



Building Resilient, Inclusive and Climate-Responsive Local Governance in Ghana

NALAG Polycrises Project: Empowering Women and Youth in Local Governance and Climate Resilience through Economic Development and Capacity Building in Ghana

Context

Local government in Ghana is currently navigating a complex polycrisis of challenges where climate change, economic instability and social inequalities intersect.

The informal sector in Ghana, which provides livelihoods for the majority of the population, is heavily dominated by women and young people. It contributes to over **80%** of national employment but remains marginalised and under-supported. Many home-based and micro-enterprises lack access to essential resources such as skills training, market opportunities and financial services. Also, development planning at the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assembly (MMDA) level is often siloed, treating gender equality and social inclusion (GESI), economic empowerment and climate adaptation as separate priorities.

This fragmentation limits the ability of local governments to effectively respond to the complex, overlapping needs of communities - particularly of women and youth, whose growth potential remains constrained. For instance, following the 2023 elections, only **4.1%** of elected assembly members were women - despite the national law requiring at least **30%** of their representation in leadership positions, and youth voices remain frequently overlooked in local governance.

These institutional and systemic challenges are further intensified within a broader polycrises context, where climate change, economic instability, governance deficits and social inequalities intersect.

Contracting authority: The European Union

Lead executing agency: Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)

Implementing partners: National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG)

Regions: Ghana, focused on Central and Eastern Regions

Budget: €80,000

Duration: 12 months

Within Ghana, the adverse impacts of climate change are increasingly concentrated at the local level, further compounding existing development challenges. The combined effect diminishes the capacity of MMDAs to deliver equitable public services, foster resilient local economies and support communities to adapt to multiple shocks.

Despite existing national frameworks and policy commitments on decentralisation, gender equality, local economic development and climate action, a significant implementation gap persists at the local level. There is a critical need for a structured and scalable intervention that integrates GESI, Local Economic Development (LED) and climate resilience into a unified and coherent framework, enabling MMDAs to move towards more inclusive, adaptive and sustainable development pathways.

Objectives

The project, “NALAG Polycrises project: Empowering Women and Youth in Local Governance and Climate Resilience through Economic Development and Capacity Building in Ghana,” addresses these intersecting gaps by strengthening MMDAs capacity, enhancing inclusive participation, and promoting climate-resilient economic opportunities. It will contribute to building responsive, inclusive and economically resilient local governance systems equipped to navigate the complexities of the polycrisis era while delivering sustainable development outcomes for all. The project has four specific objective:

- Support **02** MMDAs to design and implement inclusive, climate-conscious and local economic development pilot projects;
- Increase participation of women and youth in local decision-making processes and leadership roles within the pilot MMDAs and selected regions of NALAG Membership.
- Strengthen local economic systems through the integration and growth of informal and home-based enterprises within the pilot MMDAs and selected regions of NALAG Membership.
- Draw out and disseminate key models and lessons of the project for national-level scale-up and policy integration.

Strategic approach and expected results

1 Support to Pilot MMDAs

Providing technical and financial assistance to two pilot MMDAs: Awutu Senya East Municipal Assembly (Central region) and New Juabeng North Municipal Assembly (Eastern region), to design and implement localised polycrisis projects relating to LED, women and youth inclusion, climate-conscious governance. These initiatives will integrate waste management, recycling, sustainable environmental practices.

Expected results: **02** MMDA pilot projects on polycrises designed and implemented; **02** case studies developed documenting the projects’ best practices; **01** policy brief on local government addressing polycrisis to inform local and national policy.

2 Leadership and advocacy training

Delivering a structured Leadership and Advocacy Training Module covering inclusive governance, GESI, LED, climate resilience, policy advocacy. The training targets young women leaders, youth representatives and community advocates within the pilot MMDAs (accounting for at least **25%** participation) and across NALAG’s membership within selected regions.

Expected results: **150** women and youth trained in leadership and advocacy; Mentoring sessions provided for **90** female tertiary students; Established mentorship and peer learning platforms.

3 Enterprise development

Strengthening women- and youth-led enterprises to improve productivity, resilience and access to sustainable economic opportunities. This includes practical skills training in product quality improvement, packaging and branding, marketing and financial literacy, complemented by fundamental business development support such as record-keeping, pricing, customer management for more efficient and competitive operations.

Expected results: **150** enterprises equipped with foundational business and production skills.

4 National Conference

Convening a culminating national conference on multilevel governance, sustainable urbanisation, local economic development, and climate smart initiatives, bringing together policymakers, MMDAs, CSOs and private sector actors.

Expected results: **01** national conference held on these cross-cutting issues.

Project sustainability

For long-term impact, the pilot MMDAs are expected to sustain project activities beyond the funding period. Furthermore, key results and best practices will be documented and shared with non-participating assemblies to promote wider learning and replication.

Contracting authority
The European Union

Lead executing agency
Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)

Key implementing partners
National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG)

Photo credit: Photo 1: © Zeal Creative Studios 2026

Contact point

- CLGF Office: Joyce Ekuful, CLGF West and Central Africa Programme Manager joyce.ekuful@clgf.org.uk
- NALAG office: Mr Sheriff Armah, General Secretary asheriham@gmail.com