



# Health Care: Our Challenge and Hope

by Dr. David Mensah

The Ebola disease that is devastating so many communities in neighbouring West African countries is a sobering reminder of how fragile the health care systems are in this part of the world.

We have read report after report explaining that Ebola has become such a great crisis because of the weak health systems in West Africa. Even food security of the affected communities is threatened as trade is hindered by the outbreak. We at GRID and NEA feel rather small in the face of such an enormous global challenge, but we are not without hope.

God has blessed our work and we know that the health care system in our project area is stronger than it was even ten years ago. There is a vibrant network of volunteers who are educating their communities about health issues. Local health personnel have a better relationship with communities, so that there is less suspicion and distrust of them. Clinics are better equipped.

Make no mistake: if Ebola or a similar disease were to find its way to Carpenter, there would be suffering. But we are hopeful that its impact would be lessened because of the hard work that has gone into strengthening local health systems.

Thank you for your partnership with us over the years as we have been working to improve health in Carpenter area communities. People are producing and eating more food. More have clean water to drink. Women are finding help in childbirth. Children are attending school. People have received life-saving health care. All of these things work together to improve our communities' health, and we are grateful.

There is much more to be done. The worldwide health crisis has given new urgency to our desire for a strong local health care system. Please join us as we pray for God's guidance in addressing the great challenges involved in nurturing sustainable, quality health care in the Carpenter region.

**GRID** (Ghana Rural Integrated Development) and **NEA** (Northern Empowerment Association) are **partner organizations** working to alleviate poverty in Northern Ghana. **Motivated by Christ's love**, our mission is to **assist poor communities to meet their basic needs in a sustainable manner**.



## Ghana Health Team Postponed to 2015

The Ghana Health Team's November 2014 mission has been postponed due to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

Dr. Jennifer Wilson, Ghana Health Team Leader, explained that a decision to postpone was made to protect both volunteer team members and their potential patients. "We are concerned that our presence could actually contribute to the spread of Ebola. Due to our reputation, patients come to see us from all over Ghana. Our team's good name could attract sick patients with Ebola, who may then introduce it to the Carpenter region."

All donations received for the 2014 Health Team will be used for the rescheduled mission in November 2015. Team members will continue to raise funds for that future mission. A matching grant from the Jericho and Makbraneth Foundations is still in place, effectively doubling all donations to the team's general expenses.

Thank you for your continued support of this team, which is such an important component of our overall program in the Carpenter area.

## Measuring Health in Carpenter

18

People who have been saved thanks to the anti-snake venom serum available in Carpenter. Two were school-aged boys who were very close to death before they received the ASV.

Community health volunteers who are meeting for regular health education training, visiting homes to encourage good health practices, and monitoring newborns for health.

85

72

Infants (out of 74) who were successfully resuscitated at birth using simple methods and tools given to health workers.

Reduction in the newborn mortality rates in 2013-2014. Only 4 newborn deaths occurred this year, compared with the previous annual 30-40 deaths.

85%

## Ebola Prevention and Preparation

The vision of GRID and NEA is to enable people to meet their basic needs in a sustainable manner. We are a development agency, not an emergency relief one.

Nonetheless, because of our involvement in strengthening health care in the Carpenter region, we have a role to play in preventing the transmission of Ebola and preparing to respond to it.

NEA staff members are well-networked with local clinicians and with health volunteers. We plan to intensively educate all of our staff members with current information on Ebola so that they can then spearhead a public

health education campaign in the area. This will involve educating our 85 community health volunteers, who can then share accurate information about how to prevent disease transmission.

NEA staff will also hold larger community education sessions that include chiefs and elders. Our experience shows that health education has the greatest impact when these influential leaders are supportive.

At present, we have no plans to respond to the Ebola emergency beyond community health education.

# Education Trends Reflect Community Development

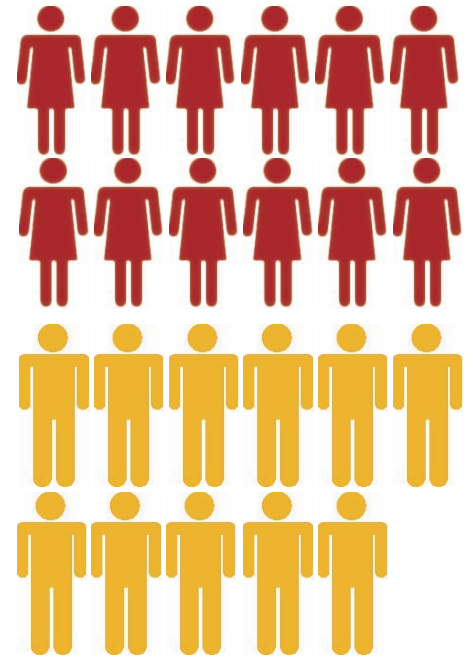
## Secondary School Scholarships



Why is a decline in the number of secondary school scholarships a sign of success? Because the lower numbers reflect a decreasing need for assistance.

As people are becoming more food secure and financially stable, they are able to provide for their children’s secondary school education. It’s always a special moment when a parent tells us, “This year, I had enough money to send my children to secondary school.”

## Post-Secondary Scholarships



In 2014, more women than men received scholarships for tertiary education. This shows us that girls have better access to education, and more are completing secondary school.

## NEA Scholar: Prosper Yeaka

Prosper lost his dad at an early age and had to stay with his grandfather until age 12. He was admitted to Damongo Senior High School, but struggled to pay his tuition fees. He was only able to pay for his late second and third year fees when he received his graduation certificate.

Even though he had received good grades, Prosper was not able to pursue further education right away. He was convinced

that the only way he could escape the cycle of poverty was through more education.

He applied to NEA for a scholarship, and received one that allowed him to pursue a BA in business.

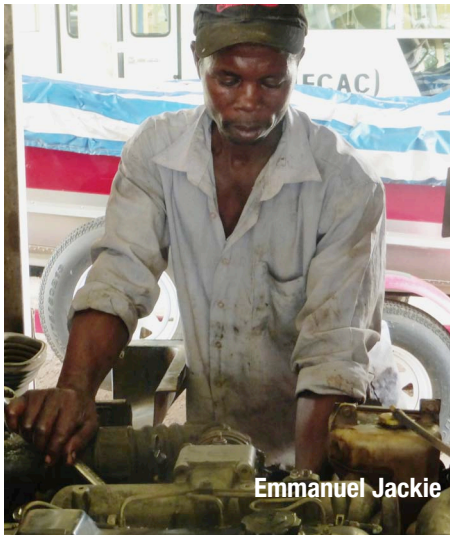
“Without the help of NEA’s scholarship, I would have deferred my program, or perhaps lost interest in pursuing higher education,” says Prosper.



Prosper Yeaka

# NEA Staff Profile: Emmanuel Jackie

by Yaw Adu-Gyamfi



Emmanuel Jackie has been NEA's chief mechanic since 2000. He had fourteen years of previous experience as a tractor operator mechanic in Accra and Subinso.

At NEA, his skills are important to ensure that the organization's vehicles are in good working condition, so that staff can safely travel to meet with rural communities. He also oversees the service and repair of equipment used on the

project site or in communities for their development.

Jackie envisions training young people in the NEA area in skills such as welding and mechanics, which could enable them to find work in the future.

Motivated by the love of Christ, Jackie works hard to support the mission of GRID and NEA. He serves as an elder of the local church, and lives at the project site with his wife and five children.

## Women's Expanding Role in Business

In Carpenter, NEA has been operating a cassava processing centre for several years. The purpose of this enterprise is to create economic opportunities for women in the area so that they can support their families.

The gari centre has been very successful, providing local farmers with a fair price for their cassava crops and giving some local women jobs. Now that it is established, it is time

for its management to be handed over to women.

To that end, NEA has helped twenty-four women form a cassava processing cooperative. All of these women have some experience in processing cassava, and will be running the business going forward. This will provide these women with more experience in business management, and will ultimately ensure the sustainability of the enterprise.



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