POLICY BRIEF
DECENTRALIZATION AND GENDER and SOCIAL INCLUSION IN GHANA

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AfDB	African Development Bank
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
CDD	Centre for Democratic Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DAs	District Assemblies
DACF	District Assemblies Common Fund
D&G	Democracy and Governance
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FOAT	Functional and Organizational Assessment Tool
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GoG	Government of Ghana
GPs	Grant Partners
GRSCDP	Gender Responsive Skills and Community Development Project
GSGDA	Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda
ILGS	Institute of Local Government Studies
IMCC	Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee
LED	Local Economic Development
LGS	Local Government Secretariat
LI	Legislative Instrument
LOGODEP	Local Government &Decentralization Programme
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
NDAP	National Decentralization Action Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PDA	Persons with Disability Ac
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

STAR-Ghana is a multi-donor fund programme which addresses the need to increase civil society and parliamentary influence in Ghana to foster better governance of public goods and services. In doing so, it aims to develop efficient and transparent mechanisms which can link civil society with and to the actions of government, traditional authorities, and private enterprise.

The overall goal of the programme is "to increase the accountability and responsiveness of government, traditional authorities and private enterprises to Ghanaian citizens". Its purpose is "to increase the influence of civil society organizations (CSOs) and Parliament in the governance of public goods and service delivery".

Following a political economy analysis of Ghana's Governance sectors, STAR-Ghana put out thematic call for Democracy and Governance (D&G), inviting proposals from civil society organisations (CSOs). The objective of the call was to support GPs activities to deepen decentralization/strengthen local level demand for M/M/DA accountability and responsiveness and in the implementation of existing local government programs), gender, youth and social inclusion as well as citizen's engagement in government accountability.   Approved projects are expected to contribute to STAR-Ghana's purpose and goals as stated above.

This Policy Brief Decentralization commissioned by STAR-Ghana and per the terms of reference (Annex 1) is to enable the Grant Partners (GPs) have a better understanding of the legislative and policy context of the sector in which they are working, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the objectives of their projects.
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It will seek to outline the various (constitutional and , legislative frameworks, policies, institutional arrangements and programmes which are underpinning decentralization reforms and provide a guide to support alignment of GPs identified projectse brief will also highlight gender and social inclusion issues which impede or enhance participation, focusing particularly on women, children, and vulnerable groups. This will strengthen GPs programming and engagement through targeted advocacy. The document provides a brief on key legal instruments and policies as well as outlines some critical issues which have implications for programmes, targeting and advocacy.

1.2   Methodology

A two pronged approach was used for this brief - A critical review of the constitutional and legislative instruments and interviews were undertaken. The desk review provided a global picture of the instruments that back the decentralization process. National and institutional policies that seek to promote and enhance decentralization were also reviewed. Documents reviewed included the 1992 constitution, various Acts, the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA). Institutional

policies and plans reviewed included theDecentralization Policy Framework, the National Decentralization Action Plan and STAR Ghana documents among others. There is also a brief description of some policy interventions and initiatives that been pursued so far.

1.3   Decentralization

Since gaining independence in 1957, successive governments in Ghana have looked to a vibrant local government system to aid the country's development. Attempts at decentralization were introduced, for instance, in 1983 under Rawlings' military rule. Ghana's current programme of decentralization was initiated in 1988. The process of decentralization continued and was endorsed by Ghana's first multiparty government that came into power in 1992. Until 2010, there existed no coherent policy document defining the decentralization processes and local governance in Ghana. The country operated within the overall guiding programming document, the National Decentralization Action Plan (NDAP), which was endorsed by the Cabinet in 2004.

To further real progress of the decentralization reform, a decentralization policy framework was developed in 2010. In 2012, the government further reviewed and created new assemblies bringing their number to 216 assemblies from an original 110 in the late 1980s. In 2006, 28 more districts were created bringing the number to 138 and then to 170 in 2008 with the recent increase to 216. Following these reforms, it is imperative that all stakeholders participate in ensuring Ghana's decentralization process is made more effective.

CHAPTER TWO: LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DECENTRALIZATION

Ghana's local government is provided by the Directive Principles of State Policy Chapter Six- Article 35 Clause 6d which says, "make democracy a reality by decentralizing the administrative and financial machinery of government to the regions and districts and by affording all possible opportunities to the people to participate in decision-making at every level in national life and in government". This is reinforced by Chapter 20 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1992, which provides that "Ghana shall have a system of local government and administration which shall, as far as practicable, be decentralized" (GoG, 1992). As such the Constitution prescribes several legislative frameworks authorising DAs with the oversight responsibility of nurturing and deepening local governance have been developed to enhance the decentralization provisions with the aim of facilitating popular participation in governance.

It is important to be familiar with the national legal instruments and frameworks that support the promotion of Ghana's decentralisation and local governance programme and the importance of addressing critical issues in the sector's programming. These legal frameworks (discussed below) are very informative in ensuring that decentralisation issues are mainstreamed into national development.

2.1 National Legislations and Instruments
- <u>The Local Government Act 1993 (Act 462)</u>

This Act establishes and regulates the local government system in accordance with the constitution and provides for other connected purposes. It provides for the participation of citizens in the administration of their localities by bringing governance to the doorstep of citizens. This is particularly important as government continuously makes efforts to promote participatory democracy as a means to create opportunities for all citizens to make meaningful contributions to decision-making, and to broaden the range of people who have access to such opportunities. More importantly, by establishing and outlining the responsibilities of local government structures, it inevitably provides the needed platforms for communities, CSOs and other stakeholders to collaborate in strengthening Ghana's decentralisation process.

- <u>Local Government Service Act, 2003 (Act 656)</u>

This act was passed in 2003 to establish a local government service and to provide for the objects, functions, administration and management of the Service and for connected purposes. The act seeks to ensure that as far as practicable, persons in the service of local government shall be subject to the effective control of local authorities. This is part of efforts to discourage centralisation and to promote accountability and transparency the governance process, a major pillar of Ghana's decentralisation program. It also provides a window of opportunity for CSOs such as Star-Ghana and its GPs to bring participation in decision making and development closer to communities through specific support for communities.

- Financial Administration Act, 2003 (Act 654)

The financial administration act regulates the financial management of the public sector; prescribes the responsibilities of persons entrusted with financial management in the government; ensures the effective and efficient management of state revenue, expenditure, assets, liabilities, resources of the government, the consolidated Fund and other public funds and to provide for matters related to these. This act ostensibly delivers a framework for ensuring accountability and transparency in the management and utilisation of public resources. Programs and projects pursued by organisations especially CSOs such as Star-Ghana and its GPs inevitably contribute to achieving the Ghana's fiscal decentralisation policy objective and in strengthening transparency and accountability in the management and utilisation of public resources.

- Internal Audit Agency Act, 2003 (Act 658)

The Internal Audit Act was promulgated in 2003 to establish an Internal Audit Agency as a central agency to coordinate, facilitate, monitor and supervise internal audit activities within Ministries, Departments and Agencies and MMDAs. It seeks to secure quality assurance of internal audit within these institutions of State, and to resolve the challenges associated with the Financial Administration Decree, 1979 such as the limited scope of the audit function and the unsatisfactory reporting relationships. It also serves as a response to Government's need for a structure that would support the eventual transfer of budgetary authority and expenditure control to the MDAs and MMDAs. It is envisaged that the efforts of this agency will be complemented by the activities of Star-Ghana and other CSOs to ensure efficiency, accountability and transparency in the management of resources in the public sector.

- Public Procurement Act, 2003 (Act 663)

The legal framework for public procurement in the country is provided for by Act 663 of 2003 as required by the 1992 constitution. The Act establishes the Public Procurement Board; makes administrative and institutional arrangements for procurement; stipulates tendering procedures and provides for purposes connected with these. By these provisions, it seeks to act as an antidote to corruption at all levels of governance. This mission puts the efforts of anti-corruption CSOs such as Ghana Integrity Initiative and other stakeholders seeking to promote transparency in the procurement of goods, works and services in public Institutions in the confines of a legal framework.

- National Development Planning (System) Act, 1994 (Act 480)

This act reiterates the importance of planning for development and emphasises the need for citizen participation in decisions that affect them. Act 80 was passed in 1994 to provide for a National Development Planning System, define and regulate planning procedure and provide for related matters. The act provides a legal framework for the formulation of development policies, programmes and projects. Most importantly, it provides a legal framework for the implementation of decentralized planning in Ghana. This act is an attempt to mine equitable development out of an effective local administrative system. The need to address the imbalances in development and stimulate equitable development through decentralised planning is provided for by this

act and thus provides a window of opportunity for CSOs and other stakeholders operating in this sector to contribute in achieving these aims.

- <u>Institute of Local Government Studies Act, 2003 (Act 647)</u>

An Act that establishes the Institute of local government studies, defines and regulates it as a body to organize the training of members of the Regional Co-ordinating Councils, District Assemblies and lower local government units; staff and personnel in the local government and related sectors; and any other person or body, local or foreign interested in governance, to enhance the managerial, administrative, financial and operational efficiency of organs and units of local government. This act together with support programs by CSOs seeking to develop the capacity of DAs is clear and important responses to strengthen the county's administrative decentralisation.

- <u>District Assemblies Common Fund Act, 1993 (Act 455)</u>

This act establishes the DACF as a Development Fund created under section 252 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana to be allocated annually by parliament. Not less than 7.5% of the total revenues of Ghana and is payable in quarterly instalments to the District Assemblies for development. The disbursement of the fund is based on a formula approved by Parliament annually. Formula factors usually include needs, equalisation, responsiveness and service pressure in the districts, though the weight of each factor may vary yearly. It is important to note however, that 10% of the fund is held centrally as a reserve fund while 90% is shared out (Appiah-Agyekum, Danquah and Sakyi, 2013). Moreover, not only are these disbursements delayed, central government directives determine 75% of expenditure while only 25% of disbursements are fully discretionary to DAs (Crawford, 2004). This limits the financial capacity of DAs necessitating them to secure funding from other sources.

- Local Government Department of District Assemblies (Commencement) <u>Instrument of 2009 (L.I. 1961)</u>

This legislative instrument was passed in 2009 to operationalise the decentralised departments at the district level as the departments of the District Assemblies who would be subject to the control of the local authorities. Under section 161 (1) of the Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462, 22 decentralised departments at the district level are to cease to exist in their present form and then reconstituted through a series of merges into 16 Departments in the Metropolitan Assemblies, 13 in the Municipal and 11 in the District Assemblies under section 38 of the Act. The integration envisages a composite budget system in which the DAs would embrace all the new departments, emphasising a devolved level of governance. The operationalization of this instrument identifies the various departments and their functions enabling CSOs cooperate with appropriate departments and stakeholders in discharging functions at the community levels thus contributing to the effective implementation of Ghana's decentralisation reforms.

- The Local Government (Urban, Zonal and Town Councils and Unit Committees) Establishment Instrument of 2010, LI (1967)

In 2010, parliament passed Legislative Instrument (LI) 1967 to replace LI 1589 of 1994. The enactment of LI 1589 created the sub-district structures, setting the tone for the implementation of decentralisation at the sub-district level and providing an avenue for the local community and the District Assembly to meet and discuss issues. The new L.I 1967 which replaces the old one, L.I 1589, is expected to ensure that the sub-district structures, especially the unit committees, function effectively in accordance with their statutory functions.

The new LI 1967 has reduced the membership of Unit Committees from fifteen (15) to five (5) members all elected and provides that a unit committee shall be equivalent to an electoral area in the country. This implies that the designated electoral areas are the basic unit for the Unit Committees. Although this is expected to make the district level elections more competitive, cost effective, manageable and efficient all in the name of deepening grass root democracy and good governance, these changes bring a heavy burden on the Unit Committees whose membership has been reduced and the area size increased to electoral areas

- Model Standing Orders for District, Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies

These are guidelines for the conduct of the business in the house - Assembly or Urban or Zonal or Town or Area or Unit Committees. These guidelines provide a framework to regulate the behaviour, procedures and final actions in the conduct of Assembly business, as provided in section 18.6 of the constitution. Assembly Decision-making and consultation are important activities by which the assembly fulfils its purpose of democratic decision-making, promoting the general well-being of communities and exercising its deliberative functions. These guidelines thus provide for effective participatory consultations, deliberations and decision making that affect citizens. The act ostensibly provides opportunities by which CSOs and communities can engage their representatives to consider issues pertinent to them during assembly decision-making. This is particularly relevant to Star-Ghana with their GPs seek not only to use appropriate legal and policy instruments to undertake advocacy on community rights but have them considered during decision making at both local and national level.

There also exist some sectoral laws that have implications for decentralized service delivery. These include:

- Education Act, 2008 (Act 778)

In 2008, a new Education act 778 was established with a three major structure, namely the National Inspectorate Board, National Teaching Council and National Council on Curriculum Development and Assessment. This Act seeks to decentralize education to inject greater efficiency and effectiveness in educational delivery at all levels. Although there have been propositions to amend this act to remove inconsistencies with the existing Ghana Education Service act of 506, the new act is relevant to thematic activities in Education, especially for CSOs such as Star-Ghana by giving meaning to their operations while providing the legal framework within which projects seeking to enhance education delivery should operate.

▪ Health Service Act (Act 525)

Act 525 establishes the Ghana Health Service (GHS) as an autonomous entity to manage most of the country's facility network, and define the facilities and staff previously under the authority of the Ministry of Health to be transferred to the GHS. However, the current reality of the health sector is that a limited number of functions and responsibilities have effectively been transferred to the DAs, but the major part of the structures, staff and functions remain within the structure of the GHS. Moreover, the existing legal and regulatory framework regarding health sector decentralisation is characterised by several contradictions between a delegated and deconcentrated GHS structure and a devolved health department. Nonetheless, relevance of STAR Ghana health sector supported projects with their Grant Partners can be strategically viewed in the framework of this act. The act delivers a framework for operations aimed at improving quality health services to all Ghanaians especially the poor through greater accountability and responsiveness in the delivery of health services. Projects undertaken by GPs such as ABANTU for development and Center for Health and social services directly complement government's efforts towards ensuring quality health services delivery for all.

Collectively, these acts emphasise the legislative and institutional framework for government agencies to provide needed basic services on the basis of basic human rights through decentralised governance while providing an agenda for CSOs and private sector to contribute to achieving these goals.

2.2 The National Decentralization Framework

Following a review of Ghana's decentralization process, after almost two decades of implementation, series of important steps to reinvigorate its planned decentralization of functions to local governments were undertaken. A new Decentralization Policy

Framework was finalized in 2010, clearly recognizing the need to accelerate the decentralization process by directly addressing bottlenecks and gaps, and to do so in a coordinated and holistic manner rather than the incremental changes attempted in the past.

The policy framework has undertaken series steps to re-organise the local government system through a series of incremental changes. These include the reconceptualization of the term 'decentralisation'. Following a revelation that the 1992 constitution defines decentralisation to mean different things at different levels of governance (Ahwoi, 2010), the policy framework redefined what is meant by decentralisation at each level of governance as follows. At the national level, decentralisation conveys a sense of ministerial restructuring and restriction of functions to policy making, planning evaluation and monitoring. At the regional level, decentralisation is conceived as de-concentration, where the departments operate as extensions of national level MDAs and coordinate and harmonize the plans and programmes of the assemblies. The district level of governance is one of devolution where assemblies are empowered as legislative, administrative, development planning, budgeting, rating and service delivery authorities. They should have clearly

defined functions, own their budgets, have structures to promote and enhance probity, accountability and transparency, manage their resources and adequate capacities to deliver on their mandates. Decentralization at the level of the sub-district structures is delegation, they would take decisions based on the functions and powers conferred on them by law and delegated to them by the assemblies but would not take responsibility for those decisions.

Additionally, the policy framework also set forth a goal "to accelerate the decentralization effort towards the ends envisaged in the Fourth Republican Constitution and to give the process the clarity and consistency and certainty required to promote local level governance and development" (MLGRD, 2010). The following nine (9) policy objectives have been formulated to guide the policy implementation;

i.   To clarify the status, roles and relationships between levels of government and the different actors and strengthen their participation and contribution to local governance

ii. To improve the administrative and human resource capacity of the MMDAs and other local government stakeholders to ensure quality service delivery

iii. To strengthen the capacity for, coordination and implementation of spatial, physical and development planning at the local level and its integration with budgeting and the national agenda, generally

iv. To facilitate economic growth, employment and income generation in order to promote household welfare and alleviate poverty

v.   To improve funding and financial management of MMDAs

vi. To promote local democracy, participation and accountability through strong and more viable stakeholder involvement in local governance

vii. To promote a rights-based orientation to local level development, ensuring equitable access to public resources and inclusiveness in decision-making

viii. To clarify and strengthen the roles and relationships between key non-state actors such as the traditional authorities and civil society groups in local governance

ix. To streamline, harmonize and coordinate development partner interventions to ensure optimal use of donor resources for local level development

The accompanying National Decentralization Action Plan (NDAP 2010-2014) that was developed lays out ten (10) priority areas for action under the nine thematic areas of the decentralisation policy framework. These are summarised below.

2.2.1 The National Decentralisation Action Plan

▪ <u>Political Decentralization and legal Reforms</u>

The aim of this priority area is to clarify the status, roles and relationships between levels of government and the different actors, and strengthen their participation and contribution to local governance.

▪ <u>Administrative Decentralization</u>

The objective of this priority area is to improve the administrative and human resource capacity of the MMDAs and other local government stakeholders to ensure quality service delivery.

- **Decentralized development planning and budgeting**

This priority area seeks to strengthen the capacity for development planning and budgeting at the local level their integration with the national agenda and citizen participation in both processes.

- **Spatial Planning**

This object aims at strengthening the capacity for spatial planning with the view to integrating it in the district development planning process.

- **Local Economic Development Policy**

This priority area aims to facilitate economic growth, employment and income generation in order to promote household welfare and alleviate poverty.

- **Fiscal Decentralization**

The aim of this priority area is to improve funding and financial management of MMDAs. This looks at district composite budgeting and improving revenue generation for the districts.

- **Popular Participation and Accountability**

This objective seeks to promote local democracy, participation and accountability through strong and viable stakeholder involvement in local governance.

- **Social Agenda**

The objective is to promote a rights-based orientation to local level development ensuring equitable access to public resources and inclusiveness in decision making. This priority area focuses on gender issues, children, the aged, the disabled and other vulnerable groups.

- **Involvement of Non State Actors in Local Governance**

The objective is to clarify and strengthen the roles and relationships between key non-state actors such as the traditional authorities and civil society groups in local governance.

- **Institutional Framework for Policy Co-ordination**

This objective seeks to facilitate effective policy coordination and collaboration for smooth devolution of political, administrative and financial authority from the centre to the assemblies. Accordingly, an Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee (IMCC) on Decentralization was established in 2010 to facilitate policy coordination and collaboration for smooth devolution of political, administrative and financial authority from the centre to the assemblies.

2.2.2 Arrangements for Policy Coordination and Implementation

There have been significant activities resulting from the decentralisation review process to support policy coordination and the implementation of Ghana's decentralisation. These include the initiation of constitutional and legislative reviews

and assessment of the decentralization process leading to the following legislative, institutional and policy instruments.

- <u>Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee</u>

As indicated earlier, IMCC was established in 2010 to ensure an effective ministerial realignment which is an institutional measure that properly puts all the decentralised ministries and institutions in effective operational perspective in the implementation of Ghana's decentralisation. The IMCC's work would identify problems and challenges regarding decentralisation in Ghana and assist institutions to address them.

- <u>The Local Government Service</u>

Following the introduction of LI 1961, staff of the existing decentralised civil service departments have been transferred to the local government service and their service continued by the Act. This has contributed towards providing technical assistance to MMDAs and RCCs, enabling them to be more effective in performing their functions. Although LI 1961 has been identified as a live-wire to the successful implementation of the decentralization concept in Ghana, there still exist several policy-related issues to be addressed. Notable among them include poor capacity and technical expertise of the Local Government Service Secretariat to deliver on Human Resource Management and Development as it affects the operations of MMDAs. Moreover, the implementation of FOAT has exposed weaknesses in MMDA's organizational and managerial capabilities to respond to functional and sectoral responsibilities. There also exist weaknesses in the public Service to manage the change process especially during transition periods suggesting the need to clarify as well as sensitize MDAs on their roles vis a vis the MMDAs.

- <u>The District Development Facility</u>

To support the financial capacity of MMDAs while ensuring their efficiency, a performance-based grant has been established to improve performance of MMDAs in terms of efficiency, transparency and accountability. The District Development Facility (DDF) is a special fund set up to incentivise District Assemblies in Ghana to effectively carry out their constitutional mandate. The goal is to ensure MMDAs provide efficient basic community infrastructure and service delivery through judicious use of resources. It is made up of financial contributions from GoG and four of her development partners, namely, Agence Francaise de Development, Canadian International Development Agency, Danish International Development Agency, and Kreditanstalt fur Wiederaufbau (Local Government Service, 2014). As a performance grant, District Assemblies can only access the DDF after their performance have been evaluated using the Functional and Organisational Assessment Tool (FOAT). Given its intended purpose to strengthen the financial capacity of MMDAs through external transfers, it is only appropriate to applaud the initiative. However, it is equally important to caution that a continuous transfer of funds from external sources not only has the tendency to be poorly managed but could also serve as a disincentive to effective local revenue mobilisation by the District Assemblies.

- Local Economic Development Policy

Until now, DAs have focused on their administrative and legislative functions, to the detriment of their local economic development (LED) functions (MLGRD, 2013) thereby hindering their effort to improve quality of life and to offer greater opportunities for economic empowerment of their residents. Consequently, a Local Economic Development Policy framework has been prepared as an alternative development strategy, to fully harness the economic potentials of the districts, for job creation and faster poverty reduction. The policy seeks to achieve the following objectives

- Improve the coordination of economic development planning and implementation between government and donors and government and businesses and citizens at the local level;
- Enable local governments to support local economies to realize their potential and make local communities active participants in the economy of the country;
- Empower local governments to facilitate functioning partnerships between the public and private sectors in order to unlock the local economy and drive new growth;
- Provide a financing framework to coordinate funding flows in support of the strategy;
- Promote broad based local participation in the economy

This policy provides a window of opportunity for civil society and partners to support in strengthening local economic competitiveness and competition by helping to develop enterprises and promoting shared ownership. Moreover, civil society is expected to be active in the local development process. This invariably implies that civil society must be active in promoting social accountability as LED initiatives in the past have lacked transparency, accountability and participation.

- Public Private Partnership Policy

The policy provides a new direction for harnessing the strengths of both public and private sectors for specific projects and their inefficiencies, surgically removed to ensure the effective provision of public infrastructure and services traditionally provided by the public sector. It envisages the privatization of certain functions of the DAs or for those functions to be performed jointly by the DAs and the private sector. These include waste management, revenue mobilisation, and market management among others. In this light, the PPP policy essentially creates a platform for CSOs and development partners to work collaboratively with DAs in resp0nding to the needs of citizens, ultimately leading to socio-economic development, poverty alleviation and bridging the inequality gap. Given that the policy is relatively new, there is huge optimism that this would facilitate government's efforts in meeting the infrastructure and public service deficit in the country.

- Ghana National Urban Policy

Urban development is now high on the state's agenda leading to the development a national urban policy in 20112. The policy recognizes the centrality of effective MMDAs for city management in positioning cities as future engines of growth and poverty reduction. The goal of the policy is to contribute to arresting rising inequalities

in socio-economic and spatial terms and advance towards sustainable development. The policy thus calls for initiatives to strengthen urban governance for instance by resourcing the decentralized structures and sub-structures to make them effective in local governance in line with the policy recommendations contained in the new Decentralization Policy Framework and its Action Plan. It is thus imperative CSOs and other partners support in building the capacities of MMDAs to perform urban management functions under the decentralization policy as outlined in the provisions of the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462) and the National Development Planning (Systems) Act, 1994 (Act 480).

Collectively, these arrangements have established a renewed commitment to far-reaching decentralization as an instrument to improve the accountability and effectiveness of basic service delivery. Most importantly, it is clear that the focus of the decentralisation policy and related policy instruments has implications and is closely linked to the operations of Star-Ghana and the activities of its Grant Partners.

2.3 Organizational Structure of the New Local Government System

A new local government system has been structured, made up of a regional coordinating council (RCC) and a four-tier metropolitan and three-tier municipal/DAs structure.

2.3.1 Regional Coordinating Council

Currently, Ghana is made up of 10 political administrative regions managed by Regional Coordinating Councils (RCC). RCCs are conceived as deconcentrated agencies of the Central Government. In other words, the RCCs are viewed as not being part of the devolved local government systems. In their present state of existence, the RCCs have functioned as administrative and coordinating rather than as political and policy making bodies. The legal provisions charge the RCCs with the role to coordinate policy implementation amongst the district assemblies.

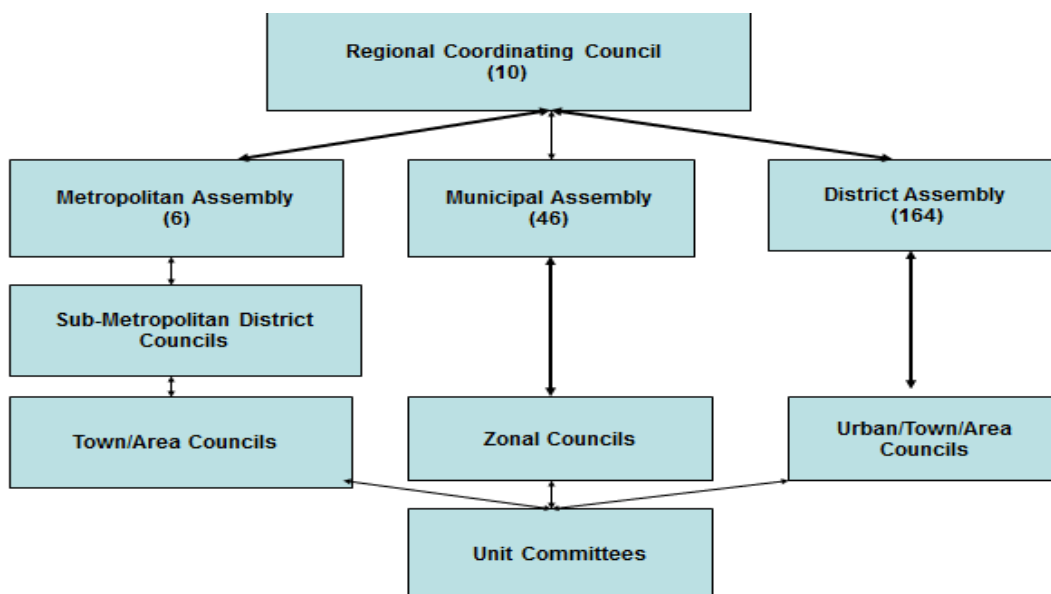### 2.3.2 The District Assembly

Ghana's decentralisation defines district level of governance as the devolution level, where decentralization in the true sense of the concept is played out. As such Article 241 (3) of the Constitution provides that the "District Assembly shall be the highest political authority in the district, and shall have deliberative, legislative and executive powers". The local authorities consist of four-tier metropolitan and three three-tier municipal/district assembly structures (see figure 1). The 216 assemblies comprise 6 metropolitan, 46 municipal and 164 district assemblies. According to article 242 of the Constitution, District Assemblies shall consist of District Chief Executives, 70% of members directly elected by universal adult suffrage, the MPs representing constituencies within the districts, and one-third of members appointed by the President in consultation with traditional authorities and economic and social interest groups. Elections to all local government bodies are on a non-partisan basis through universal adult suffrage; the elections are state-sponsored and conducted by the Electoral Commission.

2.3.3 Sub-District Structures

These being subordinate bodies of the DAs, vested with decentralisation powers in the nature of delegation. This gives them mandate to take decisions on their own based on the functions assigned to and the powers conferred on them by law or delegated to them by the DAs, although the sub-district structures do not take responsibility for those decisions. Essentially, the town/area/zonal councils are implementing agencies of the District Assemblies. They are constituted by the sub-

metropolitan Councils, urban/town/zonal/area councils, and unit committees. The internal political structures of all three – the District Assemblies, Metropolitan Assemblies and the Municipal Assemblies – are the same.

Figure 1: Structure of the new Local Government System

Source: IMCC, 2012

2.3.4 Committees of the District Assembly

In the performance of its functions, the DA works through the executive committee and its subsidiary committees of development planning, social services, works, finance and administration, and justice and security (see fig. 3). The executive committee is responsible for the performance of the executive and administrative functions of the District Assembly. The members of the executive committee are elected by the members of the District Assembly from amongst themselves, chaired by the chief executive.

There also exist the public relations and complaints committee to receive, investigate and makes recommendations to the district Assembly on public complaints about the conduct of staff members and local authorities in the District Assembly. Thus it serves as an oversight committee. It is chaired by the Presiding member of the Assembly.

Figure 2.2: Structure of the Assembly
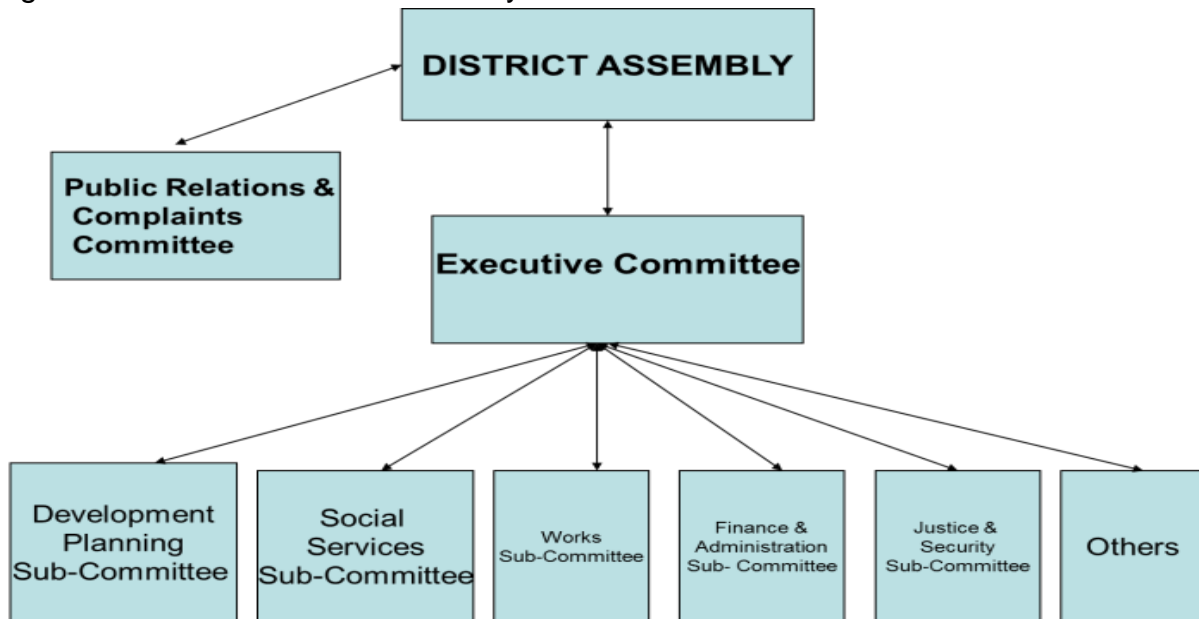
2.3.5 Coordinating Directorate and Departments of the Assembly

The Coordinating Directorate of the District Assembly is the highest administrative unit in the District Assembly, responsible for assisting the District Assembly in the performance of its duties. This includes Implementation of policies and decisions of the District Assembly. The Directorate is responsible for the career progression and discipline of officers in the Office of the District Assembly.

2.3.6 Finance and Revenue

The Constitution provides that each District Assembly shall have a sound financial base with adequate and reliable sources of revenue. District authorities have three main sources of revenue: Transfers, including DACF, grants-in-aid, funds from development partners; Ceded revenue, i.e revenue received from a number of lesser tax fields that the central government has ceded to the District Assemblies; and locally raised revenue raised through local taxation, investments and incomes from commercial activities, and loans (if approved by the Minister of Finance)

However, most of the revenues of the District Assemblies consist of transfers. The high dependency on transfers from the central government and donors indicates that the DAs have limited authority to set local expenditure priorities, as expenditure regarding most transfers are determined by granters. Similarly, the autonomy of the DAs is limited by the fact that they have to submit their annual budgets to the Ministry of Finance for approval. As mentioned earlier, to ensure financial accountability, the Auditor General audits the district assembly accounts annually and reports to parliament.

2.4 Challenges of the current Local Government System

Chapter 20 of the constitution identified some imperatives for achieving the envisaged decentralized local government (MLGRD, 2010; p. 7), namely;

- The transfer of functions, powers, responsibilities and resources from the centre to local government;

- Measures to build the capacity of local authorities to plan, initiate, coordinate, manage and execute policies;
- Establish a sound financial base with adequate and reliable sources of revenue;
- Vest control of persons in the service of local governments in local authorities, as far as possible; and
- Create opportunities for people to participate effectively in governance to ensure the accountability of local authorities.

However, recent studies by the Institute of Local Government studies on the state of local Governance in Ghana (ILGS, 2014) suggest that the new local government system is still confronted with some challenges implying some of these imperatives are still unachieved. These findings are supported by the African Peer Review Mechanism reports (APRM, 2011) and findings from the progress report on the implementation of the decentralisation policy framework (IMCC, 2012). Similarly, papers produced under the constitutional review series for decentralisation reforms program (Osae, 2009; Ahwoi, 2010; Ofori Panyin, 2010; Appiah-Agyekum, Danquah and Sakyi, 2013) indicate that although the reforms have been largely successful, they have also faced many challenges that derive from the existing system. These challenges are summarised as follows;

- Despite the increasing training and capacity building programs frequently organized for local government functionaries, inadequate managerial and technical capacity at the local level is observed to contribute to the poor implementation of the decentralization policy and adopted initiatives. Similarly, many MMDAs are challenged with inadequate logistical support to aid the local administrative structures especially the sub-structure structures.
- There still exist serious fiscal and budgetary constraints emanating from unreliable central government transfers. Moreover, the dependence on financial transfers further serves as a disincentive to local revenue collection. The lack of effective public financial management expertise in most of the MMDAS further compounds this challenge.
- The establishment of the Local government service secretariat and the subsequent introduction of LI 1961 have largely succeeded in vesting control of persons in the service of local government in local authorities. However, the inadequacy of logistics and technical capacity of personal to execute their functions as required poses heavy difficulty in realizing the aims of effective local governance. For instance, considering the functions outlined for the newly created department of Trade and Industry as prescribed in second schedule, it is fair to assert that several MMDAs lack the human resource and logistical capacity required to execute these function.
- Regarding participation, findings from the study undertaken by ILGS (2014) indicate citizen participation in local governance is generally low as the majority of citizens seem reluctant or perhaps are unable to take advantage of whatever opportunities decentralization reforms have created for popular participation. This assertion is similar to an earlier finding of the 2008 Afrobarometer report (CDD, 2008), which suggests that although Ghanaian democratization is

advanced in comparison to many other African countries, civic responsibility and civic engagement are low.

As a result of these challenges, the local and regional authorities are unable to perform their assigned functions effectively or to provide the necessary services. At the same time, the social and political weakness of civil society means there is too little public pressure to ensure accountability. This situation does not comply with the level of devolution that the Ghanaian constitution prescribes. Given these revelations, development partners and CSOs.

CHAPTER THREE: GESI AND DECENTRALIZATION

The STAR-Ghana Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Strategy document defines gender and social inclusion as "the absence of discrimination on the basis of gender in opportunities, in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in access to services. It is the full and equal exercise by men and women of their human rights. Social inclusion is the removal of barriers both formal and informal and the provision of systems to increase the access of diverse individuals and groups to development opportunities. Inequalities in gender and social exclusion in local governance may lead to non-participation and lack of voice for men or women based on culture, status, geographic location or disability. And what do Ghanaian policy documents define these as? Can there be a bit of comparison so that we know the conceptual framework that GPs are working in?

3.1   International and Regional Conventions and Policies
International Conventions which also promote the gender equality and social inclusion are
•   The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979, ratified on 2 January 1986.
•   The World Conference on Human Rights (June 1993, Vienna) stated that women's human rights are an indivisible part of universal human rights;
•   The World Summit for Social Development (March 1995, Copenhagen) underlined the necessity of including women in efforts to reduce poverty, unemployment and in shaping integrated societies; others are the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), Beijing +5 (2000) , and Beijing+10 (2005) Reports and also the Commonwealth Gender Policy & Plan of Action
At the regional level the following conventions are very relevant to programming:
•   African Charter on Human and People's Rights which came into force in 1986 – Ghana ratified this Charter on 24th January 1989. There is also the Protocol on the rights of Women in Africa which has been ratified by Ghana in 2007.
Others are the ECOWAS Gender Policy (March 2004) and the AU – NEPAD (July 2001) Gender Equality Objective 5, which all seek to promote gender equality and social inclusion.

3.2   National Instruments and Policies
Key constitutional mandates and LIs relating to GESI include:
The 1992 National Constitution: Chapter Five of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana outlines the fundamental human rights and freedoms of its citizens. It makes provision for the equitable engagement of both women and men, and embodies the need to focus on redressing existing imbalances. Also Article 35 (6) (b) of the 1992 Constitution, requires the state to take appropriate measures to achieve reasonable gender and regional balance in recruitment and appointment to public offices.

Affirmative Action Bill: The 2010 Constitutional Review Commission in its recommendation to Government proposed Parliament enact a comprehensive Affirmative Action Act to address the gender inequality holistically. When passed

Affirmative Action Act would guaranteed 30 per cent representation of women in all public institutions and offices as far as possible and provide systems and structure that will support gender equality with respect to women's participation in decision making and address discrimination against vulnerable groups and minorities.

The Government in its White Paper agreed with the recommendation and has initiated the process to get the bill passed. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Inclusion has spearheaded nationwide consultations on this has a bill has currently been laid before Parliament. CSOs continued interest in getting the bill passed into Law is crucial.

Persons with Disability Act (2006): The Persons with Disability Act (PDA) was passed in 2006. The PDA has eight provisions guaranteeing the rights of the disabled. They include political, social, cultural, recreational, economic and right of physical access. The PDA also promotes non-discrimination and free healthcare for persons with disability.

One of the priority areas of the Decentralization Policy Framework is The Social Agenda which seeks to promote a rights-based orientation to local level development ensuring equitable access to public resources and inclusiveness in decision making. Here, policy measures include gender responsive budgeting, women's participation in local governance and particularly in the Assemblies, develop strategies to support the Disabled, promote child development and intensify education on HIV/AIDs.

The priority Area also aims to develop decentralized guidelines out of the national aging policy, support health efforts to reduce maternal and infant mortality, support most vulnerable through targeted interventions and promote citizens awareness of their rights and mechanisms for redress of rights violated.

The Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA): The GSGDA acknowledges the importance of women's Participation in Governance. Government has indicated that it will implement specific interventions to improve women's participation in Governance. These include:
• increasing the pace of the implementation of the policy of affirmative action for women including strengthening the institutions dealing with women's and children's issues;
•reviewing and enforce existing laws protecting women's rights and introduce new legislations to take care of existing gaps; and
•continuing to formulate and implement gender policies and legislative reforms aimed at attaining a minimum of 40% women's representation in Government and public sector appointments.

In the same vein, government proposes to support the implementation of the Disability Act to ensure a more effective appreciation of and inclusion of disability issues both within the formal decision making process and in the society at large.

The specific policy interventions to be implement to achieve this objective include:
• mainstream issues of disability into the development planning process at all levels

• promote continuous collection of data on PWDs;
• implement the provisions of the Disability Act; and
• promote universal access to infrastructure by PWDs

3.3   Challenges for Women's Participation in Governance

Gender equity in governance has been and continues to be a problem. While women increasingly serve in high-profile positions, such as Speaker of Parliament and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, there is still room for more women to be appointed to decision making positions. This is also the case for women's involvement in politics.

According to Agyare Kwabi (2013), In 2002, the government increased the quota of female appointed members at the District Assembly level from 30% to 50%. This resulted in women constituting 35.5% of appointed members for 97 out of the 110 districts (men constituting 1,188 and women - 655). Between 2006 and 2010, the number of women in district assemblies decreased significantly (there are now 400 women of 6,000 DA members or 7 percent). This still falls short of the 40% target set by the National Plan of Action and the 50% that the government aspired to achieve.

Abantu in its post 2012 election press release indicated that though the number of women elected to Parliament had increased compared to that of 2008, it was "still unreflective of the Census-certified 51 percent female population in Ghana". The release further indicated that "at current rate of increment in the number of women elected to Parliament, it is highly unlikely that Ghana can attain the minimum UN recommended threshold of 30 per cent requirement" that can make meaning contribution to women's effective engagement in decision making.

CHAPTER FOUR: INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Given the importance of decentralisation to national development, there are presently several ongoing projects and programs with direct implications for decentralisation. These efforts are attempts to strengthen decentralisation and local governance in the country. It is thus imperative that sector partners and players in the development of their supportive Programmes take cognizance of the current programs and projects to avoid duplicated efforts and to ensure maximum use of resources. This section briefly describes ongoing projects that have multiplier effect on Ghana's decentralisation process and are of particular relevance to Star-Ghana and its GPs.

4.1   Support for Decentralisation Reforms

The success of Ghana's decentralisation reforms can be largely attributed to this program. The Support for Decentralisation Reforms program (SfDR) jointly implemented by GiZ and the MLGRD was initiated in 2007 with the aim of improving conditions for effective local government at the national level. The project also sought to improve the capacities of institutions at local and regional levels as well as political participation in the decision-making process. Using a multi-level, multi-stakeholder approach, state and non-state actors were encouraged to deepen Ghana's decentralising reforms. The advisory services address political, administrative and fiscal aspects of decentralisation. Meanwhile, pilot projects are run at the local level, from which approaches and systems are developed for the national level.

Consequently, the program contributed in achieving the following;

- The development of a National Decentralisation Policy, along with a framework for its implementation.
- The enactment of the Legislative Instrument LI1961 – which regulates the integration of devolved sector ministries into the district administration.
- The program supported the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to develop an Audit Manual which stresses the importance of internal auditing at all levels.
- The Local Government Service Secretariat (LGSS) is undergoing an organisational development process, while the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG) is willing to reassess and improve the role it plays in promoting decentralisation.
- The setting up of IMCC
- Support the African Peer Review Mechanism to establish oversight committees for the separate districts, which depend on civil society involvement.
- The development of a National Urban Policy, along with a system for naming streets and registering addresses

Arguably, this project has been largely successful and has contributed significantly to Ghana's decentralisation process. In this light, it may be appropriate to suggest that best practices from this project especially its advocacy strategies might be particularly relevant to Star-Ghana and its GPs as they advance their efforts in strengthening local governance in Ghana.

4.2 Ghana Local Government Capacity Support Project

This is a GoG-World Bank initiative to strengthen institutions that support accountable local governance for improved service delivery. The project seeks to achieve this by strengthening intergovernmental fiscal framework; local public financial management and accountability for improved infrastructure and services in urban assemblies. It also intends to improve citizens' engagement with urban assemblies and their perceptions of urban management. LGCSP was launched in 2011 targeting 46 Metropolitan and Municipal Assemblies (MMAs) over a five-year period, with the MLGRD mandated to oversee its completion.

Although the project is ongoing, these efforts have contributed immensely to strengthening transparent and accountable governance in the country, specifically sub-national government administration and public administration in the financial sector, a major goal of the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA). Undoubtedly, this also contributes to fulfilling several priority areas of the National Decentralisation Action Plan (NDAP) as it focuses on the following areas;

- Administrative Decentralization
- Infrastructure and service delivery
- Municipal governance and institution building
- Municipal finance
- Participation and civic engagement

4.3   The Local Governance and Decentralization Program

In 2007, a large reserve of oil was discovered off the coast of the Western Region thus attracting huge investments and consequently development. Given the already existing natural resources and increasing urban population, several attempts have been made to guide development in the region ultimately to harness the benefits from the oil find.

In 2010 Management Systems International (MSI) and SNV began the implementation of the Local Governance and Decentralisation Program (LOGODEP) to support sustainable decentralized bottom-up planning, decision-making and implementation processes across all the districts in the Western Region. The project progressed successfully with support from MLGRD and the various districts assemblies. Subsequently, a second phase has begun to consolidate efforts in expanding public participation in local governance, supporting integrated development planning in the targeted districts along with increased internally generated funds and strengthening linkages to local governance initiatives at national level. Interestingly, findings from a 2013 citizens' participation survey conducted by the LOGODEP team indicate significant improvement in citizen participation and support for local governance, with improvements in citizen awareness and knowledge of local governance, MMDA consultation and feedback to citizen and public participation in local governance. Although it is difficult to attribute these improvements entirely to LOGODEP, it is fair to suggest that LOGODEP has played a key role in this success.

4.4   Gender Responsive Skills and Community Development Project

In an attempt to achieve the Millennium Development Goal three (3) that calls for the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment, GoG pursued a

comprehensive policy framework for mainstreaming gender in Ghana's socio-economic development agenda. Similarly, Ghana's decentralization program

mandates local authorities to undertake social development, specified as social agenda priority area in the NDAP.

In this regard, the African Development Bank (AfDB) supported the Ministry for Gender, Children and Social Protection (formerly Ministry of Women and Children Affairs) to implement a four-year Gender Responsive Skills and Community Development Project (GRSCDP). The project aimed at promoting gender equitable socio-economic development through institutional capacity building, and improvement of women's gainful employment and entrepreneurship. The project covered fifty-nine (59) districts within the ten (10) regions of Ghana. Consequently, staff from several line Ministries, Departments and Agencies, 25 Community Development Vocational and Technical Institutes benefitted from capacity building training programs. Subsequently, representatives from beneficiary MDAs and MMDAs received training manuals and tool kits to guide them in mainstreaming gender at sub-national development programs.

Interestingly, the development and execution of the various components of this project were outsourced to local CSOs and research institutions, which significantly led to local capacity building and subsequently ownership of the project. Indeed, several lessons could be derived from this project especially regarding the training and capacity building components.

4.5   Gender Mainstreaming in Land Governance

There is a broad consensus that well-developed land rights for all are necessary to promote economic development in Ghana. The effects of unequal gender relations have been identified as a significant contributing factor to poverty. In this regard, Gender Mainstreaming in Land Governance was initiated in 2010 to address this imbalance in land administration in Ghana. COLANDEF, one of Star-Ghana's GPs was an implementing partner thus undertook advocacy for gender mainstreaming for the Lands Commission, the Traditional Authorities and other Land Sector Agencies in the Western Region. COLANDEF also developed strategies that informed policies on land administration to reflect the concerns of all. The project benefitted three strategic communities in the western region, namely Wassa Fiase in Tarkwa –Nsuaem District, Wassa Akropong in Wassa Amenfi District and Beyin in Jomoro District.

Although the duration of the project was short (October 2010 to January 2011) it effectively led to the establishment of Gender Desks in the Lands commission and Traditional councils in the project communities to ensure the sustainability of the gender mainstreaming agenda. Also, the project led to the formulation of a comprehensive advocacy strategy to facilitate awareness creation on gender relations and imbalances in land administration. Issues of gender and land governance are indeed on the increase. As such, it would be fruitful for Star-Ghana and its GPs to assess the success of this project to inform subsequent advocacy strategies and projects in a quest to promote gender mainstreaming in local governance nationally.

4.6   Inclusive Governance for the Urban Poor (Inclucity Project)

As part of efforts to improve Ghana's decentralisation, Global Communities (formerly CHF International) is implementing a four-year governance inclined project dubbed Inclucity. The project is geared towards bridging the gap between the urban poor and government by enabling improved service delivery though inclusive governance and

build capacities to improve municipal revenue generation. Over the next four years (2011-2015), IncluCity expects to raise municipal revenue and provide equitable social and economic services to all sectors of the metropolises, especially the poor through increased constructive participation of slum residents in governance, inclusive planning and budgeting processes in the two Metropolitan Assemblies. Inclucity also intends to increased capacity of the two Metropolitan Assemblies (Accra and Sekondi-Takoradi) to generate municipal revenue.

Interestingly, Global Communities Ghana will continue to develop the capacity of local partners to sustain key program elements after funding has ended. So far, the project has assisted both Metropolises in developing and implementing Revenue Improvement Action Plans, exploring revenue generation options, including waste-to-resources, recycling, private sector investment and improved rate-setting and tax collection systems. Given the range of activities encompassed in this project, it is envisaged that successful implementation of Inclucity will contribute to realising the Development planning, popular participation and accountability, social agenda and fiscal decentralisation goals of Ghana's decentralisation program.

4.7   The Urban Back-up

The Urban Back-Up Project was launched in 2011 to empower local authorities to adequately manage pro-poor urban development processes in order to improve the living conditions of the urban poor in Ghana. The Urban Back-up is an initiative undertaken by Cities Alliance and the German Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ) to increasingly enable poor secondary cities to access Cities Alliance funding. In doing so, the reach and impact of Cities Alliance urban development programs in poor secondary cities will increase, resulting in improved living conditions of the urban poor. Though an appropriate initiative to support the implementation of the Ghana administrative decentralisation efforts (priority action area 2), funding challenges limited beneficiary cities to a few selected secondary cities, including Bolgatanga, Wa, Tamale, Techiman, Kumasi, Cape Coast, Elmina, Suhum, Aflao, and Swedru. Although the program ended in 2012, part of the program's aims was to develop the capacity of the Institute of Local Government Studies to deliver technical assistance to secondary cities nationwide to improve the living conditions of squatter and slum dweller households after the program end-date. Subsequently, lessons from the implementation of the Urban Back-Up project fed into the Ghana Land, Services and Citizenship for the urban Poor program.

4.8   Ghana Land, Services and Citizenship for the urban Poor Program

As a sequel to the Urban Back-Up project, LSC is a partnership initiative undertaken by Ghana and its support partners to align urban development efforts at the national,

city and community levels. It aims at supporting national and local policy dialogue to promote sustainable urbanisation, ensure the empowerment of local governments and reinforce the importance of active community participation. The initiative would also strengthen the capacity of local governments to inclusively plan and manage urban growth while empowering organisations of the urban poor to actively engage in local development.

Unfortunately, however, LSC activities center on only the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area, denying other DAs the benefits that may be derived from the lessons from the Urban Back-Up Project. Given that other MMDAs are faced with the challenges of urbanisation, especially urban poverty, it would be constructive if the benefits of this initiative were extended to other MMDAs through similar support programs advanced by CSOs such as Star-Ghana and its development partners. Moreover, given the increasing concern of urbanisation in the Country, it is high time support programs developed by GPs take into consideration urban implications.

4.9 Ghana Social Opportunities Project (GSOP)

As a link to the sector national development policy, the Government of Ghana in 2007 prepared a National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) which among others identified social protection (safety net) program gaps within the Social Protection sector.

GSOP seeks to improve targeting in social protection spending, increase access to conditional cash transfers nationwide, increase access to employment and cash-earning opportunities for the rural poor during the agricultural off-season, and improve economic and social infrastructure in target districts. The project is made up of five components namely;

- rationalize national social protection policy
- labor intensive public works
- Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty Program (LEAP)
- capacity building at national and local level to implement the NSPS
- project management and coordination

The project covers over 40 districts throughout the country, administered by the MLGRD. Over the five years (2011-2016), it is envisaged that the implementation of GSOP would further the objective of the decentralisation social agenda by facilitating the graduation of ultra-poor households out of poverty by exploiting synergies. Moreover, GSOP is expected to promote the creation of job opportunities for enhanced welfare of citizens.

Other Social welfare and poverty alleviating projects being implemented concurrently that would have implications for citizen participation and would involve the work of Star-Ghana and its GPs include;

- Local Enterprises and skills Development Programme (LESDEP)
- District Wide Assistance Programme (DWAP)
- Afro-Asian Rural Development Programme (AARDO)

4.10 Monitoring programs and Strategies for Decentralisation

To ensure an effective implementation of Ghana's decentralisation program, the NDAP provides that an annual decentralisation implementation review meting be

organized on key policy areas by MLGRD with technical support from ILGS. This meeting is expected to provide an avenue for a thorough review of the implementation process by diverse stakeholders to inform reforms and future programs. This will also accommodate other existing performance management frameworks such as the FOAT, the District Governance Citizens' Report Checklist administered under the African Peer Review Mechanism and results collated by the National Development Planning Commission and assessment efforts by NGOs and CSOs. The results will be widely disseminated, through electronic and other means.

Moreover, the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and the judicial system provide opportunity for citizens to hold their assemblies accountable for their actions. The Auditor General audits all assemblies annually and submits a report to parliament for necessary action. Also, each district is obliged to establish a complaints committee presided over by the assembly chairperson, where public complaints are reported for redress.

CHAPTER FIVE: MATRIX OF STAR GHANA INTERVENTIONS

The STAR Ghana call for proposal on Democracy and Governance which focused on decentralised aimed to provide support to GPs in the following areas:

The main area   under the Managed Component was;

Enhancing decentralised governance in Ghana: (Deepening decentralization/strengthening local level demand for M/M/DA accountability and responsiveness and in the implementation of existing local government programs)

- Evidence-based advocacy on implementation of the National Decentralization Action Plan;
- Using ICT & Social Media to enhance citizens' engagement with decentralised governance structures, particularly District/Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies

All the GPs in the managed call respond to advocacy on the NDAP implementation. They include; Institute for Policy Alternatives (IPA), SEND-GHANA, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Africa Office-Ghana (CHRI), Multimedia Group Limited, ABANTU for Development and Local Governance Network (LOGNET). The GPs areas of work include NDAP priority areas on popular participation and accountability, social agenda and non-state actors. There is also focus on the Affirmative Action to promote and enhance women's participation in decision making. None of the GPs seems to focus on using ICT and Social Media as intervention tools.

The Open Component

 The main areas for consideration under the Open Call were;

Gender, Youth & Social Inclusion:

- Enabling realization of political rights of excluded social groups, particularly women, the youth and persons with disability, including advocacy for affirmative action in appointments;
- Enhancing the participation of women, youth & PWD's participation in local governance

Under this call, all the 16 GPs all respond to the call objectives. They include Foundation for Integrated and Strategic Development, Ghana Federation of the Disabled, Ghana National Association of the Deaf, Northern Sector Action on Awareness Centre, People's Action to Win Life All-Round, Savana Signatures, Social Development and Improvement Agency, The Hunger Project – Ghana, United Civil Society Organisations of Nzema East District, Voice of People with Disability Ghana, Friends of the Nation, Youth and Women Empowerment / Krobo Queen MothersAssociations, Global Action for Women Empowerment, Ghana Developing Communities Association, Socioserve-Ghana, The Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre.

These GP work focus on the NDAP priorities areas of popular participation and accountability, the social agenda and well as non-state actors. They also respond largely to the Affirmative Action Policy and the Disability Act. Although in some regions there are more than one GP working, there is no evidence of collaboration (Table1). Project outcomes will be impacted positively if GPs in the same geographic areas could work together.

Table 1: Geographic location of GPs.

Region	Organization
Ashanti	Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre (GSHRDC)
Brong Ahafo	GSHRDC, SODIA, GFD
Central	GFD
Eastern	Socioserve, GFD, Friends of the Nations, Voice of People with Disability
Greater Accra	-
Northern	GDCA, Savanna Signatures, GNAD, NORSAAC, The Hunger Project
Upper East	Savana Signatures, GFD, GNAD, Foundation for Integrated and Strategic Development
Upper West	Savana Signatures, GFD, People's Action to win Life All Round
Volta	Socioserve, GAWE, The Hunger Project
Western	FON, GFD, United CSOs of Nzema East District

A matrix of GP work and their link to the various Policy areas is attached as Annex 2.

CHAPTER SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS

Key recommendations

- Most STAR GPs work across Policies such as the Affirmative Action, the Disability Act and NDAP priority areas of participation, social agenda and involvement of non state actors. They could in strengthening these areas, advocate for resourcing of CHRAJ and NCCE by the DA to enable these institutions take up the public sensitization and strategically collaborate with the DAs in promoting transparency and accountability.
- Programmatically, the GPs who have common areas of intervention and are within similar geographic zones can pull resources together for value addition and critical mass.
- GPs could consider advocating for District Gender Desk Officers and gender focused CSOs should be members of the Budget committee to ensure gender responsive budgeting of district resources.
- To enhance the level and participation of citizens especially women in local it is important to create institutionalised platforms for stakeholders especially CSOs engagement with local authorities to facilitate the governance process at the local level.

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POLICY BRIEF: DECENTRALIZATION AND GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN GHANA

STAR-Ghana

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