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ANNUAL REPORT

— ***Building momentum for the future*** —



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OUR PLANS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This year has been one with extremely contrasting features– extreme sorrow from deaths resulting from the pandemic, and extreme shifts in the global governance system, resulting mostly from trade and its effect on globalization and interdependence, creating opportunities as well as challenges for many societies. Much of these concepts needed to be reconsidered, both in theory and in practice.

With the onset of the dreaded coronavirus in the early hours of the year, a pandemic was looming. Originating from the world's industrial hub (China), the impact was huge– affecting all trade routes. Africa was not spared, just as any other region of the world. Many foresaw a dire situation on the continent due to its mostly underprepared leadership and systems; but on hindsight, the virus seemed to have been more lenient on the continent.



Global trade routes decimated by the coronavirus pandemic

The very factors that account for this turn of events are still to be understood. The pandemic revealed the reality of governance systems on the continent. While some countries suffered from prevailing failures in establishing adequate systems for governance, others flourished in the backward decisions to entrench state capture, as was witnessed in Ghana and Nigeria. Some countries demonstrated responsive leadership by taking decisions that better protected their citizens, but in Cameroon for instance, these were thwarted by systemic failures for accountability.

The year also experienced global shifts in opportunities for furthering evidence use, particularly with the cuts in budgetary allocation to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As a consequent from the pandemic and (remotely) its separation from the European Union (EU), this decision impacts on the global leadership role played by the UK in international development, as well as on the livelihoods of many under-developed communities. Development agents had to reconsider the sustainability of their interventions, sometimes leading to the discontinuation of critical projects.

For us, the pandemic introduced opportunities that empowered us to make direct impacts on policy decisions on the pandemic. Together with the University of Southampton and a couple of partner organizations across Ghana, Togo and the United Kingdom, we provided urgent pandemic support to health authorities in Ghana and Togo.

Apart from this we played various roles in promoting evidence use, through collaborations with other implementing organizations like CDD Ghana and SEDI partners (led in-country by ACET) to enhance capacities for evidence use, as well as with the AEN to enrich general competencies within the ecosystem.

Our performance this year, despite the prevailing constraints, is captured by theme for the year – we have been gradually building momentum for our future across the Africa-region. And the years ahead can only be better.

MR. KIRCHUFFS ATENGBLE

Executive Director

OUR OBJECTIVES

PACKS Africa operates as a youth-led think tank 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 its operational areas

MISSION

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

VISION

Our vision is a pan-African development process that is fuelled by evidence-informed policies.

KEY AREAS OF OPERATION

We place special focus on the governance of research and other types of evidence for innovation in policymaking. Over the years, we have contributed meaningfully to provide critical support to the uptake of evidence in policy processes in Ghana and beyond. In the spirit of sustainability, the organization has adopted the strategy to collaborate with relevant stakeholders including CSOs and government agencies to champion sustainable development at the national, sub-regional and continental levels

HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

The activities indicated below gives account of activities conducted in the year 2020;

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Evidence for Development (E4D) project



Group photograph at a training workshop organized by CDD Ghana under the E4D project

The Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) invited PACKS Africa to serve as implementing partners on the above mentioned project which aims to build capacity of policy officers at sub-national level for their enhanced evidence use in policy processes.

Discussions begun this year, but contract for our lead role in developing training resources and facilitation of learning is to be signed in 2021. This project is funded by the Hewlett foundation.

Participation in relevant policy events



Our Executive Director participating in an in-person Advisory Group meeting with the AEN

Due to recognition of our role within the policy-making space in Ghana, we received invitation from government agencies to join discussions in various events that explored opportunities to improve use of evidence in decision making.

These included the Ghana Results fair, which was led by the Ministry of Monitoring and Evaluation (MoME) as well the National Conference on AFCFTA implementation that was led by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI).

Book chapter on evidence use in parliaments

Following an invitation by colleagues within the evidence-to-policy space to join a team to contribute towards an upcoming book on the subject, our Executive Director offered to lead in making the contribution from PACKS Africa.

Resources produced from previous initiatives supported the chapter he contributed. The publication is estimated to be released in 2021

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Pilot of Context Matters Matrix

The pilot, which started in 2019, continued this year but could not be completed due to logistical challenges. All the same, we are gathering the necessary lessons from its implementation, considering that it is our first multi-country research project being internally financed. It is expected to be completed in 2021, having lasted for a total of 2 years.

The project seeks to help government agencies across countries to understand prevailing bottlenecks for up-taking evidence in policy processes. The outcome of this project will guide these agencies to explore opportunities for eliminating or reducing the effect of these challenges.

Qualitative Evidence (QE) symposium & webinar

A planned session during this symposium in Brazil last year could not materialize due to travel challenges. Discussions were initiated to hold the session as a webinar this year, under the auspices of the Global Evidence Synthesis Initiative (GESI).

The webinar explored contextual and institutional factors affecting evidence use in public agencies, and a recording of the event can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9XS7Gozr4Q>

Africa Evidence Network (AEN) functions

We maintained our role as a member of the Advisory Group for the AEN. Programme and intellectual contributions were made to support strategic direction of the network, while participating in various research projects led by the network for group development.

These included granting interviews to the study on “institutional capacity, demand and opportunity for collaboration”, as well as on “capturing the influence of the African Evidence Network (AEN) through Stories of Change”.

Ghana NGO bill

1. We were invited to participate in the engagement processes to produce a Bill to regulate the Not-for-Profit (NFP) sector. We made some proposals to strengthen the Bill from a governance perspective, which ultimately considered the need to retain majority members of the Board for CSO actors.

Rationale for that proposal is to avoid potential interference and control by government on overly critical CSO actors.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Contribution towards Evidence 2020

Colleagues from the AEN reached out for our support in holding this biennial conference in 2020. Originally intended as an in-person event to be held in Entebbe (Uganda), the outbreak of coronavirus necessitated its transition into a virtual event.

Our Executive Director was appointed to virtually lead one of the 3 work-streams of the conference, focusing on opportunities for capacity development within the ecosystem. An output product is a draft manifesto that was further developed by the AEN Secretariat into its final version:

https://aenweb.blob.core.windows.net/aenweb/files/files/AEN_Draft_Manifesto_on_capacity_development_for_EIDM_in_Africa_FINAL.pdf.

Press release:

For the first time, we released pressers on issues that bothered on the thematic areas of our operation.

The first release called on the Government of Ghana to use a bulk of funds to be secured for pandemic response on research-related activities: https://www.packs-africa.org/wp-content/press/Press%20Release_20200313.pdf; while the second presser sought to clarify a confusion that had arisen from a supposed 'Google research' suggesting that the Vice President of Ghana was a liar (see here: https://www.packs-africa.org/wp-content/press/Press%20Release_20200824.pdf).

Blog post on Evidence use during the pandemic

A blogpost was initiated with colleagues from the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) on the extent of evidence use by the Government of Ghana with the advent of the pandemic. A nuanced view was presented, taking a reflective look at typical decisions and decision making models used by government.

This was published on the AEN blog here: <https://www.africaevidencenetwork.org/en/learning-space/article/56/>

Pilot of the Evidence Landscape project

This project was conceived this year to provide insight into the evidence ecosystem in Ghana for various governance purposes. It seeks to collect and distribute data on the variety of actors (combinations of producers, intermediaries and users) and the kind of evidence and publications they have been working on.

Being an internally funded project, the data collection component continued into 2021.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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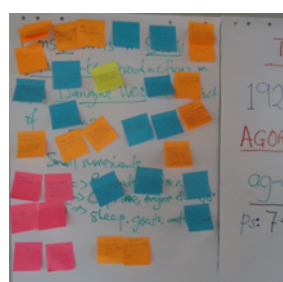
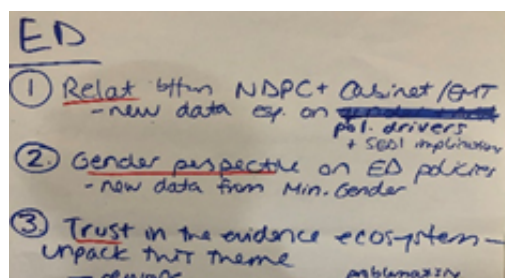
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Support to the SEDI project

We were called upon to provide support to ongoing projects being implemented by the Africa Center for Economic Transformation (ACET), as they led the Strengthening Evidence for Development Impact (SEDI) project.

Our Executive Director was engaged personally to begin a political-economy analysis (PEA) on capacity development for evidence use within the civil service of Ghana in aid of the project, amongst other consultancy roles offered.



Samples of learning aids used in training sessions depicting subject of discussion

Engagements with the UN Country Team

Upon request from the United Nations (UN) Country Office, we joined other CSOs to engage with the team on pandemic response and recovery in Ghana. Other similar engagements were held, particularly under the leadership of the new Resident Officer.

Output document produced from the engagement on pandemic recovery can be found here: https://ghana.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/United%20Nations%20Ghana%20SERRP_%20Final.pdf.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

Website and Domain Maintenance

To sustain our web-presence, we maintained our website through renewal of our domain name and the hosting of our website.

Unfortunately, we could not introduce new content to the website, and this is to be fixed through a planned redesign of the website.



Registration with the Data Protection Commission (DPC)

In accordance with data protection laws of the country, we maintained our registration with the DPC (registered in 2019) as data controllers within the data ecosystem of Ghana.

Renewal of this registration is due in 2021.



**DATA PROTECTION
COMMISSION**

Donations by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD)

We received official notice from our partners WFD, suggesting that they were folding up their operations in Ghana.

As a result, however, a decision had been made to distribute their operating assets among partners in the country, hence a list was shared with PACKS Africa to indicate items that were to be transferred to us.

We acknowledged receipt of the items, and our finance team updated our assets records, following an estimation of the net worth of the items. See audited annual financial report for more on this.



STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

PACKS Africa is fully registered with the Registrar General's Department (RGD) of Ghana and regulated by the Department of Social Welfare. The governance and leadership structure of the organization is made up of the Board of Directors and Management.

The Board is made up of distinguished personalities who serve as volunteers for advancing the cause of the organization.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NAME	DESIGNATION
Dr. Musah Adams	BOARD CHAIRMAN
Mr. Kirchuffs Atengble	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & SECRETARY
Mrs. Dora Dei-Tumi	MEMBER
Mr. Emmanuel G.K Duncan	MEMBER
Mrs. Sylvia Inkoom	MEMBER
Mr. Cephas Egbefome	MEMBER
Ms. Monica Geraldo De Lima	MEMBER
Mr. Daniel Ameyaw	NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Mr. Frederick Wordie	NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

First tenure for the Board expired in March 2020. However, with some revisions being effected on our constitution and in directorship, the Board agreed to proceed with its second term, pending any changes to be made. We initiated a process to revise composition and membership of the Board.

With the resignation of one of the Non-Executive Directors in 2018, search for new Directors were initiated. This process ended with the appointment of Mr. Frederick Wordie and Mr. Daniel Ameyaw as Non-Executive Directors.

The decision was made to retain the existing Board until a new set has been constituted.

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In addition to prevailing logistical challenges, the pandemic introduced new difficulties in holding a meeting for the Board.

Only one meeting was scheduled in December, but once again could not form a quorum.

In the midst of these difficulties however, critical decisions were made following personalized engagement with members of the Board when necessary.



MANAGEMENT TEAM

Changes were made to the management team this year. While the Executive Director and Office Assistant retained their positions, Mr. Thomas Y.A. Essel moved from a volunteer Data Analyst (on our EIPM projects) to a contract Programme Officer for Knowledge Management.

We had Mr. Emmanuel Benchie joining the team as Finance Manager on part-time basis.

NAME	POSITION
Mr. Kirchuffs Atengble	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Ms. Lucy Afatsiawu	OFFICE ASSISTANT
Mr. Emmanuel Benchie	FINANCE MANAGER
Mr. Thomas Y.A. Essel	PROGRAMME OFFICER – KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

PACKS AFRICA AND THE SDGS



We have been front-runners in the promotion of the SDG targets in Ghana.

To further our advocacy efforts in this area, we continued to serve as Co-Conveners for sub-platform 17 of the Ghana CSOs Platform on SDGs in Ghana.

This required that we work together with counterpart organizations to coordinate activities related to building and sustaining partnerships for the global goals in Ghana. The role also required that we reviewed documents while also

represent the group at Conveners and Steering committee meetings.

We maintained membership in the Goals 9 and 16 sub-platforms, where our interest was in promoting open access to knowledge resources through the internet and other digital technologies.

With 2020 being a special year because of the coronavirus pandemic, we made contributions to support the collective project of providing support to underprivileged populations when the pandemic struck.

PICTURE COMMENTARY



A panel discussing evidence use during celebration of Africa Evidence Week (2019)



Mrs. Kate Addo (Parliament of Ghana) during celebration of Africa Evidence Week (2019)



OUR PLAN

We will continue to implement interventions that nurture good governance for improved use of evidence in policy processes.

In addition to the various roles we play in a variety of related groups, the under-listed activities will be implemented in 2021 as a core of our programming

Furthering our pilot of the Context Matters Matrix

Advance implementation of the Evidence Landscape project

Initiate processes for a new strategic plan (2022-2027), aimed at expanding our regional coverage

Complete the initiated revisions to the organisation's constitution

Undertake all outstanding statutory obligations, including renewal of operational certificates

Introduce a new capacity development initiative for beneficiary organisations

With more gains made in a pandemic year towards advancing the case for evidence-informed decisions, we look forward to a more prosperous 2021 for EIPM.

We are hopeful about these prospects because of our growing with beneficiary organisations, implementing partners, and well as those with new partnerships for funding.



Get In Touch

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