



A personal counselling interview with needs assessment is the starting point for working with the MEP Unit.



The second step is the basic training in 'Entrepreneurship and Financial Literacy'. Afterwards, participants will be assigned to need-oriented training groups.



Business simulations and role plays prepare the MEP training participants for all contingencies.

Photos: GIZ © Gideon Mankralo/Natalie Rau

Migration and Employment Promotion (MEP) Our success – our stories

How can success be measured?

Opinions differ on this question. While the fact sheet reflects the current status and achievements of PSED's Migration and Employment Promotion (MEP) Unit, the project's protégés speak for themselves on the following pages.

The new perspectives which have been opened up to them by GIZ's MEP and the related Programme Migration for Development (PMD) speaks to the successes of the support measures.

We are in close contact with our protégés

MEP takes a very keen interest in its beneficiary's progress and success, and keeps in constant touch with them through personal interviews and telephone calls. Standardized survey tools are adopted in monitoring and evaluation, to facilitate the projects' progress.

In this way, we ensure that they realize their full potential. In coordination with their development, MEP further promotes them to contribute to the long-term improvement of their employment and income situation.

Five selected success stories

On the following pages, a total of five MEP protégés tell their personal success stories and how MEP opened their eyes for individual fulfilment through creating their own businesses. These stories show how close failure and success lie together and that even a personal counselling or a targeted training can lay the foundation for their professional career as well as for an improvement of their living conditions.

Thanks to the actions of MEP, the narrators of the success stories have become heroes of their own lives. They have been able to strengthen their own competences, obtain new qualifications and, with the support of GIZ, fulfil their dream of being self-employed. As a result, they not only create promising future prospects for themselves, but also for others - and in total for Ghana. Thus, their biographies tell the success story of a whole country.

Germany awakened Kwadwo's passion for photography

Dclef Fotografie doesn't sound like a typical Ghanaian or even English company name. But it's a young Ghanaian founder and professional photographer. 'I want to sound international and professional with this name', is how Kwadwo Asiedu-Danquah explains the *exotic* spelling of his company's title. 'Moreover, my name is forging a bridge to my early photography beginnings, which were in Germany.'

The collaboration between the Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM) and the Migration and Employment Promotion (MEP) project facilitated Kwadwo's rise to becoming a self-employed photographer in Ghana.

CIM supports highly educated and experienced Ghanaians, who lived abroad – especially in Germany, with their return to Ghana and the reintegration into its labour market.

The Centre is a joint project of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the International Placement Services (ZAV) of the German Federal Employment Agency. Just like GIZ-PSED, it operates on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Kwadwo's success story started in 2011 when he was studying for his master's degree in Photogrammetry and Geoinformatics in Stuttgart, Germany. Photogrammetry is a method of measuring images in order to determine their position or a 3D-shape from photographs – usually taken by a special measuring camera. However, one of his earliest purchases after Kwadwo's arrival in Germany was not such a measuring camera, but a 12-megapixel digital camera to share his impressions of Stuttgart with his loved ones at home.

'My business name is forging a bridge to my early photography beginnings, which were in Germany.'

'That was the foundation for my career as a person and event photographer', says the young and talented Ghanaian in retrospect. After graduating in 2014, the now 30-year-old photographer moved to Hamburg for a second master's degree in Resource Efficiency in Architecture and Planning. There, he got in touch with other creative minds: Two of his fellow students were working on a series of unique photographs. Kwadwo Asiedu-Danquah quickly became a keen fan and finally joined the group.



This picture is a self-portrait taken by Kwadwo Asiedu-Danquah. It's also a proof of his talent as a people and event photographer.

Photo: GIZ © Dclef Fotografie

He started uploading his first photos on social media networks. 'The feedback, I received, was enormous. Not only friends and family, but people from all over the world commented on my pictures', says today's professional photographer over his beginnings. 'The online community encouraged me to think about photography as a possible occupational area.'

In Germany, Kwadwo already landed his first photo jobs. But at that time in the past, the Engineer was not serious about his photography business. Not until 2017, when Kwadwo planned to return to Ghana and started screening the labour market for matching job opportunities in his country of origin. Unfortunately, he realized that his employment prospects were slim despite his two master's degrees. Luckily, one of his university professors told him about CIM. Thanks to the Centre, Kwadwo was directly assigned to a reintegration workshop in Eschborn, Germany. That training was a fabulous preparation for his return. Back in Ghana he contacted MEP. The GIZ project supported the young Photographer through training measures to create his business plan and start a professional career in his home country. In addition, MEP is providing Kwadwo with equipment and tools necessary for his operations. As a result, Kwadwo is able to create secured jobs for himself and two other photographers.

Juliana Ashong first had to migrate to Germany to find out her future is lying in Ghana

Juliana Ashong is now back in Ghana for less than a year. But so far, she has settled down well in her country of origin thanks to the support of the Migration and Employment Promotion (MEP) Project within the Programme for Sustainable Economic Development (PSED). PSED is carried out by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in Ghana on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

From 2010 till 2018 Juliana was living in Germany

The Ghanaian lady spent the past eight years in Bochum, Germany. The now 52-year-old was hoping to find a job there as a cook, but unfortunately, she'd trusted the wrong people. She was lured by a *connection man* who promised to help her secure the right documentation to start a new and self-determined life in Germany. Unknowing to her, this man rather had other ulterior motives for her.

'He wanted me to work for him as a prostitute. But I originally thought I could pay him back the money I owed him for my flights and papers as soon as I found a serious job as a household or kitchen helper', says Juliana, close to tears. But that was not fast enough for the contact person. So, Juliana fled from him in a cloak-and-dagger-operation and applied for asylum in Germany.

She had to leave everything behind once again. She had nothing. The very same reason why she wanted to leave behind Ghana.

To understand why Juliana got involved in this shady trade, the elderly lady has to explain her situation: 'I'm a widow. When my husband died, I suddenly became the only provider of my three children. A task that I couldn't manage under the circumstances. I moved to Germany to earn enough to give my children a well-protected life at home.'



Head of MEP Unit Mark Mehrländer (l.) and technical Advisor Gideon Mankralo (r.) are handing over MEP-sponsored equipment to its new owner Juliana Ashong.

Photo: GIZ © Natalie Rau

That's what Juliana Ashong is able to do now. After she was dependent on welfare in Germany, she made the decision to return to Ghana. She says: 'My social worker gave me the address of the Center for International Migration and Development in Accra. He told me that the programme can help me reintegrate to Ghana and its labor market.' And he was right. At the Center for International Migration and Development (CIM), Juliana was first given detailed personal advice on her options. Shortly after that, she received a call from Gideon Mankralo, who works as an advisor for the PSED project MEP.

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**'Today I have a restaurant,
the necessary kitchen equipment and
a promising future for me and my children –
and I owe it all to MEP.'**

During the phone call, Juliana talked about her dream of becoming self-employed as a restaurant owner and cook. MEP has made this dream come true. 'Today I have a restaurant, the necessary kitchen equipment and a promising future for me and my children – and I owe it all to MEP.' In order to realize her vision of having her own restaurant, the cook initially attended a basic training in 'Entrepreneurship and Financial Literacy'. Afterwards, she created her business plan in a subsequent workshop. Both training sessions have been carried out by MEP. In addition, the PSED component provided Juliana's equipment such as a stove burner, pans and pots, chest freezer, other kitchen utensils, tables and seats.

MEP opens eyes

Like Juliana, unfortunately, many Ghanaians in Germany suffer from unemployment. Misled by incorrect or only partially correct information, they leave their home country to find out that in Ghana they basically had every opportunity to build a future. The chances have just not been consciously perceived or used. MEP is trying to change that.



Juliana Ashong can finally open up her own restaurant and bar in Accra.



In the future, the restaurant offers comfortable seating to 50 guests, which will be provided with delicious traditional Ghanaian meals prepared by Juliana and served by two service staff.



The 52-year-old cook gets all the necessary equipment such as a gas stove with tank, pots, pans, other kitchen utensils, tables and chairs from MEP.

Photos: GIZ © Natalie Rau

Linda Maka is a proud mother and also a food processing entrepreneur

Linda Maka managed the impossible: She turned her last savings of 200 Ghana Cedi (about 35 Euro) into her flourishing business: Salbix Foods. She received the necessary support such as trainings to build the knowledge and skills and equipment to expand her production from the Migration and Employment Promotion (MEP) component within the Programme for Sustainable Economic Development (PSED).

Under the label Salbix Foods, Linda Maka produces a healthy and tasty cereal mixture, which is locally known as *Tom Brown*.

'But everybody who assumes that my cerealmix is any ordinary breakfast cereal is wrong', says the 40-year-old laughing.



The 40-year-old Linda Maka is very happy: Soon, her Salbix Foods cerealmix could also be available in German supermarkets and pharmacies.

Photo: GIZ © Natalie Rau

In fact, the cerealmix is a dietary supplement for special (medical) purposes. Originally, Linda developed her cereal powder in 2016 for her daughter Samelle, who didn't want to eat any commercial baby food after weaning. Close to despair, Linda consulted with doctors and specialists. At the end of this process, Salbix Foods' cerealmix emerged: a 100% organic cerealmix blend of brown rice, wheat, millet, oats and high-protein soybeans - with no added sugar, salt or preservatives. Salbix' cerealmix is not only qualified for feeding on malnourished babies and toddlers or slowly weaning babies from breast milk, but for the whole family depending on its preparation: take it as a diet shake instead of a meal for weight loss or as a protein shake for muscle building or simply as a delicious breakfast porridge or smoothie.

'The MEP training opened my eyes. During the training, we were shown how to start a serious business.'

The mother started preparing her cereal powder in child-friendly portions in her own kitchen. Thanks to MEP she is now producing and bottling the mixture on a massive scale. In early 2018, the trained social studies teacher couldn't find a job because of a hiring freeze. So, Linda attended a training in 'Entrepreneurship and Financial Literacy'. 'The MEP training opened my eyes. It became clear to me: I had to make a business out of the cerealmix, I had to take the lead again for my own life. During the training, we were shown how to start a serious business', says Linda about her experience with MEP. 'I always thought that starting and registering a company was tedious and time consuming. The training disabused me. Just a few days after the training, Salbix Foods was an officially registered business.'

In another GIZ workshop, the 40-year-old entrepreneur drew up her business plan under guidance of the MEP units' regional advisor and decided to take her cerealmix to the next level: Linda is thinking about expanding her product line by adding cereal and protein bars as well as shakes enriched with extra soy protein and natural flavours like pure cocoa. She also wants to export the cerealmix - initially to Germany and then to the whole world.

She is currently getting her product thoroughly tested to get all the necessary certificates. In order to make production more professional, MEP is supporting Linda with an industrial milling, processing and packaging machine.

Angela Merkel already knows Linda and her mix

The former teacher expresses her appreciation to GIZ for the opportunity to expand her business and develop an export market. Through PSED-MEP, Linda introduced her product to Angela Merkel in August 2018. The German Chancellor visited Ghana as part of her working trip to West Africa – accompanied by a business delegation consisting of representatives of top German companies, all of which are very interested in Linda and of course Salbix Foods. ‘The mix would be excellent for the vegan market, I was told’, Linda is currently in negotiations with some German investors to offer the cerealmix in Germany. So far, pharmacies, supermarkets, baby suppliers and corner shops in Accra already sell the Salbix’ cerealmix.

PSED networking event for start ups

On the occasion of the Chancellor’s visit, PSED initiated a networking event for young start-ups just like Linda, which took place at the Impact Hub in Accra. The Hub is a start-up incubator that literally provides space for growth and networking to emerging companies in a variety of industries. In addition, it provides them with the necessary infrastructure and tools to establish themselves on the market. Besides Salbix, many other freshly founded, innovative companies such as Cibus Technologies or Brand E (in the bar on the right) had the chance to present themselves and their ideas to the Chancellor, Gerd Müller, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, and Angela Merkel’s high-ranking business delegation.

Ghana is becoming increasingly attractive as an investment country for the German economy. For this reason, Merkel and her compatriots used the PSED event to get an idea of Ghana’s economical infrastructure and its start-up scene.

Mini-fair, lounge discussion and Makerspace

Part of the networking event with Merkel was a mini-exhibition during which the start-ups introduced themselves and their products and services. A lounge discussion has given selected founders the opportunity to speak with the Chancellor about the opportunities and risks of the Ghanaian start-up scene and possible approaches to support. In the Impact Hub Makerspace, the chancellor has been shown a newly developed composting system that can revolutionize waste management in Ghana.



German Chancellor Angela Merkel (r.) gets comprehensive information from GIZ-supported founder Linda Maka (l.) about Linda’s start-up Salbix Foods.



The Gizzeo bio digester was presented to Angela Merkel (right) by its two inventors Desmond Koney (front) and Andrew Quartey (back) from Cibus Technologies.



Brand E is a branding company which produces creative, customized and long-lasting paper bags for businesses and individuals.

Derick Dugu has found his destiny in agriculture

Asked about his private and professional future, Derick Dugu would not have been able to give a clear answer until recently. Although the 24-year-old Ghanaian transformed his early passion for electronics through apprenticeship after his Senior Secondary Education, he was somehow still looking for a balance in life.

‘The apprenticeship was a good decision. After my apprenticeship, I even thought of taking lessons in ICT to improve my skills in app development. Both fields have always been of great interest to me. But unfortunately, I have not been able to secure formal employment in these areas since the available vacancies were more advanced, especially for the ICT’, says Derick.

Therefore, after the training in ‘Entrepreneurship and Financial Literacy’ Derick chose a completely different profession.

‘If I hadn’t been referred to the GIZ training by the Association of Small Scale Industries (ASSI) branch in Konongo, I wouldn’t be where I am today.’

‘Our facilitator instructed us to think of other business opportunities apart from the ones we were originally working in. That was an eye-opening experience’, explains the young Ghanaian.



Okra, also known as Gumbo or Banya, is originally from Ethiopia. It’s an important vegetable especially in the African and Mediterranean cuisine.

Photo: GIZ © Neha Deshmukh



Derick Dugu’s okra farm is his pride and joy. Therefore, he protects every single plant with a net against external influences.

Photo: GIZ © Gifty Afi Cudjoe

Thanks to the training Derick Dugu is now a proud okra farmer and commercial goat rearer. The training was offered by PSED-MEP.

‘Due to the imparted knowledge in business creation, management and finance, I’ve developed a more open view of possible businesses. If I hadn’t been referred to the GIZ training by the Association of Small Scale Industries (ASSI) branch in Konongo, I wouldn’t be where I am today’, Derick continues.

Who knows if he’d still be in Ghana?

The young farmer is from Konongo in the Ashanti region. The region is a migration hotspot, possibly due to its history. The people there have always been characterized by a strong entrepreneurial spirit that often let them forget about national borders.

Fortunately, Derick Dugu’s ambition has been channelled into a promising future in Ghana. He is one of 121 potential migrants who have been trained in the Ashanti Region to strengthen their professional skills to realize their full potential.

William Opare Mintah is excellent

Ubora is Swahili and means excellence or high-quality standards and this is exactly what William Opare Mintah promises with his courier service Ubora Express: an extremely fast and precise delivery of consignments or execution of errands of all kinds in and around Accra, Ghana.

Extremely fast delivery is what Ubora services provide, because the 29-year-old relies on motorcycles that can handle the often-stagnant traffic in the Ghanaian capital skilfully. Currently, William owns six motorcycles and employs five more drivers with his fledgling company. But soon our fleet of vehicles will increase. I plan to buy motorized tricycles and a van for larger jobs', says William proudly of his expansion plans.

Only half a year ago, the young Ghanaian would not have dreamed of such a professional success.

'After completing my Bachelor of Science in Business Management at the University of Development Research in Wa (capital of the Upper West Region in Ghana), I simply couldn't find employment and when I finally got a job, it was on a contract basis, which was not extended after the first year. I was unemployed, despite my university degree', says William of his initial dilemma. A phenomenon that encounters many young Ghanaians of all educational levels.

'My friend told me about the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and its Sustainable Economic Development Programme.'

But the 29-year-old did not like the idea of sitting at home and waiting for a commitment to one of his applications.

He continues: 'To be honest, I thought of trying my luck in European or African foreign countries.' Fortunately, a friend William has prevented this from happening. 'My friend told me about the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and its Sustainable Economic Development Programme.'

I was told that the Migration and Employment Promotion (MEP) project, specifically targets young Ghanaians like myself, who are thinking of migrating, or who have already emigrated, and who intend to return to Ghana. My friend advised me that MEP opens up new perspectives for such people, for example through trainings that give their participants something special in order to be successful in



William Opare Mintah and the team of his motorcycle courier service Ubora Express deliver in the shortest possible time.

Photo: GIZ © Natalie Rau

finding employment, the path to self-employment or reintegration in Ghana and the local labour market.

William initially took part in business and financial literacy training. As a result, he has embarked on the idea of becoming self-employed with his delivery and courier service Ubora.

Williams migration plans are gone

'I already owned a motorcycle. Using it for a business seemed obvious to me after MEP training. So, I attended a second business start-up workshop. It was there that Ubora came into being based on shared brainstorming', says the young entrepreneur proudly. 'The Swahili company name is now the only thing that reminds me of my migration plans.' Swahili is the most widely used language of the people in Kenya and Uganda.

In the one-week workshop, William was also directly supported in creating his business model and business plan. Thanks to GIZ, William does not have to worry about his applications at home today. Today, he is his own boss and, together with his five employees, delivers top performance in the truest sense of the word.