

Report for WSI
about the Partnership WorldSkills Germany – WorldSkills Ghana
"Building the WorldSkills movement in Ghana"

1. The Project

Ghana was welcomed as the 81st member of the WorldSkills International (WSI) family in 2019. As part of the partnership program, a long-standing WorldSkills member accompanies a new member.

WorldSkills Germany (WSG) has taken on this task for Ghana. With a lot of passion and enthusiasm, WSG staff and experts support the first steps towards a national WorldSkills movement in Ghana. Great attention is paid to the sustainable development of an organizational structure. All stakeholders, especially representatives of the private industry in Ghana, are to be brought on board. A steering committee with representatives of these stakeholders is currently being established. Most of the support goes to building up the WorldSkills Ghana Secretariat. This secretariat is supposed to guarantee the practical implementation of all activities. A first challenge for the WSG team is the support in recruiting employees for the secretariat. Based on the planning and implementation of a national competition, the structures, and working methods are to be developed, tested, and practiced for independent work together with these employees.

2. Our approach and maxims for action

Together with those responsible for WorldSkills Ghana (WSGh), WSG is helping to set up a WorldSkills movement in Ghana. We see WSGh and ourselves as equal partners. To generate sustainability, we start working with our friends in Ghana from where they are currently. All our action steps are based on the available resources, both in terms of the people available and in terms of infrastructure, technical equipment, material and training curriculum inside TVET Colleges.

The maxim for every single action is "Realistic at the highest level, motivating for everyone involved, combined with mutual trust". At the same time, we always keep an eye on the WorldSkills standards. The work approach focuses first and foremost on raising awareness in each activity. The motto is "Change of mindset" for everyone involved, regardless of position and reputation. If we succeed on a broad basis, then WorldSkills Ghana can operate successfully and independently in the long term and sustainably.

3. Goal and Objectives

Goal

The goal of this agreement is to define how WorldSkills Germany and COTVET of Ghana will collaborate in building and expanding a national WorldSkills movement in Ghana (WorldSkills Ghana) from 1 June 2020 until the WorldSkills Competition 2022 in Shanghai.

Objectives

In order to achieve this goal, WS Germany together with COTVET has agreed on the following objectives:

- a) Establish and expand the organizational structures of the WSGh Secretariat
- b) Development of skills teams: experts, technical supporters, skills sponsors
- c) Train experts, develop training and performance centers
- d) Train Competitors; regarding their skills (soft and hard) and attitudes needed for competition
- e) Organize, plan, project management and implementation of the national competitions and preparation of experts and participants for international competitions

4. What happened so far

In spring 2020, an MoU was signed between WSGh and WSG based on an ambitious project plan. The German Cooperation for International Cooperation (GIZ) agreed for the financing of the project. With Michael Büchele, WorldSkills Germany was able to gain a very experienced colleague who was already actively involved in the development of WorldSkills structures in other countries. In addition, Alba Losert, another experienced colleague, joined the team. Together with the team from WorldSkills Germany, a project and contact group was set up for the colleagues in Ghana.

The Corona situation made the further planning process very difficult. No on-site visits to Ghana, no invitations for WSGh experts to Germany, postponement of the national competition. Thanks to the efforts on both sides, the activities have been relocated to the virtual space as far as possible. "Online meeting platforms have become our communication tools," reports Michael Büchele. "It was thus possible to successfully advance the project - albeit at a greatly reduced pace and, in some cases, with simplified content." When the airport in Accra reopened at the end of September, a visit to Ghana was organized for the first time. In conjunction with appropriate safety measures, initial training courses were held for the experts in Accra and Kumasi.

In addition, the possibilities of holding a national competition in autumn this year were investigated. First contacts with the private sector could be established as an important prerequisite for this. So-called “Skill Organizing Teams” (SoT) have now been set up for 14 skills. These teams are responsible for the creation of the test projects (competition tasks) including infrastructure and material, assessment criteria, workshop planning and layout and the other necessary tasks for the successful implementation of the competition. In March, these teams were adequately trained on site in Ghana by specialist staff from the WSG team.

For the organization of the national competition, a project plan was drawn up by the employees of the WSGh secretariat with the support of WSG. To support the first phase of implementation, Alba Losert from the WSG team worked as a temporary employee in the WSGh secretariat in May and June. For five weeks, Alba worked on "Change the mindset", i.e. being active through role model effect, motivation, creativity, but above all through eye level and all that is available in Ghana in terms of opportunities and resources.

5. Working with what is available - support based on mutual understanding and trust! - First on-site experiences

"It was a great honor to have been invited by WorldSkills Ghana to create sustainable structures together," said Alba Losert. One of the first steps was to find out how it is possible to make the dream of WSGh a reality based on the possibilities available. This brainstorming process was essential to tap into all the resources and options available in Ghana. “Realizing ideas that can be implemented and that can be built on the available resources are catalysts and carriers of motivation for me. Using the given resources and building something is empowering, fun, context relevant, and most important activates self-agency through thinking, doing, learning together.” For Alba Losert the process is as important as the outcome.

"In Ghana there is the saying 'what comes around goes around'", says Losert. “That means that our way of thinking has an impact on the environment.” In the beginning, little could be implemented on site, as each measure required money. “Then we asked ourselves whether we really need money to create opportunities?” So a rethink started and the WSGh team used opportunities that arose through contacts, team spirit, available resources and motivation. This became evident when Mr. Arko Domotey, Director of the Accra Technical Training Center (ATTC), provided office space and students from the Art Department helped Mamudu Hamidu, the Technical Delegate of WSGh, to renovate the classroom and others helped with electrical installations. This could also be used as a learning experience.

According to Losert, the following question arises for the process of building up the organizational and competitive structures in Ghana: "How can we create a working environment in which everyone feels welcome

who wants to get involved and contribute to the WSGH movement?" Inspire the team members to build their qualifications and motivation. The aim is to enable the ability to act from within. Losert makes it clear: "The first question of the day in the WSGH team is therefore: 'What are we doing today?'" Supporting the process from the ground up means asking for answers that come from within, from the Ghana-Team itself.

The approach of building capacities that will last in the long term and will be carried by those involved makes sense insofar as the networks and opportunities created by a platform like WorldSkills can be used optimally. This idea of not only focusing on the competition, but also creating conditions that carry the spirit of WorldSkills, also between competitions, is a catalyst for the revival of motivation and the practical training of skills. "The question of who sets the agenda is extremely important in the process," says Losert. "This is where the team comes in. How do you want to get involved, where do you see the greatest need, what do you want to change in terms of skills?" The personal freedom to shape one's own responsibilities offers space for innovation and distinguishes WorldSkills Ghana.

6. Mamudu Hamidu the Technical Delegate of WSGh, his personal impression about the first fruits of the cooperation

Being a Technical Delegate for Ghana is not fun but interesting. As a young member of WSGh keeping the movement comes with a lot of hardship, misunderstanding, fun influences, and willingness for key actor in Ghana to accept change of attitude to practical skills. Most people dream of higher standards, big event and relegating the key task of getting closer to the young people and teachers of TEVT. It was like a lonely boy on an Island with weird dreams. Even though I had a different thinking about skill development in Ghana, my observation at WorldSkills Kazan 2019 gave me hope, but we are probably doing a lot of decisions with practical skills development somehow in the wrong way. I cried when I looked at the young and the old working together to fix everything in and around the competition centre, competitors, experts and all supporting groups just focused on delivery skills with discipline and share-will. I asked myself "what the hell have Ghana and some countries being doing?". It was revealing and shocking! However, while some countries were busily gathering resources, others, I cannot mention but may whisper into anyone's ears, were just missing the reality of tapping into this rich resource for their national development. Hmm!

After skimming and scanning for the right strategies, the Ghana observer team led by Fred Kyei Asamoah the Executive Director for Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET) now a Commission for TVET (CTVET) met with WSG team led by Hubert Romer, their Official Delegate. Funny enough I was asked to make sure there should be a cooperation between WSGh and WSG. How do I start?! A crazy guy trying to always change the way of skills development in my university, it was an opportunity to

help my country see this way of life which I have been pushing. The reason? A lot of waste in the TVET system. Young people's precious energy is wasted without or with insignificant technical know-how. I am always sad because when I look at the youth statistics in the USAID Country Development Cooperation (CDC), Ghana, about 50% of the population are below 30 years with barely little structured skills. This is scary if their energy is not channelled to a positive one. I saw that WorldSkills is the right platform to give the youth and TVET system the positive energy.

In 2020, the partnership negotiation began. The question was: How do I do it? I initiated a conversation through virtual means. It was difficult initially. But by adopting new self-motivated strategies and involving Fred in some meeting, I had the clue to fish and get the bull by the horn. As things were being structured in the WSGh Secretariat which has barely anything, Hubert and his team managed to work with us to get the first draft of activities both parties would have to engage in. WSGh drafted with WSG the MoU notwithstanding the rise of COVID-19 pandemic. Agreements were reached in this beautiful way through virtual means.

The physical presence of partnership was realized when one worried man once met in Kazan but saw me asking more about realities in practical skills stepped his foot in Ghana late 2020 after our hectic zonal skills competition despite Corona. Guess who? His name is Michael Buechele from Austria represented as the partnership advisor. It was a night-day wonder. This did not end there. To work effectively as a team, he introduces Alba Losert for support and assistance. So far, a lot of progress has been seen. WSGh has seen restructuring through drawing of organisational structure, expanding of staff, and begging for office space within a TVET institution.

The seek for WSGh Secretariat to be in a TVET institution was more of a crazy thinking with a lot of resistance from all parties. The question of beauty stood in between. Many say it must look nice. However, the initial team made up of Mamudu, Michael and Alba had really thought through achieving real success and benefit of WSGh for the benefit of students, teacher, industry, and the public. This team agreed, if we really want to solve the problem of employment in Ghana, we will have to tackle the bull by the horn not the tail. The team persisted and to the surprise and admiration of all we now have our Secretariat in an institution happily working with changing ways of seeing practical skill using what we called the 3Ms: Man/Woman Power - Materials - Machine and the principle of 5S thus sort, set in order, shine, standardize, and sustain.

WSGh with WSG team successfully developed WSGh National Competition Action Plan for late August 2021. This plan led to the training of our Skill Organizing Teams (SOTs) to understand teamwork and how to deliver a skill according WorldSkills Occupational Standard Specification (WSOSS). Based on this, Ghana experts

are being marched with German experts for coaching NOT according to German specification but what is the available reality in Ghana.

Aside these, both parties tried their first approach of keeping things simple but on high quality in delivering our Open-Door Day meeting with student, teacher experts and the public. This had a different turn of the normal skills event by letting all senior officials doing cutting skills to know how to understand the skill competitors. It was really fascinating when they were judged in front all the well seated participants under a camera in a WSI judgement and measurement style. All students felt motivated with bright future. The Open-Door Day ended with the outdooring of WSGh and WSG partnership agreement. This was a huge motivation for all teams and WSGh stakeholder.

Notwithstanding this strives, the team are aware of the tough work ahead in transferring these ideas to all institutions and every young and adult in Ghana and export to other Africa countries to understand that TVET can solve all problem through WSI BUT it must be real and not dreaming too much. Else the young people would still be a burden and subsequently produce lip-service adult with no actions.

Let us keep running and make it real.

7. Résumé and prospects

The national media have since taken active notice of the special activities of the WS Ghana team and the higher-level bodies.

WSG has assigned a trainer to each skill or SOT. The WSGh trainers and later also the participants are prepared for the National Competition in virtual training sessions. WSGh and WSG also have African skills in mind, as well as the participation of a selected group in WorldSkills Shanghai 2022.

Thanks to the support and promotion of the project by the Organization Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and its international partners, fundamental and sustainable structures can be put in place. They should lead to the establishment of Capacity Building Centers. Furthermore, we want to be able to combine training and employment on site in order to be able to use the impact of the WorldSkills training and competitions for vocational training in Ghana.

"It is our wish to integrate other nations into this project network with Ghana in order to be able to further use and spread the mutual learning effect," says Hubert Romer.