



The Local Inclusive Festival (LIFE) Project

Phase 1 Final Report (March 2013):

The Inclusion of People with Disabilities into the Builsa Feok Festival

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Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Abstract	4
Introduction	5
The Life Project	5
Project Methodology.....	7
Phase One Methodology and Research Participants.....	8
1. The Builsa Feok Festival	11
History	11
Traditions and Activities.....	12
Challenges and Controversies.....	14
Conclusion	18
2. People with Disabilities and the Feok Festival	20
Previous Involvement and Current Involvement	20
Traditions and Activities.....	21
Challenges.....	22
Benefits from Inclusion.....	25
Case Study	27
3. Conclusion and Recommendations	29
References	31
Appendices	32
1. <i>Activities</i>	32
2. <i>Kadema Feok program</i>	33

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Abstract

The Local Inclusive Festival Project (LIFE) is a joint scheme between International Service and the Sandema Presbyterian Church of Ghana Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR). The LIFE project is centred on integrating people with disabilities into the Feok festival, which is an annual celebration in the Builsa District commemorating the Builsa people's victory over slave-raiders in the 18th Century and a time of thanksgiving to the Gods for a successful harvest. A research project investigating attitudes and opinions of the Builsa people towards the Feok festival and the inclusion of people with disabilities has been conducted. It was found that many people in the district wish for the festival to be restructured, and be more inclusive of all communities including people with disabilities. People with disabilities and the general population believe there are many activities that can be disability-inclusive. An inclusiveness policy should be implemented ensuring that all demographics of society, including people with disability, are enabled to participate in activities at the Feok festival. It is hoped that people with disabilities can be represented on Feok festival planning committees, in order to assist traditional and formal leadership in overcoming challenges, such as transportation and mobility, which may hinder their participation in Feok festival activities.

Introduction

The Life Project

The Local Inclusive Festival Project (LIFE) is a joint scheme partnering the British charity International Service and the Sandema Presbyterian Church of Ghana Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) which is a registered faith-based non-governmental organisation based in Sandema, Builsa District in the Upper East region of Ghana. The LIFE project is centred on the Feok festival; a celebration by the Builsa people in December every year to commemorate the victory of the Builsa people over the slave raiders in the 18th century and is also a time of thanksgiving to the Gods for the harvest. The LIFE project will aim to regenerate the Feok festival in the Builsa district through engagement with key stakeholders and by identifying ways in which to increase the inclusivity of the festival, specifically ensuring that People with Disability (PWD) are provided a space to participate. The LIFE project will work alongside the framework of CBR.

The project is part of a UK government-funded (DFID) scheme, International Citizen Service (ICS), to encourage young people, aged 18-25, to participate in international development. International Service are part of a consortium of organisations who are implementing the ICS scheme. UK volunteers will work on the project in three month cycles, commencing in January 2013, and continuing until 2015. The UK volunteers work with a national volunteer (Ghana) and a team leader (UK) who are in position for 6 months.

Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is a development strategy focused on the rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities, and the social inclusion of people with disabilities with the overall aim of improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities.¹ The community-based approach facilitates and empowers disabled people and their families to dynamically participate in community activities. The CBR matrix operates a holistic approach towards disability encompassing focuses on Health, Education, Livelihoods, Social, and Empowerment of people with disabilities. The LIFE project, whilst primarily centred on developing the social inclusion of people with disabilities, specifically issues relating to Culture and Arts, and Recreation, Leisure and Sports, will also incorporate aspects of additional CBR strands including Empowerment, Livelihoods, and Education, with further potential in addressing Health matters, particularly as the project develops and after the development of a fundraising strategy.

In 2006, the United Nations released the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; a framework and legal basis for changing attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. The Convention has an explicit social development dimension, whilst reaffirming the human rights that people with all types of disabilities must be able to enjoy.

¹ WHO, ILO, UNESCO, Joint Position Paper on CBR, 2004

The LIFE project aims to support and implement principles of the UN Convention, including, but not limited to, the following:

Article 3: General Principles, (c) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society

Article 8: Awareness-raising, 1 (c) To promote awareness of the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities.

2 (a) (iii) To promote recognition of the skills, merits and abilities of persons with disabilities, and of their contributions to the workplace and labour market.

Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community, (c) Community services and facilities for the general population are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs.

Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport:

State parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities:

Enjoy access to cultural materials in accessible formats;

Enjoy access to television programmes, films, theatre and other cultural activities, in accessible formats;

Enjoy access to places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services, and, as far as possible, enjoy access to monuments and sites of national cultural importance.

State Parties shall take appropriate measures to enable persons with disabilities to have the opportunity to develop and utilize their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of society.

5. With a view to enabling persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

To encourage and promote the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of persons with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities at all levels;

To ensure that persons with disabilities have an opportunity to organize, develop and participate in disability-specific sporting and recreational activities, and to this end, encourage the provision, on an equal basis with others, of appropriate instruction, training and resources;

To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sporting, recreational and tourism venues.

Ghana ratified the Convention in March 2012, adding further impetus to the implementation of the National Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715) and the improvement of the welfare and human rights of People with Disabilities in Ghana. The LIFE project will aim to highlight and advocate for the implementation of two important points specified in the Persons with Disability Act 175:

Point 38 Access to sporting events, festivals and cultural activities

“The Ministry responsible for Education and Sports, The District Assemblies and National Commission for Culture shall as far as practicable ensure, through the provision of adequate facilities, programmes and incentives, that persons with disability have access to sports and cultural events.”

Point 39 Participation in national Activities

“A person or institute which organises a national, regional or district activity shall as far as practicable ensure that the facilities are made available for the participation in the activity by persons with disability.”

The LIFE project will aim to establish whether these, and additional points within Act 175, and also those specified in the UN Convention, are implemented during the period of the Feok festival, and identify ways of facilitating their implementation in the Builsa District.

Project Methodology

The project will be divided into 3 month phases, with successive phases building on previous achievements.

Phase One commenced in January 2013 and finishes at the end of March 2013. This phase will be predominantly research based, identifying a baseline of activity and an understanding of the Feok festival, as well as exploring attitudes towards the inclusion of people with disability into the festival.

There are two main aims to be achieved for Phase One:

1. Compile a comprehensive document describing the Feok festival (culture, activities, traditions, communities involved, and planning strategies). This document will also establish a baseline of activity for the inclusion of people with disabilities and discuss general attitudes towards the proposal of LIFE for inclusivity.
2. Advocate for people with disabilities to be represented at planning meetings; highlight the needs of people with disabilities; and advocate for the needs of people with disabilities to be considered throughout the Feok festival.

Phase One involves a multi-modal research design, encompassing semi-structured qualitative interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires.

The final research stage of Phase One will be an engagement meeting and validation forum with a number of key stakeholders, and representatives of groups who have thus far participated in the LIFE project. The forum will allow us to validate our findings and discuss ways in which the Builsa Community can move forward to engage people with disabilities in the planning of the Feok.

Further phases will identify possible activities and products people with disabilities could showcase or perform during the annual Feok festival, and assist key stakeholders in the development and organisation of such activities. A key phase of the project will be to design and promote a fundraising campaign to develop resources for people with disabilities; provide transportation; and develop sustainable livelihood schemes, all of which will feed into the regeneration of the Feok festival.

Phase Two will occur between April and June 2013. As of March 2013, it is thought that this phase will focus on developing disability-accessible activities which can be incorporated into the Feok festival in December.

Phase Three (July – September 2013)

Phase Four (October 2013 – December 2013)

Phase One Methodology and Research Participants

We conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with **13 Builsa Chiefs and their Sub-Chiefs and Elders** to find out about the history of the Feok. The history and significance of the annual celebration was highlighted when the Chiefs and Elders were approached in the following areas; Sandema (Paramount Chief), Bachonsa, Chuchuliga, Doninga, Fumbisi, Gbedema, Gbedembilisi, Kadema, Kanjarga, Siniensi, Wiaga, Weisi, and Uwasi. Traditional Chiefs are custodians of religion and culture and were able to offer us an insight into general issues surrounding the Feok festival, as well as provide opinions and possible solutions to the issue of the exclusion of people with disabilities. Unfortunately we were unable to record the oral histories of the Chiefs electronically; this could be a possible future project.

Semi-structured interviews were also held with key members of the **Builsa North District Assembly**, including the District Chief Executive, District Co-ordinating Director, Budget Officer, Director of Social Welfare and Disability Fund Secretary.

Focus group forums were held with five **Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs)** based in Sandema (Sandema DPO (45 people), and Sandema Mental Health Association (37 people)), Fumbisi (42 people), Kadema (25 people) and Wiaga (53 people). A series of questions were posed to the groups regarding their inclusion into the Feok festival and their social inclusion, as well as their understanding of Feok and the activities and traditions related to Feok, and to understand and ascertain any issues which are currently preventing people with disabilities from participating in the festival. A semi-structured interview guide directed the questions.

A structured quantitative **questionnaire** was disseminated to 250 members of the public across the Builsa District, notably in Sandema, Wiaga, Fumbisi, and Chuchuliga. 150 questionnaires were returned and the responses recorded. Participants were selected by design, due to their English language ability, and via snowballing. 84% of people questioned came from the Builsa District, and 88% of respondents were aged between 18-39; a demographic not previously included in the research process. 87% of respondents were Christian, although Traditional and Muslim religions were also included in the data. This is not representative of the make-up of the Builsa District, as 46% of the population follow Traditional African religion, in comparison with 28% who are Christian and 23% of Moslems.² Over 90% of the respondents had completed some form of education (Primary

² The Composite Budget of the Builsa District Assembly for the 2012 Fiscal Year

through to Tertiary). 67% of respondents were male, therefore we arranged to meet with **three Women's groups** based in Wiaga (St Monica's Widows group, and Ammachaab and Agumchaab) (40 women attended), Fumbisi (Unity) (28 women attended), and Sandema (Ayigchaab) (17 women). A semi-structured interview guide dictated the course of these focus groups.

In order to ascertain the opinions of a broad demographic of the Builsa district, the LIFE team also visited **four schools** in the Sandema locale: Anankum Junior High School (approx. 50 students); Sandema Senior High School (approx. 70 students), Sandema Senior High Technical School (the entire senior school); and Sandema Preparatory Junior High School (approx. 93 students). Once again, semi-structured interview guides were utilised.

To further their understanding of people with disabilities engaging in sports, the volunteers also visited **two additional schools** outside of the Builsa district: St John's Integrated Senior High School, Navrongo, and Gbeogo School for the Deaf, Tongo, Bolgatanga. The findings from these meetings will help to inform progress of Phase Two.

The LIFE project also took advantage of **Radio Builsa** (a local community radio station) to promote the activities of the project, gather further opinions on disability and the aims of the project, as well as be used as a tool for community awareness on the rights and potential of people with disabilities in the district. During Phase One, the volunteers introduced the LIFE project, and also held a phone-in session regarding the inclusion of people with disability into Feok. Another radio session is planned to share the research findings.

Throughout the course of Phase One it transpired that Kadema had yet to hold their community Feok. After interviewing the Kadema Chief and his entourage, the LIFE team were invited to observe the festival. The Kadema Feok has been utilised as a **case study**, based on participant observation and direct (field) observation.

Methodological concerns

A major methodological issue is language and communication; the main language within the Builsa district is Buli. Whilst there are many people in the region who speak English, they tend to be amongst an educated demographic. In order to assess attitudes and opinions of a cross-section of the population it is necessary to use translators. Unfortunately the project does not have the time nor the resources to undergo back translation. Translators are employees of CBR Sandema and national volunteers on the LIFE project. There is a risk, therefore, that the project findings will be affected by a high degree of subjectivity, decreasing the internal validity of the findings. Nevertheless, multiple investigators reduce high subjectivity by providing 4 or 5 interpretations of responses.

A related problem has been encountered during the questionnaire phase. As Buli is not a widely literate language, and only one of the researchers had the requisite language skills, the questionnaires were written and distributed in English. Therefore, the respondents also had to speak English. The data therefore neglects a large percentage of the public, who do not

read/write English. However, the multi-modal method of collecting data provides a corroboration and verification process of data gathered.

The findings of this research project are reported below including an overview of the Builsa District Feok festival, as it has been understood by the LIFE volunteer team, and suggestions for the inclusion of people with disabilities into the Feok festival.

1. The Builsa Feok Festival

The LIFE project has compiled this record of the history, traditions and activities of the Builsa Feok festival based on interviews and focus groups with Chiefs, Elders, and the general public.

History

The Feok festival is a three-day event that has been an on-going celebration for the Builsa people throughout history as a sign of thanksgiving to the Gods for bountiful harvests. The celebration serves as a day of homecoming for friends and family who gather to perform sacrifices to the Gods to give thanks for their good harvest, health, and protection, as well as offering sacrifices for a good harvest in the coming year. Every year in December the people of Builsa gather to discuss local projects and development issues at both a community level, and a district level. The celebration at a district level serves to foster unity between the local communities.

Through our discussions with Chiefs and their Elders, it is clear that the history of the Builsa people forms a vivid and important cultural memory. The Feok festival serves as a time to celebrate and remember this history. Since the early 19th century the Feok (harvest) celebrations have been fused with the defeat of the slave raiders that took place in June, 1897. Although Britain passed the law to abolish slavery in 1808,³ swiftly followed by the rest of Europe, it was still a known problem in the Northern regions of Ghana. During this time the region of Builsa was under attack by slave raiders from the South, led by Babatu and Samori.⁴ Babatu and Samori invaded communities and captured locals to sell them as slaves in Europe. Due to their physical build and energy the people of the Builsa District were reportedly popular choices for the slave market.

The slave raiders had already targeted the North before invading Builsa. It was, however, the southern villages of Builsa which were attacked first, forcing people to seek shelter in Sandema. This ultimately prepared the Builsa people for the attack and, led by Sandema Naab Anaankum, they congregated in Sandema whilst surrounding villages were invaded.⁵ An oath was made to Akuncham, the God of War. The Builsa people gathered at a tree in Kanjaga in June 1897 where the slave raiders were captured and killed.⁶

The history and origins of the Feok festival were well understood from all the groups interviewed. Feok represents the culture of the Builsa people, and is a time to give thanks

³ The British Government passed the law to abolish slavery in 1808, and was extended to all British colonies in 1833.

⁴ Babatu Zato, born ca. 1850; Samori Ture, born in Sanankoro in modern day Guinea. Samori's mother was captured as a slave and in order to negotiate her freedom, Samori became a member of the slave raiders army before becoming leader.

⁵ http://www.kroeger1937.homepage.t-online.de/Materialien/BulsaChronology_engl.htm;
<http://www.mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/budget/Builsa.pdf>;
<http://www.mclglobal.com/Features/04b3f.html>

⁶ http://www.kroeger1937.homepage.t-online.de/Materialien/BulsaChronology_engl.htm

and remember historical events. It also has important significance for the performance of funerals, as these only take place after Feok. Evidently, Builsa's are a proud people and proud of their culture. Feok is specified as a time of unity at a family, community, and district level, and signals a time for merry-making, reuniting with friends and family, and forming new acquaintances together. In essence, Feok is a time for all Builsa's to unify and come together as one people. However, many of the groups identified concerns and challenges that have prevented unity forming in recent years (please see p.13).

Traditions and Activities

Feok is a key period for the Builsa period and is an important and popular celebration. 96% of those who completed a questionnaire rated Feok as important, identifying reasons such as it provides education to the younger generation and promotes the culture and traditions of the Builsa people, as well as serving as a platform for development, and encouraging the home-coming of Builsa's from the diaspora. Only one person said Feok is not important to Builsa's, but did not provide any reasoning for this response.

Locals gather to follow traditions, remember their cultural history and spectate or participate in a number of traditional and modern activities. The festival is a principal time for Builsa's to educate the youth about their ancestor's triumphant defeat of the slave raiders and to follow old traditions in remembrance, such as making sacrifices, preparing meals, and wearing traditional dress. Throughout discussions with Chiefs and participants of the project, the different traditions and activities of the festival have become apparent, as well as the level of involvement from different sections of the community, including people with disability. In this section, a discussion of the implementation of Feok including an overview of the different activities and traditions is presented. This is then followed by further detailed discussions in relation to the inclusion of people with disability.

i. Planning

In preparation for the district level celebration in Sandema, the capital of the Builsa District, Chiefs and Elders congregate in planning committees to organise and manage the different activities that will take place and discuss participants. The Traditional Council establishes a planning committee comprised of Chiefs and assigns roles for a number of the Chiefs to head sub-committees, tasked with specific responsibilities. The Chair of the Planning Committee is rotated around the Chiefs. The District Assembly is also represented on the planning committee, and provides financial support to the festival and adopts a facilitative role with regards to the festival budget.

A relatively recent development to the celebration of Feok is the introduction of community level festivals, which take place between December and March, after the District-level event that is held in Sandema. As an example of its adolescence, the town of Wiaga did not celebrate the Feok at a community level until 1985.

Planning for the community Feok celebration goes through the same process, but takes place at a community level. The Chief, Elders and Sub-Chiefs develop planning committees and sub-committees at a local level. It is understood that the community level Feok celebrations are focused on advancing a development agenda in each community.

On an individual basis, a few women specified that they have been involved in the planning of their community Feok and some have followed their Chief and assisted in the District Feok planning committee. The women's groups interviewed have never been called upon to be a part of the planning committee as an organisation. All women's group expressed that they would like to be represented on the planning committee.

As far as has been ascertained, young people and children are also not represented or involved at the planning stages.

It will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 (see p. 18) but people with disabilities are also not represented on the planning committees. However, it was expressed during our meeting with the Chief in Bachonsa, and from the Sandema Chief, that people with disabilities are already included on the community level planning committee. It has also been established that certain individuals are involved in Feok celebrations throughout the 3 day festival.

ii. Traditions and Activities

Of the people who completed a questionnaire, 88% responded that they were aware of activities that take place during the 3 day Feok festival. Each group (women, schools, Chiefs and Elders) interviewed were also forthcoming with activities that take place. This confirms the view that Feok is an important festival for Builsa's. Activities identified include the war dance, drumming, acrobatic displays and many competitions including tug of war, singing, dancing, archery and, more recently introduced, a football tournament for the youths (see appendix 1 for a full list of activities that have been mentioned during the research). Others use the Feok as an opportunity to showcase their skills and crafts to sell produce such as woven baskets, hats, art work and leather goods.

Traditional dress is usually worn when performing the renowned war dance, with participants sporting the traditional smock, horn hat, and weaponry including the axe, bow and arrow, and spear. During the war dance, which is only performed by men, women show encouragement by dancing and singing beside them and screaming in support. Women also wear traditional smock dresses. It is also a time to display wealth, with some women wearing elaborate accessories such as elephant tusks on their arms.

Every year at Feok each community contributes to the District Feok, which is hosted by the Sandema Naab, by offering animals such as sheep and cows. It is understood that these animals are subsequently slaughtered in order to provide festival participants with food and drink.

Sacrifices and prayers are made to the Gods and ancestors to ask for protection. It is a time to reunite, eat and drink, and celebrate with the community by singing, dancing and drumming. Women prepare traditional meals such as baram baram beans, pobula and the local drink pito.

The students at all four schools were able to share a great deal of information about the Feok festival, and the activities and traditions that take place. It was evident that many of the students (from Builsa) participate, or at the very least spectate during Feok. As part of the District Feok some students specified that they participate in the war dance (boys) or drum (boys), and wear traditional dress and talismans. Many of the students talked about singing and dancing (both traditional and modern), and eating and drinking with friends and family. At a community level, some of the boys specified they play a role in pouring libation, and also perform sacrifices for the protection of their family. However, there are no specific activities organised for the youth during the festival.

An important activity that has been identified by each group who participated in the research project is the discussion of development issues, and fundraising for the development of the District. Invited dignitaries, opinion leaders, traditional and formal leaders deliver speeches on development topics and raise awareness of important issues to the general population.

From researching the history, activities and traditions of the Feok festival it is evident that the majority of Builsa's who were interviewed are very much aware of the importance of the annual celebration, as well as its traditions and purpose. However, it was found that participation or involvement in the planning process by people with disabilities, but also women, children and young people, is low. Making small changes to the festival such as revising their involvement may prolong its popularity, and the modernisation of activities may encourage the participation and interest of young people and children. Nevertheless, the majority of those who participated in the research were ardent that traditional and cultural activities remain prominent in the festival. Financial constraints and other factors exist that require consideration before any changes can be pursued.

Challenges and controversies

Although the Feok festival is a significant event for the Builsa people, it has become apparent that the popularity of the festival is diminishing. Of those people who completed a questionnaire, 75% of respondents said the festival had declined in recent years, whereas only 17% felt that the festival had improved. 44% of respondents felt the just-ended 2012 Feok was either poor or very poor, with only 13% rating the festival as good, and no participants rating the 2012 Feok as Excellent. The organisation of the festival was criticised as a significant reason behind the decline. Many people also cited a lack of co-operation and unity among the various communities and Chiefs in the district as the cause of the degeneration of the festival. 88% of respondents stated that the Feok needs to be restructured.

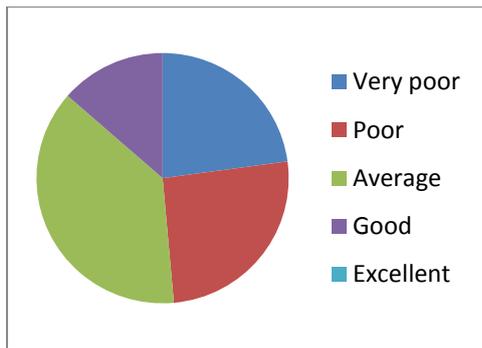


Figure 1: How do you rate the just-ended 2012 Feok festival?

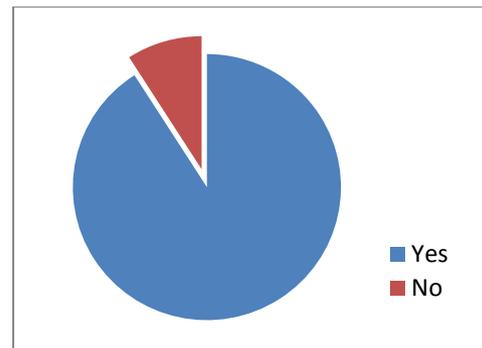


Figure 2: Does the Feok festival need restructuring?

A number of additional factors have been identified, including disinterest from the youth in the culture and purpose of the festival, religious influences, funding, lack of cultural knowledge, and interference of Western culture, as well as the emerging trend for individual communities to host their own Feok festivals. The principal issues raised by each of the groups the project approached shall be discussed in further detail below.

i. Financial Constraints and Logistics

A key concern and a possible suggestion for disinterest in the festival highlighted by each group involved in the project were financial constraints, both on a personal and community level.

The Wiaga women's group explained that festival participants (i.e. dancers and drummers) would previously have received refreshments (a meal) before they returned home after the festivities. However, this no longer occurs and therefore there is no motivation for people to participate.

On an individual level, women from the Fumbisi group expressed that a lack of personal finances meant that they are unable to afford to buy the traditional smock dress and feel embarrassed and unwilling to attend the festival without wearing this costume.

In many of the communities visited by the project it was expressed that people were unable to afford the transportation costs, traditional dress, or have the necessary money to provide accommodation, food, and refreshments for the duration of the festival, and so they are unable to participate or spectate.

There was also a consistent articulation of concern regarding transportation to and from the festival. It is understood that each community is supported with one bus to Sandema, however this is not always guaranteed and there is not enough transportation for participants and spectators. Interestingly, the availability of transportation was cited as a reason for Feok being rated as 'Improved a bit' (15%) in comparison to previous years.

It shall be discussed in further detail in the following chapter of the report, but a lack of financial resources was also expressed as a reason behind the lack of involvement by people with disabilities in the festival.

ii. Builsa District Relations

The LIFE project has learned that the Feok festival is a time to celebrate the unity of Builsa's. However, from our research, it is evident that there is a level of disharmony between communities in the District which is affecting the success of the 3 day festival. Findings from the questionnaire indicate that there is a lack of cooperation among Chiefs in the organisation of the festival, and some communities (e.g. Chuchuliga) are not invited to participate. Responses from women's groups, schools, and Chiefs and Elders reiterate this point, for example we have been informed that Wiaga have refused to participate in the war dance in relation to disputes surrounding the Sandema Chieftaincy. Many people mark the Death of the former Paramount Chief, Azantilow, as a trigger for the decline of the festival.

Chieftaincy problems and disputes accordingly affect the participation and attendance of Builsa's to festival events and activities. If the chief of a community did not receive an invite to the event, or makes a decision not to attend, no member of this community should attend either. Low participation and attendance (by communities, members of the public, and Builsa's in the diaspora) has been recorded as a reason for the disappointment in the 2012 Feok festival.

There is also concern that the District level festival is becoming dominated by Sandema, and other communities have expressed they do not feel welcome. The emergence of community level festivals compounds the lack of attendance and interest in the district level festival hosted by Sandema.

The nature of these disagreements are beyond the scope of the LIFE project, but it is hoped that any disharmony amongst Chiefs in the Builsa District can be resolved in due cause, as it has been reported by many of the participants that the decline of the Feok has its roots in these disagreements.

iii. Activities/traditions

Many of the respondents suggested that there was not enough opportunity for people to get involved in Feok activities; many people expressed that they would like to further their involvement in the festival.

Responses from the youth and school groups identified that the Feok requires modernisation. However, the culture and traditions authentic to the Feok must remain the focal point of the festival. One particular student from Sandema Senior Technical School was very vocal about the negative influence of "Western culture" on the Feok festival, and felt that Feok has less and less to do with Builsa people and their traditions. An example of this can be reflected in the opinions raised by the Siniensi Chief and his Elders who expressed that their culture is fading as a result of their country adapting to westernised values and religious influences such as Christianity. Due to such factors, the true meaning of the Feok fades with modern

activities such as football tournaments and beauty pageants replacing traditional ones related to the preservation of culture and Builsa history. However, it can be argued that the activities aforementioned encourage youth involvement and attract a wider audience. The Sandema women's group expressed that if more modern activities were included in the Feok then the youth would get more involved.

In relation to this, it has been noted that traditionalists no longer take part in the opening and closing prayer at the Feok, despite this being identified as the dominant religion in the district. This is now carried out by contemporary religious figures. A Christian religious leader will perform the opening prayer to the festival, whilst a Muslim will perform the closing prayer or vice-versa. Due to this religious input and influence some individuals may shy away from traditional acts such as sacrificing an animal, as their religion will not allow them to participate. Nevertheless, a recent (2012) report from the District Assembly has found that Traditional African religions are dominant in the district.

It is evident that a balance between modern sports and activities and traditional methods needs to be established to continue remembering and celebrating the Builsa heritage yet also involve and interest the youth, and participation from the general public. We asked research participants what activities, that are currently not included, they would like to see during the festival. A full list can be found in appendix 1; what follows is a summary of responses from each demographic included in the research.

88% of people who completed a questionnaire agreed that the Feok festival should be restructured (9% answered no to the restructuring of the festival). There were a variety of suggestions for how this should be coordinated, including the introduction of more activities, although there is variation in opinion regarding the inclusion of modern activities (e.g. sporting competitions) compared to solely traditional and cultural activities.

Across all the groups that we spoke to there was a general consensus that there should be more activities for the youth. It is widely understood that the Feok festival serves as a time to educate the youth on the history and culture of Builsa's and so there is a desire for children to be more active throughout the festival. The school pupils we spoke to also reiterated this request and suggested a range of activities including interschool debates and quizzes, sports tournaments, as well as more traditional activities such as drumming and dancing.

All women interviewed expressed a great desire to be more involved in the Feok festival and gave many ideas as to things they would like to be involved in, including craft exhibitions, fashion shows, demonstrations of culture, and sports tournaments.

The Wiaga women's group expressed that they would like the widows amongst them to have the chance to sing and dance at the Feok festival. The Fumbisi women's group specified that it wasn't common to come across a traditional group at the Feok anymore and they would like to create a traditional drumming group to display how historical Builsa's would live; with this they could also have demonstrations of grinding millet on stone and other traditional acts. As well as this they explained it would be nice to have a day specifically for the women's groups of Builsa to display their skills and trades. The Fumbisi group also

expressed a desire for more modern music to be played at the festival so modern dancing can be included in the Feok, such as azonto as well as the traditional dances.

Despite any pleas for the introduction of new, and modern, activities, there is still an overwhelming desire for the Feok festival to represent traditions and the culture of the Builsa people; tradition and culture should be the focal point of the festival.

Further suggestions for changes to the festival include inviting other tribes and communities, perhaps outside of Builsa, to participate or compete. This would perhaps be possible in sports tournaments and more modern activities. Increasing the participation in some activities would also attract wider attention to the Feok festival and encourage a larger audience to attend. This will have automatic benefits on trade and the economy, as well as increase awareness and assistance of development issues in the district. However, a more in-depth analysis of the capacity of the district (i.e. budgets, transportation capacity, accommodation) to host a larger event is required.

Conclusion

From the research the project has conducted, it is evident that Feok is an important time for the Builsa people, and is related to the celebration of a bumper harvest and also the victorious defeat of slave raiders, Babatu and Samori. People are very proud of their history and their traditions and enjoy exhibiting them at the festival. Concurrently, many people have articulated a desire for the festival to include more modern, sporting activities. A major inhibitor to the success of the Feok is believed to be the disharmony amongst Chiefs and communities within the district and it is hoped that these can be resolved in due course.

Aside from suggestions already mentioned regarding changes to activities and resolution of disagreements between Chiefs, participants to the project would like to see changes to the organisation and coordination of the festival, including better advertising and promotion of times and activities. Participants of the women's groups and results from the questionnaire expressed an overwhelming need to see the Feok restructured to attempt to involve all chiefs and communities of the Builsa District, and increase participation and attendance, particularly from youth groups and marginalised groups such as women and people with disabilities.

Through our discussions with Chiefs and Elders, as well as responses from the questionnaire, it has been repeatedly suggested that the festival should rotate around the communities which comprise the Builsa District. There is a concern that the 3 day festival is becoming the 'Sandema Feok' instead of the 'Builsa Feok'. Rotation of the festival around the district would bring further development across the district (for example improving infrastructure to increase accessibility). However, there are obvious challenges to this suggestion which requires further investigation, such as the capacity of individual communities to host a larger festival and the assurance of consistency from year to year. It might be considered that the festival remains in Sandema, but rotates bi-annually. This could give communities 2 years to plan and prepare for the festival, without detracting the festival from the capital, Sandema.

The development of this suggestion is beyond the scope of the LIFE project, and requires further research and discussion from key stakeholders of the festival. The LIFE project is agreeable to offer support if necessary in this matter.

In summary, suggestions from research participants regarding the development of the Builsa district Feok festival include:

- Review of activities, and introduction of new activities/events
- Increase participation of youth and other groups in activities
- Inclusion and participation of all communities
- Resolution of Chieftaincy disputes
- Rotation of the district level festival around the Builsa district communities.

2. People with Disabilities and the Feok Festival

The main purpose of our research has been to ascertain the involvement of people with disabilities in the Feok festival, and identify potential opportunities to increase their inclusion. When the issue of people with disabilities and their lack of involvement in the Feok festival was raised before the Builsa District community Chiefs and their Elders the overall feedback was positive. Many believed that people with disabilities should be involved in the festival, as it is a celebration for all Builsa's. Yet some were unable to understand how they could take part when so many physical activities are paramount to the celebration, such as the war dance, tug of war and archery competitions. Still, people with disabilities have taken part in the Feok in the past and many disabled people attain a number of skills such as basket and hat weaving that can be exhibited at the Feok. The following chapter will discuss activities that people with disabilities currently participant in, or have done so in the past, as well as suggestions for further inclusion of people with disability into the festival. Challenges and issues preventing disability inclusion will also be discussed, with recommendations for overcoming these challenges.

Previous Involvement and Current Inclusion

When asked whether the Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) would want to be a part of the Feok festival the unquestionable reply from all groups was affirmative. All of the people with disabilities interviewed were incredibly keen for their chance to perform, plan or be a part of the festival.

Although most PWDs interviewed expressed that they had not taken part in the Feok festival previously, several people had been before they developed a disability. Men had partaken in the war dance and a number of women had danced along-side them, for example, fanning the dancers. All of this involvement stopped once they had become disabled for one reason or another; some of these reasons will be discussed in further sections of the report. The Sandema DPO group had explained that they had once taken part in the festival as part of the FISTRAD drumming group but this was disbanded the following year due to monetary constraints and they have not taken part since. All DPOs interviewed explained that though they have not been a part of the activities at the 3 day Feok festival before, a lot of their families had been.

The Wiaga women's group said that PWDs are currently not allowed to partake in the Feok. They did however also suggest that the attitude of people with disabilities may be preventing them for participating, such as shyness or embarrassment about their disability, or feeling rejected from social events, due to the attitude of society. Several women said that it can still be seen as a disgrace to have a PWD in your family and this means that they are not bought out of the house, or to the Feok. One chief also stated that people with disabilities cannot play a meaningful role and therefore cannot participate in Feok activities (this same chief

later committed to making a conscious effort to include people with disabilities). The Sandema women's group explained that although PWDs may have not been invited, the Feok is announced to all Builsa's inclusive; this suggests that no special invitation is required. This was confirmed by members of the District Assembly who welcomed diversity in festival participants, and also by the Sandema Naab.

It should be noted that there are individual people with disabilities who have participated in Feok activities previously. With each group who participated in the research (Chiefs, DPOs, Women, Schools, and the general public) we met at least one person who was able to identify a person with disability who as an individual had participated in Feok activities at a district level. However, as a group (association) people with disabilities have not previously been included in Feok activities.

Box 1. Charles Taylor, Guitarist and Singer

Charles Taylor is a well-respected musician in the Builsa District who has been blind since the age of ten. He is very popular and has won competitions, made CD's and has previously performed at the District Feok festival in Sandema. However, in recent years Charles has stopped performing at the festival as he no longer receives compensation after performing. He explained that individuals with disabilities have been invited to perform at the festival, but not as a group or an organisation, and that people with disabilities have a lot of skills they can display at the festival, such as singing, dancing, drumming, and story-telling.

According to Mr Taylor, attitudes towards disability have changed considerably in recent years, and the inclusion of people with disabilities into the Feok festival will contribute to further changes. However, he also expressed that people with disabilities will face challenges and difficulties through attending the celebrations due to their disability; careful consideration of these challenges needs to be included in the planning of the festival.

Traditions and Activities

It was widely understood that, as a group, people with disabilities can contribute and participate in the Feok festival in a number of ways, including singing, dancing, drumming, sports, acting, and craft exhibitions, as well as participating in cultural displays such as the war dace. Their disability does not hinder their participation in these activities and more.

The top priority communicated by the Fumbisi Disabled People's Organisation, and also reiterated by the other organisations we communicated with, was being permitted the chance to speak to the Feok spectators in order to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities and educate the general public on their talents and abilities and disability awareness; participating in Feok activities would be a conduit for changing attitudes towards disability and will have wide-reaching implications on the participation of people with disability in general life.

Some members of the Disabled People's Organisations we spoke to expressed that they did not necessarily wish to be involved in festival activities but would like to have the opportunity to spectate. Whilst we believe people with disabilities are not consciously excluded from spectating, it is apparent that additional provisions and support need to be in place in order for them to spectate. For example, appropriate seating, or a safe space for them to gather, is not provided.

For a full list of activities that have been identified as activities which people with disabilities can participate in, please see appendix 1.

Challenges

Whilst having a disability should not prevent anybody from participating in activities, there are obviously challenges which need to be overcome as well as a consideration for any additional support people with disability may require when participating and spectating.

The community Chiefs expressed that there are some factors that arise that restrict the participation of some people with disabilities. For example, consideration into the safety of people with disabilities participating in physical activities, and those, such as the war dance, which are performed with weaponry. However, consultations with people with disability themselves suggest that these challenges can easily be overcome with planning and rehearsals.

Other challenges include discrimination, financial concerns/poverty, transportation and mobility concerns, and lack of resources. These issues will be discussed in further detail below.

i. Discrimination

People with disabilities are currently not a part of the Feok festival and they believe that this is because they have a disability. All of the DPOs spoken to gave strong and shocking negative views quoting that they felt disregarded in society, ignored and looked down upon. One lady in Fumbisi described how they feel that they are regarded in the same way as a corpse; they are not called upon in social life just as the dead would not be. In several meetings with people with disabilities it was said that certain suspicions and taboos in relation to disability still exist, resulting in derogatory comments made to PWDs. It has been highlighted, notably by a number of Chiefs, that people with disabilities are often considered as a burden by family members. People with disabilities are therefore hidden away, or not assisted to travel and participate in social activities. This discrimination has been experienced while at Feok activities which have made people with disabilities feel unwelcome and unable/unwilling to join in or spectate.

It is important to acknowledge that the attitude of people with disabilities themselves may also hinder their participation, as much as the attitude of others. Evidently, from the participation of Charles Taylor and other individuals with disability in the district, it is not a

taboo or forbidden for people with disability to attend. Many people believe that people with disabilities are already provided the opportunity to be included in the Feok (39% of those surveyed believed people with disabilities already did participate in the festival). However, it has been conveyed that the majority shy away from this. Again, this can be the result of a number of factors as mentioned above, but it could be argued that the negative attitudes of people with disability may have stemmed from social and family attitudes. As an example, in Kadema, the Chief had discussed the issues of participation with the Kadema Disabled People's Organisation in the community festival. During our meeting with the organisation, one gentleman was not convinced any provisions would be made for people with disability or be welcomed by the general public, despite assurance from the Chief. As is discussed in the case study below (p. 27), people with disability were provided with a space and the topic of disability inclusion was addressed by the Kadema Chief during the festival. Nevertheless, this example highlights that the behaviour and attitudes of society affect how people with disabilities think about themselves; this is an opinion raised to us by Officers at the District Assembly.

In many cases discrimination occurs due to a lack of awareness and understanding rather than malicious intent. It is hoped that by encouraging more participation from people with disabilities and garnering support for their inclusion from key stakeholders in the festival, advocacy and education on the rights and abilities of people with disability in the Builsa district can flourish. Society, as well as people with disabilities, needs to understand the rights of the 2006 Persons with Disability Act and be aware of the additional problems PWDs face. However, 95% of people who completed the questionnaire responded that people with disabilities should be allowed to take part in the Feok festival.

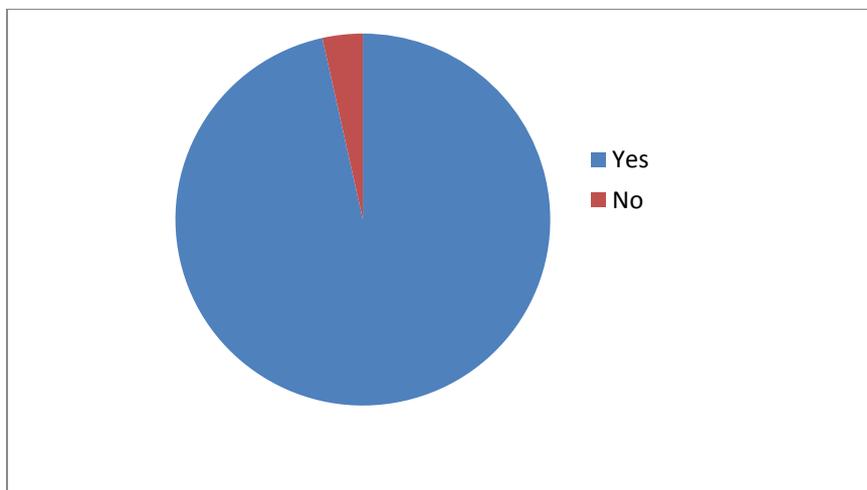


Figure 3: Should People with Disabilities be included in the Feok festival?

Responses supporting the inclusion of people with disabilities into Feok activities included combatting discrimination and stigmatisation, and allowing people with disabilities to play a more active role in society. 3% of survey responses said that people with disabilities should not be able to participate as they may feel embarrassed or the physical nature of the activities of Feok limits their participation. Of course, there is some element of truth to these

statements but through advocacy and activities of the LIFE project across the next 12 months, it is hoped that these challenges can be overcome.

ii. Poverty

Access to financial resources, and activities that generate income, appears to be a problem affecting participation in the Feok festival for all Builsa's, and has been an issue consistently raised as a factor hindering the participation of people with disabilities in social activities, in particular the District Feok festival. Participation in the festival, as a performer or spectator, requires a certain amount of funds; provisions for the appropriate traditional dress/costume, transportation costs to Sandema, accommodation costs, and provision of food and refreshments. People with disabilities require additional assistance to support their incomes as their disability can restrict the livelihood activities they can perform. As an example, it was explained to us in Bachonsa that people with disabilities struggled to keep livestock as they did not have the capacity to walk the animals the 10km to the nearest water source.

One of the key activities identified by all groups that people with disabilities can participate in is an exhibition of their crafts. However, many people, people with disabilities included, lack the funds to purchase the materials required to pursue their crafts and therefore they receive a limited or no income to support themselves or their families.

A further issue that was raised in all three meetings with the DPOs was the lack of or quality of the resource centres available to people with disabilities for skills training, craftwork, and meetings. Many of the communities currently do not have a centre for people with disabilities, for example Fumbisi and Wiaga, and therefore people with disabilities reluctantly meet under trees or try to borrow school halls. However, these options are not sustainable and not appropriate during the rainy season.

iii. Transportation and mobility

Transportation to and from the Feok grounds is an issue which restricts participation and attendance for all Builsa's. Public transport is the only option for the majority, and when it is in high demand many PWDs are unable to board the buses available, as they are pushed to one side, especially when they are using assistive devices such as wheel chairs or mobility bikes. However, the DPOs interviewed explained that many people with disabilities are unable to use public transport as they are not disability friendly, or they are unable to accommodate their mobility devices (e.g. wheelchairs, tricycles). Consequently, people with disabilities face additional challenges travelling to the Feok grounds.

If people with disabilities are able to travel to the Feok festival grounds, there is a further challenge of their mobility around Sandema. Many of the people with disabilities we spoke to expressed a need for assistance with mobility devices, such as walking sticks, wheelchairs and tricycles. Many of the groups we talked to stated that it is difficult to care for a person with disability during the Feok grounds and someone needs to stay with them at all times,

assist with feeding and mobility etc. Therefore people with disabilities are considered as burdensome.

Benefits from inclusion

Extensive benefits were expressed by the DPOs regarding the inclusion of people with disabilities into the festival. It was understood that boundaries within society would be broken and people with disabilities would be more integrated into the community. If the chance is given, they will be able to educate the public on disabilities, the Public Disability Act, and the struggles with having a disability in the Builsa District. The inclusion of people with disabilities into social and cultural activities will, in time, infiltrate their day to day lives, having positive implications for their livelihoods, access to social services, social welfare, and attitudes towards disability. The chairman of the Wiaga DPO expressed that it would be beneficial for families with PWDs to see their accepted and celebrated inclusion as this could broaden their views about their own family members and how they are treated.

i. General attitude change towards PWDs

At all of the DPO meetings attended, it was generally agreed that attitudes towards PWDs have greatly improved in society and this has been recognised by the PWDs as they have begun attending schools, and learning trades. Throughout all the interviews and discussions, it was evident that attitudes have changed in recent years and people with disabilities are no longer 'hidden away' by families. However, there is still some misunderstanding of the abilities of people with disability which hinder their participation in social events. Whilst the majority of people who completed a questionnaire responded that people with disabilities should be allowed to take part in Feok events, 3% of those surveyed suggested that people with disabilities would be unable to participate in many of the physical activities (such as the war dance, sports, dancing), or would be embarrassed to participate. Therefore, the benefits of being included in Feok activities would change the attitudes of those who question the capability of people with disabilities.

In addition, we discovered that the confidence of some people with disabilities is low with regards to their own ability to participate, as well as the anticipation that they would be openly included in activities. It is thought that the LIFE project will be able to assist people with disabilities to change their own attitudes and encourage them to take a more active role in society, in particular the Feok. An overwhelming majority of people spoken to throughout the research project were open to the participation of people with disabilities in the Feok festival. It is hoped that by developing activities for people with disability, and integrating people with disabilities into existing activities, they will feel less vulnerable to discrimination and more encouraged to participate openly in other social activities.

Box 2. The power of advocacy: Radio Builsa interview

Radio Builsa is a part of the FISTRAD family based in Sandema, it has a number of DJs and plays between 5am and 10pm every day. Radio Builsa has over 1 million listeners across the Builsa District.

On Thursday 21st February, 2013 LIFE project volunteers completed a show on 106.5mhz Radio Builsa with resident DJ and station manager, Ibrahim Alahassan between the hours of 9pm and 10pm. This was another avenue to the people of Builsa and another way to share the LIFE project's aims and questions. As well as a positive way to reach more opinions of the Builsa people it is also a way to educate the listeners on the project and the advocacy of people with disabilities. Positive feedback has been received since and during the interview. Ibrahim questioned the volunteers on a range of topics to do with the LIFE project, CBR and living in Ghana to which the volunteers had prepared comprehensive answers. A call-in session was completed in the last 15 minutes of the show. A gentleman from Navrongo called in to congratulate the volunteers on the excellent work they were completing and the chairman of the Wiaga DPO group phoned in to add his support to the project and explained that one of the challenges faced by PWDs is the resentment from their family and a plea was made to families listening to seek help from charities such as CBR if they are struggling with the inclusion of a PWD into their family. It was also explained that PWDs are now decision makes in Ghana (e.g. Minister of Chieftaincy) and this respect should be extended to a family level. We had a call from a gentleman in Chuchuliga who supported the radio programme also. Another caller suggested that the Feok grounds needed improving so that people could enjoy the Feok more, this involves planting flowers etc. to make the area look a lot nicer.

Responses from the radio show attest to the changing attitudes towards disability in the region. LIFE project volunteers also received verbal feedback regarding attitudes towards disability after the radio show had aired.

The inclusion of activities for people with disabilities into the Feok festival will contribute greatly to changing attitudes.

ii. Improved Livelihoods

Throughout the research project, the exhibition of traditional crafts has been highlighted as a key activity that people with disabilities can participate in during Feok. Although this has not been a dominant focus of the LIFE project thus far, it is understood that many people with disabilities residing in the district make and sell traditional crafts as their main source of income (such as basket weaving, rope making, soap production). However, it is also recognised that people with disabilities struggle to make a steady income due to a lack of resources, lack of capital, and limited means. One of the main aims of the LIFE project, across its 3 year projected existence, is to support livelihood activities of people with disabilities. If people with disabilities are facilitated to sell their crafts and trades during the Feok festival it is expected that they will develop a comfortable profit margin in which to

support further trades throughout the year. More research is most definitely required in this area. This proposed benefit also relies on the restructuring of the current Feok festival, as it is dependent on steady attendance of spectators and tourists.

iii. Furthering the implementation of disability laws

As previously mentioned in the introduction of this report, the LIFE project aims to support the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and also the (Ghana) National Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715). By supporting people with disabilities to increase their role in Feok festival activities, the LIFE project, and the Builsa people, will be furthering the implementation of government and international legislation on the rights of people with disabilities. It has been widely understood that many people in the District, including traditional and formal leadership, are accepting and open to the inclusion of people with disabilities; in fact it has been made aware to us on a number of occasions, notably by the Paramount Chief, that people with disabilities are not purposefully excluded from the Feok, or other similar social events. However, it is also understood that there is a lack of awareness and comprehension how to include people with disabilities into existing activities, due to their physical nature or a lack of understanding of the capabilities of individuals with a particular disability. It is hoped that the LIFE project, in partnership with CBR Sandema, can develop the knowledge of traditional and formal leadership on this topic, as well as people with disabilities and the general public.

Kadema Case study

On Saturday 9th February, the chief of Kadema invited the LIFE volunteers to the community Feok festival. The theme of the festival was “Illitracy, a recipe of igitonance and poverty, wipe it off now!” (sic). The celebration took place in a large space akin to a town square, outside the local school. The Chief and his entourage (sub-chiefs and elders) sat under a large tent, with the Chief sat directly under a large umbrella. Across the Feok grounds were two additional marquees, for invited guests. A sound system was also set up.

Mr Maxwell Akandem, CBR co-ordinator, had previously contacted the Chief to find out what time the festival would commence. The timings of the festival were not widely disseminated or adhered to. We had initially been informed that the festival would start at 2pm. However, we did not arrive until 3:30pm. The Chief and his entourage had arrived, music was playing on a sound system, and a drumming group was preparing to perform. Nevertheless, the general public did not seem to arrive at the Feok grounds until approx. 4:30pm. Despite some confusion regarding the timings of the event, the festival had clearly been well publicised as it drew large crowds to the Feok grounds by approximately 5pm.

Upon our arrival, we were handed a program of events (see appendix 2) and seated under a small marquee, opposite the Chief and his entourage. The program listed a number of different speeches, interrupted by cultural events. The program had been well thought out; however, the cultural activities could have been more numerous as we only saw a small group

of drummers and dancers. The Kadema Disabled People Organisation had been invited to join the festival, and was invited to sing and dance with the drumming group.

The program listed 25 individual events, including the arrival of citizens, Kadema Naab, and the District Chief Executive, followed by the traditional pouring of libation. The program predominantly included a number of speeches from Kadema Naab, the District Chief Executive, and Heads of Departments from Education, Health, NHIS, Agriculture, NCCE and Builsa Radio (see appendix 2 for full program listings). Unfortunately, no times were listed on the program. A further point of research would be to examine how information is disseminated to the public about the timings and events of Feok.

The Kadema Disabled People's Organisation had been invited to attend the festival, as an organisation, by the Kadema Chief. They had previously met with him on two occasions and discussed the issues they faced in attending the festival. One concern which they had iterated to the LIFE team was that they did not have anywhere to sit, and were often overcrowded by able-bodied spectators. It was apparent that the Chief had specified a particular place for them to sit, where they could display their crafts and still observe all of the events. The inclusion of people with disabilities was also mentioned in several speeches, with the President of the Kadema DPO also being invited to speak. People with disabilities were also invited to sing and dance, and lead a small procession, including the LIFE team, to greet the Chief. The Kadema Feok festival, and Kadema Chief, actively included people with disabilities in the activities. Whilst no formal research has been conducted, from observations of the LIFE team the general public did not appear to be disturbed by their inclusion into the festival, and appeared to enjoy their performance and procession to the Chief.

The LIFE team were invited to examine the crafts and trades people with disabilities had on display. Unfortunately, the compere of the festival would not let us and explained that there would be an exhibition later on in the day. Regrettably this did not seem to occur, and it was very dark when we were finally afforded an opportunity to look at their crafts. There were a variety of crafts on display, but it did not appear that those selling had much produce.

By approx. 7pm the crowds had grown considerably, and included men and women. It appeared that they were less interested in the speeches which were still continuing, and more concerned with merry-making. There did not seem to be many organised activities for the general public to participate in, and there seemed to be no motivation for the public to arrive at the grounds until dark. The crowds filled the Feok grounds to prepare for merry making. By this time, the LIFE team were required to leave and were unable to make any further observations.

The LIFE team would like to extend their gratitude to the Kadema Chief, and the community of Kadema for welcoming us to their Feok celebration. The team thoroughly enjoyed their visit to Kadema Feok, and were impressed by the leadership of the Kadema Chief, particularly in relation to his active inclusion of people with disabilities in Feok.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The LIFE project has conducted a research project into the inclusion of disability into the Feok festival, which takes place annually, in December, in the Builsa District. It is evident that Feok is an important celebration to Builsa's; people are proud of their culture and how the festival provides an opportunity to display their culture and tradition. Information ascertained throughout the project will be validated at a Stakeholder Engagement meeting on Thursday 21st March 2013 (the findings of which will be included in later editions of this report).

It has been found that, whilst considered an important event in the year, the popularity of the annual 3 day festival is declining, due to disharmony between communities, lack of interest from the youth, and disorganisation of festival events. An overwhelming majority of research participants would like to see changes to the festival.

The LIFE project is focused on assisting people with disabilities to participate in the Feok 3 day festival. The LIFE project understands that many people with disabilities are involved in Feok celebrations at a family level, and participate in activities such as sacrifices to the Gods, pouring of libation, and other family-level celebrations. However, the concern of the project is with their involvement at the district level 3 day festival currently held in Sandema in December. Findings suggest that there is support for this project in the Builsa District, with 95% of people who completed a questionnaire agreeing to the inclusion of people with disabilities into Feok festival activities. There are, however, a number of challenges which need to be overcome in order to fully integrate and include people with disabilities into the Feok festival. These include, but are not limited to, poverty, lack of resources, transportation and mobility problems, and discrimination. The project is aware that part of the responsibility of involvement in activities rests with people with disabilities themselves. However, their involvement relies on the support from community members and Chiefs. The Kadema community Feok festival serves as an example that awareness of the issues facing people with disability in the community can assist in finding solutions. When the Chief was able to discuss with people with disabilities the challenges they face in participating and attending, solutions were able to be found to ensure their full and ready participation. In order to find sustainable solutions to any challenges hindering the participation of people with disabilities into the Feok festival activities, as well as motivate and encourage their participation, the LIFE project recommends people with disabilities to be represented on Feok festival planning committees, for example appointing members of existing Disabled People's Organisations in the District onto Feok planning committees, or at the very least establishing a Disability Awareness advisory committee for Feok, and other social and cultural activities. People with disabilities are themselves best situated to inform how best to achieve disability accessibility and inclusivity in the Builsa Feok festival.

The LIFE project is committed to assisting people with disabilities to develop relevant activities which will contribute to their inclusivity. In future phases, the project aspires to build the capacity of local DPO's and people with disability to participate in activities which feature in the 3 day Feok festival, such as sporting and cultural activities, and developing strategies to support livelihoods of people with disability. Further investigation is required to understand the personal and collective strengths and capabilities of people with disabilities, and to develop activities which will be sustainable.

It is requested that the festival programme is reviewed, not only to increase participation and attendance of the wider public, thus benefiting the entire Builsa community, but also to develop and include activities for marginalised groups, such as people with disability, women, and the youth. It is recommended that at least one additional day of programming is established to enable supplementary activities without impinging on existing, and necessary, cultural activities.

The LIFE project would recommend a budgetary review of the Feok festival, and hopefully find ways to assist in the financial support of people with disabilities in their endeavour to participate fully in festival activities. This review should occur concurrently alongside a review of current and planned activities to integrate people with disabilities into social and cultural activities, in line with governmental and international legislation such as the National Public Disability Act and the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In summary, key recommendations based on the findings of this project are:

- Include people with disabilities into the planning of Feok festivals, by appointing a representative of local Disabled People's Organisations, onto planning committees.
- Review Feok festival budgets to ascertain whether people with disabilities can be supported financially in activities.
- Review the Feok festival programme, with the proposal of extending the festival to include additional activities and events for people with disabilities, women and the youth.
- Support people with disabilities in their attendance and participation of Feok.

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The following websites assisted in the verification and supplementary information on the history of slave raiders in Ghana:

http://www.kroeger1937.homepage.t-online.de/Materialien/BulsaChronology_engl.htm;

<http://www.mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/budget/Builsa.pdf>;

<http://www.mclglobal.com/Features/04b3f.html>

Appendices

Appendix 1: Feok Festival activities and suggestions for future activities

List of Activities reported to take place at the Feok festival:

- Acrobatic display
- Archery competition
- Cultural displays of clothing and traditional activities
- Dancing including the war dance, Ampee and Nagla, Azonto, and Feok jams.
- Drumming and music
- Football tournament
- Fun games e.g. sack race and lime/egg and spoon race
- Magical Display
- Miss Feok competition
- Opening and Closing prayers
- Pouring of libation
- Reading of moral tales and stories
- Sacrifices and prayers to God's for protection
- Showcase of skills and crafts
- Singing
- Speeches and discussions of developmental projects
- Tug of war

List of additional activities Women's Groups would like to participate in:

- Cooking competition
- Fashion Show (for seamstresses)
- Sports tournaments
- Story-telling and proverb reading
- Tug of war

List of activities children and young people would like to participate in:

- Acrobatics
- Acting
- Athletics
- Basketball
- Dancing
- Drumming
- Eating competitions
- Interschool quizzes, including spelling bee, debates
- Rapping
- Sack race
- Sing
- Tug of War

List of activities Disabled People Organisations would like to participate in:

- Acting a play
- Dancing
- Disability awareness and advocacy
- Drumming
- Exhibiting craft work
- Football tournament
- Pouring of the libation
- Saying the opening/closing prayer
- Singing
- Story telling

Appendix 2: Kadema Feok Festival Program (reprinted to fit).

Kadema Feok Celebration

Date 9th February 2013

Theme: “ILLITRACY, A RECIPE OF IGONORANCE AND POVERTY, WIPE IT OFF NOW!”

Program

- Arrival of citizens to the convention grounds
- Arrival of Kadema Naab and Entourage
- Arrival of the DEC and Entourage
- Exchange of greetings
- Pouring of libation
- Christian prayer
- Culture display
- Introduction of chairman
- Chairman’s response
- Culture display
- Introduction of guests
- Introduction of special guest of honour
- Cultural display
- Welcome address (speech) by Kadema Naab
- Guest speaker on the theme
- Key-note address by the D.C.E
- Culture display
- A recap of convention’s income and expenditure
- Silver collection on support of community centre project
- Speeches by Heads of departments – Education, Health, NHIS, Agriculture, NCCE, Builsa Radio
- Fraternal message from Kadema citizens resident in Accra, Tamale, Navrongo, Bolgatanga, Sandema
- Culture display
- Chairman closing remarks
- Vote of thanks
- Refreshment/Departure

Thank you for coming and May the Almighty Lord guide you safely back to your destination