ANNUAL REPORT

2025

The Reform Window:

Groundwork for democratic renewal *in a year of transition*

CDD-GHANA

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About CDD-Ghana

Established in 1998, the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) is an independent, not-for-profit think-and-do tank. We work through research, policy engagement, thought leadership, civic dialogue, and partnerships to promote and strengthen democracy, good governance, and inclusive development in Ghana and across Africa.

As a founding Core Partner and Ghana National Partner of Afrobarometer, CDD-Ghana also serves as the convener and secretariat for the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), the West Africa Election Observers Network (WAEON), and the West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network (WADEMOS).

OUR VISION

A peaceful, well-governed democratic state and society in Ghana and other parts of Africa that enhances the liberties, opportunities, and well-being of its people.

OUR MISSION

To promote and deepen democratic consolidation, good governance, and inclusive growth and development.

OUR VALUES

Independence • Integrity • Inclusiveness • Excellence

Our Theory of Change

If Ghanaians and Africans are informed, active, and engaged; if electoral systems are credible and politics are competitive; if the rule of law and equal justice for all are respected; if institutions are effective, transparent, and accountable; and if political, social, and economic processes are inclusive — then we will see peaceful, well-governed democratic states and societies that enhance the liberties, opportunities, and well-being of their peoples.

Where We Work: Our Thematic Areas

CDD-Ghana's work is organized around five thematic areas. Together they cover the full span of what it takes to build and sustain a democracy, from how elections are run to how public money is managed, how justice reaches communities, and how citizens organize to be heard.

Political and Constitutional Governance

Securing the integrity and credibility of the institutions and processes of democratic representation and accountability, from election management to citizens' access to and shaping of political decisions at the local and national levels. Covers elections and election observation, election management accountability, decentralization and local governance, legislative engagement, political parties and campaigns, and the independent constitutional commissions.

Economic and Corporate Governance

Improving the transparency, integrity, and effectiveness of government management of public assets, engagement with the business sector, and regulation of private economic activity. Covers state-owned enterprises, natural resource and extractive governance, anticorruption and value for money, private sector development, public financial management, regulatory bodies, and public sector reform.

Justice, Peace and Security

Strengthening the responsiveness, accountability, and quality of justice and security services for local communities and marginalized groups, especially in fragile settings. This includes access to justice, sentencing and prison reform, judicial accountability, policing and law enforcement, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and administrative justice.

Social Inclusion and Equity

Building the political, economic, and social power of women, youth, rural communities, and other disadvantaged groups by expanding their access to meaningful economic activity and governance and by making public services and social protection more equitable and responsive. Covers gender equity and women's empowerment, social protection, social accountability, youth engagement, disability rights, migrant and extractive communities, refugees, and sustainable rural livelihoods.

Civil Society and Media

Protecting and expanding space for civic action and using CDD-Ghana's convening power to increase the representation and impact of civil society and the media in public governance. This includes the CSO regulatory environment, think tanks, professional and occupational groups, media, disability rights, and community-based organization capacity building.

These five areas are CDD-Ghana's standing mandate. The five pillars in this year's Program Highlights are how we focused that mandate against the specific pressures of 2025.

From the Board Chair



The year 2025 marked an important milestone in Ghana's democratic journey, with the peaceful transfer of power after the 2024 general elections. Beyond reaffirming the strength of Ghana's democratic tradition, the transition also raised public expectations for accountable leadership, institutional reform, and responsive governance.

At the continental level, democratic governance continued to face challenges. Across several African countries, shrinking civic space, contested electoral integrity, human rights abuses, unconstitutional changes of government, the manipulation of constitutions to extend presidential terms, and weakened regional responses underscored the fragility of democratic gains and the need for sustained monitoring and coordinated action.

In this context, CDD-Ghana pursued its work under the theme “The Reform Window,” treating 2025 as a year to lay the groundwork for democratic renewal. Throughout the year, our efforts remained focused on strengthening rule-of-law institutions, safeguarding democratic norms, and ensuring that governance reforms remain grounded in citizens' expectations and aspirations.

As a leading civil society organization in Ghana, we recognize that peaceful elections alone cannot measure democratic progress. Democratic progress must also be reflected in the strength of institutions, the protection of rights, public confidence in governance, and citizens' ability to participate meaningfully in national development.

On behalf of the board, I thank our executive management team and staff for their commitment and resilience throughout a demanding period. I also express our gratitude to our donors, development partners, state institutions, collaborators, and the citizens whose continued support makes our work possible.

Professor Audrey Gadzekpo

SIGNED

ASG

Board Chairperson, CDD-Ghana

Executive Director's Reflection



Throughout 2025, CDD-Ghana operated in an evolving democratic environment shaped by Ghana's political transition and a broader decline in democracy across the continent. The return of President John Mahama to office, with a commitment to reset politics, governance, and the economy, raised public expectations for institutional accountability and reforms that could deliver tangible improvements in citizens' lives.

As the first year of a new government, 2025 opened a rare window for structural reform. The Center renewed its advocacy for outstanding governance reforms, including constitutional, electoral, political financing, local government, and State-Owned Enterprise reforms, as well as the protection of minority rights. These priorities shaped both our strategic engagements and our program implementation.

We remained focused on strengthening democratic governance through policy engagement, civic participation, research, advocacy, and partnerships with state and non-state actors. At the same time, we continued to improve operational efficiency through digitization, clearer roles and processes, and stronger financial sustainability.

> **A SEAT AT THE REFORM TABLE**
>
> Our staff were drafted onto the very platforms shaping Ghana's reset agenda — including the Chair of the Constitution Review Committee, membership of the National Anti-Corruption Plan drafting committee, the local government committee, and the national development planning committee.

At the regional level, through our International Desk and WADEMOS, we advocated for substantive ECOWAS reforms and for a formal Post-Exit Framework for ECOWAS and the Alliance of Sahel States, while monitoring the democratic implications of multiple foreign powers operating in West Africa and the Sahel.

Our achievements were made possible by our staff's dedication, our Board's guidance, and the continued confidence of our donors and partners. As we move forward, we remain committed to strengthening institutions, expanding civic engagement, and supporting accountable, inclusive governance that responds to citizens' needs.

Prof. H. Kwasi Prempeh



Executive Director, CDD-Ghana

Our Board Members & Executive Committee



Prof. Audrey Gadzekpo
Board Chair



Dr. Clara Beeri Kasser-Tee
Vice Chair



Mr. James Sraha
Board Secretary



Prof. E. Gyimah-Boadi
Member



Prof. Baffour Agyeman-Duah
Member



Mrs. Sadia Chinery-Hesse
Member



Mr. Felix Biga
Member

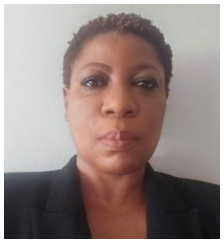


Mr. Kweku Awortwi
Member

Executive Committee



H. Kwasi Prempeh
Executive Director



Edem Selormey, PhD
Director, Research & KM



Kojo, P. Asante, PhD
Director, Partnerships & Policy Eng.



Ophelia Abramu
Director, Finance & Grants



Frederick Adu-Gyamfi
Director, Programs & Operations

The Year in Context

THE REFORM WINDOW

2025 began with a defining moment for democratic governance in Ghana and across Africa. Ghana entered a new political era following a historic electoral transition, even as democratic governance across the region faced mounting pressures that tested institutional resilience, civic freedoms, and public trust.

A Political Turning Point

Ghana ushered in 2025 with its fourth democratic transfer of power between parties. The National Democratic Congress's landslide victory in the 2024 elections was more than an electoral outcome; it signaled that Ghanaians were demanding substantial change. The new administration assumed office with a reform agenda spanning constitutional review, institutional strengthening, economic recovery, and accountability — framed as a reset of Ghana's politics and economy. Public expectations were high, and the window for reform was open.

A Continent Under Strain

Beyond Ghana's borders, democratic strain deepened across West Africa. Shrinking civic space, human rights abuses, the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government, electoral integrity challenges, and weakened regional responses continued to threaten democratic progress. These were not distant concerns; they shaped the environment in which CDD-Ghana's regional engagement and democratic solidarity work took place.

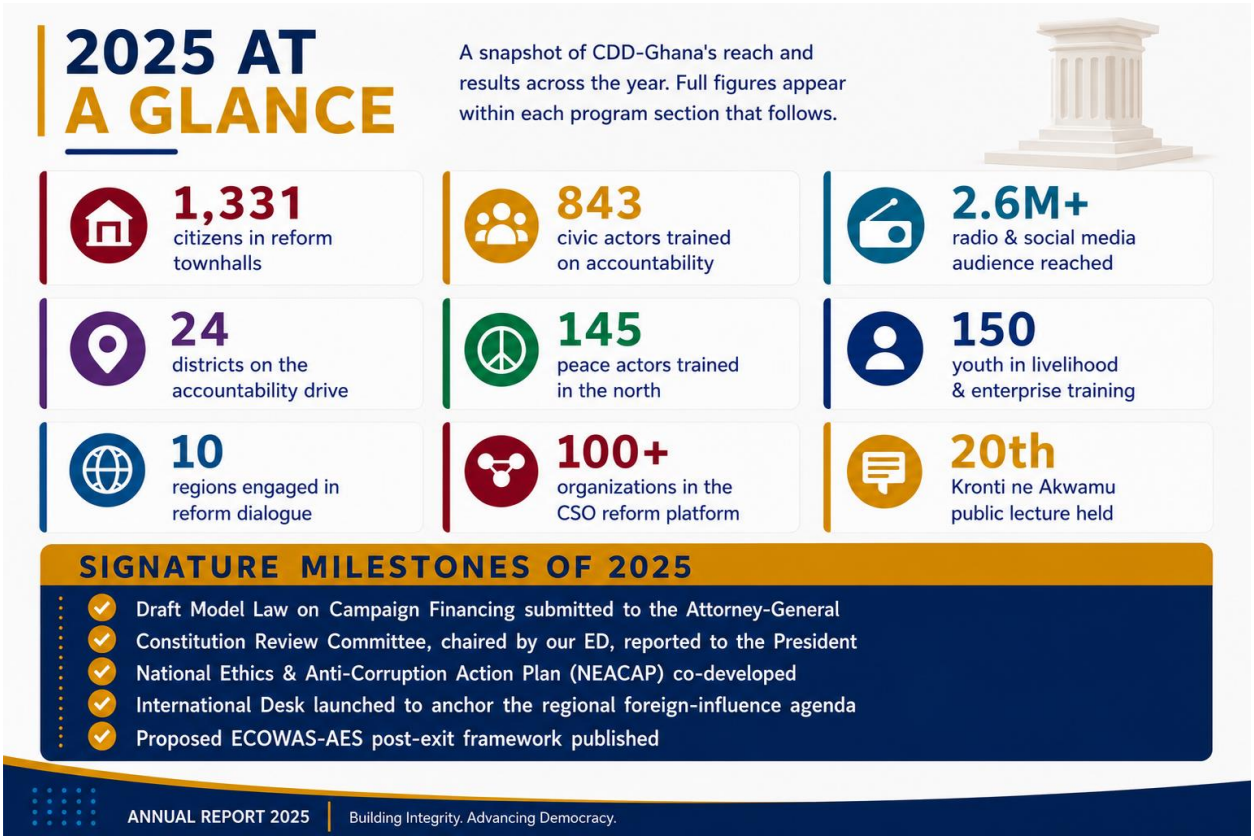
Groundwork for Transformation

Amid both realities — national opportunity and continental pressure — CDD-Ghana anchored its 2025 strategy in a clear purpose: to work within the reform window at home while sustaining democratic solidarity across the region, laying the groundwork now for the transformation that must follow. Our work focused on strengthening democratic institutions, safeguarding democratic norms, promoting accountable governance, and ensuring that reform remained grounded in citizens' substantive participation.

'Se Wo Suban' is the primary Adinkra symbol for transformation.

2025 at a Glance

A snapshot of CDD-Ghana's reach and results across the year. Detailed figures appear within each program section that follows.



Highlights in 2025

A quick tour of the year before the deep dives. These are some of the moments that captured the essence of our work in 2025, grouped by pillar. The sections that follow, from page 12, tell the fuller story behind each.

Securing Stability and Resilient Communities

- Baseline studies and market-needs assessments across 15 districts in the Upper East, Upper West, and North East under the GCERF-funded "Bridging the Gap" project.
- Town halls connected citizens directly with the police, immigration, health service, National Identification Authority, and district assemblies, many for the first time.
- Community actors trained in early-warning detection, mediation, and peace messaging, alongside livelihood training in livestock, financial literacy, and enterprise.
- A WADEMOS-facilitated Sahel working group opened engagement with the African Union Chair on Mali and Burkina Faso.

Driving Governance Reform and Political Accountability

- A 2024 Post-Election Conference was held in Koforidua with the National Peace Council, WANEP, and UNDP; President Mahama delivered closing remarks.
- Town halls across 10 regions reached 1,331 citizens, with special sessions for women, youth, persons with disabilities, and pensioners.
- A draft Model Law on Campaign Financing was submitted to the Attorney-General, moving political-financing reform from advocacy to legislation.
- CDD-Ghana supported a political-financing transparency resolution at the 11th UNCAC Conference of States Parties in Doha.

Advancing Accountability and Combating Corruption

- Anti-corruption radio messaging across 16 districts reached an estimated 1.18 million people; 843 civic actors were trained across 24 districts.
- CDD-Ghana was appointed to the Presidential Committee that produced the National Ethics and Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NEACAP).
- An expert review of the 2022 Conduct of Public Officers (COPO) Bill was conducted, and the report was submitted to the Attorney-General.
- The development of a State-owned Enterprise (SOE) citizens scorecard was agreed upon in principle with the State Interests and Governance Authority (SIGA).

Producing Evidence to Shape Policy and Reform

- Three flagship papers published under the Brookings-linked "Strengthening Democracy in Africa" project.
- Ghana's Afrobarometer Round 10 Survey major activities were concluded, with a donor briefing hosted at the Swiss ambassador's residence.
- Three new multi-year research anchors launched: Democratic Resilience (IDRC), Evidence for Development, and the Ghana Cities Monitor.
- Democracy Dialogues, a CDD-Ghana flagship audio podcast aimed at bridging the gap between governance and sustainable development, launched in January 2025, with 15 episodes recorded and published.
- Youth Unplugged, a youth-led podcast, launched in October with six episodes recorded and published.

Strengthening Regional Democratic Solidarity

- The International Desk launched in April 2025 to coordinate the Center's regional foreign-influence work.
- Five country studies commissioned on the roles of the Gulf States, China, Russia, and Turkey in African democratization and development.
- A high-level conference in Dakar marked ECOWAS's 50th anniversary, and a Post-Exit Framework document for ECOWAS–AES relations was developed
- An MoU was signed, and a joint conference was organized on the margins of the G-20 meeting in Johannesburg with the Africa Center for the Study of the United States at the University of the Witwatersrand.

2025 in Motion: Quarter by Quarter

The pillar highlights on the previous pages show what we did; this page shows when. Four quarters, one direction of travel.

Q1
JAN–MAR

- A new government takes office; CDD-Ghana honors invitations to the presidential inauguration and the swearing-in of MPs.
- 14 citizens' townhalls held across 12 regions of Ghana on the new NDC government reform proposals (February and March)
- CDD launches its first podcast, 'Democracy Dialogues,' with a conversation with new female parliamentarians and the recently passed Affirmative Action law (January 30)

Q2
APR–JUN

- The International Desk launched with a high-level convening on foreign powers in West and Central Africa (April).
- The Southern-Led Democratic Resilience project holds its inception meeting in Accra (April); the T-20 High-Level Dialogue convenes in Pretoria (April).
- IDRC approves the project's first technical report and work plan (June).

Q3
JUL–SEP

- The E2A Conference on participatory governance convenes at the University of Ghana (July), with CDD-Ghana on the steering committee.
- The Presidential working group drafting the National Ethics and Anti-Corruption Action Plan is working (July–August).
- CODEO deploys observers for the Akwatia constituency by-election (September).

Q4
OCT–DEC

- Youth Unplugged, the Center's youth-led podcast under the Southern Approaches to Democratic Resilience project, launches (October).
- The Brookings dissemination workshop (November), the 20th 'Kronti ne Akwamu' lecture, and the Afrobarometer donor briefing at the Swiss ambassador's residence (November).
- The Constitution Review Committee submits its summary recommendations to the President and Citizens Platform (November - December).

Program Highlights

Our theme for the year — a reform window opened by transition — needed more than a slogan to hold it together. It needed a structure. So we organized the year's work around five pillars, each a distinct part of how CDD-Ghana put the window to work while democracy across the region remained under strain. The pillars are not silos. They overlap and reinforce one another, which is why a single project often appears in more than one place. But naming them separately clarifies our aims and honestly reflects our achievements.

Each pillar below opens the program section that bears its name, and the figures that follow each section are drawn directly from that year's work.

I. **Securing Stability and Resilient Communities.** Peace is not merely the absence of violence. This pillar treats security as built on trust between citizens and the state, inclusive governance, and real economic opportunity. Most of the work focuses on the northern regions, where those foundations are under the most strain.

II. **Driving Governance Reform and Political Accountability.** Ghana's transition reopened long-standing questions about how the country is governed. This pillar covers the reforms we have advocated for years, from campaign and party financing to local government and the constitution itself, and the work of moving them from advocacy to actual policy action while the reform window is still open.

III. **Advancing Accountability and Combating Corruption.** Accountability works best when citizens can see and use it, not when it remains locked inside institutions. This pillar focuses on shifting corruption-fighting from a top-down exercise to a participatory one, both in communities across the country and at the national level, where the rules are written.

IV. **Producing Evidence to Shape Policy and Reform.** As a think-and-do tank, our credibility rests on the quality of the evidence we produce. This pillar encompasses the research that informs everything else we do, from Afrobarometer surveys to multi-year studies of democratic resilience, all aimed at keeping policy debates grounded in what Ghanaians actually experience.

V. **Strengthening Regional Democratic Solidarity.** Ghana's democracy does not exist in isolation, nor does its fragility. This pillar extends our work beyond the border, tracking the foreign powers now active across West Africa and the Sahel and helping build the regional coalitions that a weakened ECOWAS still needs.

I. Securing Stability and Resilient Communities

In 2025, Ghana stood at an important crossroads. The country remained largely stable, but underlying pressures in the northern regions revealed how fragile that stability could be. Recurring chieftaincy disputes, farmer-herder tensions, the protracted Bawku conflict in the Upper East Region, and the risk of violent extremist spill over from the Sahel posed risks to communities and the nation alike. Under its Justice, Peace, and Security pillar, led by the Security Governance Team, CDD-Ghana treated security not as the mere absence of violence but as a product of trust between citizens and the state, inclusive governance, and economic opportunity. The Center's evidence-based approach combined community resilience, institutional trust-building, economic inclusion, and the promotion of human rights within a human-security philosophy.

> ***"Security is not the mere absence of violence — it is trust between citizens and the state, inclusive governance, and real economic opportunity."***



A Field Research Assistant (r) administering a questionnaire to a resident during the baseline survey exercise in the North-East Region

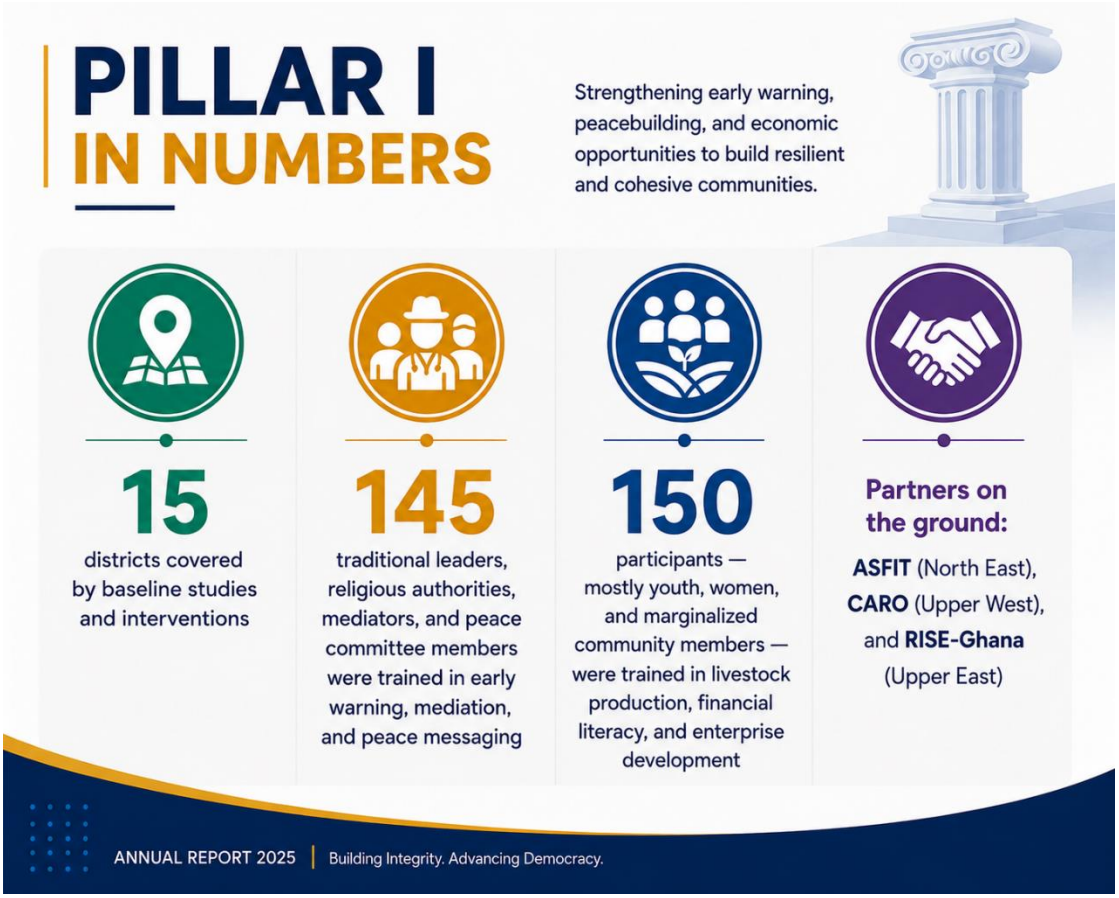
In the first quarter of the year, comprehensive baseline studies and market needs assessments for the GCERF-funded "Bridging the Gap: Promoting Socio-economic Inclusion, Social Cohesion, and Peacebuilding for Vulnerable Communities" project, conducted across 15 districts in the Upper East, Upper West, and North East

Regions, revealed a layered picture of vulnerability: households exposed to economic shocks, limited access to productive assets, and moderate yet fragile social cohesion in conflict-prone areas. The studies showed that the drivers of insecurity were not only political or ideological but also economic and social.

Vulnerability Dimension	Key Finding
Economic stability	High exposure to shocks; limited livelihoods
Youth employment	Significant unemployment and underemployment
Social cohesion	Moderate, but fragile in conflict-prone areas
Trust in institutions	Low in marginalized communities (e.g., Fulbe)
Extremism risk	Indirect but increasing due to Sahel dynamics

The response was deliberately multidimensional. Town hall engagements brought citizens into direct dialogue with public service providers — the Ghana Police Service, the Ghana Immigration Service, the Ghana Health Service, the National Identification Authority, and District Assemblies — often for the first time. Across the 15 districts, the project strengthened local peace infrastructure by training community-level actors in early-warning detection, mediation, and peace messaging. At the same time, the project addressed economic exclusion, a persistent driver of insecurity, head-on through livelihood training in livestock production, financial literacy, and enterprise development. Human rights awareness and constitutional education ran throughout: evaluation data showed that many participants — including law-enforcement personnel, students, and religious leaders — had never received such training before, and the engagements grounded them in the primacy of the 1992 Constitution as the framework for both state authority and citizen conduct. This dual approach strengthened both the demand and supply sides of accountability.

Our security focus also extended beyond borders. Through a working group on the Sahel, facilitated by WADEMOS and CDD-Ghana, we began exploring engagement with the Chair of the African Union to call for urgent evaluation and proactive intervention in the security situations in Mali and Burkina Faso.


PILLAR I
IN NUMBERS
Strengthening early warning, peacebuilding, and economic opportunities to build resilient and cohesive communities.
15
districts covered by baseline studies and interventions
145
traditional leaders, religious authorities, mediators, and peace committee members were trained in early warning, mediation, and peace messaging
150
participants — mostly youth, women, and marginalized community members — were trained in livestock production, financial literacy, and enterprise development
Partners on the ground:
ASFIT (North East), CARO (Upper West), and RISE-Ghana (Upper East)
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II. Driving Governance Reform and Political Accountability

Ghana's transition reignited national conversations about governance structures and accountability. CDD-Ghana mapped key reform areas and aligned long-standing priorities — campaign and party financing, local government, and SOE corporate governance — with the government's reset agenda, increasing the likelihood of buy-in and implementation.

Following the historic election, CDD-Ghana, through CODEO, partnered with the National Peace Council, WANEP, and UNDP to host the 2024 Post-Election Conference in Koforidua. The CDD-Ghana Elections Team was integral to planning, from designing the program to sourcing resource persons. The conference brought together the Electoral Commission, the police, the media, the NCCE, CSOs, development partners, and political parties. President Mahama attended the closing ceremony and delivered remarks. The Center will carry forward the conference's agreements with the EC and partners ahead of the next electoral cycle.









Some distinguished speakers, including H.E. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana, who delivered the keynote address at the Post-2024 Election Evaluation Dialogue held at Koforidua, Eastern Region

CODEO's watch did not pause after the general elections: the coalition deployed observers for the parliamentary by-election in the Akwatia constituency and issued an end-of-polls statement on the conduct of the vote.

As part of its reform advocacy, the Center convened 14 town halls across 12 regions, reaching 1,331 citizens, including four special sessions for women (Ho), youth (Tamale), persons with disabilities (Accra), and pensioners (Accra). To reach citizens in their local languages, CDD-Ghana partnered with Adom Brands and the Multimedia Group. The resulting report was submitted to the Constitutional Review Committee and the Presidency, embedding citizen priorities directly into the reform process.

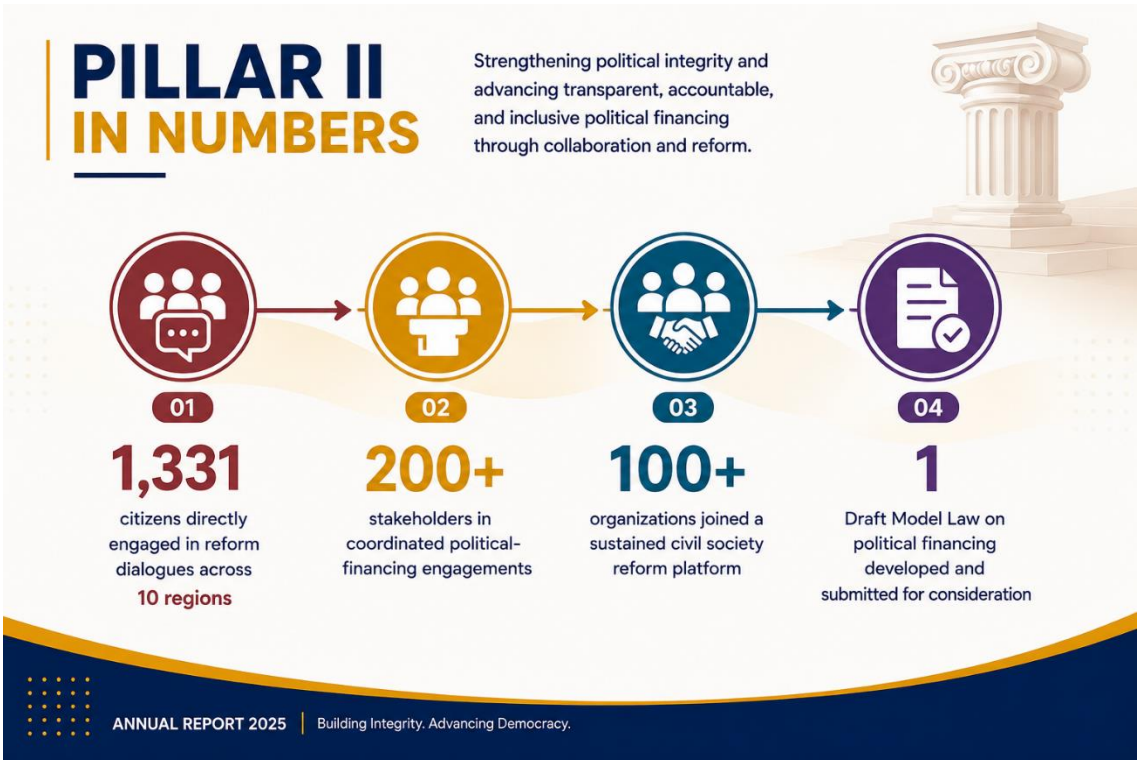
CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM: FROM DIALOGUE TO PROCESS

CDD-Ghana secured funding from the FCDO and the Swiss Embassy to support the Constitution Review Committee, chaired by our Executive Director, Prof. H. Kwasi Prempeh.

In partnership with STAR-Ghana Foundation and Democracy Hub, the Center helped establish a citizens' reform platform of **over 100 stakeholders**, with a 30-member steering committee and regional coordinators. Nationwide activities are planned for 2026.

On the high cost of politics, the Center convened a multi-stakeholder meeting with Transparency International Ghana, bringing together about 80 actors from state institutions, political parties, civil society, and oversight bodies. It reconstituted a Technical Working Group — which has been working on political financing since 2022 — to review a Draft Model Law on Campaign Financing, providing detailed input on spending limits, donor transparency, reporting systems, public funding, and enforcement. The draft was subsequently submitted to the Office of the Attorney General, marking a significant shift from advocacy to legislative action, with a nationwide consultation planned for 2026. The reform agenda also reached the global stage: CDD-Ghana and other civil society Organizations supported a political-financing resolution at the 11th Conference of States Parties to the UN Convention Against Corruption in Doha, sponsored by Norway alongside Ghana, Albania, and Mongolia.

To strengthen subnational governance, a team of 25 field research assistants conducted ethnographic studies, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions across selected districts, complemented by zonal dialogues in Tamale (Northern), Wa (Upper West), Kumasi (Ashanti), and Tema (Greater Accra) to ground reform advocacy in the realities of local governance. As the year closed, the Ministry of Communications introduced 16 communications-related legislative proposals covering misinformation, cybercrime, data protection, and emerging technologies; some provisions raised concerns about constitutional rights to privacy and free expression. CDD-Ghana convened broadcasters (GIBA), media support groups (MFWA, Factspace West Africa), IT hubs, and governance CSOs to coordinate feedback and — despite its request for more review time being denied — proceeded to produce memos for presentation in the new year.


PILLAR II
IN NUMBERS
Strengthening political integrity and advancing transparent, accountable, and inclusive political financing through collaboration and reform.
01
1,331
citizens directly engaged in reform dialogues across 10 regions
02
200+
stakeholders in coordinated political-financing engagements
03
100+
organizations joined a sustained civil society reform platform
04
1
Draft Model Law on political financing developed and submitted for consideration
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III. Advancing Accountability and Combating Corruption

As Ghana entered a new political era, one issue cut across communities, media, and policy circles alike: accountability. CDD-Ghana approached it not as a technical matter confined to institutions but as a lived experience to be strengthened from the ground up: shifting accountability from a reactive, elite-driven model to a participatory one and making the systems meant to respond to citizens more visible and functional.



Scenes from the I Am Aware Project Annual Review Meeting held in Ada, Greater Accra Region

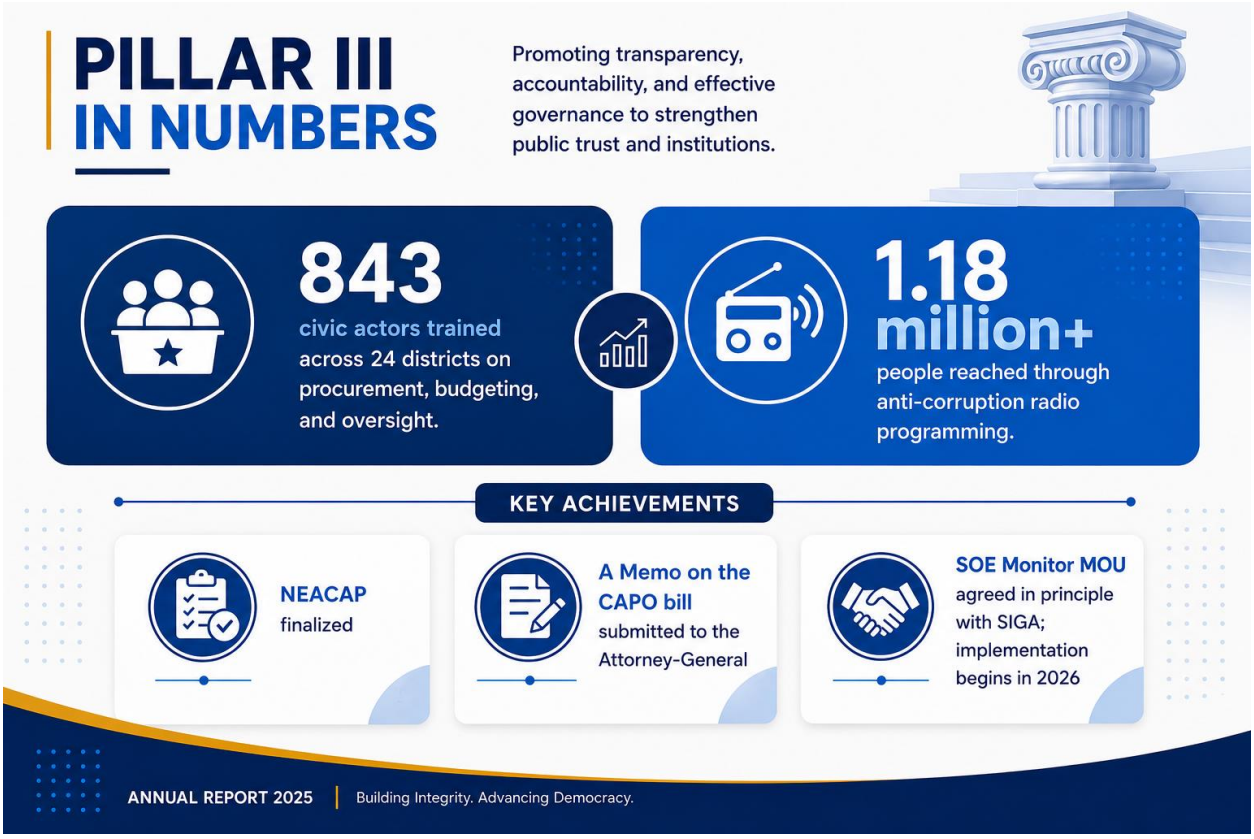
Across 24 districts, the Center engaged communities to build a practical understanding of how governance systems work. Radio, among the most trusted and accessible platforms in Ghana, carried anti-corruption messaging across 16 districts, reaching an estimated audience of more than 1.18 million people and explaining how corruption manifests, how to report it, and why citizen participation matters.

Anti-Corruption Campaign	Reach
Radio audience reached	1,180,000+
Civic actors trained	843
Youth participants	300
Persons with disabilities	54
Districts covered (total)	24
Districts covered (media)	16
Corruption reports filed (ALAC)	12+

At the national level, the Center addressed structural bottlenecks in a meeting with the Presidential Advisor for the National Anti-Corruption Program, Prof. Francis Doodo. CDD-Ghana was appointed to a presidential committee that produced the National Ethics and Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NEACAP), now slated for Cabinet approval and for Parliament in the first quarter of 2026. Following a meeting with the Attorney General, Dr. Dominic Ayine, and his deputy, the Center is championing a Conduct of Public Officers (COPO) Bill and has submitted a memo and a draft bill to the Attorney General. It is working with the State Interests and Governance Authority (SIGA) on an SOE Monitor — a citizen-facing scorecard based on users' assessments of state-owned enterprise performance — with an MOU agreed in principle and implementation expected in 2026.

Through the Hewlett-funded “I Am Aware” project (2023-2027), district CSO partners helped assemblies mobilize communities to prepare the 2026-2029 District Medium-Term Development Plans, conducted service-delivery scorecards for education and health, supported public hearings, and ran civic awareness campaigns on sanitation in Adaklu, Kadjebi, Madina, Shama, and Dormaa.

The Center's local governance portfolio also brought a UNDP-supported project focused on women and youth to a deliberate close. District Democracy and Governance Learning Cafés convened women and youth political activists with the NCCE and District Assemblies across the eight project districts, followed by training in leadership, political campaigning, peace advocacy, and community governance participation. The project's lessons were captured in a video documentary that told the stories of community activists driving social and political change. An end-of-project reflection with assembly members, district planning officers, and regional CSO partners informed the final report submitted to UNDP.


PILLAR III
IN NUMBERS
Promoting transparency, accountability, and effective governance to strengthen public trust and institutions.
843
civic actors trained across 24 districts on procurement, budgeting, and oversight.
1.18 million+
people reached through anti-corruption radio programming.
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS
NEACAP finalized
A Memo on the CAPO bill submitted to the Attorney-General
SOE Monitor MOU agreed in principle with SIGA; implementation begins in 2026
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IV. Producing Evidence to Shape Policy and Reform

As a think-and-do tank, CDD-Ghana's mandate is to produce reliable, trusted, and relevant evidence. In 2025, the Center fulfilled this mandate through a portfolio of research projects.

The Center concluded the “Strengthening Democracy in Africa” project (launched in 2024, funded by the Africa Growth Initiative at Brookings via OSF), publishing three flagship papers: “Ghana's Democracy under the Fourth Republic” (July 2025), “Why Does Ghana's Democracy Hold Steady in a Turbulent Democratic Landscape?” (September 2025), and “Shaping Democracy from the Middle: Party Grassroots and Ghana's Democratic Progress” (November 2025). A dissemination workshop on November 3-4, 2025, brought together teams from Brookings, Mali, Kenya, and Zimbabwe. The team also shared the two Ghana case studies with Parliament's leadership.

Afrobarometer

As a core Afrobarometer partner responsible for Anglophone and Francophone West Africa and North Africa, the Center delivered the Ghana Round 10 survey outputs. On November 18, 2025, the Center hosted a well-attended donor briefing at the Swiss Ambassador's residence, covering democratic aspirations, views on the military, youth priorities, and migration. Preparations for Round 11 are underway, and the Center has issued a call for new national partners in Liberia, Cabo Verde, and Nigeria as part of the Afrobarometer re-bidding for the National Partner process.

> **NEW MULTI-YEAR RESEARCH ANCHORS**
>
> **Southern-Led Approaches to Democratic Resilience** (IDRC, 36 months) — a comparative study across four African and four South American cases (see below).
>
> **Evidence for Development (E4D)** (Hewlett, 2025-2027) — strengthening local policy actors' use of evidence, including a District Fiscal Health Index in the Oti Region.
>
> **Ghana Cities Monitor (GCM)** (Hewlett) — extended through July 2027; regional and national reports to be launched in 2026.

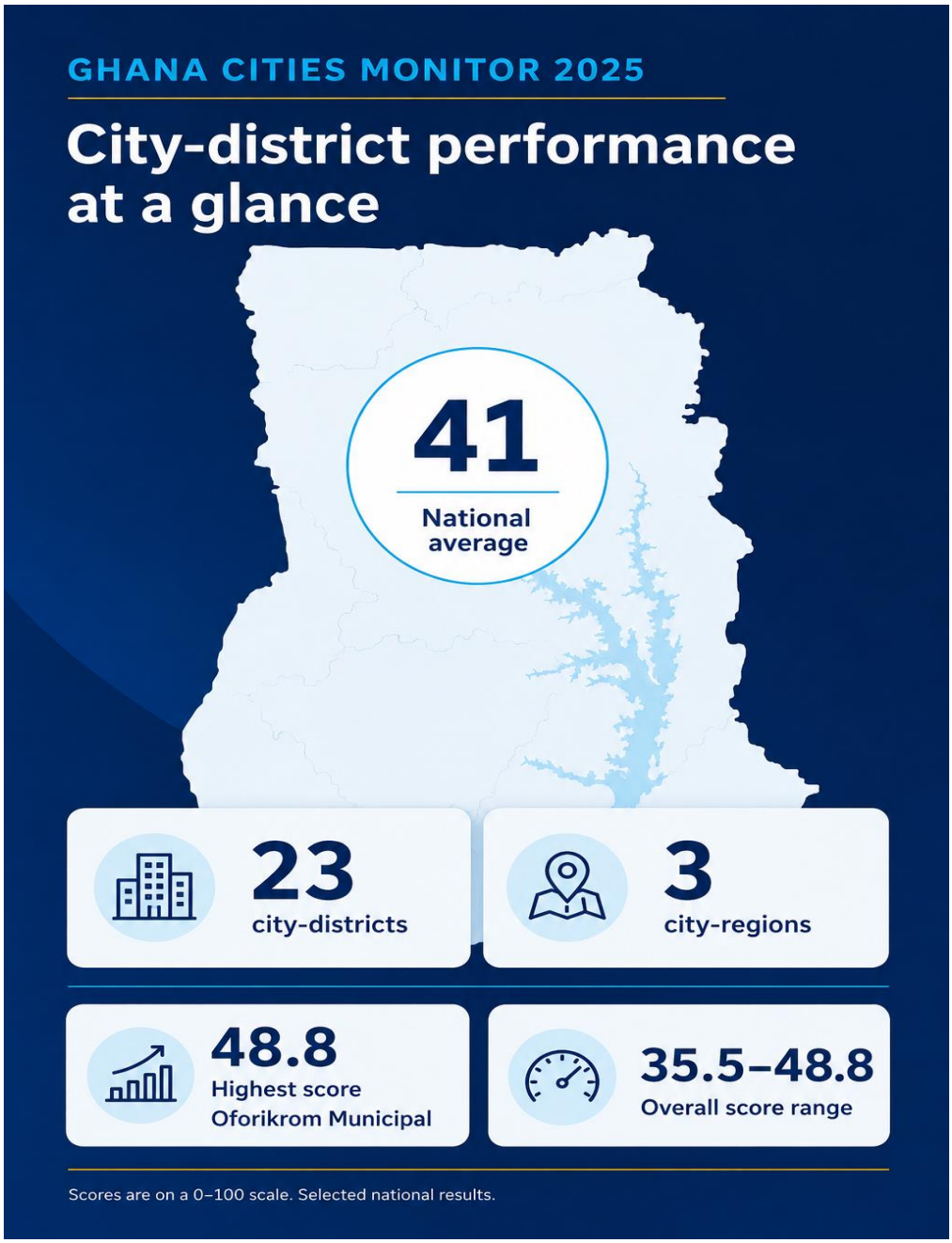
Evidence for Development (E4D)

Two Hewlett-funded projects continued to extend the Center’s evidence work into local government. Through Evidence for Development (E4D, 2025-2027), the Center built local actors' capacity to use evidence by developing a District Fiscal Health Index across the Oti Region's nine districts and convening Communities of Practice in Dormaa East, Bolgatanga East, and Sagnarigu.

The Center also brought its evidence agenda to the national stage. It supported the Evidence to Action (E2A) Conference on participatory governance for sustainable development — organized by the International Center for Evaluation and Development and ISSER at the University of Ghana in July — and served on the conference steering committee. On the sidelines, CDD-Ghana convened a session with the Ghana Statistical Service, the National Development Planning Commission, the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition, and PACKS Africa to examine findings from the GSS's Governance Wave Series and assess progress toward inclusive, responsive, and participatory governance in Ghana.

Ghana Cities Monitor

The Ghana Cities Monitor (GCM), which ranks service delivery in Accra, Kumasi, and Tamale and their municipalities, was extended through July 2027, with three regional reports and a national report scheduled to launch in 2026. Across these efforts, the Center's evidence consistently informed ongoing policy processes — from the constitutional review to local development planning — keeping reform debates grounded in citizens' lived experiences.



A snapshot of city-district performance from the Ghana Cities Monitor 2025. The final report, featuring the complete findings, will be launched in 2026.

Spotlight: Southern-Led Approaches to Democratic Resilience

Consistent with our strategy to defend democracy beyond Ghana, the Center launched a three-year project to build a Southern-led, Southern-focused understanding of democratic resilience. The project examines the factors that contribute to resilience across four African, three South American, and three Southeast Asian cases and translates those findings into actionable recommendations to strengthen democratic institutions and practices.

The project is organized around three goals. On knowledge creation, it maps the factors and patterns behind democratic decline in African and South American contexts, drawing on one of the most comprehensive empirical studies of democratic resilience to date. On capacity-building, it supports a new wave of early-career researchers across both regions. It creates structures for them to collaborate on the pillars of resilience — civil society empowerment, countering disinformation, pluralistic media, and institutional protections for parliaments and the judiciary. In terms of policy influence, a Community of Practice brings researchers and policymakers together to co-develop actionable policy and to connect major democracy stakeholders across Africa and South America.

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Partners: CDD-Ghana, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella (UTDT, Argentina), the Centre for Elections, Democracy, Accountability and Representation, University of Birmingham (UK), and Institute of Asian Studies (IAS), Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

Funder: International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Duration: 36 months

Approach: A Southern-centric definition of democratic resilience, built from historical and comparative case studies rather than imported frameworks.

Progress in 2025

- Country experts from Ghana, Zambia, Benin, Senegal, Argentina, Peru, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand completed their literature reviews on the subject matter.
- Data collection began in Zambia and Senegal, Argentina, Peru, and Colombia; data collection in Ghana, Benin, Thailand, Mongolia, and Sri Lanka is scheduled for the first quarter of 2026.
- Foundational milestones included the project inception meeting in Accra (April 2025) and IDRC approval of the first technical report and work plan (June 2025).



Highlights from the launch of the Southern Approaches to Democratic Resilience Project in Accra, Ghana

Building resilience means making space for diverse voices, and the project's youth component does exactly that. In October 2025, the Center launched a youth-led podcast, Youth Unplugged, to provide a space for young people to speak openly about governance, leadership, and their lived realities. By giving youth room to question, reflect, and share ideas, the podcast amplifies their voices in national debates and connects everyday experience with formal institutions. It maps directly onto the project's resilience framework — helping young people process political shocks (absorptive capacity), rethink participation and accountability (adaptive capacity), and surface insights that can guide future reform (anticipatory capacity). Six episodes have been recorded, four of which are published on YouTube, YouTube Shorts, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram.

V. Strengthening Regional Democratic Solidarity

WADEMOS and International Desk

In response to the declining quality of democracy in West Africa, CDD-Ghana has deepened its continental footprint. This work draws on the Democracy Capture Index, which explains citizen dissatisfaction as a function of capture by a few, and on WADEMOS, the transnational civil society platform the Center helped create in 2022. To coordinate this growing portfolio, the Center launched its International Desk in April 2025.

The 2025 edition of the Center's flagship DEMCAP report, "The Many Faces of Democracy Capture in Africa," was published during the year, together with a companion key-insights digest — giving the regional agenda a fresh evidence base.

> ***"Ghana's democracy does not exist in isolation — and neither does its fragility."***

The Desk's launch coincided with a high-level regional convening on "Foreign Powers, Interests, and Impacts in West and Central Africa," during which a baseline study was shared with regional dignitaries. The keynote was delivered by the ECOWAS Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security, Dr. Abdel Fatau Musah, with the UN's Deputy Special Representative for West Africa and Ghana's Special Envoy to the AES also in attendance. Building on that baseline, the Desk commissioned five country studies to examine the roles of the Gulf States, China, Russia, and Turkey in African democratization and in the changing nature of warfare, to inform targeted policy engagement.

ECOWAS AT 50: REIMAGINING THE REGION

With WADEMOS, the Africa Governance Institute, and the offices of the Special Envoys of Senegal/ECOWAS and Ghana to the AES, the Center convened a high-level conference on a Post-Exit Framework for ECOWAS-AES relations — bringing together former ministers, retired generals, academics, and CSO leaders.

Coinciding with ECOWAS's 50th anniversary, CDD-Ghana co-organized a conference in Dakar to reimagine ECOWAS for the next 50 years, with a reform paper to be commissioned for 2026 policy discussions.



A panel session during the launch of the CDD-Ghana International Desk featuring (L–R) Dr. Emma Brokering, H.E. Abdel-Fatah Musah, Col. Rtd. Larry Gbevlo-Lartey, H.E. Barrie Freeman, Ambassador D.K. Osei, Ambassador William Awinador Kanyirige, and Prof. E. Gyimah-Boadi.

The Center also reconnected with international think tanks. It attended the T-20 High-Level Dialogue in Pretoria in April 2025 — a G20 platform hosted under South Africa's presidency — and signed an MoU with the African Center for the Study of the United States (ACSUS) at the University of the Witwatersrand. Under that partnership, CDD-Ghana co-hosted a panel on foreign influence, disinformation, and democratic resilience at the AFSA Conference in November 2025, held on the margins of the G20 Summit in Johannesburg, where it also set up a book-and-publications corner.

Institutional Initiatives and Partnerships

Beyond direct programming, CDD-Ghana enriched public discourse and built the relationships that sustain its influence. In November, the Center held its 20th Kronti ne Akwamu Lecture at the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, on the topic "Galamsey: A Country's Search for a Solution in Plain Sight," delivered by award-winning investigative journalist Erastus Asare Donkor.

The Center maintained cordial, nonpartisan relationships with political actors — honoring invitations to the presidential inauguration and the swearing-in of MPs and strengthening ties with the new Clerk of Parliament. It deepened engagement with the donor community and diplomatic missions, including the Danish and US embassies. It also contributed to forums on constitutional reform, ethical leadership, and electoral integrity across the region.

New institutional partnerships included an MoU with the University of Media, Arts, and Communication (UniMAC) for the Multimedia Unit; the hosting of the newly launched African Coalition for Academic Freedom; capacity-building for the Early Career Pharmaceutical Group; and support for the Africa Social Movement Baraza, which drew more than 200 young activists to Accra. The Center also co-hosted the 3rd Ghana Civil Society Forum with STAR-Ghana, which the vice president keynoted.

The year also honored those who built the field. The Center presented a metal dove sculpture and a citation to Dr. Ibn Chambas on his 75th birthday and an ant sculpture — honoring a master builder of civil society institutions — to Dr. Akwasi Aidoo at an event co-hosted with TrustAfrica and OSF. The Center also premiered "The Democracy Influencer," a documentary tracing the life and work of founding partner Prof. E. Gyimah-Boadi and his role in nurturing a generation of civil society voices across the continent.

SCAN FOR THE FULL RECORD

Full Partnerships & Events Record

A complete account of CDD-Ghana's 2025 convenings, awards, regional engagements, and diplomatic partnerships is available here.

Link: https://bit.ly/4wuH8vQ

Our People in National Service

A measure of the Center's credibility is how often its staff are called upon to serve. In 2025, senior staff sat on the platforms shaping Ghana's reform agenda — from the Constitution Review Committee to the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan working group, the National Decentralization Policy Committee, and the Open Government Partnership steering committee.

SCAN FOR THE FULL RECORD

Staff Appointments to State and other Bodies

The full table of CDD-Ghana staff serving on government committees and advisory bodies is available here.

Link: https://bit.ly/4wxVKKX

The Evidence Base

The Center's authority rests on what it publishes. In 2025, our researchers and fellows produced a steady stream of research papers, reports, blog posts, podcasts, and seminar sessions that informed live policy debates at home and across the region — from political financing and democracy capture to 'Galamsey' and Ghana's resilience under the Fourth Republic. The complete library is maintained online and updated as new work is released.

SCAN FOR THE FULL RECORD

2025 Publications Library

Link: https://bit.ly/44gdcaK

Our Live X-Spaces Record

Public reasoning is at the heart of CDD-Ghana's mandate, and in 2025 that increasingly meant engaging citizens online. Throughout the year, the Center convened live X Spaces (formerly Twitter Spaces) — open, real-time audio conversations where researchers, policymakers, journalists, and ordinary citizens debated governance questions of the moment, including constitutional reform, political financing, Galamsey, elections, and youth participation.

These sessions extend the Center's convening power beyond conference rooms: they are free to join, archived for replay, and reach audiences — particularly young Ghanaians — that traditional formats rarely do.

Topic / Title of the Space	Featured speakers	Live + replay listeners
Is social media a threat to Ghana's Democracy?	Jude Duncan, Broadcast Journalist, Channel 1 TV Kweku Asante, Broadcast Journalist, Multimedia Group Dzifianu Afi, Content Creator and Strategist	202 live listeners
Ghana's Affirmative Action Act 2024 Implementation	Becky Ahadzi, Coordinator, Affirmative Action Bill Coalition Ms. Gifty Turkson, Deputy General Secretary, Teachers and Educational Workers Union (TEWU) Michael Akagbor, Program Manager, Human Rights and Social Inclusion, CDD-Ghana Isaac Mensah, Programs Officer, Department of Gender, MoGCSP	74 live listeners
Why does galamsey persist despite countless laws, bans, and task forces?	Patience Tei, Environmental Activist Awura Abena Agyeman, Co-Founder, WEAR Ghana Angela Hammond, Esq., Lawyer	263 live listeners

WHY THIS RECORD MATTERS

We introduced the CDD-Ghana quarterly X-Spaces in September. The log is evidence of reach and relevance: it shows the center's convening public debate in real time, at near-zero marginal cost, with measurable audiences. We held 3 X-Spaces and 539 cumulative live listeners.

2025 Projects and Funders

Every result in this report has a partner behind it. As an independent, not-for-profit think-and-do tank, CDD-Ghana depends on a generous community of funders and development partners for its sustainability and its project interventions. Their support does more than fund activities: it protects the Center's independence, enables us to respond quickly when democratic pressure builds, and keeps our evidence free and public. Without them, none of the work in these pages would have been possible.

The principal project vehicles for 2025 and the partners who made them possible are set out below.

Project	What it does	Funder / Partner
Bridging the Gap: Promoting Socio-economic Inclusion, Social Cohesion, and Peacebuilding for Vulnerable Communities	Strengthen the resilience of vulnerable border communities in northern Ghana by promoting socio-economic inclusion, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence to reduce vulnerability to violent extremism.	Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF)
I Am Aware	Inform citizens about the quality of public service delivery to strengthen accountable and responsive local governance.	William & Flora Hewlett Foundation
Mobilizing Citizens for Credible 2024 Elections, Structural Reforms in the Governance Sector to Promote Election Integrity, Transparency and Accountability	Promoting transparent, credible, and peaceful Election 2024 through systematic election observation, reducing the negative influence of money in party and public elections, promoting accountability and corporate governance of SOEs, and promoting accountability of MMDCEs to citizens	British High Commission
Strengthening the Rule of Law and the Fight Against Corruption through Citizen Support for the OSP and Codifying Public Ethics Rules	Enhance the capacity of civil society, the media, and citizens across 60 districts to advocate for changes to the Office of the Special Prosecutor law and passage of the Conduct of Public Office Bill.	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Countering Hate, Furthering Rights	Defend LGBTQI+ persons and their human rights in Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda through legal and policy reform, social inclusion, and strengthened civil society capacity.	Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU)
Evidence for Development (E4D)	Strengthening local government policy actors' capacity to use evidence to improve the quality of public policy for inclusive development in Ghana	William & Flora Hewlett Foundation
Ghana Cities Monitor (GCM)	Ranking public service delivery across Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, and their municipalities	William & Flora Hewlett Foundation
Action for a Holistic Electoral Approach for Democracy (AHEAD Africa)	The project seeks to empower civil society, including citizen observers, to contribute to electoral integrity in African Union member states	European Partnership for Democracy/European Union
Southern-Led Approaches to Democratic Resilience	A comparative study examining cases from Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia to deliver a Southern-focused understanding of democratic resilience by identifying the factors that contribute to it and offering strategic	The International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada

Project	What it does	Funder / Partner
	recommendations to strengthen democratic institutions and practices.	
Strengthening Accountability, Rule of Law, and Institutional Responsiveness in Ghana	Seeks to contribute to the 'watchdog role of CSOs to advocate and promote reforms on accountability and rule of law in Ghana	European Union
Strengthening Democracy in Africa (concluded 2025)	Generate evidence and practical lessons to help policy actors strengthen democratic resilience and counter democratic backsliding in Africa. The project focuses on three interconnected areas: the evolution and current state of democracy in Africa; the democracy-building interventions best suited to different democratic vulnerabilities; and the relationship between democratic trajectories and socioeconomic policies.	Africa Growth Initiative at Brookings, via OSF
Afrobarometer Ghana Round 10 Survey Afrobarometer Core Partner	National public-attitude surveys on democracy, governance, and quality of life	Afrobarometer; GIZ (PAIReD)
Support to the Constitution Review Committee and the CSO Reform Platform	Citizen engagement in Ghana's constitutional reform process	FCDO; Embassy of Switzerland — with STAR-Ghana Foundation and The Democracy Hub
Enhancing Social Cohesion and Social Contract Through Empowerment of Women and Youth in Three Northern Regions of Ghana Project	Prevent localized conflicts and the spread of violent extremism in Northern Ghana by strengthening local and customary governance institutions to promote inclusive and accountable governance, economic opportunities, and improved service delivery.	United Nations Development Program
Transitional Civic Solidarity and Regional Engagement in Defense of Democracy in West Africa (WADEMOS)	Building transnational civic mobilization to enhance and coordinate CSO response to democratic recession and contribute to the defense and promotion of democratic norms and values in WA, including engagement with ECOWAS	Swedish International Development Agency
Strengthening Democratic Solidarity	Enhance civil society's capacity to advance democratic transitions and counter democratic backsliding as well as strengthen local civil society's capacity to assess and respond to malign authoritarian influence in the region.	National Endowment for Democracy (NED)
The Future of Democracy	The study examines how powerful actors capture state institutions, assesses institutional vulnerabilities across Africa, and advances evidence-based reforms through research, national assessments, and policy engagement.	Open Society Foundation

WITH GRATITUDE

To every partner named here — and to those who sustain the Center with unrestricted and institutional support — thank you. Your confidence is what turns a reform window into a reform.

Financial Overview

CDD-Ghana's work is sustained by a diverse base of donors and development partners, a deliberate strategy that protects our independence and our capacity to respond where democratic pressure is greatest. The income and expenditure breakdowns below follow the Center's 2025 program structure. Final figures will be inserted once the external audit is complete; CDD-Ghana's full audited financial statements are available on request.

Income by Program / Source

Funding Source (Project grants)	Amount (GHS)	Share
Research & Afrobarometer	38,571,105.25	42.33%
Democracy/governance & Social accountability	18,761.980.01	20.59%
Institutional & unrestricted	13,089,627.00	14.37%
WADEMOS / International Desk	9,024,287.27	9.91%
Peace & security	8,158,347.63	8.95%
Human Rights and Social Inclusion	3,506,837.91	3.85%
Total income	**91,112,185.07**	**100%**

Expenditure by Program / Source

Program Area	Amount (GHS)	Share
Institutional & unrestricted	28,779,913.00	32.16 %
Research & Afrobarometer	27,721,711.92	30.98 %
Democracy/ governance & Social Accountability	17,104,327.09	19.12 %
Human Rights and Social Inclusion	8,937,864.76	9.99 %
WADEMOS / International Desk	6,864,617.23	7.67 %
Peace & security	72,675.00	0.08 %
Total Expenditure	**89,481,109.00**	**100%**

STEWARDSHIP AT A GLANCE

98.21% of expenditure directed to programs and direct mission delivery

Full audited financial statements available on request

2026 Outlook



Members of the Constitutional Review Committee led by Prof. H. Kwasi Prempeh (middle-left) pose for a group picture with H.E. John Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana (m), Vice President, H.E. Naana Jane Opoku Agyemang (to the right of the President) and the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Dr. Dominic Ayine (fourth from right)

The new year presents CDD-Ghana with a rare opportunity to influence governance, constitutional and institutional reform. Following the submission of the Constitution Review Committee's recommendations to the president in December 2025, the Center will focus on stakeholder engagement and on developing a roadmap for implementing the proposed reforms, particularly those concerning accountability, political financing, limits on executive power, and local governance. We will closely track the CRC's final report and the government's Position Paper in 2026.

- **Constitutional reform:** The CSO Platform on Constitutional Reform will engage civil society, the media, labor, and citizens to drive an inclusive, transparent, and credible process, with nationwide activities planned.
- **Governance and accountability:** Work on political finance, the Conduct of Public Officers Bill, anti-corruption, and economic governance remains central, anchored in evidence-based research and constructive dialogue with state and non-state actors.
- **Public opinion research:** CDD-Ghana will run Afrobarometer Round 11 in Ghana, providing fresh citizen perspectives on democracy, governance, and quality of life.
- **Regional influence:** Through WADEMOS, the Democratic Resilience and Democracy Capture work, the International Desk, and WAEON, the Center will continue to expand its reach and contribution to ECOWAS reform.

PARTNER WITH US / SUPPORT US

CDD-Ghana's 2026 agenda sits at the center of Ghana's reform moment — a window that does not stay open indefinitely. Sustained, flexible funding allows us to move from convening conversations to producing evidence to changing policy. To discuss partnership and support, contact us at: **info@cddgh.org**.

Reference

To keep this report focused on the year's story and results, the full list of acronyms is maintained online.

SCAN FOR THE FULL RECORD

List of Acronyms

The complete glossary of acronyms used across CDD-Ghana's work is available at *the link: https://bit.ly/4brU4uq*

Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD Ghana)

Bridging Research & Practice to Promote Good Governance

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