Project No. 1-2

Region: Africa
Country: Ghana

Project:
Ghana Decent Work Pilot Programme: Working out of poverty in Ghana

Donors:
The Programme has been supported by the Netherlands-ILO Partnership Programme, the ILO and smaller contributions from UK Department for International Development (DFID) and Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA).

Project Description:
Working out of poverty
Four of every ten Ghanaians still live in poverty. A rapidly growing number is engaged in micro and small enterprises in the informal economy. Many are persistently poor, particularly women. The Government of Ghana realizes that what people need to move out of poverty is a decent job.

National ownership
The Government and the social partners have taken up the challenge. The blueprint for growth and prosperity is the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS). The national ILO constituents and partners have designed the Decent Work Pilot Programme through which the ILO helps them to strengthen the potential of the GPRS to generate more and better jobs.

Key policy areas identified by the national partners are: skills development, employment-intensive infrastructure, persons with disabilities, productivity improvement, and income distribution. The focus is on the potential of the informal economy. To break the cycle of informality and poverty, governments can improve laws and regulations, and increase access to productive resources and market opportunities. The Programme helps to build the right policies and programmes into the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Building partnerships
Formulating, testing and implementing policies and programmes that will produce more and better jobs for poverty reduction requires a variety of partners. The Programme is assisting in the creation of partnerships between national and local government, the social partners, the private sector and social society institutions.

Adding-value to the poverty reduction strategy
The Programme includes a novel approach that connects national policy targets to action at the local level. In the Central Region, two districts with a high poverty incidence are testing a local economic development strategy that creates and improves jobs for the poor. Under the district assemblies, Sub-committees for Productive and Gainful Employment have been set up to bring together local government, elected assembly members, and local business and social groups. The Sub-committees consult broadly on the economic potential and social needs and work with local and national government and the private sector. They take forward proposals to access new markets, expand businesses, and to improve working conditions and productivity in areas like palm oil and fish processing, food processing and garment manufacturing. The Sub-committees are beginning to be recognized as a valuable tool for decentralizing poverty reduction, improving dialogue, and improving governance.
The goal
By the end of 2005, the lessons from the Districts will be built into a revised GPRS and relevant policies and programmes. This will include a strategy for the informal economy, new approaches to vocational training and to job creation through procurement policies. Implementation will be based on innovative ways and greater capacity to deliver development programmes at national and local level.

Progress in implementation
The GDWPP has brought the informal economy into national policy discussions. In January 2005, the President of Ghana declared improvements in the informal sector one of the five top priorities of his government. Following a national policy dialogue initiated by the Programme, the Ministers of Manpower, Youth and Employment and of Private Sector Development are taking the lead in shaping a national strategy.

In the on-going revision of the GPRS 2006-2009, ILO constituents successfully advocated for employment as a central goal of the strategy. In addition to policy coordination across the GPRS to enhance employment outcomes, a number of specific programmes are being prepared.

**Gender and Ethnic Components:**
Women are disproportionately affected by poverty and informality in Ghana. The GDWPP has mainstreamed the gender dimension into problem analysis, the formulation of the Programme, of targets and outputs. A conscious effort is made to improve the gender balance in all activities.

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