

Unleashing the Global Potential of Shea Businesses through Transformative Business Coaching

Women led businesses are a key part of the shea value chain across the shea producing



countries, including Ghana. While these micro, small, and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) are central to the shea ecosystem, serving as off takers of shea kernels and/or butter from co-operatives, they often face challenges that limit their ability to scale up, access credit for expansion and compete internationally. Therefore, a major pillar of the Shea Business Empowerment Program (SBEP) is the provision of business coaching to 300 MSMEs, specifically focusing on women and youth led businesses.

The project carried out business diagnostic assessments to enable the program to offer the MSMEs direct coaching. These assessments were designed to evaluate the organisational capacity, business management systems and structures of these enterprises. According to the assessment, 46% of the enterprises lacked a business or investment plan, which invariably hindered their ability to access much needed capital.



Working with a leading business training firm, Tradeline Consult Ltd, the business coaching services were tailored to the specific needs of the MSME, in line with the detailed business diagnostic conducted at the start of the coaching. The assessment highlighted the businesses' strengths, which would be further developed to consolidate growth, as well as the key challenges faced by the participating MSMEs, ensuring business specific solutions are adopted for optimum impact. Broadly, the coaching focused on operations management, sales and cash book management, niche marketing and export readiness, among others. Over 215 MSMEs have been supported, with 60% being youth led and 72% women owned.

"I participated in the 5 day Shea Business Empowerment Program SME Masterclass training held in Accra in May 2023 that covered various aspects of running my business, including operations, sales and cash book, supply chain management and business resilience. With my newfound knowledge, I am now able to better track expenses, reduce waste and optimize pricing. Additionally, through the entrepreneurial coaching received from Tradeline Consult Limited, I was able to access a loan of GHS 50,000 (approximately USD 4,000) from Fidelity Bank to enable me to purchase chocolate melanger and raw materials for production." **Yvonne Nuoriyee, CEO of Edible Treats**

A ripple effect created by the growth in these MSMEs has been the resulting impact on job creation. Ten businesses participating in the program have reported an increase in workforce to accommodate the changes being made to their business operations. Characteristically, these jobs have been provided to young people in the areas of social media management, sales and cash book management, marketing and sourcing.

"When I joined Sava Shea Company Limited, the opportunity to better use social media and efficient cashbook management systems to drive increased sales and overall business growth jumped out at me." With the generous support and guidance from the founder (Ruth), I have been able to create consumer-facing content that tells the story of Sava Shea, and we have noticed an increase in customers who identify with our company's values." **Gideon Neequaye, Operations Manager**



In October 2023, the GSA completed comprehensive monitoring of the business coaching pillar of SBEP, adopting a mixed methodology involving interviews, questionnaires and document reviews. The monitoring visits to the sampled MSMEs showed all the businesses visited had seen improvements in how they conducted business. Ten companies had hired a total of 22 young people to take on more production, 3 had received growth capital of GHS 358,000 to help them expand and 7 were in various stages of applying for loans from financial institutions.

As part of efforts to build business resilience, particularly within a fast changing regional and global economy, the next phase of the program will focus on strengthening the program's direct coaching process, expanding market access through exhibitions and enhancing access to low cost financing to MSMEs.