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Up-scaling Local Economic Development

Lessons from the Ghana Decent Work Programme

2011



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**Up-scaling Local Economic Development
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Foreword

In recent years both national governments and international agencies have increased targeted support for making local economies more robust and generating productive jobs and incomes for local populations. By applying participatory approaches local actors become not only participants but also agents of development.

This case study presents and analyses the lessons learned from the Local Economic Development (LED) component of the Ghana Decent Work Programme (GDWP), particularly with regard to up-scaling and replication. It shows that LED can have sustainable impact at local and national levels alike. In the context of increasing decentralization the LED component fostered social dialogue at local level through the establishment of district-level Sub-committees on Productive and Gainful Employment (SPGEs); strengthened local businesses; and promoted extension of social protection for workers in the informal economy, among other initiatives. The LED component placed significant emphasis on economic sectors with a high share of working women.

The case study is a contribution to the analysis of good practice in the promotion of decent work at the local level through an integrated approach, and it therefore will be of value to local economic practitioners and national policy-makers alike.

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Executive Summary

Up-scaling Local Economic Development: Lessons from the Ghana Decent Work Programme

How can we maximize the institutional and policy impacts of Local Economic Development (LED) projects? The lessons learned from the LED component of the Ghana Decent Work Programme (GDWP) show that LED can have sustainable impact at local and national levels alike. In the participating districts the GDWP resulted in the creation of self-sustaining LED fora with clear potential for addressing local decent work deficits. This success can primarily be attributed to three factors:

1. by **focusing on capacity-building and deliberately limiting direct funding** the GDWP fostered local ownership and financial independence;
2. the empowering of local stakeholders to **shape the LED approach in accordance with local norms and values** enabled the emergence of public-private dialogue and effective working practices;
3. using Ghana's legislative framework to **embed the LED for a within the local government structure** facilitated access to public resources and enhanced the policy influence of the programme.

The success at local level has in turn created support for the LED approach among the national constituents of the ILO. However the successful integration of LED into the national policy framework requires broad-based consensus among a range of national stakeholders. In Ghana three factors helped create the necessary momentum:

1. the **coincidence of several LED projects**, initiated by a range of development partners with a varied national constituency base, helped create widespread awareness of the approach;
2. disappointment with the results of decentralization in turn created the political will to consider seriously **the potential role of LED in unleashing the true potential of devolution**;
3. the variety of LED approaches piloted in Ghana facilitated the **emergence of an informed national debate** on the most appropriate framework for Ghana.

Key Points

Divorcing capacity-building activities from direct funding can notably enhance the long term impacts of LED.

Embedding LED fora within local government structures can enhance both the financial sustainability and the policy impacts of LED.

The coincidence of LED programmes initiated by a range of development partners can facilitate the emergence of informed debate and help create a national consensus around LED.

Working within national norms and values may both enhance the direct impact of LED and encourage local and national ownership.

List of Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
DA	District Assembly
GDWP	Ghana Decent Work Programme (pilot programme until 2006)
GEA	Ghana Employers' Associations
GoG	Government of Ghana
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy/Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation (renamed GIZ)
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Country
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILGS	Institute of Local Government Studies
ILO	International Labour Organization
LED	Local Economic Development
LER	Local Economic Recovery
LGS	Local Government Services
MESW	Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MMYE	Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment
MTDP	Medium Term Development Plan
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PRODERE	Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees
SPGE	Sub-Committee for Productive and Gainful Employment
TUC	Trade Unions Congress
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

1 Introduction

The present era of globalization has been accompanied by an increasing interest in the role played by localities in economic development and employment creation. Space is becoming increasingly “slippery” in the sense that capital, goods, people and ideas travel more easily (Markusen 1996). Paradoxically this has meant that the ability to create and strengthen competitive advantage at local level has become increasingly crucial to creating productive and gainful employment for all men and women. By rooting economic activity in the social and economic fabric of localities, some territories have been able to take full advantage of the opportunities globalization has to offer (Storper 1997). Others have been less successful in adapting to this challenging environment, resulting in a relative decline in their economies and a growth in decent work deficits. The accompanying rise in regional inequalities within countries has in turn led to a reorientation towards territory-based development strategies. In many countries this trend has been accompanied by a decentralization of powers and resources from the central State to lower tiers of government. As a result of these twin developments regional and local administrations are becoming increasingly important agents in the world of work.

In response to this trend the ILO has developed a number of programmes to support its national constituents in promoting decent work at local level through a Local Economic Development (LED)¹ approach. The ILO understands LED as: “a participatory development process that encourages partnership arrangements between the private and public stakeholders of a defined territory that enable the joint design and implementation of a common development strategy by making use of the local resources and competitive advantage, with the final objective of creating decent jobs and sustainable economic growth for all”. Participatory approaches have the main advantage of encouraging bottom-up solutions to the problems affecting a certain population, thus respecting people’s own priorities for development. However they also entail risks that need to be carefully assessed, such as the existence of vested interests; gate-keeping by local elites; lack of representation of disadvantaged groups in participatory authorities (local fora, neighbourhood committees, etc.); reliance on external agents to guide or fund initiatives; and the pressure exerted by those agents to prioritize product over process. When these challenges are addressed participatory approaches can contribute not only to bolstering local economies but also to empowering those who take part and to developing capabilities for dialogue, feedback and debate, with the final objective of improving living standards.

The ILO gained early experience with the LED approach through its participation in the inter-agency Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees (PRODERE). This programme was implemented between 1990 and 1995 as part of an international effort to consolidate the peace process in Central America. The innovative element of PRODERE was that it moved away from the traditional top-down technical cooperation programmes of that time. Instead of intervening at central government level, local development strategies were encouraged. This proved an effective approach to providing an immediate response to local needs, in terms both of employment creation, and of reconciliation and community-building (Lazarte, Hofmeijer et al. 1999). Since then the ILO has

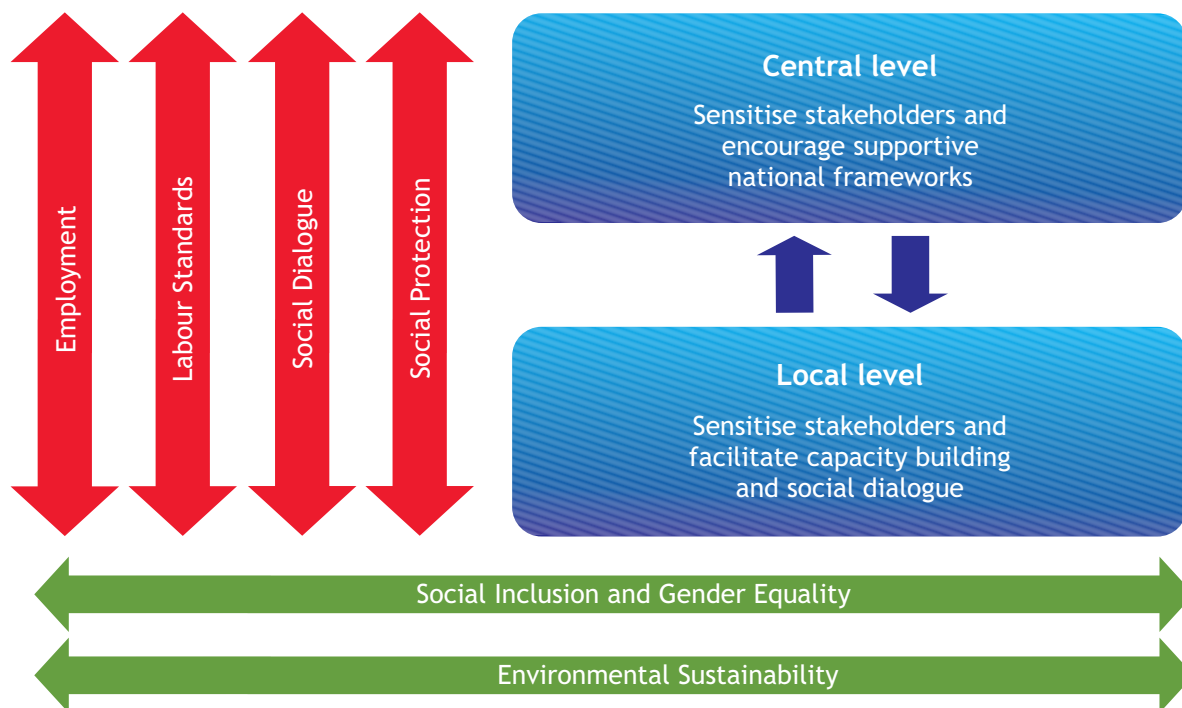
1 Please note that the term LED is simultaneously being used as a) a particular developmental approach; and b) the results of successfully pursuing that approach.

been engaged in territorially-based development initiatives in a variety of circumstances ranging from post-crisis Local Economic Recovery (LER) to fully-fledged LED. Differences in economic conditions and governance settings have resulted in a range of locally-tailored programme designs.

Reflecting the organization's mandate, the ILO's approach to LED is centered on the decent work agenda. The ultimate objective is to increase decent employment opportunities for all women and men within a locality. Through a range of sensitizing and capacity-building activities the ILO seeks to enable a wide range of local stakeholders in the world of work to participate in the joint design and implementation of locally-tailored development strategies. In particular the organization is committed to facilitating social dialogue and encouraging partnership between representatives of the informal and formal economies and the public sector. In so doing it seeks to enhance the voice of traditionally vulnerable and marginalized groups in the labour market, such as informal workers, women, the disabled, and young people. More recently it has complemented this agenda with a focus on environmental sustainability and green jobs.

By initiating LED projects at local level the ILO aims to address, in a participatory manner, decent work deficits, particularly in the informal economy. By sensitizing the Ministry of Employment, Workers Associations and Employers' Organizations to the potential of the approach, the ILO aims to create national champions for LED. Furthermore, by encouraging ongoing dialogue between local and national stakeholders, the approach seeks to raise awareness of local bottlenecks and encourage the emergence of a more enabling environment for local economic growth. Where LED pilots show that the approach can play a significant role in addressing decent work deficits, the ILO aims to scale up the approach through replication in other districts or integration of LED into the national policy framework. Thus LED strategies work simultaneously at both national and local levels, sensitizing and providing technical assistance to stakeholders and working towards improved policy coherence between national and local levels. Figure 1 illustrates graphically the ILO approach to LED, outlining the different areas of work, cross-cutting issues and the type of collaboration forged with national and local stakeholders.

Figure 1 The ILO Approach to LED



The ILO’s experiences over the past two decades suggest that LED can be “one of the potentially most promising strategies for a comprehensive and multifaceted approach for upgrading informal economy workers and economic units and improving their access to mainstream services, social protection and markets” (ILO 2007:15). The benefits and sustainability of the approach however do tend to vary from context to context. In addition, up-scaling of successful local projects can at times prove difficult to achieve. In this context there is a need to determine a fresh good practice in promoting decent work locally, ensuring the effective participation of ILO’s social partners and improving coherence between national and local policies. This case study into the LED component of the Ghana Decent Work Country Programme (GDWP) aims to serve as a starting point for this effort.

2 The Ghanaian context

In many ways Ghana represents a relatively central case within the ILO’s portfolio of LED activities. Ranking 130 out of 169 countries in the 2010 Human Development Index, Ghana falls within the UN’s least-developed country category. For much of the period following independence in 1957 the Ghanaian economy performed very poorly, especially considering the country’s relative wealth in mineral and other natural resources. In addition Ghana developed a strong reliance on international financial and technical assistance during the post-independence period. In the 1980s, following its dismal economic performance, the country adopted stabilization and structural adjustment policies in line with International Monetary Fund (IMF) requirements, which involved economic liberalization, privatization and State reform. Notwithstanding the negative outcomes generated by this approach, since the 1990s Ghana’s economy has exhibited a strong performance, with annual GDP growth

averaging 5 percent. Between 2000 and 2008 GDP growth rates steadily increased from 3.7 to 7.3 percent (source: World Bank, World Development Indicators). This trend was accompanied by a marked reduction in poverty. Between 1999 and 2006 the national poverty rate fell from 40 to 29 per cent, while extreme poverty declined from 27 to 18 per cent. (Source: Millennium Development Goals Database, United Nations Statistics Division). In the Central Region of Ghana, on which the LED component of the GDWP was focused, poverty rates decreased from 48 percent to 20 per cent over the same period. Along with the Eastern Region this makes it the region that has benefited most from the general trend towards poverty reduction (see table 1).

Table 1 Incidence of poverty by administrative region (1992- 2006)

	1992	1999	2006	Change 1999 to 2006
Ghana	52	40	29	-11
Central	44	48	20	-28
Eastern	48	44	15	-29
Upper East	67	88	70	-18
Northern	63	69	52	-17
Western	60	27	18	-9
Ashanti	41	28	20	-8
Volta	57	38	31	-7
Brong Ahafo	65	36	29	-7
Upper West	88	84	88	4
Greater Accra	26	5	12	7

Source: UNDP Ghana Human Development report 2007

High economic growth has contributed to a sharp reduction in poverty. The primary sector (agriculture, mining, forestry, etc.) continues to dominate the economy in terms of its contribution to output, employment and revenue generation. And although economic activity is slowly shifting away from agriculture, the agriculture sector alone employs about 54 per cent of the labour force. Even though between 1991 and 2005 employment increased significantly, job creation has not been able to keep pace with a rapidly expanding labour force. Thus underemployment and unemployment have risen in the last two decades. The unemployment rate in Ghana has remained close to 11 per cent and, as in other sub-Saharan countries, the informal sector has become a growing source of employment. In fact 80.4 per cent of the labour force works in the private informal sector, according to the Ghana Statistical Service. Activities within the informal sector are maintaining a significant, and in some cases, dominant share of the market. This is the case in the sectors of mining, commerce and finance, among others (Adams, 2008:1). A survey developed by Gallup which asked Ghanaians to

rank issues directly related to the Millennium Development Goals in order of importance to them as individuals, found that providing more jobs for youth was ranked fourth, just behind reducing poverty, hunger, and the spread of HIV/AIDS (Gallup Poll, 2009:8).

Ghana's social structure remains predominantly traditional and informal, with close family links, and people relying on personal networks to find work. The population remains young, with relatively high but declining fertility and low mortality levels (Ghana Statistical Service). Despite the fact that the urbanization process is not a recent phenomenon, Ghana's landscape has remained characterized by the predominance of very few urban centres and persistent inequality between these centres and small and medium-sized rural towns. In Africa living standards in rural areas lag far behind those in urban areas, and Ghana is no exception.

As regards the political scenario, compared to other African countries Ghana enjoys a relatively favorable governance setting. In 2011 the Mo Ibrahim Foundation on African Governance ranked the country 7th out of 53 African countries. Since the restoration of competitive democratic politics in the 1990s Ghana has slowly developed a relatively favorable track record in terms of political participation and orderly transfer of power. This trend has been accompanied by clear advances in the areas of government accountability, corruption, rule of law, and the quality of public management.

In addition there has been an ongoing process towards government decentralization since the late 1980s. Since the passing of the Local Government Act (Government of Ghana, 1993) this process has led to the creation of 170 metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies with a range of deliberative, legislative and executive powers. In order to fulfil their statutory duties these local authorities receive resources from the centre through the District Assembly Common Fund and other grant transfers. The districts also enjoy a limited degree of fiscal autonomy, allowing them to generate resources through local fees and taxes. Despite the formal commitment to devolution the effects of decentralization have in practice remained relatively limited. Ambiguity regarding the distribution of responsibilities across tiers of government, coupled with a clear lack of resources and capacity at local level, have seriously hampered progress. In response to these challenges the Government of Ghana has recently produced a new Decentralization Policy Framework aimed at accelerating the pace of decentralization.

In this context the local economic development approach, which builds on participatory public-private fora at local level, emerged as an appropriate strategy for addressing the challenges affecting local economies and ensuring that its benefits go to disadvantaged groups; for providing institutional strengthening for local, decentralized institutions; and for improving vertical harmonization between the interests and programmes of national and local governments and institutions.

Box 1. Quick Facts

ILO LED interventions in Ghana

- ILO Ghana Decent Work Pilot Programme (2002-2005)
- Ghana Working out of Poverty project (2004-2006)
- Strategic initiative - Support for the adoption of decentralized pro-poor growth policies (2006-2007)
- Decent work and local development through dialogue and partnership building Ghana - Ghana Decent Work Programme (2008-2010)

Partners

Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment, Trade Union Congress, Ghana Employers' Association, Institute of Local Government Studies

Donors

- Government of the Netherlands
- DFID
- DANIDA

Location

8 districts in the Central Region:

- Effutu Municipal (joined in 2003)
- Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam District (2003)
- Mfantseman Municipal (2007)
- Twifo-Hemang Lower Denkyira (2007)
- Awutu-Senya² (2009)
- Agona West (2009)
- Gomoa East (2009)
- Gomoa West (2009)

Objectives

- To contribute to the reduction of poverty in Ghana by addressing Decent Work deficits in micro and small enterprises in the informal economy and by enhancing the employability of low-income women and men, the young in particular
- To mainstream employment-focused strategies for decent work in national and district policies in Ghana.

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<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/dwpp/countries/ghana/index.htm>

<http://www.ilo.org/led>

<http://www.ledknowledge.org>

2 At the start of the GDWP, Effutu and Awutu-Senya formed one district. Following boundaries changes, this district was split in two. As the existing SPGE was strongly focused on the Effutu area this opportunity was used to create a separate SPGE in Awutu-Senya.

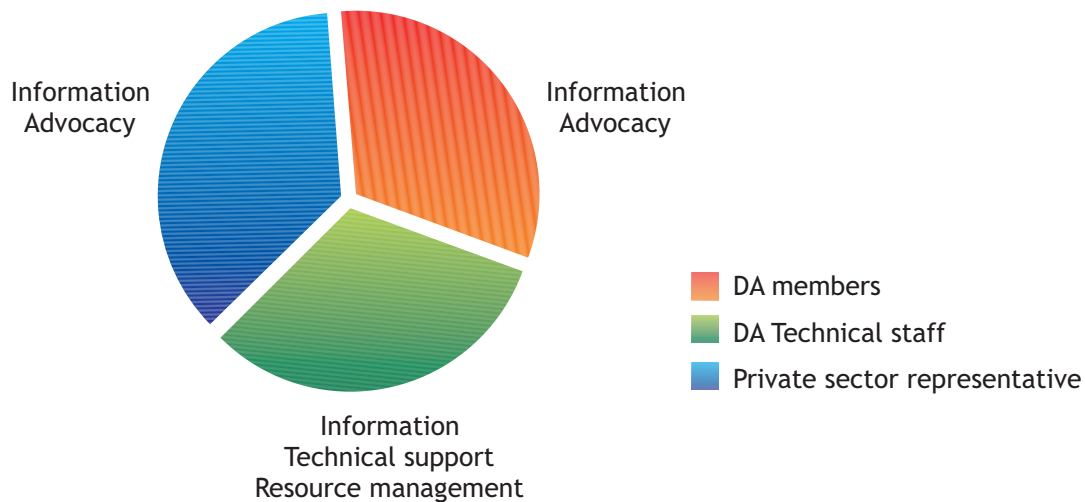
3 The LED component of the Ghana Decent Work Programme

The Ghana Decent Work Programme emerged out of a pilot project initiated in 2002 by the ILO in collaboration with the Government of Ghana (GoG). From the outset it has consisted of national and district-level components. At national level the programme aimed to help the ILO's national constituents improve their capacity to influence the national policy framework and incorporate elements of the decent work agenda into development strategies such as the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS)³. These interventions were accompanied by the launch of LED pilot projects in two districts in the Central Region of Ghana. The aim of this part of the project was to promote public-private partnership at local level and demonstrate how this could help address some of the decent work deficits relating to underemployment and informality. Links between the local and national levels were established through regular report updates, multi-stakeholder workshops, and field visits by national stakeholders.

At local level the design of the LED pilot project closely reflects the ILO's priorities and general approach to LED. Following an initial sensitization phase, multi-stakeholder LED fora were set up. Based on a recommendation by the Institute of Local Government Studies, these fora were institutionalized as formal sub-committees of the participating District Assemblies. The resulting Sub-Committees on Productive and Gainful Employment (SPGE) consist of six representatives from the private sector alongside four District Assembly members and five District Assembly technical staff (see Figure 2). The GDWPP's pro-poor and informal economy orientation has to a certain extent mitigated the risk of elite capture and rent-seeking. Representatives in the SPGEs were mainly drawn from small business associations that represent the informal economy. To promote effective representation of the informal economy in particular, the programme placed considerable emphasis on the need to strengthen local business organizations. Furthermore the participation of all actors was accompanied by institutional capacity building. All SPGE members received extensive training in the ILO approach to LED in general and decent work issues as they relate to the informal economy in particular. Gender issues were mainstreamed within these capacity-building activities from the outset.

3 While this programme was later renamed Growth and Poverty Reduction, the acronym has remained the same.

Figure 2 The composition of the SPGE and member contributions



Source: Carlien Van Empel (2007) Local Economic Development in Ghana: Rooting public-private dialogue. Series Local Economic Development Stories, ILO.

Following the success in the two pilot districts, the LED component of the GDWP has been replicated in six further districts within the Central Region of Ghana. The design of the programme has remained relatively stable over time. Following developments in ILO thinking the capacity-building activities have started to place stronger emphasis on environmental sustainability and green jobs.

Previous evaluations have shown that the LED component of the GDWP is delivering notable results at local level (Grooten 2005; van Gerwen 2007; Ulrich 2008; Arowolo and Asangalisah 2010). The early sensitization activities generated considerable interest among a wide range of local stakeholders. Similarly the training provided to the SPGE members has been well-received by local participants and generally judged as effective by external consultants. The action plans produced by the SPGEs explicitly employ the concepts and tools introduced in various training modules. The SPGEs have identified a number of decent work issues ranging from lack of health insurance to unhygienic and unsafe working conditions. As the projects matured a range of activities was implemented to address these concerns. Gender issues have been mainstreamed within the LED strategies; for example all SPGE action plans for 2009-2010 include activities exclusively or primarily aimed at women. Some of the plans also devote attention to environmental degradation and sustainability. In addition there is emerging evidence that the SPGE action plans have in turn influenced the Medium Term Development Plans of the participating districts.

Box 2: Rooting LED Activities for Sustainable Livelihood and Economic Governance, Awutu-Senya District, Ghana

The Awutu-Senya District Assembly kick-started implementation of the LED approach with the preparation a LED action plan and prioritization of key economic sectors for investment. This was done with the support of ILO's Decent Work Country Programme in 2009. The District identified fish processing, gari processing and fashion design as sectors for investment, as those areas enjoyed comparative advantage and were predominantly occupied by women. The LED activities included targeted training, technical assistance for small business enterprises, and support for small business associations to strengthen their governance for delivery of effective services.

About 200 small business entrepreneurs benefited from the Assembly's LED training, of which 154 were women. Additionally 40 leaders of four small business associations were given training and mentored in effective leadership; association building and management; advocacy; resource mobilization; and effective service delivery.

Over the past two years the fish processors have significantly improved their competences. For example, the technical training they received has equipped them to process high-quality fish that has both attracted high market prices and increased sales. This development has boosted the income levels of the fish processors. Although they could not give concrete figures, fish processors interviewed indicated that they are able to support their families, paying their school fees, financing their upkeep, and registering with the National Health Insurance Scheme to take care of their health needs. Thus the improved fish processing methods have both increased their productivity and production and improved their living standards.

The small business associations involved have improved their governance, adopted better management practices and been able to offer effective services to their members as a result of the mentoring and training programmes. For instance the Gari Processing Association at Bawjiase, after gaining better understanding of the gari industry and its unique selling points, identified marketing channels for exporting their products at higher prices. The business associations' improved leadership, enhanced capacity and good governance have enabled them to actively engage Awutu-Senya District Assembly in fee fixing and other business development issues that contribute to improving the district's business environment.

Source: Baisie, E (2011)

Measuring the direct effects of LED on employment creation and economic growth is notoriously difficult. However the coincidence between the pilot projects and notable increases both in the rate of business registration and in the fees and levies collected by DAs suggests that the GDWP has produced significant economic dividends. Similarly, the noted increases in National Health Insurance Registration -supported within the framework of the GDWP by employers' associations and informal economy organizations -and the over-representation of traditionally marginalized groups within SPGE-initiated training activities, imply that the programme is addressing not only economic but also social issues (Grooten 2005; van Gerwen 2007; Ulrich 2008; Arowolo and Asangalisah 2010).

The afore-mentioned effects at local level are all the more impressive if one considers the limited direct funding made available to SPGEs. In line with ILO's general approach, the LED component of the GDWP has been strongly focused on delivering change through capacity-building. While a small Enterprise Development Fund was made available, the SPGEs carried the primary responsibility for mobilizing the resources necessary to implement their action plans. During the early stages of the programme the lack of direct funding through the GDWP was frequently cited by local stakeholders as an obstacle to success. While funding remains an area of concern, the SPGEs have increasingly been able to gain a degree of financial independence of the GDWP.

Box 3. Stimulating Enterprise Creativity and Business Growth through LED Initiatives in Agona West Municipality, Ghana

The Agona West Municipality is located in the eastern part of the Central Region. It has a total land area of 540 square kilometres and a population of 160,000. The Municipal Assembly (MA) has a SPGE, which serves as a catalyst for leveraging resources for development of the local economy. In this capacity the Agona West SPGE has succeeded in securing several funding arrangements to support economic development initiatives. For example the SPGE and GIZ (formerly GTZ) have jointly financed the installation of an electricity transformer at an industrial village in the capital, Agona Swedru, which will benefit 1,000 master craftsmen and their apprentices. The SPGE is also collaborating with the GIZ to set up a District Economic Development Forum, an initiative to boost economic governance in the municipality. Under a Memorandum of Understanding between the ILO/DWCP and the Municipal Assembly (MA), an Enterprise Development Fund has been created and funds are regularly allocated to the SPGE by the MA to undertake LED initiatives. The SPGE is currently supporting an Oil Palm Processing Association at Bobikuma to attract funding from the Export Development Investment Fund (EDIF) and the French Government's Small Grants Programme. A consultant was engaged to help prepare project proposals for submission to these donors for possible funding.

Based on the available opportunities in the municipality, the needs of the local business sector, and the dynamics in the global market place, the SPGE has prepared a LED strategic action plan which is being implemented to promote local economic development. Under this LED strategic action plan, the District selected the dressmaking, fashion and design sectors for promotion. About 250 small business operators in these sectors were given training in skills upgrading, design and quality finishing, and small business management.

The outcome of these training interventions is stimulation of both creativity and economic growth among the operators. For instance one beneficiary, Mrs. Cynthia Eshun, manager of Cyniko Fashion and Deco in Agona Swedru, stated that she had been empowered to design and sew trendy dresses to meet the emerging needs of her cosmopolitan clients. She said *"after the technical training, I am able to design brassier caps, coil sleets and wrangler sleeves which are currently in vogue."* As a result she has been able to increase her customer base by 35 per cent and her annual income by 45 per cent. Her workshop has also become a model for young prospective entrepreneurs to learn dressmaking. Mrs Eshun currently mentors about five apprentices and two workers. Aside from helping her take care of her domestic responsibilities effectively, the increased income has helped her acquire a new workshop and new equipment for her business.

Mr. Saeed Abdullah Baba, the Manager of Saeed Designs in Agona Swedru also describes his experience with the LED initiative as *"very empowering"*. His design skills have been immensely enhanced and now he aspires always to produce unique designs. Mr. Saeed has also been able to diversify, adding another product line to its product mix and making clothing for women. In a bid to brand his products properly and stand out, he has designed and printed labels for them. These practices have increased his customer base by 30 per cent. Having received training in small business management programmes, Mr. Saeed has put them into practice by strengthening his position in his market niche, focusing on serving high-income earners in Swedru. According to his own estimate his annual income has increased by 40 per cent.

As observed in the Agona West Municipality, the LED interventions implemented by the SPGE have stimulated growth in businesses and created opportunities for business development. As beneficiaries practised skills acquired in training programmes and exhibited creativity in their occupations, their customer base and incomes increased. They were thrilled by these outcomes and motivated to keep acquiring new skills to remain competitive.

Source: Baisie, E (2011)

A substantial share of the SPGEs' resources now originate from the DA. The institutionalization of the LED forum through a formal sub-committee of the DA and the access this provides to the main decision-making platform clearly plays a role in generating this resource stream. As the Assembly Coordinating Director in Effutu put it: "The funds available to the Assembly are very limited, especially considering its mandate. The SPGE is able to secure its share of the resources, because the SPGE chairman is a member of the Executive Committee. If that was not the case, most of the resources would probably go to the other sub-committees".

While DA funding remains crucial, SPGEs are also starting to report notable successes in mobilizing funds in other ways. By serving as a visible access point for local SMEs, some SPGEs have been able to capture resources linked to national development programmes or projects initiated by other development partners. In addition it was felt that the existence of a stable multi-stakeholder LED forum facilitated mobilization of external resources from NGOs and international organizations. Finally, some SPGE have been able to address shortfalls in local government funding by offering local businessmen and other relatively affluent individuals the opportunity to buy shares in the business activities initiated by the SPGE.

The LED component of the GDWP was specifically designed to inform and influence policy at national level towards creation of a more conducive enabling environment for local economic growth. The sensitization to the ILO approach and the first-hand experience with LED in the pilot and replica districts have indeed significantly increased the knowledge of and support for LED among the national constituents of the ILO. This is exemplified most directly by the fact that the 2008 National Employment Policy of the Ministry of Manpower, Youth, and Employment strongly advocated the need to integrate the LED approach within the national policy framework (Ulrich 2008). More recently the Government of Ghana has decided to incorporate LED within its general commitment to accelerating decentralization. As a result, a lively national debate has now emerged on the most appropriate national framework for LED. This provides a clear opportunity to integrate elements of good practice developed during the GDWP into the national policy framework.

The economic and governmental environment in Ghana clearly played a role in the success of the GDWP. The experience of jobless growth, combined with the related problems of underemployment and informality, created a fertile political environment for the ILO agenda. The relatively stable government context furthermore enabled the ILO to develop a productive relationship with the Government of Ghana in general and the Ministry of Employment in particular. As a result the programme was able to facilitate notable changes in the national policy framework within a relatively short space of time.

With respect to the LED component of the GDWP in particular, the existing level of decentralization and the current drive to accelerate this process both created an enabling environment for success. The GDWP is unique within the wider ILO portfolio in the sense that the LED forum is formally integrated within the local government structure. Delivering LED in this way would not have been possible in the absence of the provisions of the 1993 Local Government Act (Act 462). This Act established the District Assemblies as the highest political and administrative authorities at local level. It stipulates that a number of mandatory DA sub-committees need to be established in areas such as development planning and social services. Under this same heading it gives the DAs authority to establish further sub-committees as they see fit. In collaboration with the ILGS, the ILO decided to use this provision to embed the LED fora within the local government structure

Across the board national and local stakeholders in Ghana have indicated that the decision to create dedicated Sub-committees for Productive and Gainful Employment has greatly enhanced the influence and sustainability of the resulting LED fora. However the ease with which additional sub-committees can be created in the Ghanaian system also poses a potential threat. Aware of the benefits associated with embedding projects within the local government structure, other international organizations such as GTZ and IFAD have also sought to institutionalize their programmes through dedicated sub-committees. This trend carries a real risk of creating unnecessary duplication and competition for resources between sub-committees with overlapping remits. The recent emergence of Sub-Committees on Micro and Small Enterprises Promotion illustrates the threat posed by such developments. Originating in local pilot operations conducted under the GoG/IFAD/AfDB Rural Enterprises Project, these sub-committees have now been made compulsory across Ghana. In the districts participating in the GDWP, this development has led to a situation in which two sub-committees with very similar mandates co-exist. In Awutu-Senya this has already resulted in substantial tension. This suggests that the provisions of the 1993 Local Government Act provide both opportunities and potential threats.

4 The Policy and Institutional Impacts of the LED component of the GDWP

As noted there are promising signs that the LED component of the GDWP has had significant policy and institutional impact at both local and national levels. Functioning SPGEs have been set up across all eight participating districts. By delivering LED through a formal sub-committee of the District Assembly, rather than a freestanding forum, the approach has effectively been institutionalized at local level. Institutionalization is desirable in several contexts because it is directly linked to sustainability. In this particular case the institutionalization of the local economic development forum (i.e., the SPGE model) enabled it to achieve a degree of legitimacy and stability which in turn aids fundraising for agreed initiatives.

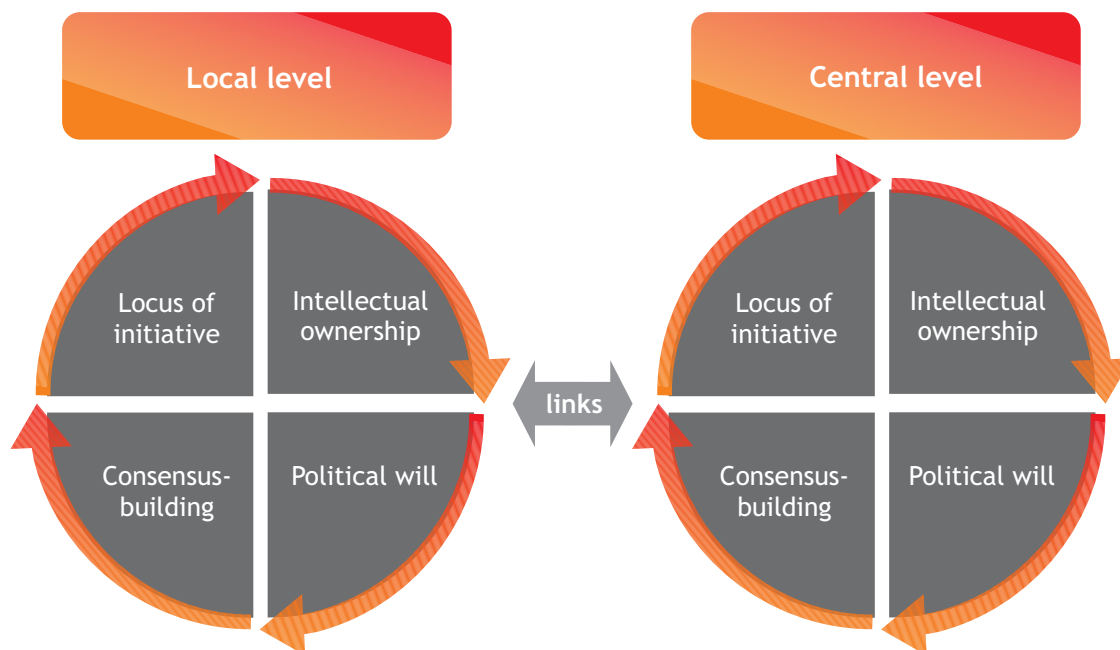
Moreover the level of “institutional thickness” In Ghana is conducive to LED. In the context of local development, institutional thickness connotes the presence of local institutions, the level of interaction between them, and the existence both of a sense of common identity or purpose and of structures that allow collective action (Coulson and Ferrario, 2007). The district-level element of the GDWP further strengthens horizontal interaction between local institutions and vertical interaction between district level and national institutions.

The DAs involved in the project have generally proved supportive of the GDWP and have been relatively forthcoming in supplying counter-funding for SPGE activities. In addition there are growing signs that the issues and priorities identified by the SPGEs are influencing the Medium Term Development Plans in the participating districts. At national level interest in LED has also increased over the course of the GDWP. As a result LED has been explicitly incorporated within the current drive to accelerate government decentralization in Ghana. At the time of writing a national debate on the most appropriate national framework for LED is ongoing.

While the observable institutional and policy impacts are encouraging, we need to be careful not to accept too readily inclusion of LED in official statements and documents as proof of programme integration. Like most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Ghana is marked by a relatively high aid dependency. A recent study estimates that overseas development assistance is worth more than 35 per cent of total government expenditure in Ghana (Moss and Subramanian 2005). As a result government officials devote a relatively high percentage of their time to managing relations with international organizations and NGOs. This reliance on international assistance furthermore creates incentives to pay at least lip service to the priorities and demands of the various development partners. As a result the real preferences and practices of key stakeholders may at times differ substantially from the stated aims.

In order to gauge the true level of commitment to the LED component of the GDWP, this study will focus on the degree of programme ownership displayed by local and national stakeholders. The concept of ownership is notoriously difficult to define and measure. This report will operationalize ownership by adapting to the case under study the four-dimensional classification scheme developed by Johnson and Wasty(1993). Within this framework (1) locus of initiative, (2) level of intellectual ownership, (3) political will and (4) efforts towards consensus-building are seen as the four main dimensions of ownership. This study will seek to determine the level of ownership of the LED component of the GDWP for each dimension. To do this a classification system ranging from 1 to 4 has been developed for both local and national levels. Within this scheme higher numerical values indicate a greater degree of ownership. By adding the individual scores for each of the four dimensions, an overall ownership rating will be determined. This overall ownership rating ranges from very low to low, medium and high, depending on the combination of scores achieved for the individual dimensions. Figure 4 graphically summarizes the approach. Further details of the methodology can be found in appendices 1 and 2.

Figure 3 Ownership as a measure of institutional and policy impacts



By applying this model to the case under study it was possible to gain a better understanding of the sources of success at the different levels. Locally the level of ownership of the LED component of the GDWP was found to be relatively high for all four ownership dimensions. There are however also a number of context-specific factors that allowed the GDWP to be particularly successful in terms both of direct results and of wider policy impacts.

At national level ownership of the GDWP is more mixed. The national constituents of the ILO display relatively high levels of intellectual support for the ILO approach to LED. The Ministry of Employment in particular has taken clear steps to try to integrate elements of this approach within the national policy framework. The ILO's constituents are however not in a position to drive such initiatives unilaterally. This problem has been partially overcome by a combination of deliberate measures by the ILO and favourable national conditions.

From the outset the ILO has devoted a considerable amount of time and resources to developing a close partnership with the ILGS. This in turn has proved instrumental in encouraging wider support for the SPGE model among key national stakeholders such as GEA and TUC. In addition the coincidence of several LED programmes initiated by a variety of development partners has helped create a broad-based consensus around LED in general. But there are indications that the GDWP has been less successful in building a broad-based consensus around the SPGE model in particular and in creating the political will to incorporate some of the more contentious elements of the model in the national policy framework.

4.1 Programme ownership at the district level

The LED component of the GDWP is one of the longest-running programmes within the ILO portfolio. Nearly a decade into the project there are promising signs that it is also one of the most successful that the ILO has been involved in to date. At local level the observable institutional and policy impacts are accompanied by a relatively high level of ownership across all four dimensions (see figure 4).

The ILO approach to LED captured the interest of local stakeholders by linking LED to pressing local problems left largely unaddressed by the traditional top-down approaches to development. Most local stakeholders identify the lack of productive and gainful employment opportunities as the key development challenge facing their district today. The high incidences of informality and the decent work deficits associated with this factor are widely recognized as key areas of concern. While shifts in central policies have helped create a more enabling environment for local development and economic growth, the centre has been unable to tackle these issues directly. While important responsibilities in the field of LED have been formally devolved to district level for almost a decade, most DAs have not been able to engage effectively with this part of their remit. Taken together all this has helped create a susceptible political and social environment for the ILO approach to LED.

Box 4. Promoting Local Economic Development for Sustainable Enterprise Development in Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam District, Ghana

The Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam District is located in the North-East part of the Central Region in Ghana. Through the introduction of LED initiatives by the Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam Assembly's SPGE, sustainable livelihoods have been created for the local population.

In collaboration with other development partners, the SPGE initiated and established an oil palm processing factory at Onwane near the District capital, Ajumako. This factory now represents a growth pole in the district, creating direct and indirect employment for about 200 people who are involved at various stages of supply of materials and fruits, processing of fruits and kernel, transport, and sale of palm oil, kernel oil and other by-products of the factory. The palm kernel, a by-product of the factory, is generating additional businesses outside the factory. Processors also buy kernel for oil extraction but, while the palm oil is exported, the kernel oil is sold on the domestic market. The processing factory has created sustainable livelihoods for primary and secondary actors in the oil palm processing value chain.

Another example of how the local economic strategies are benefiting local businesses is provided by the small business management and technical training programmes offered to over 300 small business operators with the support of ILO, which have generated improvements in their enterprise performance. Mr. Abdul Rahaman Ibrahim is the manager of the clothing store Await Collections in Ajumako. He has reported significant improvements since he started benefiting from the training and mentoring interventions of the SPGE. For example he has enhanced capacity to take initiatives independently, producing a customer and measurement book which he updates regularly, and ensuring the consistency of apprentice training by developing a course outline covering modules, activities and training duration. In addition he has designed labels for his products.

With these improvements and innovations Mr. Rahaman Ibrahim is increasing his customer base. He now sews uniforms for three Senior High Schools in the District and one public institution at regional level. His customer base has increased by 60 per cent and his income by 50 per cent. Currently he has ten apprentices and three employees. Part of the profit from the business has been reinvested in the acquisition of new equipment, with the remainder invested in other projects such as a cocoa farm, a citrus farm and a house-building facility. With the knowledge and experience gained he has been elected as the Vice Chairman of the Ghana National Tailors and Dressmakers Association for the Central Region.

The oil palm processing factory at Owane and Await Collections are typical cases of the outcomes of LED interventions in the District which have helped create sustainable and decent jobs for the local population.

Source: Baisie, E (2011)

The early phases of the programme were nonetheless challenging. The ILO approach to LED deliberately separates capacity-building in LED from access to large-scale direct funding. In addition the technical and operational support provided is strongly demand-driven. Taken together the approach therefore places the locus of initiative firmly in the hands of local stakeholders. While this is widely seen as one of the most important factors behind the long-term success of the GDWP, the approach does not produce rapid results. Moreover many of the early successes are not highly visible to local communities. Better roads and new buildings are more readily appreciated than strengthening of small business associations, for example. As a result it can be difficult to maintain the momentum generated during the initial phases of LED. Especially in an aid-dependent country such as Ghana, local stakeholders have needed time to internalize this new way of thinking.

The issue of funding most clearly illustrates this point. Lack of access to affordable finance is widely seen as an important obstacle to SME development in general and to upgrading of informal activities in particular. Therefore it is perhaps unsurprising that many SPGE members initially identified the lack of a micro-finance facility as an important weakness of the GDWP. However, as the project has matured more and more SPGEs are starting to perceive the lack of direct funding as a strength rather than a weakness of the ILO approach. As an interviewee in one of the 2003 pilot districts put it “When we see white people we see dollar signs...the [LED component of the GDWP] was an eye opener: we can do something for ourselves!”. Attitudes in the replica districts that joined in 2007 and 2009 suggest that this approach can however take several years to internalize, as aid-dependency attitudes tend to change slowly.

The ILO’s demand-driven approach to LED furthermore means that the results are strongly dependent on the commitment and drive of local people. Over the course of nearly two decades of facilitating LED through capacity-building, the ILO has gradually developed a competitive advantage in this area. Making use of tried and tested training materials, the GDWP has been able notably to improve the capacity of a wide range of public and private stakeholders. The majority of these capacity-building activities were delivered through local providers. By working in close partnership with local organizations the GDWP has had a positive influence on the quality of LED-related training and research activities now available in Ghana. In addition many local providers indicate that they regularly draw on the materials developed in partnership with the ILO in other training contexts. This suggests that the LED component of the GDWP will leave a lasting legacy in Ghana, even if the SPGE model itself does not prove fully sustainable.

Box5: Institutionalizing LED Activities for Decent Job Creation in Effutu Municipality, Ghana

The Effutu Municipality is located in the eastern part of Ghana's Central Region. Through public-private dialogue, the Effutu Municipal Assembly, together with the small business associations (SBA), established the SPGE. The forum has fifteen members comprising six from the private sector, four Assembly Members and five technical staff from the Assembly and Decentralised Departments. The SPGE's main responsibility is to propose concrete interventions within the framework of the District Medium Term Development Plan, including formulating a district action plan for local economic development (LED). The forum also ensures dialogue and coordination between the stakeholders in local development in the municipality.

A participatory Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis and planning carried out in 2009, along with successful implementation of several LED activities, has resulted in employment creation in the municipality. By the end of November 2011 300 small businesses, of which 80 per cent were headed by women entrepreneurs, had benefited from the Effutu SPGE's management and technical training programmes. This has resulted in better enterprise management and improved the operating practices of the beneficiaries. For example, some enterprises in fashion design and hairdressing have moved out of temporary structures and table-top shops into more decent structures or premises of their own. Many of the enterprises which participated in the training are flourishing and continue to provide employment for themselves and local people in the municipality.

Another activity under the SPGE LED Action Plan which has created employment is the Maize Block Farming. This was a joint initiative between the SPGE and the Municipal Directorate of Food and Agriculture. Under this initiative 83 farmers received technical assistance and successfully completed best farm and business management training. Their participation in the training and extension services enabled them to access significant credit and farm inputs as well as prepared land for farming. Of the 83 beneficiaries 25 were women farmers. Almost 200 direct and indirect jobs were created by the initiative and most of the farmers who participated reported that they improved the management of their farming businesses.

The Edwumapa Cooperative Credit Union established by the SPGE and the small business associations within recent years have disbursed small loans of USD\$98,387 (Ghc 157,420) to over 200 businesses, including fashion design, hairdressing, fishing and processing, farming, traders and garages. 70 per cent of the loan beneficiaries are women and, of that percentage, 90 per cent have access to social health insurance. The credit union 'Edwumapa Credit' located in Winneba, the district capital, continues to improve its operations and has been one of the most enduring success stories of the ILO Decent Work and LED Initiative since 2007. In November 2011 the following performance indicators were recorded:

● Total Membership	474 (256 women, 218 men)
● Total shares	USD\$17,121.55 (Ghc 27,394.48)
● Total Savings	USD\$121,779.44 (Ghc 194,847.11)
● Total Liquid Investment	USD\$17,577.87 (Ghc 28,124.59)
● Total Loans Portfolio	USD\$98,387.53 (Ghc 157,420.04)
● Total Assets (Fixed)	USD\$5,335.63 (Ghc 8,537.00)
● Total Reserve	USD\$3,025.70 (Ghc 4,841.11)

The small loans disbursed by the credit union and the LED interventions introduced by the SPGE have impacted positively on the socio-economic conditions of the beneficiaries.

Source: Baisie, E (2011)

The 2009-2010 action plans show that all eight SPGEs now have the capacity to develop sound LED strategies. Some however continue to be notably more proactive than others in developing new ideas and finding innovative ways of implementing them. As expected these differences seem to be at least partly related to the length of involvement in the project. While the SPGEs within the initial two pilot districts have been up-and-running since 2004, the formal inauguration of some SPGEs occurred less than two years ago. As a result the SPGEs are in very different stages of development and the content of the 2009-2010 action plans generally reflects these differences.

However, even among SPGEs that were inaugurated at around the same time, there are notable differences in the number and types of activities planned. Often such differences seem strongly correlated with the specific skills and background of the SPGE members in general and the chairperson in particular. While the level of commitment is invariably high, differences in personality traits and capacities mean that not all SPGEs display a similarly strong ability to identify opportunities and drive new initiatives. While the training and knowledge-sharing workshops have made a considerable contribution to ensuring a minimum level of capacity across all participating districts, it would seem that there is no substitute for the entrepreneurial spirit of local champions.

Different though as they are, the LED strategies and action plans of the SPGEs all displayed a relatively high level of intellectual ownership of the ILO approach to LED. The strategies that result from the processes used to analyse the local situation, identify priority areas, and develop concrete actions, invariably link the decent work agenda to concrete actions within the locality. In addition the strategies are clearly designed to target informal sector workers in general and women in particular. As noted, some of the 2009-2010 action plans also devoted considerable attention to environmental sustainability and climate change.

While a high degree of intellectual ownership can enhance the sustainability of a project, it is associated with a risk that some of the priorities identified by the forum receive less attention than initially envisaged. Since the ILO's focus on decent work closely coincides with the main problem defined by local stakeholders, this effect in this case has been relatively limited. The SPGEs generally accept the importance of the decent work agenda and are keen to integrate it into their strategies and action plans. In comparison the level of support for the cross-cutting themes of environmental sustainability and gender equality is much more variable.

While some districts perceive environmental degradation and climate change as a major threat to sustainable livelihoods in their districts, others are notably less concerned with these issues. Interestingly the SPGEs established in 2009 seemed more willing to accept that environmental issues should form an integral part of an LED strategy than their longer-established counterparts. This could be due to several factors such as the increased attention to environmental issues during recent years.

With respect to gender equality, the impact can be assessed at two levels: first at the level of those who benefit from the interventions that the SPGEs agree on, such as the number of women in the training courses, representation of women in the sectors chosen as intervention targets, etc.; and second at the level of institutional change, such as their representation in decision-making authorities. As regards the first level, there is a general willingness to acknowledge that women are

disproportionately involved in the types of informal activity associated with the most marked decent work deficits. As a result the focus of SPGE activities on sectors with higher representation of working women was widely seen as appropriate and necessary. However, addressing gender imbalances at the level of institutional change has remained a challenge. Women remain under-represented in SPGE membership, and indeed this has been noted in past evaluations of the programme.

While the ILO has continued to stress the importance of gender equality and the need to include women in more substantive ways within the SPGEs, it has not sought actively to change the gender mix of the SPGEs through more top-down directives. The reason behind this decision is that, according to SPGE members, it is widely felt that the personal traits and capacities necessary for effective involvement in LED tend to favour the selection of men over women. When asked to elaborate on this, it was suggested that successful business people with the necessary local connections and esteem within the community tend to be male in Ghana. Interestingly, even female SPGE members were inclined to agree with this logic. Across the board local actors felt that local stakeholders should be free to select the most capable individuals for SPGE membership with little to no interference from the ILO. The imposition of more restrictive rules regarding the gender balance within the SPGE was widely seen as unhelpful and inappropriate. In addition the personal credibility of the chairperson in particular was perceived as crucial to the influence and success of the SPGE. Many felt that a chairperson selected on gender grounds would not be able to secure a similarly strong consensus in the context of local norms and conventions.

This illustrates some of the decisions that have to be made in bottom-up approaches. While the ILO has undertaken continued sensitizing actions to highlight the importance of gender equality and mainstreaming, it has not implemented top-down measures as these are not consonant with the approach and may even be counterproductive. However, while exercising cultural awareness care also has to be taken to avoid participatory fora such as the SPGEs replicating existing inequalities, whether based on gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic status, and so forth.⁴

The support for the SPGE within the DA in particular indeed seems strongly related to the personal credibility of the chairperson. As noted the SPGEs were created using the provisions under the 1993 Local Government Act (Act 462). As the District Assembly needs formally to initiate the establishment of a new sub-committee, this arrangement requires a minimum level of political will from the outset. This is especially true as the DA has a number of defined duties and responsibilities towards its sub-committees. These include covering sitting fees and travel expenses, as well as representation of the sub-committee within the Executive Committee of the Assembly. Although the ILO did co-fund some of these expenses for the duration of the project, this arrangement ensured that participation in the GDWP was not a cost-free exercise, either financially or politically.

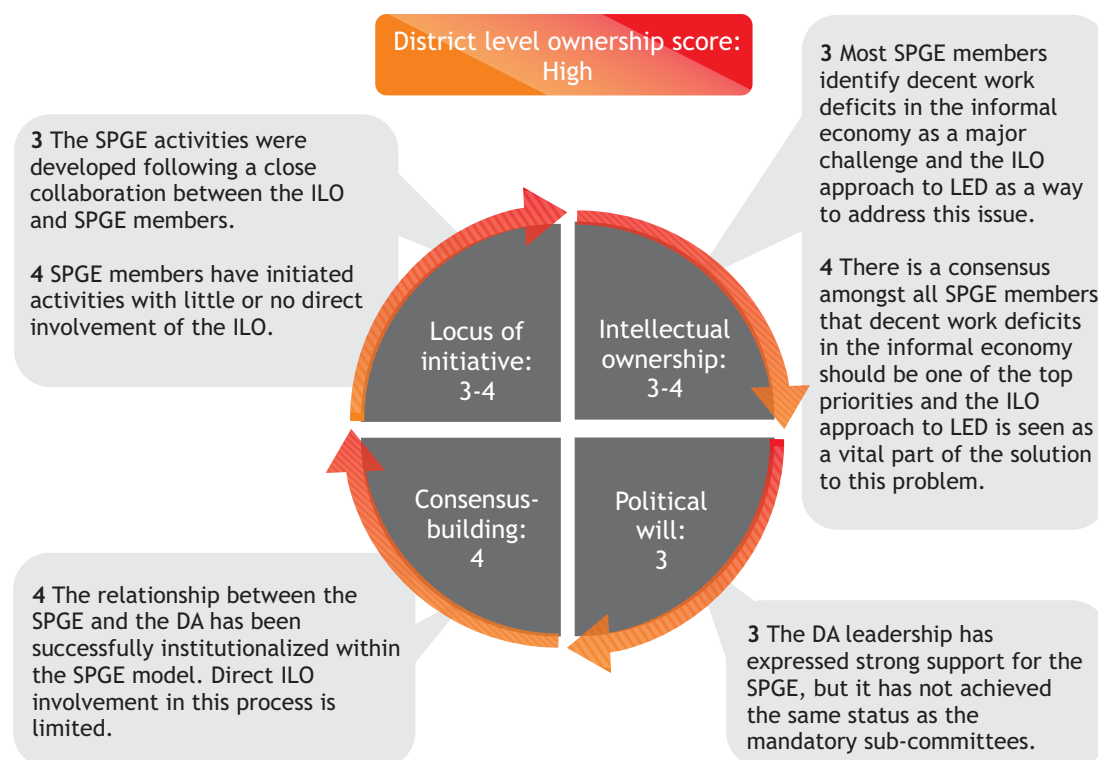
In all the participating districts the SPGE members have selected a private sector representative as chairperson. On the one hand it was widely argued that this choice has enhanced the impact of the SPGE. By allowing a private sector representative to spearhead the sub-committee, the SPGEs have been able to overcome the widespread popular distrust of government. This has in turn proved

4 More information on effective gender mainstreaming at the local level can be found in “Gender Mainstreaming in Local Economic Development Strategies: A Guide”, ILO 2010.

instrumental in reaching informal sector workers in particular. The stronger role of the private sector was also credited with the emergence of more dynamic and depoliticized working practices. In addition it has helped create a degree of stability in the leadership of the SPGEs. In Ghana frequent reshuffles of local technical staff are the norm. The practice of selecting Assembly members through local elections without political parties further enhances this volatility. In this context, the greater continuity ensured by selecting a private sector chairperson creates valuable opportunities for consolidating knowledge and facilitating organizational learning.

On the other hand the strong role of the private sector does pose questions as regards the legitimacy of the SPGE and its actions. While the SPGE members representing the public sector enjoy a clear popular mandate to engage in LED activities, their private sector counterparts do not. In this context the willingness to accept the SPGE as a fully-fledged sub-committee and allow it to be represented within the Executive Committee of the DA hinges strongly on the personal reputation of the chairperson. Across all participating districts SPGE chairpersons have had actively to use their personal status to build support for the SPGE and its strategies among key government officials. In this context the restraint shown by the ILO in addressing the notable under-representation of women⁵ in the SPGEs may have enhanced the impact of the programme by allowing local stakeholders to select the chairperson best able to secure the necessary support within the District Assembly.

Figure 4 Programme ownership at the district level



⁵ At present only one of the eight SPGE chairpersons is female.

4.1.1 Factors behind the success at the district level

As described above the ownership of the programme was found to be relatively high across all four ownership dimensions. Three inter-related factors played a role in achieving this success.

First, the focus on capacity-building, combined with the limited level of direct funding associated with the GDWP, has meant that the locus of initiative has from the start been quite firmly placed in the hands of local stakeholders. While it did take most stakeholders some time to adjust to this approach, the ability to secure resources independently of the GDWP has increased both the local ownership and the financial sustainability of the resulting LED fora.

Second, the restraint shown in the guidance provided to local stakeholders facilitated the emergence of locally-owned practices and strategies. Although the districts did receive ongoing operational and technical support from ILO staff, local stakeholders have been empowered to make their own decisions from the outset. Project evaluations have consistently shown that the resulting SPGEs and their action plans reflect some, although not all, of the ILO's priorities and values. Nonetheless the organization has resisted the temptation to enforce its own perspective through top-down directives.

Third and finally, the decision to deliver the LED component through a formal sub-committee of the District Assembly both ensured a minimum level of political will and created opportunities for SPGEs to build a consensus around their strategies and secure funds for them. The 1993 Local Government Act stipulated that DAs have a number of responsibilities *vis-à-vis* their sub-committees. As a result the decision to participate in the LED component of the GDWP was never a cost-free exercise for the participating District Assemblies, either politically or financially. The formal status within the local government system enabled the SPGEs to capture a larger share of government funding and influence local policies more directly.

4.2 Programme ownership at the national level

The Ghana Decent Work Programme emerged in response to the relatively limited role played by the social partners and the Ministry of Employment in the formulation of the first Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS). Its primary aim was to encourage inclusion of the ILO's national constituents in the policy formation process and improve their capacity to use such opportunities effectively to influence the national policy framework for poverty reduction. The GDWP has achieved notable successes in this area. Previous evaluations have found that the GEA and TUC have been strengthened considerably. Similarly, the capacity of the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment (MMYE), later renamed the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare (MESW), has been significantly enhanced. However, over the course of the GDW it has become apparent that political leadership changes in the Ministry of Employment can leave significant capacity gaps. To mitigate this problem the ILO has periodically provided quite extensive personal support to the Deputy Minister of Employment. With this support the national constituents have been able to develop a distinctive agenda and initiate a number of policy changes in the fields of poverty reduction and employment policy.

From the outset the high predominance of the informal economy and the related decent work deficits were identified as the key development challenges facing Ghana today. Following sensitization, the LED approach has been integrated within the GDWP as part of the overall effort to address these issues. However, support for this particular element of the GDWP seems to vary from stakeholder to stakeholder. While GEA and TUC are very much aware of the LED component of the GDWP, they tend to devote greater attention to the national components of the programme. In contrast the Ministry of Employment strongly advocates the need for national policy initiatives to be accompanied by local action.

As at local level, the political leadership's interest in the LED approach seems primarily motivated by the limited ability of more conventional policy measures to address effectively the persistent issues relating to underemployment and informality. Ghana has experienced decades of jobless growth, resulting in limited advances in poverty reduction and inequality. In this context political elites have become increasingly aware of the need to ensure that the current phase of economic expansion is accompanied by real job creation and poverty reduction. As the formal sector at present seems relatively saturated, informal jobs are likely to provide the vast majority of new employment opportunities. The decent work deficits that tend to characterize such activities therefore need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Encouraged by the results of the pilot and replica districts, the Deputy Minister of Employment and Social Welfare argued that LED can play a significant role in this process.

In many respects, the type of LED envisioned by the Deputy Minister is relatively similar to the approach advocated by the ILO. Both perceive LED primarily as a tool for enhancing the productive and gainful employment opportunities available to local people. Furthermore, the Deputy Minister firmly defended the need for LED initiatives to be accompanied by district-level capacity-building and ongoing public-private dialogue. It was however felt that the cross-cutting issues of gender equality and environmental sustainability are already fully mainstreamed in Ghana and did not require additional attention in this context. These findings partially echo the views of local stakeholders. However the link between decent work deficits and gender issues seems less strongly entrenched on a national scale.

Taken together the available evidence suggests that the Ministry of Employment both supports important elements of the LED component of the GDWP and is willing actively to champion the policy as part of its general strategy to increase decent employment opportunities for all. The relatively high scores at the top of the national ownership chart reflect these findings (see figure 6). However the Ministry of Employment is not in a position to drive policy change in this area unilaterally. Instead, the current opportunity for integrating LED within the national framework has been created by a change of power at central level and the commitment of the incumbent government to accelerate the process of decentralization. In line with its mandate the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) carries primary responsibility for driving this policy. It is supported in this task by the ILGS and the Local Government Service (LGS). Aware of the need to build wider alliances, the ILO has made several attempts to include the MLGRD and its subsidiaries in the GDWP. In addition it has actively sought to engage the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC). This strategy has produced mixed results.

From the outset the ILO has worked closely with the ILGS. Formally a part of the MLGRD, the ILGS is responsible for training, information dissemination and research in the area of local governance (for more information see <http://www.ilgs-edu.org>). Since initiating the LED component of the GDWP, the ILO has devoted a considerable amount of time and resources to developing the capacities of the ILGS with respect to LED. By using its local knowledge and expertise the ILGS has in turn made some important contributions to the project design of the GDWP. The suggestion for delivering LED through a formal Sub-Committee of the District Assembly, for example, came from the ILGS. The organization has also been actively involved in selecting the pilot and replica districts and training the SPGE members. Taken together this has fostered a strong sense of ownership. As the Director of the ILGS, Dr. Esther Offei-Aboayge, put it: “I helped design the Decent Work Programme”.

As a result of this close collaboration the ILGS has internalized much of the ILO approach to LED. There are strong indications that the support for the SPGE model within the ILGS has in turn had a spill-over effect on attitudes within the LGS. As part of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), the LGS is responsible for providing technical assistance to local governments and helping them perform their functions effectively (for more information see <http://www.lgs.com.gh>). As a result the organization will play an important role in supporting implementation of the national LED framework currently being developed.

In addition the MLGRD draws on the expertise of the LGS to inform its own position on LED. The close collaboration between the ILGS and the LGS, and the resulting support for elements of the SPGE model within the LGS, may therefore help ensure that good practice developed under the GDWP influences the policy debate at national level.

Efforts to directly engage the parent ministry of the ILGS and the LGS in the GDWP have been notably less successful. The reasons for this were discussed at length during an interview with MLGRD staff. From these discussions it became clear that the reluctance to engage with the LED component of the GDWP was primarily caused by the fact that the ILO is rightly perceived as the primary development partner in the world of work. In line with this perception the GDWP was conceptualized as a labour market programme aimed at the Ministry of Employment and the social partners. The choice of institutionalizing the national dialogue on all elements of the GDWP through the Committee on the Informal Economy in turn reinforced this perception. As a result the MLGRD did not feel the need to devote valuable time and resources to the project, despite the fact that it included a significant LED component. Interviews with staff at the NDPC revealed a similar perspective.

In Ghana the ability to develop a close working relationship with a well-connected research and training institution helped partially mitigate the negative effects of the failure to involve some of the other national stakeholders in LED. In addition the range of LED projects initiated by other development partners over the past decade facilitated the emergence of a broad-based consensus around the general idea. The projects developed by the UNDP and GIZ in particular played an important role in sensitizing the MLGRD and the NDPC to the LED approach. Taken together, the momentum created by the myriad of LED projects initiated over the past decade has proved sufficiently large to ensure the explicit inclusion of LED within the current drive towards further decentralization.

At the time of writing the national debate on LED is still very much ongoing. Following the announcement that the government intends to accelerate the process of decentralization, the MLGRD has produced a Decentralization Policy Framework and accompanying Ghana Decentralization Action Plan. Both of these documents devote considerable attention to LED. Within the framework document the MLGRD defines LED as “the process by which local governments, local businesses and other actors join forces and resources to enter into new partnership arrangements with each other or other stakeholders to create new jobs and stimulate economic activity in municipalities, towns and villages” (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 2010a:30). The related Action Plan positions LED as an intervention aimed at facilitating economic growth, employment and income generation (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 2010b). The policy measures and activities linked to this policy objective furthermore reflect an emphasis on collaborative and participatory processes in general and public-private dialogue in particular.

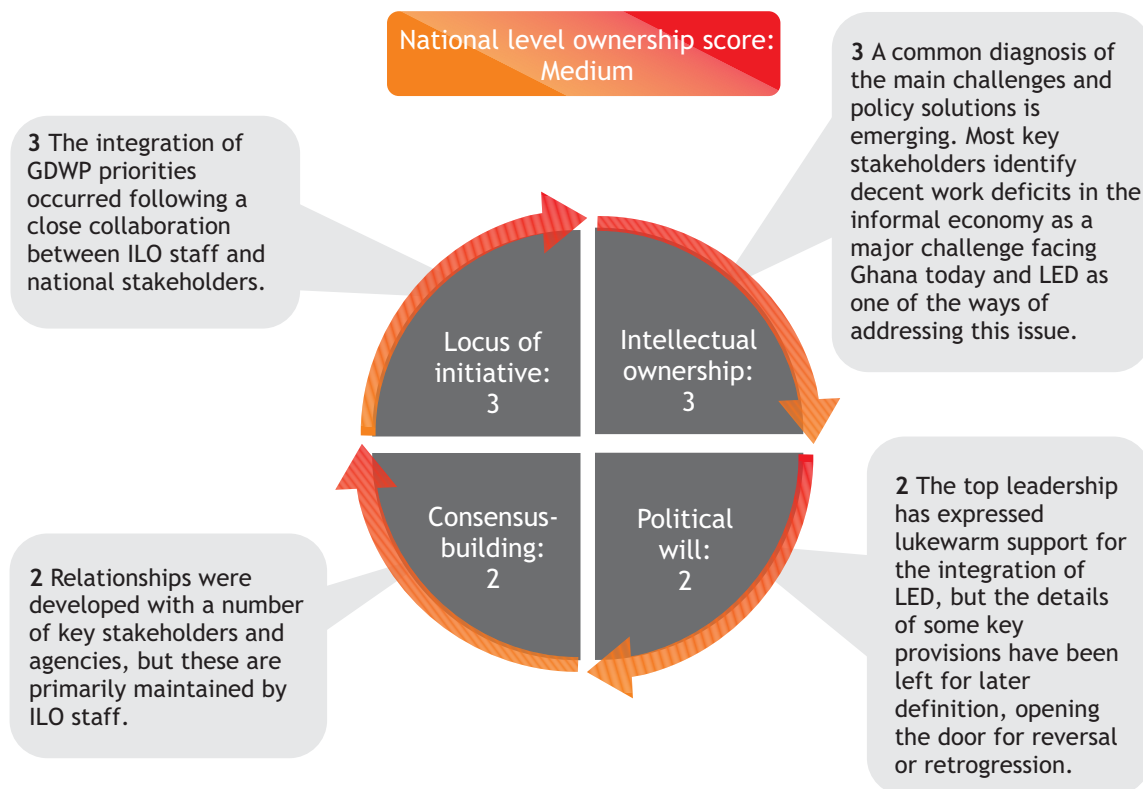
Taken together the approach to LED advocated by the MLGRD incorporates many elements of the ILO’s strategic LED framework advances. There are however important differences. At the most basic level there is a subtle difference in the problem definition advanced by the GDWP and the policy objective proposed by the MLGRD. While both ultimately aim to reduce poverty, the GDWP defines the main development challenge in terms of underemployment, decent work deficits and poor productivity, whereas the MLGRD focuses more broadly on facilitating economic growth and employment, without any specific reference to the quality of jobs. As a result LED is presented as a discrete policy area and no explicit connections are made with related DA responsibilities in the fields of education, health, gender issues, children’s issues, or human rights observance. In addition the type of LED forum proposed by the Ministry envisages a much less pronounced role for the private sector than is the case in the SPGE model.

The reluctance to incorporate the above-mentioned benefits of full private sector membership within the national framework for LED may reflect the unresolved legitimacy issues associated with the SPGE model. As noted at district level, the private sector representatives within the SPGEs do not enjoy a direct popular mandate. Instead the willingness of the local government and other local stakeholders to accept the existing arrangements hinges strongly on the personal reputation of the chairperson in particular. While such difficulties have been relatively easily overcome at local level, it is perhaps unsurprising that national stakeholders are less inclined to accept this unusual arrangement.

Following publication of the action plan the UNDP and the MLGRD jointly took the initiative to organize a national conference on LED. The proceedings of this conference showed that, while most stakeholders formally support LED, there are still notable differences in their interpretation of the approach. As one interviewee put it “As a nation, Ghana has not defined LED yet”. It could be argued that closer cooperation between the various development partners involved in LED could have encouraged the emergence of a more coherent vision. On the other hand the variety of approaches piloted in Ghana provides a wealth of information which, if analyzed appropriately, could inform a dynamic national debate on the most appropriate framework for Ghana and its regions. In the long run the already-noted lack of coordination between development partners may therefore encourage a higher degree of intellectual ownership.

Direct involvement in various LED projects has allowed a range of national and local stakeholders to experience at firsthand both the potential of LED to produce real results and the challenges and obstacles associated with the approach. As expected, the impacts achieved at local level tend to vary from programme to programme and from district to district. As a result some stakeholders currently seem significantly more convinced of the benefits of LED than others. By bringing together a wide range of national and local stakeholders alongside the various development partners, the national conference on LED made possible honest and open knowledge-sharing. Continuation of this process will be crucial to ensuring that good practices are noted and, where possible, integrated within the national framework for LED.

Figure 5 National programme ownership score



4.2.1 Factors behind the success at national level

The local component of the GDWP clearly demonstrates that the ILO approach to LED has the potential to deliver real results in Ghana. Encouraged by the early successes of the programme, the ILO has explored two potential routes to up-scaling: replication and integration. While limited replication has occurred, the ongoing drive towards further decentralization in Ghana has shifted the focus towards the ultimate integration of LED within the national policy framework.

The main difficulty faced by the ILO in pursuing this strategy has been that its national constituents are not the primary agenda-setters and decision-makers in the field. Owing to a combination of deliberate actions by the ILO and favorable national conditions, the GDWP was partially able to overcome this challenge.

From the outset the ILO has devoted a considerable amount of time and resources to developing a close partnership with the ILGS. This in turn has proved instrumental in encouraging wider support for the SPGE model. In addition, the coincidence of several LED programmes initiated by a variety of development partners helped create the momentum needed to encourage the emergence of an informed national debate on LED.

5 A note on sustainability

Participatory approaches treat people as participants and agents of development rather than as beneficiaries as applies in more traditional top-down approaches. The ultimate goal is to build capabilities that will allow people to improve their living standards. This is achieved through fostering a culture of cooperation, debate and ownership in respect of agreed initiatives, which in turn enables the process to become sustainable and to adapt to evolving needs. Because the participatory forum is very much at the heart of the LED approach, the assessment of the overall sustainability of the Ghana project will be focused on the SPGE.

After analyzing the main characteristics of the LED component of the GDWP, the degree of ownership by local stakeholders, and the level of policy and institutional impact, it is possible to conclude that the LED component of the GDWP faces some challenges. Most specifically, the ease with which formal sub-committees of the DA can be created, and the advantages of this approach, have inspired other development agencies to pursue similar strategies. This is already starting to lead to the emergence of sub-committees with overlapping remits and a consequent degree of confusion among the population regarding the precise functional remits of each sub-committee. In addition, the direct assistance associated with the GDWP will soon be coming to an end. While the current SPGE members show a strong commitment to continuing the approach, the gradual exit of the ILO is greeted with a degree of apprehension. Nonetheless, the LED component of the GDWP has successfully demonstrated that LED can be used as an effective tool for operationalizing the decent work agenda at local level. To what extent the key factors in this success can be replicated in other contexts is debatable.

The institutionalization of the LED forum within the local government structure and the associated benefits in terms of political will and consensus-building may be difficult to transfer to other country contexts. In contrast, such good practices as encouraging local ownership by adopting a hands-off approach to LED and divorcing capacity-building activities from direct financial assistance are an integral part of the ILO approach to LED. Over the past two decades the ILO has tried and tested these practices in a variety of country contexts. The results have been found to vary from country to country. The Ghanaian experience suggests that there may be several reasons for this variation.

First, in Ghana the institutional setting was conducive to implementation of an LED approach. Because of the opportunity created by the 1993 Local Government Act, which facilitates creation of DA sub-committees to address social and economic issues, the institutionalization of the participatory forum emerged as the most appropriate strategy. This may not be the case in other countries, where looser or more informal structures maybe more appropriate. The specific characteristics of the structure in which dialogue is anchored in an LED approach are therefore highly contextual.

Second, differences in district level results show that the success of the approach greatly depends on the ability of key individuals within the locality to drive the process. While capacity-building can ensure a minimum level of competence across all districts, there seems to be no substitute for entrepreneurial spirit. Cultural and historical differences may mean that the ability to engage with such an entrepreneurial approach differs from country to country and region to region.

Third, the focus on capacity-building and the resulting lack of highly visible immediate results can make it more difficult to persuade local stakeholders to become actively involved in the LED process. In Ghana this issue was to some extent overcome by the close fit between the decent work agenda and the issues local stakeholders wanted addressed. The prevalence of the informal economy and the associated decent work deficits in other low- and middle-income countries should allow a similar process in those contexts. In Ghana, however, the formal responsibility of DAs in the field of LED and the increasing pressure to fulfil this remit more completely helped to ensure more active local government involvement. The local government environment may not prove similarly receptive in other country contexts.

Finally, shifting the responsibility for funding projects to the local stakeholders will only produce the desired results if stakeholders are able to fulfil this role to a reasonable standard. While training can greatly enhance the capacity of local stakeholders to secure funds, the level of success will also be related to the available opportunities.

The formal status of the sub-committees and the related access to local government resources, coupled with the generally high level of aid currently flowing into Ghana, underpin much of the success of the SPGEs in this area. Whether local actors will be able to secure the necessary funds to make LED work in the absence of either or both of these factors is questionable. Where local stakeholders are able to record early successes, the ability to secure resources can become a source of pride and self-confidence. Conversely, the failure to achieve such objectives can lead to a general lack of observable impacts and consequent stakeholder disengagement, which may jeopardize sustainability.

6 Conclusions

The LED component of the Ghana Decent Work Programme has been widely perceived as highly successful. By way of the concept of ownership, this study has aimed to examine to what extent the noted policy and institutional impacts of the GDWP are indeed grounded in sustainable commitment and ownership on the part of national and district-level stakeholders. The results suggest that the GDWP has been highly successful in encouraging local ownership, while the impact at national level has been more mixed.

At local level ownership of the programme was found to be relatively high across all four ownership dimensions. Three inter-related factors played a role in achieving this success.

First, the focus on capacity-building, combined with the limited level of direct funding associated with the GDWP, has meant that the locus of initiative has from the start been placed quite firmly in the hands of local stakeholders. While it did take most stakeholders some time to adjust to the characteristics of a participatory approach, the willingness to engage with the project and the importance attached to it has been remarkably high across all participating districts. This can in turn be related to the fact that the GDWP offered local stakeholders an opportunity to address the pressing decent work deficits that had been left largely untouched by central government policies and previous donor interventions. The closeness of the fit between the decent work agenda and the development challenges facing the participating districts helped to capture the interest of a range of public and private sector stakeholders and ensure their active involvement in the LED process. Private sector involvement was further encouraged by the fact that the ILO approach offered such stakeholders a genuine opportunity to play a full part in the LED process. This stands in contrast to the 'advisory' or 'consultative' role often awarded to non-public sector actors in government-led LED and local SME development projects.

Second, the restraint shown in the guidance provided to local stakeholders facilitated the emergence of locally-owned practices and strategies. Although the districts did receive ongoing operational and technical support from ILO staff, local stakeholders were empowered to take their own decisions from the outset. Project evaluations have consistently shown that the resulting SPGEs and their action plans reflect some, even if not all, of the ILOs priorities. Nonetheless the organization has resisted the temptation to force its own perspective on local stakeholders. Key values-for example the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships and attention to decent work deficits among informal workers and women in particular-have been successfully transferred. In contrast, issues such as the persistent gender bias within the SPGEs have been raised but changes have not been forced in a top-down manner. The evidence suggests that this willingness to work within the cultural context has not only helped encourage local ownership, but also enhanced the effectiveness of the approach within the Ghanaian context.

Finally, the decision to deliver the LED component through formal sub-committees of the participating District Assemblies has both ensured a minimum level of political will and created opportunities for SPGEs to build a consensus around, and secure funds for, the strategies proposed.

The 1993 Government Act stipulated that the DA has a number of responsibilities *vis-à-vis* its sub-committees. As a result, the decision to participate in the LED component of the GDWP was never a cost-free exercise for the participating District Assemblies. The status within the local government system provides the SPGE with privileged access to the political leadership and allows the LED forum to capture a larger share of the DA resources. Taken together these aspects have enhanced both the immediate policy impacts and the financial sustainability of the approach.

The local component of the GDWP clearly demonstrates that the ILO approach to LED has the potential to deliver real results in Ghana. Encouraged by the early successes of the programme, the ILO has explored two potential routes to up-scaling: replication and integration. While limited replication has occurred, the ongoing drive towards further decentralization in Ghana has shifted the focus towards the ultimate integration of LED within the national framework. The main difficulty faced by the ILO in pursuing this strategy has been that its national constituents are not the primary agenda-setters and decision-makers in the fields of local government policy and decentralization. The organization has tried to address this problem by involving a wider range of national stakeholders within the GDWP. This strategy has produced mixed results. The ILO has developed a very fruitful partnership with the ILGS. This partnership has in turn proved instrumental in encouraging awareness of and support for the SPGE model among other key stakeholders. Nonetheless, the evidence collected in the context of this study suggests that the MLGRD and the NDPC in particular remain unconvinced of the merits of the ILO approach to LED.

The negative effects of this failure to involve a number of key stakeholders have been partially mitigated by the actions of other development partners. The ILO has not been a lone voice in promoting LED in Ghana. UNDP and GTZ in particular have also been involved in similar projects in other parts of Ghana. Working directly with both the MLGRD and the NDPC, these programmes have helped generate greater awareness of the LED approach. As the success of LED pilot and replica projects has varied from organization to organization and district to district, this exposure has not brought about uniform levels of support for LED. In addition, individual perceptions of the main development challenges facing districts in Ghana today and the role LED can play in addressing such issues tend to vary from stakeholder to stakeholder. Nonetheless, the momentum created has proved sufficiently large to ensure the explicit inclusion of LED within the current drive towards further decentralization.

The national debate on the most appropriate national framework for LED is still very much ongoing. Early indications suggest that the co-existence of a number of LED projects has enabled the emergence of an informed policy debate involving a wide range of local and national stakeholders. In this context, the limited formal cooperation between development partners may increase the degree of long-term ownership of the LED approach in Ghana. By presenting national stakeholders with a portfolio of possible approaches, the actions of the development partners both necessitated and encouraged a national debate. The national LED framework that will eventually emerge from this process can therefore be truly characterized as a Ghanaian approach; but to facilitate this process the development partners will have to increase their efforts to disseminate the available information on LED projects in user-friendly formats. In particular, international organizations need to be more willing to share obstacles and challenges as well as success stories.

As at local level, the degree to which the Ghanaian experience can inform good practice in other contexts varies from success factor to success factor. Especially in the case of the ILO, the need to build a wide-based national consensus in order to maximize the institutional and policy impacts of successful LED projects is likely to be a reoccurring theme. The positive influence of the partnership with the ILGS and the subsequent spill-over effects on other government departments suggest that the ILO should seek to exploit its competitive advantage in sensitization and capacity-building so as to create similar partnerships in other countries. In Ghana the ongoing debate surrounding decentralization, coupled with the co-existence of a number of LED projects initiated by a range of development partners, have helped build a national consensus. Similarly favorable conditions may not exist in other country contexts. Alternatively, successful LED projects could be scaled-up through replication rather than integration within the national policy framework.

7 Policy recommendations

At both national and local levels the Ghanaian experience suggest that the ILO approach to LED can create high levels of ownership along the locus of initiative and intellectual conviction dimensions. This can be linked to the ILO's mandate as well as its resource position.

By insisting on representation of informal economy operators and on integrating the decent work agenda within LED, the ILO's approach moves away from the exclusive focus on economic growth and the preoccupation with formal sector development that tends to characterize many LED programmes. Sensitized to this way of thinking, local stakeholders have been able to devise LED strategies that address many of the decent work deficits left largely untouched by traditional development policies and previous interventions by NGOs and international organizations. This has in turn helped secure strong support for the approach from a range of local and national stakeholders.

The ILO approach to LED focuses on capacity-building for LED rather than direct funding of local interventions. As a result of this strategy, it has developed a wealth of high-quality LED sensitization and capacity-building materials. While this has enabled the ILO to achieve notable successes in a variety of contexts, the organization has perhaps not fully exploited its competitive advantage in this area. Similarly, other development partners could potentially enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of LED initiatives by drawing more strongly on the expertise of the ILO in this field. The main policy recommendation to flow from this report for the ILO would therefore be:

The ILO should be more active in promoting its approach to LED as a tool to address the decent work deficits associated with the informal economy and encouraging other development partners in general, and UN agencies in particular, to draw more strongly on its competitive advantage in sensitization and capacity-building for LED.

This recommendation in turn links in with the finding that the up-scaling of LED through integration within the national framework requires a broad-based national consensus. In this context partnerships between development partners with differing national constituents may improve the prospects for eventual integration. The ONE UN framework provides an excellent opportunity to

explore the possibilities for more integrated and coordinated LED interventions among UN agencies with complementary mandates and constituents. Such partnerships may in turn create novel opportunities to separate capacity-building from funding activities, whilst enhancing the ability of local stakeholders to secure adequate resources.

Taken together, the experiences in Ghana suggest that separating capacity-building activities from access to substantial resources can enhance the cost-effectiveness of LED and encourage financial independence from international donors. But in the absence of adequate opportunities for resource mobilization, this programme design may lead to disillusionment and disengagement. In such circumstances capacity-building activities need to be accompanied by facilitated access to funding.

Partnerships between complementary development partners may again prove fruitful here, as it may help re-enforce the separation between sensitization and capacity-building activities on the one hand and access to funds on the other. The general policy recommendation would therefore be:

To encourage the sustainability and efficiency of LED, international organizations should aim to divorce capacity-building activities from large direct funding streams. Simultaneously there is a need to ensure that local stakeholders can mobilize adequate internal and external funds to make LED a success.

The experiences in the central region of Ghana furthermore suggest that international organizations should try to resist the temptation to interfere with the finer details of local practices and strategies. In the context of enabling national policies, LED can play a vital part in enhancing the productive and gainful employment opportunities available to all women and men. However LED cannot and should not be used as a catch-all tool for addressing a whole range of issues which are difficult to address through central interventions alone. Attempts to use LED in this way may alienate key stakeholders and draw valuable resources away from activities that would have had a more pronounced effect on employment and decent work. The ILO's efforts to link cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and environmental sustainability to the decent work agenda and incorporate these aspects into training activities have helped raise awareness of such issues. The organization's reluctance to intervene when local practices do not fully conform with the ILO's norms and values should however be seen as a strength rather than a weakness. This suggests that:

LED should primarily be seen as a tool for enhancing the productive and gainful employment opportunities available to all women and men. It can play a role in raising awareness of social and environmental issues, but development partners should resist the temptation to enforce norms and values in a top-down fashion.

The success of the LED component of the GDWP was facilitated by the emergence of an enabling national environment. Over the course of the GDWP, decent work deficits and informal economy issues have become increasingly prominent features of the national development agenda. In addition, the 1993 Local Government Act and the current push towards further decentralization have created opportunities for integrating the LED approach within national policy frameworks and local government structures. On the other hand, the experiences in Ghana also demonstrate that the

formal decentralization of LED responsibilities alone is not sufficient to achieve results. Local governments often lack the capacity to truly engage with their remit in the field of LED. In addition, new functions and responsibilities need to be accompanied by adequate resources. Taken together this leads to the following recommendation:

Government decentralization can facilitate the emergence of successful and sustainable LED practices. Central governments however do need to ensure that the decentralization of functions and responsibilities to the local level is accompanied by sufficient capacity-building as well as fiscal devolution and/or adequate grants.

The success achieved by the participating districts show that local stakeholders are capable of producing remarkable results if they are given the tools and autonomy to act. In this context it is important to build up the capacity of local stakeholders and provide a clear institutional framework for LED. The GDWP shows that integrating LED for a within the local government structure can be useful. More thought however needs to go into how this can be achieved without jeopardizing either the role of the private sector in the LED process or the public accountability of local government. Regardless of the precise institutionalization of the LED forum, the experiences in Ghana suggest that:

To maximize the impact of LED, local governments need to understand the importance of private sector involvement and be willing to allow informal and formal economy representatives alike to play a full part within the development and implementation of LED strategies. Institutional structures can facilitate this by awarding private sector representatives full membership of LED fora.

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Appendix 1

Research methods

This study is based on a combination of desk research and fieldwork. Previous external evaluations and ILO country reports have been used to inform the study. In addition, the author collected a range of local and national policy documents. The district level fieldwork component consisted of (i) participation in a district level Knowledge Sharing Workshop organized on 31 July 2010 at the Windy Lodge Hotel in Winnebaand (ii) visits to two districts in the Central Region of Ghana; Effutu and Agona West. The two districts were selected on the basis that they contain SPGEs at two very different stages of development. While Effutu was one of the 2003 pilot districts, Agona West only joined the programme in 2009. In Effutu individual interviews were conducted with a range of local stakeholders, including the District Assembly Chief Executive, members of the Sub-Committees on Productive and Gainful Employment (SPGEs) and other relevant stakeholders outside the SPGE. On request the fieldwork in Agona West took the form of a focus group.

At national level it was hoped that the author would have the opportunity to participate in the National Conference on Local Economic Development, planned to take place in Accra on Monday 25 October 2010. Owing to organizational difficulties this conference had to be postponed to December. Because of consequent time and budget constraints, the author was therefore unable personally to attend the meeting. In order to gather the necessary information a number of face-to-face interviews were conducted with a range of national stakeholders, as well as ILO staff involved in the GDWP. In addition Mr. Emmanuel Baisie (national ILO staff) kindly sent the author a conference report along with the documents presented during the National Conference on LED, and collected the testimonies of those involved in the LED initiatives.

Table 2 List of interviews conducted in the context of this study.

Name	Function	Date	Place
Hon. Nii Ephraim	Municipal Chief Executive (Effutu Municipal Assembly)	19/10/2010	Winneba
Mr. Kunsch	Municipal Coordinating Director (Effutu Municipal Assembly)	19/10/2010	Winneba
Mr. George Acquah	SPGE Chairman (Effutu Municipal Assembly)	19/10/2010	Winneba
Mr. Arko Sam	Manager (Edwumapa Cooperative Credit Union)	19/10/2010	Winneba
Municipal Director	Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Effutu Municipal Assembly)	19/10/2010	Winneba
Mr. Isaac Mwengu	Municipal Planning Officer (Effutu Municipal Assembly)	19/10/2010	Winneba
Hon. Felix Jacob Obeng-Forson	Municipal Chief Executive (Agona West Municipal Assembly)	20/10/2010	Agona Swedru
Mr. Matthew Quayson	Municipal Coordinating Director (Agona West Municipal Assembly)	20/10/2010	Agona Swedru
Mr. Seth Anim Boadu	SPGE Focal Person (Agona West Municipal Assembly)	20/10/2010	Agona Swedru
Mr. Isaac Tetteh	Municipal Planning Officer (Agona West Municipal Assembly)	20/10/2010	Agona Swedru

Up-scaling LED

Name	Function	Date	Place
Dr. Kweku Eyiah	SPGE Chairman (Agona West Municipal Assembly)	20/10/2010	Agona Swedru
Mr. Anthony Adu-Baffour	JENAD Consult LTD	21/10/2010	Accra
Mr. Robert Nsiah	National Coordinator FIT Ghana	21/10/2010	Accra
Hon. Antwi Sekyere Boasiako	Deputy Minister Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare	21/10/2010	Accra
Mr. Slyanus	Planning Officer Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development	21/10/2010	Accra
Mr. Wilson	Programme Officer Ghana Employers Association	21/10/2010	Accra
Ms Olivia	Director Planning and Monitoring Unit Local Government Service	21/10/2010	Accra
Mr. Christopher Conduah	Policy Unit National Development Planning Commission	22/10/2010	Accra
Dr. Esther Offei-Aboayge	Director Institute of Local Government Studies	22/10/2010	Accra
Mr. Simons Borkor	Lecturer Institute of Local Government Studies	23/10/2010	Telephone interview
Dr. Nii Moi Thompson	International ILO staff	22/10/2010	Accra

Appendix 2

Measuring ownership

The study adapted the model of ownership developed by Johnson and Wasty (1993) to the case being reviewed. To avoid retrofitting, the categories were defined ahead of the case analysis. The possibility of reducing the categories to low, medium and high has been discussed. To ensure the integrity of the research, it was not possible to change the classification scheme used in this study. If the ILO intends to incorporate this model of ownership in its evaluation and monitoring practices, it may however be advisable to make the shift to a three-point scheme.

The first dimension of ownership considered is the **locus of initiative**. This dimension examines who has initiated the noted integration of the ILO's approach to LED into institutional frameworks and policy documents at local and national levels.

At district level the following scale was used for this measure:

1. Many of the SPGEs activities occurred following direct interventions by ILO staff, despite a lack of consensus among SPGE members regarding the correct course of action.
2. ILO staff directly initiated a number of activities, but SPGE members broadly supported these actions.
3. The SPGE activities were developed following a close collaboration between the ILO and SPGE members.
4. SPGE members initiated activities with little to no direct involvement of the ILO.

At national level this study focused on the level of initiative shown by the main national constituents of the ILO. The scale used here is:

1. Integration of GDWP priorities occurred following direct interventions by ILO staff, despite a lack of consensus among national stakeholders.
2. ILO staff initiated the integration of GDWP priorities, but national stakeholders broadly supported this initiative.
3. The integration of GDWP priorities occurred following close collaboration between ILO staff and national stakeholders.
4. National stakeholders initiated the integration of GDWP priorities with little to no direct involvement of ILO staff.

The second dimension of ownership is the **level of intellectual conviction** among key stakeholders. This dimension aims to gauge the degree of consensus among key stakeholders regarding the main challenges facing their country or district today and the remedial action that needs to be taken to rectify these issues. In the context of this study this dimension focused specifically on the attention

paid to decent work deficits in the informal economy and the viability of LED as a mechanism for addressing some of these issues.

At district level the analysis focused on the views of SPGE members in particular. The scale used here is:

1. The SPGE members fundamentally disagree on the nature and causes of the main challenges facing their district. As a result there is little consensus on the action that needs to be taken to address these issues.
2. There is some disagreement among SPGE members regarding the prominence that should be awarded to decent work deficits in the informal economy within the wider development agenda, or resistance to the viability of the ILO approach to LED as a solution to such issues.
3. A common diagnosis of the main challenges and policy solutions is emerging. Most SPGE members identify decent work deficits in the informal economy as a major challenge and the ILO approach to LED as one way of addressing this issue.
4. There is an observable and detailed consensus among all SPGE members that decent work deficits in the informal economy should be one of the top priorities and ILO's approach to LED is seen as a vital part of the solution to this problem.

At national level the focus was again on the views of the main national constituents of the ILO. The scale used here is:

1. The national constituents fundamentally disagree on the nature and causes of the main challenges facing Ghana today. As a result there is also little consensus on the action that needs to be taken to address these issues.
2. There is some disagreement among the key stakeholders regarding the prominence that should be awarded to decent work deficits in the informal economy within the overall development agenda and/or resistance to the viability of LED as a solution to such issues.
3. A common diagnosis of the main challenges and policy solutions is emerging. Most key stakeholders identify decent work deficits in the informal economy as a major challenge facing Ghana today and LED as one of the ways of addressing this issue.
4. There is an observable and detailed consensus among all key stakeholders that decent work deficits in the informal economy should be one of the top priorities in the development agenda and LED is seen as a vital part of the solution to this problem.

The third dimension of ownership is the **degree of political will displayed by the political leadership**. At the district level, this indicator focused on the extent to which the District Assembly leadership has shown a strong commitment to the SPGE model. The scale used here is:

1. There is no clear-cut indication that the DA leadership strongly supports the SPGE model.
2. The DA leadership has expressed lukewarm support for the SPGE, but has not included SPGE priorities in the medium term development plans or allocated substantial funds to the project.

3. The DA leadership has expressed strong support for the SPGE, included SPGE priorities in the medium term development plans and allocated funds to the project. The SPGE has however not achieved the same status as the mandatory sub-committees.
4. A strong commitment to the SPGE and its priorities has been accompanied by the allocation of adequate resources to this activity. The SPGE has achieved the same status as the mandatory sub-committees.

At national level, the study examined to what extent the national political leadership has produced strong and public statements in support of LED and whether these statements have been followed up by substantive action. The GDWP has been relatively focused on the national constituents of the ILO. Successful integration however also depends on the political will of other key actors. Along this dimension, the analysis therefore included announcements made by the President of Ghana as well as other relevant national stakeholders like the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the National Development Planning Commission. The scale used here is:

1. There is no clear-cut indication that the top leadership will take decisive action to overcome obstacles or opposition to the proposed integration of LED within the national policy framework.
2. The top leadership has expressed lukewarm support for the integration of LED, but the details of some key provisions have been left for later definition, opening the door for reversal or retrogression.
3. The top leadership has issued a strong and detailed public statement on its intent to further decentralize powers in the field of local economic development to district level.
4. Strong and detailed public statements on the decentralization LED responsibilities have been accompanied by clear commitments to provide training and devolve resources to the districts.

The final dimension of ownership examines **to what extent efforts were made to build a consensus around preferred policy options among key stakeholders**. At local level this dimension primarily focused on efforts by SPGE members to create support for the SPGE model and its work within the DA.

1. No efforts were made to create support for the SPGE within the DA.
2. Relationships were developed but these are primarily a result of the design of the programme.
3. SPGE members have been actively involved in advocacy activities directed towards the DA. They are supported by ILO staff in these activities.
4. The relationship between the SPGE and the DA has been successfully institutionalized within the SPGE model. Direct ILO involvement in this process is limited.

At national level this dimension examined the efforts made to consult and involve key national stakeholders as well as the agencies ultimately responsible for the implementation of LED.

1. Important key stakeholders or implementing agencies were neither consulted nor involved in the LED component of the GDWP.
2. Relationships were developed with a number of the key stakeholders and agencies, but these are primarily maintained by ILO staff.



Up-scaling LED

3. The social partners have been actively involved in advocacy activities directed towards key stakeholders and agencies. They are supported by ILO staff in these activities.
4. Relationships between the social partners and other key stakeholders and agencies have been successfully institutionalized. Direct ILO involvement in this process is limited.

The scores for each of the ownership dimensions have been used to calculate overall ownership bands at each level. All four dimensions have been given equal weight in this process. Where the totaling of individual scores lead to an overall score of **6 or less**, overall ownership will be set at **very low**. Where the total of individual scores lead to an overall score of **7 to 9**, overall ownership will be set at **low**. Where the total of individual scores lead to an overall score of **10 to 12**, the overall ownership will be set at **medium**. Overall scores of **13 or more** will be taken to indicate a **high** level of overall ownership.

The ILO is supporting constituents in the integrated devising of decent work strategies for local development by building up local capacity for effective policy making, systemic development planning and strategy implementation.

Our work includes the implementation of technical cooperation projects and the development and dissemination of a knowledge base on successful local initiatives for decent work.

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