

ANNUAL REPORT 2025





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2025



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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



DR. RASHEED DRAMAN

Reflecting on 2025, I am proud of the progress the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA) has made. Through focused effort and strategic partnerships, we delivered measurable contributions to democratic governance across Africa - reaffirming that strong, responsive, and inclusive parliaments are achievable.

In a complex political environment, ACEPA has remained a trusted partner to legislatures, supporting them in addressing emerging challenges and better representing citizens' priorities and aspirations.

Our flagship initiatives recorded significant milestones. The Inclusive Legislatures for Gender Responsive Policies (ILGRP) project advanced gender-responsive legislation and budgeting in Ghana, Kenya, and Togo. In Ghana, the Data for Accountability Project (DAP), strengthened Parliament's use of data to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals and enhance accountability. Our collaboration with UNICEF continues to promote child-rights legislation, while the International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief (IPPFoRB) initiative supports Freedom of

Religion or Belief. And through our new collaboration with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, ACEPA is beginning to support political inclusion and consensus building in Ghana.

Throughout the year, I represented ACEPA in high-level dialogues on electoral integrity and evidence-based policymaking. Across these platforms, one message stood out: rebuilding trust between citizens and the state is essential - and Parliament remains the central institution for achieving peace, progress, and prosperity. Our work is ultimately about people - ensuring parliamentary decisions reflect the needs and aspirations of women, men, and youth across our communities.

This progress is a collective achievement. I thank the dedicated ACEPA team whose expertise and commitment drive our impact. I also extend sincere appreciation to our partners and funders - Global Affairs Canada, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, STAR Ghana, UNICEF Ghana, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, the World Bank and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs - as well as the Parliaments of Ghana, Kenya, and Togo and our civil society collaborators. You are co-creators of a more democratic future.

As we look ahead to 2026, our resolve remains strong. We will continue listening, innovating, and supporting parliaments to deliver the progress Africa deserves.

Thank you for being part of this journey.



WHO WE ARE

The African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA) is an African not-for-profit parliamentary development organisation incorporated in Ghana in 2012. ACEPA was established with the sole purpose of making the people of Africa realize their full aspirations and enabling communities to thrive. To achieve this, ACEPA is passionately dedicated to building the capacity of African parliaments, elected representative bodies at all levels of governance, and Civil Society Organisations for them to enable the development aspirations of African peoples and communities. ACEPA is therefore committed to supporting national and sub-national legislatures and representative assemblies across the continent to become more effective and serves as a Centre of Excellence for improving parliamentary practice on the African continent.

ACEPA has supported more than 20 parliaments across Africa, including sub-regional and continental parliaments. ACEPA is headquartered in Accra, Ghana and currently has project teams based in Kenya and Togo. Our core areas of work include Evidence Informed Policy Making & Sustainable Development, Gender Equality & Social Inclusion and Parliamentary Reform.



OUR VISION

We envision an Africa where parliaments enable peace, progress and prosperity for all.



OUR MISSION

We work to strengthen African parliaments to be more effective and impactful representative bodies.



OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS

ACEPA's work for the next five years is anchored on three strategic priorities.

01

Strategic Priority 1:

Parliamentary Development- to build and strengthen the capacity of parliaments at all levels.

Strategic Priority 2:

Parliamentary Engagement- to facilitate effective and transformational parliaments towards the achievement of national and global development goals.

02

03

Strategic Priority 3:

Organisation Development- to improve and strengthen ACEPA's structure, systems and culture through organisation development and improved institutional governance.

October 2015 – ACEPA Commences support to the Pan African Parliament (PAP).

August 2016 – ACEPA enters a partnership with INASP to promote evidence use in the Parliaments of Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe. This marked the beginning of ACEPA's Evidence Informed Policy Making (EIPM) workstream.

March 2017 – ACEPA signed by the World Bank to support the Parliament of Djibouti.

September 2017 – ACEPA and partners collaborate on a two-year project to enhance parliament's engagement with citizens, with funding from STAR-Ghana.

April 2018 – ACEPA partners the Commonwealth Initiative for the Freedom of Religion or Belief (CIFoRB) to hold a Commonwealth West Africa Forum on Freedom of Religion or Belief. This marked the beginning of ACEPA's FoRB and Human Rights workstream.

May 2019 – The World Bank contracts ACEPA to provide support to the Parliament of the Central African Republic.

June 2019 – ACEPA partners the Ghana Statistical Service and INASP on the Data for Accountability Project to strengthen the use of statistical data in the Parliament of Ghana.

November 2020 – ACEPA partners the University of Oxford and the Church of England on the Freedom of Religion or Belief Leadership Network (FoRBLN). The initiative targeted MPs in Ghana, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Tanzania and The Gambia.

March 2022 – ACEPA partners the Parliamentary Centre, Canada, to implement the Inclusive Legislatures for Gender Responsive Policies project which supports the Parliament of Ghana, Kenya and Togo.

June 2025 – ACEPA enters a partnership with the Swiss Confederation to pursue a project on Political Inclusion and Consensus Building in the Parliament of Ghana.

August 2025 – ACEPA enters a partnership with UNICEF Ghana to enhance the capacity of the Parliament of Ghana to promote children’s rights.

Aside from the milestones listed above, since inception to date, ACEPA has also supported several Parliaments upon demand from the Parliaments themselves. These include the Parliaments of Botswana, Malawi, Uganda, The Gambia, the ECOWAS Parliament and the East African Legislative Assembly.





OUR 2025 IMPACT IN STORIES

A Law That Turns Safety Nets into Rights: Ghana Passes the Social Protection Bill, 2025

For years, Ghana's social protection system was guided by strong intentions but lacked a solid legal foundation. Flagship programmes such as the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP), the School Feeding Programme, and NHIS exemptions supported millions, but their implementation relied on executive policy decisions rather than enforceable law. As a result, social protection remained vulnerable to political changes, inconsistent funding, and delivery gaps.

This vulnerability had significant consequences in a country where millions, especially women, children, older adults, persons with disabilities, and those in extreme poverty, rely on social protection as a lifeline. Without legal guarantees, access to support was often inconsistent and subject to policy changes rather than rights-based entitlements.

Addressing this gap required ongoing institutional engagement, coordination of technical expertise, and collaboration between Parliament and civil society. As part of its mandate to strengthen parliamentary processes and promote inclusive governance, the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA) facilitated efforts to advance a comprehensive Social Protection Bill, which had stalled for nearly a decade due to changes in government and shifting priorities.

By late 2024, the Bill faced yet another round of failed passage as the tenure of the 8th Parliament came to its end. When the Bill was tabled before the 8th Parliament in December 2024, ACEPA recognised the urgency of the need to facilitate momentum towards its passage. It convened an engagement between Parliament, civil society organisations, and women's rights groups. This enabled a structured review of the draft Bill and the preparation of a memorandum reflecting citizen and sectoral perspectives.

However, the December 2024 elections led to the Bill lapsing at the close of the 8th Parliament.

The Bill's reintroduction in the 9th Parliament in 2025 provided a renewed opportunity. ACEPA-supported partners built on the previous work, strengthening their submissions to ensure continued advocacy and technical input. Collaborating with the Parliamentary Committee on Gender, Children and Social Welfare, these efforts enriched deliberations and informed key legislative refinements.

On 31 July 2025, Parliament passed the Social Protection Bill into law, marking a significant milestone for Ghana. The Act includes stronger provisions on sustainability, equity, and institutional coordination, such as establishing a Social Protection Fund and clearer safeguards for programmes like LEAP, School Feeding, Capitation Grants, and NHIS exemptions.

This achievement highlights the importance of sustained parliamentary support, evidence-based advocacy, and collaboration. While no single actor can claim exclusive credit, the process shows how ACEPA's facilitation of civil society engagement, support to parliamentary committees, and technical input contributed to the improvements in the final Act. ACEPA's unique value lies in its ability to strengthen these processes through non-partisan research, capacity-building workshops, and the facilitation of dialogue among key stakeholders.

The passage of the Social Protection Act is more than a policy success; it is a step toward institutionalising dignity, equity, and accountability for Ghana's most vulnerable populations. Ongoing collaboration between Parliament, civil society, and development partners will be essential as implementation begins.

Under the Inclusive Legislatures for Gender-Responsive Policies (ILGRP) Project, funded by Global Affairs Canada, ACEPA, through its Executive Director and the ILGRP Ghana team, together with its partner, The Parliamentary Centre, acknowledges the financial support of Global Affairs Canada, which contributed to the passage of this Bill.

We further acknowledge the significant contributions and collective efforts of the Parliament of Ghana, civil society organizations, groups, and individuals toward the passage of the Act.

From Data to Decisions: How Visualisation Skills Are Strengthening Evidence Use in Ghana's Parliament

When parliamentary debates are underway, Members of Parliament often have just minutes, not hours, to grasp complex evidence before decisions are made. Yet for years, much of the data prepared to support their work was buried in dense tables, technical language, and lengthy briefs that were difficult to absorb in the heat of debate.

This gap between evidence and decision is narrowing in Ghana's Parliament. The reason is a data visualisation training facilitated by the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs

(ACEPA) for staff of Ghana's Parliamentary Research Department, with support from the Hewlett Foundation.

For Muftaw Abdulai, a Research Officer in Parliament, the training fundamentally changed how he provides support to MPs in their oversight and legislative roles. As he recounts, "Many of our assignments are time-sensitive". So delays in MPs' ability to easily access, understand and apply information to their debates and decisions can be costly.

Thanks to the training, the MPs Muftaw services now have access to easily discernible information because of his data visualization skills.

"For instance, I created a visualization for the ranking member of the Youth and Sports Committee, and he was profoundly impressed. We subsequently became close collaborators."

Since the training, Muftaw has produced concise infographics and charts that have been used in committee discussions, allowing MPs to quickly grasp trends, compare scenarios, and ask sharper, more targeted oversight questions. What once required lengthy verbal explanations can now be understood at a glance.

This shift is more than a technical improvement; it is a democratic necessity. When evidence is presented clearly and accessibly, MPs are better equipped to make informed decisions on budgets, laws, and policies that directly affect the lives of over 30 million Ghanaians. Poorly communicated data risks being ignored; well-visualised evidence drives better scrutiny, accountability, and outcomes.

By strengthening how evidence is translated into insight, ACEPA is helping to ensure that parliamentary decisions are guided not by guesswork or time pressure, but by clear, credible, and actionable data.

Laying the Foundation for a Gender-Inclusive Parliamentary Workplace

Effective parliaments rely not only on strong laws but also on inclusive internal systems that support their staff. Until recently, Ghana's Parliamentary Administration lacked key gender-sensitive human resource policies that facilitate inclusive work spaces. Policies on childcare, harassment, and gender equality were non-existent, despite Parliament's leadership in advancing gender-responsive legislation nationally.

ACEPA's Inclusive Legislatures for Gender-Responsive Policies (ILGRP) Project has supported the Parliament of Ghana to address this gap. Its technical and facilitation support to the Parliamentary Administration has resulted in the development and validation of three critical human resource policy documents:

- a Child Day Care Policy, intended to support Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff with caregiving responsibilities and promote work-life balance;


- Anti-Harassment Policy, developed for the parliamentary service to prevent and address workplace harassment and misconduct; and
- a Gender Policy, to integrate gender equality principles throughout parliamentary administrative structures and practices, and parliament as an institution.

The development and validation of these policies represent a significant milestone for an institution employing over 1000 staff, including women and men in administrative, research, and support roles. The validation process incorporated input from multiple departments, reinforcing institutional ownership and readiness for adoption.

While final adoption rests with the Parliamentary Administration, these validated drafts provide Parliament with concrete tools to enhance workplace safety, equity, and inclusion. More broadly, they signal a shift toward institutionalizing gender equality within Parliament’s internal operations, extending the commitment to fairness and inclusion beyond legislative debates.

This intervention was implemented through the Global Affairs Canada funded ILGRP Project with Parliamentary Centre, and aligns with ACEPA’s Strategic Priority One; Parliamentary Development, which prioritizes strengthening parliamentary institutions, systems, and administrative capacity..





OUR 2025: WHAT THE NUMBERS SAY

Parliamentary Engagements

559 Members of Parliament: ACEPA has engaged 559 MPs across Ghana, Kenya, and Togo on their core roles of legislation, representation, and oversight.

Parliamentary Staff Development

2,146 parliamentary staff beneficiaries: In Ghana, Kenya and Togo, ACEPA has delivered targeted capacity building on gender-responsive budgeting, gender-responsive lawmaking, legislative research, policy brief development, and citizen engagement to 2146 parliamentary staff.

Institutional Strengthening

4 parliaments: ACEPA has supported the parliaments of Ghana, Kenya, Togo, and Malawi to strengthen their resilience and effectiveness.

Citizen Engagements

1,515 citizens: ACEPA has facilitated contact between MPs and over citizens.

753 CSO members: ACEPA has engaged and partnered 753 CSO agents in legislative advocacy and capacity building.

3 parliamentary oversight visits: ACEPA has facilitated visits by parliamentary oversight committees to communities.

5 fora: ACEPA has facilitated five fora to promote dialogue between parliamentarians, citizens, and civil society organisations.



OUR STRATEGIC PILLAR HIGHLIGHTS

New initiatives launched

Enhancing the Capacity of Parliament to Address Children's Issues Project

ACEPA in partnership with UNICEF Ghana launched a new initiative during the year dubbed “Enhancing the Capacity of Parliament to Address Children’s Issues”. The project seeks to strengthen the capacity of the Parliament of Ghana, and individual MPs to effectively integrate child rights considerations into core legislative, representative, budgetary and oversight functions. It responds to the critical role Parliament plays in shaping policies, laws and public expenditure decisions that directly affect the welfare, protection and development of children.

Specifically, the project strengthens Parliament’s capacity to review laws and budgets through a child rights lens, enhances MPs’ oversight of child-focused programmes, and supports identified child rights champions to effectively advocate for children’s issues in the House and at committee level. Through targeted capacity building and evidence-based engagements, the project equips MPs with the knowledge and tools needed to influence policy and budget decisions, ultimately contributing to improved outcomes for children in Ghana.

Political Inclusion and Consensus Building Project

The Political Inclusion and Consensus Building project is another initiative that commenced in 2025. The project seeks to strengthen Ghana’s democratic governance by promoting dialogue, cooperation, and inclusive decision-making among political parties and Parliament. ACEPA is implementing the project with funding from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). It focuses on supporting political party leaders, youth, women, and parliamentary institutions to play constructive roles in reducing political tensions.

Major achievements by strategic pillars

ILGRP and the Rhythm of Advocacy: How a Senator's Voice Gained Power to Strengthen Disability Rights in Kenya

Senator Crystal Asige's story starts in her childhood home in Mombasa, Kenya, where, only in her twenties, she gradually lost her sight to Glaucoma. In its place, she found her voice.

For more than a decade, Crystal used her talents as a singer, songwriter, and music producer to champion the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs). She led petitions to policymakers, raised awareness through her art, and spoke across local, national, and international platforms. Her fierce dedication led to her nomination in 2022 by the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) to the Senate of Kenya, where she represented PWDs and Special Interest Groups.

Transforming Legislation Through Leadership and Collaboration

Upon entering Parliament, Senator Asige focused her efforts on updating the outdated Persons with Disabilities Act of 2003. She spearheaded the development of the transformative Persons with Disabilities Bill 2023—engaging communities, county leaders, and national stakeholders to ensure the legislation reflected lived realities.

ILGRP's Role in Strengthening the Bill

As the bill advanced to the National Assembly in 2024, ACEPA's Inclusive Legislatures for Gender-Responsive Policies (ILGRP) project (a partnership with the Parliamentary Centre and Global Affairs Canada) played a pivotal role in broadening and deepening the consultation process. ACEPA's ILGRP partnered Senator Asige by convening policy dialogues, supporting technical reviews, and gathering extensive community-driven recommendations to address gaps in the draft bill.

In November 2024, ILGRP facilitated a coordinated submission from organizations of persons with disabilities, civil society organizations, and Women's Rights Groups to the National Assembly's Departmental Committee on Social Protection, chaired by Hon. Alice Ng'ang'a. When the committee's report was tabled in Parliament in December 2024, it included many of the recommendations made through these consultations, demonstrating how ILGRP helped connect grassroots insights to national lawmaking.

A New Era for Kenyans Living with Disabilities

The PWD Bill 2023 introduced far-reaching reforms, including:

- Accessibility and reasonable accommodation,
- Anti-discrimination measures,
- Affirmative action for representation,

- A National Disability Development Fund,
- Inclusive education for all, and
- Stronger national disability data for planning and budgeting.

In March 2025, the National Assembly passed the bill. Two months later, in May 2025, President H.E. Dr. William Samoei Ruto signed it into law.

For the 2.2% of Kenyans living with disabilities—over one million people—this Act marks a turning point. It promises greater access to education, health care, employment, accessible buildings and transport, and reduces the burden on families caring for persons with disabilities.

A Partnership for Lasting Change

Senator Crystal Asige’s leadership sparked a new chapter for disability rights in Kenya. Through its convening power, technical support, and commitment to inclusive lawmaking, The ILGRP project and key advocates have helped to transform community voices into legislative action—ensuring that this landmark Act reflects the real priorities and aspirations of persons with disabilities across the country. This intervention was made possible through the Global Affairs Canada funded ILGRP project implemented by the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA) and Parliamentary Centre.

Building ACEPA for the Future

In 2025, ACEPA took decisive steps to strengthen its internal systems and position itself as a future-ready institution capable of delivering lasting impact on parliamentary governance in Ghana and beyond.

Recognizing that strong institutions require clear direction, sustainable financing, and effective public engagement, ACEPA developed three foundational frameworks: a five-year Strategic Plan (2025–2029), a Resource Mobilization Plan, and a Communication Strategy. Together, these tools now provide a coherent roadmap for organizational growth, programmatic focus, partnership development, and visibility.

The Strategic Plan has sharpened ACEPA’s long-term vision and aligned staff and partners around clear priorities for institutional reform, parliamentary strengthening, and democratic governance support. Complementing this, the Resource Mobilization Plan has improved the organization’s readiness to diversify funding sources and pursue strategic partnerships, reducing reliance on short-term project opportunities. The Communication Strategy is helping ACEPA better articulate its impact, strengthen stakeholder trust, and amplify its voice in national and regional governance conversations.

A major milestone in this transformation journey was the inauguration of a new Board, providing renewed governance oversight, strategic guidance, and institutional stewardship. The Board’s establishment has strengthened accountability structures and created a stronger bridge between strategic ambition and management execution.

These reforms mark an important shift in ACEPA's evolution - from a high-performing programme organization to a more resilient, strategically governed institution fit for the future. With stronger systems, clearer direction, and enhanced leadership, ACEPA is now better positioned to scale its influence, sustain impact, and respond to emerging governance challenges across Africa.

Taking Child Rights from the Margins to the Centre of Parliamentary Action

For many years, child rights concerns in Ghana have often been discussed in policy circles without sufficient connection to the lived realities of children, particularly those in rural communities. In 2025, the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA), in partnership with UNICEF Ghana, helped change this narrative by bringing Members of Parliament face-to-face with the everyday challenges affecting children's rights.

Under the initiative, MPs participated in field visits to the Bibiani and Ayensuano districts, where they engaged directly with children, parents and community leaders. These visits exposed legislators to pressing issues including barriers to education, child protection risks, inadequate social services, and the unique vulnerabilities faced by children in underserved rural settings.

By moving parliamentary engagement beyond committee rooms and into communities, the initiative created a powerful bridge between evidence, lived experience, and legislative action. MPs returned with deeper insight into how child rights violations manifest at the local level and a stronger appreciation of the need to mainstream children's issues across debates, oversight, budget scrutiny, and lawmaking.

This marked a bold step in embedding child rights across Ghana's legislative ecosystem. The field immersion strengthened parliamentary ownership of child-focused development issues and laid the foundation for more informed advocacy, stronger oversight of child protection policies, and greater responsiveness to the voices of children in national decision-making.

Most importantly, the initiative helped shift child rights from being seen as a sectoral concern to a cross-cutting national governance priority, positioning Parliament as a stronger champion for the wellbeing and future of Ghana's children.

From Data Scarcity to Evidence-Driven Parliamentary Action - How ACEPA is helping transform data use in the Parliament of Ghana

One of the persistent challenges in parliamentary governance is the limited use of credible data and evidence to support lawmaking, oversight, and representation. Recognizing this gap, the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA) partnered with the Parliament of Ghana to institutionalize a sustainable system for evidence-informed decision-making.

Through the DAP project, ACEPA supported the establishment of an SDG Desk at the research department, which aligned with Parliament's own vision. Building on this vision, Parliament itself subsequently established a Data Management Unit, further

strengthening its institutional framework and capacity. What began as a modest unit with only two staff members has now evolved into a growing institutional department with seven dedicated professionals, providing a strong foundation for data generation, management, and use across parliamentary business.

Building on this progress, ACEPA's support in the past year focused on strengthening the department's systems and technical capacity. This included facilitating the development of a Data Sharing Policy, a critical governance framework that now guides how data is accessed, shared, protected, and used within Parliament. The policy has improved internal coordination and laid the groundwork for more consistent evidence flows between parliamentary departments and committees.

In parallel, ACEPA delivered targeted capacity-building support to staff of the department, equipping them with practical skills in data management, evidence synthesis, and the production of user-friendly parliamentary knowledge products.

The results are already visible.

Over the reporting period, the department successfully produced 13 parliamentary fact sheets on priority national issues. These concise evidence briefs were specifically designed to support Members of Parliament in debates, committee work, and plenary interventions.

Most significantly, two statements delivered on the floor of the House were directly informed by these fact sheets, demonstrating a clear shift from data production to actual legislative use. This marks an important step in embedding a culture of evidence-based parliamentary discourse, where MPs are increasingly able to rely on credible data to frame national issues, shape public debate, and strengthen oversight.

Beyond the numbers, this progress signals a deeper institutional change: Parliament is gradually moving from ad hoc information use to a more structured and sustainable evidence ecosystem.

ACEPA's continued partnership with Parliament is therefore not only building technical systems but also helping shape a new culture of data-driven governance, where better evidence leads to better decisions and stronger democratic accountability.

Why This Matters

This intervention demonstrates how strategic institutional support can move beyond short-term training to create lasting systems for evidence use in Parliament. By strengthening the Data Management Department, ACEPA is helping the Parliament of Ghana become a more effective, informed, and responsive democratic institution.



OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

THE WIND BENEATH OUR WINGS

ACEPA's work is made possible through the generous support of our donors and the collaborative commitment of our institutional partners. Together, we form an ecosystem dedicated to strengthening democratic governance across Africa.

Funders

Global Affairs Canada

ILGRP Project



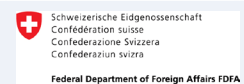
The International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief (IPPFoRB)

Freedom of Religion or Belief



SWISS Embassy Ghana

Political Inclusion and Consensus Building Project



UNICEF Ghana

Enhancing the Capacity of Parliament to Address Children's Issues



Hewlett Foundation

Data for Accountability Project



Institutional partners

The Parliamentary Centre

ILGRP Project



Ghana Statistical Service

Data for Accountability Project



Parliament of Kenya

Beneficiary Parliament - ILGRP



Parliament of Togo

Beneficiary Parliament - ILGRP



Parliament of Ghana

ILGRP, Data for Accountability, Child Rights and Consensus Building projects





WHAT OUR PARTNERS SAY



DEBORAH RISI TAYO AKAKPO
GENDER STUDIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS
DOCUMENTATION CENTRE, GHANA

For the past three years, the Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre has been part of ACEPA's Inclusive Legislatures for Gender-Responsive Policies (ILGRP) project. What began as participation in an initiative has evolved into a transformative institutional shift.

Through ACEPA, the Centre's staff have significantly strengthened their capacity to engage Parliament more strategically and effectively. They now better understand how laws are enacted, which parliamentary committees to approach, who the key actors are, and at what stage engagement is most impactful. This deeper institutional knowledge has enabled the organisation to scrutinize gender-responsive laws and national budgets with greater precision and confidence.

With a strengthened gender lens, the team now critically analyzes policies and budgets, develops evidence-based recommendations, and contributes constructively to legislative review processes. Their engagement with Parliament has shifted from occasional interactions to sustained, informed participation.

Importantly, the impact has not been limited to those directly involved in the project. Staff members trained under ILGRP have cascaded their knowledge internally, building colleagues' capacity who did not attend project engagements. This internal multiplier effect has enhanced the organization's overall effectiveness.

The ripple effect extends further. Through its community-based "combat interventions," the Centre integrates insights gained from ACEPA into grassroots education on gender issues. Young feminist groups and community networks now benefit from a stronger understanding of parliamentary processes and gender-responsive governance.

Beyond capacity building, ACEPA has fostered collaboration. The Centre has aligned with like-minded civil society organizations to collectively analyze issues through a gender lens and develop joint solutions that advance equity and social inclusion.

We look to the future with excitement about the prospect of more impact through our collaboration with ACEPA.



HON. N'TEFE BAWOMA, MP.
MEMBER OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
IN THE PARLIAMENT OF TOGO

When the ILGRP project began, I was the linchpin of the National Assembly, head of the committee division, working behind the scenes to support parliamentarians in their legislative work. I understood how Parliament functioned. What I did not fully understand was how deeply gender was missing from it.

That changed.

Over three years of training, ACEPA and the ILGRP project did not just build my knowledge, they rekindled something in me. The tools, the guides, the gender-responsive budgeting manuals, the frameworks for analysing legislation through a gender lens, all of it lit a fire that I could not ignore. I found myself not just supporting the fight for gender equality in Parliament, but wanting to be part of it.

So I made a decision. I crossed the line that separates administration from politics. I stepped forward as a politician, an activist, and a decision-maker, because I knew that the change I wanted to see needed people on the inside who understood both the mechanics of Parliament and the urgency of gender equality.

Today, the difference is visible. Laws are no longer examined in isolation, they are analysed for their impact on women, girls, and vulnerable groups before they are passed. As a member of the Finance Committee, I approach the national budget differently. I ask different questions. I see what was invisible before, the gaps, the assumptions, the places where gender was simply not considered.

The ILGRP project has also strengthened collaboration between parliamentarians, committee assistants, and civil society organisations, building a network of accountability that extends beyond the chamber and into communities across the country.

I am proud to be a champion of gender equality in Parliament. And I am committed to ensuring that what ACEPA helped us build does not end when the project does — because the momentum we have created belongs to all of us.

With sincere gratitude to ACEPA for a project that changed not just how I work, but who I am.



OMAR SEIDU
AG. DEPUTY GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN
— GHANA STATISTICAL SERVICE

The partnership between the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) and the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA) has been deeply enriching and mutually beneficial.

Through our collaboration, we have strengthened the bridge between data production and evidence-informed policymaking, ensuring that statistical insights meaningfully support parliamentary oversight and legislative effectiveness.

ACEPA's commitment to continuously enhancing the capacity of parliamentary actors - i.e. Members of Parliament and staff of the Parliamentary Service - has complemented the mandate of GSS to promote a culture of data use in governance.

Together, we continue to demonstrate how strong and sustained institutional collaboration between a national statistical office and a civil society organisation can advance evidence-based policy formulation, transparency, accountability, and impactful national development. ACEPA's contributions to good governance among CSOs in Ghana are unparalleled.



OUSSEYNOU NGOM
PROGRAM OFFICER, GENDER EQUITY &
GOVERNANCE
THE WILLIAM AND FLORA HEWLETT
FOUNDATION | MENLO PARK, CA

It is a pleasure to share my appreciation for the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA) and its continued leadership in strengthening democratic governance across Africa. As an African-led institution dedicated to building the capacity of parliaments and representative bodies, ACEPA plays a critical role in supporting more effective, accountable, and responsive governance across the continent.

I have had the opportunity to work closely with ACEPA in Ghana, particularly through our collaboration on strengthening the use of data and evidence within parliamentary processes. This work has contributed to enhancing Parliament's oversight role, deepening collaboration with national data institutions, and fostering a more systematic and sustainable culture of evidence-informed policymaking.

Our engagement with ACEPA has since evolved into a broader and more strategic partnership, reflecting a shared commitment to advancing stronger governance systems. This collaboration now spans multiple areas of work, including gender equality and social inclusion, where ACEPA continues to integrate inclusive approaches into its parliamentary strengthening efforts.

What distinguishes ACEPA is not only its technical excellence, but also its deep commitment to locally grounded, partnership-driven approaches. Its work reflects a nuanced understanding of political and institutional realities, and a clear vision for strengthening governance systems in ways that are both effective and inclusive.

As the demand for more transparent, accountable, and inclusive governance continues to grow, ACEPA's role will remain essential. I am confident that it will continue to serve as both a thought leader and a trusted partner in advancing stronger parliaments across Africa.



CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

The year 2025 has been one of growth, resilience, and renewed clarity of purpose. It tested our institutional capacity, challenged our assumptions, and strengthened our resolve to advance democratic governance through research, dialogue, and parliamentary engagement.

In an environment marked by political polarisation, fiscal constraints, and increasing public scrutiny of democratic institutions, it became clear that our work must not only be technically sound but also timely and accessible. Producing good knowledge is only half the job. The other half is making sure it reaches the right people, Members of Parliament, parliamentary staff, civil society, and citizens, in formats they can actually use.

That is the standard ACEPA holds itself to. Because knowledge that does not travel does not change anything.

As a result, we invested more deeply in stakeholder roundtables, workshops, field visits and citizens engagement, as well as leveraged on our digital engagement.

Throughout the year, shifting political dynamics required us to recalibrate timelines, adjust engagement strategies, and rethink how we convene stakeholders. Some planned activities had to be redesigned to respond to emerging priorities within Parliaments and partner institutions. Rather than viewing these changes as setbacks, we embraced them as opportunities to deepen alignment with national needs — an approach that strengthened our credibility and reinforced our role as a trusted, non-partisan partner.

Funding cycles, competing donor priorities, and operational costs required careful planning and focused implementation. We responded by strengthening internal coordination, improving monitoring systems, and prioritising impact-driven programming. These measures not only ensured continuity but also improved efficiency across all projects.

In a context where institutions are frequently invited to workshops, consultations, and forums, meaningful participation cannot be assumed. We learned that stakeholders respond more positively when engagements are practical, solution-oriented, and clearly linked to policy processes. Consequently, we shifted toward more targeted dialogues and follow-up mechanisms designed to move beyond conversation toward measurable outcomes.

Collaboration with parliamentary departments, state institutions, civil society, development partners, and the media amplified our impact in ways that independent action could not. Where we worked in isolation, progress was incremental. Where we worked collaboratively, progress was transformative. The year underscored that sustainable democratic strengthening requires collective ownership.

Internal capacity development, team cohesion, and knowledge management emerged as critical pillars for long-term success. Investing in our people through training, reflection sessions, and improved systems enhanced both morale and productivity in equal measure.

In sum, 2025 taught us that resilience is not merely about surviving challenges, it is about evolving through them. The obstacles we encountered refined our strategy, sharpened our delivery, and deepened our commitment to strengthening democratic governance across the continent.





LOOKING INTO 2026

Strategic Priorities

We look ahead to 2026 with clarity, purpose, and renewed ambition. The lessons of 2025 have shaped a forward-looking agenda that builds on our strengths while addressing emerging governance challenges with greater intentionality.

Deepening legislative support and policy engagement is our first strategic priority. We aim to strengthen our research and advisory services to Parliaments, ensuring that Members and Committees have access to timely, evidence-based analysis. This includes expanding our thematic research areas, enhancing rapid-response policy briefs, and institutionalising structured engagements between researchers and lawmakers.

Inclusive governance and citizen engagement will be a central focus. Democratic legitimacy depends on meaningful public participation. In 2026, we intend to amplify public education initiatives, simplify complex legislative processes for broader audiences, and leverage digital platforms to reach young people and underrepresented groups. Bridging the gap between Parliament and citizens remains at the heart of our mission.

Institutional capacity strengthening remains a non-negotiable priority. This includes targeted training for parliamentary staff, support for committee systems, and the development of practical tools that strengthen oversight and accountability functions. By reinforcing institutional systems, we contribute to long-term democratic resilience.

Sustainability will guide our internal strategy. Diversifying funding sources, strengthening partnerships, and enhancing monitoring and evaluation frameworks will be key to ensuring programme continuity and measurable impact. Institutional sustainability is essential for maintaining the independence and credibility that define our work.

Knowledge production and dissemination will be elevated. Beyond research outputs, we aim to position ourselves as a thought leader in democratic governance through publications, public dialogues, and regional collaborations. The goal is not only to inform policy but to shape national conversations around accountability, transparency, and inclusion.

A Call to Action

The work of strengthening democracy cannot be done in isolation. In 2026, we call on all stakeholders to lean in with purpose and commitment.

We call on Members of Parliament to continue engaging with evidence-based research and to champion reforms that enhance transparency and accountability within our democratic institutions.

We call on state institutions to collaborate actively in advancing institutional reforms and policy innovation that serve the public interest.

We call on civil society organisations to sustain constructive advocacy and citizen mobilisation, ensuring that community voices continue to shape legislative decisions.

We call on development partners to invest in long-term institutional strengthening initiatives that build lasting democratic capacity rather than short-term outputs.

We call on citizens and the media to remain active, informed, and engaged participants in democratic processes, holding institutions accountable and amplifying the public interest.

Democracy is not self-sustaining. It requires vigilance, collaboration, and consistent commitment from every actor within the democratic ecosystem.

With the insights gained in 2025 and a clear strategic direction for 2026, we are prepared to deepen our impact and broaden our reach. The coming year presents both challenges and opportunities — and we move forward with confidence, strengthened partnerships, and an unwavering commitment to democratic governance.



OUR COMMUNITY

Meet the People behind the Purpose and Action

ACEPA's work is powered by people — our dedicated staff and fellows, our committed donors and partners, and the parliamentary champions who demonstrate every day that inclusive governance is possible. This section celebrates the community that makes our mission a reality.

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Team
Members

6

Donor &
Funding
Partners

5

Institutional
Partners

MEET OUR TEAM

ACEPA's work is powered by a dedicated team of governance experts, advisors, programme officers, and support staff. Together, we bring expertise in parliamentary affairs, gender equality, communications, finance, and project management to everything we do.



Dr. Rasheed Draman
Executive Director



Dr. Gifty Adika
Senior Governance Advisor



Agnes Titriku
Programs Manager



Issifu Lampo
Associate/ Senior Governance
Advisor



Ibrahim Inusah Maïda
Projects Officer



Lillian Bruce
Local Gender and CSOs Advisor



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Jeniffer Githegi,
Parliamentary Liaison and Project Advisor, Kenya (ILGRP)



Abdul-Hamid Sumaila
EPL Fellow



Ubeidat Alhassan
EPL Fellow



CONNECT WITH US

How to get involved

ACEPA's work is only possible because of the people and organisations who believe in it. Whether you are an individual who cares about democratic governance, an institution looking for a credible parliamentary development partner, or a donor seeking to invest where impact is measurable, there is a place for you in this work.

Partner with us — If your organisation works in governance, gender equality, research, civil society, or parliamentary development, we would love to explore what we can build together. We are always open to new partnerships that deepen our reach and strengthen our impact.

Fund our work — Your support enables us to deliver training, develop tools, policy materials, support legislators, and document change across Africa. We welcome contributions from foundations, bilateral donors, development finance institutions, and individual philanthropists who share our vision of stronger, more inclusive parliaments.

Engage with our research — Use our publications, policy briefs, and programme learnings to inform your own work. And share them widely. Knowledge that spreads creates impact beyond what any single organisation can achieve alone.

Join the conversation — Follow our work, share our stories, and amplify the voices of the parliamentarians and communities we work with.

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