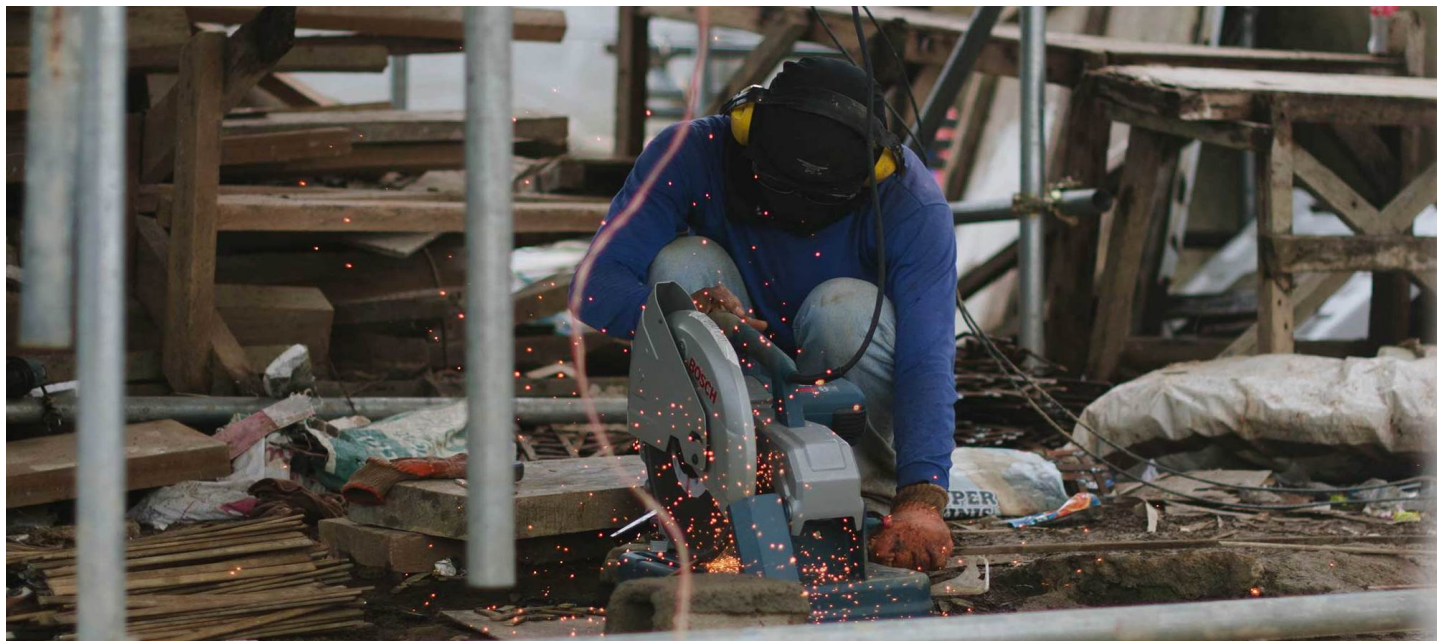


Developing skills for life and making connections in Ghana



A programme participant learning to weld. New skills have meant greater job opportunities, and the ability to earn more.

Introduction

In this final update from our GEOP programme in Ghana, we discover how young men and women are gaining technical, business and leadership skills and are using their collective voice to create better working environments.

An opportunity to thrive

When combined with his initiative and natural talent, a GEOP welding course helped 30-year-old Ebenezer Asare's career to take off exponentially.

After finishing a four-year course in automobile engineering, Ebenezer was working as a member of the maintenance team at a local company, but also spent time trying to improve his skills by watching welders at work.

When an emergency welding job came up, Ebenezer felt confident enough to step in. He completed the job successfully, and a senior member of staff was so impressed that he encouraged Ebenezer to apply for GEOP's welding-training course.

Now, after completing the GEOP course, Ebenezer not only has a new job at the company in the welding team – and can earn up to three times more than he

previously did – but he has even begun building a house of his own.

'I have also been able to save more and made investments with the income I am earning. I have a dream of entering into a full-time automobile-engineering role and opening my own company, and this welding skill will play an instrumental role in that', explains Ebenezer.

Sustainable impact

As GEOP comes to an end in December, the country team is looking at increasing the involvement of local government so people know where to get support from as they grow their businesses.

Connections between traders and local authorities have been developed in recent months, for example, through a series of consultative meetings, enabling business owners to negotiate with the Ayawaso East Municipal Assembly on charges for the coming year.

The meetings were made as participatory as possible and included a session with female market traders, who had felt that the levies previously imposed on them were excessive.



The welding course Ebenezer Asare attended is life changing. 'I am very grateful to Christian Aid and the GEOP project for giving me this opportunity.' Ebenezer Asare

The meeting also gave the Assembly an opportunity to declare the revenue collected during the year and its expenditure on projects, helping to develop accountability and transparency as well as trust in the tax system.

Comprehensive training on taxation, financial literacy and leadership was also given to 360 young women from different groups within Ablekuma and Ayawaso East Municipality.

The three-day courses, aimed at helping their businesses thrive, covered the processes and benefits of record-keeping, financial management and tax obligations.

The leadership element of the training, designed to help young women to assume leadership roles within their communities and strengthen women's groups, explored themes such as leadership in groups and the qualities of a good leader.

Supporting small businesses

Leather products and beads created by four people living with disabilities who had received GEOP training, were on display at a business forum organised to help regulatory bodies to support small businesses.

The forum was designed to help such bodies to develop policies that support small businesses, especially those

owned by women, young people and people with disabilities.

GEOP has established that business set-up, formalisation and registration are key to success, and so brought together statutory agencies involved with business registration, product standardisation and certification, tax payment and quality assurance to encourage practices that favour small businesses.

Among those attending was the Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry, and representatives from the Ghana Standards Authority, the Ghana Trade Company Limited, the Food and Drugs Authority, the Ghana Revenue Authority and financial institutions involved with start-up finance.

Other GEOP News:

In July 2019, a member of GEOP welding training group was one of five students selected by the Government of Ghana to be trained in stainless-steel welding at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology in Edmonton, Canada.

Sixty-nine young men and women, who had already been trained in welding and bridal make-up respectively, attended two days of training in entrepreneurship and financial management.

A two-day forum in Ellebelle enabled 49 young women to share with the local Assembly ways in which the authority could create and improve an environment in which to help their businesses to thrive. It also raised awareness of the need to pay taxes and the responsibility of the Assembly to provide efficient and high-quality services.

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FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

