

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

**YEAR 1 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION
SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
(FEBRUARY 1 -JULY 31, 2023)**

Submitted to
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August 25, 2023

Abbreviations and Acronyms

DCD	District Coordinating Director
DCE	District Chief Executive Officer
FMNR	Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration
FMNR4WELIP	FMNR for Women Empowerment and Livelihoods Project
FONAR	Forum for Natural Regeneration LBG
GAPs	Good Agricultural Practices
GNFS	Ghana National Fire Services
GSLA	Group Savings and Loans Association
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PMT	Project Management Team
SG	Savings Groups
WVG	World Vision Ghana

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Background Information

The Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration for Women's Empowerment and Livelihoods Project (FMNR4WELIP) in the Nabdam District, Upper East Region of Ghana is funded by the Awaken Trees Foundation of Austria. The two-year pilot project is being implemented by FONAR in two communities (Dasang and Kparaboug) in the Kontintabig Electoral Area of Sakoti Area Council. The project is aimed at safeguarding and enhancing women's land-based livelihoods through sustainable use of natural resources using the farmer managed natural regeneration (FMNR) land restoration technique. The project is promoting uptake of the FMNR model alongside a few viable complementary livelihood activities, targeting vulnerable female farmers, widows, female-headed households and other disadvantaged groups. The project has formed lead FMNR farmer groups and trained them to lead their communities for collective action on land restoration. The trained FMNR lead farmers in turn are expected to provide on-farm practical training to other farmers either on their own farms or on community demonstration sites for replication. This approach is intended to increase FMNR adoption among individual farmers in the project communities and beyond.

The project has two main objectives (outcomes):

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.

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.

Activity Implementation Summary

Activity 1 - Community entry engagements held with the chiefs and elders of the two project communities to secure key stakeholders buy-in. Seven (7) community leaders in Dasang, including the Chief, Assembly member and women representative (Magazia) were present at the meeting. While 10 community leaders (6men/4women), including the chief attended the engagement at Kparaboug.

Activity 2 - FONAR held a district level project inception meeting at the Nabdam District Assembly hall in Nangodi, the District capital. Sixteen key district level stakeholders, including the District Chief Executive (DCE), Mrs. Agnes Anamoo and journalists attended the meeting.

Activity 3 - The project organized environmental situational awareness and analysis sessions in the two project target communities to introduce FMNR to the people. 65 people (37 females/28 males) in Kparaboug, and 85 people (51 females/34males) in Dasang attended the sessions.

Activity 4 – The project facilitated each of the two communities to identify and select their FMNR lead farmers. Each community the meeting selected 10 lead farmers (5 females/5 males). Twenty lead farmers were selected for the two communities.

Activity 5 – FONAR distributed 30 branded T-shirts with messages to the FMNR lead farmers and selected community leaders, serving both as incentives and as awareness creation. The project also supplied the lead farmer groups and community leaders with basic logistics.

Activity 6 – The Project held a one-day orientation and FMNR training at Kparaboug for the 20 FMNR lead farmers (10 males/10 females) selected from the two project communities.

Activity 7 – FONAR organized separate community sensitization and pruning trainings in the Community FMNR demonstration plots. The activities were attended by more than 100 youth, men, women and elders in both communities.

Activity 8 – Baseline NRM knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) Survey conducted. The report is being compiled.

Activity 9 – The project with additional funding support from EKO (US-based non-profit) organized a sensitization meeting on the GSLA approach for 45 female FMNR lead farmers, female household heads, widows and other identified vulnerable groups in the two project communities.

Activity 10 – Eight Executive members of the FMNR Lead Farmer Groups trained on leadership skills.

Activity 11: Christopher Pubeng and Eugene Agomna visited the farms of four (4) lead farmers and a follower farmer in Dasang and Kparaboug to provide on-farm FMNR technical support and to monitor FMNR implementation during the farming season.

Project Activities

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

Activity 1 - Community entry to secure key stakeholders buy-in.

February 3, 2023: The project team led by FONAR Executive Director (Sumaila S. Saaka) visited the two project target communities (Dasang and Kparaboug) to interact with the chiefs and elders to solicit support and buy-in from the project key stakeholders. The first meeting was held with the chief and elders of Dasang Community, and another with the chief and elders of Kparaboug. The consultative meetings were also used to introduce the project and to confirm the community peoples' willingness to take part in the project activities. The team explained the project goal and objectives, outlined the proposed project activities and explained the guidelines for participation in project activities. The community leaders and other key local stakeholders (representatives of women and the youth) in the two target communities welcomed the project idea, agreed to support the Project and expressed their willingness to participate in the project activities.



Consultation meeting with the Chief and Elders of Dasang Community (village)



Consultation meeting with the Chief and Elders of Kparaboug Community (Vilaage)

Activity 2 - Inception Meeting with District Level Stakeholders and Partners

February 16, 2023: FONAR held a district level project inception meeting at the Nabdam District Assembly hall in Nangodi, the District capital. The purpose of the meeting was to seek the support and approval of the District Assembly (local government authority) for the project, to introduce the Project Management Team (PMT), to introduce the project and its implementation strategy, to create synergies with key local government stakeholders for project success and to discuss the way forward for the project implementation.

In attendance were the District Chief Executive (DCE), Mrs. Agnes Anamoo, the Acting District Coordinating Director (DCD), Mrs. Rosina Musah, the District Planning Officer, heads of relevant decentralized departments and agencies and the Assembly member for the two target communities. Also present were a community elder, a representative of World Vision Ghana (WBG), staff of FONAR and the Media.

The DCE (Mrs. Agnes Anamoo) thanked FONAR and Awaken Trees for choosing to pilot the FMNR4WELIP project in her district. She announced that the District Assembly has embraced the project and was ready to support FONAR during its implementation to achieve the intended results. The Executive Director of FONAR, Mr. Sumaila Saaka expressed appreciation to the DCE and her team for the warm reception, and then presented the project overview, starting with a background of both FONAR and Awaken Trees Foundation. He explained the meeting objectives, the project background and scope, implementation strategy, and potential partners and collaborators. In addition, Sumaila introduced the FONAR project team members and solicited support from the partners for the project to succeed.

After the presentation, the meeting participants asked questions for clarification and contributed ideas based on their experiences on how the project can be implemented to succeed in the particular context of the Nabdam District. The District Manager of Forestry Services Division (FSD), Mr. Henry Opoku Boateng wanted to know whether the project will be introducing (planting) new tree species since most native species in the communities were getting lost (extinct) due to deforestation and overgrazing. The Project Manager (Sumaila) explained that in FMNR, farmers select and manage the types of tree species they want to leave on their farms. However, if they manage and prune these native on-farm trees well, then animals may not get to the top of the trees to destroy them. He also added that overgrazing was a major barrier to FMNR implementation, and called for a collaborative effort from all stakeholders, especially the District Assembly, to tackle the problem.

At the end of the meeting, the DCE urged the decentralized departments and agencies concerned to take the project seriously and help it to succeed. She said the Assembly will embrace the FMNR concept and incorporate it into the Districts' Medium Team Development planning process. The inception meeting was widely covered by local and national news media organizations.



Scenes from the Inception Meeting (Below Right photo – in front DCE (L) and DCD (R)

Activity 3 - FMNR introduced in the two Project Communities

March 10 & 11, 2023: The project organized environmental situational awareness and analysis sessions in the two project target communities. The first session was held on March 10, 2023 at Kparaboug and attended by 65 community representatives of all ages (37 females/28 males). The second session held at Dasang community on March 11, 2023, was attended by 85 people of all ages (51 females/34 males). Christopher Pubeng (FONAR staff), Jonas Bugre (WVG FMNR Development Facilitator/FONAR partner staff) and Madam Cecilia Topok Saparkroug (Yagzore Community FMNR Champion) facilitated the sessions. The activity facilitation followed a lesson plan FONAR developed for introducing FMNR in communities. The team facilitated a participatory environmental situational analysis (past, present and future) for the local people to perceive and understand what is happening in their environment over the years. This activity allowed the people to reflect on the current situation of their local environmental conditions and to make informed guesses about future events if the current situation does not change.

The facilitators used pictorials and experience sharing to prompt the community members to reflect on the past changes in local weather and the environment, including changes in vegetation (e.g., forest, shrubs, grass, agricultural crops), wildlife and other natural resources. They shared experiences about the changing local environment and the impacts on their livelihoods. This helped the community members in identifying possible land restoration methods, including motivating them to try FMNR. The activity was then used to introduce the project and FMNR to the communities.

At the end of the sessions, the participants were able to:

- Analyze the current environmental situation of their communities and the factors responsible for land degradation, tree cover loss, poor soil fertility, low crop yields and food insecurity. They identified deforestation (tree cutting for firewood and charcoal), and land clearance for subsistence farmland expansion as the main human activities responsible for land degradation.
- They understood and could explain the FMNR restoration concept and its potential for addressing land degradation and improving crop yields in their communities.
- They community people agreed to adopt FMNR on their farms and community grazing lands.

Participants during sessions in the two communities indicated their willingness to embrace the FMNR practice. However, they complained of elephants frequently raiding their farms in recent years, often destroying food crops and trees during the cropping season.



Jonas Bugre facilitating a session at Kparaboug



A community elder sharing experience of the past



Cecilia Topok facilitating a session in Dasang



Christopher Pubeng facilitating a session in dasang

We followed the situational analysis activity with night shows of FMNR video documentaries and pictorial slide presentations to create community-wide awareness on success stories of FMNR implementation in Niger, Talensi and other places. About 70 men, women and children attended these night video awareness creation sessions, during which they shared their views and asked questions.



Photos from the community video shows in Dasang and Kparaboug

Activity 4 – Selection of FMNR Lead Farmers in the two Project Communities

The project adopted the FMNR Lead Farmer (LF) approach¹. Under this farmer to farmer (F2F) extension service delivery approach², the project beneficiaries are facilitated to identify and select lead farmers to be trained in the FMNR technique and related good agricultural practices (GAPs). The lead farmers are then expected to pass on the knowledge and skills of this best practice land restoration technology (FMNR) to their peers. The lead farmers are also the main contact persons for the project and partner organisations.

April 11 & 12, 2023: Hence, a first step towards the project implementation was to organize separate community meetings for the people to identify and select their FMNR lead farmers. Each of the two project target communities were required to select 10 lead farmers (5 females/5 males). FONAR developed guidelines that provided selection criteria for the communities to use in choosing their lead farmers. FONAR Executive Director (Sumaila) trained extension officers of the Nabdam District Department of Agriculture (project implementing partner) and FONAR staff to facilitate the Lead Farmer selection community engagements. The FMNR lead farmers were selected based on their potential readiness to adopt FMNR, communication ability, having good behaviour, being resident in the community, their role in the community and their level of literacy. Facilitating the community members to choose the FMNR lead farmers was to help increase local ownership and accountability for sustainability.

The first participatory community meeting to identify and select FMNR lead farmers was held at Dasang Community on April 11, 2023, and a second meeting held at Kparaboug on April 12, 2023. Emmanuel Akotba (Extension Officer, Department of Agriculture), Michael Yenguriba (Extension Officer, Department of Agriculture), Christopher Pubeng (FONAR staff), and Eugene Adugbire Agomna (FONAR volunteer) facilitated the sessions. The facilitators during engagements explained the FMNR

¹ Lead farmers are individuals who are elected by the community to perform technology specific farmer-to-farmer extension and are trained in the technology such as FMNR. The lead farmers implement their activities through the FMNR farmer groups.

² The provision of FMNR training by farmers to farmers, through the creation of a structure of farmer promoters known as lead farmers.

lead farmer concept, the roles and responsibilities of a lead farmer, qualities of a lead farmer and how to identify a lead farmer. They explained that for the lead farmers to perform their roles properly, FONAR and the Department of Agriculture extension staff will support them with training on various topics and basic pruning tools. At the end of each community meeting, the people were allowed some time to deliberate among themselves and to agree on a list of 10 lead farmers (5 males/5 females). The FMNR lead farmers are expected to adopt and practice FMNR on their farms, motivate at least 10 other farmers to try FMNR. They must always lead by example by practising what they are taught in their own fields.



Activity 5 – Supply of branded T-Shirts and Pruning tools to Lead Farmers

FONAR distributed 30 branded T-shirts with messages promoting the project to the FMNR lead farmers and selected community leaders, serving both as incentives and as awareness creation. The project also supplied the lead farmer groups and community leaders with 30 pieces of cutlasses, 30 pairs of wellington boots, 30 pieces of sickles for tree trimming and cutting twigs, 30 pieces of pruning knives and 30 pairs of protective hand gloves. The items were to support the farmers to practice FMNR as well as transfer their knowledge and skills to other farmers. The equipment supplied also motivated the farmers to embrace and promote FMNR in their communities.

Activity 6 – Training and Orientation of FMNR Lead Farmers

April 24, 2023: The Project held a one-day orientation and FMNR training at Kparaboug for the 20 FMNR lead farmers (10 males/10 females) selected from the two project communities. The project is women focused, and the inclusion of women as FMNR lead farmers is to help achieve women empowerment in agriculture and community natural resources management. It is expected that the female FMNR lead farmers would be able to participate actively in tree regeneration and management practices. This would eventually help to reach other women with FMNR practices for improved food security. The approach is also intended to improve women-to-women FMNR extension services delivery and improve access to agriculture-related information to women farmers.

The training method was both participatory indoor sessions and a practical tree pruning lesson. The purpose of the training was to give a hands-on training to the lead farmers so that they become familiar with how to do FMNR and to teach other farmers to adopt and practice FMNR. The training also allowed the farmers to share on-farm tree management experiences. In addition, FONAR team used the opportunity to explain the project goal and objectives; clarify the roles and responsibilities of the project team, implementing partners, lead farmers and community members.

FONAR Executive Director (Sumaila), Jonas Bugre (WVG/partner staff) and Michael Yenguriba (Department of Agriculture Extension Officer) facilitated the training. In a participatory presentation using visual images (pictures and short videos), Sumaila took the participants through the lead farmer concept, the idea of establishing FMNR demonstration plots for community practice and learning and introduced the farmers to FMNR. He explained the difference between FMNR and tree planting, the benefits of FMNR on farms and outside farms and the potential challenges of FMNR implementation. Jonas introduced the participants to FMNR tree management techniques, including how to thin new shoots from sprouts and proper pruning of tree branches. He also explained why regenerated trees should be marked with red flags to protect them from intruders.

After the classroom sessions, branded project T-Shirts and pruning logistics were distributed to the lead farmers before they went out for the practical pruning session.

Participants comments and contributions after the training.

- Madam Pogbire Tamina (Treasurer of Kparaboug LF Group) said she gained knowledge that indiscriminate tree cutting was not good and that it was important to take good care of trees for food security. He promised to educate other women in her community on proper pruning and cutting of shrubs.
- Mba Bihinaab of Kparaboug community said he has started practising FMNR on his farm as well as composting with crop waste. He has also stopped the practice of burning when preparing his farm for planting.

- Joseph Mpumbire (Chairperson of Dasang Lead Farmers) said they will begin practising FMNR this farming season and so will not cut and burn shrubs on their farm but will rather prune and protect them to grow. Joseph said he learned how to properly prune and thin trees. He said he has also seen in the presentation how to sow food crops with intervals so that the plants have enough space to grow and not compete for nutrients with trees.
- Tobig John (Secretary of Kparaboug LF Group) said through the sensitization and training they now know that some trees and shrubs have the potential to grow into maturity if properly managed and protected from fire and livestock damage. He said he has learned that some trees when left on the farm can provide the soil with fertility and prevent soil erosion.

In closing remarks, Noori Bredren thanked FONAR for choosing their communities for the project. He also thanked Awaken Trees Foundation for the funding. He said one of the major challenges the communities were facing was the lack of potable drinking water and asked for support to solve the problem.



Presentation of logistics to Dasang and Kparaboug LF Groups



Classroom session



Practical tree management (pruning and thinning) session



LF farmers ready for action



Pruned trees marked



Mad. Pogbire Tamina

Activity 7 – Community FMNR Sensitization and Pruning Training Demonstration.

May 11, 2023: After the lead farmer groups were trained on the FMNR technique, we asked their leaders to engage the traditional leaders (chiefs and elders) of the communities to allocate parcels of communal lands as FMNR demonstration plots. Subsequently, the plots were allocated and FONAR invited to inspect and demarcate them (*see Annex 1: Plot of Dansag and Kparaboug FMNR demonstration plots on Google Maps*).

On May 11, 2023, FONAR organized separate community sensitization and pruning trainings in their demonstration plots. The activities were attended by more than 50 youth, men, women and elders in each community. They showed enthusiasm and willingness to embrace FMNR during the pruning training through their participation and questioning. The people were educated on the importance of keeping trees on their farms and communal graze lands to serve as windbreaks, improve soil fertility for increased crop yields, increase availability of wild fruits and fodder for their livestock and recharge their ground water systems. They were later taught proper tree pruning techniques. FONAR Executive Director (Sumaila) encouraged the farmers and people to embrace the FMNR project as their own. He pointed out that their collective sense of duty, commitment, willingness and a sense of belonging will help to achieve the project goal. The national television (GBC – TV) and news agency covered the event.



Community FMNR sensitization and pruning training in Kparaboug



Community FMNR sensitization and pruning training in Dasang

In all, more than 100 community members (farmers) – women (majority), men, youth and children participated in the events held in the community.

Some community elders were also present and pledged their support to the project. The lead farmer groups have also been organizing members of their communities to prune shrubs on their FMNR demonstration fields.



Dasang farmers pruning in the FMNR field

Dasang FMNR demonstration field signboard



Pruning exercise in Kparaboug

Kparaboug FMNR demonstration field signboard

Activity 8 – Baseline NRM knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) Survey

May 23-30, 2023: The project conducted a baseline natural resources management (NRM) knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey to improve our understanding of environmental changes and their effects on the target people. The main objective of the survey was to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices of the local communities regarding NRM, which could either facilitate or hinder FMNR implementation. The survey team interviewed 40 farmers (20 women/20 men) individually in Dasang (the bigger community), and 10 farmers (5 women/5 men) were interviewed in Kparaboug. Data were collected on farmers' views of land/tree tenure and security; local knowledge of plant uses and perceptions of twenty important plant species commonly found in the communities; farmers awareness of local NRM laws and community bye laws; NRM attitudes and perceptions; access to markets and NRM Extension services; NRM governance and conflict resolution mechanisms; and perceived local development constraints and opportunities. The data is being analyzed.

Activity 9 – Group Savings and Loans Associations (GSLA) Awareness Training

June 21, 2023: Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) technique seeks to rapidly increase tree cover for improved livelihoods and incomes of rural smallholder farmers. By practising FMNR, farmers can improve and diversify their incomes from the sale of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), instead of depending heavily on wood harvesting. Income from the sale of honey, wild edible fruits, thatch grass, mushrooms and wild vegetables contribute significantly to the well-being of rural households in FONAR operational areas. Hence, the community FMNR Project intends supporting women's groups in target communities to develop and diversify local agro processing and NTFPs micro-enterprises for economic empowerment.

As women diversify and increase their sources of income, they may want to make savings to further develop income generating micro-enterprise for income security. Introducing Group Savings and Loans Associations (GSLAs) will allow community members, especially women, to build micro savings and learn basic financial literacy skills. During emergencies, people can secure low interest loans to support themselves and their families. Both FMNR and savings groups build trust and cooperation skills, so they fit easily together. Hence, FONAR is promoting the village group savings concept to develop the culture of savings, provide micro-loans, micro enterprise advisory services to build resilience of vulnerable members of the project communities to shocks.

The project with additional funding support from EKŌ (US-based non-profit) organized a sensitization meeting on the GSLA approach for 45 female FMNR lead farmers, female household heads, widows and other identified vulnerable groups in the two project communities (Dasang and Kparaboug). Juliana Abasemah Atagra (FONAR Staff) facilitated the training. She introduced the participants to the Group Savings (SGs) concept and principles and explained stages of SGs implementation. At the end of the training the participants understood the SGs concept, the importance of micro savings to take care of their basic needs and were willing to form SGs under the project.



GLSA sensitization and training sessions in Dansang and Kparaboug communities

Activity 10 – Leadership Training for Executives of FMNR Lead Farmer Groups

June 30, 2023: The project organized a one-day orientation and leadership training for eight (8) Executive members of the Lead Farmer (LF) Groups in the two project communities (Dasang and Kparaboug). Executives of the lead farmer Groups who attended the training were the Chairpersons (2), Secretaries (2), Organizers (2) and Treasurers (2). Four women executive members and four men executives participated in the training. The purpose of the training was to strengthen their competencies for effective leadership of the groups. FONAR Executive Director (Sumaila) designed and facilitated the participatory training.

At the end of the training, the participants understood the concept of leadership in farmer groups and the role expected of them as group leaders. There were also able to identify and explain different farmer group leadership styles, identify the qualities of a good leader and explain the roles of a leader in FMNR lead farmers' groups.

In a presentation, Sumaila explained that it was very important for the group leaders to show good example by adopting FMNR practices and supporting others to do so. Therefore, they are expected to lead and guide other lead farmers and follower farmers to increase the adoption of FMNR and related good agricultural practices in the communities.



Chairperson of Dasang Lead Farmer Group, Joseph Mpumbire thanked FONAR for the training. He said they were gradually understanding the FMNR concept and will continue to share the knowledge and skills with other farmers. Dok Dennis (Secretary of Dasang Lead Farmer Group), on his part, said they have embraced the FMNR concept, now feel confident to pass on FMNR knowledge and skills, and have been conducting pruning exercises on their demonstration plot.

Activity 11: On-farm FMNR Technical/Extension Support and Monitoring

Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) is basically an agroforestry practice that involves farmers deliberately protecting and managing naturally regenerating native trees on agricultural land. In our project context, agricultural land is used for both growing annual crops during the wet season and for livestock grazing during the dry season. Under FMNR, farmers are encouraged to select, protect and prune regenerating trees and shrubs from re-sprouting stumps, rootstock or from seeds. These basic tree management practices when properly implemented can deliver a number of benefits to individual farm families and local communities, including increasing agricultural productivity through soil fertility improvement and feed for livestock, incomes, and other environmental benefits.

July 12-13, 2023: Christopher Pubeng and Eugene Agomna (FONAR Project Officers) visited the farms of four (4) lead farmers and a follower farmer in Dasang and Kparaboug to provide on-farm FMNR technical support and to monitor FMNR implementation during the farming season. Importantly, the team wanted to find out whether the lead farmers were actually practicing FMNR on their farms.

On the first day (12/07/23), the team visited the 2.5 acres maize farm of Joel Yen-Nyeya of Dasang Community. The farm, which is located on the outskirts of the community, had more than 10 mature trees of different species and a few young regenerating trees. He explained that the trees on his farm were many, but elephants invaded the farm last cropping season and destroyed many of them. On observation, Joel is regenerating more shea trees on the farm for their fruits and the nuts for shea butter production. Asked about a particular shrub he had pruned, he said the leaves of the shrub are used as herbs for babies to prevent certain childhood infections. The team also visited the sorghum farm of Joseph Mpumbire, chairperson of Dasang lead farmers group. He had started pruning some young trees and shrubs on the farm, which looked good and promising. Joseph said before FMNR was introduced in the community, he used to cut the whole tree or shrub off when preparing the land for a new farming season. FONAR advocacy and training has changed his attitude and he has pruned all the shrubs that have sprouted again and used the leaves to mulch the crops in the farm. Tambire Yen-Nyeya, a follower farmer, was also maintaining more young trees on his farm following the introduction of FMNR in his community.



The team visited two FMNR lead farmers in Kparaboug on the second day (13/07/23). The first stop was at the four-acre maize farm of Kurug Abeong (a lead farmer). The farm, which was about four acres, had only two mature trees on it.

At the time of the visit, he had pruned many shrubs and was hopeful of restoring trees on the farm. He said the trees were important in fertilizing his farm, providing him shade to rest under during farm work, and providing shea nuts for his wife as a source of income. He said within the last three years elephants have destroyed seven shea trees and other tree species on his farm.

Mba Bihinaab, another lead farmer in Kparaboug, had pruned many shrubs on his farm. He used animal traction to prepare the land for sowing instead of tractor ploughing to minimize disturbance of the pruned shrubs. Mba said he used to consider the shrubs as a nuisance on his farm but because of FONAR, he now sees the potential of regenerating these shrubs into big trees. Asked about a cluster of neem trees stumps re-sprouting, he said he would be selecting one or two of those re-sprouting to regenerate as there were too many and taking up a lot of space on the farm. In all the five lead farmers are regenerating about 200 young trees and shrubs of different species.



Other Project Milestones

During the period under review, FONAR signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Nabdam District Assembly and three decentralized departments as implementing partners. The implementing partners are the Departments of Agriculture, the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development and the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS). FONAR is already working with extension officers of the Department of Agriculture to implement some activities, including the selection of the FMNR lead farmers and identifying complementary good agricultural practices (GAPs) to promote.

The Department of Social Welfare and Community Development is one of the decentralized departments of the Nabdam District Assembly, which promotes the improvement in the living standards of the people and the disadvantaged sections of communities through their own initiatives and active participation. FONAR intends working with the Department to engage and mobilize the project target communities around FMNR and related community development issues. Effective community engagement and mobilization will contribute to building trust between the project team, community people and local leaders. It will also raise the quality of decision making during the project implementation, which reflects the needs and aspirations of all community stakeholders.

Annual bushfires is a key barrier to FMNR uptake in the project area. FONAR will work with district department of the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) to select community fire volunteers for training as community fire squads. FONAR will liaise with the Upper East Regional Office of the Rural Fires Unit of GNFS to organise a trainer-of-trainers training on basic bushfires prevention and control measures for the district fire officers. They will in turn train and support the community fire volunteers. FONAR will provide basic logistics to the community fire volunteers and work with them to raise community fire awareness and preparedness.

The project has also developed a unique logo for branding purposes as well as some training manuals and guides. These include a project backdrop banner, various PowerPoint presentations and Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) Lead Farmer Extension Guidelines. We are also in the process of developing project Field Monitoring Guidelines.

Planned activities for Year One -3rd & 4th Quarters (August 23 – Jan. 24)

1. Conduct Training of Trainers (ToT) on Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) for Field Extension staff of District implementing partners and FONAR staff.
2. Training of 30 Lead farmers and follower farmers on Composting & Fall Army Worm Pest Control.
3. Organise farmer exchange visit (farmer field school) to Talensi FMNR communities for evidence of FMNR success and sharing of experiences.

4. Develop community bushfire training, education and awareness campaign materials (signs, posters, brochures, stickers, videos, etc).
5. Select and train 20 farmers (10 in each community) as fire stewards (volunteers).
6. Conduct safe community fire use education and awareness using different communication channels.
7. Support fire stewards with basic firefighting equipment and logistics (cutlasses, wellington boots, hand gloves and branded t-shirts).
8. Support communities to develop local bushfire prevention and control byelaws (regulations) and decide on disciplinary action.
9. Train 25 women in the use of energy saving mud stoves to reduce firewood use.

News Media coverage of the Project Activities

1) District Level Inception Meeting

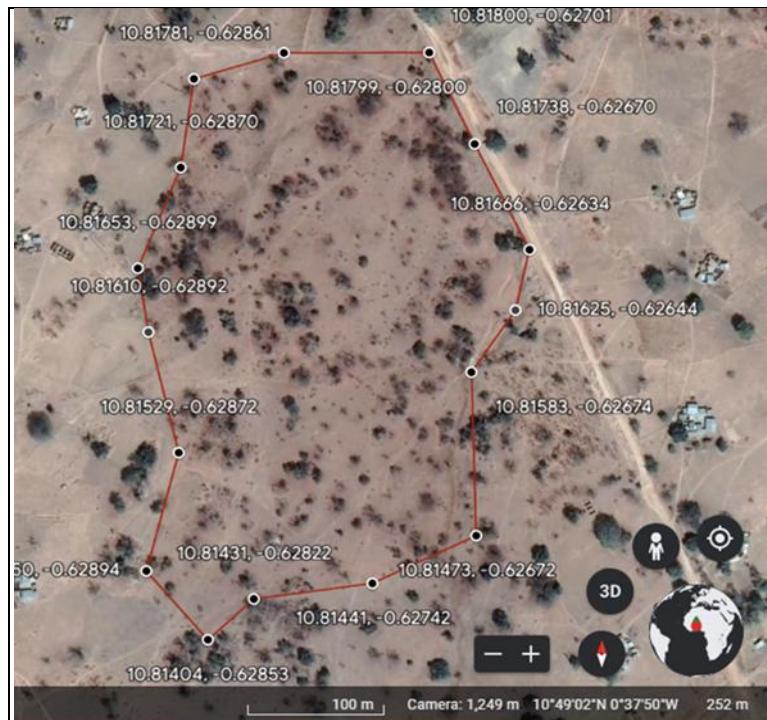
- > <https://www.modernghana.com/news/1215925/uer-fmnr-project-for-women-empowerment-in-nabda.html>
- > <https://www.gbcghanaonline.com/general/fmnr-project-for-womens-empowerment-piloted-in-nabdam-district/2023/>
- > <https://www.modernghana.com/news/1215925/uer-fmnr-project-for-women-empowerment-in-nabda.html>
- > <https://gna.org.gh/2023/02/nabdam-women-benefit-from-empowerment-project/>
- > <https://newsghana.com.gh/ngo-sensitises-farmers-on-advanced-natural-regeneration-concept/>
- > https://www.linkedin.com/posts/modernghanaweb_uer-fmnr-project-for-women-empowerment-activity-7034265073460080640-yNMn/?originalSubdomain=gh

2) Community Pruning Demonstration Exercise

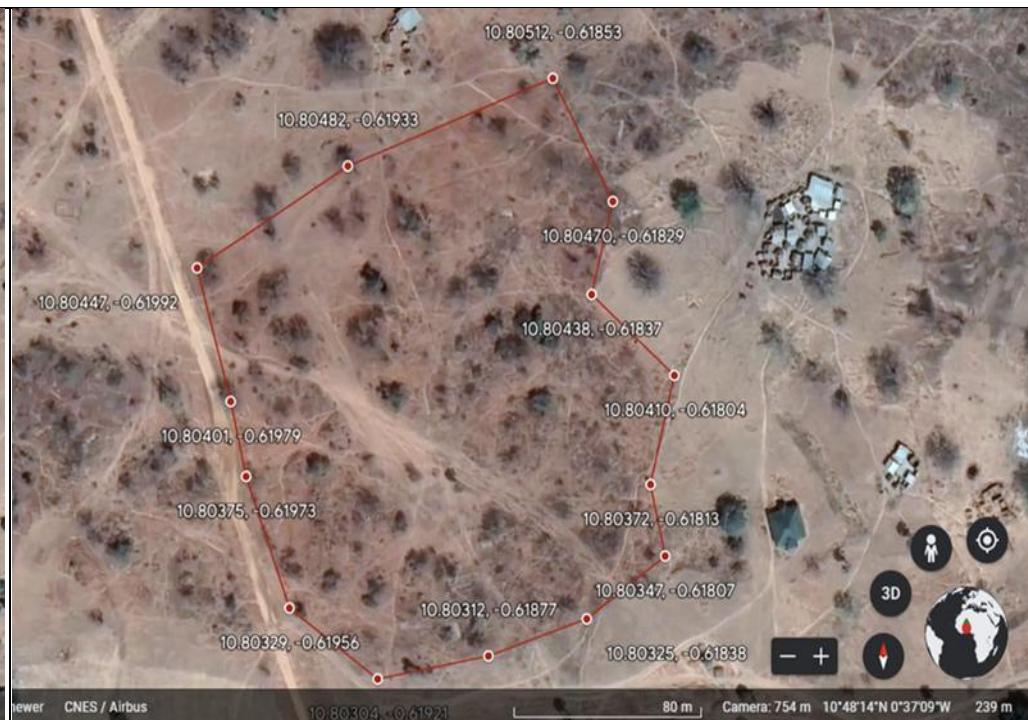
- > <https://gna.org.gh/2023/05/ngo-sensitises-farmers-on-advanced-natural-regeneration-concept/>
- > <https://www.businessghana.com/site/news/business/285972/NGO-sensitises-farmers-on-advanced-natural-regeneration-concept>

- > 
FONAR on
GTV.mp4

Annex: Dansag and Kparaboug FMNR demonstration plots on Google Maps



Dansag Community FMNR Demonstration Plot (9.40 hectares)



Kparaboug Community FMNR Demonstration Plot (3.24 hectares)