



• Kofi Baah Agyepong (2nd from right), CEO of the Youth Employment Agency, interacting with some of the beneficiaries

YEA starts BEAP with 1,452 businesses

THE Youth Employment Agency (YEA) has rolled out its Business and Employment Assistance Programme (BEAP) with 1,452 small businesses aimed at bolstering economic recovery, post-COVID-19.

The BEAP, designed to support 10,000 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and startups severely impacted by the pandemic, began in May, this year, while 1,452 businesses were placed in March this year.

It provides a lifeline to MSMEs within various sectors such as chop bars, mechanic shops, fashion designers, pharmacies, and schools, offering salary support of GH¢500 per recruited employee, with the employer supplementing the remainder.

The measure is to mitigate financial strains faced by businesses highlighted in a 2023 survey by the Ghana Statistical Service.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Youth Employment Agency (YEA), Kofi Baah Agyepong, has been touring some of the payment centres in the Volta, Ashanti and Bono regions to inspect the exercise at first hand.

He told journalists that offering salary supplements to enable the MSMEs to engage more hands was a vital support amid ongoing economic challenges.

Mr Agyepong said the disbursement to the first 1,500 verified BEAP beneficiaries marked a significant milestone in YEA's efforts to alleviate unemployment and support struggling enterprises.

The businesses constitute the first phase of the BEAP initiative as more businesses will be added every month.

The YEA CEO explained that BEAP did not only provide a lifeline to SMEs but also

aimed to foster employment opportunities across Ghana, targeting 20,000 beneficiaries as part of its broader initiative.

"YEA remains committed to utilising sustainable funding from the Communication Service Tax exclusively for job creation and economic empowerment initiatives," Mr Agyepong stressed.

In addition to BEAP, he said, YEA had been instrumental in various employment and skills training programmes, collaborating closely with state agencies to enhance community services, health care and vocational training opportunities.

"Targeting various establishments such as chop bars, pharmacies, schools, and more, BEAP strives to alleviate the financial burden on these enterprises while bolstering employment opportunities for Ghana's workforce.

"The plan is to support 10,000 companies, facilitating the employment of approximately 20,000 individuals," Mr Agyepong said.

He mentioned some of the successes of YEA as the recruitment of 15,000 Community Protection Assistants working with the Ghana Police Service; 6,000 Community Health Workers working with the Ghana Health Service; 1,500 Prison Office Assistants working with the Ghana Prisons Service, and 4,000 workers on the Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme as some of the milestones in 2022 and 2023.

The YEA CEO said the government through the agency had recruited 5,000 insurance agents for the National Insurance Commission with base pay.

The YEA Job Centre has also secured 13,000 direct jobs, while 2,000

dressmaking trainees were undergoing apprenticeship training with GH¢500 monthly support.

"Currently, YEA is recruiting another 20,000 young people to be trained and set up in 10 different trade areas being carpentry, masonry, plumbing, hairdressing, beauty care, auto works, general electricals, Plaster of Paris (POP) works, steel works, welding and fabrication and painting," Mr Agyepong said.

The CEO added that arrangements had been made for training to start next week.

"YEA initiatives impacted various sectors, including community services, health, entrepreneurship, and vocational training, experienced substantial growth, offering a beacon of hope for Ghanaian youth seeking stable employment and entrepreneurial ventures," Mr Agyepong added.

"YEA remains committed to utilising sustainable funding from the Communication Service Tax exclusively for job creation and economic empowerment initiatives".