

2016 ANNUAL REPORT



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Norbert Baba Akolbila

(1961 – 2017)

This report is dedicated to the memory of Norbert B. Akolbila, Founder and Executive Director of MONAR. Norbert started putting the pieces for this report together before his sudden demise on February 12, 2017. Norbert worked selflessly to establish MONAR as an environmental NGO to pursue his passion for promoting and advocating for the widespread adoption of Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR), which he saw to be a more feasible, simple and less expensive re-greening approach. He was a gifted people mobiliser around issues of common interest, who loved nature and humanity.

Message from the Board of Directors....

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank all the volunteers and supporters of MONAR for believing in the young blossoming tree planted by the late Norbert Baba Akolbila to make a statement for the need to reverse the rampaging devastation of our environment with its telling consequences for livelihoods of people in our communities.

The Board views the passing on of the Founding Executive Director of MONAR (Norbert), very disturbing, especially at a time that the Organization was gaining roots for take-off. His passing on took away the energy and passion often required to get young Organizations likely MONAR firmly implanted. This notwithstanding, the Board is committed towards taking the necessary steps to ensure that the dream and vision of the Norbert is alive.

As we pay a glowing tribute to the forward-looking Norbert, the Board has resolved that the only be fitting tribute that can ever be paid to him is to see to the realization of the vision of MONAR as was dreamt by him. A dream so strong that drove Norbert to resign his position in World Vision Ghana to pursue.

Once again, on behalf of the Board and on my own behalf, I wish to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the volunteers and supporters of MONAR, especially Tony Rinaudo and his dedicated colleagues at World vision Australia, for their dedication and believing in the vision, potential and future prospects of our organization.

God bless you all.

ACP Patrick Atampugre Akolgo

Board Chair, MONAR

Highlights of Activities for the Year

- ⇒ MONAR in 2016 continued to monitor closely progress of project implementation of existing projects at its pilot sites in Bongo and Nabdam Districts of the Upper East Region.
- ⇒ During the period under review, MONAR also worked with its partners such as the World Vision Ghana (WVG) Talensi Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) Project to carry out some community level FMNR activities.
- ⇒ MONAR also attended partner and collaborative meetings.

Knowledge Sharing and Partnerships

MONAR participated in a number of programmes and activities organised by partners in 2016.

- **April, 2017:** MONAR staff (Samuel Mbura) participated in the Upper East Regional launch of Ghana's third District League Table (DLT), which was held at the Ghana Health Service In-Service Training Centre in Bolgatanga. The programme was organised by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) and UNICEF Ghana, in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. Introduced in 2014, the District League Table is a social accountability tool that ranks Ghana's 216 Districts (local government authorities) by their level of development and service delivery. The District League Table aims to improve transparency and accountability in national development by making public, the level of basic service provision to improve the wellbeing of people at the district level. The District League Table, seeks to continuously track development across the country thus enabling citizens and decision-makers to access where improvements are needed for targeted support. The District League Table uses indicators from 6 key sectors - health, education, sanitation, water, governance and security - to compile a single score for each District. All 216 Districts are then ranked from the District in 1st place down to that in 216th place.
- **February 23, 2016:** The Bongo District Assembly invited MONAR to participate in its annual stock taking review meeting of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) operations in the district. The meeting was held at the District Assembly Hall, and attended by representatives of more than 10 local and international NGOs working in the area. The objective of the event was to enable the District Assembly, NGOs and other Non-State Actors like Traditional Authorities to interact, review their performances and share lessons learned. Presentations were made by sector-specific NGOs around five thematic area, which were; agriculture, water and sanitation, education, health, child rights and the environment. MONAR made a presentation on FMNR and on progress of work at its field pilot site in the Ayopia Community in the district.
- **October 6, 2016:** MONAR staff (Samuel Mbura) participated in a stakeholder public forum, which was held under the theme: "*Oil and Gas Governance – the Gaps, Opportunities and Policy Options*", in the Northern Regional capital (Tamale). The forum was organised by the Civil Society Platform on Oil and Gas (CSPOG) in partnership with the Ghana Oil and Gas for Inclusive Growth (GOGIG) Initiative. It brought together representatives from

diverse CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) and non-state actors, including political parties, to deliberate on the governance gaps of Ghana's oil and gas resources management. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) is funding the five-year project aimed at improving economic growth and poverty reduction through a well-managed oil and gas sector.

Technical Support (Capacity building, Outreach and Monitoring Visits)

Training of Environmental Clubs



WVG Talensi FMNR Project contracted MONAR to facilitate the formation and training of Environmental Clubs in four primary schools in the Talensi District, which were Kpatia, Yagzore, Awaridoone and Goriko community primary schools. The overall activity objective was to use the clubs as entry points to raise environmental awareness among school children, help them to develop positive attitudes and life skills for nurturing trees, and instilling the spirit of volunteerism among young people. In all, 80 school children (40boys/40 girls), 20 in each school, were trained to form the nucleus of the environmental clubs. The clubs were

formed, trained and inaugurated from February 17th to 19th, 2016, and topics covered during the trainings included basic knowledge on the environment, the importance of the environment for the survival of human beings, human activities that contribute to environmental degradation such as indiscriminate bushfires, how children can contribute to protect the environment, the basics of FMNR, and guidelines for forming school environmental clubs.

Community Engagement on FMNR

MONAR in partnership with WVG Talensi ADP organised community stakeholders and engagement meetings on FMNR aimed at empowering the local stakeholders to collaboratively manage their FMNR sites. Key community natural resources management (NRM) stakeholders from 11 communities were sensitized and trained on their roles and responsibilities in FMNR implementation. Training participants were drawn from, Awaridone, Goriko, Zubeog, Yameriga No. 2, Baare, Bapeligu, Kpale, Sakorit, Kpatia, Kulpeliga and Datuko communities in the Talensi District. The communities were grouped into five Clusters for the purpose of the training. Participants included chiefs, tendaana (land custodians), Assembly members, the youth, women, FMNR lead farmers, representatives of faith-based organizations, and other vulnerable groups like persons with disabilities. The trainings were held in September, 2016, and facilitated by MONAR Executive Director (Norbert Akolbila). He was assisted by Christopher Pubeng and Samuel Mbura (MONAR field Officers).



Norbert Akolbila Facilitating a Training in Awaridone Community

Field Monitoring

February 20, 2016: MONAR staff, led by the Executive Director (Norbert) paid a monitoring and assessment visit to its two FMNR pilot sites at Ayopia Community in the Bongo District. The two FMNR sites at Ayopia covers a total land area of about 10 hectares, where the community members are being assisted to nurture multi-purpose indigenous trees such as various types of *cumbretum species*. The purpose for the visit was to find out the challenges faced by the community FMNR volunteer farmers, who have been selected by the community to manage the FMNR pilot sites. Since the sites were established in 2015, MONAR has trained the volunteer farmers and provided them with logistics (tools) to manage the trees being regenerated. Twenty (20) volunteer farmers have



Norbert (extreme right) interacting with FMNR volunteer farmers in Ayopia Community (Bongo)

been trained on pruning techniques, and on how to select viable shrubs to grow into trees. Earlier monitoring visits to the community showed that the farmers were taking measures to ensure that the fields were protected from both animals and human activities.

Advocacy for Mainstreaming FMNR into National Environmental Policies

Since its establishment in 2014, MONAR has been engaging with government agencies (district, regional and national), its civil society partners and traditional authorities, using various platforms, to advocate for the mainstreaming of FMNR into national agro-forestry and environmental policies. These engagements are yielding modest results. In December 2016, the Paramount Chief of Bongo Traditional Area in Upper East Region (Ghana), Naba Baba Salifu Aleeyaarum launched an FMNR Project to reverse land degradation in his traditional area. This was largely due to the influence of Norbert Akolbila, FMNR champion and Executive Director of MONAR, A feasible agroforestry technique like FMNR when adopted as a national policy can increase the resilience of smallholder farmers to climate change, and at the same time contribute towards poverty reduction and food security. In this regard, MONAR issued a statement to mark World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought 2016, urging the Government of Ghana to adopt, as a matter of policy, FMNR as a cost-effective and people-centred approach to combating the threat of desertification in the country. The statement was widely publicised in the local and international media as well as on the internet. (see: <https://www.newsghana.com.gh/farmer-managed-natural-regeneration-policy-can-fight-desertification/>, <http://www.thefinderonline.com/News/Govt-urged-to-adopt-policy-to-combat-desertification.html>, <http://kapital971.com/tag/world-day-to-combat-desertification/>, <https://desertification.wordpress.com/2016/06/>).

Testing the Waters for Funding Opportunities

As a young NGO without any dedicated funding support, MONAR during the year under review, explored a number of funding opportunities to support its operations.

Funding Proposals Submitted

- **In June, 2016** MONAR submitted a well written project proposal to the Canadian High Commission in Accra under the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) 2016-17 small grants funding window. The call was opened to non-profit and non-governmental organizations working in Ghana to address specific priority areas, including climate change and enhancing environmental sustainability, with emphasis on projects promoting the participation of women and girls, as well as other vulnerable groups. The goal of MONAR's project proposal was to strengthen local capacity for Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) uptake in Upper East Region using the Ayopia (in Bongo District) and Logre (in Nabdam District) Community FMNR pilot sites as entry points. Unfortunately, the proposal was not selected for funding.
- **September, 2016:** MONAR submitted a proposal to the International Tree Foundation (ITF), a UK-based international environmental NGO, under its Sustainable Community Forestry Programme. The programme provides small grants funding to community-based organisation's (CBOs) to deliver community-level participatory tree planting and growing projects. The goal of MONAR's proposal was to increase the uptake of FMNR and to strengthen district and community level structures for natural resources management in the Ayopia Community in the Bongo District. Ultimately, the aim was to increase resilience of rural farm households to the adverse effects of deforestation like drought by improving tree density and management in the community. The proposal did not receive funding.



Working Visit of Ellen Kalmbach, Bread for the World (Germany)

MONAR hosted Dr. Ellen Kalmbach, Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Advisor for Africa and Asia, Bread for the World – German Protestant Development Service international NGO. She was accompanied by Seydou Ramde, Rural Development Officer of Evangelical Churches Development Office (ODE), Bread for the World partner in Burkina Faso, and Daniel (Driver-ODE)

The visit enabled Ellen and her team to have first-hand field experience of FMNR, flagship re-greening approach of MONAR. She heard of MONAR's activities around FMNR in the Upper East Region of Ghana from the FMNR Hub website hosted by the Food Security and Climate Change Team of World Vision Australia (WVA). She, therefore, decided to visit MONAR field sites in Northern Ghana as part of a working field trip to Burkina Faso and Niger (West Africa). Bread for the World is the global development and relief agency of the Protestant Churches in Germany. It works in many developing countries, including Ghana, to empower the poor and marginalized to improve their living conditions. MONAR used the opportunity to broaden its partnerships base and to solicit funding from Bread for the World and its partners.

FMNR Hub of World Vision Australia Support

The Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) Hub, managed by the Food Security and Climate Change Team of World Vision Australia (WVA), under the leadership of FMNR pioneer Tony Rinaudo, continued to provide technical, professional development and mentorship support to MONAR in 2016. The hub provided a platform for MONAR to reach wider audience with its message. In addition, the hub offered Norbert Akolbila (Founder and Executive Director of MONAR) tutorship consultancy service of the online FMNR training programme of WVA. This enable MONAR to run its office and to acquire basic equipment such a motor-bike, Public Address (PA) system, an LCD project and office furniture. Many thanks are due to World Vision Australia, especially the Food Security and Climate Change Team and the World Vision Talensi FMNR Project Team for their support. We look forward to more fruitful relationships in the future.

Key milestones

- **In June 2016**, MONAR received a Certificate of Recognition as a national Non-Governmental Organization from the Department of Social Welfare of Ghana's Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare barely two years into its existence. The organization is already registered with te Registrar-General's Department of Ghana as a Company Limited by guarantee.