Location: Burkina Faso
Year formed: 2010

Who we are
GRAAD Burkina is a strategic research/studies think tank created in 2010 with the core objective to produce high quality and relevant knowledge (evidence) to guide policy making in Burkina Faso. Ranked in the top 50 of the best think tanks in SSA, GRAAD is an independent non-profit organisation.

What we do
GRAAD Burkina’s core ambition is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in Burkina Faso through research projects implementation, strategic studies, capacity building and knowledge dissemination. For policy influence, the Group publishes policy briefs and organizes policy dialogue meetings, press conferences, public debates, etc.

Key areas of focus
- Green economy
- Women empowerment
- Youth employment
- Education/awareness for change

CONTEXT
Since 1990, under decentralization process, sanitation is entrusted to commune in Burkina Faso. But, given the weakness of financial resources, sanitation remained a non-priority issue in the communal plans of development. Each year, Koudougou Commune (our target) spends USD $30,000 for a need of USD $54,000, a gap of USD $24,000. Progressively, this situation has driven to the multiplication of uncontrolled dumpsite numbers. In 2016, the city was characterized by a huge solid waste pollution. By implementing the CRG approach, the goal was to change this situation as well as citizen behaviours. But the project budget was not enough, the commune budget as well. During the research, the team found out that in the past, many data and good recommendations were already introduced to the commune, but nothing had actually moved. For change, a new idea was absolutely necessary and the idea of CRG came.

WHAT WE DID
To address the issue, GRAAD Burkina has started with a diagnostic research that allowed it to produce evidence on households’ practices, quantities and composition of waste, evolution for the next five years, and processing costs for the commune if no action is undertaken. The investigations also produced data on the opportunities offered to the commune in terms of youth employment and women empowerment. The project has elaborated an integrated waste management strategy in which the team recommended to reorganize the sector, build the stakeholders capacities and investment increase in waste processing. In this perspective, the team convinced the Mayor to set up the CRG to discuss problems and potential solutions through short thematic workshops. In practice, the CRG is composed of 15 members including Mayor, SG, Technicians, GRAAD team, representatives of community based organizations (CBO). As lesson from our case, is that we can say that citizen knowledge power lies on its power to transform scientific neutral data to real life emotional stories (testimonies) that “shakes” any human being heart, even if he’s an authority. Regarding the CRG, its success lies on two facts: the opportunity given by real time exchanges with the decision makers and accountability “imposed” to each member at each session.

CHALLENGE
In this project for policy influence, the team encountered three main challenges: the mayor’s reluctance after the first meeting, management of members’ agendas and language barriers.

OUTCOME
Our engagement activities with CRG led to two main results: First, for the first time in the commune, the rise of commune investment in waste management up to USD $20,000. Second, the decline of the number of anarchic waste dumps in communes from 140 to 95 in a year. Recently the commune has set up a credit mechanism to support youth and women businesses. Furthermore, the participants to this exercise are aware now that their knowledge can be important and helpful.