



**ALLIANCE FOR EMPOWERING
RURAL COMMUNITIES**

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Building Resilient Communities

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OUR VISION

Empowered **communities** with enhanced capacities to address challenges and achieve **self-reliance**.

OUR MISSION

To empower local **communities** to build resilience to global crises and adapt local actions for **sustainable development**.

OUR OBJECTIVES



1. Advance a Just and Inclusive Energy Transition:

Champion the shift from fossil fuels to sustainable, community-centered renewable energy systems by advocating for divestment from harmful energy projects, promoting equitable access to clean energy, and ensuring rural and vulnerable communities are active beneficiaries and leaders in the transition.



2. Strengthen Community-Led Climate and Environmental Resilience:

Scale up nature-based solutions, promote sustainable urban and infrastructure development, and build local capacity to adapt to climate risks, ensuring communities are equipped to safeguard ecosystems, livelihoods, and cultural heritage.



3. Empower and Engage Communities in Decision-Making:

Create inclusive platforms and tools that enable young people, women, and marginalized groups to actively shape and influence policies, fostering broad-based support for equitable and sustainable development.



4. Foster Local Ownership for Sustainable Development:

Equip communities with the knowledge, skills, and resources to identify, design, and lead solutions to local challenges, enhancing their self-reliance and long-term resilience to global crises.



ABOUT AERC

AERC

Annual
Report
2025

The Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities (AERC GH) is a legally registered, youth-led, community-driven nonprofit organization based in Ghana, Africa. AERC was established and began its public activities in 2020. The organization's founding mission was to empower local communities and vulnerable people to develop innovative solutions for developmental challenges in Ghana and Africa. Since its inception, AERC has focused on the intersection of the environment, climate, and energy justice, empowering rural and marginalized communities to lead in shaping climate and development solutions. By the end of its first year, AERC was already engaged in local and international programs, including educating youth on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The organization operates with the core belief that local communities are champions in building a just, resilient, and sustainable future for all.

Our Mandate

Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities (AERC) operates with the mandate to work at the intersection of the environment, climate, and energy justice, specifically by empowering rural and marginalized communities in Ghana and Africa to lead in shaping climate and development solutions.



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The year 2025 marked a defining chapter in the growth and impact of the Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities (AERC). It was a year of deepened commitment, strategic consolidation, and renewed resolve to advance community-led solutions to some of the most pressing development and environmental challenges facing our rural and peri-urban communities.

Across our programs, AERC strengthened its focus on climate justice, sustainable livelihoods, environmental protection, and inclusive development. Guided by our Strategic Plan, we advanced advocacy on fossil fuel finance, expanded community engagement on plastic waste management and nature-based solutions, and laid important groundwork for scalable interventions in renewable energy, urban resilience, and community-led adaptation. At the heart of all our work remained a simple but powerful principle: communities must not only be beneficiaries of development, but active leaders in shaping their own futures.

None of this progress would have been possible without the trust and collaboration of our partners, the dedication of our staff and volunteers, and the resilience of the communities we serve. We are especially grateful to our development partners, local government authorities, civil society allies, and traditional leaders who continue to believe in AERC's mission and walk this journey with us. Your support has enabled us to translate ideas into action and vision into measurable impact.

As we reflect on the year, we also acknowledge the challenges encountered from resource constraints to the growing urgency of climate and socio-economic pressures. These realities have only reinforced our determination to work smarter, strengthen accountability, and deepen partnerships that deliver lasting results.

Looking ahead, AERC enters the next phase of its work with clarity of purpose and confidence in our collective ability to drive change. We remain committed to transparency, innovation, and community empowerment, and we will continue to amplify local voices in national and global conversations that shape development outcomes.

On behalf of the Board, management, staff, and volunteers of AERC, I extend my sincerest appreciation to all who supported us in 2025. Together, we are building resilient communities and advancing a more just and sustainable future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Desmond Kofi Foe Sena'. The signature is stylized and somewhat abstract, with many overlapping lines and loops.

Desmond Kofi Foe Sena
Executive Director

OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

The year 2025 marked a period of growth, resilience, and deeper community impact for Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities. Across our program pillars from climate justice advocacy and renewable energy transitions to community-led adaptation, biodiversity protection, and youth empowerment. 2025 was a year of strategic positioning and foundational progress, prioritizing technical capacity building, research, and policy advocacy across all pillars: Fossil Fuel Finance (FFF), Renewable Energy (RE), Nature-Based Solutions (NbS), Community-led Adaptation (CLA), and Urban and Infrastructure (U&I). While direct large-scale field implementation was limited due to funding gaps, the work accomplished established a robust pipeline for impactful execution in 2026.

Improved internal systems, staff capacity, and strategic planning under the new 2026–2030 Strategic Plan.

Enhanced community engagement through the World Cities Day documentary project and outreach for World Environment and Earth Day.

Achieved global advocacy visibility by representing Ghana’s vulnerable communities at ACS and moderating two side events at COP30.

Strengthened collaboration with ASHMA.

Produced and Published two press releases.

Secured an advocacy win at the Mission 300 Convening, leading to a key recommendation for a National Mission 300 Task Force with CSO representation to diversify clean cooking solutions beyond LPG.

Successfully organized the inaugural Youth Adaptation Day, mobilizing youth to lead local climate resilience planning.

Completed key research outputs, policy briefs, and evidence for national-level climate dialogues.

Successfully implemented major digital advocacy campaigns under the Fossil Fuel Finance and Renewable Energy pillars.

Our activities are structured around two main focus areas and supported by several strategic pillars:

ENERGY TRANSITION

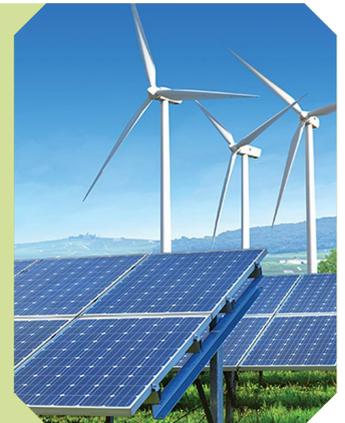
Fossil Fuel Accountability:

We push for public and private investments to move away from fossil fuels toward sustainable and just alternatives. By tracking and challenging harmful energy financing, we accelerate the shift to a low-carbon future.



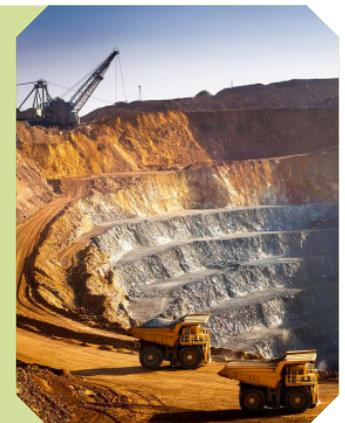
Renewable Energy:

Clean, affordable, and reliable energy is essential for poverty reduction and equitable development. We champion decentralized renewable energy systems that power homes, schools, and businesses, reducing fossil fuel dependence while creating economic opportunities in rural areas.



Critical Raw Materials:

The green transition relies on critical minerals, but extraction must not harm communities or the environment. We promote transparent, fair, and sustainable sourcing practices, ensuring benefits for local people and safeguarding ecosystems through responsible governance.



ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE

Community-Led Adaptation:

Strengthen local leadership and build adaptive capacity, ensuring grassroots knowledge informs policy and practice.



Nature-Based Solutions:

Restore degraded lands, preserve biodiversity, and promote adaptation strategies rooted in nature, which creates livelihood opportunities for all.



Urban & Infrastructure Development:

Promote inclusive, climate-resilient infrastructure, including urban planning with green spaces and adaptive designs.



Plastics & Waste Management:

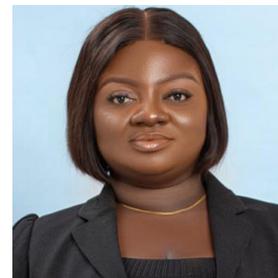
Reduce plastic use, promote sustainable consumption, and advocate for circular economy initiatives to protect ecosystems and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



MEET THE TEAM



DESMOND SENA KOFI FOE
Executive Director



YVETTE AHENKORAH
Urban & Infrastructure Prg. Lead



CARLISLE NAA DODUA DODOO
Community-Led Adaptation Prg. Lead



NICHOLAS SELADY SEKPEY
Renewable Energy Prg. Lead



SANDRA EFUA ATTAH DICKSON
Nature-Based Solutions Prg. Lead

KEY POLICIES OR PROCEDURES:

AERC upholds strong governance, ethical standards, and safeguarding measures through its core policies. The Constitution provides the legal and organizational framework guiding AERC’s operations. The Financial and Accounting Policy ensures transparency, accountability, and responsible use of resources. The Child Safeguard Policy and the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment Policy protect vulnerable beneficiaries and staff while promoting a safe and respectful environment. The Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy, Code of Conduct, and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy reinforce AERC’s commitment to integrity, equity, and ethical conduct across all programmes and activities.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

COP30

The Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities participated in COP30 in Belém, Brazil, engaging in strategic partner meetings, youth-led adaptation dialogues, and high-level advocacy spaces. Through these engagements, AERC advanced its work on strengthening frontline and rural community leadership, promoting inclusive participation, and reinforcing the importance of equitable representation and language access in global climate negotiations.

TECHNICAL RESEARCH:

Completed a Solar Radiation Map for Sagnerigu, Northern Ghana, to guide clean energy planning.



POLICY ADVOCACY:

Successfully advocated for the formal establishment of a National Mission 300 Task Force with CSO representation to diversify clean cooking solutions beyond LPG.



COMMUNITY VISIBILITY:

Led three major community engagement and outreach activities for World Environment Day (Tema New Town), World Earth Day (School Outreach) and World Cities Day (Afienuya).



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT:

Published the Assessment Report on Youth Awareness and Engagement with Ghana's NDCs, surveying ~100 youth and highlighting significant awareness gaps and barriers (62% citing lack of information).

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Developed eight high-quality project proposals across all pillars, creating a robust pipeline for 2026.



MILESTONES REACHED

◆ Institutional Strengthening & Strategic Planning

Completed internal review and capacity-building activities under the new 2026–2030 Strategic Plan.

Upgraded internal systems to improve operational efficiency and programmatic monitoring.



◆ Global Advocacy & Visibility

Represented Ghana’s vulnerable communities at African Climate Summit (ACS).

Secured advocacy win at Mission 300 Convening, resulting in a key recommendation for a National Mission 300 Task Force with CSO representation.

◆ Renewable Energy & Technical Outputs

Completed the Solar Radiation Map for Sagnerigu, Northern Ghana to guide clean energy planning.

Implemented targeted digital advocacy campaigns under the Fossil Fuel Finance and Renewable Energy pillars.



◆ **Community Engagement**

Produced and disseminated the World Cities Day documentary.

Conducted outreach campaigns for World Environment Day and Earth Day.

Organized the inaugural Youth Adaptation Day, mobilizing youth for local climate resilience planning.

◆ **Partnerships & Collaboration**

Strengthened collaboration with ASHMA through joint initiatives and knowledge-sharing.



◆ **Research, Policy, and Evidence Generation**

Completed key research outputs, policy briefs, and evidence submissions for national-level climate dialogues.

◆ **Media & Public Communication**

Produced and published two press releases on major initiatives and outcomes.



RENEWABLE ENERGY PILLAR



- ◆ Approximately **70 community** members and youth reached for the NDC Youth Awareness Assessment Report.
- ◆ Participated in ACS
- ◆ Conducted a Solar Radiation Analysis for Sagnerigu using ArcMap.

- ◆ Conducted the Assessment Report on Youth Awareness and Engagement with Ghana's NDCs.



- ◆ Participated in a Carbon Accounting training.

Co-signed a letter with CSOs on Article 6.4 carbon market rules. ◆



- ◆ Participated in the Future of Energy Conference, WACEE Conference, Africa Climate Summit, and Mission 300 Convening.

- ◆ **Produced two major policy briefs**



- ◆ **Led an active digital advocacy campaign (20+ outputs)**



- ◆ **Developed a comprehensive Five-Year Strategic Plan (2025–2029)**

- ◆ **Increased public literacy on fossil finance risks and strengthened AERC’s credibility in global climate finance spaces.**

- ◆ **Produced 5 professional articles on biodiversity, wildlife, and climate awareness.**
- ◆ **Conducted technical desk research on Rain Gardens, Mangroves Restoration, and Urban Green Spaces/Heat-Health linkages.**



- ◆ **Organized community outreach for World Environment Day (Tema New Town) and World Earth Day (School Outreach).**
- ◆ **Developed 3 project proposals/ concept notes (Coastal NbS, School Greening, Youth-Led Adaptation).**

◆ Produced 2 thought leadership articles.

◆ Conducted desk research on Bridging Traditional and Scientific Knowledge and Adaptation Strategies for Pastoralist and Farming Communities.



◆ Collaborated with 350GROC to facilitate the donation of solar lamps.

◆ Engaged with ASHMA on its Medium-Term Development Plan and CDKN on future collaboration opportunities.

◆ **Participated in
COP30**

◆ **Executed the World Cities
Day project documenting
urban heat impacts**



◆ **Initiated engagement
with the Ashaiman
Municipal Assembly
(ASHMA).**

◆ **Successfully represented
Ghana's urban
challenges at the global
level**



QUANTITATIVE IMPACT:

Research Outputs:
5+ Policy Briefs

Advocacy Outputs:
50+ social media advocacy outputs
5+ Articles published

Policy Gaps Identified:
74.2%
of youth unaware of NDCs.

Project Proposals Developed:
10+ high-quality concept notes

QUALITATIVE IMPACT:

Policy Influence: Successful articulation of accountability gaps led to the recommendation for a National Mission 300 Task Force with CSO representation, promoting a multi-fuel clean cooking approach beyond LPG.

Technical Guidance: The solar radiation analysis is a technical output essential for guiding practical and accurate clean energy planning in Sagnerigu.

Community Buy-in: Engagement in Tema New Town demonstrated that informal sectors and market women are eager to participate if the approach is inclusive and practical.

Youth Empowerment: School outreach confirmed that students are highly receptive agents of change, reinforcing the need to center youth leadership in future projects.

Partnership for Resilience: Established a formal partnership with 350GROC to donate solar lamps, promoting clean energy access and enhancing household safety in vulnerable communities.

Urban Advocacy: The U&I pillar's World Cities Day project used video storytelling and community narratives to bring the adverse effects of urban heat to national and international attention.

We sincerely thank our funders and strategic partners including government institutions, civil society coalitions, international development partners, and community based organizations whose financial and technical support enables our work and impact. We also acknowledge our staff, pillar leads, volunteers, and fellows for their dedication and professionalism. Above all, we remain guided by the resilience, leadership, and lived experiences of the communities we serve.

Funders and Partners



GLOBAL
CENTER ON
ADAPTATION

Description of contributions:

CSO collaboration led to advocacy wins on carbon market rules and clean cooking diversification.

ASHMA engagement supported and contributed to the development of its Medium-Term Development Plan.

AERC's participation at COP30 was made possible through the support of the Global Governance Fund (GGF), enabling effective engagement in international climate policy dialogues and coalition-building.

350GROC partnership facilitated the donation of solar lamps to vulnerable communities.

Partnered with UN-Habitat on World Cities Day documenting urban heat impacts

CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

CHALLENGES	PILLARS	KEY LESSONS LEARNED
Limited Field Implementation Funding	NbS, CLA, U&I	Technical foundation work (research and proposal development) is essential for securing future grants. Must prioritize fundraising for a low-cost, high-visibility pilot.
Youth Exclusion & Awareness Gap	RE, CLA	The strong commitment of youth is undermined by lack of information (62%) and financial constraints Institutionalizing platforms for inclusion is critical.
Fossil Finance Data & Policy Resistance	FF,RE,CRM	Absence of early consultation exposed accountability gaps in national energy planning (LPG over-reliance). Simplified messaging and coalition advocacy are necessary to counter competing national narratives.
Weak Local Policy Integration	U&I, CLA	Sustained engagement and leveraging local leadership (e.g., in Tema New Town) is essential for acceptance and ownership. Interventions must be co-designed with communities.
Technical Capacity for Spatial Data	RE, NBS	Technical tools like GIS are essential for evidence-based planning (e.g., Solar Radiation Map). Partnerships with universities are needed to generate local soil/climate data.

UPCOMING INITIATIVES

AERC will commence full-scale implementation of the first year of its Five-Year Strategic Plan (2026–2030). Key initiatives planned for 2026 include:

Launching core activities across all Seven strategic pillars, including renewable energy pilots, community-led adaptation initiatives, nature-based restoration programmes, critical raw materials baseline assessments, and fossil fuel finance monitoring.

Establishing Community Climate Action Committees in priority districts and expanding community monitoring systems for energy, mining, and infrastructure impacts.

Rolling out a harmonised Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework and publishing periodic policy briefs and research products grounded in community-generated evidence.

Strengthening partnerships with district assemblies, civil society coalitions, private-sector actors, and national regulatory bodies to advance inclusive climate and energy governance.

UPCOMING INITIATIVES

In 2026, AERC aims to achieve the following organisation-wide goals:

Deepen community mobilisation and leadership by empowering youth groups, women's collectives, and rural advocacy platforms.

Advance evidence-based advocacy to influence national energy transition processes, critical mineral governance, and climate finance allocation.

Scale nature-based solutions and climate-smart agriculture models to enhance local resilience.

Expand decentralised renewable energy access through targeted pilots and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Strengthen internal systems, governance structures, staff capacity, digital tools, and safeguarding mechanisms to support long-term organisational growth.

Secure diversified, multi-year funding to sustain implementation of strategic pillars.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

AERC's strategic priorities for 2026 are guided by its long-term vision and commitment to community-led climate and development action. The organisation will focus on:

Pillar Acceleration: Rolling out high-impact activities under each of the six pillars, ensuring measurable progress by year-end.

Evidence and Research Strengthening: Generating timely data, analysis, and knowledge products to drive advocacy and programming.

Community-Centred Approaches: Embedding participation, rights awareness, and local ownership in all interventions.

Policy Influence: Expanding engagement at local, national, regional, and global levels to shape energy, environment, urban development, and climate resilience policies.

Institutional Consolidation: Enhancing governance, financial management, HR systems, and operational efficiency.

Resource Mobilisation: Pursuing strategic funding opportunities and partnerships to ensure sustainability and programme scalability.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We extend our deepest appreciation to our dedicated partners, staff, volunteers, and fellows for their unwavering commitment and creativity in driving impact. We also thank the communities we serve; women, youth, farmers, traditional leaders, and schoolchildren whose resilience and insights remain the guiding force behind our work.



 @aercgh

 Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities

 @ghanaaerc

 Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities

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