

# IMPACT UPDATES

## 40 YEARS OF IMPACT

This year marks a special anniversary for GRID & NEA. Forty years ago, Dr. David Mensah received a distressing letter from his family in Ghana telling him three family members had died of starvation. As a result, students and faculty at Acadia University in Nova Scotia, along with local churches, rallied together to raise funds to help the people in Ghana. These efforts were also carried on in Ontario by Dr. David's father-in-law, Gene Paisley. The response to the devastating tragedy in Ghana was the beginning of The Mensah Food and Orphanage Fund, now known as GRID (Ghana Rural Integrated Development).

In June, the GRID leadership team gathered together to celebrate forty years of partnership between GRID & NEA. We are so grateful for the great things God has done through us and you, our faithful, generous partners and supporters for four decades.

A stroll down memory lane allows us to see the impact we made together over forty years in Northern Ghana.

### 1983 - 1993

The Mensah Food and Orphanage Fund (later registered as GRID) was established with the help of Colbrook Baptist Church and the late Rev. Douglas Porter, GRID's First Board Chairman.

In 1988, Partnership Africa Canada (the aid arm of the Government of Canada that preceded CIDA) approved a grant for the commencement of The Janga Project and additional grants over the next decade for activities to be scaled up.

The Mensahs moved to Ghana to implement the project. Work began in Janga with women's peanut farming. Wells were dug, tomato farming tested, and many more development projects were initiated. The first volunteer team from Ontario Bible College (now Tyndale) came to help in Janga in 1992 and several groups of volunteers followed over the next years.



**GRID Leadership Team celebrating forty years anniversary of GRID & NEA's partnership during the 2023 Annual General Meeting.**

## 1994 - 2003

Conflict erupted in Northern Ghana. Dr. John Schram, the former Canadian High Commissioner asked Dr. David if he could assist in restoring peace in the area. Dr. David met with previously warring tribes to start a project together to reconstruct a local market. As challenging as it was, tribes that had been in conflict came together to complete the task.

Through advisory work for The Body Shop, Dr. David was instrumental in assisting the Tungteiya women's shea butter cooperative to be managed effectively. To this day, 650 women continue to supply shea butter to Body Shop.

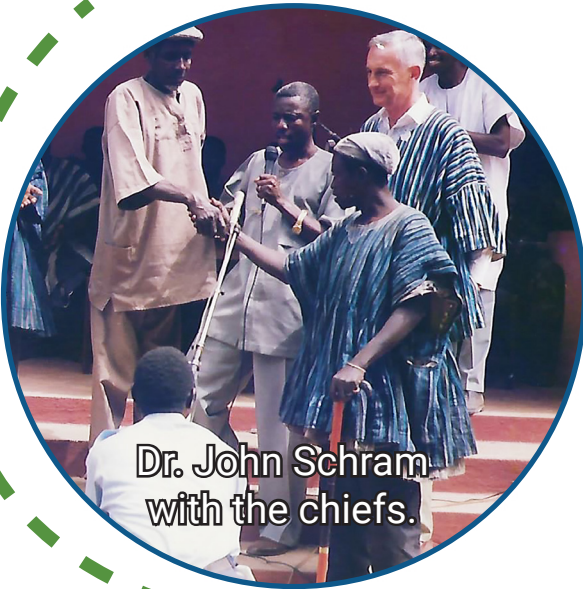
After years of living out Christ's love by providing basic needs (water, food, and help for the sick), the first church was established in Janga upon the invitation of the late Chief Sooh Naba.

As Janga achieved sustainability, we began to search for where we should work next. Bole District, one of the largest and poorest in Ghana, did not have any working NGOs. We targeted the Deg area, one of the poorest sections of the district. The local chief gave us land, and the Janga women's co-op gave the Deg women's co-op 60 bags of peanuts to start a farming program. The Carpenter Project was launched.

Although there were similarities between Janga and Carpenter, there were also a few differences. We had to emphasize environmental protection in Carpenter, as people burned trees to produce charcoal and fishermen used chemicals to catch fish. Over 600 volunteers formed the Nensom Environmental Watchdog group, who patrolled over 200 km of the Black Volta River to ensure that poison and illegal nets were not used in fishing.

Partners from Canada and US came to build schools and warehouses, teach at the local schools, and train Ghanaian pastors as churches grew.

During this decade, the Ghana Ministry of Food and Agriculture honoured NEA as the Best NGO in Northern Region.



Dr. John Schram  
with the chiefs.



One of the members  
of the women's shea  
butter cooperative.



2001 Carpenter  
School Build



## 2004 - 2013

They said growing fish in Northern Ghana couldn't be done. Nevertheless, in 2004, the Carpenter Aquaculture program opened. The program addressed the need to provide people with the missing protein in their diets. The North Mo chiefs honored Dr. David and Brenda and they were enstooled as Chief and Queen Mother of Development of the North Mo tribe.

This decade was a time of expansion. More wells were dug, co-ops increased, more schools were built, and farms expanded.

A medical mission was launched and the first medical team arrived in Carpenter in 2007. Thousands of people from over 50 villages came to the clinics. Many lives were saved, and many people were healed! The team met Dr. Kingsnorth, co-founder of Operation Hernia, on their flight to Ghana. It led to a partnership that has lasted more than a decade.

In 2008, Dr. David Mensah fell heir to a family chieftaincy title, paving the way for reaching out to area chiefs and steering the entire tribe.

Since 1998 CIDA (now Global Affairs Canada) has funded GRID development projects. In 2009, as we came to the close of a CIDA-supported project, a formal evaluation was launched. One of the recommendations was that CIDA should use GRID & NEA as a model for its other development initiatives. Leyaata Project was approved, which has reduced mother and infant mortality in 82 villages.

For several years, we desired to bring together the Christian Chiefs who were scattered over the northern half of the country. In 2010, this became a reality. Over 120 chiefs from 13 tribes came (this organization has since grown to over 250 Christian chiefs). Carpenter has become their 'Jerusalem.'

The church continues to expand, and the first Pastors' Conference happened in 2011, with 75 pastors and church leaders from 35 established congregations attending.



## 2014 - 2023

It's a decade of challenges and celebrations. We started with the devastating news of an Ebola outbreak, giving birth to a strong desire for sustainable, quality health care of a model hospital in the Northern Region of Ghana. A team from the Engineering Ministries International (eMi) came to conduct a feasibility study.

Then, we celebrated as the Mensahs received the 2015 Millenium Peace Award. In the same year, the Carpenter Hospital campaign was launched, GRID USA was established, and the Leyaata Ane Project - extending the program to 80 more communities - commenced. In 2018, we collaborated with the Government of Ghana in supplying 2M fingerlings for the entire Northern Region.

Together, in 2019, we crossed the fundraising finish line for construction of the Leyaata Hospital in Carpenter. And then Covid happened. Amid the crisis, we saw sustainability at work! With various income-generating projects, NEA was able to provide food and income to its staff, their families and the communities we serve. And your generosity was astounding!

In 2021, Leyaata Ane finished and Babanaya Project began - improving the well-being of women and girls in 30 communities. NEA was awarded as the Region's Best Fisher. Then, in 2022, we celebrated the grand opening of the Leyaata Hospital. Many build projects were completed at the same time, such as the Carpenter Church, dormitory, other churches, dams, wells, KVIPs, etc.

## 2024 --- Looking Ahead

*by: Jacques Lapointe*

Scripture encourages us to make plans because the Lord will order our steps. So, as we look ahead and upward for direction, we hold fast to this principle of dependence on the Lord in all aspects of our work and planning.

As we look ahead to 2024 and beyond, here is how we see the way forward. Continuing to establish the Leyaata Hospital as a model is a top priority. In its first year of operation much has been accomplished and we continue to build on this. Ghana Health Partners is a team of seasoned professionals from Canada and the UK who have worked closely with the excellent team at the hospital toward establishing its excellence. Construction of the new junior staff housing will be a great encouragement to those who have been patiently waiting for improved accommodations.

NEA has identified new projects and programs in agriculture, aquaculture, education and several others. These creative, astute plans build on what has been accomplished already in these areas. These represent a quantum leap forward in sustainably meeting needs. As resources permit, we will continue to expand our reach with the Good News.

**The vision for new opportunities is clear. As always, the need rests with you, our generous donors, as the final piece to make the future as bright as the past.**



**GRID & NEA** 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.**

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