

32 Young women receive business starter packs under Empower360

By Diana Mensah



THIRTY-TWO young women, including many persons with disability (PWDs), have received entrepreneurial training and fully stocked business startup packs to establish their own creative businesses.

The kits are designed for makeup artistry, resin crafts and soap production, areas in which they received the training.

Though the kits are more than working tools, they symbolise launchpads for economic empowerment, income generation and self-reliance.

Dubbed "Empower360", it is an initiative

under the Ghana Grows Programme, a flagship transition programme implemented by MasterCard Foundation in partnership with the Springboard Road Show Foundation.

The programme targets young people aged 15 to 35, and offers a comprehensive model that blends vocational training, personal and business development, and psychosocial support.

The intensive five-day hands-on training programme was designed to equip young people with the skills, tools and mentorship they need to build sustainable careers in the creative industry.

Participants will also be mentored and guided to ensure they grow into successful entrepreneurs capable of creating employment opportunities for others.

Needs

Speaking at the closing of the Empower360, the Executive Director of Springboard Road Show Foundation, Comfort Ocran said the second edition of the Empower360 evolved in response to the needs of participants engaged in the earlier Ghana Grows Programme.

"While our initial focus was on mindset-shifting and exposing youth to vast opportunities in agriculture and technical, vocational education and training (TVET), the feedback was clear that inspiration alone wasn't enough. They needed tools, training and mentorship to take action," she explained.

Mrs Ocran said even though they saw the opportunities and were ready to invest in them, they lacked either a startup kit or clear

guidance on how to engage in the field.

That, she said, led to a recalibration of the programme, resulting in Empower360 — a hands-on, skills-based training model—coupled with the provision of starter kits.

Mrs Ocran said the first pilot in December trained 24 young women in mushroom farming and that each of them successfully launched their own enterprise.

Encouraged by that success, the foundation expanded the model to include creative sectors for the second edition, with 32 participants selected from youth clubs, girls' networks, and the Ghana Grows database of over 420,000 youth, she added.

"Empower360 is more than skills training. It's about helping young people thrive and live balanced, dignified lives," Mrs Ocran said.

She said the participants were also trained on financial literacy, where they learned to track earnings, reinvest profits, manage expenses and build for the future.

Scale

The Technical Director of Springboard Road Show Foundation, Rev. Albert Ocran, emphasised the scale of the initiative, saying "the initiative has over the years been encouraging young people to seek dignified and fulfilling work in agriculture, agribusiness and other age-based sectors".

"Through our national efforts under the Ghana Grows Programme, we've engaged more than 420,000 young people across the country, organised them into clubs, and introduced them to resources like the Career Clinic and other youth-focused interventions," he added.

Mr Ocran outlined the three-phase design of Empower360, adding that 20 youth-led organisations had been identified and trained to cascade their expertise.

"What we are doing is igniting confidence in these young people. When you give them the right mindset, the right tools and the right support, they don't just survive; they innovate," he said.



• Participants in Empower360 Initiative