

FISTRAD Annual Report 2025

Message from the Board Chair & Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This past year has been one of mixed challenges. The results of the 2024 elections in Ghana and the United States led to changes in governments and policies that have had a serious impact on our programmes. The withdrawal of USAID projects in Ghana brought some of our projects to an abrupt end. Despite that, we experienced growth, resilience, and meaningful impact. Thanks to the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and Paul EV our main donors, and other partners, FAWE and the Ghana Community Radio Network, we continued to advance our mission to reduce poverty and create an enlightened society in Builsa and Upper East Region.

Together, we managed to train forty-five girls in cloth weaving and dressmaking, carried out adolescent reproductive health education amongst five hundred girls and boys in the district, and expanded key radio programs aimed at reducing ignorance and also sensitized community members to demand accountability and their rights. We have increased the capacity for people to express themselves through radio programming, involving people in national discourse and deepened democratic rights by providing a voice to ordinary citizens through radio. We have also strengthened our organisational foundation by training some staff in digital technology and radio technology with support from SES and Xavier Maya as the facilitator and trainer. Our ICT and library services are also making impacts on many children in the vicinity

. We are deeply grateful to Paul EV for the trust and support given us and Xavier Maya for his part in facilitating SES support and training our staff.

Unfortunately, the year brought grief and pain as we lost a staff member, Emmanuel Alonkunab, in February, my wife Beatrice in March, and our Board Chairman, Chief Afulang, in September. May they rest in eternal peace.

Our Mission ; To work in partnership with like-minded individuals and organisations to eradicate poverty and ignorance in Builsa.

Our Vision:

A world of equal opportunities, enlightened communities in an environmentally friendly atmosphere.

Core Values:

- **Integrity**
- **Equity**
- **Collaboration**
- **Impact**
- **Accountability**

Key Highlights:

• Vocational training for forty-five girls enrolled and undergoing training.

- Fifteen staff and volunteers trained in radio technology and digitisation.
- Renovation of radio compound fencing and replacement of carpet in the studio with Tyles
- ICT training for rural children without access to computers.
- Library services to the community.
- Enhanced Solar project.

Programs & Impact:

Adolescent reproductive health education: This programme is in partnership with a local organisation named FAWE and sponsored by Global affairs 360 Canada. The objectives of the project are to educate young people on their sexuality so as to reduce school dropouts due to teenage pregnancy, early marriages, and rampant infections of sexually transmitted diseases. The project is carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, and Education. School children are given education and training so as to avoid behaviours that expose them to early sex and its unintended consequences. Young people out of school also benefit from the project through radio programming and community fora.

Since the introduction of the project two years ago, data from the health facilities in the district shows a seventy percent reduction in sexually related diseases and unwanted pregnancies amongst the youth. The Ghana Education Service has also recorded drastic

reductions of ninety percent in school dropouts due to teenage pregnancy.

ICT Training and Library

The programme was introduced three years ago to support rural school children who have no access to computers and consequently computer literacy, a situation that puts them at a serious disadvantage. In this era where ICT education is key. We currently have twenty computers and we are serving three rural schools. They each come twice a week. Our strategy for getting students to read in the library is that access to computer training is tied to attendance at the library. The impact of that policy is a renewed interest in the library facility and reading in the three participating schools. It is unfortunate that there is a decline in book reading habits among Ghanaian youth; they are rather opting more for social media and the internet.

The change in the school curriculum has rendered most of our books in the library obsolete. We are replenishing the library with new curriculum materials. This we started last year and continued with it this year. It is important to acknowledge here that apart from the Paul's financial support, during my recent visit to the England Nick O'Neil and his family members also made financial contributions to support purchases of books for the library. Presently, the junior high school children can have access to most of their new curriculum books in the library. The senior high school books are also available. We have also added more benches and tables to increase seating capacity. We have a paid librarian to take care of the library. Our next plan is to expand IT education amongst the youth and people born before computers and ready to learn. We intend to call for enhancement of the IT laboratory so as to include higher areas of knowledge such as editing, cyber security, and production. Increasing skills in this area will make more youth employable or even start their own businesses. All these cannot be done without a reliable internet facility. This is the direction FISTRAD wants to go moving forward.



Students using the library



Hands on at computer lab

Vocational training

- Our traditional vocational training programme in cloth weaving and tailoring started in the first week of February with enrolment of new trainees, purchases of training materials, and repairs of broken machines. This year, fifteen first years were enrolled, all girls. Together with second and final year, we had forty-five trainees with only one boy. The year started quite successfully as the vocational class was able to produce clothes for sale, and therefore we had some money to do the initial preparation for starting the programme until Paul gave us financial support for the year. This year we intensified entrepreneurial training to ensure that when they pass out, they will have the necessary skills to succeed



Trainees At Work

Passing out ceremony

- Third year trainees usually write a final examination practically and a little bit of theory. They also write the National vocational Training Institute examination which is national and highly recommended and recognized. They can even progress up to grade three which is equivalent to diploma. To demonstrate their skills, they are required to weave their own clothes and sew them to wear for the occasion. The passing out ceremony took place on the seventeenth of January 2026. This was due to trainees delay in completing their assignment because most of them were also involved in peasant farming during the rainy season for their upkeep



Final years who passed out

Radio project

- It is one of our most successful projects that has impacted the community and beyond. Established in 2008 with funding from German Embassy and facilitated by madam Annette Turman and French Embassy. We broadcast in Buli, kantosi , Kassim and English. Transmission begins by five of the clock every morning and closes at ten in the night. We have four permanent staff and uncountable volunteers.
- The morning show depends on volunteers who come as resource persons and all our community programs are run by volunteers.
- As a radio station, we are members of the Ghana community radio network and also the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association. We also work in partnership with District Assembly, Chiefs, other NGOs in Ghana and Embassies. Currently we are doing adolescence reproductive health in partnership with FAWE another NGO and Agro ecology with the Ghana Community Radio Network We have worked with German, French Canadian embassies USAID, UNESCO, DW academy and the British council in the past. Paul EV from Germany Kreuzwerthein, remains our strategic partners since the station was established sixteen years ago.
- Radio Builsa and FISTRAD are fully compliant with national legislation being registered with the Registra General Department and the department of Social Welfare
- Radio Builsa Morning show is our flagship program and is listened to across four districts with approximately seven hundred thousand people. We also do lots of community-based programs involving community members sensitizing and educating people on issues from health, agriculture economics, social and cultural programs. The station has brought cultural revival among the youth and the elderly, and encouraged speaking out by community members on issues affecting them. Radio Builsa has brought enlightenment to the community. The Builsa traditional Council gave us a dissertation for our outstanding performance in bringing development to the area. We also had the Northern media Award for the year 2021

- With the financial support from Paul, we replaced the carpet in the studio with Tyles and floored the compound with concrete and fenced it to make it safer and nice. Upon the initiative of Mr Xavier Maya, we got support from SES a German organization that enabled him to visit us for three months and supported us with our technical challenges. He also trained our staff in basic equipment maintenance and presentation techniques.



Xavier Maya with Radio Staff

Solar Project

- The solar project was financed by Paul to help reduce our expenses on electricity and also to provide stable power. Presently it is functioning quite well. However we still have some challenges which need to be addressed. It is not able to power the two air conditioners. We are therefore using the national electricity to power them and that is expensive. To reduce expenditure, we sometimes do without cooling the systems which is very difficult and dangerous particularly during the hot season. In November this year Mr Werner Frei the engineer who supplied the equipment signed a performance improvement agreement with us. The agreement is for fifteen years and he is to help improve the situation to allow the two air conditioners to be on the solar system. We are now waiting for the contract plans to be implemented. According to the contract terms we are to pay a monthly fee to a given account which has not yet been provided
- We are also to provide some airtime for evangelism which will be used as part payment of the cost of the solar system and that has started and ongoing. We believe it is a fair deal and a win win situation as he is into evangelism. We are looking forward to seeing how the arrangement works



Set up of Solar

Guest House

- The guest house project which started as a means of providing accommodation to our visitors has now become one of our sustainable projects. The guest house has four self-contained rooms and a kitchen in the center for use by visitors who need that service. We don't provide food but give the opportunity for visitors to store food in the fridge or even cook if they choose to. We have a cleaner and a care taker The guest house is the only sustainable project as a social enterprise. It is able to pay it's staff maintain equipment and still make profit at the end of the month. We hope to in future increase the number of rooms and facilities.



Gertrude Schuber Hall

The hall was constructed to recognize the contributions of our mother Gertrude Schuber as chairperson of Paul EV; the hall has become a social enterprise a meeting point for several events. In the past we use to hold our meeting in the library which was interfering with visitors using the library. Now we have a comfortable meeting place for workshops and other community meetings. It has become the focal point of FISTRAD. We have started advertising it and I believe very soon some people or organizations will like to rent it for their programs



Trip to Europe

◦ The Executive Director of FISTRAD Mr Richard Alandu undertook a trip to The United Kingdom and Germany. The purpose of the trip was to visit his friend and Co-Founder of FISTRAD who is now unwell and not capable of visiting Sandema to see and participate in project activities and also reconnect with Patricks family, former Board of Trustees members and other supporters in the UK The other reason was to visit our friends in Germany Paul EV who have been our project partners and who organize Ghana Day, a fundraising campaign annually mostly in October. My last visit was in 2022. My presence I believe would have added another dimension to the campaign which brings together friends and supporters. Unfortunately, this time around there was a problem of no access to interview appointments and therefore I couldn't get a visa to Germany so I went to the United Kingdom since I had a visa. How ever my inability to get a visa to Germany gave birth to another idea which paid off. My Friend Mr Nick O'Neil a supporter of FISTRAD agreed to represent me in Germany and to carry a few gifts from Ghana to our friends. For the first time a friend and supporter of FISTRAD from the United Kingdom participated in Ghana Day fundraising campaign which was very lovely. Nick has told me severally that he is willing to work with Paul in their activities. I hope in the next not very distant future Nick and I will do the German tour which we planned in our itinerary for my visit. When I informed Almuth Schuber that I will be in London to visit Patrick, she warmly accepted the idea to visit Patrick and decided to meet me in London so we can together visit Patrick and show our love and solidarity. After the visit to Patrick, Nick who led us there and a typical Londoner, also led us to explore the city enjoyed coffee and other pleasantries before we both left London in different directions. I can say it was my highest point in the visit, one that shows sometimes the bond between citizens of different countries is much limited by the bureaucracy in the Embassy or Visa application process.



Almuth, Richard and Patrick in London

- The Visit to England gave me the opportunity to meet former Trustees Jenny Brown and Abraham Wilson and to reconnect with good friends like Jason Welsh and his family, Mr John Page and member of the Zephyr Trust Elizabeth Breeze even though they supported us for a couple of years it was during this trip I had the opportunity to meet her personally. unfortunately, I couldn't meet Donald Watson her husband and Cathy Galashan due to the brevity of my visit to London. It also gave an opportunity to explore the north of England and to see and experience the culture and beautiful towns villages and topography of the country side
- Nick used the opportunity to introduce me to the university of York where we had a conversation on collaboration with the climate change department on the issue of agro ecology to address challenges of agriculture in Builsa. I hope if successful it will build bridges between the university of York and farmers in Builsa particularly in the area of research and climate change



Nick with Ugenia Obeng of University of York Rep representative

Way forward

Since the start of FISTRAD nearly three decades ago, a lot has changed in the area of civil society and the communities we serve. The need for the young rural child to have the opportunity to learn digital skills or literacy is crucial if they are not to be left out. We are also in a world in which adults also need to upgrade to be able to cope with educational and work trends. We have to unlearn old skills and adapt new ones if we are to keep to the realities of our times.

- Our aim is now to become more facilitators to move our young ones into digital skills. Move the library gradually into E-library and the radio to become more digital such that we can be accessed anywhere.
- This is not an easy objective but with determination and support from friends and partners it is very possible.

- Compiled by Awentite Winnie
- Signature
- Executive Director

Alandu Richard