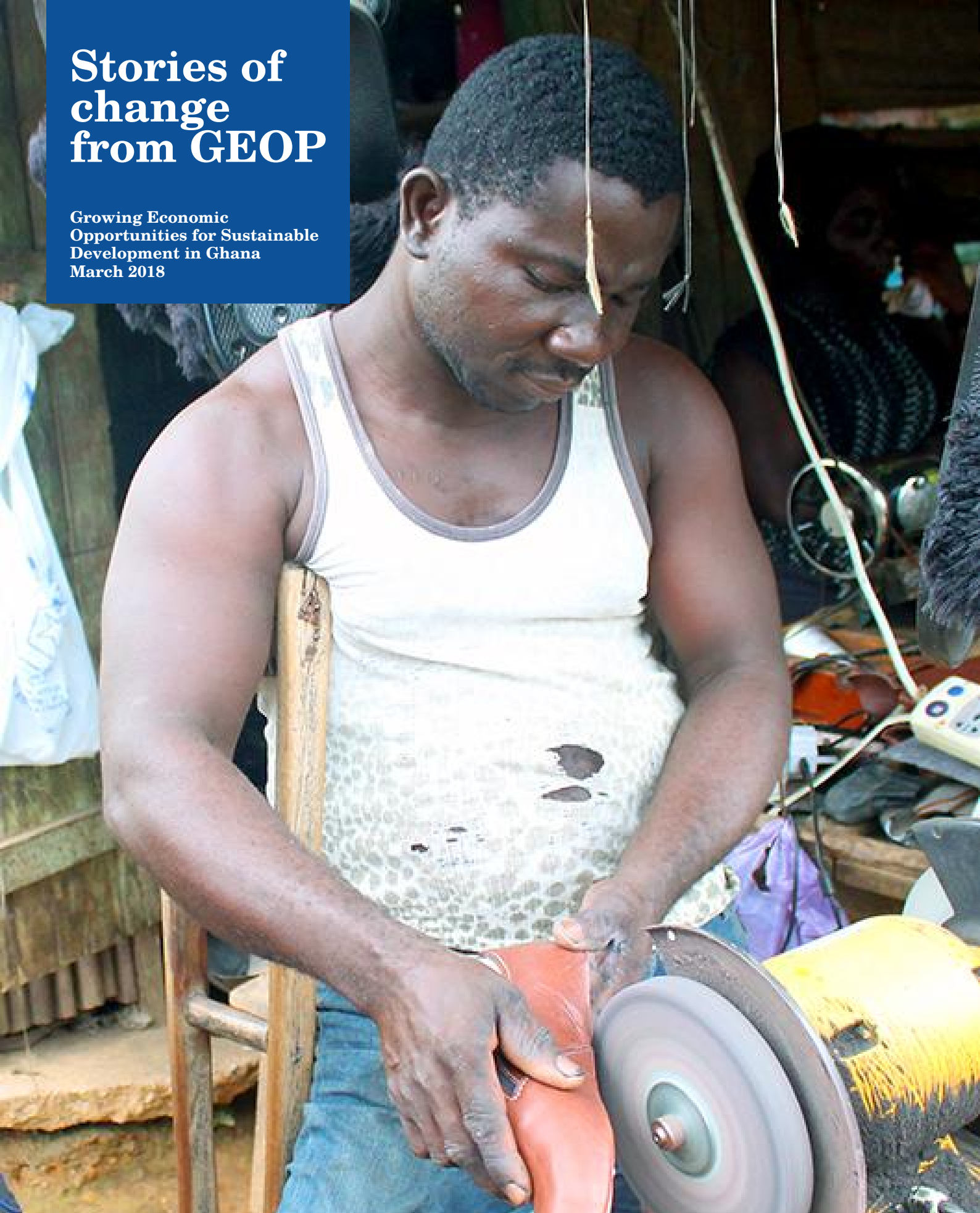


Stories of change from GEOP

Growing Economic
Opportunities for Sustainable
Development in Ghana
March 2018



Empowering people with disabilities to live dignified lives

GEOP case studies



On the left of the picture is Amina proudly displaying slippers she designed using beads, as a result of the training she received from the GEOP project.

About GEOP

Growing Economic Opportunities for Sustainable Development project (GEOP) is a three-year, EU-funded project that aims to foster strong partnerships between civil society and local authorities, to promote local job creation, revenue mobilisation and expansion of economic activities.

The project is implemented in the Ellembele District, Western Region, and Ayawaso East and Ablekuma South sub-metros of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly, Ghana.

Brief background

Kamgbunli is found in the Ellembele District of the Western Region of Ghana. The community is located a few miles from the Western coast of Ghana and it is situated in a hilly area, a short distance from Ampain and Eikwe communities. Peasant farming is predominantly the occupation of the people of Kamgbunli.

Mrs Amina Issah Ebanyinle, a 42-year-old woman lives with her household in the Kamgbunli community. She is divorced and has three children (two boys and a girl). Amina was born with a disability and life has been difficult for her because she has to work hard and care for her family.

Life before the project

In the past, Amina produced and sold

bags made of bamboo sticks in order to cater for her family. However, the business collapsed because of the change in preference of her customers to foreign bags.

Participating in bead-making training

Amina was involved actively in the needs assessment process and selection of people with disabilities (PWDs) for the vocational skills training of the GEOP project. Together with other PWDs who showed an interest in beads making, the project trained Amina and her colleagues on how to produce necklaces, bracelets, earrings and slippers using beads.

In her words, 'the training was extremely important as it has given me a source of livelihood to cater for my family.'

To create a niche for her in the market, Amina has so far focused on using beads to design female slippers. She distributes the finished products to her PWD colleagues who own shops in neighbouring communities to help her sell it.

Life after the training

Amina has so far produced 41 slippers following the GEOP training and she has sold 32 at a price of between GHS 12-16 per slipper, depending on the level of beads used for the design of the slippers.

She has so far recorded a profit of GHS 85 from the business over a period of two months. She aspires to train other interested PWDs in neighbouring communities on how to use beads to produce not only slippers but also necklaces, bracelets and earrings. More importantly, she dreams of growing her business and exporting her products to La Cote D'Ivoire and other countries within the West Africa sub-region.

Touching testimony

Amina stated passionately that:

'Participating in the training was the best decision in my life as I can now use my hand to work and provide the basic needs of my family. I am grateful to the EU, Christian Aid and the project partners for helping me improve my livelihood.'

**Find out more about the
GEOP project at
caid.org.uk/GEOP**



Teach a man... how to produce shoes!

GEOP case studies



A picture of Kaku Famiyuh, a beneficiary of the leather-work training for people with disabilities - part of the GEOP project. Here he is grinding the sole of a shoe, with his apprentice watching closely.

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Brief background

Mr Kaku Famiyuh is a 40-year-old married man with four children who lives with his wife in Nkroful, the district capital of the Ellembele district in the Western Region of Ghana. Kaku grew up in Nkroful and life was very difficult in the town because there were very limited employment opportunities for young people and people with disabilities (PWDs).

Life before the project

Kaku was born with a disability and he works as a cobbler in order to cater for his family. He produces sandals and slippers for both sexes and also repairs shoes. As a result of his good services, Kaku has a massive customer base and he has gained admiration from a lot of people in the Ellembele district.

Drive to participate in shoe-making training

Kaku had received numerous orders from customers to produce shoes but because he lacked the requisite skills, he has lost some of his loyal customers.

In a bid to learn how to produce shoes, Kaku was willing to pay whatever it takes to learn so as to satisfy the demands of his customers and also improve his business prospects. When he heard about the training for PWDs in leather work as part of the GEOP project, Kaku registered his interest and participated in the needs assessment conducted by the project team.

Together with other interested PWDs in the leather work business, they opted to learn how to produce shoes.

Life after the training

Kaku said:

‘The training on how to produce shoes and boots was very participatory and I have improved my skills a lot. I can now produce different types of shoes and boots to meet the needs of my cherished customers.’

Prior to the training, Kaku was earning an average monthly income of GHS 200 from his business. He now makes an average monthly income of GHS 300 as a result of adding shoe production to his business.

He has so far produced and sold 30 shoes after the training and importantly, he is meeting the demands of his customers.

Future aspiration for business

Kaku dreams of expanding his business to employ other PWDs within the district. In line with this vision, he has opened a business account at the Lower Pra Rural Bank where he saves. He is open to using his savings to get a loan from the bank to expand his business operations not only in Nkroful but to other neighbouring districts.

Improved livelihood options

In his words:

‘My income has improved and I am able to take very good care of my family. I have enrolled my children in good schools and I am grateful to the EU and Christian Aid for improving my livelihood.’

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Improving income through soap production

GEOP case studies



A picture of Mary Cudjoe (a beneficiary of the training in soap making for people with disabilities, as part of the GEOP project) mixing raw materials for the preparation of liquid soap and shampoo

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Brief Background

Ms Mary Cudjoe, a 30-year-old single mother with two children, lives in the Azulenloanu community in the Ellembele District of the Western region of Ghana. Her son is 10 years old and her daughter is three years old.

Mary was born with a severe disability and life has been extremely difficult for her because she is unable to work and look after her family. Her parents shoulder the responsibility of the family and support her financially to care for her children.

Participating in soap-making training

As part of the implementation of GEOP, project partners met with Mary and other people with disabilities (PWDs) who belong to the

Ellembele PWD association, to conduct a needs assessment in order to ascertain their preferred vocational skills trade. Mary, unemployed without any skills at the time, was trained on how to produce liquid soap, bleach, conditioner, shampoo, and hair food.

Working with the skills acquired from the training

With the help of her parents, Mary has set up her own business after the training and she is producing liquid soap and hair food on a small scale. She informed the project team that:

'I have so far produced 100 bottles of liquid soap and 35 pieces of hair food for sale at the Azulenloanu and Esiam markets.'

She added that the business is doing

well and she makes between GHS 30-40 profit from each production. She is also diversifying her income by investing the profit from the soap making business to raise a structure for the production of medicinal mushroom.

The structure is at the roofing stage and she is engaging with the Department of Social Welfare of the Ellembelle District Assembly to get the mushroom fruiting bags to start production.

A bright future

Mary dreams of expanding her business and operating a big shop to sell her products someday. She also dreams of growing her business to have agents, especially PWDs, in Ellembelle and neighbouring districts to sell her products. Mary said:

'The training has been very helpful as I have a source of livelihood now and I can support my parents to cater for my children. I am grateful to the GEOP project for the opportunity and I want to also train other interested PWDs in soap making in order to help them improve their living condition.'

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From a single source of income to multi-earner

GEOP case studies



A picture of Cosmos Kaku in his shop producing different types of shoes with skills acquired from the leather work training for people with disabilities, part of the GEOP project.

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Brief background

Mr. Cosmos Kaku is a 42-year-old married man, living with his wife and four sons in the Ayinase community, a suburb of the Ellembele district in the Western region of Ghana. Cosmos was physically challenged from birth and his wife also became disabled later in her life through illness. He used to make a living principally from working as a cobbler in the Ayinase community.

Previous experience

For more than 14 years Cosmos worked as a 'shoe-maker' who could only mend shoes. He had a wide customer base because of his expertise and the quality of his services, but despite his popularity he could not produce new shoes, even though these were in high demand in the district. He used to earn GHS

100 monthly as a shoe-maker.

Participating in shoe-making training

Cosmos participated in the needs assessment conducted as part of the GEOP project for people with disabilities (PWDs) and was selected to be trained on shoe production after meeting the selection criteria.

'The training was very useful and I have produced and sold 20 pairs of shoes on my own. I now earn GHS 200 monthly because I now have additional skills to produce shoes as opposed to only mending.'

Vision for business

To expand his business operation, Cosmos saves daily with a microfinance institution and invests the money into his business quarterly. He was saving GHS 10

daily prior to participating in the training but has recently improved his savings to GHS 15 daily.

He is also diversifying his income by investing it into running a mill he owns, and the business fetches him approximately GHS 120 monthly. As a result of the increase in his income, Cosmos supports his wife financially to run a grocery shop at the Ayinase market.

Cosmos currently has two apprentices (with one being a PWD) and he is mentoring them to produce shoes, slippers and sandals. To boost the visibility of his business and to increase sales, he usually pays a fee for advertisement of his products to the public at Ankobra and West End radio stations.

Impact of the project

Cosmos noted that:

‘The GEOP project has been a key turning point in my life and I am very grateful for the work EU, Christian Aid and its partners are doing to improve the livelihood of PWDs in the Ellembele District.’

He added that the increase in his income means he can now better cater for his family and enrol his children in good schools.

Find out more about the GEOP project at caid.org.uk/GEOP