



NISEC ALUMNI ABROAD



# ANNUAL REPORT 2018

*Working together to improve  
**learning, teaching** and **boarding**  
facilities at Nifa Senior High*

Nisec Alumni Abroad  
Annual Report 2018  
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Cover photo: NAA Project Leader Michael Adu and students at the commissioning of NAA's maiden project at Nifa Senior High School.

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# President's review

Welcome to the 2018 NAA Annual Report. This report represents our third year of operation as an alumni charity organization dedicated to helping Nifa Senior High School. As the years go by, I'm proud to see NAA go from strength to strength.

The past year may be described as a milestone year. Among the highlights are achievements that define who we are as a charity organization. And when I look back, three things stood out: We commissioned our first project, launched our website, and enjoyed extraordinary goodwill from within our membership through an exciting fundraising event that saw us go back to our roots. But 2018 was also a year in which we suffered a great loss, with the passing of our Vice-President.

The year began with a visit by Michael Adu, our Project Leader, to Nifa Senior High. He reported that our first project, a ten-seater biofil toilet system for the girls at the school, was 80 per cent complete. To reach our fundraising target, we embarked on a highly successful, week-long 'Kofi ne Ama' campaign. This enabled us to pay the final instalment of the \$20,000 needed to complete the project and meet all our contractual obligations.

In September, we commissioned the completed toilet facility amid a fanfare of trumpets, singing and processions. In attendance were students, teachers, the district's VIPs and our very own Michael Adu, who delivered a speech to mark the occasion. The NAA executive made a decision to name the facility in honour of Vice-President



Belinda Darko, who had passed away earlier in the year after more than two years of unwavering commitment and dedication to NAA and our first project. Belinda's passing is a big loss to NAA, but her legacy lives on.

In July, we welcomed our new Vice-President, Mary Quao, following an election to replace Belinda. Mary, who lives in New York, graduated from Nifa in 1983 and has been a committed member of NAA since it was established in 2016. Voting to select new Regional Coordinators (RCs) was held at the same time, resulting in the election of Vera Larbi, Winifred Codjoe and Kingsley Akowuah-Addo as our new RCs for the US, Canada and Europe respectively.

I'm also proud to report that our long-awaited website is now a reality. The new website gives us much-needed online presence and increases our visibility to potential donors and potential NAA members, as well as boosting our profile as a credible organization.



The website, [www.nisecansabroad.org](http://www.nisecansabroad.org), along with a new NAA logo featured on the front cover of this report, was designed and built at no cost to our organization, thanks to a group of young men with family relations within our membership.

Publication of the NAA Calendar was a first for us. The calendar features the birthdays and photographs of all members who provided those details to the NAA executive on request. In addition to serving as a visible representation of our organization, the calendar reminds us to celebrate the birthdays of our members on our electronic platforms. The 2018 NAA Calendar was produced under my direct initiative, again at no cost to NAA.

During the year, the desire of members to meet face to face and celebrate our achievements continued to grow. The NAA leadership, including the Regional Coordinators, examined options for

such a meeting and decided that an alumni type of reunion would be appropriate. We set up a seven-member committee to plan the event, which we have scheduled to take place in New Jersey in the US on the weekend starting July 19, 2019.

I would like to thank the NAA leadership and all our members for their support in a year that we managed to achieve so much to further the cause of our organization. In the year ahead, we will continue to build on our achievements, in particular, by working with Nifa Senior High to identify, and start fundraising for, our next project for the school. Last but not least, I look forward to catching up with our members face to face at the forthcoming reunion in New Jersey in July 2019.

Nicholas Opoku Appiah  
President







# Organizational overview

Nisec Alumni Abroad Inc. (NAA) is a public charity organization that is registered in the U.S. State of Virginia and boasts a worldwide membership. It is said that the founding fathers of Nifa, the alma mater of NAA members, set out to produce scholars who will be of use to their communities and to the world at large. This objective is represented by the school’s logo, whose flaming torch symbolizes the well-trained Nisec graduates inspired to go out into the world to serve. As a group, NAA embodies everything the founding fathers envisaged for Nifa’s graduates. More than that, NAA’s organizational objective is helping ensure the achievement of those aspirations by successive generations of the school’s graduates.

NAA was established on January 7, 2016. It is a non-political, non-religious public charity group dedicated to improving learning, teaching and boarding facilities at Nifa Senior High School in Ghana, West Africa. NAA members are former students of Nifa Senior High and its antecedent, Nifa Secondary School, who are resident outside Ghana.

Brought together by the power of social media, members were galvanised into action by a rude awakening—the school they knew so well and loved so much had become a shadow of its former self. In late 2015, many older members, who had once enjoyed modern facilities at the

school, were stunned to see photographs of crumbling facilities and revolting sanitary conditions circulating on social media. Moved by those pictures, the former students now residing overseas decided to do something about it. They formed a new group known as Nisec Alumni Abroad in early 2016. It is primarily a single-issue group focused on assisting Nifa Senior High in improving its educational facilities.

NAA is led by an elected executive, a ten-member management committee chaired by a president. Supporting the work of the management committee, especially in the important task of fundraising, is a team of three Regional Coordinators (RCs) representing the key regions from which the group’s membership is drawn: Europe (including the UK), Canada and the United States of America.

At December 31, 2018, NAA had 63 members spread across Europe, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and the United States. The organization’s principal mode of communication is electronic, based on Whatsapp group platforms, where most discussions, announcements and voting take place, with meetings held via telephone conferencing where possible. NAA is guided by a constitution adopted by members on April 1, 2016.



A dilapidated kitchen and pantry at Nifa Senior High School

“Our primary goal is to help the poor little ones completing their education in rundown and unhealthy facilities.”  
**Nick Opoku, President**



A disused toilet facility at Nifa Senior High School



# Governance and regulatory arrangements

## Summary

A newly elected executive took office on January 15, 2018. In July, three new Regional Coordinators for Europe, Canada and the United States were elected, along with a new Vice-President following the death of the incumbent. The NAA constitution adopted in 2016 remained unchanged and continued to govern NAA's operations during the year.

## The executive

The ten-member management committee (the executive) chosen in the December 2017 general election to steer the affairs of NAA assumed office on January 15, 2018. The new executive comprises seven members of the inaugural executive and three new members, namely Helena Adu, Hayford Asare-Tabiri and Doris Gehrig. The new executive is expected to stay in office until January 14, 2020.

Following the passing of Vice-President Belinda Darko in March, an election was held in July and Ms Mary Quao was chosen as the new Vice-President. It was agreed Mary would hold her position until the next general election.

In 2018, the executive held six meetings focusing on a range of issues. They include strategies to meet NAA's fundraising target for its first project, the naming and commissioning of the project, Vice-President Belinda Darko's passing and replacement, website and calendar development, how to increase membership from Europe and responding to concerns over stringent rules for posting messages on NAA platforms.

The executive approved plans for a formal reunion in July 2019, to be led by a seven-member planning committee comprising three members of the executive and four other NAA members.

The Executive	
President	Nick Opoku
Vice-President	Belinda Darko, then Mary Quao
Secretary	Kofi Ansah
Assistant Secretary	Helena Adu
Treasurer	Samuel Gyadu-Appiah
Assistant Treasurer	Kwadjo Agyemang
Project Leader	Michael Adu
Assistant Project Leader	Hayford Asare-Tabiri
Registrar	Yaw Obiri
Assistant Registrar	Doris Gehrig

## Regional Coordinators

An election was held in the week starting July 8 to select new Regional Coordinators. Kingsley Akowuah-Addo (1997 year group), Vera Larbi (1982) and Winifred Codjoe (1982) were successful in being elected as RCs for Europe, the US and Canada respectively.

The RC positions were created under the constitution in 2016 to support the executive in their work in the regions. While guidelines were developed to ensure clarity of the scope and nature of the RC work, a decision on tenure was not made. The executive addressed this oversight by aligning the term of the RCs with that of the executive, which is two years. However, given the term of the current RCs started mid-year, it was agreed that they would serve for 18 months so the next RC election could coincide with the next general election in January 2020.





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Regional Coordinators	
United States	Vera Larbi
Canada	Winifred Codjoe
Europe	Kingsley Akowuah-Addo

### The NAA Constitution

The NAA constitution adopted in 2016 remained unchanged and continued to govern NAA's operations during the year. The RC Guidelines developed under the constitution were amended to reflect the introduction of tenure for Regional Coordinators.

### NAA Annual Report 2017

The 2017 NAA Annual Report was released on July 5, 2019, well behind schedule. Annual reports are a constitutional requirement for the organization and contribute to our accountability and transparency. They are expected to be delivered in the year following the reporting year.

The challenges of combining full-time work with NAA's voluntary work mean it is not always possible to deliver these reports on schedule. However, the executive recognises the importance of these reports and will do its best to deliver them as soon as practicable.





# Membership, registration and communication

## Summary

By the end of 2018, NAA had a total of 63 members spread across seven countries.

## Membership

Membership numbers remained steady throughout the year, with NAA gaining two new members and losing two. At December 31, the total number of members in NAA was 63, which was the same as the 2017 total.

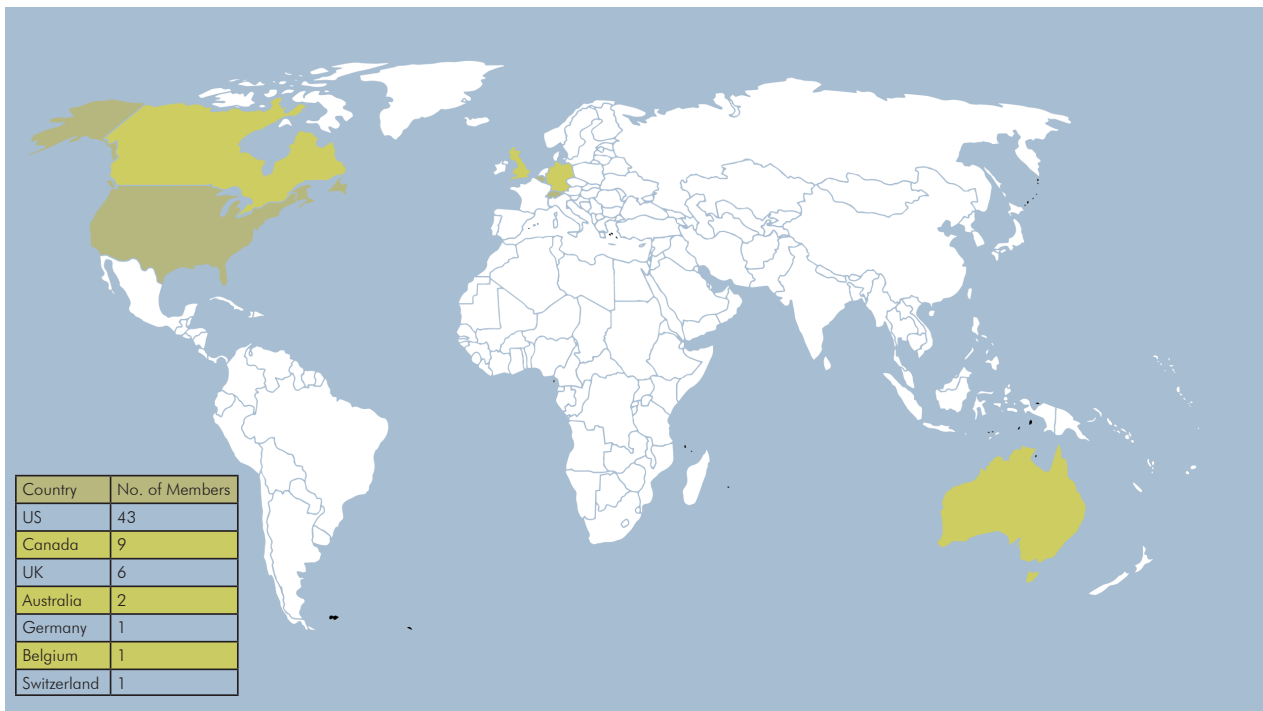
The small size of NAA's membership within the UK and Europe remained a concern and an ongoing subject of discussion within the executive. These two regions are known to be home to a large number of Nisec alumni and the executive continued to work out the best way to attract more members from that region with little success. This issue remains a high priority in the year ahead.

## Communication platforms

The Global Platform, NAA's main communication platform, continued to be the organization's official registry. It was one of five official Whatsapp-based communication platforms maintained by NAA during 2018. The other platforms are:

- RC Europe platform
- RC Canada platform
- RC USA platform
- The Executive platform

Joining NAA entitles members to a place on its communication platforms. One becomes a member of NAA only after being placed on the main platform, which then entitles their presence on their respective RC platforms. At December 31, there were nine registered members in Europe (UK and mainland Europe); two in Australia; nine in Canada and 43 in the United States.





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### Launch of NAA's website

NAA's long-awaited website was launched on July 1. This has been two-and-a-half years in the making. The website, [www.nisecansabroad.org](http://www.nisecansabroad.org), tells the story of our mission, how we started and what we've achieved. It currently has nine pages: Home, About Us, Meet the Leadership Team, Get Involved, Membership, Publication, News and Activities, Photo Gallery and Contact Us.

The website is important for NAA's mission. It gives the organization much-needed online presence at a time when such presence is a sine qua non of organizational success. It will give us the credibility we need as a genuine charity organization, allowing potential donors and philanthropists to put a face to the name and helping to attract new members.

Glowing comments on NAA's main platform following the launch indicate that members are happy with the new website. However, the executive sees the website as a work in progress. Our goal is to make ongoing improvements to the website to make sure it continues to meet the needs and expectations of our organization, members and stakeholders.

“Great accomplishment ... a testament to our outstanding leadership.”  
**Enoch Asante Bediako**

“I've visited the site and the presentation is superb. Such is the spirit. I hope it will better the aims and aspirations of NAA.”  
**Kwabena Bekoe**

### Message from NOSA

The National Executive, Leaders of Year groups and the entire membership of NOSA home and abroad congratulate you on the remarkable launch of your website. The purpose of the project, as outlined, we agree will facilitate discourse and provide the platform to educate and inform us all about developments in NOSA and our alma mater. This is a demonstration of your resolve to support our school. We commend you highly for the feat. God bless you all.

Kwadwo Kissiedu Kwapong, President, NOSA



**Guidelines for posting messages**

Following concerns that the strict interpretation of NAA’s rules on posting messages, as provided by the NAA Constitution, was confusing, stifled members’ ability to socialise and created platform boredom, the executive reviewed the rules.

This resulted in the development of new message posting guidelines that were clearer and offered a more relaxed interpretation of the rules.

The guidelines are a list of broad themes about what the executive deems appropriate and inappropriate for posting on NAA’s platforms.

The guidelines encourage members to refrain from posting non-NAA related materials during periods when key activities about NAA business, such as elections or discussions about the organization, are taking place, until such activities and discussions are over.

Can be posted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievements and celebrations—of NAA members and their families and loved ones, e.g. graduations, marriages and weddings, birthdays, births, awards</li> <li>• Health and wellbeing—messages that provide useful advice about human health. But please try to avoid posting sensational clips like those about fish, rice, or vegetables made from plastic</li> <li>• Reasonable opportunities—such as scholarships or job opportunities that might benefit members and their families; not some scam about winning cell phones or vacation getaways, etc</li> <li>• Warnings—about scams, personal safety, etc</li> <li>• Motivational messages</li> <li>• Harmless/inoffensive jokes</li> <li>• Sports, entertainment and culture that enliven and amuse</li> </ul>

Cannot be posted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Party political messages, especially about Ghana—can be very divisive</li> <li>• Religion—can be very divisive</li> <li>• Sexual or pornographic images or messages—not acceptable</li> <li>• Graphic images—can be confronting for some people, e.g. injured people in a car accident; armed robbers killed by the police, so-called Christians executed in another country, torture; children being abused; images of sick people, etc</li> <li>• Offensive jokes and insults—about other tribes or ethnic groups, people with disability, sex or gender, etc</li> <li>• Grotesque representation—distorted and shocking images of human faces and other body parts; sometimes abnormal creatures, with a mixture of human and animal parts</li> <li>• Advertising—of any nature</li> </ul>



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### Social activities

As in previous years, the main social activities on the NAA platforms were celebrations of birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Canada Day, Independence Day (USA) and Valentine's Day, as well as expressions of condolences to bereaved members. The NAA Calendar, an initiative of the President, was a real hit for members and provided a rallying point for birthday celebrations.

About 13 NAA members attended Belinda Darko's funeral in Laurel, Maryland, on June 1. NAA members, including those who could not attend, donated \$2,650 to the bereaved family.

### The NAA Story Boneshaker

During the year, the executive, led by Secretary Kofi Ansah, introduced the NAA Story Boneshaker, a series of stories about life in Nifa, Ghana and the diaspora. The stories, published on the main platform each Friday, were designed to inject liveliness into the communication platform and encourage members to reminisce about secondary school life and Ghanaian culture. A total of ten stories were published, with contributions from a handful of members. Due to minimal responsiveness from members by way of feedback and story contributions, the series was discontinued. The last NAA Story Boneshaker was published on December 28.



Students having fun on the Nisec boneshaker around the early 1980s

# Projects

## Summary

NAA's maiden project, a ten-seater biofil toilet system for the girls at Nifa Senior High School, was completed and handed over to the school authorities for commissioning in September.

## Construction

The year started with a visit by Michael Adu, the Project Leader, to Nifa Senior High to assess progress of NAA's maiden project, a ten-seater biofil toilet system for the girls. Mr Adu shared photos of the building on the main platform, generating great excitement from members.

In his report to the executive, Mr Adu noted that the headmaster, his assistant and other school authorities accompanied him on a tour of the site and expressed their satisfaction with the quality of the facility, which was 80 per cent complete at the time of the visit. The main structure, as well as toilet fittings and accessories, was in place. Plumbing work was underway. Connection to the main grid, painting and landscaping were scheduled to occur shortly.

Mr Adu took the opportunity to inspect the construction of another toilet facility nearby being funded by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The headmaster told him the church officials were impressed with the NAA facility and mentioned that it was a lot better than the one they were building nearby. Having seen both, Mr Adu came to the same conclusion.

“ We thank everyone who made it possible to make the students happy as they use the toilet with comfort and smiles.  
**Hayford Asare Tabiri** ”

“ I'm proud to be part of this amazing group.  
**Julie Owusu** ”

“ Despite the fundraising challenges, we will persevere to see the project through to its conclusion.  
**Michael Adu** ”





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### Project commissioning

NAA's biofil toilet system was completed in June, but it was not until September 13 that it was commissioned. Project leader Michael Adu was on hand to deliver a speech and celebrate the occasion with the school. In attendance were the District Chief Executive, NOSA representatives, the late Belinda Darko's family, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the

headmaster and staff, students and parents. It was a joyous occasion filled with fanfare, with guests treated to the melodious sounds and brass band music of the school choir and cadet band. As part of the project's commissioning, NAA paid for the design and installation of a plaque with the inscription "Donated by Nisec Alumni Abroad in Memory of Belinda Kono".



Plaque honoring late Vice-President Belinda Darko



Ten-seater biofil toilet system at Nifa Senior High, funded by NAA



NAA Project Leader Mike Adu and students at the project commissioning



Nisec students, NOSA members and officials from the Church of Jesus Christ at the project commissioning



# Financial statement

## Summary

Deposits totalling \$4,125.71 were made during the year and expenses over the same period totalled \$9,392.99.

## Summary of accounts: receivables & expenses

Items	Total
Beginning balance January 1, 2018	\$8,380.74
Total amount of registration fee received from members	\$0.00
Total deposits	\$4,125.71
Total Withdrawal/ expenses	\$9,392.99
Balance as of December 31 2018	\$3,113.46

The largest single expense during the year—\$7000 plus a fee of \$40—related to a bank transfer made to the headmaster of Nifa Senior High, Dr. Akoto, in January. This represented the second Instalment of payments towards NAA's first project, a biofil toilet for girls at the school.

## Fundraising

As of January 2018, a total of 45 members had made contributions ranging from \$100 to \$1000 each towards NAA's \$20,000 toilet project. The minimum amount required to be paid by each member was \$250. An outstanding amount of

over \$7000 was needed to fulfil NAA's contractual obligations to the building contractors, Biological Filters & Composters Limited, and to fund ancillary items such as a plaque.

A total of 18 members had not made any contributions yet at the start of 2018 despite repeated reminders since 2016 when the fundraising began. The President therefore appealed to members who had already made contributions to add a little more if they could afford to.

On January 21, the executive, led by Assistant Treasurer Kwadjo Agyemang, embarked on a week-long 'Kofi ne Ama' fundraising campaign to help raise funds to supplement the final instalment of the project payments. Per tradition, members born on each of the seven days of the week took turns in pledging any amount they could donate, starting with 'Monday borns'.

The campaign was highly successful. Over \$2,200 was raised, more than enough to pay for the final 10 per cent of the instalment amounts for the project. The campaign injected much-needed vitality and fun into life on the platform and generated significant participation, with members born on each of the seven days coming up with creative and innovative ways about how their group could win the contest. In the end, the Sunday 'borns' won.

“ Although we needed the money, the fun involved in this Kofi ne Ama has been so exciting.

**Belinda Darko** ”

“ Folks, let the pledges and donations flow ... It's time to demonstrate kindness.

**Samuel Gyadu Appiah** ”

“ Our contributions will go to help make Nisec a better place for the less fortunate.

**Mary Quao** ”





# Conclusion

It has been a big year for Nisec Alumni Abroad (NAA) and its stakeholders. NAA is continuing to build on its early achievements, doing what it set out to do when it was founded in January 2016.

In this milestone year, NAA has seen its maiden project become a reality. The ten-seater biofil toilet system is now open for use by the girls at Nifa, making school life a little better for these young students. NAA has increased its exposure to prospective members and donors with the launch of its website. The organization's highly anticipated online presence has been more than two years in the making, but exceedingly welcome. The year 2018 has also confirmed that the spirit of goodwill is very much alive within the NAA membership, with members demonstrating their strong commitment and willingness to put their hand in their pocket when the need arises.

In a year that saw its first and successful leadership transition from the inaugural management committee, NAA can be proud of its commitment to maintain good leadership through democratic processes. The newly elected executive has hit the ground running, steering the organization towards achieving new goals over its two-year term in office.

The new executive is acutely aware it cannot accomplish the task of meeting the organization's objectives alone; the support of Regional Coordinators (RCs) and NAA's rank and file is crucial. It was encouraging to see new RCs start off with great enthusiasm, taking up the challenge of looking after the organization's members and their needs in various regions across the world—from Europe to Australia to North America.

Last but not least, life on NAA platforms has been given a social boost. Members are now able to socialise more, kill boredom and keep themselves entertained thanks to the introduction of new guidelines. These guidelines have relaxed the rules for posting messages on the organization's

platforms, while ensuring such messages do not detract from NAA's core business.

Three years after its founding, Nisec Alumni Abroad is firmly on track, making good progress in its one-pointed goal to help improve educational facilities at Nifa Senior High School. The reality, however, is that NAA's work is only just beginning despite the early achievements. Nifa continues to be plagued by significant infrastructure problems. Classrooms, dormitories, bathrooms, the dining hall, the kitchen and other basic facilities are in a serious state of disrepair. In some cases, they pose a serious risk to safety.

In the year ahead, NAA will have to identify what more the organization can do to help improve facilities at Nifa Senior High. This is what makes NAA tick; it is our *raison d'être*.





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