ISSN: 3057-3750

AFRICAN CENTRE FOR PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS



DIALOGUE TO ACTION NEWSLETTER

Quarter 3 (July - September 2026)

2026 | Edition #03

Impact Note from our Senior Governance Advisor



ISSIFU LAMPO
SENIOR GOVERNANCE ADVISOR/ ASSOCIATE

During the quarter, the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA) continued advancing its parliamentary strengthening agenda through initiatives that connect evidence, citizen voices, and institutional capacity to practical action. Across its programming in Ghana and other African countries, ACEPA focused on strengthening parliamentary oversight, promoting evidence-informed representation, advancing child protection, encouraging political inclusion, and supporting gender-responsive governance.

In Ghana, ACEPA supported parliamentary oversight visits to the Suhum and Abuakwa South constituencies, funded by UNICEF Ghana. The visits brought parliamentarians into direct engagement with communities, local authorities, and service providers to examine child protection and social welfare concerns, including child labour, child marriage, and the implementation of social welfare programmes. Using the "See-Hear-Analyse-Act" approach, the engagements encouraged parliamentarians to move beyond reports, assess realities on the ground, and identify actionable responses to issues affecting children.

ACEPA also advanced evidence-informed representation through the Constituency Evidence System (CES), building on the Data for Accountability Project (DAP I and II) in four identified constituencies. It engages local stakeholders to strengthen the collection and communication of citizen concerns related to education, healthcare, school feeding, and other essential public services. By complementing official statistics with citizens' lived experiences, CES seeks to equip Members of Parliament with more contextual evidence to inform their oversight and representative responsibilities.

Through its partnership with International Justice Mission (IJM) Ghana, ACEPA convened a training for the Parliamentary Press Corps on child protection, human trafficking, and policy advocacy. The engagement strengthened journalists' understanding of Ghana's trafficking laws, institutional responses, and survivor-centred reporting, while highlighting the importance of accountability, adequate funding, and informed media engagement in protecting children.

ACEPA also promoted political inclusion and consensus-building through a youth workshop funded by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). The workshop brought together student leaders from **TEIN and TESCON** to explore ethical leadership, good governance, inclusive decision-making, and constructive engagement across political differences. The initiative reflects ACEPA's commitment to preparing young people to contribute to more inclusive and consensus-oriented democratic governance.

At the regional level, ACEPA and the Parliamentary Centre, through the Global Affairs Canada-funded Inclusive Legislatures for Gender-Responsive Policies (ILGRP) project, convened a regional forum in Nairobi, Kenya, on 23–24 September 2026. Bringing together parliamentary representatives and partners from Ghana, Kenya, and Togo, the forum provided an opportunity to share experiences and advance practical approaches to strengthening gender-responsive and inclusive legislatures, particularly through legislative, budgetary, and oversight processes.

Taken together, these interventions highlight the common thread running through ACEPA's work this quarter: strengthening the connection between evidence, citizens, and parliamentary action. Whether facilitating community-based oversight visits in Suhum and Abuakwa South, channeling citizen-generated evidence in Ketu North, or fostering regional learning on gender-responsive parliaments in Nairobi, ACEPA supports approaches that make parliamentary institutions more evidence-informed, citizen-responsive, and inclusive.

Ultimately, this quarter marks another firm step in ACEPA's broader mission to move parliamentary strengthening beyond capacity building alone, toward institutionalising systems and practices that enable Parliament to listen to citizens, utilize evidence, exercise effective oversight, and deliver better governance outcomes.

From Field to Action - Advancing Children's Rights through Parliamentary Oversights

The Problem

Children make up over one-third of Ghana's population, yet they have no direct voice in parliament. Issues like child labour, child marriage, trafficking and gaps in social protection continue to affect vulnerable households, often without sustained parliamentary attention or coordinated follow-up.

The Intervention

This quarter, to ensure children's issues are consistently reflected in Ghana's laws, budgets and oversight, ACEPA launched the Parliamentary Caucus on children, translating the platform into direct field engagement in the Eastern Region.

With support from UNICEF Ghana, ACEPA's initiative to Enhance the Capacity of Parliament to Address Children's Issues has worked to institutionalise parliamentary leadership on children's rights. A key milestone this quarter was launching the Parliamentary Caucus on Children, a non-partisan platform that brings together MPs across parties to champion child-responsive legislation and oversight.

This was followed by a capacity-building briefing and a field monitoring visit to Suhum and Abuakwa South Municipalities in the Eastern Region, conducted in collaboration with the Parliament of Ghana, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), where MPs engaged directly with municipal authorities, frontline service providers, traditional leaders, and communities.

The Change

The field visit moved MPs beyond reports and into direct contact with the realities facing children, including a meaningful engagement with children in Jato. It surfaced concrete gaps, limited resources for frontline services, delays in fund releases, and weak institutional coordination, and translated them into actionable recommendations, including engaging the Speaker of Parliament to draw attention to the challenges identified and advocate for timely parliamentary action to address them.

Additionally, strengthening the Caucus and the Committee on Human Rights was identified as a way to sustain advocacy and oversight on children's issues. As ACEPA noted, the work continues: turning what was seen and heard into evidence-informed action for children.



Transforming Institutions & Empowering Voices: Closing Five Years of Impact Under the ILGRP Project

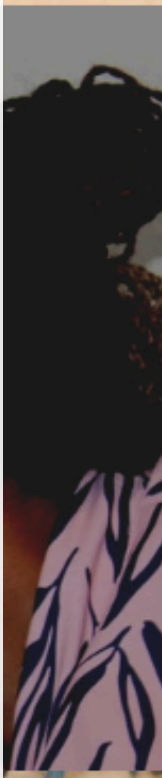
The Problem

Across many African nations, legislative institutions often struggle to translate constitutional guarantees of equality into everyday governance. Legislative, budgeting, and oversight processes frequently lack the systematic tools, gender-disaggregated data, and inclusive frameworks needed to address systemic inequalities. As a result, critical national policies - ranging from fiscal budgets and land governance to emerging artificial intelligence regulations and social protection programmes - risk overlooking the specific needs of women, youth, girls, and marginalized communities.

Furthermore, traditional parliamentary oversight too often remains confined to meeting rooms, leaving citizens, civil society organizations, and local communities with limited opportunities to engage duty bearers directly, track legislative transitions, or influence decisions that shape their livelihoods.

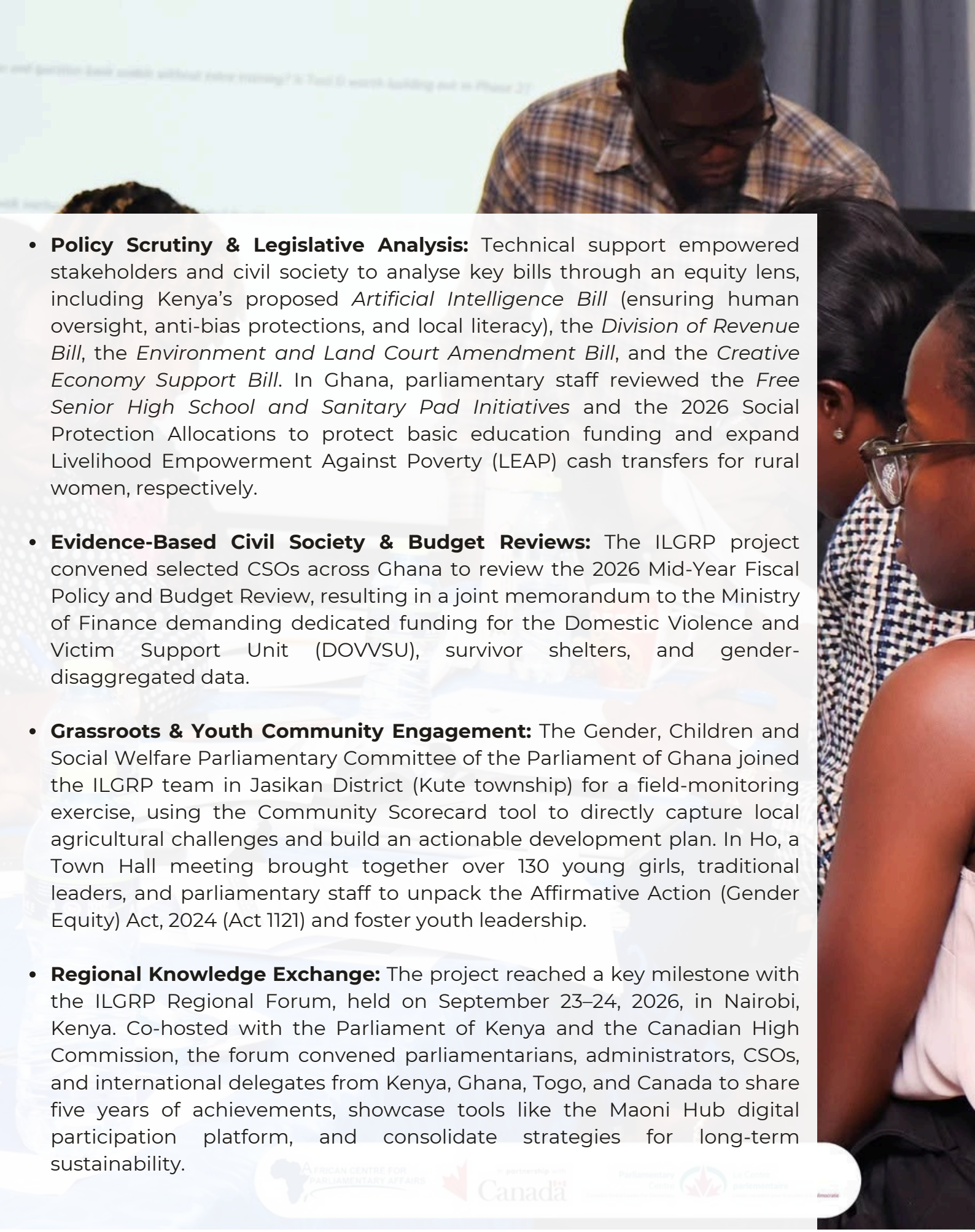
The Intervention

To address these institutional and participatory gaps, the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA), in partnership with the Parliamentary Centre and funded by Global Affairs Canada, implemented targeted activities across Ghana, Kenya, and Togo under the Inclusive Legislatures for Gender-Responsive Policies (ILGRP) Project.



- **Institutional Toolkits & Administrative Reforms:** In Kenya, the ILGRP project supported working sessions with the Parliamentary Research Services and the Directorate of Human Capital and Administration Services to refine the *Gender-Responsive Human Resource Supervisors Guidelines* and the *Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Budgeting (GRIB) Guidelines*, embedding equality directly into administrative policies and the national budget cycle. In Togo, the project developed operational handbooks, legislative drafting templates, and a *Gender Impact Analysis Guide* to support staff and MPs in advancing gender-sensitive parliamentary work that leaves no one behind.





- **Policy Scrutiny & Legislative Analysis:** Technical support empowered stakeholders and civil society to analyse key bills through an equity lens, including Kenya's proposed *Artificial Intelligence Bill* (ensuring human oversight, anti-bias protections, and local literacy), the *Division of Revenue Bill*, the *Environment and Land Court Amendment Bill*, and the *Creative Economy Support Bill*. In Ghana, parliamentary staff reviewed the *Free Senior High School and Sanitary Pad Initiatives* and the 2026 Social Protection Allocations to protect basic education funding and expand Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) cash transfers for rural women, respectively.

- **Evidence-Based Civil Society & Budget Reviews:** The ILGRP project convened selected CSOs across Ghana to review the 2026 Mid-Year Fiscal Policy and Budget Review, resulting in a joint memorandum to the Ministry of Finance demanding dedicated funding for the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), survivor shelters, and gender-disaggregated data.

- **Grassroots & Youth Community Engagement:** The Gender, Children and Social Welfare Parliamentary Committee of the Parliament of Ghana joined the ILGRP team in Jasikan District (Kute township) for a field-monitoring exercise, using the Community Scorecard tool to directly capture local agricultural challenges and build an actionable development plan. In Ho, a Town Hall meeting brought together over 130 young girls, traditional leaders, and parliamentary staff to unpack the Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act, 2024 (Act 1121) and foster youth leadership.

- **Regional Knowledge Exchange:** The project reached a key milestone with the ILGRP Regional Forum, held on September 23–24, 2026, in Nairobi, Kenya. Co-hosted with the Parliament of Kenya and the Canadian High Commission, the forum convened parliamentarians, administrators, CSOs, and international delegates from Kenya, Ghana, Togo, and Canada to share five years of achievements, showcase tools like the Maoni Hub digital participation platform, and consolidate strategies for long-term sustainability.

The Change

The interventions under the ILGRP project have driven fundamental structural and operational shifts in how partner parliaments approach inclusive governance. By embedding gender-responsive toolkits into parliamentary research, human resource management, and committee oversight, institutions in Kenya, Ghana, and Togo are moving from informal commitments to institutionalised practices that mandate gender analysis across all legislative and budgeting functions.

Civil society organisations and citizens now possess structured mechanisms, such as gender-budgeting memorandums, community scorecards, and digital participation hubs, to hold duty bearers accountable and demand evidence-based spending. At the community level, field-monitoring visits and town halls have transformed citizen-parliament interactions, giving young girls, local farmers, and rural women a direct voice in legislative oversight and implementation. By demonstrating the concrete value of cross-country peer learning and inclusive participation, the ILGRP project has strengthened the foundation for transparent, gender-responsive, and accountable parliamentary governance across the region.











From Data to Action: Taking Constituency Evidence to the Next Level

The Problem

Members of Parliament have an important responsibility to represent the interests and concerns of the people who elected them. Every day, MPs and their offices receive concerns from citizens through community engagements, phone calls, messages, and other interactions. However, these concerns are not always captured, organised, or analysed systematically. A concern raised by one citizen may seem like an isolated problem.

Without a structured avenue, reliance on occasional community engagements, individual complaints, or fragmented sources of information makes it difficult to reveal a broader picture of recurring issues, patterns, and emerging concerns across a constituency.

The Intervention

Building on lessons learned from the Data for Accountability Project, the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA), with support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, introduced the Constituency Evidence System (CES):

- **Systematic Data Capture:** Citizens share issues affecting their communities, while designated Data Focal Persons capture and organise this information in a structured manner so it can be analysed to identify recurring issues and patterns.
- **Constituency Piloting:** CES is currently being piloted in four constituencies: Salaga South, Daboya/Mankarigu, Ofoase Ayirebi, and Ketu North.
- **Complementing Statistics for Parliamentary Action:** The system provides MPs with constituency-level evidence to complement official statistics, helping them decide how and where to raise concerns through parliamentary tools, including Statements, Parliamentary Questions, Motions, Committee deliberations, budget discussions, and advocacy.

The Change

CES creates a practical pathway to capture, organise, and analyse information from communities, turning a concern into data, data into evidence, and evidence into informed representation. For citizens, such as a farmer struggling with access to markets, a parent concerned about a school, or a young person seeking opportunities. CES gives them a way to communicate issues affecting their lives and ensures their experiences are considered. For MPs, it provides a clearer, more structured picture of citizen experiences, strengthening relationships with constituents and supporting responsive representation, action, and accountability.

Laws and Policies that Shifted

This quarter, ACEPA's technical advice, evidence-based advocacy, and capacity-building engagements directly shaped, analysed, and advanced several key legislative, fiscal, and institutional frameworks across Ghana, Kenya, and Togo:

Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act, 2024 (Act 1121) — Ghana

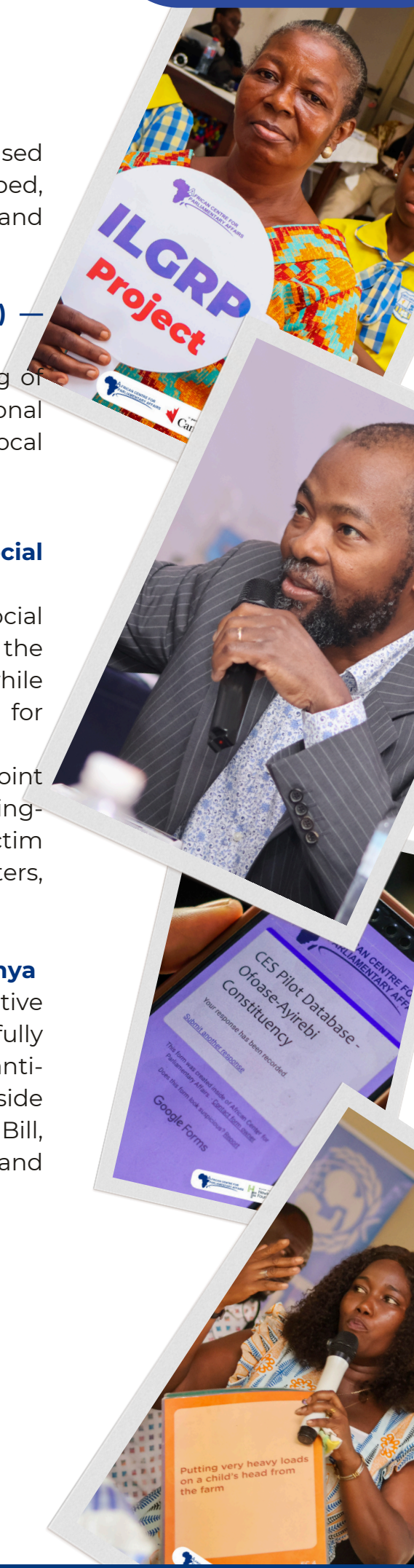
- Mobilised community-level understanding and tracking of Act 1121 by convening over 130 young girls, traditional leaders, and parliamentary staff in Ho, establishing local accountability frameworks for its implementation.

2026 Mid-Year Fiscal Policy and Budget Review & Social Protection Allocations — Ghana

- Led technical reviews of national education and social welfare spending, safeguarding funding allocations for the Free Senior High School and Sanitary Pad Initiatives while advocating for expanded LEAP cash transfer coverage for rural women.
- Coordinated a national coalition of CSOs to submit a joint memorandum to the Ministry of Finance, demanding ring-fenced funding for the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), state-sponsored survivor shelters, and gender-disaggregated budgetary reporting.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Bill & Legislative Scrutiny — Kenya

- Conducted comprehensive equity-focused legislative analysis on Kenya's proposed AI Bill, successfully advocating for explicit human oversight, algorithmic anti-bias protections, and digital literacy provisions, alongside targeted reviews of the Division of Revenue Bill, Environment and Land Court Amendment Bill, and Creative Economy Support Bill.



Gender-Responsive Human Resource & Budgeting Guidelines — Kenya

- Co-developed and refined the Gender-Responsive Human Resource Supervisors Guidelines and Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Budgeting (GRIB) Guidelines with the Parliamentary Research Services and the Directorate of Human Capital and Administration Services to mainstream gender equity directly into national budget cycles and administrative operations.



Legislative Transition Frameworks & Gender Impact Tools — Togo

- Authored operational handbooks, legislative drafting templates, and a specialised Gender Impact Analysis Guide to support Togo's constitutional shift to a parliamentary system and strengthen local access to justice via "Maisons de Justice."

Institutionalization of Child-Responsive Governance — Ghana

- Established and formally launched the non-partisan Parliamentary Caucus on Children, embedding a dedicated institutional mechanism within the Parliament of Ghana to scrutinise child protection policies, fight child labor/marriage, and safeguard social welfare budgets.



Political Inclusion and Consensus Building

- Strengthened youth political leadership and consensus-building by convening a workshop for TEIN and TESCON student leaders, equipping emerging leaders with practical skills in ethical leadership, inclusive decision-making, good governance, and cross-party dialogue to foster a more collaborative and inclusive democratic culture in Ghana.







Regional & Global Influence

- The ILGRP team in Ghana joined the rest of the ILGRP team in Kenya for the ILGRP Regional Forum in Nairobi
- ACEPA was represented at International Justice Mission's (IJM) National Justice Conference
- ACEPA was represented at the French National Day Celebration
- ACEPA was represented at the Institute for Democratic Governance, Ghana's (IDEG) Citizen Forum on Local Governance Reforms
- ACEPA was represented at the SOS Children's Villages' National Dialogue on Financing Child Protection in Ghana











Reporting Period
July- September 2026



Q3 2026 Impact Snapshot

Parliamentary Staff Engaged

Citizens Engagement under various initiatives

48

Members of Parliament Engaged across projects

89

42

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) Engaged

868

35

Media houses engaged during the quarter

Reporting Period
July- September 2026



Q3 2026 Impact Snapshot

Our third quarter in ***numbers***

5

Training sessions

3

Constituency Engagements

1

Association Engagement (TEIN & TESCON)

1

Launch of Parliamentary Caucus on Children

1

Campus Engagement

1

Regional Forum

Partner and Stakeholder Voices

"The broader significance of gender-responsive governance is about ensuring that broader experiences and perspectives are reflected in legislation, in budgeting, in oversight, in public consultation, and whether institutions are really able to understand how public decisions may affect different groups of citizens differently."



H.E Ambassador Joshua Tabah
High Commissioner of Canada to Kenya

"Children's issues in this country have become very endemic, moving from child deprivation, lack of education, lack of access to Quality Healthcare and child abuse. These things are happening daily and affecting the development trajectory of this country so the government should have consciously looked at this on how to bridge the gap between policy, advocacy and legislation and that is what the caucus is going to do."



Hon. Zuwura Mohammed Ibrahimah
MP, Salaga South, Parliament of Ghana

"The Caucus is going to be a mouthpiece for children in Ghana everywhere to make sure that policies, legislation, and budgeting are child-sensitive and child-friendly and go a long way to enhance the rights and wellbeing of every child in Ghana."



Felix Addo-Yobo
Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF

"Parliamentary democracy gives an important opportunity, like we have today, to learn from one another and share interventions and build institutional partnerships"



Hon. Gladys Boss Jepkosgei
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of the Parliament of Kenya

"Despite different ideologies, we have one constitution and one Ghana, and if we respect these duties, we can disagree peacefully and build Ghana together"



Justice Kusi Forson
Communications Director (TESCON), African University of Communication and Business

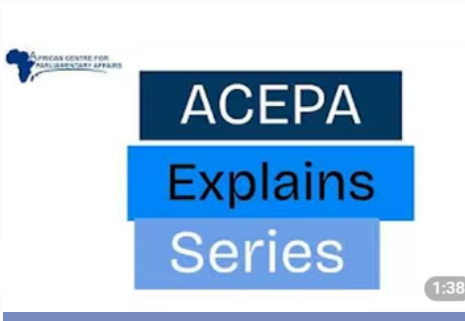
Videos



[Ghana Tonight with Dr. Rasheed Draman]



[Maoni Hub]



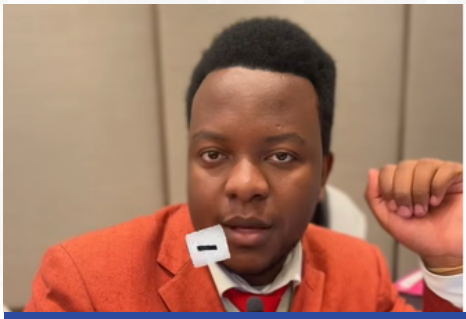
[ACEPA Explains - Finance Committee]



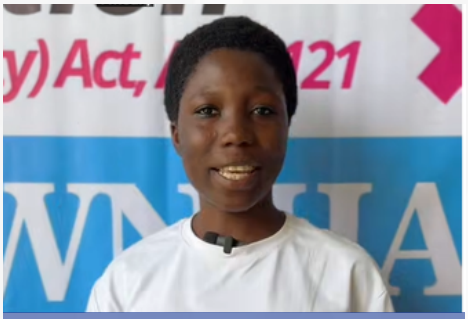
[ILGRP Regional Forum TV Report]



[Townhall Meeting Engagement]



[Regional Forum in Nairobi]



[Townhall Meeting- Describe the Engagement]

Q3 Spotlight Corner



Ubeidat Alhassan

Programs Officer

Driven by a deeply rooted interest in one thing: understanding how Parliament works, what evidence tells us about its performance, and how that evidence can contribute to stronger accountability, Ubeidat Alhassan joins the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA) as a Programmes Officer.

As an alumna of Emerging Public Leaders (EPL) Ghana, Ubeidat had had the opportunity to engage with questions of leadership, public service and community engagement. At ACEPA, she has contributed to parliamentary monitoring and research through the development of the Parliamentary Monitoring Report Series, covering legislative business, parliamentary performance and emerging developments within Parliament. She has also undertaken parliamentary performance and attendance analysis, contributed to research publications and articles, and supported the conceptualization of programmes around youth participation, democratic resilience and citizen engagement.

Ubeidat's core focus remains clear: She is drawn to the space where research meets action, particularly where evidence can be translated into ideas.

Ubeidat holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and has 3 years of professional experience in banking, customer service, marketing and operations, complemented by training in project management. She is increasingly expanding her work toward governance, disaster & crisis management, and risk communication. She hopes to continue building a career focused on strengthening institutions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT🎉✨

As we reflect on the milestones and progress achieved this quarter, we extend our sincere appreciation to our partners, funders, parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, civil society actors, and all stakeholders who continue to walk with us in advancing accountable, inclusive, and responsive governance.

Special thanks to our key partners:

Civil Society Organisations

Ghana Statistical Service

Global Affairs Canada

International Justice Mission (IJM)

Parliamentary Centre

The Parliaments of Ghana, Kenya and Togo

STAR Ghana Foundation

SWISS Embassy

UNICEF Ghana

William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

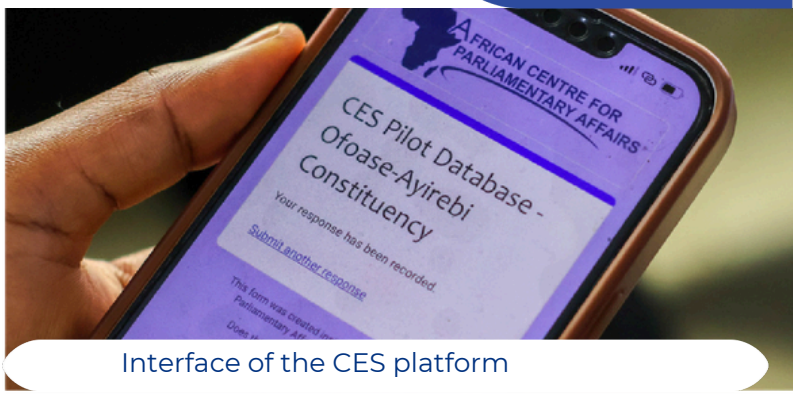
This newsletter is a reflection of our collective effort, and we are honoured to share this journey with you.

The ACEPA Team

Q3 in Pictures



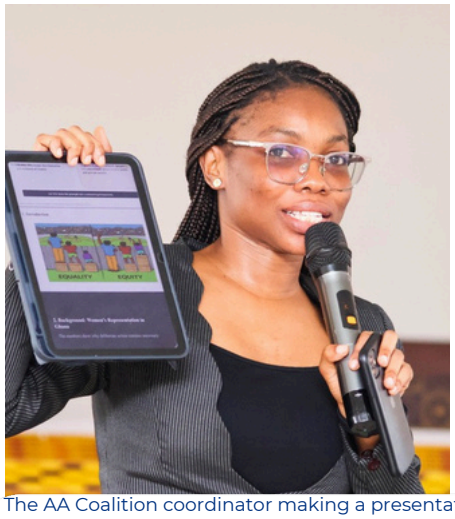
A cross-section of participants at the ILGRP Forum



Interface of the CES platform



A cross-section of MPs and participants at the field visit in Suhum



The AA Coalition coordinator making a presentation



Dr. Gifty Adika at the launch of the Governance Series Wave 3 Report



A group picture of MPs on a field visit



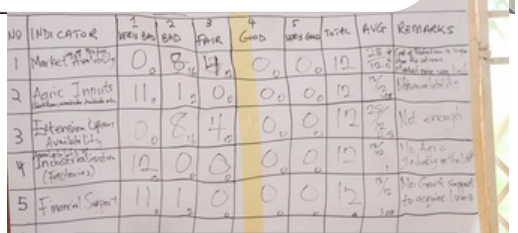
ACEPA team at UNESCO Office. Second from the right is Dr. Draman & second from the left is Dr. Adika



Cross-section of participants



Our program officer at a workshhop under the STAR Ghana project



A community scorecard

Q3 in Pictures



Deputy Director of the public engagement department of the Parliament of Ghana



Dr. Rasheed Draman speaking at the Financing Anti-Human Trafficking Efforts in Ghana meeting



Group picture of some students with their teacher at the townhall meeting in Ho



Students captured at our Kampus Konnect Engagement



Students in a picture frame from our engagement at Tamale Technical University

This newsletter was produced by the ACEPA Communications team, led by Benedicta Naa Odarkor Ablateye.

Contact Us

www.acepa-africa.org

info@acepa-africa.org

+233 30 295 6811

No AGR/2B Farmland
Beach Road, Accra

Connect with Us

African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA)

AFRICAN CENTRE FOR PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS