



FARMER MANAGED NATURAL REGENERATION FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND LIVELIHOODS PROJECT (FMNR4WELIP) PROJECT IN NABDAM DISTRICT

YEAR TWO PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT (AUGUST 1, 2024 – JANUARY 31, 2025)

Submitted to
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

GSLA	Group Savings and Loans Association
FMNR	Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration
GAPs	Good Agricultural Practices
GNFS	Ghana National Fire Service

Table of Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms	2
The Project Goal and Objectives	4
Project Goal	4
Project Objectives.....	4
Expected Project Results/Outputs.....	4
Planned Activities for the Reporting Period.....	5
Activities Implemented (August 2024-January 2025).....	5
August 20-21, 2024: Monitoring and support visits to Dasang Community	5
August 27-28, 2024: Monitoring and support visits to Kparaboug Community	8
August 6&9, 2024: Field monitoring assessment of orange trees support performance	10
October 3, 2024: Plastic bags support to communities to reduce elephant crop raids.....	12
October 18, 2024: Poultry rearing livelihood improvement support.....	12
November 20 & 21, 2024: Refresher Training for Community Fire Volunteer Squads	14
November/December, 2024: Support to GNFS Bushfire Radio Awareness Campaign.....	15
December 2024: Support to Nabdam District Assembly to develop Draft Bushfire Byelaws.....	16
January 17, 2025 – Project review and extension consultative meetings.....	18
What next? – Ideas for Project Phase Two:.....	19
Key Outcomes/Lessons learned:.....	20

The Project Goal and Objectives

Project Goal

The project goal is to contribute to increased food security and empowerment of 400 rural poor women and girls through promotion of sustainable livelihoods in Dasang and Kparaboug villages (Communities) in Nabdam District by 2024. The project aims to enhance people's livelihoods by first implementing the Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) method to restore degraded lands, which then leads to multiple benefits like increased crop yields, improved soil health, and access to fuelwood and ultimately improving their economic and social well-being.

Phase One Project Duration: 24 months (February 2023 – January 2025)

Project Objectives

The project has two main objectives, which are:

- **Objective 1:** Enhance the capacity of farmers in target communities to adopt FMNR for improved household food and livelihoods security.
- **Objective 2:** Increase farmers, women in particular, access to alternative livelihoods that reduce pressure on tree resources.

Expected Project Results/Outputs

The project expected results/outputs are as follows:

Objective 1: Enhance capacity of farmers in target communities to adopt FMNR for improved household food and livelihoods security.

- Output 1.1: Project target communities (villages) mobilized and sensitized on the project.
- Output 1.2: FMNR Lead Farmer groups formed and trained in FMNR techniques and good agricultural practices (GAPs).
- Output 1.3: Community bushfire awareness and preparedness enhanced in target areas.
- Output 1.4: Project target communities supported to establish FMNR demonstration plots.

Objective 2: Increase farmers, particularly female farmers, access to alternative livelihoods that reduced pressure on tree resources.

- Output 2.1: Diversified alternative livelihood options for women, the youth and the most vulnerable developed to reduce pressures on woodlands due to overdependence.
- Output 2.2: Village Savings Group (SG) concept introduced in project target communities.

This report presents the progress made in project implementation for the period August 2024 to January 2025 to achieve the objectives and targets set for year two (2) project implementation.

Planned Activities for the Reporting Period.

August – October 2024 (Third Quarter):

1. Poultry rearing livelihood improvement support to 45 female FMNR Lead Farmers and other vulnerable women in target communities.
2. Train women/young girls on developing income generating micro-enterprises.
3. Conduct FMNR training for Extension staff of District implementing partners
4. Monitoring and supervision visits.

November 2024 – January 2025 (Fourth Quarter):

1. Conduct safe community fire use education and awareness using different community channels.
2. Support Nabdam District Assembly to review bushfire prevention and control byelaws.
3. Support communities to establish natural resource conflict management committees.
4. Conduct project endline and lessons session.

Activities Implemented (August 2024-January 2025)

August 20-21, 2024: Monitoring and support visits to Dasang Community

The project conducts regular extension monitoring and support visits to farmers on their fields to assess the implementation of FMNR and related good agricultural practices. During the visits, the project staff also provide ongoing tree care technical support, identify challenges and ensure farmers are effectively adopting FMNR on their farms. Christopher Pubeng and Eugene Agomna visited the farms of four FMNR Lead Farmers and champions in the Dasang Community on August 20 and 21, 2024. The Lead Farmers were Joel Yenyeya, Joseph Mpumbire, Dennis Denke and Nagpogbil Teni (female). The team also visited the farm of Cletus Mbumbil, a Follower Farmer of Joseph Mpumbire.



Joel Yenyeya with Christopher on his farm



Joel explains the medicinal benefits of trees

Joel Yenyeya is one of the early FMNR adopters in Dasang community. As a FMNR Lead Farmer and champion, Joel is currently regenerating different tree species on his farm - the team counted 18 young trees on his maize farm and 26 on his groundnut plot. On the benefits of on-farm trees, Joel explained that tree leaf litter, especially from pruning, helps to improve the fertility of his farm. The team observed dry leaves from the pruning and tree litter on the farm. Joel said "that all these tree debris eventually decompose to form part of the soil, improving fertility. However, he noted that though the shading effect of trees can hinder crop growth, he has been managing trees on his farm through pruning of lower branches to reduce shading of food crops. Joel explained that the Project has improved his understanding of the importance of on-farm trees and how to manage them. As a result, he is regenerating all kinds of trees on his farm. Joel, who is educated, is mentoring five other farmers as Follower Farmers

Joseph Mpumbire is chairman of the Dasang Lead Farmers group. Joseph is an enthusiastic FMNR champion, who is leading change in his community. He has a farm of about 2.8 hectares, which looks like a shea tree plantation. Joseph cultivates maize and groundnuts on the farm, which has many young and mature shea trees. He is regenerating more than 40 trees and shrubs from stumps and root sprouts. Joseph said he has a special interest in growing shea trees on the farm because of its economic importance. He is now a peer-to-peer FMNR trainer in the Dasang community, mentoring five other farmers as Follower Farmers.



Joseph Mpumbire pruning a tree on his farm



Joseph admiring a young tree on his farm



Joseph Mpumbire protecting a young Shea tree



Joseph's maize farm dominated by Shea trees

Dennis Denke, 32, is Secretary of the Dasang Lead Farmers Group. Dennis is also an early FMNR champion in Dasang. When FONAR introduced the FMNR concept in the Dasang Community, Dennis started implementing technique on his farm. But he had to abandon the plot due to land ownership (tenure) issues. Despite this setback, he is still practicing FMNR on his bush farm. Dennis is currently mentoring five Follower Farmers on the FMNR approach, including his wife.



Nagpogbil Teni is a female FMNR Lead Farmer in Dasang. Teni is an early adopter of FMNR when FONAR introduced the technique in her community in February 2023. She has become a strong FMNR advocate and champion, training and mentoring other farmers to adopt the practice. Teni has a living tree fence around her small groundnut farm. She established the live tree fence to mark the boundary of her farmland, to protect crops from animal damage and for other eco system services. Teni manages the trees by cutting the lower branches to reduce the shading effect on her food crops. The pruned branches and twigs are used for additional ground fencing and as firewood. She is regenerating 16 different tree and shrub species on her farm and mentoring two female follower framers.

Teni is the secretary of Dasang GSLA. She took a loan from the Group to take care of her child's medical bills. She is happy about the initiative as it was easy for her to cover the bills without going to individuals for them to lend her money.



Teni and her daughter on the farm



Live tree fencing on Teni's farm



Christopher with Teni on her farm

Cletus Mbumbil is a young Follower Farmer of Joseph Mpumbire. Cletus is regenerating nine naturally occurring trees and shrubs on his millet farm. He said Joseph Mpumbire taught him how to properly prune the trees and shrubs on the farm for faster growth. Cletus explained that leaves from the tree pruning are used as mulch, which decompose later to improve soil fertility.



August 27-28, 2024: Monitoring and support visits to Kparaboug Community

The project field staff visited the farms of four FMNR Lead Farmers and champions in the Kparaboug Community on August 27 and 28, 2024 to monitor FMNR implementation and provide on-site technical support. Farms of the Lead Farmers visited were John Tobig, Kurug Abeong, Silvia Tecka and Gifty Tankorin. The team also visited the farms of three Follower Farmers, who were Joseph Anika, Yenbabil Zebre and Kayam Sampana. The project implementation strategy required that each FMNR Lead Farmer has at least five Follower Farmers, who observe and learn the FMNR technique from them, and are seen as 'trainees', with the potential to become FMNR Lead Farmers themselves in future.

John Tobig is the Secretary of the Kparaboug Lead Farmers Group. John selected 12 useful tree and shrub species for regeneration on his 1.2 hectare (ha) groundnut farm. He knew that pruned leaves from the trees can be left on the farm to decompose as organic matter to improve soil fertility. John is also a member of the Kparaboug Savings and Loans Group. A loan from the Group helped him to buy inputs for his farm operations. He is mentoring five Follower Farmers from the community and hoping to train more farmers on the FMNR technique, especially those farming closer to him.



Kurug Abeong is a Lead Farmer and Champion from the Kparaboug Community. He is one of the early adopters of FMNR in the community, and his farm is a model farm being used as a site for training Follower Farmers. The project team visited his farm during the 2023 farming season when he began implementing FMNR on the field. Most of the regenerated young trees have grown so fast to his surprise. So far, Kurug has regenerated 17 different tree and shrub species on the farm, many of which are shea trees. Kurug explained that they (farmers) used to indiscriminately clear all the trees during land preparation for planting. *He said: "if not for the FMNR concept, all the trees I'm regenerating wouldn't have been on his farm".* The team was amazed when Kurug said some tree species they used to take for granted are now being prioritized for regeneration, pointing to a young blackberry tree he is regenerating on his farm. Kurug was, however, worried about the frequent elephant damage to their trees and crops, especially the economically valuable Shea tree.

Kurug led the team to the farm of **Yenbabil Zebre**, one of two Follower Farmers he is mentoring. At the time of the visit, Yenbabil had identified some shrubs, sprouts and young trees to grow on the farm.



Shea tree (L) toppled by elephants on Kurug's farm



Kurug and Yenbabil (Follower Farmer)

Silvia Tecka is a young female FMNR Lead Farmer in Kparaboug, who farms on the outskirts of the community with her husband. The project team visited the couple's 3.6 hectares (ha) new maize and groundnuts farm where they are deliberately preserving young shea trees. Silvia said that in the past they used to clear most of the trees to reduce tree-crop competition. However, she has now learned from the FMNR Project that they (farmers) can manage trees on their farms through careful pruning to reduce competition. Besides, they have been taught that trees can improve soil fertility, maintain soil moisture during drought and reduce soil erosion. *"Our perception about trees has changed since the FMNR concept was introduced here"*, Silvia said. She has trained seven other farmers on the FMNR technique. Silvia, a member of the GLSA, said she took a loan from the Group to hire farm labour.



Gifty Tankorin is organizer of Kparaboug Community FMNR Lead Farmers Group. She is one of the Project's young female FMNR champions, mentoring other young women and girls on innovative agricultural practices such as FMNR and rural micro-enterprise development for livelihood improvement. Gifty and her husband cultivated a one hectare (ha) soyabean farm during the 2024 farming season. They have more than 10 mature shea trees on the farm, and are regenerating 19 young trees and shrubs. Gifty said they pruned branches of the mature shea trees to reduce competition with the soyabean crop and for better fruit production of the shea trees. She said the tree prunings are left on the farm to fertilize the soil. Gifty is a beneficiary of other project complementary activities such as the GSLA, poultry livelihood support, improved mud stove initiative and citrus tree planting support. She said the project has made a big impact in her life, explaining; *"I took a loan from the savings to hire labour for my farm work"*. Gifty has built the improved mud stove the project introduced. She said the improved stove saves a lot of fuelwood and does not make her cooking pots black. In addition, the stove remains hot for a long time after the fuelwood has been removed. This keeps food cooking even when one is not around and the fuelwood burns out. Gifty is mentoring two Follower Farmers.



August 6&9, 2024: Field monitoring assessment of orange trees support performance

It has been established in Asia that the smell of orange and citrus trees can repel elephants because elephants don't like the smell or taste of oranges. This led to orange tree planting interventions around farms to reduce human-elephant conflict. At the start of the rainy season in June, the project supplied 150 orange/citrus seedlings to farmers affected by elephant crop damage for trial planting. FONAR hopes this long term elephant-deterrent strategy would work to reduce the annual elephant-human conflicts in the area during the farming season. Also, the orange trees can become a supplementary source of income for the farmers when they begin fruiting. Farmers in Dasang, which is a bigger community than Kparaboug, received 100 seedlings. Kparaboug farmers were given 50 seedlings. The field monitoring visits had the following two objectives; 1) to check the survival rate of the trees planted, and 2) to confirm that the trees were actually planted by the beneficiaries as agreed.

At the time of the visit, 80 seedlings had been planted in Dasang. The beneficiaries were FMNR lead farmers (both males/females), follower farmers and community opinion leaders. Dry spell (agricultural drought) in July/August delayed planting of the seedlings. Beneficiaries of 20 seedlings were still waiting for good rains to plant their trees. The project team during a walk-through inspection with the farmers observed that 76 of the 80 seedlings planted survived and were looking good.

The 50 seedlings supplied to farmers in the Kparaboug community were distributed to 20 lead farmers and community fire volunteers for planting. At the time of the monitoring visit, 22 seedlings had been planted, owners of 28 were waiting for the rains to plant.



Dasang Community planting sites visited -6 August 2024



Kparaboug Community planting sites visited -9 August 2024

January 24, 2024: Follow up monitoring visit: During this follow up visit, we observed that farmers who planted some of their orange/citrus seedlings at home had protected them from livestock damage and were also watering them. Farmers in both communities who planted their trees on bush farms complained that some of the trees had been damaged by free grazing livestock, bushfires, insect pests and lizards. Also, they mentioned lack of water for watering the plants during the long dry season (November through May) as a challenge. This reinforces the idea that FMNR is a more feasible and low cost restoration alternative than tree planting.



October 3, 2024: Plastic bags support to communities to reduce elephant crop raiding

Migrating elephants continue to destroy farmers' crops in the project area every farming season around August/November. Farmers continue to innovate by using a combination of different methods to keep the elephants off their farms. The elephants not only destroy food crops, but also young trees regenerated on farms such as the Shea tree. The deterrent methods farmers use include creating of plastic packaging bag fences around farms to scare away the elephants from entering the farm.

At the request of farmers, the project supplied four bundles of plain white plastic packaging bags (100 pieces per bundle) and ten packs of nylon ropes for distribution to farmers who are affected by the elephant raids. Farmers in the Dasang Community received two and half bundle of rubbers and six bundles of ropes. Farmers at Kparaboug received one and half bundles of rubbers and four bundles of rope.



Joel Yenyea received the items in Dasang



Kurug Abeong received the items in Kparaboug

October 18, 2024: Poultry rearing livelihood improvement support

Poultry rearing contributes significantly to diversified livelihoods in the project area, as it provides a readily accessible source of income, nutrition (eggs and meat) and manure for crop production. Poultry keeping is often managed by women and children in households, making it a valuable asset for reducing income inequalities and improving overall wellbeing of families. Hence, the project provided 132 improved fowls (88 pullets/44 cockerels) to 44 female FMNR Lead Farmers, widows, female-headed households and persons with disability, who are the most vulnerable in the two target project communities. Twenty women benefited from the livelihood support in Dasang community, while 24 others benefited in Kparaboug Community. Each beneficiary received three fowls and a small quantity of transitioning feed. The project sought to increase household poultry production through cross-breeding of the improved chicken breeds and local ones, which are adapted to the local environment. The aim was to help increase incomes and improved nutrition from eggs and meat consumption. Majority of the intervention beneficiaries were members of Group Savings and Loans Associations (GLSA) established by the project. This integrated approach was adopted to maximise outcomes achievements and return on investment, guided by principles of inclusiveness and participation.



Presentation of fowls and feed at Dasang



Presentation of fowls and feed at Kparaboug

Outcomes:

The expected results of the activity were; 1) improved quality of household poultry, 2) enhanced diversified sources of income and 3) improved household nutrition. During a monitoring visit on 24 January 2025 before this report was compiled, we found that the growth and survival rate of the introduced improved poultry breed was very high. Ten out of the 60 birds supplied to farmers in Dasang died, while only two (2) out of 72 birds provided to Kparaboug farmers died. In all 120 out of the 132 fowls supplied to the 44 project target groups survived. In effect, the activity has been largely successfully, with the hope that the improved chicken support will contribute both to household food security and incomes.



Photos of chickens from some beneficiaries in Dasang Community – 24/01/2025



Photos of chickens from some beneficiaries in Kparaboug Community – 24/01/2025

November 20 & 21, 2024: Refresher Training for Community Fire Volunteer Squads

The project organised a two-day refresher training for Community Fire Volunteer Squads (CFVS) established in the two project communities. Personnel from the Nabdam District Office of the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) facilitated the training. The CFVS are expected to conduct bushfire prevention education and awareness campaigns on the dangers of bushfires, preventative measures and encourage responsible behaviour to minimize the risk of bushfires in their communities. They are also expected to control the outbreak of small bushfires.

Eighteen people (11 males/7 females) attended the training. They were made up of 16 CFVS members and two FMNR lead Farmers drawn from the two project communities (Dasang and Kparaboug). The first day of the training was used to refresh the minds of participants on basic concepts of bushfire safety, including what starts a bushfire, causes of bushfires, fire behaviour and asset protection measures. The second day activities were on practical bushfire prevention and control measures such as prescribed (controlled burning), fire break construction and basic bushfire control techniques.



Scenes from day one classroom training



Scenes from day two practical training

Immediate Activity Outcomes

The community-based bushfire prevention and control approach using the Community Fire Volunteer Squads (CFVS) appear to be very proactive. The CFVS were very effective in mobilising community members to control bushfire outbreaks immediately after the training as shown the pictures below.



13/12/2024 – Fire volunteers and community members controlling bushfire outbreak in Kparaboug

As a result of the CFVS activities, the incidence of bushfires in the two project communities has reduced significantly between 2023 and 2024. Before the project intervention, bushfires were frequent annual occurrence in the area because no one takes responsibility. It is encouraging that the project intervention is influencing behaviour change – community people are now taking responsibility for managing bushfire risks and are able to prevent and control bushfire outbreaks. The unburnt grass cover protects the soil by acting as a barrier against erosion, absorbing raindrops, slowing down runoff, and maintaining soil structure, effectively preventing the topsoil from being washed away by wind or water, especially during heavy rainfall. Limited burning also allows young regenerated trees and shrubs to grow into maturity.



24/01/2025 – Photos from the Project communities where large areas are not burned

November/December, 2024: Support to GNFS Bushfire Radio Awareness Campaign

The project sponsored the Upper East Regional Rural Fires Department of the GNFS to conduct bushfire awareness campaign on three local FM Radio Stations. The three Bolgatanga based radio stations – A1 Radio, Dreamz FM and Yem FM, have wide coverage and also broadcast in the local languages. The campaign objective was to raise awareness about the causes and effects of bushfires, and how to control them. The radio discussion panelists were two personnel of the GNFS (Divisional Officer – Grade II [DOII] Mohammed Musah and Station Officer-Grade 1 Freeman Aduah).

FONAR Executive Director (Sumaila Saaka) contributed to the discussions via phone. There were phone-in calls that allowed listeners to participate in the programme.



December 2024: Support to Nabdam District Assembly to develop Draft Bushfire Byelaws

The District Assembly (local government authority) is responsible for developing and enforcing bushfire control and prevention byelaws within its area, ensuring local communities adhere to regulations aimed at mitigating bushfire hazards. The "Control and Prevention of Bushfires Act" (PNDC Law 229) mandates District Assemblies to establish Bushfire Control Sub-Committees to draw up byelaws for the control of bushfire in the district. The byelaws are to specify the periods in the year when burning of farm waste, grass and dead wood are to be prohibited; draw up early burning programmes where appropriate; set up Community Bushfire Control Committees; educate residents within the district on the hazards of uncontrolled fires, and collect and compile data on outbreaks of fire within the district. Unfortunately, many District Assemblies do not have the capacity to develop bushfire byelaws without technical assistance. Hence, the Nabdam District Assembly sought technical assistance from the project to help it draft its bushfire byelaws. FONAR intends working with the District Assembly and relevant Departments like the GNFS and Forest Service Division (FSD) to build the capacity of stakeholders to implement community-based bushfire management strategies.

- **December 20, 2024: Group Savings and Loans Association (GLSA) first cycle share-out**

In February 2024, the project facilitated formation of two Group Savings and Loans Associations (GSLA), one in each of the two target communities (Dasang and Kparaboug). Members of the groups are mainly women, identified as the most economically vulnerable groups in the communities. The Dasang community savings group had 20 members and the Kparaboug group registered 25 members. FONAR project staff supported the groups in areas that needed improvement and routinely monitored their performance.

At the end of the cycle in November, the Kparaboug group saved GHS8,002.00 (US\$ 544.35). The average saving per member was GHS110.00 (US\$7.50), while the highest saving per member was GHS530.00 (US\$36.00) The total interest on loans was GHS575.00 (US\$39.11). The Dasang GSLA saved GHS6,855.00 (US\$466.32). The average saving per member was GHS80.00 (US\$5.44), while the highest saving per member was Ghs525.00 (US\$35.71). The total interest on loans was Ghs534.00 (US\$36.32).

In December, Christopher Pubeng (project staff) went to support the groups share out a cumulative amount of GHS14,857.00 (US\$1,010.67), and the groups have already started the 2nd cycle of savings.

Community	Savings		Membership
	GHS	USD	
Kparaboug	8,002.00	544.35	25
Dasang	6,855.00	466.32	20
Total	14,857.00	1,010.67	

Immediate impact of the Savings Groups:

Here are some exciting comments by GSLA after the share out:

- *"Today I will enter market and buy rice towards the Christmas festivity."*
- *"I will use part of my money buy zinc (roofing sheets) and to roof my room which was blown off by wind last season and to support my son who is in school."*
- *"I think I wouldn't have been able to save what I received today because of insecurity at home."*
- *"I will also be able to celebrate this Christmas well because it will help me buy some things which I couldn't have."*
- *"I will take part of my savings and buy meat for the Christmas."*
- *"Thank you FONAR for introducing such innovative and impactful idea to us, though most of us were into savings but not as compared to what we are seeing now" - Magdalene Nyelibire (Chairperson of Dasang GSLA)*

The GLSA activity has been largely successful and well received by the beneficiaries. Some beneficiaries have invested their savings into income generating micro-enterprises. Shortly after the first cycle share out, the groups immediately began the second savings cycle. Many people want to join the existing groups or form new ones. The project intends building on the success of this activity in the second phase.



January 17, 2025 – Project review and extension consultative meetings

The project team led by FONAR Executive Director Sumaila S. Saaka, met leaders of the various project implementation stakeholder structures in the two communities – Lead Farmers Groups, Community Fire Volunteers Groups and GSLAs. The meetings were held to review the project performance, identify implementation lessons learned (successes and challenges), and to collectively decide on intervention areas to focus on under phase two project implementation.

In both project communities (Dasang and Kparaboug), the team met Executives of the Lead Farmer and Fire Volunteer Groups. And held separate meetings with leaders of the Savings and Loans Groups. Eleven community representatives attended the meetings held at Dasang (7 females/4 males), while 16 people (13 females/3 males) attended meetings held at Kparaboug.

Highlights of key project intervention impacts (perspectives of community representatives):

- Formation and training of Community Fire Volunteer Squads (CFVS) has been very impactful. The fire volunteers have raised bushfire awareness and inspired community actions to prevent and control bushfires including; creating firebreaks, educating people on fire safety practices, actively monitoring bushfire risk during the dry seasons, clearing flammable vegetation around homes and community assets, and mobilising community members to control bushfire outbreaks.
- Bushfire management training created a collective sense of responsibility in the communities. The project should support fire volunteer groups to organise community durbars to create more awareness on bushfires.
- The lead farmers and fire volunteers have successfully helped to reduce the incidence of bushfires in the immediate community surroundings. Reduced incidence of bushfires in the past two years has improved access to grass and fodder for livestock. "Our cattle no longer travel far to graze, reducing the stealing of our animals", said a fire volunteer in Kparaboug.
- However, bush burning remains a challenge on the outskirts of the communities.
- Social fencing mechanisms (traditional social rules and institutions used to manage common local natural resources) still exist, but are no longer effective. Hence, the need for formal community level natural resource management byelaws.
- Residents are now more aware of the multiple benefits of trees to their livelihoods. Through this increased awareness, residents have stopped cutting trees in the community FMNR demonstration plot, and individual farmers are implementing FMNR on their farms.
- The GSLA initiative has a positive impact on the beneficiaries, particularly increasing household income security and dignity. According to a GSLA member in Dasang, they easily have access to loans to solve their problems timely and discreetly. GSLA members are also investing their savings into income generating activities.
- The improved mud stove initiative the project introduced is helpful. The project would support the community trainers with wooden boards to construct the stoves for more women.

What next? – Ideas for Project Phase Two:

- 1) The project should strengthen the community-based fire management approach through more training, support for community awareness campaigns and provision of basic fire firefighting tools to fire volunteers groups.
- 2) The project should consider introducing beekeeping activity under phase two. Beekeeping can be used to achieve multiple objectives in the project target area. These include sustainable income generation (honey and beeswax production), enhancing crop pollination, deterring elephants from raiding crops, supporting biodiversity, promoting sustainable agriculture through FMNR uptake, reducing setting of bushfires in order to protect beehives and contributing to environmental conservation. Fortunately, many farmers in the project area are regenerating Shea trees on their farms. The Shea tree is a good source of reliable supply of nectar and pollen for bees, making it a valuable resource for the beekeeping activity.
- 3) The savings and loans activity has proved to be effective for achieving rural micro-enterprise development and income security among vulnerable groups in the project communities. The first cycle of the activity, which was implemented on pilot, provided a source of financial support for families during difficult times. The activity built critical group social skills for community development such as active listening, effective communication, collaboration, conflict resolution, empathy, leadership, consensus building, networking and problem-solving. These skills are essential for positive interactions, building trust within the community and facilitating collective action towards shared goals. The project will strengthen the activity under phase two implementation.
- 4) Training on safe use of agro-pesticide and fertilizer application: The community representatives requested for training on safe use (application) of agro-chemicals and fertilizers. Under this activity, the training will be designed to teach farmers about appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) use when handling or using pesticides, protection of the immediate environment when applying pesticides, compatibility of pesticides, mixing rates of pesticides, disposal of pesticide residue, pre-harvest interval and first aid administration. This activity will be linked to the beekeeping activity, as inappropriate pesticide use can harm bees and the beekeeping activity.

Joseph Mpumbire (Chair, Dasang Lead Farmers Group) and Moses Noorin (Chair, Kparaboug Lead Farmer Group) thanked FONAR and Awaken Trees for selecting their communities for the project implementation. Joseph said FONAR will forever be remembered in the community.



Meeting participants at Dasang



Meeting with GSLA members in Kparaboug

Key Outcomes/Lessons learned:

- 1) During the two-year project implementation, we developed very valuable training and educational materials (manuals/guides/posters, etc.,) on FMNR and related topics. We have shared these materials with some of our project implementing partners. These materials developed will be used in other projects and disseminated by project Awaken Trees. During the period we have also built the capacity of our staff and partners.
- 2) FMNR uptake has been encouraging on bush farms where land is available compared to homestead farms. The possible explanations include land fragmentation of homestead farms and fewer trees on these farms to regenerate. Land tenure insecurity could be a barrier to FMNR uptake in some cases.
- 3) During the project implementation, we continue to identify and involve more local community stakeholders. This has worked very well, and we will continue in that direction.
- 4) Providing project beneficiaries (farmers) with small incentives like t-shirts and basic tree pruning/firefighting tools helped for more engagement with the project.
- 5) The second phase of the project will build on these lessons learned as we intend expanding the project coverage to two adjoining communities.