

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



**Connecting the dots
for sustainable smallholder
agricultural landscapes restoration**

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This annual report provides an overview of Forum for Natural Regeneration LBG (FONAR's) work from January 2024 to December 2024.

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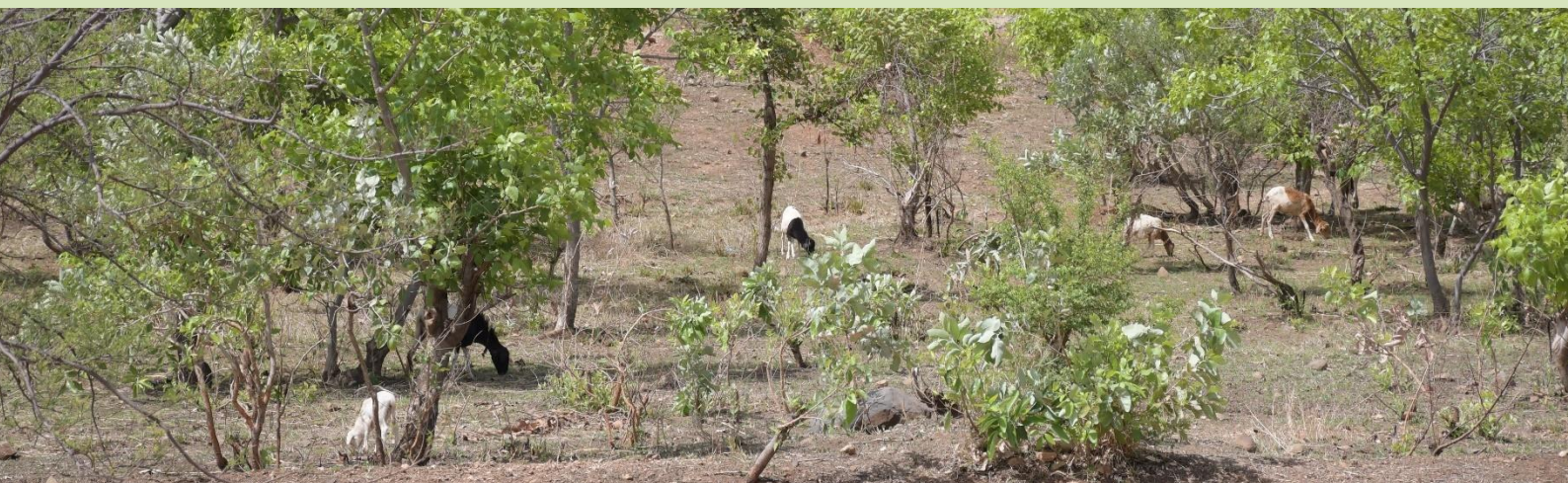
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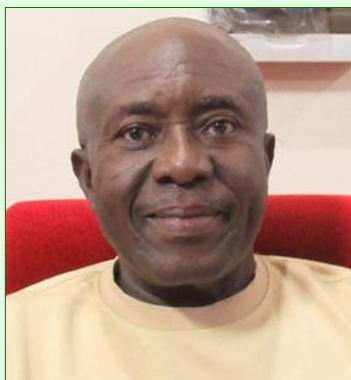


**REGREENING THROUGH NATURAL
REGENERATION FOR LIVELIHOOD
SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY**

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Message from the Board and Management



**COP (RTD) PATRICK
ATAMPUGRE AKOLGO**
Chair of the Board



SUMAILA S. SAAKA
Executive Director

Dear Reader,

It is our greatest pleasure to present the 2024 Annual Report of Forum for Natural Regeneration LBG (FONAR). The report chronicles activities the Organization carried out during the year in review. It covered activities that were conducted in FONAR's three thematic programming areas. These are our FMNR Education Programme, Community FMNR and Livelihoods Programme, Advocacy and Policy Engagement Programme, and Training, Capacity Building and Learning Programme.

FONAR implements projects and activities under these broad thematic areas through our flagship School Kids FMNR Eco-club Projects, Community FMNR and Livelihoods Improvement projects, capacity building, advocacy and policy dialogues, community mobilization and outreach campaigns.

2024 was a year of uncountable blessings and tremendous achievements for FONAR. Towards the end of October, we were privileged to host Mr. Tony Rinaudo, pioneer of the Global FMNR movement and 2018 Right Livelihood Laureate. He visited our Office in Bolgatanga as part of a working visit to Ghana under the auspices of World Vision Ghana and its donors. During the year, we had the honour to have the Heidehof Foundation of Germany generously agreeing to support us expand coverage of our school FMNR Eco-club programme to more schools in Talensi District of Northern Ghana. We made a lot of progress with our Community FMNR project implementation in the Nabdam District.

We would like to sincerely thank each and every one of our donors, supporters and partners from the bottom of our hearts for keeping faith with us. We value your partnership and collaboration. We are ever commitment to openness, honesty, prudence and the highest level of transparency in the use of funds you have entrusted to us. Together we are making a huge difference in the lives of countless children and families in the rural communities where FONAR work.

We are Forum for Natural Regeneration (FONAR)

Forum for Natural Regeneration LBG (FONAR)

is a registered Ghanaian environmental non-governmental organization (NGO) that promotes ecological restoration, especially in degraded agricultural landscapes for improved livelihoods, ecosystem restoration 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 as Movement for Natural Regeneration (MONAR). We work with diverse local stakeholders and partners to find feasible solutions to context-specific livelihoods, environmental and food security challenges.

We promote the adoption of feasible land restoration solutions like FMNR to improve food security, livelihoods and building resilience of communities to climate change impacts.

We believe agroforestry policies, programmes and technologies supporting on-farm greening interventions for smallholder farmers are more likely to contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods when they are culturally sensitive, acceptable and doable.

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 agroforestry and environmental restoration policies for sustainable restoration practices.

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

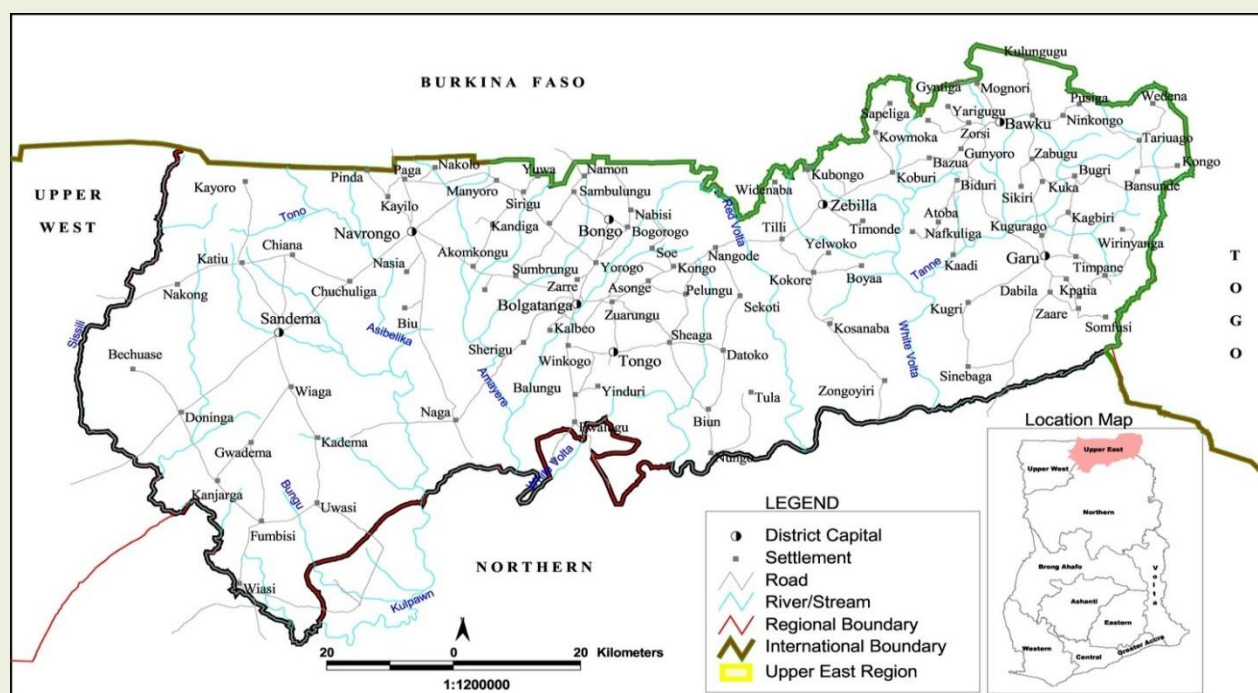
Our Solution: We promote wide scale adoption of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) as a simple, quick, cost-effective and culturally sensitive technique for greening degraded landscapes. We do this through community and social mobilisation, advocacy, education and building genuine partnerships.

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 dispersed farming

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 land.



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.

What We Achieved in 2024



“Regreening minds, agricultural landscapes and livelihoods with trees for sustainable development”

Our vision is ‘inspiring hope in communities and individuals to take care of the environment for food security, resilient livelihoods and communities’. We do recognise that multiple factors such as attitudes, beliefs, habits, history, land tenure and economic issues influence rural smallholder farmers’ agricultural land restoration practices. Thus, we work towards achieving our vision using both bottom-up and top-down approaches by transforming young minds, improving livelihoods and influencing policy.

School Kids FMNR Eco-Club Programme



One of FONAR's key strategies for greening mindscapes and landscapes involves engaging children through the formation of school kids Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) eco-clubs in basic schools. The school FMNR eco-club programme goal is to empower and inspire young people to become FMNR advocates and agents of change for environmental restoration in their communities. Since August 2021, we have worked with 15 primary schools in the Talensi District of Northern Ghana, directly involving more than 500 children in tree growing and nature-based environmental education activities. Through the initiative, 561 native and exotic trees were regenerated and planted under very harsh conditions in school grounds and communal lands.

The trees grown benefit children and schools by providing shade, preventing soil erosion, creating conducive learning environments and protecting school buildings against windstorms. The intervention not only helps restore degraded lands but also raises awareness among the younger generation about the importance of environmental stewardship. We are currently expanding this innovative mindscape greening initiative to 10 more schools in Talensi within the next two years. By this, FONAR is nurturing the next generation of environmental stewards and FMNR advocates to continue to grow more trees, engage their communities around environmental restoration, and enhance the biodiversity of local communities.



Observance of World Environment Day 2024.

FONAR collaborated with six Eco-club schools to organise various activities to mark World Environment Day (WED) 2024. WED is celebrated globally on June 5 every year to create awareness and action to protect the environment. The 2024 WED was observed under the theme: *"Land Restoration, Desertification and Drought Resilience,"* with the slogan: *"Our Land. Our Future. We are #GenerationRestoration."*

The theme was particularly relevant to what we do in our operational areas, which are prone to drought and desertification. The school eco-warriors organised various innovative and educative activities to mark the day in their schools. The activities include; awareness campaigns on the importance of trees, effects of drought and desertification, tree pruning exercises, recycling of sachet plastic waste into local baskets

More than 340 children, teachers and parents attended the activities in all the six schools.



***"Trees give us oxygen, shade, fruits, rain, fodder and protect our environment.
Let us protect the trees to protect our environment."***

-Joseph Abaah, 14, President of Gbane 'B' Primary school Eco-club.



“FMNR pruning – even children can do it”

Knowledge and skills of proper pruning is key to the success of FMNR. Pruning can help trees grow faster and quickly become mature trees. Pruning trees and shrubs on farms reduces competition with crops for nutrients, water and sunlight, and help increase crop yields. Pruning can also provide mulch for crops.

Dennis Garrity, Drylands Ambassador for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) notes that children can practice FMNR. *“It doesn’t cost any money; they can simply identify good and useful natural trees that come up in the fields naturally and both adults and children can manage them into fully grown trees”⁴.*

However, there is a bit of science in proper tree pruning – what, when, where and how – to prune that both teachers and children should know that proper pruning helps trees grow well by regulating their shape and size. On the other hand, poor pruning can damage a tree for its lifetime, so children should know basic tree and shrub pruning techniques.

In July, FONAR organised re-fresher training for eco-club teachers and members in six schools on introduction to FMNR, tree parts identification, basic pruning techniques and tree measurement. The two-hour training held in each school equipped 180 eco-club members and 21 teachers with

knowledge and skills to be able to identify and label the parts of a tree, describe the basic functions of tree parts, understand the features of woody plants and how trees/shrubs grow, and how to measure tree Diameter at Breast Height (DBH). In addition, the children were introduced to the FMNR concept and basics of pruning in the classroom. Later, they went out for a hands-on pruning practice in the field.



⁴<https://evergreenagriculture.net/even-children-can-do-fmnr/>



Excursion to Paga Crocodile Pond: “We learned and we had Fun”

- Mary Magdalene Adongo
Gorogo Primary School Eco-club Coordinator

Excursions are a good way of introducing eco-club members to environmental concepts, ideas and experiences that cannot be taught in the classroom. Students and teachers learn about environmental issues in a fun and hands-on way.

FONAR supports eco-clubs to visit environmentally important sites such as wildlife conservation areas, relevant government agencies, rehabilitated and degraded lands as an essential part of our FMNR eco-club programme. Taking school kids to these sites bring lessons learned in the classroom to life and helps them to engage in environmental stewardship.

In May, FONAR supported Gorogo Primary School Eco-Club to visit the famous Paga Crocodile Pond. The sacred crocodile pond is located 35 km north of Bolgatanga in Upper East Region of Ghana near the Ghana-Burkina Faso border. It attracts both domestic and international tourists every year.

The sacred and tamed crocodiles are enticed out of the pond with a live fowl and visitors can touch and take photographs with the crocodiles without being harmed. Twenty-two eco-club members and five teachers went on the trip. They learned about the history of the pond, crocodiles and had fun. The children planted a tree at the pond to symbolically mark the visit and to help in providing shade for the crocodiles. The children also visited the Ghana-Burkina Faso border at Paga and interacted with border officials.



Launch of “Regreening Communities through School Kids FMNR Eco-Clubs in Talensi District of Upper East Region, Northern Ghana Project”

The two-year project expands coverage of FONAR’s innovative School kids FMNR Eco-club initiative in Talensi District of Northern Ghana. It will mobilise school kids and teachers in 10 rural public basic schools in Talensi through child-led eco clubs, aimed at sustaining FMNR practices in farming villages through bottom-up knowledge creation, sharing and action. The school children and teachers, as community change agents, are expected to translate FMNR knowledge and skills into positive regreening actions in their communities by December 2026.

Heidehof Foundation of Germany is funding implementation of the project in eight schools and Awaken Trees Foundation of Austria directly supporting two schools.

The project has two objectives, which are to:

- Establish school kids FMNR eco clubs in 10 basic schools in Talensi district, empowering children and teachers to contribute actively to local landscape regreening actions.

- Increase community awareness on importance of trees and the need for sustaining FMNR practices for improved livelihoods.

The project launch and inception meeting was held at Tongo. Talensi District capital. Twenty-seven participants, representing officials of the Talensi District Education Office, FONAR partners, headteachers of the target schools, the media attended the meeting.

Immediate meeting outcomes:

- The Project scope (goal/objectives) shared with the partners.
- A common understanding of roles and responsibilities of project implementing partners reached.
- Common understanding of the project implementation approach achieved.
- Support of District Education Office in project implementation assured.



Cross-section of meeting participants.



District Director of Education – Christiana Azure Ayinzoya (second L)

Nabdam Community FMNR Regreening Project



In February 2023, FONAR began implementing a two-year Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration for Women's Empowerment and Livelihoods Project (FMNR4WELIP) in Nabdam District communities of Upper East Region. The project is funded by Awaken Trees Foundation of Austria, aimed at safeguarding and enhancing women's land-based livelihoods through sustainable land and tree resources management.

The project promotes FMNR uptake alongside a few viable complementary livelihood activities like poultry rearing, savings groups and micro enterprise development, targeting vulnerable female farmers in two communities.

The project adopted the Lead Farmer (LF) approach for FMNR extension service delivery. The LF concept is community-led and recognises the skills of local farmers for promoting effective

'horizontal' learning. It involves working with communities and farmer groups to identify innovative and successful farmers with the skills, aptitude and commitment to work with fellow farmers towards FMNR implementation.

The project trained and equipped **40** lead farmers and community fire volunteers, who are championing FMNR implementation in the target communities (villages).

Our FMNR Champions, Our Torchbearers

They Lead by Example...

Nagpogbil Teni, 36, a mother of three children, is an early FMNR adopter in Dasang village where FONAR introduced the technique in February 2023. She has become a strong FMNR advocate and champion, training and mentoring two other farmers to adopt the practice. Teni maintains a living tree fence around her homestead small groundnut farm. The live tree fence marks boundaries of her field, protects her crops from animal damage and for quick access to firewood from pruning. *"The training by FONAR on how to prune our trees well and more education on the many benefits of trees has been helpful. I prune the lower tree branches to reduce shading effect on my food crops, use branches and twigs as additional ground fencing and as firewood".*



Cletus Mbumbil is a 26-year-old young farmer, who has recently embraced the FMNR idea. He is a Follower Farmer of Joseph Mpumbire, chair of the Dasang Lead Farmers Group.

In the 2024 farming season, Cletus pruned about 10 naturally occurring trees and shrubs on his sorghum field. *"Joseph taught me how to prune multi-stem shrubs and trees on the farm for them to grow faster",* he said.

Cletus knows that proper pruning can reduce shading of his crops, and the pruned leaves improves soil fertility. In addition, he gets fuelwood when mature trees of his farm are pruned. A win-win situation, he said.

Silvia Tecka is an enterprising FMNR Champion in Kparaboug village. She and her husband are deliberately preserving young shea trees on their 3.6 hectares maize and groundnuts farm. 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 FONAR that 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.



Kurug Abeong is a FMNR champion in Kparaboug village. He is one of the early adopters of FMNR in the community, and his farm is a model for training other farmers. Kurug began implementing FMNR during the 2023 farming season. Most of the regenerated young trees have grown so fast to his surprise. Kurug has regenerated 17 different trees and shrubs 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 now wouldn’t have been on this farm”*. Kurug is worried about the frequent elephant damage to their trees and crops.

Lesson learned

There is a huge potential to use well trained and motivated FMNR Farmer Champions (Lead Farmers) as the ‘spark’ to accelerate farmer-to-farmer FMNR scaling and replication if thoughtfully planned and implemented.



BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT IS KEY FOR FMNR SUCCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Periodic bushfires are necessary in savannah woodlands of northern Ghana, particularly to preventing the encroachment of trees, promoting grassland dominance and supporting fire-prone savannah biodiversity conservation. Without fire, the savannahs would transition into denser woodlands disrupting the balance between trees and grasses.

However, the frequency and severity of bushfires can harm young trees regrowing from resprouting roots and naturally occurring tree seedlings and prevent them from growing to become fire-tolerant mature

trees. Thus, too frequent and consistent annual bushfires in the late dry season is a major barrier to FMNR uptake in our project communities. Bushfires destroy young economic trees, shrubs and grasses every year.

In 2023, FONAR collaborated with the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) to form Community Fire Volunteer Squads (CFVS) in the two

project target communities. They were trained and supported with basic fire-fighting hand tools to prevent and control bushfire outbreaks. CFVS members have also been trained to build firebreaks to protect individual and

community assets, and to carry out community bushfire awareness education.

In addition, FONAR trained 15 personnel of the Rural Fires Department of GNFS in Upper East Region on Community-based Fire Management.

The bushfire intervention of the project contributed to drastic reduction in late dry season bushfires, more community ownership of fire prevention and control measures, and improved dialogue between project implementing partners and local communities.



Jan, 2025: Project communities where large areas are not burned

Surprising outcome (anecdotal): Kparaboug community people reported that their dried boreholes have recharged. Perhaps, the improved grass cover contributed to enhanced soil water infiltration, and subsequently to increased groundwater recharge by slowing down surface runoff. Empirical research would be needed to confirm this.



Diversifying Rural Livelihoods for FMNR Uptake

FONAR works in rural farming communities, which are heavily dependent on rain-fed subsistence agriculture and wood harvesting for income. The absence of environmentally friendly and diversified rural livelihoods undermines FMNR implementation by increasing pressure to use and cut trees in the short-term. In Nabdam where we implement the FMNR4WELIP, women are mostly involved in the collection and sale of timber and non-timber tree products. Women and children also bear the brunt when tree resources are scarce.

Diversified income sources of rural women can contribute to reduce tree cutting and improve FMNR uptake and sustainability. In the long-term FMNR uptake can increase crop yields and livestock production by improving soil fertility, reducing soil erosion, improving water availability and increasing fodder.

In October 2024, FONAR provided 132 improved fowls (88 pullets/44 cockerels) to 44 identified vulnerable women for rearing. Survival rate of the birds is good - 120 out of the 132 fowls supplied survived and have started laying eggs. The activity contributes to FMNR restoration efforts, diversified incomes, improved nutrition and reduced dependence on trees for income.





Empowering Rural Women through Financial Inclusion

The Nabdam Community FMNR Project (FMNR4WELIP) promoted women Group Savings and Loans Associations (GSLAs) as the primary community level self-mobilising groups, consisting of about 20-30 women members. These are self-selected groups designed to encourage savings, income generation, livelihoods building and promote social cohesion among people in the community. In February 2024, FONAR supported formation of two GSLAs in the two project communities, trained and provided them with savings toolkits. Both groups registered a total of 45 members.

We used a minimum set of key performance indicators (group leadership, ability to resolve internal conflicts, regularity of meetings, rate of loans recovery, property records keeping) as a criterion for extending other livelihoods support to group members of the groups.

The GSLAs helped group members saved money and accessed low interest credit to develop their micro enterprises, take care of basic household expenses, thus contributing to women's financial inclusion and empowerment.



An enabling political and policy environment is key for scaling up Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) as a priority landscape restoration solution in Ghana. Integrating FMNR into government's land restoration policy strategies is a 'win-win' and 'no regrets strategy.' Ghana prioritises large-scale tree planting reforestation campaigns like the annual Green Ghana Day initiative, as the main strategy for restoring its fast depleting forests, woodlands and agricultural landscapes. However, tree planting efforts have failed because of low seedling survival rates, lack of post planting care and limited community ownership.

World Vision Ghana (WVG) in partnerships introduced FMNR in Talensi District of Northern Ghana in 2009. In Talensi, farmers embraced this simple traditional tree management technique to restore the productivity of large tracts of degraded lands spontaneously. FMNR implementation in Ghana and across many dry Sahelian countries (Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal) has demonstrated the long-term feasibility of the practice. Studies suggest that FMNR has increased crop yields from 31 to 350 kg/ha⁵⁵, demonstrating its untapped potential to enhance food security and improve rural livelihoods. FMNR is a recognised SDG good restoration practice and an effective nature-based climate solution. It is being applied in many African countries as a climate smart agricultural technology to increase tree cover, improve crop yields and fodder in agricultural landscapes.

Despite this, FMNR is not visible in Ghana's forest and agricultural landscapes restoration strategy mix. It also appears not to be on the radar of political parties when it comes to their manifesto reforestation policy development process. FONAR strategically engages relevant policy makers and communities to prioritize integrating FMNR into their land restoration strategies.

In June 2024, we engaged Upper East Regional Executives of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the main opposition party, to consider including FMNR into their manifesto's environmental restoration measures. This was at a time when the party was conducting nation-wide consultations to refresh its 2024 manifesto leading up to the December 2024 General Elections. The NDC is now in government. The Party's Regional Secretary (Akamugri Donatus Atanga) who spoke at the meeting is the new Upper East Regional Minister. The NDC is committed to implementing a 'Tree for Life' reforestation policy, providing opportunity for further engagements to make a case for FMNR widespread implementation.



⁵⁵ Abasse, T et al. (2023). Farmer managed natural regeneration in Niger: the state of knowledge. Tropenbos International, Ede, the Netherlands.

Partnerships and Networking Matter to Us

Partnerships and networking matter to us as a small environmental Organization based in the South, set up primarily to promote widespread application of FMNR greening approach for agricultural landscape restoration. Partnering, networking and collaborating with like-minded others enables us to access resources, expertise and share responsibilities. In addition, working with others allows us to exchange ideas and perspectives that can spark new feasible solutions to the seemingly 'wicked' environmental problems of today.

After all, "who we know" is just as important as "what we know."

28 February 2024: FONAR Executive Director, Sumaila S. Saaka attended a Nature Based Solutions and integrated water resources management (IWRM) plan implementation key stakeholders meeting held in Bolgatanga. The White Volta Basin Office of Ghana's Water Resources Commission (WRC) organised the meeting in partnership with the Dutch Water Authorities' Blue Deal Project. The WRC-led Blue Deal Project works with partners and local government authorities to implement nature-based solutions like FMNR for integrated water resources management (IWRM) in the Upper White Volta basin in northern Ghana and southern Burkina Faso.

12 June 2024: Christopher Pubeng (Assistant Programme Officer) attended a ceremony held in Bongo to enskin 25 environmental chiefs in the Bongo Traditional Area. The environmental chiefs are to sensitise their people to rehabilitate degraded lands through tree planting and natural regeneration to protect local water resources catchment area.



24-25 April 2024: FONAR hosted two Researchers from the Technical University of Munich (TUM), Germany. They were Dr. Daphne Keilmann-Gondhalekar (WEF Nexus Research Group Leader) and Mr. Kwadwo Asamoah (Research Assistant). We shared knowledge on FMNR uptake and water security challenges in Northern Ghana and visited farming communities where FMNR has been implemented for first-hand experience.



1 July 2024: FONAR received two staff, Mr. Micheal Amaniampong Owusu and Alexander Danso-Anokye from USAID/Ghana Market Systems and Resilience (MSR) Project. The purpose of the visit was to learn more about FONAR activities for possible collaboration in areas of common interest.

23 October 2024: Visit of Tony Rinaudo AM:

Mr. Anthony (Tony) Rinaudo is pioneer of the modern day SDG good land restoration practice called Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR). He is 2018 Right Livelihood Laureate and currently World Vision Australia's Principal Climate Action Advisor, leading global efforts for FMNR scaling. He lived in Niger Republic of West Africa as a Missionary and Agronomist with his family for 17 years (1981-1999), where he discovered FMNR as a simple and rural smallholder farmer



Sitting: Tony Rinaudo (L), Sumaila Saaka (M), Joseph Appiah (R)

friendly land restoration technique. With a simple set of tree management tools and practices, farmers can regenerate and protect their degraded farmlands and communal grazelands to improve food security and rural livelihoods. Tony has since devoted much of his entire adult life towards promoting the scaling up of FMNR across the world, particularly in African drylands. He introduced FMNR in Talensi Communities of Northern Ghana in 2009 through World Vision International in Ghana to help improve food security and livelihoods in the District.

Tony, who was on a one-week working tour to Ghana, visited FONAR Office in Bolgatanga to familiarise himself with our work. He has been personally supportive of FONAR since the organization was founded in 2014 to promote FMNR scaling. During the hour-long visit, Sumaila Saaka (FONAR Team Leader) made a presentation on FONAR's work. Sumaila thanked Tony for the visit, describing it as an honour and huge privilege. He also expressed gratitude to Tony and his brother – Peter Rinaudo - for supporting the work of FONAR over the years.

Tony was impressed with the work of FONAR, and commended our team for achieving so much within a short period of time, particularly with our school kids FMNR eco-club initiative. He encouraged the team to keep up the good work. At the end of the visit, Tony presented two autographed copies of his book – The Forest Underground – to FONAR. He was accompanied by two officials of World Vision Ghana, Joseph Appiah (Grants Manager) and Samuel Abasiba (FMNR Project Manager).



Key Achievements and Challenges

1. School Kids FMNR Eco-club Programme

This intervention started in August 2023 as a two-year pilot project, involving 15 primary schools in Talensi District of Northern Ghana. Following a successful implementation of the pilot phase, FONAR and its core funding partner – Awaken Trees, redesigned the project into a long-term programme. We have expanded coverage of the programme to 10 more rural community basic schools in Talensi District under a new project with funding from Heidehof Foundation and Awaken Trees.

A. Key Achievements

- The programme has reached more than **600** children directly, who have become **FMNR** knowledge-bearers, advocates and land restoration messengers in their communities.
- More than **1000** community members, school children and teachers reached with bushfire awareness and preparedness sessions.
- The project fostered closer relationships among children, teachers and community stakeholders, helping to build friendships, teamwork and trust around FMNR implementation.
- We have strengthened collaboration among key stakeholders (District Education Office, School Authorities, Community Leaders and Ghana National Fire Service).
- We developed guidelines, educational materials and tools, which have been shared with our partner organizations. These tools are being used to guide school kids FMNR eco-club interventions across the world.

B: Key Challenges

- FMNR practice requires the schools to have access to land with trees and shrubs to establish demonstration plots. In some project communities, it was difficult to get suitable sites near project schools for use as demonstration plots. To solve the problem, we facilitate the target schools to engage community leaders to allocate a suitable site for the club where the children can learn and practice FMNR pruning techniques.
- Schools and teachers often lack both time and resources to do outdoor teaching of FMNR or environmental restoration practices. To solve this problem, FONAR has developed a comprehensive school kids FMNR curriculum for teachers to use as a guide in delivering eco-club sessions.
- We experienced limited teacher support in a few schools. We encourage that all teachers are involved in Eco-club planning and activity implementation. We intend organising mutual support training for all school teachers.
- Insufficient funding to support clubs with more logistics and to cover more schools.

We will use the school FMNR Eco-club programme to reach parents and out-of-school children through community outreach activities. Also, we will continue to promote knowledge sharing on the tools and materials we developed with our partners, education authorities as well as other civil-society actors.

2. Nabdam Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration for Women's Empowerment and Livelihoods Project (FMNRWELIP)

The project, which began in February 2023, promotes FMNR uptake in two rural farming communities. In addition to promoting a few viable complementary livelihood activities targeting vulnerable female farmers. The project adopted the Lead Farmer (LF) approach for FMNR extension service delivery. The LF concept is community-led and recognises the skills of local farmers for promoting effective 'horizontal' learning, knowledge and skills transfer.

A: Key Achievements

- 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. They are available on Awaken Trees website (our core partner). During the period we have also built the capacity of our staff and partners.
- Very high FMNR uptake on bush farms where land is available compared to homestead farms where plot sizes are small. There are fewer trees on homestead farms to regenerate.
- Many farmers in project target communities have embraced FMNR, which they see as a simple, quick, culturally appropriate and easy to implement traditional agricultural practice.

B: Key Challenges

- Unmet high expectations of some FMNR lead farmers for incentives, even though we tried to manage project beneficiary expectations from the inception.
- Frequent human-elephant conflict in the project communities discourages some farmers to regenerate trees on-farms.
- Unclear and complicated land/tree tenure regime could be a barrier for FMNR adoption among tenant farmers in project area.
- Some farmers may lose interest in the FMNR concept because of delayed benefits.

Lessons learned: We found that integrating modern beekeeping practices on FMNR sites could incentivize people to regenerate and protect trees. The project intends introducing modern beekeeping among farmers if we get more funding because modern beekeeping is a bit capital intensive at start. 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.

It is important to involve community leadership structures in project activities from the outset for their buy-in. In addition, using staff of local government partners from the Department of Agriculture and Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) contributed immensely to the credibility of our extension service delivery reach. Though, many of these local government staff have technical (knowledge and skills) and logistical capacity deficit to do their work. So, FONAR builds the capacity of our partner staff in relevant technical areas related to our work. The project's focus on deliberately getting women and the youth involved in all activities is achieving results. We have high interest and participation of women and youth in all project structures and engagements. Regular monitoring and support visits to interact with farmers and listen to their concerns helped to build trust and good relationships for the project success. Support of neighbouring community members is also important for the project success.

A functioning Board of Directors Matters

March 20, 2024: The first Board Meeting of the Year was held at Blue Sky Hotel, Kumbosgo near Bolgatanga. The meeting was organised under the patronage of the Board Chair COP (Rtd.) Patrick A. Akolgo. Items on the meeting agenda included; introduction of FONAR staff, Report of the Executive Director, Consideration and approval of the amended FONAR Constitution, Consideration and approval of organizational policies, Consideration and approval of the 2022 and 2023 FONAR Annual Reports, Review of the Board's composition, tenure of office and election of officers, and a presentation on the Board's role in organizational development, oversight and strategic planning.

The Board Chair, COP (Rtd) Patrick Akolgo opened the meeting and welcomed Board members and FONAR staff. He then invited attendees to do self-introductions, followed by the Executive Director's Report. The Executive Director, Sumaila S. Saaka began presentation of his report by thanking the Board Chair for hosting the meeting at his hotel. He also thanked the Board members for their support. Sumaila updated the Board on progress made from August 2021 to 31st December 2023. He outlined the Organization's progress based on current projects being implemented, organizational capacity development, achievements and challenges and future plans. Sumaila then highlighted FONAR's approach of using innovative ways to promote uptake of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) through the school kids FMNR Eco-clubs Programme. He further noted that FONAR will continue to learn, adapt and work with partners as progress is made in projects implementation.

The Executive Director announced that the activities of FONAR were largely funded by Awaken Trees under the able leadership of its young Founder and President Josef Ertl. My behalf of the Board and Management of FONAR, He extended a special gratitude to Josef, who has helped to keep the organization alive. He also thanked Tony Rinaudo, pioneer of FMNR and Patron of FONAR for his support, guidance, confidence and trust. At the end of the presentation, the Board congratulated the Executive Director and his team for the progress made and expressed its support to the Organization.

The Board tenure was renewed for another two years beginning on 1st March 2024, with COP (Rtd) Patrick Akolgo re-elected as the Board Chair and Mr. Titus O. Alzumah elected as the Vice Chair. The meeting unanimously approved the appointment of Mr. Martin A. Akolgo and Ms. Sumaila Ramatu to the Board.



Our Donors and Partners

Our Donors in 2024

- Awaken Trees Foundation (Austria) – Our Core Funding Partner
- Heidehof Foundation (Germany)
- Tony Rinaudo and Peter Rinaudo
- Volker Schlöndorff – Producer of the Forest Maker Documentary Film.

FONAR's work has been made possible thanks to the generous financial and technical support of our donors, partners and collaborators. Special thanks to our core funding partner, Awaken Trees Foundation of Austria and its young inspirational Founder/President, Josef Ertl. Our sincere gratitude to Tony Rinaudo and Peter Rinaudo "the two good brothers and Global FMNR Crusaders" – for their unwavering support. We profoundly thank Heidehof Stiftung (Foundation) of Germany for funding our current school kids FMNR Eco-club Project in Talensi District. which enabled us to expand our outreach activities to more farming communities. Thank you to everyone who has supported behind the scenes for contributing to make the earth a better place for all for live and thrive.



Ghana Education
Service (GES)



GHANA NATIONAL
FIRE SERVICE



TRADITIONAL
AUTHORITIES



Entity Registration Certificates

Reg No. *CG121292014*



TIN : *C0003987914*

Certificate of Incorporation of a Company

I hereby certify that

FORUM FOR NATURAL REGENERATION LBG

originally called

MOVEMENT FOR NATURAL REGENERATION

which name was changed by Special Resolution and with the Approval of the Registrar of Companies on the 14th day of December 2021 and was **Incorporated** under the Companies Act 2019, Act 992 as a **Limited by Guarantee**, on the 27th day of August 2014

Given under my hand at Tamale, this 14th day of December 2021



A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by several loops.

For: Registrar of Business Names

Certificate of Recognition as a National NGO



Our Board

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

1. MANAGEMENT

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

**FORUM FOR NATURAL REGENERATION LBG (FONAR), HNO.CZ14, AGANA CL
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