



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



**Nurturing partnerships
to regreen mindscapes for
landscapes regreening**



This annual report provides an overview of Forum for Natural Regeneration LBG (FONAR's) work from January 2023 to December 2023.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

FMNR	Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration
FMNR4WELIP	FMNR for Women's Empowerment and Livelihoods.
FONAR	Forum for Natural Regeneration
GES	Ghana Education Service
GNFS	Ghana National Fire Service
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UER	Upper East Region
WVA	World Vision Australia
WVG	World Vision Ghana
WVI	World Vision International



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FOREWORD

I am pleased to present FONAR's Annual Report for 2023. The report highlights the modest progress we have made in projects implementation aimed at building greener and resilient communities in our operational areas. Our small indicated team and funding partners are focused on implementing innovative projects and programmes that will empower rural farming communities to adopt practical and actionable land restoration solutions such as Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) to restore their livelihoods.

FONAR works in the semi-arid Upper East Region of Ghana, which is highly prone to desertification. Restoring the dwindling savannah woodlands in subsistence farming communities in the region is crucial for combating climate change and restoring rural livelihoods. Restoring tree cover of these degraded agroforestry parklands creates value for everyone and offers ecological stability and peace for generations. Properly managed land restoration offers reliable water, food and incomes for local populations while empowering these individuals with the tools for sustainable land stewardship.

The report shines light on progress of the implementation of two projects, which are the Nabdam Community FMNR and Talensi School Kids FMNR Eco-clubs Projects. Both projects are aimed at regreening minds and hearts for landscape regreening using the simple, low cost and socially acceptable FMNR approach. In August 2021, FONAR began implementing the School Kids FMNR Eco-clubs Project in Talensi District (UER). And in February 2023, we launched the Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration for Women's Empowerment and Livelihoods Project (FMNR4WELIP) in the Nabdam District. Both projects are funded by Awaken Trees.

In October 2023, we evaluated the school kids eco clubs project after two-years of implementation, and the findings were encouraging. Children exposed to the project activities have become active agents of change and influencing FMNR decision-making in their communities. In addition, they have become FMNR practitioners themselves and creative minds advocating for solutions to local environmental challenges.

During the year, we made modest investments in our staff in terms of training and provision of working tools and equipment. These achievements could not have been possible without our donors, board, staff and other stakeholders working together. We sincerely thank everyone for contributing immensely towards weaving the evolving colourful FONAR tapestry. We owe a debt of gratitude to our core funder – Awaken Trees and its Founder Mr. Josef Ertl for your commitment to FONAR.

We hope you enjoy reading this report and pray it inspires you to support our regreening efforts for a better world. Thank you.



Sumaila S. SAAKA
Executive Director

ABOUT FONAR

Forum for Natural Regeneration LBG

(FONAR) is a registered Ghanaian non-governmental organization (NGO) that promotes ecological restoration, especially in degraded agricultural landscapes for improved livelihoods and poverty reduction. We work with communities, schools, civil society organizations, local and national government agencies and international partners to promote Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) through advocacy, research, education, community mobilization, sharing of lessons learned and supporting the actions of others.

FONAR was established in 2014. We work with partners to engage local communities and government agencies to deliberate on context-specific environmental and food security challenges in Northern Ghana.

Together we find and promote adoption of feasible land restoration solutions like FMNR to improve food security and livelihoods, build community resilience to climate change and reduce rural poverty. We believe it is critical to work with local communities on environmental restoration and governance issues that affect them directly.

We believe agroforestry policies, programs and technologies supporting on-farm regreening interventions for smallholder farmers are more likely to contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods when they are culturally sensitive, acceptable and feasible. We share our evidence and lessons learned from the field with informal and formal governance structures at all levels and with our external partners to influence environmental policies and sustainable restoration practices

A message from the Board Chairperson

Today's environmental challenges are increasingly complex and interconnected. As Albert Einstein aptly put it decades ago: "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them". Therefore, we need to do things differently to tackle today's environmental crisis, often times by making use of existing natural solutions or developing new innovative solutions that are at our feet. Hence, FONAR is open to new ideas needed to solve today's complex local and global environment challenges. The degradation of farmlands, biodiversity loss and climate change threaten livelihoods in communities where we work. FONAR believes strongly that FMNR offers a feasible solution to restoring the productivity of degraded farm and communal lands in northern Ghana.

Thanks to the generous support of Awaken Trees (our core funding partner) and strategic partners, including FMNR Hub of WVA, EKO and Tony Rinaudo. We would also like to thank our staff for the dedication and commitment.

COP (Rtd) Patrick Atampugre Akolgo (Board Chairperson)

HOPE KEEPS US ALIVE



OUR VISION

FONAR will be ranked among the leading environmental restoration organizations inspiring hope in communities and individuals to take care of the environment for food security, resilient livelihoods and communities.

OUR MISSION

FONAR will create a forum for action learning to preserve and restore the productivity of degraded landscapes through natural regeneration and restoration for sustainable livelihoods.

OUR CORE VALUES

- *Integrity*: We are honest, trustworthy and professional in our work.
- *Accountability*: We take responsibility for our results, report on them and act appropriately.
- *Respect*: We promote the dignity of all persons.
- *Excellence*: We are committed to the pursuit of innovation, efficiency and effectiveness. We explore innovative, inspirational and creative solutions to achieve our results.
- *Transparency*: We ensure transparency in our working relationships.
- *Equity, Non-Discrimination & Inclusiveness*: We ensure equity while working towards social equality, justice, respect and social inclusion in our programming. We respect cultural diversity and beliefs. We will recruit and develop staff to create a diverse, inclusive and equitable organization that reflects our vision and mission.
- *Passion for Results*: We show pride, enthusiasm and dedication in everything we do. We are committed to delivering high quality programmes in our intervention communities.

OUR APPROACH

FONAR promotes the widespread adoption and scaling up of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) as a simple and cost-effective technique for the restoration and regreening of degraded landscapes. We do this through community and social mobilisation, advocacy, education and building genuine partnerships. FONAR is committed towards building partnerships with local communities, government and non-government agencies and other civil society organizations; and then building the financial and human resources within our organization as needed to meet the changing times.

WHERE WE WORK

FONAR currently has projects in the semi-arid Upper East region (UER) of Ghana. The region is located in the Sudan Savannah and Guinea Savannah agro-ecological zone of north-eastern Ghana, which lies in the transition area between the dry Sudan and Sahel Savannah grasslands of West Africa. The region covers an estimated land area of 8,842 km², of which 80% suffers from moderate to severe land degradation. The UER had a total population of 1.3 million people in 2021, with an annual growth rate of 2.0 percent¹. The average population density of the region is 147.2 people/km², as compared to the national average population density of 139.5 people/km². Almost 80% of the region's population is rural with many people living in degraded

scattered rural settlements, where more than four in every 10 people are poor². Majority of the people are dependent on rain-fed subsistence agriculture, primarily cultivating cereal crops like millet, sorghum and rice, and rearing livestock. Rapid environmental degradation due to negative land clearing practices, overgrazing, annual bushfires and rapid population growth are the main causes of land degradation in the region³. The livelihoods of rural farm households are thus threatened by increasing agricultural drought and loss of soil fertility. To reverse the trend, FONAR works with local communities and its partners to promote the uptake of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) and related livelihood activities for re-greening degraded farms and communal lands.



¹<https://statsghana.gov.gh/regionalpopulation.php?population=MTQ3Nz>

² Ghana Statistical Service. (2014). Ghana Living Standards Survey Round 6 (GLSS6). Poverty Profile in Ghana (2005-2013)

³ Alex B. Owusu, A.B. et al., (2013). Analysis of Desertification in the Upper East Region (UER) of Ghana Using Remote Sensing, Field Study, and Local Knowledge.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Nabdam Community FMNR Project (FMNR4WELIP)

- ⇒ 150 people (88 females/62 males) introduced to FMNR in the two project communities during community sensitization sessions at project start.
- ⇒ Two FMNR lead farmer groups, comprising of 20 farmers (10 females/10 males) formed, trained and equipped in the two project communities.
- ⇒ More than 100 community members (youth, men, women and elders) sensitized and trained on FMNR techniques in the two target project communities.
- ⇒ 45 female FMNR lead farmers, female household heads, widows and other identified vulnerable groups trained on Group Savings and Loans Associations (GSLA) approach.
- ⇒ Eight Executive members of the FMNR Lead Farmer Groups trained on leadership skills.
- ⇒ Two community fire volunteer squads of 20 members (10 males/10 females) formed, trained and equipped in the two project communities.
- ⇒ Two FMNR demonstration plots (sites) established for practice.
- ⇒ Eleven farmers (6 males/5 females) practicing FMNR on their farmlands.

2. Talensi School Kids FMNR Eco-clubs Project

- ⇒ Direct project beneficiaries (eco club members and teachers) applying tree growing knowledge and skills in their schools and communities.
- ⇒ About **1000** community members, school children and teachers reached with bushfire awareness and preparedness sessions.
- ⇒ The project fostered closer relationships among children, teachers and other community stakeholders, helping to build friendships, teamwork and trust.
- ⇒ The 15 eco club schools regenerated a total of **377** trees on their FMNR demonstration plots and planted a total of **184** trees on school grounds, a total of **561** trees in two years.

PARTNERSHIPS: POWER IN NUMBERS

- **June 2023:** FONAR collaborated with World Vision Ghana (WVG) FMNR and land restoration projects in northern Ghana to organise a day's Regional Public Policy Stakeholders Advocacy Conference for FMNR scaling up in the Upper East Region. The conference was organised to round off a series of regional and district public policy stakeholder engagements on FMNR scaling up across the 15 Municipal and District Assemblies in the Upper East Region. The conference enabled FMNR practitioners, relevant government policy makers and implementers, academia and the media to share lessons learned from FMNR projects implemented in the region as well as the global FMNR success story. Eighty-one people attended the conference, including 13 municipal and district chief executives and heads of decentralized government departments and agencies. The activity was funded by World Vision Ghana and Tony Rinaudo of World Vision Australia and FMNR pioneer.
- **November/December, 2023:** FONAR strengthened its partnership with the Upper East Regional Office of the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) by organising a two-day training of trainers' workshop on community-based fire management (CBFiM) for personnel of the Rural Fires Department in the region. FONAR also worked with the GNFS to carried out bushfire prevention and control activities in Nabdam and Talensi Districts.
- **During the year under review,** FONAR signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Nabdam District Assembly (UER) and three decentralized departments of the Assembly (i.e., Departments of Agriculture, Fire Service, and Social Welfare and Community Development). The parties agreed to work together as partners to restore degraded lands and improve livelihoods in two communities in the Nabdam District under the Nabdam Community FMNR Project dubbed "Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration for Women's Empowerment and Livelihoods Project (FMNR4WELIP). Subsequently, FONAR registered with the Assembly to operate as an NGO in the district. Since then, FONAR has had very good working relationship with the Depts of Agriculture and Fire Service as implementing partners.



FMNR conference participants enjoying fruits during a visit to the Yameriga Restoration Hills in Talensi

NABDAM COMMUNITY FMNR PROJECT

Project Overview

In February 2023, FONAR began implementing a two-year '*Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration for Women's Empowerment and Livelihoods Project (FMNR4WELIP)*' in Nabdam District of the Upper East Region of Ghana. The project is funded by Awaken Trees Foundation of Austria. The project goal is to safeguard and enhance women's land-based livelihoods through sustainable use of natural resources using the Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) land restoration technique. FMNR4WELIP's specific objectives are to: (i) enhance the capacity of farmers in target communities to adopt FMNR for improved household food and livelihoods security, and (ii) increase farmers, particularly female farmers, access to alternative livelihoods that reduce pressure on woodlands.

The project promotes 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 adopted the Lead Farmer (LF) approach for FMNR extension service delivery and to accelerate upscaling of the technique and related good agricultural practices.

The project facilitated the formation of two FMNR Lead farmer groups of 10 members (10 females/10 males) in each of the two project target communities (villages). They were trained to lead their communities for collective action on land restoration using the FMNR technique. In turn, the trained FMNR lead farmers are to train and mentor other farmers either on their own farms or on community FMNR demonstration sites for replication. This approach is intended to increase FMNR adoption among individual farmers in the project communities and beyond



Empowering Women for Community Resilience

Women are the backbone of rural smallholder agricultural production in Northern Ghana, where the project is being implemented.

However, they don't have direct access to land and their voices don't matter much in community natural resources management (NRM) decision-making and discussions. This FMNR project facilitates social inclusion and

creates the space for women/girls to voice their opinions in NRM discussion. The project increased women's participation in FMNR and related good agricultural practices (GAPs) training and tree pruning activities to empower them as equal partners in building resilient households and communities.

The status of women in the community is elevated when they participate in household and community decision-making, in particular if they are able to take on leadership roles, which leads to an increase in their social standing and agency. Equal numbers of women and men are selected as project lead farmers in each community, and some are also members of the executives of the groups.

Women, girls and children in the project area are primarily responsible for collecting fuelwood for household energy needs and income. Because FMNR increases firewood supply and reduces the time required by women and children to collect firewood, their burden is reduced. Women have more time to pursue other economic activities and children have more time for education and play. FMNR implementation contributes towards addressing gender inequality, resource access, benefits sharing and inclusive representation.



Members of Dasang Community Lead Farmers Group

Important Project Steps....

There are many inter-related benefits for promoting on-farm uptake of FMNR among smallholder farmers besides sustaining yields of annual crops. But it should be pointed out that in trying to restore the productivity of degraded agricultural lands using FMNR, the primary concern of poor subsistence farming communities is to increase food production for survival. The perceived benefits of tree regeneration on-farms such as reduced soil erosion, nutrient recycling, soil conservation, increase soil organic matter, risk reduction, weed control, integrated pest management, provision of shade to livestock, etc., will be more valued if food production is increased or at least maintained.

Hence, at inception the project sensitized and trained community leaders, lead farmer groups, community members (young and

old) and local government agency partners on the FMNR principles as well as its short- and long-term benefits for food security. Stakeholder engagement and training are key elements of FMNR implementation success. We sensitized all stakeholders on the threats of soil degradation through tree cover loss on efforts to ensure food security, emphasizing the importance of retaining trees on farms to check top soil erosion, loss of soil organic matter and loss of soil biodiversity. Many of these threats impact food security negatively by decreasing agricultural yields, through a reduction of the land area available for food crop production in the project communities. Soils in the project area are visibly unhealthy mainly due to unsustainable farming practices, livestock overgrazing, annual bushfires and over-exploitation of trees.



- 1) The project established Community FMNR demonstration plots for knowledge and skills transfer.
- 2) The project arranged a peer learning visit for the lead farmers to the celebrated Yameriga FMNR Restoration Hills in nearby Talensi District. Yameriga is about 25km away from the project communities in Nabdam District.
- 3) The project formed two community fire volunteer squads of 20 members (10 females/10 males), trained and supported them with basic fire-fighting hand tools to manage small bushfire outbreaks.
- 4) The project added complementary activities to provide benefits in the short-term (before benefits can be felt from the trees themselves) in order to reduce pressure on wood resources.

Breaking the Annual Bushfires 'Jinx'

Semi-arid northern Ghana experiences a consistent cycle of annual bushfires, often caused by human activities coupled with long dry season and climate change. These rural fires burn vast stretches of land, destroying vegetation and altering the natural balance of ecosystems. Crops, often ready for harvest in November/December are frequently burned. Livestock grazing areas and FMNR restoration sites are not spared, further threatening the fragile livelihoods of agriculture-dependent communities. Besides, bushfire contributes to the degradation of farmlands, resulting in declining crop yields.

More importantly for FMNR projects, bushfires disrupt vital ecosystem services that are integral to agroforestry systems, including insect pollination and nutrient cycling. As fires alter the composition of vegetation, the delicate balance that supports thriving agricultural landscapes are disturbed. Persistent fires in the project communities makes it increasingly difficult for farmers to plan and



implement sustainable agricultural practices, including the adoption of FMNR practices.

To contribute towards breaking this 'jinx', the project formed community fire volunteer squads (CFVS) to encourage local people to participate in basic bushfire prevention and control measures.

The 20 fire volunteers (10 females/10 males) were trained by personnel of the Nabdampi District Office of the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS). The project presented basic firefighting equipment (rakes, cutlasses, wellington boots, hand gloves and branded T-shirts) to the fire volunteers for their work.



Fire volunteers practising firefighting



Fire volunteers creating a fire belt

Savings Groups and Financial Inclusion

The FMNR project seeks to support poor rural farmers restore lost tree cover quickly for improved livelihoods and incomes. 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 the project area. Hence, Project is supporting women's groups in target communities to develop and diversify local agro-processing and NTFPs microenterprises for financial inclusion and economic empowerment.

The project introduced Group Savings and Loans Associations for Socio-Economic Empowerment (GSLA4SEE) that allowed women and community members to build micro savings and learn basic financial literacy skills. During emergencies, group

members 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. The GSLA4SEE activity is also aimed at developing the culture of savings and loans to build resilience of vulnerable people in the project communities to shocks.

With additional funding from EKŌ, the project sensitized 50 female FMNR lead farmers, female household heads, widows and other identified vulnerable groups in the two project communities on the Savings Groups concept. Subsequently, the project facilitated the target groups to form their own GSLAs based on trust and ability to commit to small regular savings. Two groups have been formed with a total of 45 members. They have been provided with Starter Kits (i.e., a secure savings box and records books) and trained. The groups meet every two weeks to purchase shares, grant loans to members and repay their loans.



GSLA starter kit



GSLA training at Dasang



GSLA training at Kparaboug

Regreened mindscapes regreening landscapes

FMNR is basically a traditional on-farm tree management practice, which is part of the broader land management practices of many agriculture-dependent societies at some point in time. These dynamic practices are influenced by socio-cultural and economic considerations of land users and by external factors such as growing population and land use policies. Hence, any intervention aimed at restoring degraded landscapes should first try to understand and influence the mindsets of stakeholders at various levels. At the lowest community level, the values and actions of men, women and youth who manage land for their livelihoods will determine the form and rate of its restoration. These communities are the first to gain from land restoration as well as the first to lose without it.

Thus, FMNR is not just a tree management practice, it is also a social movement for regreening mindscapes and empowering communities to value and work with nature to meet their needs in a mutually beneficial way. FMNR practitioners try to understand

the barriers and facilitators of tree regeneration behaviour, and how to influence them. So that farmers and other land users in rural farming communities can be facilitated in implementing practices that are supportive of regreening. At the project inception, we engaged the communities to reflect on historical land management practices, and how their relationships with trees and vegetation have changed over time. Then, we facilitated the communities to identify and select their FMNR lead farmers, who were trained and equipped to lead the project implementation. The project supported practical FMNR training of farmers on community demonstration plots and on farmer fields.

In less than six months after introducing the project, many FMNR champions (both females and males) have emerged. Many farmers in the two project villages have embraced the technique in their fields, and are sharing FMNR knowledge and skills with their peers.

FMNR adoption success stories



Bakpemye Yen is a 52-year-old female FMNR lead farmer in Dasang community. She is a widow with six children. During the 2023 farming season (May to December), she cultivated groundnuts on her 3.5-acre farm, and allowed many shrubs of different species to grow on the farm following FONAR's introduction of FMNR in the area. With increased understanding of the benefits of on-farm trees, Bakpemye is determined to prune the shrubs on her farm, which she used to clear during land preparation in the past. She regenerated 15 young trees of different species on her farm. Bakpemye said; "I am allowing these trees to regrow on the farm to improve soil fertility, for medicinal uses, firewood and wild fruits (food) to supplement diets of my family".

Teni Nagpogbil, a lead farmer in Dasang, is in her early 40s. Teni's groundnuts farm of about 2.5 acres is live fenced with various native tree species. She said the live fence served as a boundary marker and to protect her crops. She pruned some of the tree branches to provide more fencing material, which will be used as fuelwood after harvest. Nagpogbil said the FMNR training FONAR organised for community members has increased her understanding of the importance of on-farm trees. Though there are many trees surrounding the farm, she still maintained and pruned shrubs inside the farm. The pruned parts of the shrubs she left on the farm to rot and serve as organic manure. Nagpogbil has regenerated four new shrubs on the farm in addition to 12 existing shea trees.



Nagpogbil admiring a regenerated shrub



Joel Yen-Nyeya explaining benefits of the shrub

Joel Yen-Nyeya is a lead farmer and FMNR Champion in Dasang Community. Joel had more than 10 mature trees of different species and a few young regenerating trees on his maize farm. 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. Joel says the shrub (shown in the photo) is a useful medicinal plant in the community. The leaves of the shrub are used as herbs to prevent certain childhood diseases among babies. Joel says FMNR is more practical because they already know the uses and values of native trees in their community, and the concept is not new to them.

Joseph Mpumbire is Chairperson of Dasang FMNR lead farmers group. He has more than 15 years of farming experience, cultivating mostly maize, millet and sorghum on his homestead farm. Joseph started pruning some young trees and shrubs on his farm after the FMNR community engagements and training, which looked good and promising. "Before FMNR was introduced into our community, I used to cut the whole tree or shrub off when preparing the land for a new farming season", he added. 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.



Joseph (R) and Christopher (L)

"When you dress (prune) a tree now, it will be become big tree in one year and it would help us".
Moses Norin, Kparaboug lead farmer group chairperson.

"First, we would cut it (tree and shrub resprouts) the way we want, but right now because of FONAR we know how to cut it. We would cut it (shrub shoots) and leave some of them to grow."
Mba Bihinaab Dasang lead farmer in an interview with Ghana Television News (GTV) – June 09, 2023.

TALENSI SCHOOL KIDS FMNR ECO CLUBS PROJECT

Regreening Young Minds for Landscape Regreening

The goal of FONAR and Awaken Trees school kids FMNR eco clubs programme, being implemented in primary schools of Ghana's Upper East Region (UER) is to empower young people to become change agents for environmental restoration in their communities. The programme began as a two-year project in August 2021 by reviving and strengthening 15 school kids FMNR eco clubs established by the then World Vision Ghana (WVG) Talensi FMNR Project in primary schools. We revived the eco clubs, trained teachers and children on the FMNR technique, provided pruning tools, supported the schools to establish FMNR demonstration sites and facilitated the clubs to conduct community outreach activities on various local environmental issues.

Through these activities, the eco clubs have raised awareness among the target communities to sustain FMNR practices (project evaluation conducted in October 2023). The project reached **385 (207 girls/178 boys)** and **32** teachers directly as club members and club teachers by the end of July 2023.

Increasing environmental literacy of young people through environmental education (EE) is pivotal for success and sustainability of ecosystem restoration efforts. The school-based FMNR environmental restoration programme will instill knowledge and skills on, and values for biodiversity conservation on the next generation for food security and sustainable livelihoods.

FONAR is transitioning the FMNR eco clubs project to a programme in line with and supportive of Ghana's new standards-based school curriculum as well as global EE best practices. To this end, FONAR's eco-clubs programme strategy will connect tree growing and environmental education generally across



School children practicing tree DBH measurement

a wide range of subjects and topics in the school curriculum.

The programme elements are intended to increase children's environmental knowledge and awareness, promote positive attitudes towards the environment, develop critical thinking skills, stewardship intentions and behaviours, and enjoyment among young people.

FONAR recognizes the critical role of teachers and the importance of a holistic approach that actively engages learners (pupils/students) in a complete learning experience. We trained and supported our eco club teachers to apply best practices that appear to drive positive results in environmental knowledge, awareness, skills, attitudes, intentions and behaviour. FONAR has identified five focus areas for strengthening to ensure the programme success. These are: 1) buy-in of programme stakeholders from the outset (cultural appropriateness and local ownership); 2) inclusive learning materials design and development; 3) teacher training, particularly involving the teachers in materials development and evaluation; 4) funding; and 5) maintaining programme support capacity.

Highlights of Project Achievements

Key findings from the [project evaluation](#) suggest that the school kids FMNR Eco-clubs achieved significant intermediate outcomes after two-years' of implementation from August 2021 to July 2023 as follows:

Key project achievements

- Eco club pupils (members) and teachers have gained environmental restoration understanding, knowledge and skills relating to natural regeneration of native trees and shrubs.
- The direct project beneficiaries (eco club members and teachers) were applying tree growing knowledge and skills in their schools and communities.
- Other children and teachers not directly involved in the project reported benefiting from the project.
- The eco clubs project fostered closer relationships among children, teachers and other community stakeholders, helping to build friendships, teamwork and trust.
- The 15 project FMNR eco club schools regenerated a total of **377 trees** on their FMNR demonstration plots and planted a total of **184 trees** on school grounds.
- In all, the clubs grew a total of **561 trees** during the two-year project.

Key project challenges

- The unwillingness of people in a few communities to support tree planting on school grounds.
- Three of the 15 schools not having FMNR demonstration plots for practice.
- Insufficient time for teachers to teach and demonstrate FMNR practices in the field, and lack of funds to support clubs with logistics and learning materials.

Recommendations for intervention redesign

- FONAR to consider opening up eco club membership limit, currently at 20 children per school.
- The need for clubs to conduct more outdoor pruning and community engagements.
- FONAR and GES staff should consider carrying out more monitoring and support visits.
- Ensure sustained engagement with clubs to reinforce messages and maximise project impact.



Photos from school kids tree inventory and data collection

Bushfire Prevention Awareness and Preparedness Campaign

In November 2023, FONAR in collaboration with the Rural Fires Department of Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) in the UER launched the 2023/24 bushfire season school and community bushfire awareness and preparedness campaign under the theme: *"Be bushfire ready; bushfire prevention is everyone's responsibility"*. The campaign was launched at Tongo-Balungu Primary school and attended by the chiefs and people of the community, regional and district officers of GNFS, representatives of Ghana Education Service (GES), school teachers, journalists, eco club members and school pupils.

Personnel of the GNFS educated the community members and school children on the good and bad uses of fire and the associated risks on lives, property and livelihoods when fire is used unwisely. The people were also trained on the use of basic

firefighting hand tools for fighting small bushfires outbreaks at the community level.

The campaign was carried out in five bushfire prone communities in the project area aimed at educating children and community members on the dangers of bushfires and how they can contribute to prevent them.

A total of **567** community members, children and teachers attended the participatory and practical learning sessions in the five communities. The activity created awareness on the dangers of bushfires among school children and community members and empowered them to act as agents of change in taking actions to prevent and control bushfires. The campaign increased knowledge of school children, teachers and communities about bushfire hazards



Scenes from the bushfire awareness campaign in the five project school communities

EKŌ FMNR OUTREACH PROJECT

In May 2023, Ekō (a US-based consumer rights advocacy group) supported FONAR with a grant of USD 5,000.00 for FMNR outreach in farming communities to help boost reforestation and support farmer livelihoods. Part of the grant was used to purchase equipment (an off-road Yamaha motorcycle, a Public Address (PA) System and a Laptop Computer) to support our community and school outreach activities.

We used the funds to support five school kids' eco-clubs to organise children's environmental art poster exhibitions and FMNR awareness-raising durbars in the school communities. The objective was to sensitize people in the communities to embrace FMNR and to stop negative environmental practices like setting of bushfires. The durbars targeted key community decision makers (chiefs and elders) and other key stakeholders.

FMNR is globally recognised as one of the feasible wide-scale land restoration techniques. However, Ghana's current restoration strategies and actions are not consciously promoting FMNR uptake in the national regreening mix, including the annual tree planting prioritized Green Ghana Day Campaign. As part of our FMNR upscaling advocacy efforts, part of the grant was used to organise a tree pruning and FMNR sensitization session in two of our project farming communities in Nabdam District. More than 100 farmers (men, women and children) participated in the exercise, which was carried on Ghana's national public television and radio network. The FMNR upscaling outreach campaign reached more than 1000 people directly in the seven target communities, and thousands of others indirectly through both local and national news media coverage.



School kids FMNR Eco-clubs FMNR Community Outreach Durbars



Green Ghana Day FMNR Pruning Exercise and Sensitization Campaign

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

As a small organization, FONAR places high priority on strengthening its institutional capacity to professionally design and implement outreach activities for our target key populations. The focus of our capacity development not only focus on developing staff competencies, but also on the other issues influencing performance – such as organisational and individual capacity, as well as the broader enabling environment. Building the technical knowledge and skills of our staff would be complemented by leadership and managerial skills, a clear organizational structure and strategy, effective processes and procedures, and efficient and effective financial management and procurement systems.

1. Staff Capacity Development

During the period under review, management made efforts to build the capacity of staff for efficient service delivery in our technical areas.

In July 2023, Juliana Abasemah Atagra (Finance/Administrative Officer) and Christopher Pubeng (Assistant Programme Officer) were sponsored by the FMNR Hub of World Vision Australia (WVA) to participate in the 15-Week facilitated FMNR Practitioners eWorkshop, hosted by the Technical Academy of World Vision



International (WVI). Both of them are now certified FMNR practitioners.

In June 2023, Eugene Agomna (Assistant Project Officer), participated in a 7-week online Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) Course, offered by the Environmental Leadership Training Initiative (ELTI) of Yale School of the Environment in collaboration with the FAO. The course content covered an introduction to the concepts and techniques needed to design, implement, and monitor effective FLR projects that meet diverse restoration goals and enhance the livelihoods for those who depend on the landscape.

We will continue to support and invest in staff professional development through on the job training, in-house mentorship and coaching, attendance of conferences, etc.

2. Property and Equipment

During the year under review, the Founder and President of Awaken Trees, Mr. Josef Ertl, funded the purchase of a Nissan Hardbody Pick-up for FONAR. In addition, the EKO FMNR outreach project grant enabled us to buy a motorbike, a laptop computer and a Public Address (PA) system. Olivia Boyd facilitated the EKO fundraising for FONAR and we would like to thank her and EKO members for the support.



MAJOR CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Challenges

We had the following challenges during implementation of our project activities in the year.

- 1) Bushfire outbreaks during the dry season in November-February posed a threat to the implementation of FMNR practices among farmers in our project communities and across northern Ghana. As a result, FONAR has been collaborating with GNFS since 2022 to educate school children and farmers on the dangers of bushfires, and the need for them to create fire belts to protect farms and community assets. During the year under review, we worked with communities and GNFS to form and train bushfire volunteer squads under the Nabdampi Community FMNR Project. A major role of the community fire volunteer squads is to continuously educate the people on the negative effects of bushfires on the environment, tree regeneration and food production. We will need more funding support to expand our bushfire management campaign in the communities.
- 2) Due to land fragmentation and scarcity in some of our eco-club project communities, farmers in a few communities were unwilling to support tree regeneration and planting on school grounds that are close to homestead farmlands. As a result, three of the 15 eco-club schools do not have FMNR demonstration plots for practice.
- 3) Insufficient time for teachers to teach and demonstrate FMNR practices in the field, and lack of funds to support clubs with logistics and learning materials is also a challenge to introducing FMNR in schools and reaching more children.

Lessons learned

- ⇒ It is important to involve community leadership structures in project activities from the outset for their buy-in.
- ⇒ Using staff of local government partners from the Department of Agriculture and Fire Service contributed immensely to the credibility of our extension service delivery reach. Though, many of these local government staff have capacity deficit in terms of technical knowledge and skills, logistics to do their work and the right mindsets. So, FONAR's approach is to build the capacity of our partner staff in relevant technical areas related to our work.
- ⇒ The community FMNR project's focus on women and the youth through deliberate efforts to get them involved in all activities is achieving results. We have high interest and participation of women/youth in all project structures and engagements.
- ⇒ Regular monitoring and support visits to project communities to interact with farmers and listen to their concerns is helping to build trust and good relationships for the project success.

OUR PARTNERS

FONAR work is made possible thanks to the financial and technical support of our funding partners and collaborators. Special thanks to our core funding partner, Awaken Trees Foundation of Austria and its Founder and President Mr. Josef Ertl. We also wish to express our sincere appreciation to Tony Rinaudo of World Vision Australia (pioneer of FMNR and our Global Advisor) for connecting us to strategic partners and increasing our visibility on the global stage. Our profound gratitude to EKO for the FMNR outreach grant support, which enabled us to expand our outreach activities to more farming communities.



TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES

Entity Registration Certificates



Certificate of Recognition as a National NGO



ANNEX 1: AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2023

FORUM FOR NATURAL REGENERATION			
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31ST DECEMBER, 2023			
		2023	2022
Non-Current Assets	Notes		
Property, Plant & Equipment	7	187,164.10	30,281.20
Total Non- Current Assets		187,164.10	30,281.20
Current Assets			
Cash & Cash Equivalent	8	70,489.04	13,160.86
Accounts Receivable & Prepayment	10	15,000.00	15,000.00
Total Current Assets		85,489.04	28,160.86
Total Assets		272,653.14	58,442.06
ACCUMULATED FUND & LIABILITIES			
Accumulated Fund		269,653.14	54,341.17
Total Accumulated Fund		269,653.14	54,341.17
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payables	9	3,000.00	4,100.89
Total Current Liabilities		3,000.00	4,100.89
Total Accumulated Fund & Liabilities		272,653.14	58,442.06
The notes on page to are an integral part of these financial statements.			
.....		
<i>Chairperson, Board of Directors</i>		<i>Director</i>	
<i>The Board of Directors approved the financial statements on</i>			

FORUM FOR NATURAL REGENERATION
STATEMENT OF CASHFLOW
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2023

		2023	2022
		GH¢	GH¢
Cash Inflow from Operating Activities			
Surplus/(Deficit) for the period		215,311.97	35,164.97
Adjustment for:			
Depreciation		49,234.48	<u>8,011.00</u>
(Increase)/Decrease in Prepayments		-	(15,000.00)
Increase/(Decrease) in accounts Payables and accrual		3,000.00	2,600.89
Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities		267,546.45	30,776.86
 Interest paid			-
Net Cashflow from Investing Activities		267,546.45	30,776.86
 Investing Activities			
Purchase of property,plant and equipment		(206,117.38)	(17,716.00)
Disposing of PPE			-
Net cashflow for investment activities		(206,117.38)	(17,716.00)
 Financing Activities			
Borrowing (Loan)		-	-
Payment for Borrowing (Loan)		-	-
Net Cash Inflow from Financing Activities		-	-
 Net changes in Cash and Cash Equivalents at beginnir		13,160.86	100.00
 Cash and Cash Equivalents as at 31st December		45,268.21	13,060.86
 Cash and Cash Equivalent C/F		70,489.04	13,160.86

FORUM FOR NATURAL REGENERATION
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

DONATIONS		2023	2022
4	Gross Income	GH¢	GH¢
	Awaken Trees -Eco Club Project	236,559.97	207,860.00
	Awaken Trees- FMNR4WELIP Project	114,375.00	
	EKO-Community outreach support	55,064.26	
	Donation from Josef Ertl	180,000.00	
	GRAND TOTAL	585,999.23	207,860.00
5	General Expenditure -Eco Club Project		
	Direct project cost;		
	Fuel & Lubricants	22,971.85	11,575.16
	Travel & transport	13,322.00	7,370.00
	Facilitation/expert	4,700.00	8,400.00
	Training/ workshop refreshments	14,075.31	14,599.81
	Capacity Building	1,000.00	-
	FMNR Logistics	946.00	-
	Community organisation	4,476.00	3,960.00
	Prunning tools	-	8,579.00
	Eco Club T-shirt	-	10,952.31
	Media & Publicity	2,920.00	1,915.00
	Support Staff	2,800.00	
	Sub Total	67,211.16	67,351.28
Recurring Capital cost:			
	Installation and maintenance cost		-
	Maintenance of equipment	1,974.00	471.00
	Sub Total	1,974.00	471.00
Overheads/Administration cost:			
	Printing//Photocopying/Stationery	8,364.34	5,912.20
	Communication/Postage	4,814.00	1,902.00
	Office beverages/maintenance	2,857.50	2,350.58
	Utilities	3,200.00	2,300.00
	Computer accessories	65.00	416.00
	Office rent	3,000.00	2,400.00
	Bank charges	2,062.00	1,113.00
	Sub Total	24,362.84	16,393.78
Personnel			
	Salaries	95,375.95	76,350.32
	Sub Total	95,375.95	76,350.32

Registrations/Subscriptions/renewals:				
Registration of certificate at the TDA				200.00
Insurance premium		485.55		417.65
Social welfare		1,500.00		1,500.00
Filing of annual returns		1,740.00		
Sub Total		3,725.55		2,117.65
Depreciation		49,234.48		49,234.48
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		241,883.98		211,918.51
6 General Expenditure- FMNR4WELIP Project		2023		2022
Fuel & Lubricants		18,597.00		-
Travel & transport		5,970.00		-
Facilitation/Expert		10,400.00		-
Training/ Workshop		6,406.00		-
Community Organisation		2,939.00		-
Pruning tools		13,694.02		-
Printing of T-shirt		5,119.80		-
Media & Publicity		5,432.17		-
Accommodation		1,400.00		-
M&E		1,000.00		-
GSLA Tool Kit/Training		3,563.00		-
Allowance for project support staff		6,550.00		-
Sub Total		81,070.99		-
Capital cost:				
Equipment Maintenance		9,613.80		-
Sub Total		9,613.80		-
Personnel Cost				
Salaries		16,350.00		
Sub Total		16,350.00		
Overheads/Administration cost:				
Printing/Stationery		4,094.00		-
Utilities		1,500.00		-
Office Beverages/Maintenance		1,337.00		-
Computer accessories		3,078.00		-

Bank charges		1,881.49	-
Sub Total		11,890.49	-
Registration/Subscription/Renewals			
Registration of certificate at District level		250.00	-
Insurance Premium		8,628.00	-
Tracking devices		1,000.00	-
Sub Total		9,878.00	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		128,803.28	-

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023			
7 PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIPMENT			
Fixed Assets	Furniture & Fittings GH¢	Computers & Equipment GH¢	Grand Total GH¢
Cost/Valuation	10%	20%	
Balance at 1/01/23	5,410	37,350.00	
Additions/Adjustments	-	206,117.38	
Balance at 31/12/2023	5,410	243,467.38	248,877.38
Depreciation			-
Balance at 01/01/2023	1,082.00	11,396.80	12,478.80
Charge for the year	541.00	48,693.48	49,234.48
Balance at 31/12/2022	1,623	60,090.28	61,713.28
Net Book Value			
As at 31/12/2023	3,787	183,377.10	187,164.10
As at 31/12/2022	4,328	25,953.20	30,281.20
8 Cash and cash Equivalent			
2023	GH¢	2022	GH¢
Balance	58,429.07	13,160.86	
Bank balance	12,059.97		
	70,489.04	13,160.86	
9 Accounts Payables			
2023	GH¢	2022	GH¢
Audit & Accountancy fee	3,000.00	3,000.00	
	-	1,100.89	
	3,000.00	4,100.89	
10 Accounts Receivable/prepayment			
Pre-finance	-	15,000.00	
	-	15,000.00	

APPENDIX 2: BOARD AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

1. THE BOARD

1. COP (RTD) PATRICK A. AKOLGO	CHAIRPERSON
2. SUMAILA S. SAAKA	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
3. ROBERT A. ALIBO	DIRECTOR/SECRETARY
4. TITUS O. ALZUMAH	MEMBER
5. LINDA MARFO (MRS.)	MEMBER

2. SENIOR MANAGEMENT

1. SUMAILA S. SAAKA	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
2. JULIANA A. ATAGRA	FINANCE/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
3. CHRISTOPHER PUBENG	ASSISTANT PROGRAMME OFFICER

**FORUM FOR NATURAL REGENERATION LBG (FONAR), HNO.CZ14, AGANA CL
GPS ADDRESS: UB-0197-1520, SOKABISI RESIDENTIAL AREA.
BOLGATANGA, UPPER EAST REGION. GHANA, WEST AFRICA.
Email: info@fonargh.org, fonargh@gmail.com**