

LAYING FOUNDATIONS FOR A
STRONG TAKE-OFF

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I	Acronyms and Abbreviations	07	Staffing Issues
II	Foreword	09	Logistical Issues
01	Background	09	Professional Membership
02	Vision, Mission and Objectives	09	Communication
03	Organisational Chart	10	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
04	Initial set-up Activities	13	Conclusion and Recommendation
05	Business Activities	14	Board Membership

ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATION

AEN - Africa Evidence Network

CABI - Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International

CARLIGH - Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana

DSA - Development Studies Association

EIPM - Evidence-informed Policy Making

GLA - Ghana Library Association, Ghana

GRA - Ghana Revenue Authority

IDRIG - Inter-Departmental Research and Information Group

MoGCSP - Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

OGP - Open Government Partnerships

RDA - Research Data Alliance

RGD - Registrar Generals Department

RTI - Right to information


SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

SSNIT - Social Security and National Insurance Trust

TEEAL - The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library

WFD - Westminster Foundation for Democracy

FOREWORD



The year 2017 witnessed remarkable events around the world – from expanded change in our climate, through continuous escalation in global human population, to increasing uncertainty in global governance (with events in the US and Europe in particular). For Africa, this is an indication for the need to seek home-grown solutions that have been proven to address our unique challenges.

PACKS Africa started operations this year as a youth-led initiative to contribute to finding solutions to some of these problems. This was based on the recognition that the African youth has substantial capabilities to aid our development process, but these talents are hardly utilised on the continent. The challenges foreseen in this venture however could not hold the vision.

Although the year was expectedly slow, a few successes were recorded, including our undertaking of an income generating activity. With our not-for-profit motive however, we channeled our energies into providing support services to the evidence-to-policy sector, helping develop the necessary relationships for future expansion.

As a new service provider within this space, we seek to establish a firm foundation, which will guarantee the needed credibility to expand our services to other countries on the continent.

Kirchuffs Atengble
Executive Director

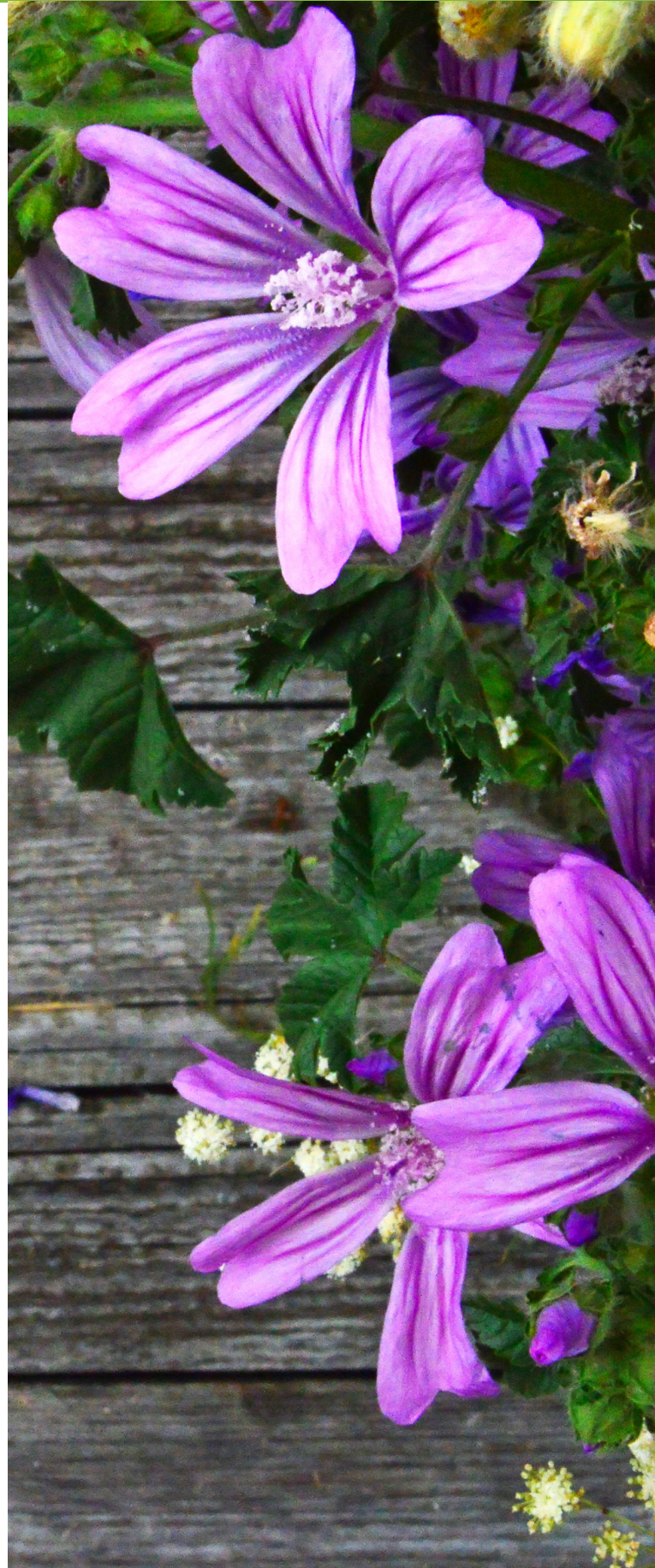
BACKGROUND

ABOUT US

PACKS Africa was registered in Ghana to operate as a company limited by guarantee on 2nd March 2017.

Our registered name is the Centre for Knowledge Management and Research. To enable our registration in Ghana as a not-for-profit nongovernmental organisation, we also acquired registration from the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP).

We operate as a youth-led think tank to improve public sector management through information systems research, knowledge management and advocacy for evidence-informed policy making (EIPM).





PACKS Africa



Vision and Mission

As a pan-African organisation, our vision is a Pan-African development process that is fueled by evidence-informed policies.

Our mission therefore is to influence the use of research and other forms of knowledge in the development of policies in Africa.

Objectives

We operate to achieve the following objectives:

- Conduct research into information systems, with the view of optimising performance;
- Manage knowledge effectively for improved uptake in policymaking and development practice; and
- Advocate for Evidence-Informed Policy Making (EIPM) in our operational areas



Organisational Chart

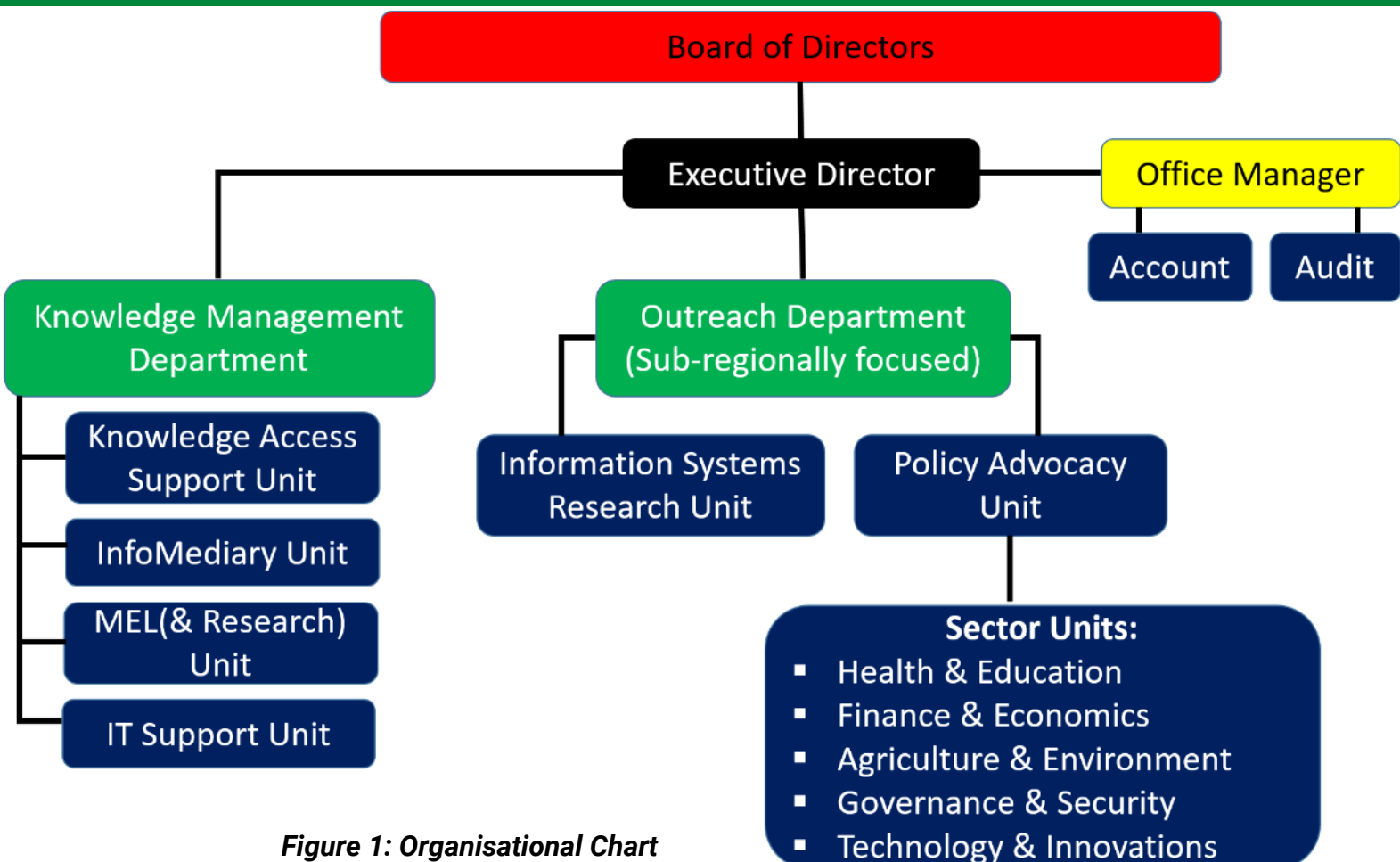


Figure 1: Organisational Chart

In our foundational years (2017-2022), we decided to operate based on the organisational chart depicted in Figure 1.

In this framework, we are to secure a functioning Administration (secretariat) under the leadership of the Executive Director, who also oversees operations within the three functional areas of the organisation:

- information systems research,
- knowledge management and advocacy units.

The ensuing sections of this report outlines the extent to which these and many more were achieved in the first year of our operation.

INITIAL SET UP ACTIVITIES

Poised to begin operations in 2017 to promote reforms within the public sector of Ghana, as planned in our corporate strategy[1], Directors of the organisation undertook some initial activities in accordance with statutory and regular business requirements.



Statutory Requirements

A business name and other registration requirements were provided to the Registrar Generals Department (RDG) in Accra towards registration of the entity. The name Centre for Knowledge Management and Research was finally registered, following an initial proposition of the name Pan-African Centre for Knowledge Sharing, which would have sufficed with the acronym PACKS Africa.



For the sake of brand convenience, the acronym was maintained to be used as the operating or trading name for the organisation, in addition to the registered business name.

Other statutory registration requirements included those to the underlisted government agencies:

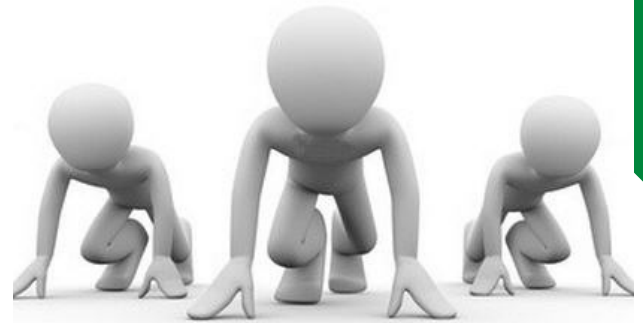
- Department of Social Welfare (NGO sector regulator)
- Accra Metropolitan Assembly (City authority)
- Ghana Revenue Authority (For tax-related issues)
- Social Security and National Insurance Trust (National pensions for staff/ Tier 1)
- Petra Trust (Private pensions for staff/ Tier 2 & 3)

[1] Strategic plan for PACKS Africa can be found at: <https://www.packs-africa.org/publications>

Other Initiating Activities

As part of business registration requirements and procedures, the following activities were also undertaken;

- Establishment of a corporate Board of Directors to oversee operations and direction of the organisation.
- Development of a Constitution to guide affairs of the organisation.
- Development of a strategic plan to provide direction to operations of the organisation in its foundational period.
- Appointment of Auditors to ensure compliance to standard accounting and financial practices and procedures.
- Development and deployment of a corporate website to register web presence for the organisation.



BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

This section focuses on the main activities that were undertaken as an organisation within the period under review.

Income generating activities

According to our Constitution and per details submitted for requirements, PACKS Africa may generate income for its activities from three main sources: fees charged for consultancy services, grants, and donations.

Within the period under review, only one of these sources was realized as a source of income, despite effort to secure income from the other sources.

A research consultancy service was rendered to the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) between March and September 2017, aimed at establishing a baseline for their work with the Parliament of Ghana.

Due to cash flow challenges within the period, funds were advanced from private resources of the Directors on several occasions that were settled when these funds became available.

This is expected to be the normal practice until cash flow becomes normalized. Details on how these resources were utilized can be obtained from our financial statement and audited reports for the period.



Non Income Generating Activities

The following business activities were undertaken, without the objective of generating income for the organisation. Most often the expected outcome was a generation of interest among our stakeholders for the work we do.



Twitter Discussions

Dubbed #Evidence2Policy series, this was a novel initiative of PACKS Africa to engage our public audience on the status of evidence use on specific issues of public interest.

The first of such series was on "artisanal small-scale mining (galamsey) in Ghana". This discussion took place between 10:00 and 11:00 GMT on 8th June 2017, a period when the menace of galamsey was at its peak in the country. Experienced faculties and researchers from UK universities led the discussion, which also involved representatives from the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, and the Minerals Commission in Ghana.

The next in this series was to be on 'mob justice' when Captain Major Maxwell Adams Mahama was lynched in Denkyira Oboasi, a rural community in the Western region of Ghana, on 29th May 2017. This could however not happen due to logistical challenges

The #EvidenceWeekly



This initiative was to serve as a platform to engage our over 1,000 mostly Ghanaian audience in our contact list. These audience ranged between library and information professionals to staff of policymaking, research and academic institutions across the country.

Through this programme, reading lists as well as developing stories within the field of information systems, knowledge management and evidence-informed policymaking were distributed to them.

The plan was to upgrade this weekly communication platform to a newsletter when adequate resources would be available to do that, but the initiative stalled by the close of August, again due to logistical issues.

Advocacy and capacity building



In line with our quest for improved utilisation of knowledge resources, especially within public policymaking and practice organisations, we have been involved in some advocacy and capacity building efforts, without necessarily considering financial gains to the organisation.

A platform leveraged for such purposes within this period was the 2017 Research and Information Week celebration by the Inter-Departmental Research and Information Group (IDRIG) of the Parliament of Ghana. In particular, we contributed to the event through our development of evidence templates for the departments.



STAFFING ISSUES

We worked with both core staff and associates.

Staff and Associates

The organisation started in March 2017 with three staff, who were the two registered directors of the organisation, and an administrative support staff. Table 1 provides some details on them.

Table 1: Profile of Staff

Name	Designation	Status
Kirchuffs Atengble	Executive Director	Part-time
Dzesi Kwame Torku	Deputy Director	Part-time
Lucy Afatsiawu	Office Assistant	Voluntary

In addition to these core staff, there were also contributions and support from 8 associates with expertise in research, policy processes and knowledge management. We wish to acknowledge services from Dr. Henry Telli, Cephas Egbefome, Engr.Kwabena Abrokwa Gyimah, Frederick Kenneth Appiah, George Amoah, Dela Kemevor, Catherine Asamoah, and Benedicta Afrakoma Gyimah.

Board Meetings

Board meetings were held to deliberate on key issues and matters in order to make certain important decisions for the progress and growth of the organisation. For the year under review, there were 2 board meetings on 18th May and 24th August respectively.

Remuneration & Social Welfare of Staff

While the Office Assistant offered to provide fully voluntary support to the organisation, the Executive Director and his deputy were paid basic salaries of for their part-time services. All statutory payments were made on their behalf, including tax and social insurance contributions (all 3 tiers).

Amounts paid to them were considered inadequate remuneration, especially considering their workloads. It is hoped that these would improve when our financial resources equally improve.



STAFFING ISSUES

Termination of Staff Contract

According to terms of the contract signed by the 2 part-time staff, the duration of employment was for 6 months (from March-August) and was subject to renewal based on financial standing of the organisation.

Unfortunately, there was inadequate resources to maintain this contract after the six months. Working relationship was therefore terminated with both paid staff. Status of the Executive Director changed therefore to voluntary, with a substantial decision to be made later.

Following the termination of contract, staff were required to return resources in their possession to the organisation.

Suspension of Statutory Responsibility

Due to the termination of staff contract, notice was served to three statutory organisations:

the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) and Petra Trust.

Response was not received from any of them in acknowledgement of receipt and/or offer of advice on the situation

Staff Capacity Development

During the period under review 1 capacity development opportunity (in Figure 2) was made available to staff of the organization through a free scholarship offer.

Figure 2: Internal staff capacity development

Strategic governance and management for think tanks

Training provider:	OnThinkTanks
Mode of training:	Remote/Online
Date:	1st November – 5th December 2017
Beneficiary:	Kirchuffs Atengble

Following this first training opportunity, recommendation was made by the Executive Director to switch from working with employed staff (in the interim) to working with associates, particularly as financial resources were highly unavailable.

LOGISTICAL ISSUES

Principal among other logistical issues worth reporting within the period is that of office location, internet and communication facilities.

The organisation started operating from the Research department of Parliament, due to the initial work that was being undertaken with the client.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Our staff were encouraged to join and maintain membership in communities of practice and professional associations for similar capacity building benefits. The underlisted groups had membership from PACKS Africa within the period under review:

- Africa Evidence Network (AEN), South Africa
- Ghana Library Association (GLA), Ghana
- Campbell Collaborations' KTI Group (Global)
- Development Studies Association (DSA), United Kingdom
- Open Government Partnerships (OGP) Civil Society Community
- Research Data Alliance (RDA), Global

COMMUNICATION

Communication is vital to operations of any organization. From three different perspectives, it is conceptualized as traditional (speaking & writing or listening & reading), interactive (both speaking and listening at the same time) or mediated (where a moderator facilitates turns among communicators).

PACKS Africa understood this value very well, and employed different media to achieve them within the period under review. Below are some communication media deployed in 2017:

- Communication via our corporate website
- Reports and other print media
- Social media communication: Twitter
- Communication via international blogs
- Personal & face-to-face meetings and other events
- Virtual meetings via Skype, Zoom, Blue Jeans, WhatsApp and webinars
- Communication at conferences and seminars

MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING

As a result of our extensive business activities within the period under review, we observed gradual progress towards realization of our short-term vision, which is to be the preferred think tank for managing knowledge for development in Ghana within our first 5 years of operation.

Next, we enumerate some specific outputs and outcomes of our initiatives and work processes.



Value- Added Services

These constituted the core of our work, organised into our thematic areas:

Information Systems Research

Value was added to operations within the Parliament of Ghana through a research consultancy service rendered to the institution. This work sought to assess existing institutional capacities to produce and make use of research.

One notable recommendation from the study findings was the creation of a centralised online information request form that was to be monitored by the steering committee of IDRIG.

Knowledge Management and Brokerage

Our twitter discussion that was hosted on the theme “making galamsey good in Ghana”. added value to the twitter community that participated in the event. This discussion hosted participants the

evidence ecosystem, who shared their expertise on opinions on the subject matter. A detailed report is available on our website.

Advocacy for Evidence use in Policy Process

The twitter discussion dubbed #Evidence2Policy series also presented lots of facts and details about artisanal small-scale mining which included the legalities of it, reasons for its dominance, as well as measures to regulate operators in such venture. These resources were very useful evidence mainly for the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources.

Through our programme dubbed #TheEvidenceWeekly, we were able to reach several audience in institutions across the country with stories that depicted evidence informed policy making. Beneficiaries were all subscribers to our service.

MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING

Reach and Visibility

While most of our communication activities were to facilitate our work processes, they have also contributed to corporate learning, knowledge sharing, and promotion of our identity and reach.

PACKS Africa is a member of Goal 17 sub-platform of the Ghana Civil Society (CSOs) Platform on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Deepened Relations

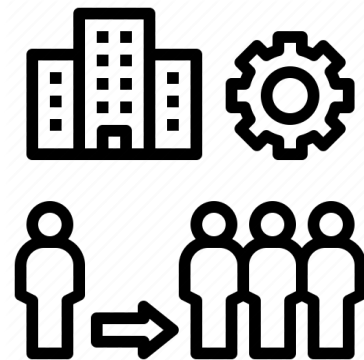


Haven engaged in active services across our three core thematic areas, both virtually and through consultations, our organisation has established good working relationship with key ecosystem actors like the Parliament of Ghana, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, the Minerals Commission and also local and foreign academics, including the University of Southampton.

Organisation Development

For our internal development efforts, we achieved the following:

- Maintained compliance for our organisation within the statutes of Ghana
- Developed capacity of our staff to better perform their functions
- Our staff sustained membership in the various professional associations in which there were





Publications & Knowledge Sharing

Within the year, the following were achieved:

- Increased availability of knowledge on our thematic issues based on our publications and knowledge sharing initiatives.
- Enhanced access to knowledge resources and their content shared through our initiatives such as #TheEvidenceWeekly and our Twitter discussions

Publication Type	Title	Availability
Blog Post	VakaYiko learning exchange inspires exhibition of evidence products in the Parliament of Ghana	https://results4allorgblog.wordpress.com/2017/05/02/vakayiko-learning-exchange-inspires-exhibition-of-evidence-products-in-the-parliament-of-ghana/
Consultancy Report	Research Usage Assessment of the Parliament of Ghana	Available on Request

Our financial statements and audited report present a better appreciation of the management techniques employed in the year. A report was produced for the period (March-December 2017), and is available as a separate attachment to this annual report. Kindly request for a copy if not enclosed.

FINANCIAL REPORTING

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION



Despite dynamics in the global governance ecosystem, the very foundations necessary for our maximum contribution to enhanced evidence use were laid. Our ability to secure some income through our consultancy services is testament to efforts made in the year.

We placed these resources to good use, delivering value to our beneficiary organisations as also to the larger community. To continue that path, we made some investments to enhance our capacity, while leveraging technology to

expand our reach. Setbacks experienced in the year were preempted through our periodic analysis of indicators to our various competencies and limitations. We succeeded this year in disallowing our temporary financial challenges to disorient our ultimate vision.

As a result, we encourage like-minded organisations to partner with us to deliver more services that drive us closer to a pan-African development process that is fueled by evidence-informed policies.



BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Full name	Position
Dr. Musah Adams	Chairperson
Mr. Kirchuffs Atengble	Secretary
Mrs. Dora Dei-Tumi	Member
Mr. Emmanuel G.K. Duncan	Member
Mrs. Sylvia Inkoom	Member
Mr. Cephas Egbefome	Member
Miss Monica Geraldo De Lima	Member



Get In Touch

Postal Address: Post Office Box NM 325, Niima- Accra.

Physical Address: #12 Mango Tree Avenue, Asylum Down, Accra

Email Address: info@packs-africa.org

GhanaPost Digital Address: GA- 0028- 5403

Phone Number: +233(0)245883575