



*Local Contractors of Mining Services (LOCOMS), Prestea Huni-Valley Municipality, Ghana, in October 2019  
(Photo Credit: WAGES)*

## **FROM GRASS TO GRACE**

### ***A Case Study on Local Contractors of Mining Services (LOCOMS)***

**By Herbert Anobah – October 2019**

*The Local Contractors of Mining Services (LOCOMS) Association has seen a transformation within members, operations and ability to respond to community-needs. The Association’s participation in the National Conference of the Mineral Development Fund, facilitated by the WAGES project, as well as various trainings in business development and financial management, has contributed to improved operations and accountability in members’ respective communities. LOCOMS has also focused on gender and youth inclusion as an important component in its work.*

## Introduction:

Local Contractors of Mining Services (LOCOMS) is an association of vibrant people who have come together with a common goal in Prestea to improve the lives of people living in the Prestea Huni-Valley Municipality of the southwest part of Ghana. The group has been in existence since 2015 and it provides haulage and mining support services to its principal client (Golden Star Resources Limited). The Association was born out of necessity for locals in Prestea to leverage mining operations. It consists of 16 people, with 15 men and 1 woman.

LOCOMS, as is popularly known by many, has had many setbacks in its operations on accessing credit, financial management and legal problems due to limited knowledge about Minerals and Mining Laws. These setbacks continue to impede the expansion of its operations and the Association as a whole, with “some members losing hope in the work of the Association,” as mentioned by one of its members.

## Skills and Knowledge:

In May 2019, the leadership of LOCOMS participated in the National Conference of the Minerals Development Fund in Accra, facilitated by the West Africa Governance and Economic Sustainability in Extractive Areas (WAGES) project – a joint initiative of the World University Service of Canada and the Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI). The conference discussed the newly-developed Regulations for the Minerals Development Fund (MDF) Act, timely disbursement and effective utilization of the Fund, and gave the public an opportunity to interact with officials. The knowledge they acquired from the conference helped them demand accountability from Chiefs and relevant stakeholders on use of the Fund as well as express their views on existing MDF-related projects.

The LOCOMS Association has also benefited from training facilitated by the WAGES project on economic development – particularly, business development, financial management and customer service. The training also covered areas to enhance their leadership and lobbying skills, environment and green economy, and gender and youth integration.

## Transformation:

As a result of the trainings, members of the association have been able to draft a constitution that amended their regulations to ensure members followed requirements. Also, members now maintain proper business records of their daily transactions. After the gender and youth inclusion training, the only female member of the group – also a youth of Ghana – was appointed as treasurer. Another young man was appointed as operations manager. The overall success of the association now relies on joint efforts of all group members.

*"We are able to lobby and win contracts that are good for the Association. An example is, we won a contract to construct a drench to link a 3.6km pipeline from Genser Energy and also re-shape an 8km road from Bondaye to Beanahu and Bondaye to Bepoase. We understand fully well, the concept of leadership and elections are supposed to be held every two years to elect new executives to run the operations of the Association according to our constitution"- member of LOCOMS*

The training has helped LOCOMS to create a strong link with Amenfiman Rural Bank, which provides loans for members. Through the training on environmental sustainability and green economy, members became aware of the need to keep their community clean and healthy. The Association

embarks on clean-up exercises on a monthly basis by de-silting some gutters and drains in Prestea town and its environs (Zongo Sports Stadium and Mbease Nsuta). The Association also cleared bushes around Prestea Senior High Technical School.

The WAGES project has impacted positively on the Association and has awoken the patriotic spirit of its members. They hope to transcend that energy and knowledge they have acquired from the numerous trainings, to groom more women and youth in their various communities to improve their lives and maximize benefits from the presence of mining operations. As stated by a member of the Association, *"WAGES has really brought hope in the association again and we are grateful."*

*"LOCOMS is advocating for more youth and women inclusion in mining activities to boost the socio-economic strength of the Prestea Township and also awaken the entrepreneurial spirit in them" – Chairman, LOCOMS*

The WAGES project aims to break the vicious circle in which local communities, especially women and youth, are excluded from the benefits of mining investments. Through WAGES, **World University Service of Canada (WUSC)** and the **Center for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI)**, work in three regions of Burkina Faso, Ghana and Guinea impacted by extractive industries. The project works to empower local communities, and specifically integrate women and youth, to participate fully in local governance, economic opportunities and the sustainable development of these areas. The project collaborates with local and national governments, select mining companies, as well as small and medium-sized businesses and civil society organizations to attain those objectives. Global Affairs Canada funds the implementation of WAGES from 2016 until 2022. For more information on the project follow this link: <https://resources.wusc.ca/project/wages>

