

FOUNDATION FOR INTEGRATED AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

MID YEAR REPORT (JULY TO DECEMBER, 2015)

1. Introduction

This report covers FISTRAD's activities from July to December. It outlines the various projects, activities and outcomes during the period. It also looks at challenges and the way forward.

Our Objectives are:

1. To increase public awareness on political and social issues
2. Increase capacity of women and excluded people to become economically independent.
3. Provide an enabling environment for young people to pass their exams and advance their education
4. Use radio to empower communities and enhance quality of life of the Builsa North and South Districts.

2. Social and Political Awareness

Our goal is to ensure continuity of social, political awareness and education to bring about a change in attitudes and behaviour that will lead to desired development outcomes. The second half report has been a continuity of activities planned for the year. We have continued with our radio discussions and campaign to empower women, but this time focused on efforts to end forced marriages which is on the increase. This was supported by The Canadian embassy small grant for grass root organization. The grant came at the end of the year and will continue up to March 2016. With the onset of the dried season we undertook an anti bush fire campaign. This is because bush fire is one of the main causes of environmental degradation and desertification of the Upper East region. You and your health, a popular health education program carried out in collaboration with Builsa Nurses Association and Ghana health service were continued. During the raining season education and prevention of malaria and other diseases rampant in the season were broadcast. Advocacy on maternal health, with emphasis on behaviour change such as, hand washing with soap before handling food, drinking water and babies' use of insecticide mosquito nets, regular attendance for check up during pregnancy and safe delivery at the clinic.

4. Economic Empowerment

To realise the vision of FISTRAD, strategic projects are being implemented to improve rural incomes and reduce poverty. These projects are skills training for enterprise development and the food security project.

4.1 Skills Training for Enterprise Development

. An evaluation of the skills training program by participants at an exhibition gave FISTRAD high marks 85% for introducing new products. This was done as part of the passing out ceremony and

was attended by community members including government officials and chiefs. Seventeen girls passed out and received certificates

One issue that came out strongly in meetings and research findings of University of Calgary students on internship is the problem of start up capital and acquisition of shops to begin their new trade after passing out.

Bank loans are difficult to get and interest rates are too high as much as 42% and this gives no chance to these girls.

A colourful passing out ceremony was organised and was attended by thousands of people all over the district and beyond, and contained in a Video CD for your viewing pleasure

4.2 Food Security Project

The food security project targets women. It is supported by the Ministry of Agriculture with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency. The objective is to increase women's incomes and address the environmental challenges.

The project targets 500 households involving 1,300 families. Selected women in each household have been given five mango seedlings to plant around their houses. Since January our field monitoring shows impressive growth of the seedlings. The raining season provided adequate water and the plants developed very fast. It is now hopeful that we can achieve 70% survival rate. The extensive use of radio to advertise the benefit of the project has created awareness and people outside the project area have started growing mango and other fruit trees. It is our hope that success of this project will not be measured by only the number of tree that have survived but also the change in attitudes towards the environment.

5.0 Remedial Classes and Library Services

The library is often used intensively at this time of the year as students depend heavily on the books for their revision to rewrite the Senior High School Exams. With more books on basic schools and the senior high school curriculum, the library is the place most serious children want to be during the examination season. The library however needs to be upgraded to include ICT facilities like internet

for research and training of the young ones who have no access to computer at home or even at school.

This year's classes ended in October. Teachers were able to conduct mock exams to prepare students well. A radio Builsa program seeking the views of students on the conduct of the classes showed that they were positive of the assessment of their chances of doing better this time around.

6.0 Children's Playground

The children's play ground continues to be the main attraction for children around the resource centre. In a town with no play ground, children around use it much for recreation and through that they can be captured young to participate in activities that can help them explore their potentials. During his brief visit the secretary of Sandema Educational resource centre Trust UK renovated the play ground and it is now in good shape for children to play

7.0 Radio Station

The radio station is the main driver of all the programmes in FISTRAD. Staffs of the station now stand at 3 permanent officers, two male and one female with 15 volunteers out of which 3 are female. During the reporting period frequent power outages and high cost of electricity has been the main point of attention. We had to reduce transmission time to cope with cost of electricity

8.0 Guest House

The guest house is becoming a well known destination for low income visitors and they keep trickling in.

9.0 Challenges and Recommendations

The main challenge is coping with the power crisis the country is going through and the consequent increases in cost and austerity.

Implementing the solar project remains the long term approach to the solution of not only the high cost of electricity, but also the huge maintenance cost and frequent breakdowns due to power surge. Transmission time has further been reduced by two hours to cope with the situations

9.0 International Relations

FISTRAD has long standing relations with University of Calgary Canada to bring their students to do three months internship with us to learn how we work in the communities This has been in place since 2009.

10 Acknowledgement

We need to acknowledge our friends and partners who supported us in the year

Skills Development Fund particularly has been very instrumental in supporting our diversification drive. Canada Embassy , Ministry of local government as well as our traditional friends, Sandema Educational Trust UK and Paul ev Germany

GALLERY



Patrick inspects products at Vocational shop



Campaign against force marriage



17 girls pass-out with certificates in dress making and weavery



Display of handbags produced with cloth woven in FISTRAD



Continuing students of vocational programme show case outfit



Exhibition of vocational products at passing-out ceremony



Young dancers entertain crowd at passing-out



Xaver from Germany visited and tries to repair faulty transmitter



A cross section of crowd at passing-out ceremony



Cross section of Chiefs and Government officials at Passing-out ceremony



Saeda and Sydney(Students from Calgary university) with Abubakar and George

