

Promoting active citizenship for change



**STAR GHANA
FOUNDATION**



Welcome

STAR Ghana delivers transformational change that advances democracy, accountability and social inclusion.

We have supported civil society organisations through grants and technical assistance, and convened meetings and discussions. We have launched major funding calls on gender equality and social inclusion, media, anti-corruption and local governance, and supported work under strategic opportunity calls.

We enabled 87 civil society organisations to mobilise and support citizens to take action around issues such as inclusive access to quality public goods and services, tackling corruption, and promoting good governance.

With support from our grant partners, more than 5 million citizens have engaged with duty bearers at all levels of governance, including Parliament, district assemblies and traditional authorities.

“*STAR Ghana is helping citizens and civil society organisations to become more active and informed, able to speak up and engage constructively with duty bearers at all levels.*”

We have seen these institutions respond and deliver. The work we support has led to more inclusion and accountability – and real improvements in people’s lives. At the same time, it has given citizens new knowledge, new ideas and greater confidence, enabling them and their organisations to apply their learning to other issues and areas.

To make sure lessons were learned from the work, we have worked with stakeholders to reflect on their experiences and gather findings. We have compiled and shared key learning documents.

We have paved the way for transition to the STAR Ghana Foundation, a new national Ghanaian entity, which was successfully launched in November 2018.

Our achievements are all the more remarkable for taking place in a difficult context of growing inequality, and dwindling funding for civil society organisations and questions around their legitimacy and impact. We have responded to these challenges.

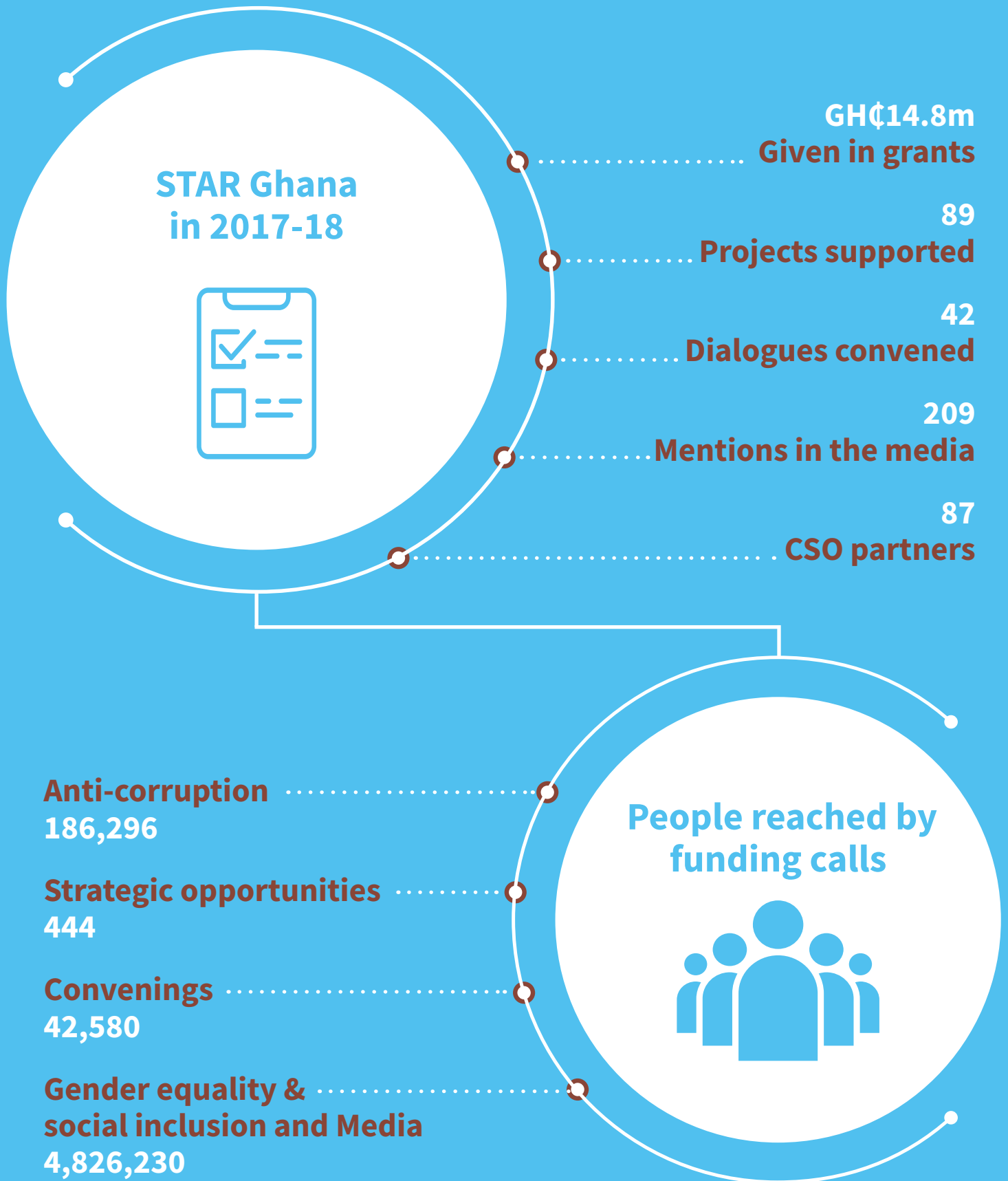
As Ghana undergoes much-needed economic development, it is important that it doesn’t come at the cost of equality, but also delivers for vulnerable people including women, children and people with disabilities. Civil society can drive this debate and amplify the voice of the marginalised.

All of us at the STAR Ghana Foundation thank you for your active support and look forward to working with you in bringing about transformational change towards an equitable and prosperous Ghana.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Esther Ofei-Aboagye'.

Dr Esther Ofei-Aboagye, Chair, Governing Council, STAR Ghana Foundation

STAR Ghana: in numbers



(Figure includes viewership and listenership of TV and Radio programmes)

STAR shines

Supporting partners

We disbursed grants to 87 partner organisations, supporting a wide range of work across all of Ghana.



Promoting dialogue

We convened 42 dialogues on development priorities at national and local levels, including anti-corruption, education, health, gender-based violence and the school feeding programme.

A new Foundation

We paved the way for the launch of the STAR Ghana Foundation, an independent Ghanaian-led organisation which will continue working with and supporting civil society beyond the end of the STAR-Ghana programme in 2020.





Influencing duty bearers

We have helped large numbers of people to engage with and influence duty bearers at all levels.

Forging partnerships

Grant partners working on similar issues have collaborated to increase their influence and impact.



Gender equality and social inclusion

62% of new projects supported have a strong focus on gender equality and social inclusion.



The STAR Ghana Foundation at a glance

- a centre for active citizenship, civil society and philanthropy
- a convener, catalyst and coordinator of civil society
- owned and led by Ghanaians
- a strategic grant maker

The STAR Ghana Foundation: from ambition to reality

The STAR Ghana Foundation was launched in November 2018. This new, independent Ghanaian-led organisation will build on the gains and lessons from the STAR-Ghana programme to enhance the effectiveness of civil society actions in Ghana.

The transition marks an important shift – from relying solely on donor agencies to one where citizens own and drive the programmes and policies of the Foundation. The STAR Ghana Foundation is an example of Ghana going beyond aid, supporting locally grown solutions to advance its own development and contributing to sustainable and inclusive change.

Solid groundwork

Over the past three years, we have done solid groundwork to make our ambition a reality.

Through three rounds of formal consultations, Ghanaians from every region, including grant partners, the media and civil society leaders all had the chance to contribute ideas about what kind of entity Ghana needs and the gaps the new organisation should fill.

Each successive consultation was designed to test ideas emerging from previous consultations and identify any remaining areas of concern. A clear consensus emerged favouring an independent national entity to coordinate civil society voice on good governance, transparency, accountability and social inclusion.



Good governance

The Foundation has a three-tier governance structure including 25 Subscribers, an 11-member Governing Council and a lean secretariat. A Biennial Consultative Assembly will ensure wider stakeholder involvement.

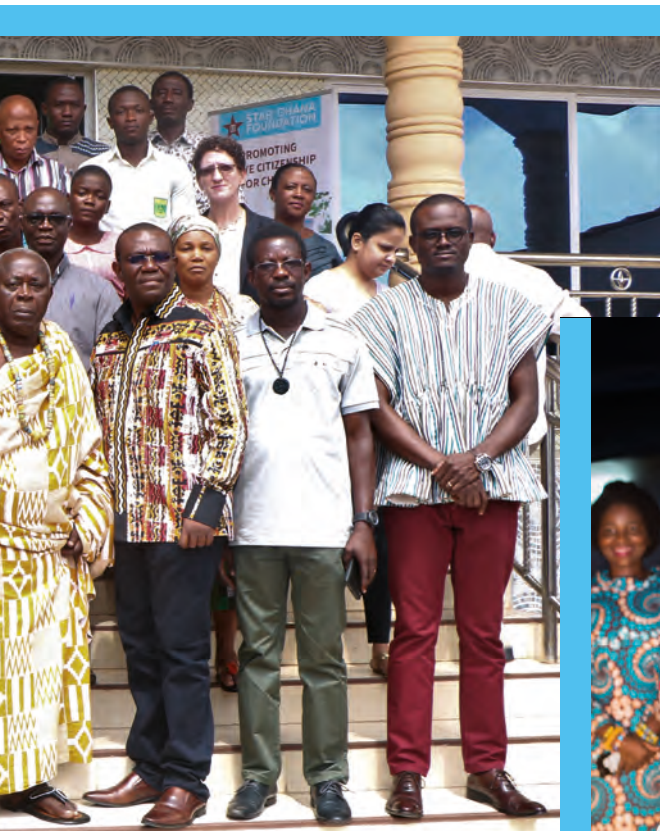
In 2018, the governance and legal frameworks for the Foundation were agreed and Ghanaians from diverse sectors of society were appointed as Subscribers and Governing Council members. Key strategies and work plans were developed covering aspects such as funding and financing. A transitional workplan and a five-year strategic plan were drawn up. The Foundation was formally launched on 13 November 2018.

The current STAR Ghana programme will continue to operate alongside the Foundation until September 2020, allowing for fine-tuning of processes under the guidance of the consortium.

STAR Ghana Foundation belongs to all Ghanaians. It creates platforms for ordinary people, particularly the most marginalised in society, to become active citizens in our development process.

“ I take great pride in seeing the beginnings of the fruition of a dream we’ve all cherished and worked so hard to bring forward. Long may this Foundation thrive.”

Professor Akilagpa Sawyerr, former chairman of the STAR Ghana programme, speaking at the launch



Anti-corruption call in numbers

GH¢4.1m awarded

8 strategic partners

8 innovative partners

17 small grant partners

186,296 people reached

Tackling corruption

STAR Ghana’s anti-corruption workstream provides grants and technical assistance to state and non-state actors working to fight corruption. The aim is to support and enhance the effectiveness of citizen, community and civil society actions to fight corruption in the country.

The workstream was informed by scoping studies, involving three dialogue events across Ghana, which enabled the programme to respond to citizens’ issues regarding corruption and how to sustainably fight them.

The ant-corruption workstream has three components.

- The Innovative Alliances component incentivises innovative collaboration between CSOs and other stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of anti-corruption actions.
- The Strategic Influencing component supports national-level civil society organisations to implement projects addressing systemic constraints at the policy levels.
- The Small Grants component is supporting anti-corruption actions at the district and local levels, enabling citizens to address local corruption issues, particularly in accessing good social services.

For the first time, STAR-Ghana’s grant call was open to private sector organisations – as the private sector was identified as a key player in the fight against corruption.



We have 33 projects embracing innovative new ways of working, holistic approaches and effective collaboration between civil society and duty bearers.

- The Ghana Police Service’s Police Watch project has been supported to revise its Service Instructions (procedures for engagement with citizens) and communications strategy for the first time since Ghana’s independence.
- The Basics in Anti-Corruption Education (BACE) project has made significant progress in the teaching of anti-corruption in Ghanaian schools, through the development of a curriculum, a teachers’ manual and a reader for primary schools, being piloted in five schools prior to nationwide roll-out. This acknowledges the importance of a shift in attitudes and values in the fight to curb corruption. The FAITH and the Christian Council projects also focus on anti-corruption in schools.
- Court Users’ Committees, made up of citizens and officials of the Ghana Judicial Service, have been set up in 11 districts. The Africa Women Lawyers Association’s Strengthen Civic Participation and Social Accountability and Justice Delivery project has enabled over 720 court users to lodge complaints directly with the judicial service for redress.

Tackling corruption in the school meals service

Community volunteers are using SMS messaging to report problems with the school meals programme.

School children in Ghana are expected to get a free meal every afternoon under the School Feeding programme. Yet when our partner Partners in Participatory Development (PAPADEV) monitored 2,700 children in the Northern Region, they found that meals were not always provided. Where they weren't, a significant number of children, particularly girls, did not attend school regularly and some went on to drop out completely.

PAPADEV trained community volunteers and officers to use SMS to report and respond to problems with the scheme. Participants can now anonymously report issues of poor quality and quantity of food served, and frequency of meals, directly to the officers of the School Feeding Programme.

“

There is no money from central government for monitoring, so we are not able to visit the schools to know what is happening. With this platform, it will go a long way to solve our problems. We can be in our offices and we will get reports of maybe caterers who are not cooking, and then we will follow up with the little resource we have.”

Jacob Bakari, Bole District Desk Officer, Ghana School Feeding Programme



Supporting state actors

We gave grants to the Ministry of Zongo and Inner Cities, and the Steering Committee approved grants to the National Council for Persons with Disabilities and the National Youth Authority.

Strategic opportunities funding window

The strategic opportunities window is a non-competitive funding opportunity that enables STAR Ghana to respond to 'hot' and emerging issues key to achieving systemic change.

Six projects are being supported under this window, focusing on the environment, anti-corruption, governance, gender equality and social inclusion and civil society sustainability. Projects funded under this window are for a maximum duration of one year.

Local governance call in numbers

GH¢3.1m awarded

7 strategic partners

17 small grant partners

Equality: a core principle

The STAR Ghana GESI strategy has a vision ‘to bring gender equality and social inclusion to the core of the programme. This strategy has informed the development of grant calls – the calls made in the past year included GESI evaluation criteria, resulting in 62% of the projects having a strong GESI focus.

Local governance

STAR Ghana implemented a call for proposals on local governance. Our political and economy analysis had identified that accountable and responsive local governance, including decentralisation, was a goal around which diverse interest and social groups could be mobilised.

Our aim is to strengthen and scale up previous and ongoing initiatives focused on local governance, particularly in the areas of inclusive voice, improved access and transparency in service delivery.

We are supporting 24 partners to carry out projects, including creating spaces for collaboration between civil society and state actors on local service delivery, mechanisms for increased transparency, and campaigns for inclusive district assembly elections, including the election of women, people with disabilities and young people. We are deepening and sustaining democratic governance at local level and providing a basis for further advocacy.

The Institute for Democratic Governance convened high-level fora with key government officials, parliamentary leaders, traditional leaders and civil society to reach an ‘elite consensus’ around the processes for the amendment of the Constitution to allow for election of district chief executives. This contributed to the timely submission of the Constitutional Amendment Bill on this matter in December 2018.

Gender equality and social inclusion

We are supporting 33 projects under our gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) call. The 13 projects under the strategic component will run till May 2020.

We promoted joined-up actions among organisations working on similar issues, encouraging grant partners to work together in clusters, with some success (see page 16 for examples).

Our partners are promoting practices that uphold and protect the rights of children, women and people with disabilities.

Thanks to the work of our partner CDA/CENPRODEG, the incidence of child marriage has reduced from nine cases to two in 30 communities in the Upper West region, as at April 2018. Six marriages were annulled as a result of early interventions from the district child panels, 33 teenage mothers were re-integrated into schools, and 21 were placed in vocational training.

Through advocacy and awareness raising by the Presbyterian Community Rehabilitation Centre, people with disabilities can now participate in traditional governance and become chiefs. In the Builsa North district of the Upper East region, five communities are now in the process of appointing their first chiefs who have a disability.

Traditional councils and chiefs of four districts in the Northern Region have collaborated with the district assemblies and Songtaba to develop and endorse district by-laws for the protection of rights of women accused of witchcraft. Following engagement by our partners, four district assemblies in northern Ghana have passed by-laws to protect the rights of women accused of witchcraft.

Fisheries Councils in the Western Region now reserve 30% of their membership for women.



Empowering people with disabilities

People with disabilities are now accessing funds to support their businesses, thanks to our partner YOWE.

People in the Lower Manya District faced challenges in accessing the funds intended to support people with disabilities to run businesses – until our partner Youth and Women Empowerment (YOWE) supported the local disbursement committee to improve its processes.

With YOWE’s support, the committee brought new members on board, elected a chair, and made their processes more accessible to people with disabilities. For example, guidelines for accessing the Disability Common Fund are now available in braille so that visually impaired people can use them.

Now the committee meets quarterly to assess applications and disburse funds to people with disabilities in the district.

“Previously, we had challenges communicating with the district assembly but through the project, we now have a cordial relationship. Now we can go there any time and have meetings with the MCE and the assembly on our issues. We have a people with disabilities rep who serves as an intermediary between us and the assembly.”

Eunice Koleur, President of the Ghana Blind Union, Lower Manya



Zolle is a STAR pupil after going back to school

Teenager Zolle is back at school thanks to the Let Girls Learn project.

Teenager Zolle Rukaya was doing well at school until she became pregnant. Her parents were angry and withdrew their support, so Zolle dropped out of school and life became very difficult for her and her baby son.

Things changed for the better when Zolle’s parents got involved with a project run by our partner Community Development Alliance (CDA-Ghana), where they learned about the need for collective action to address the problems of teenage pregnancy and child marriage.

With her parents’ support, Zolle returned to school, where she is doing well and hopes to train as a nurse.

“I am so happy I am back at school and will take exams. I am so grateful to CDA-Ghana because I thought all hope was lost until this project was initiated.”

Zolle Rukaya



Harnessing the power of the media

Our media partners have shone a spotlight on inequalities in access to public services.



Radio and television coverage of the difficulties some communities and social groups have in accessing services such as health, education and markets has contributed to local authorities stepping up their responsiveness.

For example, television reporting by CILTAD and TV3 has sped up the completion of a market, health facilities and classrooms. Following Skyy Media's monitoring of the Disability Fund, 239 people were able to access funds in 2018 – more than twice as many as in the previous five years. In the Akwapim North municipality 11 children with special educational needs are now attending school, thanks to work by the International Child Development Program to make school buildings more accessible.

An intense media campaign on financing mental healthcare prompted the government to release GH¢534,184 to the Mental Health Authority, an increase of about 100% from the 2017 figure, dramatically increasing the availability of mental health services.

Radio Ada and the rise of the queen mothers

Community radio station Radio Ada is empowering women leaders to tackle local issues.

Radio Ada is working with the queen mothers (women leaders) in communities alongside the Volta river, helping them to identify issues their communities are facing and to take action to tackle them.

Radio Ada held a number of workshops to train women, including farmers, fisherwomen, hairdressers, and people with disabilities, in how to facilitate community meetings, interview community members and record their findings.

The project also worked with district assemblies and traditional authorities, educating them to accept women in the governance system. After this work, three women stood for assembly positions in their community elections.

“ *The training has benefited me such that I'm now able to communicate in my community boldly without fear. When we went to the island communities to mobilise community members, the chiefs and everyone came out to listen to us women.*”

Joyce Otitram, hairdresser

SMS Voices

Our project SMS Voices is providing a cheap and simple way for citizens to engage directly with local government officials and other state partners via text messages. The platform also enables marginalised people to have direct access to lawyers for legal advice.

SMS Voices is in 30 districts across ten of Ghana's regions. In total, 96 citizen representatives have been trained and linked directly to 39 local government officials in their respective districts.

This year, citizens used it to report issues or ask for feedback for cases relating to assault, defilement, the Disability Fund, discrimination against people with disabilities, implementation of government policies such as the fertiliser subsidy and the School Feeding Programme, and unreceipted payments at government hospitals.

SMS project helps clamp down on illegal hospital fees

Community volunteers are using SMS messaging to help eliminate unofficial hospital fees.

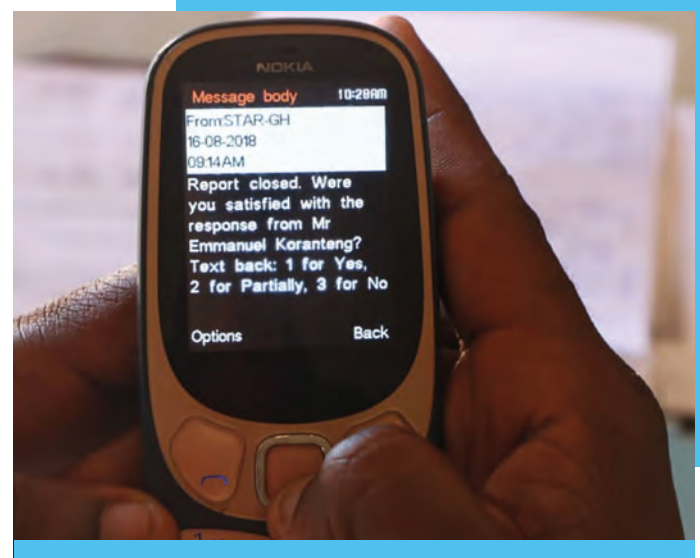
Research by our partner Centre for Active Learning and Integrated Development (CALID) revealed that some staff at government hospitals in the Tamale Metropolitan district in the Northern Region were charging patients illegal fees, which often were not receipted.

Staff routinely asked pregnant women for GH¢200 before attending to them, for example. And there were allegations that people were asked to pay GH¢90 when collecting the body of a deceased relative – but only given a receipt for GH¢50.

CALID trained community volunteers and hospital administrators to use SMS to report and respond to such issues. Participants can now send reports anonymously – and the administrators can investigate and deal with any issues quickly.

“Our objective is to stop illegal collection of money. With this platform, I can turn up at anyone's desk and prove to them when they collected money without receipting. This I believe will deter the culprits.”

Dr Ken Osei Mensah, Public Relations Officer, Tamale Teaching Hospital



Peaceful and inclusive elections

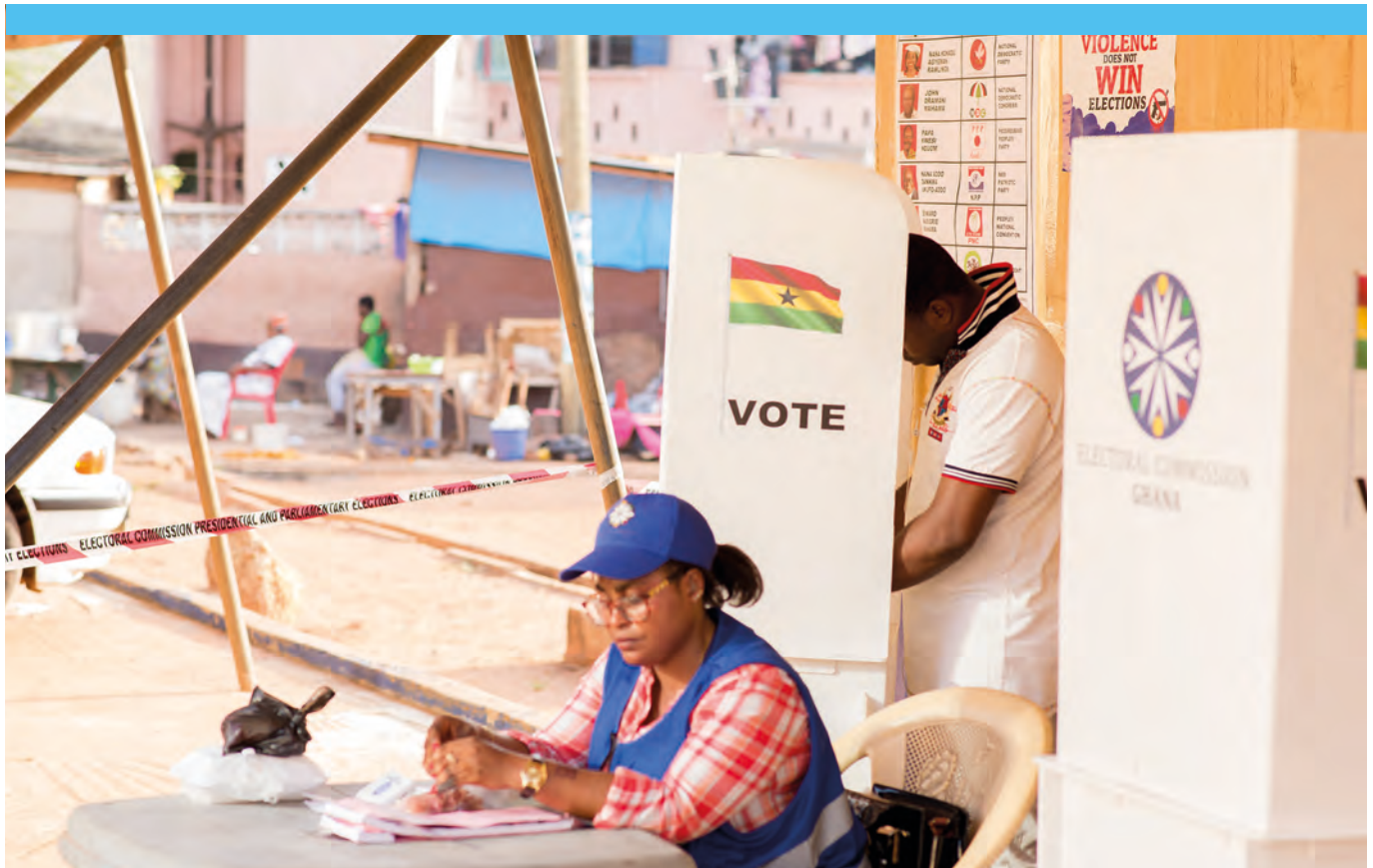
The 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections were more inclusive, transparent and peaceful than previous votes. The projects funded under our Elections call contributed significantly towards this.

We awarded grants to 38 organisations, for projects on campaigns and manifestos; observation and monitoring of elections; and inclusiveness and participation.

A number of projects helped women, people with disabilities and other socially excluded groups to claim their right to vote.

A number of projects helped women, people with disabilities and other socially excluded groups to claim their right to vote. The Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations trained and deployed people with disabilities to work as election observers at voting centres across the country, and trained 5,000 blind and partially-sighted people to use a tactile voting system.

The Musicians Union of Ghana released a compilation of songs promoting violence-free elections. The Media Foundation for West Africa monitored use of hate speech on radio, and trained political party communicators. Meanwhile Blogging Ghana trained the Ghana Police Service in how to use social media, and the African Women Lawyers Association trained police and security forces in electoral law and good practice.



Working with Ghana's Parliament

Our work with Parliament is helping to embed equality and transparency into its ways of working, and giving civil society opportunities to engage with Parliament.

Partners are working with the Leadership, the Parliamentary Service and five Committees: Health, Education, Government Assurances, Gender and Children and Local Government and Rural Development. We are building momentum with both grant partners' actions and the activities of the targeted parliamentary committees promoting inclusive development.

We have supported training for the Committees, to sensitise them to the issue of gender-responsive budgeting. We also worked to improve links between committees and ministries, so they better understand how their budgets can affect the most vulnerable in society. The Education and Local Government Committees initiated regional monitoring, to address the challenges of implementing inclusion policies such as the free education programme.

The Local Government and Rural Development Committee focused its visits to Municipal, Metropolitan and District Assemblies on securing a 3% allocation of the District Assembly Common Fund for people with disabilities. The Speaker's Breakfast Forum on Disability is setting up a cross-party Disability Caucus.

Engagement between the leadership of Parliament and our partner Youth Empowerment for Life (YEfL) led to the Speaker's promise of support for the development of youth parliaments nationwide. This will be a big boost in enhancing young voices in governance.

The African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption has also been brought on board through our anti-corruption work.

We have supported training for the Committees, to sensitise them to the issue of gender-responsive budgeting.



Partnerships in action

Our collaboration with the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice on anti-corruption has ensured that partners are able to work with the Commission at the local and district levels.

STAR Ghana has strategically partnered with many civil society organisations and state agencies (including committees of Parliament).

Our grant partners have also developed strategic partnerships with their key duty bearing stakeholders. For example, our partner FIDA has worked directly with the Ghana Police Service Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit to develop a database for women with disabilities who suffer violence.

Our strategic partnerships with state institutions at national level have helped to prepare the ground for our grant partners' work at local level. For example, our collaboration with the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice on anti-corruption has ensured that partners are able to work with the Commission at the local and district levels. Through this approach:

- Human Rights Advocacy Centre and the Ghana Mental Health Authority have worked together to develop protocols for the administration of health services in traditional mental care homes, which are now being implemented.
- Grant partners working on land rights have worked closely with the Parliamentary Select Committee on Lands and Forestry and the Lands Commission on the Lands Bill, 2018. The final report for the draft bill includes the civil society proposals.
- SEND Ghana has held policy engagement meetings with Parliamentary Select Committees on trade, subsidiary legislation, poverty reduction and finance, as well as with the Ministry of Finance and the Ghana Revenue Authority, to demand progressive tax policies and initiatives that support vulnerable citizens.
- FIDA has worked with the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice and the Ghana Police Service Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit to generate more inclusive data to provide targeted responses to members of socially excluded groups who are victims of domestic violence. The Ghana Police Service, based on research by FIDA, has begun a process to update the Charge Sheet to collect data that supports the identification of such victims.



The Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection convened on the inclusion of disability specific provisions in the Affirmative Action Bill. They have assessed the amended draft and identified further concerns identified, which have been shared with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. The Ministry has responded positively to the concerns. The bill is yet to be presented to Parliament to be taken through the legislative process.

The STAR Ghana Foundation Governing Council

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Charles Abugre, Vice Chair
Professor Agnes Atia Apusigah
Nana Asantewaa Afadzinu

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Amidu Ibrahim-Tanko, Programme Director

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STAR Ghana Partners

Gender equality and social inclusion

SEND Ghana
Human Rights Advocacy Centre
FIDA
NETRIGHT
Community Land Development Foundation
African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs
Alliance for Reproductive Health Int.
Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition
Shea Network
Basic Needs
Community Development Alliance and CENPRODEG
Daasgift Quality Foundation-FNGO
International Child Development Program, Ghana
Mihoso International Foundation
Our Lady of Mercy Community Services
Presbyterian Community-Based Rehabilitation
Songtaba
Community Development and Advocacy Centre
Youth and Women Empowerment
Voice of People with Disability Ghana
Youth Empowerment for Life

Media

EIB-STARR FM
TV3
Penplusbytes
CILTAD/Coastal TV
FMSL Multimedia Ltd (RITE 90.1)
Radio Ada
Radio Builsa
Radio Justice
Skyy Media Group
Lorlorlonyo FM

Anti-corruption

Civil Society Platform on Oil and Gas; Lead organisation: Integrated Social Development Centre
Ghana Integrity Initiative Coalition
LeadAfrique International
African Women Lawyers Association
Socioserve-Ghana
West Africa AIDS Foundation
Voto Mobile
National Catholic Secretariat, Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, Forum for Actions on Inclusion, Transparency and Harmony
Christian Council of Ghana
Ghana Centre for Democratic Development
Association of Church Development Projects
Sustainable Aid through Voluntary Establishment
Social Initiative for Literacy and Development Program
TEERE and Upper East Regional Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations
Liberty Movement Organisation
Musicians' Union of Ghana
Youth Development, Research and Innovation Centre
Global Media Alliance
Search for Rural Development
Global Action for Women Empowerment
Centre for Active Learning and Integrated Development/League of Youth Coalition
Royal Health Organisation
Partners in Participatory Development
Ghana Society of the Physically Disabled
Private Enterprise Foundation
Association of Ghana Industries
Centre for Extractives Development Ghana
Civil Society Coalition on Land
Youth Advocacy on Rights and Opportunities
Theatre for Social Change

Participatory Development Associates

Chamber of Pharmacy

Local governance

Kekeli Foundation Ghana
Centre for the Development of People Ghana
People's Dialogue on Human Settlements
Regional Advisory Information and Network Systems
Women Integrated Development Organization
SMAid International Ghana
Women in Law and Development in Africa
4-H Ghana
Volta Educational Renaissance Foundation
Child Research and Resource Centre
Ghana Developing Communities Association
Women's Hope Foundation
Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association
ARK Development Organisation
Action for Sustainable Development
Friends of the Nation
Local Government Network
Media General Ghana Limited
NORSAAC
Media Foundation for West Africa
ABANTU for Development
Institute for Democratic Governance
Ghana Journalists Association
Ghana Center for Democratic Development
Strategic opportunity partners
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations
Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition
Media Coalition against illegal mining activities
Odekro
Third World Network

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