



KNUST

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
(KNUST), KUMASI-GHANA



IRDIS

Institute for Rural Development and Innovation Studies, KNUST

INSTITUTE
FOR
RURAL
DEVELOPMENT
AND
INNOVATION
STUDIES

INSTITUTE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT
AND INNOVATION STUDIES, KNUST

ANNUAL REPORT

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Message from the Provost



P R O F E S S O R
DADSON
AWUNYO-VITOR

*Provost, College of Agriculture
and Natural Resources,
Kwame Nkrumah University
of Science and Technology*

As one of the six Colleges of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources is mandated to train students, conduct research, and disseminate knowledge in sustainable agriculture, renewable natural resources management, and rural development. The College comprises the Faculty of Agriculture, the Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources, and the Institute for Rural Development and Innovation Studies (IRDIS), the College's social science research institute, focused on rural development and innovation.

Established in 1979 as the Bureau of Integrated Rural Development (BIRD), in May 2025, the University Council approved its transition into the Institute for Rural Development and Innovation Studies (IRDIS).

IRDIS builds on more than four decades of excellence in research, capacity building, and community engagement at KNUST. As the lead research institute within the College, IRDIS serves as a vital interface between the University and rural communities, advancing rural prosperity through innovation, cutting-edge research, education, and impactful community engagement. It also strengthens



...IRDIS remains at the forefront of discussions on contemporary rural development issues.

the capacity of rural development actors and institutions across Ghana.

In line with its mandate, IRDIS undertakes interdisciplinary research, teaching, consultancy, and extension services. The Institute has expanded its outreach initiatives to deepen collaboration with host, peri-urban, and rural communities nationwide. Over the years, it has developed a strong reputation for training and capacity building among rural development practitioners, evolving into a dynamic institute that bridges academic excellence with practical rural development challenges.

With working experience across all sixteen regions of Ghana, IRDIS remains at the forefront of discussions on contemporary rural development issues. Its accomplished interdisciplinary team has partnered with central government ministries, departments,

and agencies, bilateral and multilateral aid organizations, international academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations to deliver impactful results.

The achievements of IRDIS during the 2024/25 academic year are particularly noteworthy. Highlights include innovative problem-solving initiatives, strengthened community engagement, the acquisition of significant research grants to support impactful rural development studies, and enhanced collaboration with government agencies, development partners, and local communities.

As IRDIS transitions fully into its expanded mandate, it is poised to introduce postgraduate programmes, undertake more ambitious projects, and achieve even greater impact in rural development in Ghana and beyond. ●●●

Message from the Director



Monica Addison (PhD)

Director, Institute for Rural Development and Innovation Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi

development in Ghana and beyond. A further milestone was the completion of Phase 1 (i.e. structural completion) of our new office complex, designed to provide a modern environment for research, learning, and stakeholder engagement.

It is my great pleasure to present the 2024/2025 Academic Year Annual Report of the Institute for Rural Development and Innovation Studies (IRDIS). This year marks a historic milestone, following the University Council's approval of our transition from the Bureau of Integrated Rural Development (BIRD) to IRDIS. This new status reflects our strengthened identity, expanded mandate, and renewed commitment to advancing sustainable and inclusive rural

During the year, IRDIS expanded its research portfolio with major projects addressing climate resilience, gender equality, child labour prevention, education, social protection, and agricultural transformation. Our researchers produced high-quality outputs in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, and technical reports, reinforcing IRDIS as a trusted source of evidence for policy and practice. Additionally, the Institute demonstrated strong

financial performance, reflecting prudent management and sustained confidence from our partners.

We also advanced our academic mission by initiating the development of innovative postgraduate programmes. In addition, we supervised graduate and undergraduate students and provided over one hundred young professionals with hands-on field experience. These efforts are preparing the next generation of rural development

leaders and reinforcing IRDIS's commitment to academic excellence and practical impact.

These achievements would not have been possible without the dedication of our staff, collaborators, and the continued support of University leadership. Looking ahead, IRDIS remains steadfast in its vision to serve as a leading African hub for transformative research, innovation, and education—bridging academic excellence with practical solutions to drive rural prosperity.



INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of the Institute for Rural Development and Innovation Studies' (IRDIS) activities for the 2024/2025 academic year.



ABOUT US

The IRDIS succeeded the former Bureau of Integrated Rural Development (BIRD) in May 2025, with a mandate to address complex rural development challenges through:



Cutting-edge research on contemporary rural development issues



Capacity development for rural practitioners, local governments, and NGOs



Policy influence through evidence-based recommendations aligned with the SDGs and AU Agenda 2063



Community engagement and transfer of relevant innovations from the university to rural areas of Ghana

Consistent with its core mandate, IRDIS concentrated its efforts on research, teaching, consultancy, and extension services. In addition, the Institute expanded its community outreach initiatives to strengthen collaboration between the

University and its surrounding host, peri-urban, and rural communities across Ghana. Over the past years, IRDIS has evolved into a dynamic institute focused on bridging the gap between academic excellence and practical rural development challenges.

VISION STATEMENT

To become the leading African institute for transformative research, innovation, and education in sustainable and inclusive rural development.



MISSION STATEMENT

To serve as the interface between the University and rural communities, advancing rural prosperity through innovation, cutting-edge research, education, and impactful community engagement, while strengthening the capacity of rural development actors and institutions.





CORE VALUES

- ④ **Leadership in Innovation and Technology**
- ④ **Diversity and Equal Opportunity for All**
- ④ **Culture of Excellence**
- ④ **Integrity and Stewardship of Resources**
- ④ **Preservation of Environmental Integrity**
- ④ **Community-Centered Engagement**
- ④ **Investment in Rural Prosperity**

KEY AREAS OF OUR WORK



IRDIS offers services in seven key areas, namely: Rural Development and Innovations, Capacity Building and Institutional Development, Gender and Development, Private Sector and Rural Development, Rural Health, Social Protection, and Evidence Generation. The specific areas of competence under these broad service areas are as follows:

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIONS

- ✓ Policy planning and implementation
- ✓ Local economic development (LED)
- ✓ Decentralization and local governance
- ✓ Agricultural development planning and management
- ✓ Natural resources management and governance
- ✓ Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- ✓ Transfer of innovations

CAPACITY BUILDING AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ Building and strengthening the capacity of local institutions and community-based organisations, Strengthening the capacity of chieftaincy institutions

- ✓ Public institutional reforms and transformation
- ✓ Development of tailor-made training programmes, Institutional strengthening and capacity-building
- ✓ Promotion of public/private partnership and management models, civil society and civic engagement, network support for NGOs

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ Gender-specific Mainstreaming gender into development
- ✓ Women's organizations and development
- ✓ Gender analysis and gender-responsive programming

PRIVATE SECTOR AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ Small and medium-scale enterprise development
- ✓ Training in business development and management
- ✓ Rural finance mobilisation and management
- ✓ Feasibility studies of raw material-base for rural economic ventures
- ✓ Enterprise product appraisal and development
- ✓ Value chains and inclusive market development
- ✓ Private sector engagement

RURAL HEALTH

- ✓ Agricultural health and safety
- ✓ Healthy ageing
- ✓ Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)
- ✓ Health impact assessment
- ✓ Health programme planning and evaluation
- ✓ Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION

- ✓ Child labour and trafficking
- ✓ Cash transfer programming
- ✓ Productive inclusion
- ✓ Population management and migration for development
- ✓ Food and nutrition security, Youth development
- ✓ Disability-inclusive development
- ✓ Social protection systems strengthening
- ✓ Inclusive rural development

EVIDENCE GENERATION (RESEARCH, EVALUATION AND DATA ANALYTICS)

- ✓ Rural development-driven research
- ✓ Baseline studies and specialized sector studies
- ✓ Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)
- ✓ Evidence syntheses (systematic reviews, realist reviews, meta-evaluation, scoping reviews) Impact evaluations and policy analyses
- ✓ Data analytics and visualisation

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS



RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

During the 2024/2025 academic year, the IRDIS achieved some significant milestones under research which are worthy of notes. Below are the key achievements:

Research Projects

- ✓ Three (3) Grant Research Activities
- ✓ Eight (8) Commissioned Research Activities

Publications

Over the past academic year, IRDIS researchers produced 36 publications in peer-reviewed journal articles, eight (8) book chapters, one (1) published conference paper, and seven (7) unpublished technical reports.

- ✓ Supervision of 5 PhD students; 15 MSc students; 20 undergraduate students
- ✓ Over 120 graduates and interns received hands-on in the field practical training in contract research and consultancy practice.
- ✓ One (1) maiden short course, Fundamentals of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) was mounted, and a total of 17 participants was recorded.

SERVICE TO UNIVERSITY, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES

During the period under review, the institute's staff embarked on the following service activities:

- ✓ 31 courses taught in various departments at KNUST.

- ✓ IRDIS staff provided leadership and expertise across KNUST and national institutions, serving as Principal

Investigators, Coordinators, Moderators, and technical consultants and advisors, as well as holding positions on professional associations and corporate bodies of international organizations and boards.

- ✓ Senior staff actively supported local and international scholarship through service as journal reviewers and Editorial Board members.
- ✓ As part of its community engagement and social responsibility efforts, staff commenced a tracer study on beneficiaries of KNUST's specialized admission scheme for surrounding communities to evaluate the impact of the University's special admission protocol.

INSTITUTIONAL RESTRUCTURING AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Conversion of BIRD into an Institute for Rural Development and Innovation Studies (IRDIS)

During the year under review, BIRD was elevated into an Institute for Rural Development and Innovation Studies (IRDIS). The elevation brought several

strategic benefits, such as an enhancement in its capacity, visibility, and impact.

Construction of IRDIS Office Complex

The 2024/2025 academic year began with a sod-cutting for the commencement of the IRDIS office complex in November 2024. The phase 1 (i.e., structural completion) of the construction of the office complex was completed in October 2025.

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

In the 2024/2025 academic year, IRDIS's media profile increased significantly as follows:

- ✓ Wider coverage was achieved for the announcement of BIRD's transformation from a center into an institute equivalent to faculty level, with three departments.
- ✓ IRDIS continued to build visibility at the institute's, college, and KNUST websites and grow Facebook friends and Twitter followers without using sponsored advertisements.

OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS



Table 1 provides an overview of the grants and commissioned research undertaken during the period under review.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Table 1: Overview of projects/grants worked on during 2024/2025 academic year.

	Project Title	Funding Body	Date Commissioned	Estimated Funding	Status	Contact Staff
Grant Research						
1.	West African Research Ecosystem Scorecard Assessment	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office	January 2025	£349,368.16	Ongoing	TY, MA
2.	Impact of Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices on Social and Emotional Development in Diverse Early Childhood Classrooms in Ghana	IDRC, Canada	June 2024	CAD 499,500	Ongoing	PSM, SEE, EOA, EFA, MA

3.	Climate Change, Livelihoods, and Health Among Cocoa Farmers in Ghana	Harvard University	September 2024	\$38,000	Ongoing	AAA, MA
Commissioned/ Contract Research						
1.	Country Learning Partner for the Shift the Power Programme in Ghana	STAR-Ghana Foundation	January 2025	GHC 508,499.80	Ongoing	TY, MA, AAA, BW, IB
2.	Development of Revised National Rural Development Policy	MLGCRA, Accra	June 2024	GHC 700,000	Ongoing	EOA, BW, MA, EFA, SEE, PSM, TY, IB, AAA
3.	Mid-term and Endline Evaluation of the Emerging Public Leaders Fellowship Program	Emerging Public Leaders	December 2024	\$44,000	Completed	AAA, MA, TY
4.	Study for Accelerating Change Through Innovation in Agriculture Technical and Vocational Education	World University Services, Canada	February 2025	\$76,640.00	Completed	TY, MA, AAA, IB

5.	Baseline Child Labour Prevalence Survey for Alliance for Change Project	International Cocoa Initiative	September 2024	GHC 425,000	Completed	AAA, MA, IB, NMO
6.	Final Evaluation of Gender Transformative Cash Transfer Project	International Cocoa Initiative	July 2024	GHC 999,000	Completed	AAA, MA, EOA, IB, BW, TY, LAI, NMO,
7.	Evaluation of Helen Keller International Projects on Improving Nutrition and Food Security in Côte d'Ivoire	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saint	October 2024	USD 80,000	Completed	EOA, IB, TY, BW, MA, NMO
8.	Endline Studies of the Alliance for Change Project	International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), Switzerland	September 2025	GHC 389,000	Completed	AAA, MA, IB, NMO

NOTES ON STAFF INITIALS: AAA: Dr. Albert A. Arhin; MA: Dr. (Mrs.) Monica Addison; PSM: Prof. Paul Sarfo-Mensah; EFA: Prof. (Mrs.) Ernestina Fredua Antoh; EOA: Prof. Ebenezer Owusu-Addo; SEE: Prof. Sampson Enyin Edusah; TY: Dr. Thomas Yeboah; IB: Dr. Isaac Bonuedi; BW: Dr. (Mrs.) Bernice Wadei; NMO: Mr. Nathaniel Mensah-Odum.





KNUST-IDRC/GPE-KIX project dissemination workshop

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2024/2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



RURAL DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY UNIT

The Rural Development Innovations and Sustainability Unit is a multi-disciplinary unit that exists to provide research, training, professional development, consultancy and advisory services, policy analysis, and tools to individuals, corporate, governments, or CSOs to contribute to good governance, safe, just, sustainable, socially inclusive, and environmentally responsive development. The department also aims to cultivate,

undertake, facilitate, and produce multi-disciplinary, collaborative, and innovative research focused on sustainable environment, rural development, (peri) urban sustainability, and social resilience. It brings together scholars from multi-disciplinary backgrounds to critically inform research, public debate, and seek solutions to pressing rural development challenges posed by environmental and climate changes, urbanization, policy choices, hazards, and transboundary crises (e.g., epidemics).

Project highlights for 2024/2025 include:

Climate Change, Livelihoods, and Health Among Cocoa Farmers in Ghana - Ongoing

Recent evidence shows that climate variability is increasingly undermining agricultural livelihoods, health, and environmental sustainability across Ghana's cocoa-growing regions, with significant implications for food security, rural wellbeing, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to poverty reduction, climate action, health, and sustainable production. This project examined how cocoa farmers perceive and experience climate change and related policy interventions, and how these dynamics shape productivity, livelihoods, and wellbeing. Implemented across selected cocoa-growing communities in Ashanti, Eastern, and Western Regions, the study adopted a qualitative approach involving focus group discussions with smallholder farmers, sharecroppers, and cooperative members to explore climate-related changes, vulnerability across cocoa growth stages, seasonal risks, health impacts, and local adaptation strategies.

The project formed part of a broader mixed-methods research under the Motsepe Presidential Research Accelerator Fund for Africa, in collaboration with Harvard

University. Key findings reveal that farmers are experiencing prolonged dry seasons, erratic rainfall, rising temperatures, and increased pest and disease pressure, leading to declining yields, soil degradation, and heightened livelihood insecurity. Climate stress was also found to have direct and indirect impacts on farmers' physical health, emotional wellbeing, and household welfare, with women, older farmers, and children disproportionately affected. Despite these challenges, farmers are actively adopting coping and adaptation measures such as shade-tree planting, mulching, pruning, adjusted work schedules, and collective labour arrangements, although these efforts are constrained by limited access to inputs, irrigation, and extension services. The study reveals the need for integrated, producer-focused climate policies that link income support with climate adaptation, health protection, gender equity, and stronger institutional collaboration. It recommends inter-sectoral coordination among cocoa institutions, health services, forestry agencies, and farmer organizations to develop practical, locally grounded, and scalable adaptation strategies that enhance resilience and sustain livelihoods in Ghana's cocoa sector.

Project Team: Dr. Albert Arhin;
Dr. (Mrs.) Monica Addison



Child Labour Prevalence Survey for the Alliance for Change Project by the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI)- Endline Assessment: Ongoing

The Alliance for Change Project, an initiative designed and implemented by the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) in Ghana, sought to strengthen the protective and nurturing skills of adults and forge alliances between teachers and parents to reduce child labor and enhance children's learning and wellbeing. The project was subjected to a rigorous **Randomized Controlled Design** using a **Difference-in-Differences (DID)** estimation strategy, comparing changes over one academic year in five intervention schools (Nsokote District) against five non-intervention control schools (Bekwai District). The intervention model focused on building this home-school alliance through one week of intensive teacher training on positive discipline and parent engagement, supplemented by an eight-week “Families Make the Difference (FMD)” parenting program.

The baseline conditions established the urgency of this intervention, highlighting significant developmental deficits and pervasive risks. At the outset, academic performance was low, and children were heavily engaged in work. Furthermore, the school environment was often punitive, with widespread reliance on physical discipline. These findings set a clear and critical benchmark for measuring the project's success. Nevertheless, the Endline Evaluation, conducted after one

year of implementation, concluded that the Alliance for Change Project delivered **early but uneven progress** across its main outcome areas. The training component was highly successful, with 100% of attending teachers describing the sessions as very useful, highly relevant, and reporting frequent application of the new skills. However, this shift in adult practice did not fully translate into measurable, large-scale changes for the pupils within the short study period.

Key findings of the Endline Evaluation were mixed:

- ✓ **Teacher-Pupil Discipline:** A suggestive positive trend emerged in reducing corporal punishment. The share of pupils reporting being hit, pinched, or shaken by teachers decreased in treatment schools, showing a tendency toward a reduction relative to the control group, although this difference was not statistically significant.
- ✓ **Emotional Well-being:** The intervention surprisingly **did not lead to improvements** in pupils' emotional well-being. In fact, the composite emotional well-being index showed a **statistically significant decline** among pupils in the treatment schools relative to the control group.
- ✓ **Other Metrics:** The project did not lead to statistically significant improvements in the overall quality

of teacher-pupil relationships. Positive changes in specific indicators, such as feeling cheerful or calm, were broadly similar in both treatment and control schools, indicating limited program-specific impact.

In summary, the rigorous evaluation indicates that while the project successfully activated changes in adult knowledge and motivation, particularly among teachers, the transformation of deep-seated behaviors and their translation into consistent improvements in child development requires a longer time horizon. The results suggest the project's positive influence was emerging, but further time is necessary for the new parenting and teaching skills to fully embed and produce the expected large-scale, sustained improvements in pupil protection and overall wellbeing.

Project Team: Dr. Albert A. Arhin; Dr. (Mrs.) Monica Addison; Dr. Isaac Bonuedi; Nathaniel Mensah-Odum

Baseline of Child Labour Prevalence Survey for the Alliance for Change Project by the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI)

The Alliance for Change Project, implemented by the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) in Ghana, is a critical intervention designed to uplift educational outcomes and tackle pervasive social challenges within ten primary schools across the Bekwai (control)

and Nsokote (treatment) districts of the Ashanti region. The baseline assessment, conducted through a quantitative survey of 808 pupils and 42 teachers, establishes the urgent need and specific focus areas for the project by benchmarking conditions across key indicators of education, child wellbeing, and child labor practices. The findings reveal profound educational deficits and a concerning prevalence of hazardous child labor. Academic performance is significantly low, with the overall mean reading score standing at a mere 1.5 out of 3, and only 26.1% of pupils demonstrating the ability to write a full sentence. Interestingly, while the control district (Bekwai) reported slightly higher average time spent on school-related activities (5.69 hours) compared to the treatment district (Nsokote) (4.75 hours), this effort is not translating into strong academic mastery.

Compounding the educational challenges is the widespread engagement of children in work. The baseline data indicate that 52% of all pupils reported working in a cocoa field for at least one hour in the preceding seven days, a rate slightly higher in the Bekwai control district (56.6%) than in Nsokote (48.5%). Furthermore, a staggering 45.7% of all pupils were involved in a hazardous activity during the same period. The most common hazardous tasks identified were breaking cocoa pods with breaking knives and using machetes or long cutlasses for weeding or pruning. This high incidence of labor, especially hazardous tasks, directly

threatens children’s health and ability to concentrate on their studies.

The school environment presents its own set of challenges that the project must address. While most pupils feel encouraged by their teachers, the use of physical discipline is pervasive, with 46.8% of pupils reporting being physically disciplined “sometimes” and 6.6% “all the time.” This punitive environment contradicts efforts to foster a supportive learning space. Crucially, 61.9% of pupils reported that their teacher never discussed the harm that working could do to their school results, highlighting a significant gap in the sensitization and child protection role of educators.

In conclusion, the Baseline Report for The Alliance for Change Project confirms a multi-faceted crisis requiring immediate, targeted intervention. The project’s mission is validated by the data, which demonstrates low academic performance, high rates of hazardous child labor, and a school climate reliant on physical punishment. These findings set the critical benchmark against which the project’s success in improving educational outcomes, reducing harmful child labor, and creating a positive school environment will be measured in future annual reports.

Project Team: Dr. Albert A. Arhin; Dr. (Mrs.) Monica Addison; Dr. Isaac Bonuedi; Nathaniel Mensah-Odum

GENDER, LIVELIHOODS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT

The Gender, Livelihoods and Social Development (GLSD) Unit is dedicated to generating actionable, policy-relevant knowledge and strengthening community-engaged research to address persistent and emerging development challenges in Ghana and across Africa. In line with national priorities, Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Unit aims to advance gender equality, youth empowerment, inclusive economic development, and transformative social change. The Unit also prioritizes building institutional capacity and fostering strong university community engagements to ensure sustainable, people-centred development. Project Highlight (2024–2025) includes:

Impact of Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices on Social and Emotional Development in Diverse Early Childhood Classrooms in Ghana: Ongoing

The KIX Project is collaborative research between KNUST and KIX-GPE (or Knowledge and Innovation Exchange and Global Partnerships for Education) on the Impact of Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices on Social and Emotional Development in Diverse Early Childhood Classrooms in Ghana. The project was selected through a competitive call for proposals, it was adjudicated by external experts and

selected by the KIX Executive Committee, and an agreement was signed for its commencement on the 1st of July 2024 and scheduled to last for 24 months ending on the 30th of June 2026. The project, which is being led by IRDIS, seeks to explore the use of culturally responsive pedagogies (CRPs) or teaching practices to promote the social and emotional development of early learners. The research grant is worth CAN\$ 499,500, and it is being provided by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of the Canadian Government. The grant includes sponsorship for two MPhil graduate students to do research on Early Childhood and Care Education (ECCE) at KNUST. The key justification for the project is that literature has shown that Ghanaian classrooms often utilize Western 26 pedagogies that ignore cultural assets non-Akan ethnic groups possess. This discrepancy frequently leads to disengagement among early learners. In 2019, a new KG curriculum was introduced

in Ghana for Early Child Education. Though this curriculum is good, it appears to be weak in dealing with the cultural dimension needed to help in the socio-emotional development of the children. Thus, even the play-based pedagogy emphasized in the curriculum and exemplars used in teaching the children appears to be Eurocentric. More so, current teaching and learning resources promote more intellectual development and less socio-emotional development capacities. The study will address these biases by developing and accessing culturally responsive interventions to strengthen teacher practice and diverse learners' social and emotional development in diverse early childhood contexts. Findings will guide scalable culturally responsive models embedded through policy, pre-service, and continuous professional development modules to sustain advances in early grade practices that reflect Ghana's diversity and enrich inclusion and equity from the start of schooling.





Display of culturally responsive artefacts in a project intervention school



So far, we have completed two studies under the project comprising a baseline survey and a systematic review on the topic *“The impact of culturally responsive practices on social and emotional learning in early childhood educational settings in sub-Saharan Africa”*.



Project Team: Prof. Paul Sarfo-Mensah (Team Leader); Prof. Ernestina Fredua-Antoh; Prof. Ebenezer Owusu-Addo; Dr. (Mrs.) Monica Addison; Dr. Latif Apaassong Ibrahim

West Africa Research and Development (R&D) Ecosystem Scorecard Assessment: Ongoing

The West Africa Research and Development (R&D) Ecosystem Scorecard Assessment seeks to provide a rigorous, evidence-based framework for understanding how national R&D systems function, who benefits from them, and where critical gaps remain particularly for women and other underrepresented groups. Funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the project focuses on Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, with thematic emphasis on regenerative agriculture and vaccine manufacturing, two sectors with significant potential for inclusive innovation, livelihoods, and public health outcomes.

The project is developing a composite analytical and scorecard methodology that combines quantitative indicators and qualitative assessments to evaluate the enabling environment for R&D across policy, financing, human capital, infrastructure, institutional coordination, and gender responsiveness. Using a colour-coded scorecard approach, the assessment will provide an intuitive and comparative overview of R&D ecosystem performance in each country, while highlighting systemic constraints that limit participation, leadership, and benefits for women and

marginalized groups within research, innovation, and industrial development processes. Particular attention is given to gender-sensitive policy frameworks, representation of women in STEM fields, access to innovation finance, and institutional mechanisms that support inclusive research and manufacturing ecosystems.

We translated complex data into accessible scorecards and analytical narratives, to strengthen the capacity of domestic and regional policy advocacy actors, including governments, civil society organisations, research institutions, and development partners to engage more effectively in evidence-based dialogue on R&D reform. The findings are expected to inform policy advocacy, investment prioritisation, and programme design that enhance equity, resilience, and sustainability within West Africa's R&D ecosystems. Ultimately, the assessment supports the Department of Gender's mandate to promote inclusive development by ensuring that emerging R&D and innovation systems in the region contribute meaningfully to gender equality, decent employment, and broad-based socio-economic transformation.

Project Team: Dr. Thomas Yeboah;
Dr. Mrs. Monica Addison

Gender-Transformative Impacts of Innovation for Climate and Inclusive (ICI) Cash Transfer Interventions

Gender inequality, climate vulnerability, and economic insecurity continue to interact in ways that disproportionately constrain the wellbeing, agency, and livelihood opportunities of women and girls, particularly in climate-exposed and low-income communities. In response to these challenges, this study examined the gender-transformative effects of cash transfer interventions implemented under the Innovation for Climate and Inclusive (ICI) programme, with a focus on how such interventions influence intra-household relations, economic decision-making, social norms, and resilience outcomes. The study sought to move beyond conventional welfare outcomes to assess whether cash transfers can contribute to longer-term gender transformation.

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative household survey data with qualitative methods, including focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, and key informant interviews with beneficiaries, community leaders, and implementing partners. Data collection was conducted across selected programme communities to capture differentiated experiences of women, men, and youth, and to explore how contextual factors shape programme outcomes. Analytical emphasis was placed on changes in women's control over resources,

participation in household and community decision-making, labour allocation, social relations, and exposure to gender-based constraints and risks.

Findings from the study indicate that the cash transfer interventions generated positive short-term welfare effects while also contributing to shifts in gender relations within beneficiary households. Women beneficiaries reported increased financial autonomy, improved capacity to meet household needs, and greater involvement in economic and social decision-making. In several contexts, the transfers helped to reduce financial stress, improve household cooperation, and enhance women's confidence and bargaining power. However, the study also found that deeply entrenched gender norms, unpaid care burdens, and limited access to complementary services constrained the extent to which cash transfers alone could deliver sustained gender-transformative change.

The study revealed the importance of integrating cash transfers with deliberate gender-responsive and gender-transformative design elements, including community sensitisation, male engagement, access to productive resources, and linkages to livelihoods and social protection systems. It recommends stronger coordination between social protection, gender, and climate actors to ensure that cash-based interventions contribute not only to immediate consumption smoothing but also to longer-term empowerment, resilience, and equality outcomes. The findings

provide critical evidence to support policy advocacy and programming efforts aimed at advancing inclusive, equitable, and climate-resilient development.

Project Team: Project Team: Dr. Albert A. Arhin (Team Leader); Dr. Mrs. Monica Addison; Dr. Bernice Wadej; Prof. Ebenezer Owusu-Addo; Dr. Isaac Bonuedi; Dr. Thomas Yeboah; Nathaniel Mensah-Odum; Dr. Latif Apaassongo Ibrahim

Country Learning Partner for the Shift the Power Programme in Ghana Project: Ongoing

This project examines emerging learnings on how StP is contributing to advancing three of the nine principles of the #ShiftThePower Manifesto in Ghana. These include **Principle One:** Embrace a Vision of a “Good Society,” **Principle Three:** Move Away from Quick Fixes, and **Principle Nine:** Change Ourselves. The research is based on a mixed method involving a quantitative survey and semi-structured interviews with CSOs that are partners on the StP in Ghana. The learning research finds that the StP is making some important steps towards localization and locally led development, and in advancing the principles 1,3 and 9 of the #ShiftThePower Manifesto in Ghana. The findings shine a light on how StP is working towards transforming the civil society sector by allowing local CSOs, including smaller and less formalized ones, to better organize, transform, and reform their organizational, downward accountability, and governance structures. Many CSOs now recognize the

need to build organizational systems, including having strategic plans, financial software, and function boards, which are necessary to enhance operational efficiency and organizational legitimacy.

The findings highlight how CSOs are devising mechanisms to become more inclusive and equitable by involving constituents, particularly women, youth, and other marginalised groups in their governance and decision-making structures. Organisational decision-making on projects and programming now captures the perspective of constituents through mediums such as community forums, durbars, and organized meetings. While there is increasing autonomy in financial planning, more inclusive processes of co-creation, and participatory mechanisms for setting priorities, all of which enhance legitimacy and accountability, challenges such as restricted funding and the continued influence of international partners suggest that the shift in power can somewhat be contested. Nevertheless, StP has so far laid the groundwork for locally led development by equipping CSOs with the tools, confidence, and institutional frameworks needed to negotiate power more effectively and to assert community-driven priorities in both organizational and donor relationships.

The findings further demonstrate growing awareness of the risks and dangers associated with relying solely on external sources of funding but also increased recognition and organizational capacity strengthening

(through mentorship, coaching, guidance, and matching fund) on domestic resource mobilization and alternative funding models. Capacity building workshops and the sharing of experiences of partners of domestic resource mobilization efforts are opening the eyes of local CSOs to community philanthropy to the extent that many are in the process of developing domestic resource mobilization strategies to tap into existing community philanthropic approaches. CSOs are now showcasing their ability to mobilize local resources through for example social enterprise, membership dues, corporate and religious giving, crowdfunding and establishment of digital platforms for giving, in-kind contributions and volunteerism from constituents, and partnerships with other CSOs to apply for grants. While long-term sustainability will depend on continued support, early indications show that CSOs are building the capacity, confidence, and systems to maintain community-driven funding models over time. However, barriers such as technical, organizational, and human resource limitations, public mistrust, and the perception that development should be externally funded, legal, and regulatory, continue to hinder effective implementation of community philanthropy in the local context.

Project Team: Dr. Thomas Yeboah (Team Leader); Dr. Albert A. Arhin; Dr. Bernice Wade; Dr. Isaac Bonuedi; Dr. Monica Addison

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING UNIT

The Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Unit is a multidisciplinary unit that aims to promote development effectiveness and inclusive growth through the production of rigorous, high-quality, and independent evaluation and research evidence that meet the highest standards of quantitative and qualitative analysis. The unit is staffed by a team of experienced evaluators and researchers who bring a broad range of expertise from agriculture, health, education, housing, climate change, labour markets, microfinance, and rural development among others. This year, our work has focused on conducting baseline surveys, performance evaluations and research on agriculture, farming and other critical issues of national concern. Project highlights for 2024/2025 include:

Helen Keller International Nutrition and Food Security Project (Côte d'Ivoire) - Project Summary

The Helen Keller International (HKI) Nutrition and Food Security Project, funded by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was implemented in Côte d'Ivoire between 2017 and 2023 with a total investment of USD 1,764,713. The project aimed to address high levels of child malnutrition and food insecurity in the Savanes District, particularly in communities around Korhogo. Implemented through the Enhanced Homestead Food Production

(EHFP) approach, the initiative focused on improving nutrition, health, and hygiene practices among women of reproductive age, pregnant and lactating mothers, and children under two years, while strengthening household food production and livelihoods.

The project supported 25 women's groups comprising 1,356 women across 25 communities, indirectly benefiting an estimated 10,848 people based on average household size. Activities were organized under three main pillars: agricultural and horticultural support, behavior change communication on nutrition and hygiene, and women's empowerment. Key interventions included establishing community gardens, poultry production systems, vegetable cultivation (including orange-fleshed sweet potatoes), climate-smart agriculture training, nutrition and hygiene education, literacy and bookkeeping training, and cooperative management development. These activities aimed to improve food production, promote dietary diversity, strengthen income generation, and empower women through collective action and financial literacy.

An independent evaluation conducted in 2024 assessed the project using the OECD evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach that included surveys of 587 beneficiaries, 24 focus group discussions, 64 key informant interviews, and field observations across

all participating communities. Data were analyzed using quantitative methods in STATA and thematic qualitative analysis.

The project showed strong positive outcomes in improving food security, nutrition practices, and household livelihoods. The intervention significantly increased vegetable production, expanded access to community gardens, improved knowledge of essential nutrition and hygiene practices, and enhanced women's participation in producer groups and cooperative management. Beneficiaries reported improved dietary diversity, increased savings, and better household income. The project also contributed to improved health outcomes for women and children and strengthened social cohesion through group-based activities and training.

The evaluation rated the project highly satisfactory in relevance and impact, and noted strong alignment with national nutrition priorities and global development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals and WHO nutrition targets. The project effectively addressed critical nutrition challenges in the region and helped improve agricultural practices, climate-smart farming adoption, and knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding and child nutrition. Efficiency was rated satisfactory, as the project was implemented within budget and leveraged partnerships with local institutions. However, sustainability was rated moderately satisfactory, primarily due to challenges such as limited land access for community gardens and the absence of

a clearly defined long-term sustainability strategy.

To strengthen future interventions, the evaluation recommended extending funding cycles, strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems, developing a sustainability strategy, promoting secure

land tenure for community gardens, and increasing engagement with men to address gender norms influencing household nutrition. Expanding collaboration with local institutions and improving irrigation systems were also recommended as opportunities to scale the project's impact and ensure long-term benefits for participating communities.

The Evaluation Team in Ivory Coast





FDG with project beneficiaries, Ivory Coast



Produce from women's group community garden



Project Team: Prof. Ebenezer Owusu-Addo (Team Leader); Dr. Bernice Wadej; Dr. Isaac Bonuedi; Dr. Thomas Yeboah; Nathaniel Mensah-Odum



Beneficiary Women's Group, Ivory Coast

Evaluation of Member Food Production Programme in Ghana and Nigeria

The Member Food Production (MFP) project, launched by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) Charities in 2022, was designed as an agricultural-based livelihood intervention to enhance food security and self-reliance among Church members in Ghana and Nigeria. The program's core objectives were three-fold: to improve food and nutrition access for beneficiaries and their dependents, to provide opportunities for income generation by selling surplus produce, and to promote financial self-sufficiency, including the ability to consistently pay tithing six months post-project closure. This final evaluation assessed the project's implementation and impact against the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) criteria, adopting a concurrent mixed-method approach that included surveys of 331 beneficiaries, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and document reviews.

Overall, the findings indicate that the project made meaningful contributions in supporting members to become temporally and spiritually self-reliant, achieving an overall rating of Satisfactory for both Effectiveness and Impact. The project was rated Highly Satisfactory for Relevance, demonstrating its alignment with beneficiary needs, particularly in agricultural communities, where participants benefited from farming inputs, livestock, and financial

assistance. Many participants reported an increase in their ability to provide for their families, and the evaluation found evidence of moderate improvement in household food security, access to nutritious food, improved emotional health, and increased tithing payments. The project's emphasis on an empowerment approach and the mandatory participation in the self-reliance class were noted as a defining feature, with those actively participating showing high levels of resilience and success.

However, the project's long-term success was tempered by structural and implementation challenges, leading to **Moderately Satisfactory** ratings for both **Efficiency** and **Sustainability**. Effectiveness was hindered by the delayed distribution of farming inputs, which prevented some participants from achieving full self-reliance by missing optimal planting seasons. Efficiency was compromised by inadequate monitoring and supervision from Welfare and Self-Reliance Committee (WSRC) members, leading to some beneficiaries abandoning their projects without follow-up and operational inefficiencies. Furthermore, long-term sustainability remains a challenge, as the typical six-month support cycle was deemed too short to allow beneficiaries to complete a full production cycle and effectively transition to self-sufficiency. This issue was compounded in urban areas where the project's narrow focus on agriculture faced constraints due to limited access to farmland, disadvantaging vulnerable members without property. To improve

future programming, the evaluation strongly recommends ensuring the **timely provision of resources**, with inputs delivered well ahead of the planting season. It is further recommended that the support duration be extended to a minimum of two years to allow beneficiaries to complete two production cycles and establish sustainable enterprises. Additionally, strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems, including budgeting for WSRC member expenses and developing a clear Theory

of Change, is crucial. Finally, to enhance relevance and inclusivity, the project must diversify its support options beyond farming to include small businesses and vocational skills training, accommodating the needs of urban members with land constraints. The ultimate conclusion is that while the MFP project provided a valuable foundation for self-reliance, strategic adjustments in duration, monitoring, and diversification are necessary to fully realize its potential for lasting impact.

Project Team: Prof. Ebenezer Owusu-Addo (Team Leader); Dr. Bernice Wadei; Dr. Isaac Bonuedi; Dr. Thomas Yeboah; Nathaniel Mensah-Odum



Members Farms

Development of Revised National Rural Development Policy (2025-2033) and Implementation Plan: On-going

In 2019, the Ministry of Local Government Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs (MLGCRA) developed a National Rural Development Policy (NRDP) to provide the needed focus and attention to rural areas over a five-year period (2019 to 2023). The overall aim of the policy was to achieve economic and social development of rural areas with better opportunities for poverty alleviation and enhanced quality of life for residents. The Ministry commissioned IRDIS to develop a revised NRDP covering the period 2025-2033. The preparation of the revised NRDP began in August 2024. The policy was developed by considering the emerging rural development trends, national aspirations, and international protocols and commitments such as the SDGs and The African Union Agenda 2063. Participatory approaches were adopted throughout the policy development process.

A situational analysis and a review of the 2019 NRDP were conducted to inform the development of the revised policy. Policy dialogue sessions were held with relevant rural development actors to elicit input into the policy. The MLGCRA formed an Inter-Sectorial Technical Committee with membership from Ministries of Food and Agriculture, Finance, Health, Education, Tourism, Interior, Works and Housing, Lands and Natural Resources, Sanitation and Water Resources, Ghana Institute of Planners, LUSPA, and development partners (USAID, GIZ, World Bank etc) to provide input into the policy. The policy aims to ensure harmonized and coordinated sequencing of development interventions in rural communities, to promote inclusive economic growth and support initiatives that contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable social and economic development. It also outlines strategies to ensure that rural development protects the environment and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Project Team: Prof. Ebenezer Owusu-Addo (Team Leader); Dr. Bernice Wadei; Prof. Ernestina Fredua Antoh; Prof. S.E. Edusah; Prof. Paul Sarfo-Mensah; Dr. Albert A. Arhin; Dr. Isaac Bonuedi; Dr. Thomas Yeboah; Dr. Monica Addison; Nathaniel Mensah-Odum; Prof. Clifford Amoako, Prof. Nicholas Awortwi.



Participants at the Rural Development Policy Dialogue Workshop at Aburi

PUBLICATIONS, TECHNICAL REPORTS AND WORKING PAPERS PRODUCED



PUBLICATIONS (2024/2025 ACADEMIC YEAR)

IRDIS produced 38 peer reviewed journal articles, 8 book chapters, 1 conference paper and 7 technical reports during the year under review (see details below).

Publication in Refereed journals:

1. Wadei, B., Wadei, K. A., & Bonuedi, I. (2025). Re-examining the links between women's work and household power dynamics: Insights from rural and urban Ghana. *Human Geography*, 19427786251333094.
2. Wadei, B., Owusu-Addo, E., Bonuedi, I., Yeboah, T., Tetteh, R. O., Antoh, E. F., & Mensah-Odum, N. (2025). Groundnut processing and women's economic empowerment: Insights from a qualitative analysis. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 12, 101631
3. Bonuedi, I., Owusu-Addo, E., Wadei, B., Yeboah, T., Mensah-Odum, N., Tetteh, R. O., & Antoh, E. F. (2025). The effect of groundnut processing infrastructure on access to nutritious diets in northern Ghana. *Scientific African*, e03028.
4. Owusu-Addo, E., Dow, B. and Brijnath, B., 2025. Primary Prevention Interventions for Elder Abuse: A Systematic Review. *Ageing International*, 50(3), pp.1-23.
5. Owusu-Addo, E., Gilbert, A.S., Feldman, P., Garratt, S.M., Mackell, P. and Brijnath, B., (2025). Integrated Care Models for Older People: An Umbrella Review. *Ageing International*, 50(3), pp.1-33.
6. Van Selm, G., Bukenya, B., Kanya, I., Kumi, E., Yeboah, T., Banks, N., & van Wessel, M. (2025). Northern NGO-centrism in localisation processes: reproducing power inequities in the aid field. *Development in Practice*, 1-11.

7. Kamasa, K., Amoah, P., Bonuedi, I., & Forson, P. (2025). Impact of mining-FDI on Extractive Sector Growth and its Spillover Effect on Non-Extractive Sector Growth: The Case of Ghana. *Ghana Mining Journal*, 25(1), 45-56.
8. Kamasa, K., Korsah, E., Bonuedi, I., & Forson, P. (2025). Financial development as a catalyst for tax revenue generation in Ghana: exploring the channels. *Scientific African*, e02715.
9. Kumi, E., Yeboah, T., & Edudzie, E. (2025). 'The youth are not given a listening ear': A critical analysis of the contributions of youth-led civil society organisations to Africa's development. *World Development Perspectives*, 39, 100711.
10. Adeetuk, L., & Yeboah, T. (2025). Constrained yet agentic: young men and women's everyday negotiations to daily mobility in rural Ghana. *Children's Geographies*, 1-15.
11. Arthur-Holmes, F., & Yeboah, T. (2025). Reconceptualizing the youth and waithood notions: African youth agency and rural livelihoods in artisanal and small-scale mining. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 113, 103513.
12. Lu, M., Owusu-Addo, E., Yoshikawa, M., Mensah, H. and Fry, D., (2025). Understanding law enforcement interventions for the response to and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse against children and women in Ghana: Findings from a realist review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, p.102068.
13. Dewidar O, Shamseer L, Melendez-Torres GJ, Owusu-Addo E, et al. (2025) Improving the reporting on health equity in observational research (STROBE-Equity): extension checklist and elaboration. *BMJ*;390:e083882.
14. Dewidar O, Shamseer L, Melendez-Torres GJ, Owusu-Addo E, et al. (2025) Improving the Reporting on Health Equity in Observational Research (STROBE-Equity): Extension Checklist and Elaboration. *JAMA Network Open*; 8(9):e2532512.
15. Sumberg, J., Holland-Szyp, C., Yeboah, T., Oosterom, M., Crossourd, B., & Chamberlin, J. (2024). Young people, Livelihood building and the transformation of African agriculture: A reality check. *Global Food Security*,41,100759
16. Boafo, J., & Yeboah, T. (2024). Understanding ecological grief as a response to climate change-induced loss in Ghana. *Climate and Development*, 1-11.
17. Yeboah, T., & Boafo, J. (2024). 'Side-hustling' in commercial agriculture among young university graduates in Ghana. *Geo: Geography and Environment*, 11(2), e00154.

18. Wadei, B., Fredua Antoh, E., Addison, M., and Yeboah, T. (2024). An Overview of the Obstacles to Gender Equality Processes in Rural and Urban Ghana: A Comparative Analysis. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096241235290>
19. Addison, M., Bonuedi, I., Arhin, A. A., Wadei, B., Owusu-Addo, E. Fredua Antoh, E. and Mensah-Odum, N. (2024). Exploring the impact of agricultural digitalization on smallholder farmers' livelihoods in Ghana, *Heliyon*, Volume 10, Issue 6, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e27541>.
20. Acheampong, P.P., Addison, M., Wongnaa, C.A., Baafi, E. and Opoku, M. (2024). Assessment of impacts of adoption of improved sweet potato varieties in Ghana: accounting for differences in male and female farmers, *Gender, Technology and Development*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09718524.2023.2289499>
21. Owusu-Addo, E., Bennor, D. M., Orkin, A. M., Chan, A. W., Welch, V. A., Treweek, S.,... & Brijnath, B. (2024). Recruitment, retention and reporting of variables related to ethnic diversity in randomised controlled trials: an umbrella review. *BMJ open*, 14(8), e084889
22. Dewidar, O., McHale, G., Al Zubaidi, A., Bondok, M., Abdelrazeq, L., Huang, J., Owusu-Addo, E... & Melendez-Torres, G. J. (2024). Motivations for Investigating Health Inequities in Observational Epidemiology: A Content Analysis of 320 Studies. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 111283.
23. Brijnath, B., Muoio, R., Feldman, P., Ghersi, D., Chan, A. W., Welch, V., ... & Owusu-Addo, E. (2024). "We are not invited": Australian focus group results on how to improve ethnic diversity in trials. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 170, 111366.
24. Teye, J.K., Yeboah, T., and Setrana, M.B. (2024). The Sustainable Development Goals, Migration and Regionalism: evidence from Africa. In the *Elgar Companion to Migration and the Sustainable Goals*. (Pp. 355-375). Edward Elgar Publishing.
25. Kandilige, L. and Yeboah, T. (2024). West African Migration Regimes and the Externalisation of EU Migration Management Policies. In Heck, G., Sevinin, E., Habersky, E., and Sandoval-Garcia, C. (eds). *Making Routes: Mobility and Politics of Migration in the Global South*. (pp. 127-150). American University in Cairo Press.

26. Okyere, S., Boamah, E. F., Asante, F. A., & Yeboah, T. (2023). Children's Work in Ghana: Policies and Politics. In Sumberg, J., and Sebates-Wheeler, R. (eds). *Children's Work in African Agriculture* (pp. 204-232). Bristol University Press.
27. Agyei, K.d., Manteaw, B.O., Nyamekye, A.B., Enu, K.B., Yeboah, T. (2023). Pathways Towards a Circular Economy in Ghana: The Contribution of Waste Transfer Stations and the Informal Waste Collectors in Solid Waste Management. In: Erdiaw-Kwasie, M.O., Alam, G. M. M. (eds) *Circular Economy Strategies and the UN Sustainable Development Goals Series*. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-3083-8_18
28. Owusu-Addo, E., Bennor, D. M., Orkin, A. M., Chan, A. W., Welch, V. A., Treweek, S., ... & Brijnath, B. (2024). Recruitment, retention and reporting of variables related to ethnic diversity in randomised controlled trials: an umbrella review. *BMJ open*, 14(8), e084889.
29. Dewidar, O., McHale, G., Al Zubaidi, A., Bondok, M., Abdelrazeq, L., Huang, J., Owusu Addo, E... & Melendez-Torres, G. J. (2024). Motivations for Investigating Health Inequities in Observational Epidemiology: A Content Analysis of 320 Studies. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 111283.
30. Brijnath, B., Muoio, R., Feldman, P., Ghersi, D., Chan, A. W., Welch, V., ... & Owusu Addo, E. (2024). "We are not invited": Australian focus group results on how to improve ethnic diversity in trials. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 170, 111366
31. Mensah-Odum, N., Sarfo-Mensah, P., & Fredua-Antoh, E. (2025). Legal and Regulatory Evidence on Mining in Ghana Forest Reserves: A Qualitative Perspective on the Atewa Range Forest Reserve. *European Journal of Applied Sciences*,13(03).421-434.
32. Sumberg, J., Holland-Szyp, C., Yeboah, T., Oosterom, M., Crossourd, B., & Chamberlin, J. (2024). Young people, Livelihood building and the transformation of African agriculture: A reality check. *Global Food Security*,41,100759
33. Boafo, J., & Yeboah, T. (2024). Understanding ecological grief as a response to climate change-induced loss in Ghana. *Climate and Development*, 1-11.
34. Yeboah, T., & Boafo, J. (2024). 'Side-hustling' in commercial agriculture among young university graduates in Ghana. *Geo: Geography and Environment*, 11(2), e00154.

35. Wadei, B., Fredua Antoh, E., Addison, M., and Yeboah, T. (2024). An Overview of the Obstacles to Gender Equality Processes in Rural and Urban Ghana: A Comparative Analysis. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096241235290>
36. Latif Apaassongo Ibrahim & Aidoo Robert & Osei Mensah James, 2024. "City governance, urban livelihoods, and food security: insights from street food trade in Kumasi, Ghana," *Food Security: The Science, Sociology and Economics of Food Production and Access to Food*, Springer;The International Society for Plant Pathology, vol. 16(5), pages 1081-1098.

Book Chapters:

1. Lambon-Quayefio, M. Yeboah, T., Owoo, N.O Petreski, M., Asiedu, E., Berko, E., Zakaria, M., Koranchie, C. and Agyemang, Y.N (2025). Empirical Review of Youth Employment Programs in Ghana In Mabugu, R.E and Ronconi, L (eds) *Youth Employment 4 Programmes in Africa*. Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group
2. Teye, J.K., Yeboah, T., and Setrana, M.B. (2024). The Sustainable Development Goals, Migration and Regionalism: evidence from Africa. In the *Elgar Companion to Migration and the Sustainable Goals*. (Pp. 355-375). Edward Elgar Publishing.
3. Kandilige, L. and Yeboah, T. (2024). West African Migration Regimes and the Externalisation of EU Migration Management Policies. In Heck, G., Sevinin, E., Habersky, E, and Sandoval-Garcia., C. (eds). *Making Routes: Mobility and Politics of Migration in the Global South*. (pp. 127-150). American University in Cairo Press.
4. Lambon-Quayefio, M. Yeboah, T., Owoo, N.O Petreski, M., Asiedu, E., Berko, E., Zakaria, M., Koranchie, C. and Agyemang, Y.N (2025). Empirical Review of Youth Employment Programs in Ghana In Mabugu, R.E and Ronconi, L (eds) *Youth Employment 4 Programmes in Africa*. Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group
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6. Kandilige, L. and Yeboah, T. (2024). West African Migration Regimes and the Externalisation of EU Migration Management Policies. In Heck, G., Sevinin, E., Habersky, E, and Sandoval-Garcia., C. (eds). *Making Routes: Mobility and*

Politics of Migration in the Global South. (pp. 127-150). American University in Cairo Press.

Conferences, Workshops and Seminars

IRDIS organised training workshops to train enumerators to conduct field activities under different projects during the period under review. In addition, members and staff of IRDIS attended at least twelve (12) external workshops, seminars and conferences during the period under review. Conferences attended by staff include:

1. Dr Bernice Wadei participated in the International Conference on “Gender and Development: Debates for a Changing World”, June 19-20, 2025, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK.
2. Dr. (Mrs.) Monica Addison participated in the international conference: 29th International Consortium on Applied Bioeconomy Research (ICABR), dubbed: Applied Bioeconomy Research Circular Bioeconomy & Systems of Sustainability, July 8-11, 2025, Saskatoon, SK, Canada.
3. Latif Apaassongo Ibrahim participated in the 10th Annual Agriculture, Nutrition & Health (ANH) Academy Week conference (Hybrid), Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre (JNICC), June 16-26, 2025, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Workshops and Seminars attended by staff include:

1. Dr. Thomas Yeboah participated in project inception workshop for the West African Ecosystem Scorecard assessment project organised in Brighton, Sussex UK in July 2025
2. Dr. Thomas Yeboah participated in In-Person Expert Perception Survey Design Workshop organised as part of the West African Scorecard Assessment Project in Accra, Ghana in September 2025
3. Dr. Thomas Yeboah participated in Youth Futures Policy: Enhancing Access to Dignified and Fulfilling Work for the Youth in Ghana organised by AFIDEP on 25th September 2025 at the African Regent Hotel in Accra.
4. Dr. Albert Arhin participated in Dialogue on Ghana’s Readiness for EU CSDDD in Accra organized by International Trade Centre

5. Dr. Albert Arhin participated in Cocoa Pricing Mechanisms Workshop in Accra, D'Ivoire and Sierra Leone organized by Trust Africa
6. Dr. Albert Arhin participated in Workshop on Standard Operating Procedures on Child Labour Monitoring in Accra organized by GIZ
7. Dr. Albert Arhin participated in workshop on the future of cocoa in Harvard University, USA
8. Dr. Albert Arhin participated in workshop on Toward a Green Economy Observatory for Africa (GEO-Africa) in Kenya by Africa Research Institute Network (ARIN)
9. Dr. Latif Apaassongo Ibrahim participated in workshop on Summer School on "Development Methodologies" by The African Center for Advanced Studies in Management (CESAG) in partnership with the French Development Agency (AFD), the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) and the Fund for Innovation in Development (FID).

Technical Reports

The following technical reports and working papers resulting from the various assignments undertaken by the Institute were produced during the year under review.

1. Arhin, A., Addison, M., Tetteh, R. O., & Mensah-Odum, N. (2025). *Baseline study on Heat, health, and harvests: Understanding the impacts of climate change on cocoa farmers' production, health and livelihoods in Ghana*. Prepared by IRDIS, KNUST for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University
2. Arhin, A., Addison, M., Tetteh, R. O., & Mensah-Odum, N. (2025). *Endline study on Heat, health, and harvests: Understanding the impacts of climate change on cocoa farmers' production, health and livelihoods in Ghana*. Prepared by IRDIS, KNUST for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University
3. Arhin, A.A., Addison, M., Bonuedi, I., Agbenyega, O., Wadei., Mensah-Odum, N. and Yeboah, T. (2024). *Endline of the Gender-Transformative Cash Transfer Pilot - A Quantitative Study*. Prepared by IRDIS, KNUST, for the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI)
4. Owusu-Addo, E., Bonuedi, I., Wadei, B., Yeboah, T., Mensah-Odum, N. (2025) Evaluation of Helen Keller International Projects on Improving Nutrition and Food Security in Côte d'Ivoire. Prepared by **IRDIS**, KNUST for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, **USA**.

5. Owusu-Addo E., Wadei B., Yeboah T., Bonuedi I., Mensah-Odum N., (2025). Evaluation of Member Food Production Project in Ghana and Nigeria. Prepared by IRDIS, KNUST for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, USA.
6. Yeboah T., Bonuedi, I., Addison, M., Arhin A., Wadei B., Mensah-Odum, N., Tetteh, R. (2025). *Baseline Study for the Accelerating Change Through Innovation in Agriculture Technical with Vocational Education*. Prepared by Institute for Rural Development and Innovation Studies, KNUST for World University of Services Canada
7. Arhin, A.A., Addison, M. Wadei, B., Agbenyega, O., and Bonuedi, I., (2024). *Endline evaluation of the Gender-Transformative Cash Transfer Pilot- A Qualitative Study*. Prepared by IRDIS, KNUST, for the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), Switzerland
8. Arhin, A.A., Addison, M., Bonuedi, I. and Mensah-Odum (2024). *Baseline Study on Heat, health, and harvests: Understanding the impacts of climate change on cocoa farmers' production, health and livelihoods in Ghana*. Prepared by IRDIS, KNUST, for the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), Switzerland



EDUCATION AND TRAINING



ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

In the 2024/2025 academic year, IRDIS made significant strides in teaching and supervision of student thesis/ project work. The Institute also initiated the development of innovative PhD/MPhil programmes. These programmes aim to advance research and training in critical areas of rural and community development. In addition, IRDIS staff contributed to teaching across KNUST, delivering 31 courses in various departments. The Institute also actively engaged in student mentorship, providing supervision for 5 PhD students, 15 MSc students, and 20 undergraduate students, thereby strengthening research capacity and academic excellence.

THE YOUNG CONSULTANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (YCDP)

In the year under review, IRDIS engaged one master's graduate on its YCDP, aimed to introduce graduates who are early professionals, with an interest or qualification in development to research-

driven consulting in the rural and international development sectors. The programme aligns with the Vice-Chancellor's mission of entrepreneurship training and is geared towards promoting research-based and consulting entrepreneurship. Recent graduates (MSc., MPhil or PhD) from KNUST are the people this programme targets. The programme offers graduates/early-career professionals the opportunity to develop and refine their technical skills and provide experience across the key thematic areas of rural/international development within IRDIS portfolios for a period of one year.

SHORT COURSE DEVELOPED AND MOUNTED

In the 2024/2025 academic year, the Institute mounted one (1) short course to provide capacity building for diverse stakeholders, including government officials, civil society, NGOs, private sector actors, students, and academics. IRDIS organized a short course on Fundamentals of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion. A total of 17 participants, comprising NGO workers, government, civil society, academics, and students, participated in this short course.

TEMPORAL EMPLOYMENT FOR UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES

During the year under review, IRDIS implemented a critical strategy for both operational efficiency and human resource development. The institute engaged a total of 120 unemployed graduates, integrating them directly into the execution of various commissioned research and evaluation studies. This initiative served a dual purpose: it provided vital, albeit temporary, employment opportunities, offering a crucial lifeline to a significant number of job-seeking university graduates. More substantially, the institute contributed significantly to building their professional capacity and equipping them with a suite of highly sought-after, employable skills. Through hands-on involvement in real-world projects, these graduates gained practical expertise in advanced research methodologies, rigorous evaluation techniques, and essential data analytics, positioning them strongly for future careers in the development and academic sectors.

SERVICE TO UNIVERSITY, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES

IRDIS staff continued to serve as Editorial Board members and reviewers for local and International Journals. Senior members played the roles of Principal Investigators, Coordinators, Moderators, and Members of Committees, Boards, and as technical

consultants/advisors to both National and International Institutes. Staff also served on various KNUST boards and committees, professional associations, and other national and corporate organization boards.

University-Community Engagement

As part of the Institute's community engagement to deepen the University's relationship with its surrounding communities, IRDIS staff commenced a tracer study on the beneficiaries of the University's specialized admission reserved for surrounding communities as part of its social responsibility. The study is to assess the impact of KNUST's special admission protocol that offers opportunities to beneficiaries. The aim is to evaluate educational, social, and economic outcomes of the beneficiaries as well as the perceptions and experiences of community leaders and university staff. The Institute has finalized research protocols for field data collection. So far, 276 protocol beneficiaries have been identified with the cooperation of the Directorate of Students Affairs.

National and International Community Engagement activities

Academic staff continued to serve as Editorial Board members and reviewers of International Journals. Senior members play the roles of Principal Investigators, Coordinators, Moderators, and Members of Committees, Boards, and as technical

consultants/advisors to both National and International Institutes. Staff also served on various KNUST boards and committees, professional associations, and other national and corporate organization boards. In the year under review, the staff of IRDIS engaged in several community engagement activities within KNUST and its immediate environments, nationally and internationally.

National community engagement Activities

Nana Prof. S. E. Edusah has served as a Commissioner of the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) since 2016 and contributed to the preparation of the following National documents:

- i. The Medium-Term Development Plan: The Agenda for Jobs II, and
- ii. Vision 2057 - Long-Term National Development Perspective Framework

Prof. Mrs. Ernestina Fredua Antoh served as a governing council member of the:

- ✓ University of Cape Coast, 2017 to 2021
- ✓ Council Representative on UCC Development Committee, 2018 to 2021
- ✓ University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA) 2021 to 2024

Dr. Albert A. Arhin contributed to the following national assignments:

- ✓ Member of a Technical Group working with cocoa sector stakeholders to prepare a cocoa-sector action plan for the readiness of Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive
- ✓ Member of Technical Advisor working with COCOBOD to prepare the cocoa-sector child labour monitoring system in Ghana
- ✓ Member of Technical Advisor for Oxfam on its national research on cocoa pricing pathways for co-Prospective Framework for farmers

International Community Engagement Activities

- ✓ **Dr. (Mrs.) Monica Addison** has been a subject Editor for Social Sciences & Humanities Open, an Elsevier journal, since October 01, 2024.
- ✓ **Prof. Ebenezer Owusu-Addo** is an Editorial Board member of the International Journal of Health Promotion and Education.

Prof. Albert A. Arhin contributed to the following international assignments:

- ✓ Member of a Global Research Team working on Climate Change Adaptation in West Africa: Strategies, Initiatives, Actions, and Pathways. Coordinated by African Policy Research Institute
- ✓ Member of Trust Africa's Regional Team working on Assessing Cocoa

Pricing Mechanisms and Cost of Production Across Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone.

Dr. Thomas Yeboah contributed to the following international assignments:

- ✓ Member of expert advisory group for the Status of Rural Youth in Agrifood Systems Report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome, Italy

Prof. Ebenezer Owusu-Addo contributed to the following global research.

- ✓ Global Research Team Working on the STROBE (STrengthening the Reporting of OBServational studies in Epidemiology) Equity Extension (2022 - 2026)
- ✓ Global Research Team Working on Reporting Extension of Consort and Spirit for Inclusion, Diversity, Ethnicity, and Race – RECONSIDER (2022 - 2025)

INSTITUTIONAL RESTRUCTURING AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

CONVERSION OF BIRD INTO AN INSTITUTE

During the years under review, the University Council approved the conversion of BIRD into the Institute for Rural Development and Innovation Studies (IRDIS). The elevation to an Institute status has brought several strategic benefits, such as enhancement in its capacity, visibility, and impact. The institute's ability to address societal challenges and influence national policy and practice is key to its strategic position to contribute to national development.

CONSTRUCTION OF IRDIS OFFICE COMPLEX

During the reporting period, IRDIS completed the procurement process for the construction of the office complex. A sod cutting ceremony was done by the Chancellor of the university in November 2024. Phase 1 (i.e., structural completion) of the construction of the office complex was completed in October 2025.



MEDIA PROFILE AND VISIBILITY



In the 2024/2025 academic year, IRDIS significantly enhanced its media profile and visibility across multiple platforms. The Institute received wide coverage for the announcement of BIRD's transformation from a center into IRDIS. This milestone was highlighted in both local and national media, reflecting the Institute's growing prominence within and beyond the University. The institute also continued to strengthen its digital presence through consistent updates on the institute's website, the College, and KNUST portals, while expanding its reach on Facebook and Twitter. Notably, this growth in social media followers was achieved without the use of sponsored advertisements, demonstrating the Institute's organic engagement and outreach efforts. Collectively, these efforts reinforced the Institute's visibility, credibility, and influence in academic and public spheres.



FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST OCTOBER 2025

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31st Oct 2025		
Income	GHC (2025)	GHC (2024)
Contract, Grants, and Commissioned Projects	8,343,512.29	6,769,666.87
Vehicle Income	316,185.89	371,696.30
Interest Income	178,105.18	86,043.45
Short Courses/ Others	44,568.50	130,820.00
Total Income	8,882,371.86	7,358,226.62
Expenses		
Project Cost	4,533,278.77	3,088,354.40
Research Support	296,574.86	0
Staff Benefits	2,585,106.40	1,267,452.29
Operational Expenses	304,052.72	592,165.07
Others	162,660.88	1,253,250.13
Total Expense	7,881,673.63	6,201,221.89
Surplus/Deficit	1,000,698.23	1,157,004.73
Construction of Office Building	8,439,300.99	
Bank Balances		
GCB Cedis	GHC 489,422.68	
GCB Euro	€ 16,488.11	
GCB Dollar	\$ 90,919.25	
Fixed Deposit	GHC 1,541,136.99	

COLLABORATIONS



INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

IRDIS worked with the following international organizations:

1. Winrock International
2. GIZ (Germany)
3. Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies, Erasmus University
4. UNFPA
5. UNICEF
6. PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
7. University of Iowa, USA
8. USDA, Washington Office
9. University of Rhode Island, USA
10. National Ageing Research Institute, Australia
11. INTRAC, UK
12. International Centre for Evaluation and Development (ICED)

LOCAL COLLABORATIONS

1. Ministry of Local Government Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs (MLGCRA)
2. Sekyere Afram Plains District Assembly
3. Sene East District Assembly



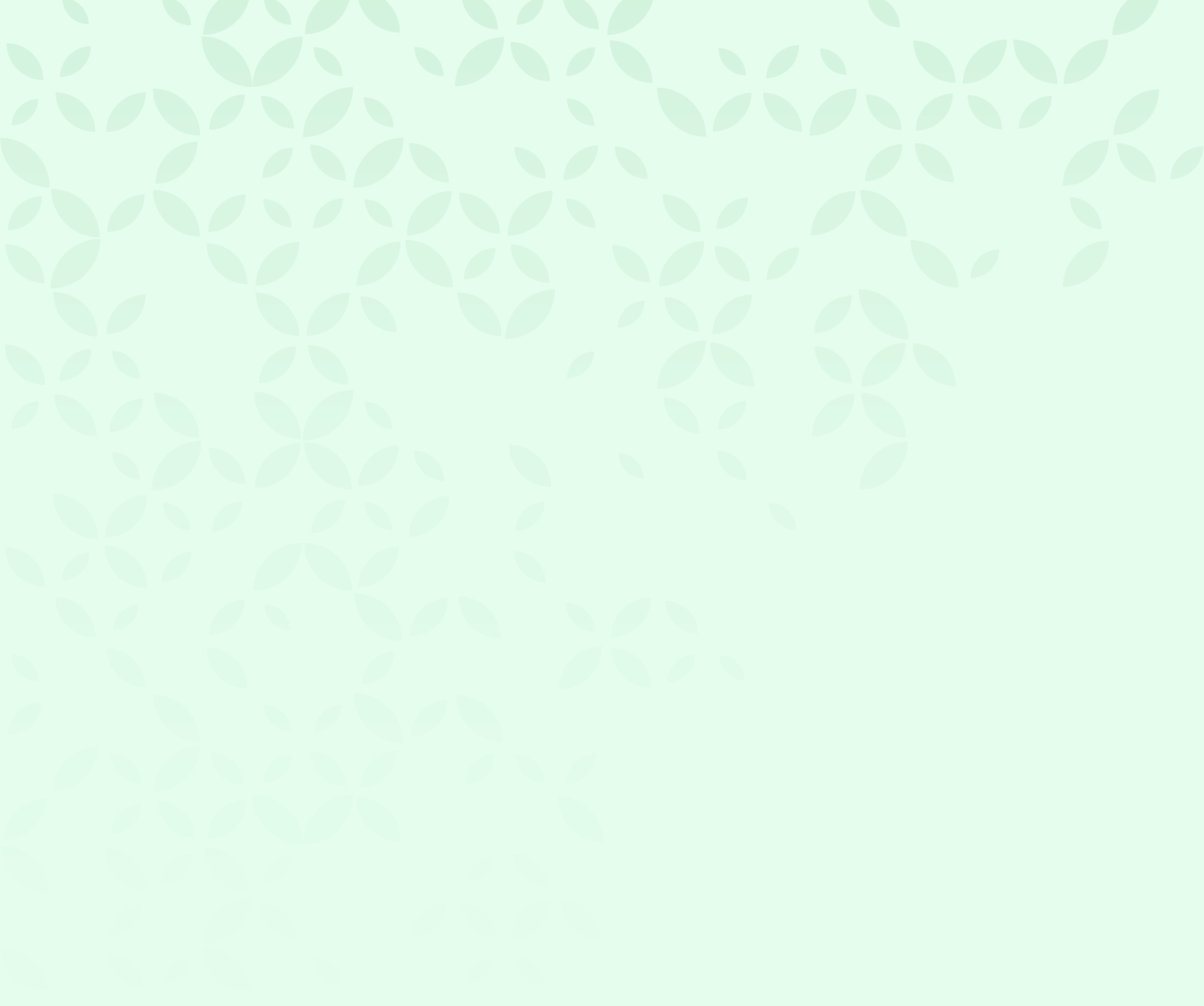


HOW YOU CAN HELP

Rural development, as it is proceeding now in Ghana, is not likely to meet the socioeconomic Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. More pragmatic and sustained efforts are required to promote sustainable and inclusive rural development in Ghana. IRDIS is committed to this agenda through our research, teaching, and outreach programmes focused upon improving the wellbeing and livelihoods of rural people. There are many ways you can get involved and make a difference.

For Further Information on how you can support IRDIS-KNUST, please call **+233 (0) 32243501**





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