

**AN ANALYTICAL REPORT ON:  
AN ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM FOR  
75 GHANAIAN WOMEN**

**BUILDING A BRIDGE:  
FROM THE LAND OF SURVIVING TO THE LAND OF THRIVING**



**PREPARED FOR:  
THE ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN ENTREPRENEURS**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*The invaluable role women play in the field of providing food, education and shelter for their families cannot be argued. The saying “give a woman a fish and you feed her for a day, teach a woman how to fish and you feed her whole community” also illustrates the influence women have on their communities. In Ghana, this is no exception.*

*More than 50% of employed women in Ghana are self employed and mostly in micro businesses in their immediate communities. The conditions in which they have to operate their businesses are challenging and the fact that they didn’t have easy access to good business training, if access at all, just added to their struggle to survive.*

*The Association for African Entrepreneurs (AAE) have partnered with the Coady International Institute in Canada to address this problem. They have designed a training program aimed directly at these women entrepreneurs at the Bottom of the Economic Pyramid. Through this training program, they want to enable the women to better manage their businesses and to steer it towards sustainability and growth.*

*However, with the natural influence women have in their communities, another consequence of this training program will be to inspire and motivate more community members to become economically stable and self sustainable.*

*The value of entrepreneurship training is often arguable, however at the bottom of the pyramid where business is a matter of surviving, the impact of training is noticeable early in the program and more often than not, the training is the bridge from having a surviving business to a thriving business.*



## IDENTIFYING THE GAP

*It would almost be impossible to overestimate the economic contribution of female entrepreneurs to global prosperity and development. According to Yu (2011), women own 38 per cent of businesses in the United States employing 27.5 million people and generating 3.6 trillion dollars in revenue. In Ghana, 56.9 of the country's women are business owners, mostly of micro business (Ghana Living Standards Survey, 2008), signifying the need for entrepreneurship development and training for sustained livelihoods.*

*The world owes much of its food production to women too, a large proportion of them being micro business owners. For example, women produce 80 per cent of the food in sub-Saharan Africa, between 50 and 60 per cent in Asia and 30 per cent in Latin America (Yu, 2011). These businesses stimulate economic growth and create direct and indirect employment for others.*

*According to Mensah (2004), Micro Small and Medium Enterprises are mostly dominated by one person, with the owner/manager taking all major decisions. The entrepreneur may possess limited formal education, access to and use of new technology, market information, and also access to credit from the banking sector is severely limited; they have weak management skills, thus inhibiting the development of a strategic plan for sustainable growth; they experience extreme working capital volatility and lack of the technical know-how. Inability to acquire skills and modern technology impede growth opportunities. This then illustrates the need for proper education for all business owners, in order to manage and grow their businesses towards sustainability.*

*In Ghana, a rapidly growing number of poor are engaged in survivalist informal activities. Self-employed women are one of the most affected segments of the population. For many, the informal economy has turned into a poverty trap: very low productivity results in very low and unstable incomes (ILO, 2004). Relevant business training especially for female business owners is a critical key factor in unlocking the poverty trap.*

*"In my community, only a few have educational opportunities and a future. The rest often waste away or get exploited. Worst of all, women, girls are left with little or no power, voice or information" - Naomi Tagoe, a native of Ningo Community, Dangme West District*

*It is significant, then, given the importance and growth of female entrepreneurship, that there is a global scarcity of business skills training and development for self-employed women. Women have far fewer formal and informal professional development opportunities than male entrepreneurs. A lack of training for women entrepreneurs limits their ability to launch and then grow a business. It limits their ability to recognize and exploit opportunities to diversify or spot market gaps.*

*In order to bridge this gap and to build a bridge from a platform of survivalist women owned micro businesses to a platform of an enabled, sustainable and growing women owned business, focused and accessible training will be the building blocks.*

## ENGINEERING THE BRIDGE

### *THE ASSOCIATION FOR AFRICAN ENTREPRENEURS*

*The Association for African Entrepreneurs (AAE) was established in 2004 in Accra, Ghana. Their vision is to be the voice of change and to create a platform for dialogue among the African people as well as to involve the international audience to have a role in helping developing nations promote the entrepreneurial spirit.*

*Their mission includes the reintroducing of innovative attitudes by enabling a participatory process that involves and includes entrepreneurs in order to reform structures that inhibit entrepreneurship development and growth and to have regional advocacy campaign contributions that can support and encourage entrepreneurship. They also work in close consultation with the various government institutions for the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation.*

*Development Programs are also a key focus area, aiming at promoting and nurturing innovation and entrepreneurial spirit amongst members. They provide news and information that will benefit members and this comes in the form of articles, newsletters, research and current news.*

*Their service offering also includes education and training in ways different from the traditional way to young people and women from low-income families who are unable to afford the traditional classroom learning. This involves apprenticeship, self-study and specific training programs. They incorporate the value of self-employment as a starting point of small and medium enterprises.*

*Also, they offer linkages, networking and other support in the form of annual fairs and exhibitions that will enable members to learn new business concepts, new technologies, and to gain prospects for their existing business.*

*Business coaching and mentoring, especially for the youth and women who are or aspire to become entrepreneurs, is also a part of their service to their communities. It is also this attribution of the organization that has led up to the proposed training program for women.*

*The AAE is also well networked with institutions such as the Coady International Institute of Canada, United Nations Civil Society Network, DELNET of ITC ILO, UN Online Volunteering Program and the Global Giving Foundation.*

*With all of the above mentioned objectives and services on offer, the AAE pose to be the ideal vehicle to bring a positive and lasting change to the lives of the identified groups of female entrepreneurs in Ghana. With their deliberate plan in educating female entrepreneurs, a bridge will be constructed from the land of surviving to the land of thriving.*

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## BUILDING THE BRIDGE

### ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

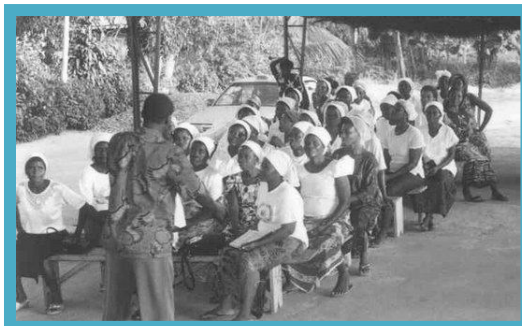
*In the light of the need for business training for especially women entrepreneurs in Ghana, the Association of African Entrepreneurs has partnered with the Coady International Institute of Canada, to bring business workshops to the doorstep of local female entrepreneurs. These workshops will emphasize on the foundational knowledge to successfully start, build and grow their business, whilst empowering them to independently secure a future for themselves, their families and their communities through business growth.*

*The planned educational program will be conducted in three different levels. The first level will be conducted over a period of 9 months and will address basic entrepreneurial and business skills, especially focused on the starting-up phase of a new business. Teams of up to two trainers will, through their mobile training units, bring the workshops into the heart of the targeted communities. The trainers will be alumni from the Coady International Institute of Canada and will have an understanding of the local culture and language in order to be able to train the women effectively. . The AAE is also working towards getting these training sessions accredited with local institutions of higher education.*

*The current proposed training program will cover two neighboring communities in Ghana. A group could comprise of up to 25 female trainees per class. The classes will be held in two sessions per day on different days of the week as demand would dictate and also to allow the trainees to be flexible in time to attend to their businesses and families. The training will be offered at no cost; however, if someone would like to repeat a class, there would be some tuition involved. Upon the successful completion of the first training program, level two entrepreneurial training program will be available that will be run over 12 months and thereafter, a 12 month level three training program.*

*The entry criteria to be accepted into this training program are based on the competencies demonstrated by the entrepreneurs. The training sessions will also be a platform for networking for the female trainees, sharing experiences, ideas, problems and solutions.*

*The majority of the businesses operating in the targeted area are agricultural in nature with a specific focus on the preservation and marketing of agricultural produce from both land and water. There are also a few businesses that do manufacturing, in a small scale though. Products manufactured include cosmetics, detergents and herbal products.*



## LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE BRIDGE

### IMPACT OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM

*With this training program, it is anticipated that the knowledge transferred will assist the entrepreneurs to manage their businesses more effectively and towards a planned growth. It is also anticipated that these training sessions will be shared and spread throughout the communities, creating a lasting legacy where the ultimate vision in achieving university accreditation could help to reduce educational isolation, whilst simultaneously generating social improvement and poverty reduction through business stimulation.*

*As stated by Menash and Benedict (2010), entrepreneurship training for survivalist business operators (and other poor persons with potential) by accredited service providers could help create, change or strengthen attitudes towards business that could transform a survivalist business operator into an entrepreneur and empower her to grow her business. Entrepreneurship training as a poverty alleviation strategy is a special case of the general observation that “lack of education is the greatest cause of poverty”, because lack of education limits one’s choices and ability to improve one’s life or one’s business. A project for the AAE to consider and to contribute to an even longer term sustainability of the training program would be providing accessible micro financing options to these entrepreneurs.*

*The critical success factor related to this project is the availability of sponsorships for training. As the training is specifically targeted at survivalist type businesses, the targeted trainees will not be able to afford such training. As this is a pilot project targeted at two specific areas in Ghana, the potential to let this training program grow and also impact other communities is huge.*

*With the support of the Coady International Institute of Canada and the Association of African Entrepreneurs, two very strong pillars has been put in place to build the bridge. The other building blocks, such as the identified entrepreneurs and their businesses, their immediate communities and the trainers have been sourced, it is now just the cement in terms of funding that is needed to make it all come together and stay together.*





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