

1.0 SKILLS INITIATIVE PROGRAM (SIP)

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Skills Initiative Program (SIP) is aimed at creating job opportunities for disadvantaged youth in Ghana through skills acquisition in Interior Decoration. SIP will directly reach 60 unemployed youth from deprived communities with training in technical and entrepreneurship skills leading to employment. As a result of the project, these targeted youth will increase their income and savings and create job opportunities in the sector, thereby indirectly benefiting their family members and economy.

The proposed project is expected to apply an integrated youth-led market systems model to improve the capacity of the youth and service providers across the value chain. The youth will benefit from having job opportunities and higher income. Sector stakeholders such as private sector firms, financial service providers and industries are expected to benefit from improved coordination and capacity. Employers will benefit from higher productivity of labour and lowered cost of inefficiencies. Importantly, SIP will create a model for youth employment and success that will be sustained after the project ends. The lessons learned about creating job opportunities for the youth.

Hopeworks Ghana is a youth development organization (non-profits) that is committed to empowering the youth (especially the disadvantaged) to discover their dreams and aspirations and contribute to provision of youth employment.

We employ education, entrepreneurship training, technology training and job placement to enhance the lives through collaboration with individuals, industries and institutions to create a sustainable future for the youth. Hopeworks Ghana is legally registered under the Companies Act 1963. We are members of the National Council for Voluntary Organizations UK (NCVO UK), Consortium for Voluntary Organizations (NCVO Ghana) and CSO on SDG Ghana operating mainly under Goals 1, 3 and 8. Hopeworks Ghana is also on the database of the World Association of NGOs (WANGO).

It is believed that the young people will improve their economic futures when provided with appropriate skills, support and opportunities. Their success depends on developing and engaging a broad network of stakeholders in the process. The program therefore aims to combine technical skills and entrepreneurship to better prepare youth to get and keep a job or run their own businesses.

Some technical partners for the project include partners include Unique Floral Event Center, City Lights and Chrisaach Carpets with Greater Accra as its target region.

It is targeted at about 60 unemployed youth from deprived communities in Greater Accra between the ages of 15 – 28 years of age. The project which would focus on skills acquisition in Interior Decoration has the following objectives:

1. Increased employment (this includes self-employment)
2. Increased coordination and support for a better enabling environment.

Below are the main activities of the project:

1. Access to soft skills training
2. Youth readiness for employment and entrepreneurship
3. Access to demand-driven training and service providers
4. Youth enterprise start-up and recruitment by employers

The project is expected to run for 6 months. Selected high performing beneficiaries after training and technical assessments by Certified Practitioners will be referred to Unique Floral Event Center for internship program for 12 months after which they will be offered employment with salaries.

They will also benefit from a financial literacy training sessions by officials and soft skills training from recognized institutions and professionals and sign up for savings packages. In-take of project beneficiaries is expected to continue on a rolling basis.

The project is expected to promote learning. Project resources have been budgeted towards monitoring, evaluation and learning plan. This will include pursuing learning questions, participating in learning events and final evaluation.

We are requesting **\$6,437** to implement SIP over a six month period.

2.0 PART B: PROJECT INTRODUCTION

2.1 Analysis of Project Need

The booming construction sector offers real possibilities for Ghana's young people. However, regulatory, financial and market constraints pose some limitations to the opportunities created by the sector's growth. For example, bureaucracy in company registration, tendering processes and the allocation of the funds generated through these activities hinder projects and restrict new players from entering the market. Foreign competition, which dominates in massive government and internationally-funded infrastructure projects, presents a significant challenge to local construction firms.

The latter tend to be family-owned small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that have limited financial resources and access to credit. Subcontractors provide the large volume of semi-skilled and unskilled workers needed by the sector, but many are not formally registered or licensed. This, along with a lack of understanding of the bidding process and limited skills in pricing and project management, hampers subcontractors' ability to bid on formal contracts.

The local production of construction inputs is limited mainly to wood, cement, stones and roofing sheets; for other inputs, the industry relies on imports. The resale of inputs to individual companies is generally done by small to medium-sized companies (the smallest units for cement, for instance, are container sized). Microenterprises are limited to local production and sale of low-quality concrete blocks, crushed rock, iron rods and wood products.

Given these realities, **creating new opportunities for youth in construction will require a systems approach** that addresses some of these constraints. Hopeworks Ghana would use a value-chain approach to create opportunities for young people in the solid waste sector.

2.2 Need for Demand-Driven Skills Training:

While the informal nature of the construction workforce increases accessibility for disadvantaged youth, the areas of greatest need still **require youth to have technical skills**. The value chain assessment will provide the data needed to select the most in-demand skills that could be acquired by our targeted youth. The fastest, most cost-effective way for disadvantaged young people to learn these trades is through apprenticeships. With only 10% of 15-17 year olds in Ghana enrolled in secondary or technical education, apprenticeships account for 80-90% of all basic skills training in Ghana.

is uniquely positioned to transfer these innovations to improve training for the sector as a whole. It is "subvented" to the government and has direct linkages to the National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI), which oversees the national apprenticeship model, yet has the flexibility to experiment because it remains an independent NGO.

2.3 Need for Networks, Contacts and Referrals:

There are very **few formal recruitment and screening mechanisms in the construction sector** linking those with skills to those who need them. Much of the hiring for construction is informal, through personal connections and by word of mouth. Instead of competitively selecting subcontractors, foremen often turn to craftsmen they know who bring their own crew. There are also limited formal connections or partnerships between companies and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions. This informal system negatively affects employers and contractors when they cannot locate workers with the skills that they need, or lack a good method to vet candidates who show up at a job site. Employment in the sector is generally on temporary contract. This means that workers have little job security, so they jump from job to job (some employers report turnover rates as high as 50%). This means that employers regularly need new workers mid-project. Often they assemble teams with individuals who have not worked together before, generating quality and potential safety issues.

2.0 TARGET GROUP

Hopeworks Ghana would target deprived communities in Greater Accra. Beyond just population, there are strategic reasons to target these cities. **Accra** is the capital and home to critical national and governmental stakeholders; together with **Tema** and **Ashaiman** (a rapidly-urbanizing municipality of the Greater Accra metro area), it is a hub of construction, which draws many youth migrants.

There are approximately one million youth aged 15-24 living in the five municipalities, targeting the estimated 11.2% who dropped out of school (most before completing junior high, making them ineligible for vocational school), for a total potential target population of 113,179 youth.

We assume that the completion of some schooling will enable youth to pass the functional literacy screening necessary to enter the project. Since many jobs in the sector are "hazardous" according to the Ghana Children's Act and the minimum legal employment age is 18, we will focus on youth who are at least 17 and can begin an apprenticeship. We will reach younger youth with messages on the importance of staying in school, saving for the future and career opportunities in the construction sector, but they are unlikely to participate in other project training and services.

To achieve our beneficiary targets, we believe that we will need to work in all five municipalities. The numbers of youth who meet the EOY age range and criteria (out of school and disadvantaged, yet functionally literate) are small and only a fraction of them will want to work in construction and have the ability to pursue the training offered. Some consortium members suggest that Accra may already be saturated in terms of technical training and livelihoods programs for youth, which may reduce the numbers who choose to enrol in the project. The geographic spread will also increase the diversity of our beneficiaries, including youth from a greater number of ethnic groups.