project districts with a total membership of 551 farmers (172 males; and 379 females). The groups were monitored and guided throughout



Figure 19: Group Picture of Enkabom VSLA during and after their share-out.

the year to ensure they abide by the rules of the module. By the end of the year, the 18 groups contributed GHS 393,233 (EUR31,466.24) and gave out GHS224,260 (EUR 17,945.13) as loans to about 80% of the total membership in all districts, except for Yendi where members did not agree to give out loans in the first-year cycle. FoN also supported 17 of the groups that had completed a one-year cycle of contribution to conduct their first share-out (i.e. share the contributions and interest generated based on individual contributions). Members were also trained in financial literacy to enable them to properly utilize the money they got from the share-out.

Generally, the VSLA module has enhanced members' access to financial resources to invest in their livelihood activities including farming, trading, etc. At very minimal interest rates (5% or 10%) and flexible payment terms, members have been able to access loans from the groups to buy farm inputs such as fertilizers, weedicides, pesticides, farm labour, rent land; as well as start new business ventures including

buying and selling of farm produce, trading of agro-inputs and selling of provisions.

3.2.6 Increased stakeholder awareness and enhanced capacity of young local artisans on the Multi-crop Thresher Technology.

FoN introduced the multi-crop thresher technology to over 1000 stakeholders (including farmers, private investors, and policymakers), with the expectation to increase awareness and enhance uptake of the technology to facilitate easy threshing and improved productivity among farmers. Further, FoN mobilized thirty (30) farmers who are also artisans (including welders, mechanics, and electricians) and trained them in the operation and maintenance of the multi-crop thresher. The trainees were educated on the components of the thresher and their functions; how to troubleshoot the thresher machine on the field, how to condition crops before threshing, how to identify faults and conduct repairs on damaged parts; movement and safety protocols; as well as optimal output of the threshers. The knowledge and skills transferred to the trainees are to prepare them to provide threshing and repair services to improve productivity of grain farmers in the zones; as well as enhance their employability and income levels.



Figure 20: Capacity building and skills transfer for youth on the multi-crop thresher at Ejura (left) and Sefwi (right)

3.2.7 Post harvest loss reduced, and productivity increased among 409 smallholder grains and cereal farmers due to improved threshing services.

FoN continued to provide free threshing services to smallholder grains and cereal farmers in the five project districts throughout 2023 using multi-crop grain threshers. Within the year, a total of 409 marginalized farmers (191 males & 218 females) from 31 communities within the five project districts benefitted from this service. The beneficiaries comprise 326 (73.4%) maize farmers, 81 (18.2%) rice farmers, 32 (7.2%) soya beans farmers and 5 (1.1%) sorghum farmers. Overall, a total of 1406.3 (100kg) bags of grains were threshed, comprising 1174.3 (100kg) bags of maize, 172 (100kg) bags of rice, 23 (100kg) bags of soya beans and 37 (100kg) bags of sorghum.

Feedback from beneficiaries indicated that the threshing services provided by FoN have liberated beneficiaries from the hustle of manual threshing which comes with stress, drudgery, and post-harvest losses, and has contributed to reduced post-loss, increased productivity, and income. Particularly, beneficiaries affirmed that the multi-crop thresher thoroughly separated the grains from the husk and cob, without



Figure 21: Threshing of maize at Techiman (left) and Ejura (right)

breaking or splashing any, and thus no grain was lost during the threshing activity (i.e. zero post-harvest losses). Additionally, the grains produced by the multi-crop thresher were confirmed to be of better quality (free from chaff, debris, breakages, and stones) compared to those produced from manual threshing or other means of threshing available. Further, the multi-crop thresher averagely threshes a (100kg) bag

of grain within 10 minutes, with an average labor of 5 people, however, threshing the same quantity using other means of threshing would have taken at least 125 minutes with an average labor of 8 people. The high quality of grains produced which helped to enhance the market value, coupled with zero post-harvest losses, no threshing cost, and reduced threshing time and labor is expected to contribute to improved income of beneficiaries.

3. 3 Community Development.

3.3.1 Enhanced capacities of 122 citizens and youth on monitoring of mineral revenue at the sub-national level.

Mining in Ghana has played a significant role in the country's economic development. It has a rich history that dates back to the pre-colonial era when gold mining was a major economic activity. The mining sector in Ghana accounts for over 5% of the country's GDP and minerals make up 37% of total exports, out of which gold contributes over 90% of the total minerals exports. As of 2020, the highest income from exports in Ghana was from gold, and gold accrued over 7.1 billion U.S. dollars that year. This makes gold the focus of Ghana's mineral sector. Revenues from manganese and bauxite added up to 142 million and 38 million U.S dollars respectively.



Figure 22: The monitoring team interacting with an officer at the ICT center and Robotic lab in Bogoso

Overall, Ghana's receipt from minerals covered 48.4 percent of its total exports in 2020. Export earnings from minerals average 35% and the sector is a major contributor to the government's revenue through the payment of mineral royalties, employee income taxes, and corporate taxes. However, mining activities in Ghana have had a significant negative impact on the environment, especially on mining communities. In view of this, the Minerals Development Fund Act, 2016, (Act 912) was passed specifically to allocate financial resources to the direct benefit of mining communities, institutions responsible for the development of the

mining sector, traditional and local government authorities, and related matters.

In 2023, FoN empowered 122 citizens and Youth from mining communities to monitor mineral revenue received at the sub-national level. These citizens and youth were from four mining districts: Tarkwa Nsuaem, Prestea Huni-Valley, Wassa Amenfi East Municipal Assemblies, and Ellembelle district. Through participatory training workshops, these citizens and youth had their knowledge enhanced on revenue management frameworks, participatory monitoring and evaluation at the local governance structure, and indicators for monitoring of physical projects at the sub-national level. Participants also had firsthand information on the projects implemented within their respective districts with funding from the mineral revenue, and together with officials from the district assemblies embarked on a monitoring visit to all the MDF-funded projects within their respective districts, both the completed and uncompleted ones. The projects include the construction of a school building, community center, market, office complex, Assembly staff quarters, provision of boreholes, etc. This engagement provided the platform for participants to interact with the District Assembly officials, Traditional leaders, Assembly members, and some key user agencies like the Ghana Education Service on key issues identified during the monitoring visit.



Figure 23: The monitoring team interacting with an Official from the TNMA in Israel -Tarkwa.

3.3.2 Increased awareness and interest of the citizenry in the utilization of minerals revenue through town hall meetings

FoN facilitated four (4) town hall meetings in Wassa Amenfi East, Prestea Huni-Valley, Tarkwa Nsuaem, and Ellembelle District on the Assemblies' allocation and utilization of Mineral revenues. In all 404 citizens made up of 272 males and 127 females participated in this meeting. The meetings contributed to increased awareness and interest of the citizenry in the utilization of mineral revenue. It also created the opportunity for citizens to interact with the District Assembly officials. Some citizens have demanded

a fair share of development from mineral revenue since their communities are also mining communities.



Figure 24: Town-Hall meeting in Tarkwa.



Figure 25: A town-hall meeting at Nkroful in Ellembelle District.

3.3.3 Increased awareness of the negative impacts of women's time poverty, unfair distribution of unpaid work, and socio-cultural norms that hinder women's rights and economic empowerment.

Within the year of reporting, FoN continued with the implementation of the Gender Transformative Model which sought to enhance societal awareness of the negative impacts of women's time and unfair distribution of unpaid work done by women.



Figure 26: Quarterly meeting of Gender Model Families in Asuoklo

Accordingly, a refresher training was conducted for 24 gender mentors who were educated on the concept and issues of concern, to serve as advocates against societal norms that limits Gender Model Families (GMF) in fulfilling their commitments to ensuring gender equality/ equity at the household level. The mentors were also guided to develop advocacy strategies and messages to promote this course. Additionally, 360 GMF from 8 project communities were educated on how to quantify the monetary value of unpaid care/domestic work. This enabled household members to recognize the economic significance of women's time and

care work, and as such redistributes unpaid care work, and renew their commitments to ensuring equality at the household level. Quarterly monitoring of the GMFs was also conducted by the gender mentors to ensure that the households fulfilled their commitments.

Also, in 2023, FoN organized workshops in 4 project districts (Sefwi Wiawso, Suaman, Aowin, and Amenfi West municipalities) to empower women to understand socio-cultural norms in their communities that hinder their rights, and how they can effectively address pertinent issues and advocate for their rights. Accordingly, women and youth groups in these municipalities were identified and brought together for the workshop. Participants were led to conduct a historical profiling of gender issues and socio-cultural norms in their communities that hinder women's economic empowerment, and also guided to develop advocacy messages and action plans for advocacy to influence such norms. Two key issues were addressed namely; women's access to land and the burden of unpaid care work.



Figure 27: Developing advocacy messages

3.3.4 Enhanced women's time saving in domestic work through the adoption of improved technologies.

In 2023, to help women save time spent in domestic work, FoN supported one hundred and twenty (120) women in the project communities to acquire domestic equipment and gadgets that provide technical solutions to domestic chores done manually. Prior to that, technology service



Figure 28: Handing over selected items to beneficiaries in Kwabeng in the Amenfi West Municipality

providers were engaged, and learning exposure visits were organized for selected GMFs. Subsequently, the GMFs were provided with grants to purchase specific technical solutions needed to address their respective needs. Coaching and technical support were further provided to enable the women to properly use and maintain the technologies, as well as promote the adoption of the same in their communities.

3.3.5 Four hundred (400) women had their capacity built on entrepreneurship, leadership, and financial management, and were empowered to launch their entrepreneurship activities

In the year 2023, FoN under the WEACT Project implemented the gender-responsive skills development training module, where a total of 400 women across the project communities were on various entrepreneurship skills, business management practices, transformational leadership, and financial literacy. Topics covered during the training include business and financial management; budgeting and financial planning; credit and debt management; how to access credit facilities; challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and how to address them, among others. Out of the number trained, 120 of them were particularly trained on valorization of cocoa leftovers and provided with start-up materials to work with. Generally, the training helped to equip the women with essential knowledge and skills on how to effectively manage their businesses and finances and make informed financial/business decisions to achieve greater financial independence.



Figure 29: Financial Literacy Training in Sui.

In line with the Project's aim to foster entrepreneurship and empower women in business, FoN under the WEACT Project provided financial assistance to selected women entrepreneurs (based on eligibility criteria such as business viability) to enable them to procure the necessary inputs to kick-start their entrepreneurial ventures and overcome the initial financial barriers. Prior to that, two-day trade fairs were organized in the project communities to link the women entrepreneurs trained to key

suppliers in areas pertinent to their business plans. Accordingly, about eighty (80) suppliers and producers exhibited their products during the event and 120 women entrepreneurs were linked to these suppliers. The women had the opportunity to interact with successful businesswomen within and outside their jurisdiction as well as learn new business skills, exchange ideas, establish connections/ networks, negotiate favorable terms, and source high quality inputs. Additionally, sustainability initiatives and support mechanisms such as mentorship programs, access to market linkages, and continued financial assistance from other institutions were explored during the exhibition fair.



Figure 30: Trade Fair at Sefwi-Wiawso



Figure 31: Exhibition show in Asankragwa

4.0 IMPACT STORIES

This section presents stories from beneficiaries on the interventions implemented within the year demonstrating how the intervention impacted positively on the lives of beneficiaries.

4.1 Change story

4.1.1 A single mother regained self-sufficiency through entrepreneurship training and financial assistance (grant) provided by the WEACT Project.

Joyce Oteng is a cocoa farmer and a single mother from the Ahokwah community. She lost her livelihood and employment due to a re-location program and partly due to illegal mining (Galamsey). As a result, Joyce resorted to casual labour to earn income for her

daily upkeep, while keenly searching for other employment opportunities. Due to the limited income from the casual labour work, Joyce could not support her son to further his education after passing the West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination.

Fortunately for Joyce, she happened to participate in the entrepreneurship and financial literacy training organized by the WEACT project at Ahokwah. Following the training, she developed and submitted a business plan for the financial assistance component. Her proposal was selected and thus, she received a grant to start her own business which was buying and selling maize. During the WEACT trade fair held at Sefwi-Wiawso, Joyce had the opportunity to meet a maize supplier and establish a connection with her to retail maize in her community. Initially, she bought two bags of maize with the grant given to her by the Project. After selling the two bags within a month, Joyce reinvested her profit into the business to buy additional bags, and currently she buys six bags of maize every month from her supplier.



Figure 32: Madam Joyce Oteng, taking records of her sales

With the training Joyce received from the entrepreneurship and financial literacy training, she keeps records of all her daily sales in her records book and monitors her expenses which has helped her to manage her finances properly. With the improvement in her income, Joyce has joined and is now saving with the Village Savings and Loans Association in her community, which provides her easy access to loans for her business and other livelihood activities. With the profit from her business, Joyce has now been able to finance her son's tertiary education. In an interview with Joyce, she expressed her profound gratitude to the WEACT Project for helping her establish a source of livelihood for herself. She added, "...being a single mother does not mean I cannot be successful; I only needed support and got it from the WEACT project...".

4.1.2 Breaking negative societal gender norms and enhancing women's economic empowerment through the Gender Model Family (GMF) concept.

Thomas Okran and Abena Theresah are a Gender Model Family under the WEACT Project in the Asuoklo community in the Aowin Municipality. With the knowledge and understanding gained through the training on the gender model, the family now distributes unpaid work in their household fairly which has positively impacted them. According to Mr. Okran, members of the family had independent duties daily in line with the gender norms of their society, but this changed when they got into the GMF and learned about the fair distribution of household chores. Thus, each member now unites to ensure that household chores paid or unpaid are completed. Originally, a farmer and wife (supporting her husband with farming and doing most of the unpaid work in the household), Abena now works as a trader also, selling vegetables and food in nearby communities. The husband and children now support her to complete the unpaid tasks which saves her time to do her trading business.



Figure 33: The Okran family performing their household chores.

4.1.3 A family relieved from seasonal hardship due to enhanced knowledge on entrepreneurship skills and financial management

Seasonal poverty/hardship among rural farmers is a common issue in most rural communities in Ghana including Sui community. Due to poor saving culture, overdependence on farming and lack of alternative livelihood sources, most rural farmers find it difficult to sustain their livelihoods during off-farm seasons. The situation was the same for Madam Elizabeth Siame until she encountered the WEACT entrepreneurship training programme. Until this encounter Elizabeth was solely a farmer and during off-farm season, she stays 'idle' at home waiting for the next season, which makes her household experience hardship when the income generated from the previous farming season is exhausted. With the knowledge acquired on entrepreneurship skills,

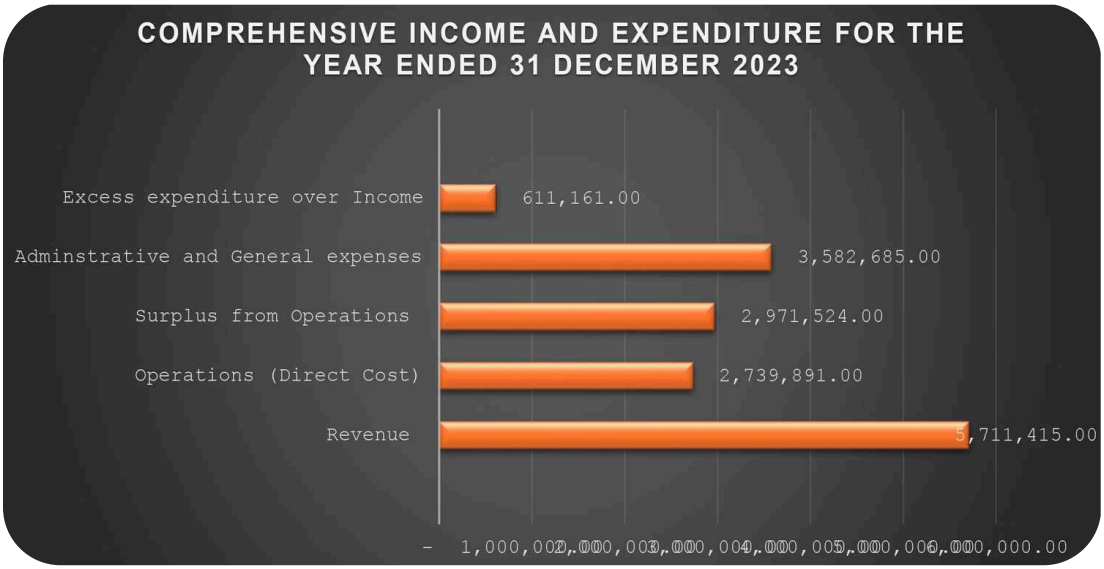


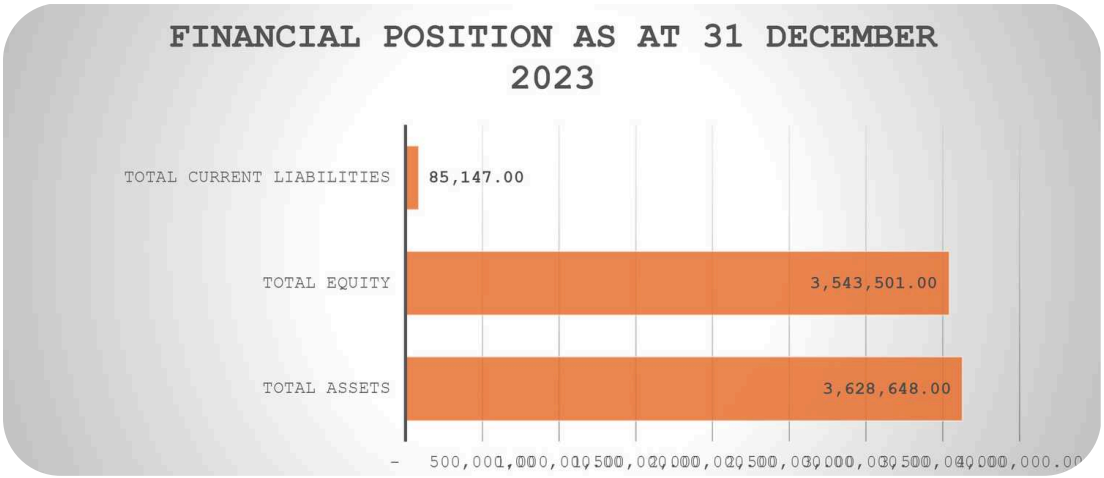
Figure 34: Siame Elizabeth sharing her story.

business management, financial management, and leadership, Elizabeth saved some money and began trading of food stuff. This has created a multiple source of income for her household and enhanced her family's income and livelihood especially during off farm season. Narrating how the WEACT training programme has impacted her life, Elizabeth said:

"...For my household, farming is our main source of income and livelihood; we cultivate cocoa and food crops. After selling the produce, we use the income to sort our household needs including payment of children's fees. With the increasing cost of inputs, farming does not generate much income these days. But our financial situation worsens during the cocoa lean season because we have no other source of livelihood. During that time, hardship sets in, and it becomes very difficult to afford our basic needs and support our children in school.

However, this situation changed when I joined the entrepreneurship training organized by WEACT in my community. I was made to understand the need to establish an alternative source of income; and how to start and manage my own business. The training also exposed me to the need for savings and how to manage my finances. The training encouraged me to start saving with the VSLA group in the community. Immediately after I joined, I borrowed some money from the group and used it as capital to start my trading business – selling vegetables and grains. It has been four months since I started this business, and I am so happy. The income I generate from this business has helped to release my family from the hardship we encounter during off-farm season. Also, I plan to use the savings I am doing with the VSLA group to buy a sewing machine for my daughter to learn dressmaking. This would significantly enhance my household's income level and well-being." (Madam Elizabeth Siame, December: 2023)





5.0 FINANCIAL RESULTS



NSAB: 0249 533 557

Adiembra-Sekondi (inside Parks & Gardens) | Email: info@fonghana.org
Tel: +233 (0) 20 977 8778 | Toll-free Line: 0800-146-181
FoN Ghana @Ghana_FoN Friends of the Nation
www.fonghana.org