



*Ghana National Tailors and Dressmakers Association (Wassa East District), Wassa East District of Ghana, in October 2019
(Photo Credit: WAGES)*

ON THE PATH OF GREATNESS

***A Case Study on Ghana National Tailors and Dressmakers Association
Ateiku Branch***

Wassa East District

By Godsway Kojo Nyatuame – October 2019

The Ghana National Tailors and Dressmakers Association (Ateiku Branch) has seen significant changes and improvements in their association as a whole as well as in the individual skill levels of its members. Through a series of WAGES trainings, in collaboration with the Business Advisory Centre, GNTDA has seen improvements in the entrepreneurial and technical skills of their group members as well as an increased understanding of gender, youth and environmental issues in the association and in their communities.

Background:

The Ghana National Tailors and Dressmakers Association (GNTDA) Ateiku branch is proof of what Hellen Keller once said, “alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” GNTDA-Ateiku Branch was formed 30 years ago with 7 pioneers. Over the years, their number rose and currently has a membership of 32 (4 males and 28 females). The group is led by Mrs. Patience Amponsah and she revealed that the group had been through many difficulties, until they came across the West Africa Governance and Economic Sustainability in Extractive Areas project.

The Intervention and Change:

The World University Service of Canada (WUSC) and the Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI) aim to support sustainable economic growth in two Districts, in the Western Region of Ghana, through their joint initiative, the WAGES project. The project works in tandem with the Business Advisory Centre (BAC) – a branch of District government that is tasked with provision of Business Development Services to local communities.

The members recalled that through WAGES/BAC, they received Entrepreneurship training (records keeping, customer services, marketing), technical training (sewing of safety and security wears, making of bags and purses), gender and environment training and business development support (business formalization, business plan development, group dynamics etc.). They narrated that they were losing interest in the group, payment of dues was becoming difficult, tension was rising among members and the businesses of the members were dying, until they received the interventions and support from the WAGES project.

“We now make bags, shoes, and purses from our offcuts. The female members who weren’t able to sew male attires previously, now sew them. We keep records of our business activities, maintain good attitude towards our customers and take our occupation more seriously”

- GTNDA member

With a grin on their faces, they unanimously agreed that the WAGES Project has restored their hope in their occupation. They disclosed that they are more united and working towards achieving the aims of the group and have now registered their association at the District Assembly.

Through the guidance and directives of WAGES and the BAC, they have acquired a Business plan that will guide the Association in its operation and ease its access to finance, should it opt to access a credit facility. Members now pay their dues regularly, individual business of the members have been boosted, knowledge sharing on new designs and styles has improved, members have developed a savings culture and their attitude and participation in the group has increased.

Paying it Forward:

On community support initiatives, the group has supported 2 individuals, 1 male and 1 female youth, to learn the trade at a reduced cost, with sewing machines provided. The Association has advised its members to dispose of their waste appropriately or use scraps to make pillows in order to protect the environment. They exclaimed that, “the group now stands tall among its peers during regional meetings and they are very grateful and appreciate the support from WUSC through the WAGES project and the BAC have provided.”

Next Steps:

Despite all these changes in fortunes, a meeting place is a worry to them. Currently, they meet on a Church premise, but they want to build their own meeting place, which can serve as training centers. Also, the non-association members in the community charge different prices to agreed prices by members, which sometimes affect the fees they charge or lose potential customers.

Moving forward, the Association wants WUSC to support them to be trained on how to sew wedding gowns and men’s suits and how to make bracelets, anklets and necklaces from beads.

On behalf of the group, the President said, *“I thank WUSC for the support and I promise to ensure that the group will use the knowledge and skills they acquired from the training to develop themselves, the community and Ghana as a whole”.*

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>

