



Review of the year 2023

Dear members, friends, partners, and sponsors of the association "School Forests for West Africa",

This year, you supported our association's work in a variety of ways, enabling us to continue our work for a sustainable environmental education. Thank you very much for your trust!

An important part of our work is to familiarize pupils in Germany and Ghana with environmental protection and to motivate them to become active themselves. We are therefore particularly pleased that this year, too, there was a lively exchange between the **partner schools in Germany and Ghana**, allowing the pupils to get to know other cultures at the same time.

On 8 May, Dr Essiamah visited the Otto-Hahn-School in Wunstorf, which has been in partnership with the Nyakrom Senior High School since 2021. There, Dr Essiamah presented the North-South project "Tree planting in schoolyards" to the pupils of the 5th to 9th grades. The children were extremely interested and asked many questions about the project, but also about the school system and everyday life in Ghana. A teacher from the Otto-Hahn-School visited Nyakrom Senior High School during the summer holidays, allowing the project partners to get to know each other even better.

Following the positive response to the first **digital exchange** between two partner schools in November 2020, the first online workshop between teachers at the several partner schools was launched on 14 April. It was proposed that a memorandum of understanding be agreed between the partner schools so that the teachers have a common basis for their work.

Last year, we contacted the **"Forests for Tomorrow" foundation**. In April, we received the news that the German high school Carolinum in Neustrelitz would like to start a partnership with a Ghanaian school. Mr Henry Bondzie, the project manager of our partner association, the Youth and Environment Club in Ghana, then arranged for Swedru Senior High School to become a partner school, much to everyone's delight.

ERPA Systeme GmbH in Göttingen has been a partner of the Agona Asafo Catholic Basic School in Ghana for many years. On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of **ERPA Systeme GmbH**, Dr Essiamah reported on the project "Tree planting in schoolyards" at the anniversary celebration. Donations totalling €4225 were collected for their partner school! The money was to be used to purchase table tennis tables with accessories for the Agona Asafo Catholic Basic School. Beaming with joy, the pupils were able to play on the table tennis tables for the first time on 18 October. Now there is already a table tennis club and lively participation!

At the meeting of schools from the **"Lower Saxony Schools WITH Africa" network** on 22-23 June in Hanover, teachers from German partner schools were able to present the cooperation with our association and report on their experiences with their school partnerships. At the meeting, the teachers also met a representative from the Anna-Sophianeum secondary school in Schöningen, who spoke enthusiastically about Dr Essiamah's visit to his school on 20 June. His enquiry about planting trees in the schoolyard of their partner school in Mali led to a collaboration with our association.

In order to maximise the **visibility of our association**, we are also represented on the [GoNature](#) platform and were happy to help with a short video of our project when applying for follow-up funding for 2024. The GoNature team planned to use concrete examples to illustrate how GoNature supports projects in nature and species conservation. In addition, our experiences with GoNature and with the services offered such as the Impact Workshop (central learning platform for digital knowledge, exchange, and networking) were evaluated.

Our association once again presented itself to the local community in Göttingen with a stand at the **Climate Market** on 17 June. We received generous donations and made new contacts, among them Greta. Greta is studying geography at the Georg August University in Göttingen and is now completing a six-month internship with our organisation. On 8 November, she took part in the #GemeinsamVereint fundraising campaign organised by Volksbank Kassel Göttingen eG in Kassel and, to our great delight, brought home a prize of €1000!

Our association member Ms Anna Weßling travelled to Ghana in late summer this year and was able to visit several partner schools and the new international environmental education centre that is being built in Nyakrom. The **international environmental education centre** is to become a central place for the exchange of new ideas and methods for sustainable climate protection adapted to the local social and economic conditions. Further information on this project can be found on the [betterplace project page](#).

Dr Essiamah also flew to Ghana in September. We will be reporting on his work on our [homepage](#) soon. We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks for the generous donations to complete the international environmental education centre as fast as possible. The financial support from the Lower Saxony Bingo Environmental Foundation made a significant contribution to securing the site and supplying electricity and water. A photovoltaic system can now be used to generate electricity locally and to operate a water pump, which transports fresh groundwater to the surface. We are also particularly grateful to the numerous private individuals who have made this progress in 2023 possible with **donations of over €6,000!** This great support has really left us speechless! Many, many thanks!!!

In Ghana, we are also keen to find **good alternatives to the use of chemical pesticides in agriculture**. Dr Essiamah is in constant dialogue with local farmers to this end. One suggestion is the use of brush cutters, which should make it easier for the farmers to maintain their plantations without using chemicals and improve the quality of the soil and the fruits. The gardener at our project partner's tree nursery has already presented the project to the farmers. However, there are still various problems, including a lack of money for petrol and a vehicle to transport the equipment to the farmers.

At the **general meeting** on 7 March, Dr Essiamah was re-elected as 1st Chairman and Mr Gerd Henke as Deputy Chairman of the "School Forests for West Africa" association. Prof. Dr Nayerah Rastin, Dr Konrad Wilke and Mr Albert Afful were elected to the Advisory Board. Ms Anna Weßling was elected treasurer. Dr Anja Nitzsche and Ms Cornelia Krömer were elected as cash auditors.

We look back on the year 2023 with great gratitude. **We were only able to make these achievements with your support!** We hope you will continue to place your trust in our work and remain loyal to us in 2024!

We wish you a peaceful festive season and a happy new year 2024!

Your School Forest-Team