

Entrepreneurship for Opportunity Actualization (EOpAct)



FINAL REPORT

A Report on Entrepreneurship for Opportunity Actualization (EOpAct)

An Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products (ASNAPP) Project

Funded by Africa Lead II

2015-2017

This report was produced under the coordination of the Entrepreneurship for Opportunity Actualization (EOpAct) Program, an Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products (ASNAPP) Program with funding from Africa Lead II.

In implementing this project, ASNAPP Ghana was supported by Agri-Impact Consult, ASNAPP South Africa & Zambia, ASNAPP Senegal and Society for Conservation (SEC)-Liberia and agribusiness firms dotted around the continent as host firms.

Daniel Acquaye and Juliana Asante-Dartey provided strategic advice and technical backstopping to the program. Larry Amekuse and Nana Nkansah Minnoh Riverson directly supervised the implementation of the program. Joseph Agyiri, Timothy Gyan, Gideon Mankralo, Kingsley Jectey, Evelyn Denchern and Emmanuel Boamah Martinson served as mentors and supervisors for interns.

We appreciate the contributions of the Africa Lead II team especially Toni Mpoy in the implementation of the project.

We also appreciate the contributions made by Host firms, SME's and Interns across the continent in the successful implementation of the EOpAct project.

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Glossary

AAIN	African Agribusiness Incubator Network
ACSL	Agri Commercial Services Limited
AIETI	Agri-Impact Entrepreneurship and Technology Institute
ALP	Agribusiness Leadership Program
ASNAPP	Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products
AU	African Union
BEEE	Becoming an Entrepreneur, Employer of or Employable
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DFDC	Deciduous Fruit Development Chamber
EOPACT	Entrepreneurship for Opportunity Actualisation
ECOSIB	Entrepreneurship for Commercial Seed Incubation Business
FTF	Feed the Future
GAEC	Ghana Atomic Energy Commission
GGC	Ghana Grains Council
GHC	Ghana cedis
HND	Higher National Diploma
ICT	Information And Communications Technology
IPN	Internship Partnership Network
IT	Information Technology
KITA	Kumasi Institute of Tropical Agriculture
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
MAS	Meridian Agricultural Services
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Microsoft Suite

SADEEV	Sahel Agriculture Durable Environnement et Energie Verts
SEC	Society for Conservation
SHS	Senior High School
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TOR	Terms of Reference
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YEA	Youth Employment Agency

Project Profile

Item	Description
Name of Grant Beneficiary	Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products (ASNAPP)
Name and title of the contact person	Juliana Asante-Dartey Country Director - Ghana
Name of Partners in the Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASNAPP South Africa & Zambia • ASNAPP Senegal • Society for Environmental Conservation • Agri-Impact Consult
Title of the action	Entrepreneurship for Opportunity Actualization (EOpAct)
Cooperative Agreement No.	AID-OAA-A-13-00085- “Feed the Future: Building Capacity for African Agricultural Transformation (Africa Lead II)
Start date and end date of the reporting period	August 2015 – September, 2017
EOpAct Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 40 graduates, 25 SMEs/start-ups and 20 students enrolled for internship programme. ➤ 15 agribusiness firms signed onto the internship programme. ➤ 5 Agribusiness firms signed on to develop long term internship programme. ➤ 20 successful internship programmes profiled. ➤ 50% of graduate interns employed. ➤ 70% of start-up interns expand business.

Executive Summary

USAID through Africa Lead funded Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products (ASNAPP) to implement Entrepreneurship for Opportunity Actualization (EOpAct) Program in five African Countries (Ghana, South Africa, Zambia, Senegal and Liberia) as part of the Africa Lead II internship-based Agribusiness Leadership Program (ALP).

EOpAct aimed at providing distinctive services to graduates, youth and women to build their technical, managerial and vocational capacities to fit into agricultural value chains, job markets and be better equipped to take advantage of business opportunities. EOpAct provided an “on-the-job” internship opportunities where graduates (Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges), youth and women were placed with firms to acquire hands-on, vocational and managerial skills to become Entrepreneurs, Employable or Employers.

Business Model

ASNAPP relied on its extensive business networks across the continent to introduce EOPACT to agribusiness organizations. Interested firms were made to apply, needs assessment done and firms profiled based on their needs and location. ASNAPP introduced the program to prospective interns that did a walk-in, or through a developed website and other students’ WhatsApp platforms. Interested students who applied were shortlisted based on the information provided on application forms and interviews conducted. After the selection, interns were trained to meet the needs of the host firms. Training topics covered included Entrepreneurship, Critical Thinking, Ethics and Basic Skills. Additionally, a few interns were further trained in greenhouse production techniques, open field production, pig production (using the IMO technology) and marketing at the request of host firms. Ideal interns were then matched to firms and host firms signed on by signing MOUs and or providing appointment letters.

EOpAct was implemented to contribute to four key objectives of IPN, namely;

- 1) Expand Africa Lead II’s existing network of intern-hosting companies and organizations
- 2) Provide a matching service by recruiting, placing, and supporting interns in appropriate host companies/organizations
- 3) Build the capacity of companies and organizations to develop their own in-house internship programs
- 4) Report on and publicize the results achieved by the IPN

The table below presents the summary of results achieved in line with the stated objectives above.

Objectives	Results
Expand Africa Lead II’s existing network of intern-hosting	Currently, the network has been boosted with over 40 agribusiness firms across Africa as against the targeted 15 . Over Fifty (50) firms were introduced to the Internship Program and Needs Assessment completed for forty (40) <i>firms</i> across the participating countries.

companies and organizations	Some of these firms are Ghana Grains Council, Agri-Commerical Services Limited, Panfida Farms, Rosh Pinnah, Meridian Agricultural Services African Agribusiness Incubator Network (AAIN), Agri-Impact Consult, Impact Capital Microfinance, Solution Oasis Limited, Ten P Farms, Sime Darby Plantation Liberia Incorporated, Greenfield Liberia Incorporated, Sahel Agriculture Durable Environnement et Energie Verts (SADEEV), Ikamva Tunnel Farming Cooperative, Klein Karoo Tunnel Farming Cooperative, De Fynne Nursery and Deciduous Fruit Development Chamber (DFDC).
Provide a matching service by recruiting, placing, and supporting interns in appropriate host companies/organizations	Of the expected 75 interns (Students/Graduates/SME's) to be enrolled, 95 were recruited, trained, placed and supported in host firms out of over 300 applicants. Twenty-seven (27) secured employment varying from 2 months to 12 months with other pursuing postgraduate studies. <i>This implies 60% of graduate Interns secured jobs exceeding the 50% target.</i>
Build the capacity of companies and organizations to develop their own in-house internship programs	Selected firms were assessed and workshops organised to build the capacities of host firms to develop their own in-house internship systems coupled with frequent visits to host firms. Six (6) firms indicated their interest in institutionalizing internship in their organization and took steps to institutionalise it with three MOU's developed. Two signed (one in Ghana and one in South Africa) to operationalise internship system as a long term feature of the institutions. The third in Ghana has been referred to the Board of Directors and still waiting for Board approval.
Report on and publicize the results achieved by the IPN	The documentation of lessons learnt and monitoring of interns' performance continues to be collected as it forms part of ASNAPP broad sustainability plan and fundraising tool. Key outcomes and critical success factors as well as challenges were shared with over 45 participants at the recently held lessons sharing workshop in Accra. Participants from four African countries are beneficiary of the documented lessons learnt. The event went viral on the electronic and print media.

As part of measures to ensure the continuity of EOpAct beyond the AfricaLead funding phase, ASNAPP will continue to provide guidance and work with firms that have shown interest to institutionalize the programme and assist any other that may come on board at a later stage even if that service may have to be offered at a very discounted fee or for free. In Ghana, ASNAPP is also exploring the possibility of realigning its activities to plug into the Government of Ghana's Funding under the Youth Employment Agency for internship development and is also implementing the minimal fee paying subscription for prospective students to cover the facilitation cost whiles firms contribute to the stipends for interns. Similarly, ASNAPP South Africa is fussed on collaborating with AFGRI and the government to deepen gains made under EOpAct.

1.0 BACKGROUND

About 65% of the total population of Africa are below the age of 35 years, and over 35% are between the ages of 15 and 35 years – making Africa the most youthful continent according to the AU Commission. Unemployment has become a major issue in many countries in Africa (Over 40% of the global jobless people are youth). Of Africa's unemployed, 60% are young people and youth unemployment rates are double those of adult unemployment in most African countries. Almost half (½) of the 10m graduates churned out of the over 668 universities in Africa yearly do not get jobs, Kelvin Balogun (President of Coca-Cola, Central, East & West Africa).

Whereas agriculture provides employment for more than 65% of the African population, there is a widening gap between industries' skills needs and the competence of recent graduates/youth entering the job market. Most of them are not exposed to business opportunities, lack hands-on, vocational and technical skills and don't have access to innovative technologies and business management services.

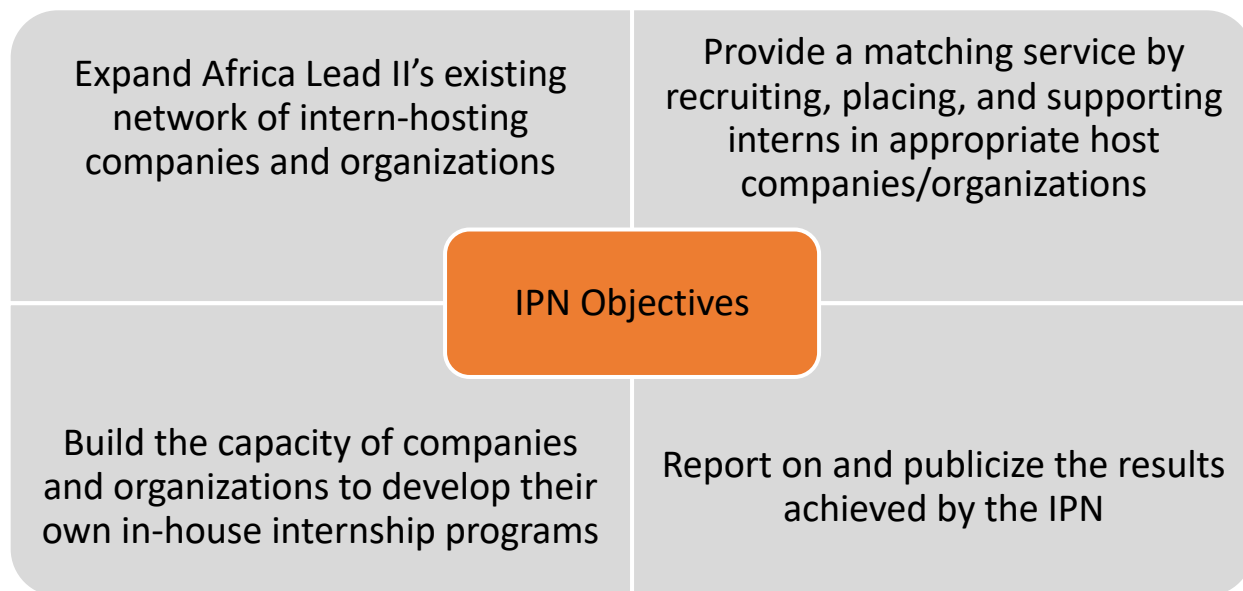
Most businesses have reduced their investments in training youth and young graduates since they tend to lose these trained personnel to competing companies without necessarily gaining value for their investment. It is against this backdrop that USAID through AfricaLead selected Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products (ASNAPP) to implement its Internship Partnership Network (IPN) program, focused on building the entrepreneurial and vocational skills of young people to exploit agribusiness opportunities.

EopAct builds on the significant progress attained by Africa Lead II's Agribusiness Leadership Program (ALP) which successfully developed internship or practicum placements for beneficiaries through a combination of on-the-job training, formal classroom instruction and informal interaction. The programme is consistent with the FTF and CAADP objectives which focuses on sustainably reducing global hunger, poverty and food and nutrition insecurity by tackling their root causes and employing proven strategies for achieving large scale and lasting impact.

Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products (ASNAPP) is an international value chain development NGO with the mission to build capacity to boost productivity, competitiveness and sustainability across agricultural value chains in Africa.

The project (IPN) christened Entrepreneurship for Opportunity Actualization (EOpAct) depicts the importance the project places on entrepreneurship skills development. EOpAct is intended to bridge skills-set gap between industry, academia and graduates. It seeks to sharpen the skills of young people to fit into industry while at the same time shaping the skills of SMEs to become productive, profitable and competitive. It is a purely hands-on industry related programme targeting the agricultural and agribusiness value chains specifically Horticulture, Livestock and Grains sector. Additionally, EOpAct is aimed at supporting agribusinesses firms to develop in-house internship programmes that will unearth youth talents towards industry value chain productivity. Ultimately, this program plans to adopt the BEEE principle (Becoming an Entrepreneur, Employer or Employable) meant to increase the number of skilled agribusiness

professionals who are expected to play an important role in contributing to private sector development and increased food security across Africa.



EOpAct is expected to work with three categories of beneficiaries (Interns) as indicated below;

Category	Description
Graduate Youth Interns	Graduates, especially those who have completed their National Service and are job-seeking and more anxious to get onto the job market; willing to learn and also ready for “on-the-job training”. It also aims at linking graduates to job opportunities.
Start-up Interns	The second category of interns will be start-ups and SMEs that have initiated their business but lack competence in certain managerial or technical skill. The project will arrange with firms/organizations with the requisite know-how to allow these SMEs enrol as interns so as to acquire the knowledge and upgrade their skills. Most of the interns here will include underserved entrepreneurs
Student Intern	Student interns will also be attached to firms for practical hands-on training during their long vacation to expose them to industry skills, establish linkages and offer opportunity for them to be engaged for full internship after their national services.

Overall EOpAct Targets/Results



Figure 1: EOpAct Targets

2.0 BUSINESS/OPERATION MODEL

A comprehensive model was developed to achieve the targets set based on the objectives of providing prospective host companies or internship service providers with interns whose background matched their human resource needs. A related aim was to offer interns opportunities to acquire skills, expertise and experience that will make them Entrepreneurs, Employers, or Employable (BEEE principle). Figure 2 presents the implementation outlook which is discussed in detail in subsequent sections.

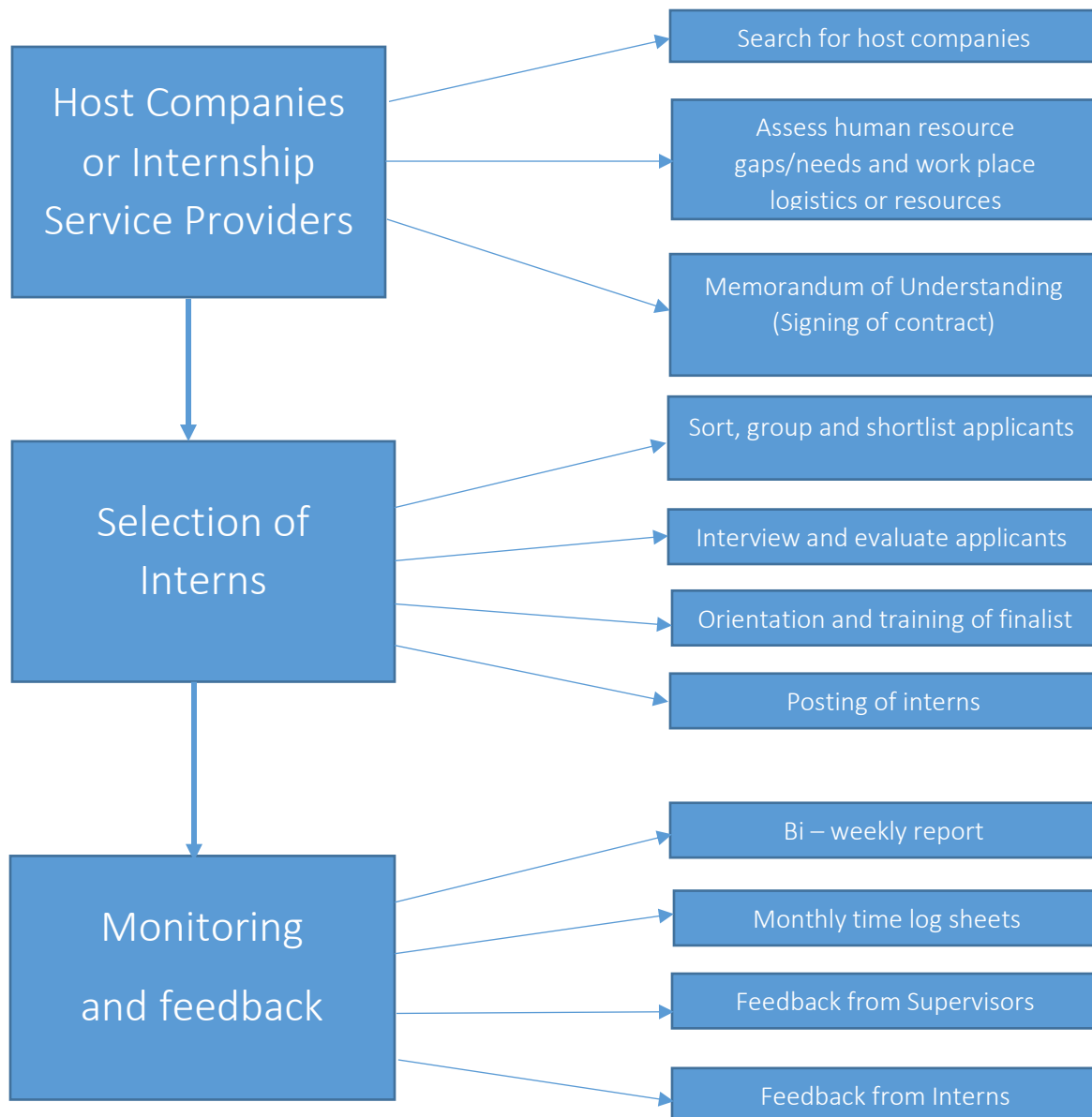


Figure 2: Operational Model

2.1 Geographical Coverage and Focus

The project focused on Interns (Graduate, Students and SMEs) in Five African Countries (Ghana, South Africa, Senegal, Zambia and Liberia) as presented in figure 3.

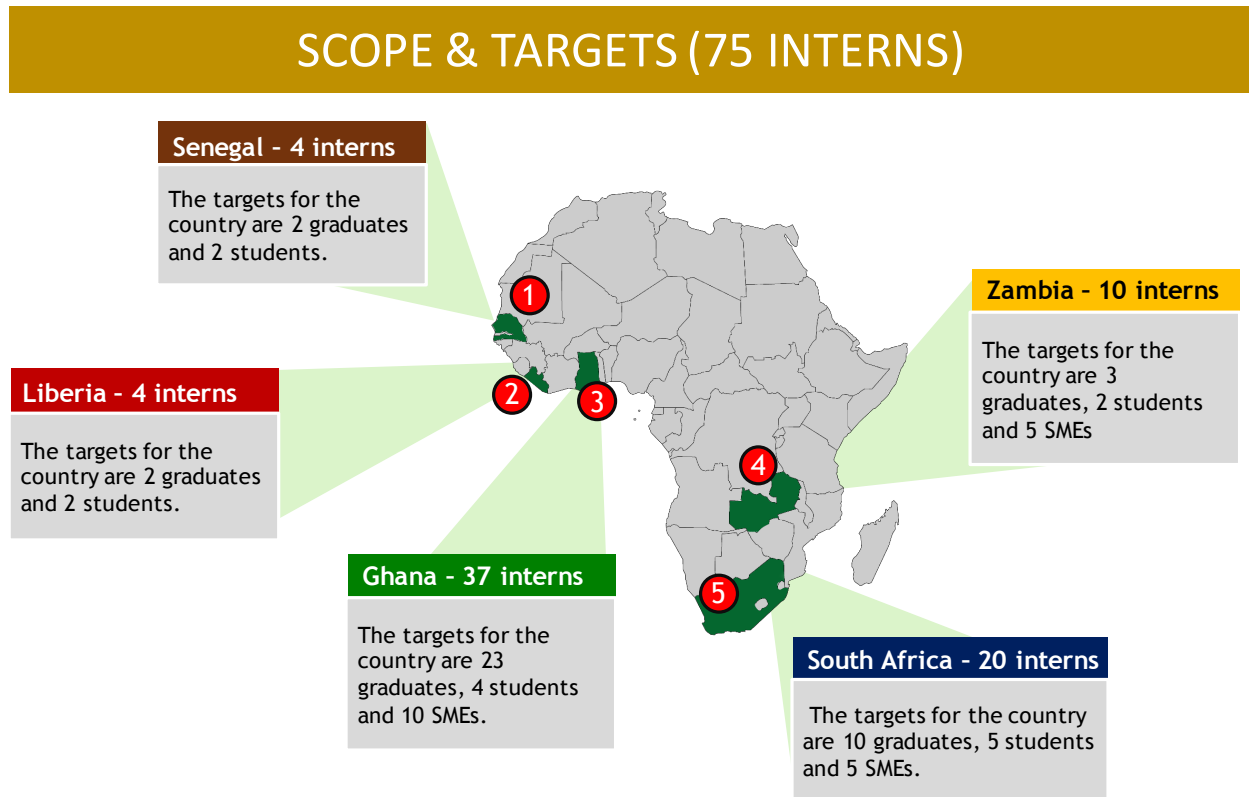


Figure 3: Geographical reach of EOAct

3.0 PROJECT ACTIVITIES & IMPLEMENTATION

Key activities were implemented in line with the four key objectives of EOpAct/IPN as described above.

3.1 Objective 1: Expand Africa Lead II's existing network of intern-hosting companies and organizations

To expand Africa Lead II's existing network of intern hosting companies, ASNAPP focussed on awareness creation by implementing the following key activities below that contributed to the massive subscription/Signing-on of host firms that was to provide subsidized labour for host firms and a learning experience for interns.

3.1.1 Establishment of Communication Outfit and Secretariat

To facilitate the work of EOpAct, ASNAPP provided an office space to be used by EOpAct supporting staff and interns that visited the office in Accra. The office is fully furnished to serve as the communication outfit. It has info packs, books on good business practices and other training materials on shelves for the public to have access to.



Figure 4: EOpAct Office Space

Over 3,500 folders, flyers and pull-up banners were printed for distribution at vantage points in Accra such as tertiary campuses (University of Ghana and KNUST); Accra and Achimota malls; University of Liberia; and at special events such as the launch of ECOSIB, GhanaVeg, AAIN conference/Workshops, launch of EOPACT in South Africa and Senegal.

The communication outfit served as the interphase that coordinated, managed and supervised implementation activities throughout participating countries. It also served as the point of call for all intended beneficiaries and host companies in Ghana. Information leaflets, flyers and resource materials were made available to inform visitors about the program.



Figure 5: Flyer, Folder and pull-up

Advertisement for Interns (Print Media): To ensure a wider coverage of the internship, ASNAPP publicised it in the National News Papers in Ghana and Liberia, on various students' whatsapp platforms and electronic platforms of the University of Ghana (<https://www.facebook.com/UGCPC/posts/1093377197359872>). In addition to the print media, EOPact was promoted in the electronic (Twitter, facebook, Websites of EOPact and Press houses, etc) and print media.



Figure 6: Press Reports and Adverts

Figure 7: Training Update in a News Paper in Liberia



Website: EOpAct setup a website with the domain name as EOpAct.com. This continues to provide a global audience for the internship program, explore for potential partners/sponsorship and expose opportunities to students/graduates searching online for job/internship opportunities. Mobicom Company limited won the bid to develop the web-based application after receiving four proposals from different firms based on their past experience, presentations and the demonstration of the understanding of the services required.

Launching of EOpAct in three countries

The program was officially launched in Ghana at the Alisa Hotel, on February 18, 2016, with mini-launches in Senegal and South Africa on July 21, and October 17 respectively. Stakeholders from the government, donor partners, academia, host companies, prospective beneficiaries as well as the general public were present at these launches.



Figure 8: Launch in Accra

At an **inception workshop** and partners meeting held in Accra, the roles of participating institutions and key objectives of the program were expounded to bring clarity to all stakeholders. Stipends were redesigned and extended to 3 months from the initial 2 months based on feedback from host firms. Host companies were encouraged to absolve stipends for some of the interns posted to them.

3.1.2 Development of Tools, criteria and TORs

Prior to recruiting Interns and signing-on of firms, ASNAPP undertook desktop research of various internship programs across the globe to learn about the selection or entry criteria used. The tools subsequently developed were adjusted to suit each country's peculiar situation.

In developing the criteria for the graduate category, ASNAPP was guided by the objectives of the project which was focused on addressing the widening gap between agribusiness industry's skills needs and the competence of graduates. Based on desktop research, the objectives of the project and interactions with agribusiness firms, the definition for a graduate was expanded to include Universities, Polytechnics, and Agricultural Colleges. Similar approaches were adopted in developing the criteria for SME's and Student Interns. These qualification criteria were contained in 4-6 bullets points on the application form.

ASNAPP developed monitoring, assessment, intern and supervisors bi-weekly report forms in addition to training manual that was used for intern training sessions.

Additionally, ASNAPP developed TOR and MOU templates for implementing partners and host firms to guide the operations of EOpAct.

3.1.3 Signing-on of Host Firms

ASNAPP relied on its extensive business networks to introduce EOPACT to agribusiness organizations. Over fifty (50) firms were introduced to the Internship Program and Needs Assessment completed for forty (40) firms across the participating countries. Some of these firms are the Ghana Grains Council, Agri-Commerical Services Limited, Panfida Farms, Rosh Pinnah, Meridian Agricultural Services African Agribusiness Incubator Network (AAIN), Agri-Impact Consult, Impact Capital Microfinance, Solution Oasis Limited, Ten P Farms, Sime Darby Plantation Liberia Incorporated, Greenfield Liberia Incorporated, Sahel Agriculture Durable Environnement et Energie Verts (SADEEV), Ikamva Tunnel Farming Cooperative, Klein Karoo Tunnel Farming Cooperative, De Fynne Nursery and Deciduous Fruit Development Chamber (DFDC).

To ensure placements were mutually beneficial to both firm and intern, ASNAPP assessed prospective host firms to understand their needs and how they contribute to helping realise the objectives of EOPACT. The needs assessment focussed on skills set required to support/expand business operations and existing/institutionalization of internship programs.

By completing the Needs and Assessment forms, organizations interested in signing onto the project indicated their human resource needs and benefit - packages (capacity building and skills training) for interns.

3.1.4 Establish a Network of interns and Host Organization

Through the website and e-mails, ASNAPP generated a database of prospective Interns, SME's and Host firms in the agribusiness industry. Files were created for companies and Interns that showed their areas of interest and placement responsibilities respectively for future reference when necessary.

EOPACT established a network of interns who interact amongst themselves. WhatsApp groups were created for each Cohort that enabled interns trained in a particular period to interact and share ideas. The Program Manager and Officer were members of each group to coordinate issues on the platform. Reminders for reports and opportunities were posted on the platform for easy access by members. Interns submitted stories, responded to questions and sometimes submitted reports through this platform.

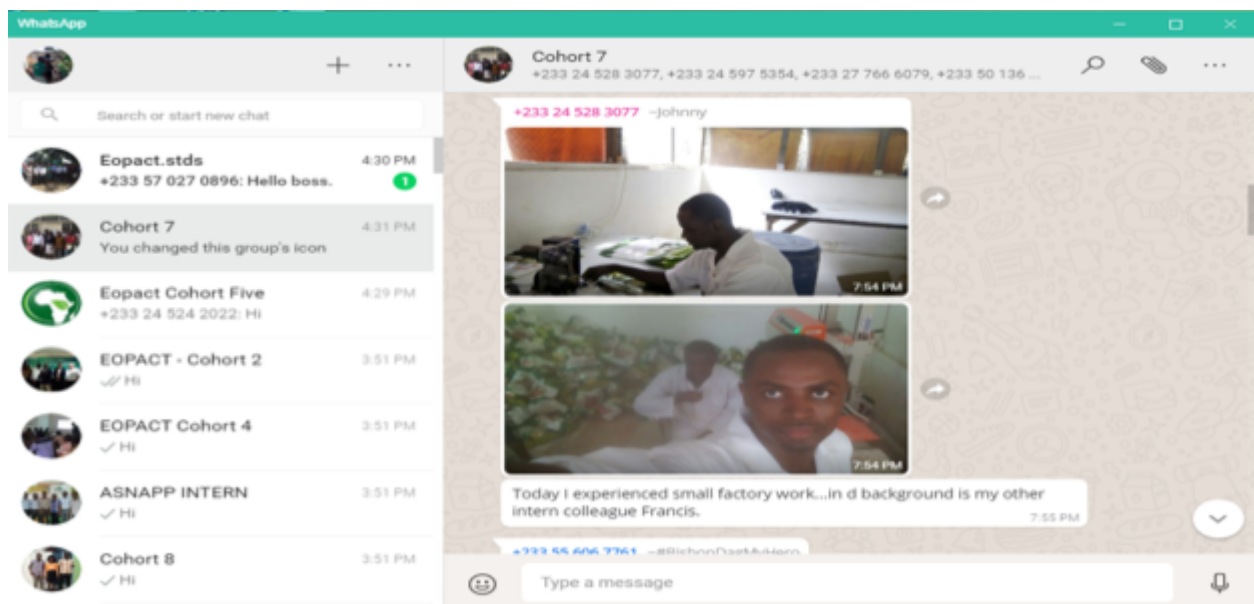
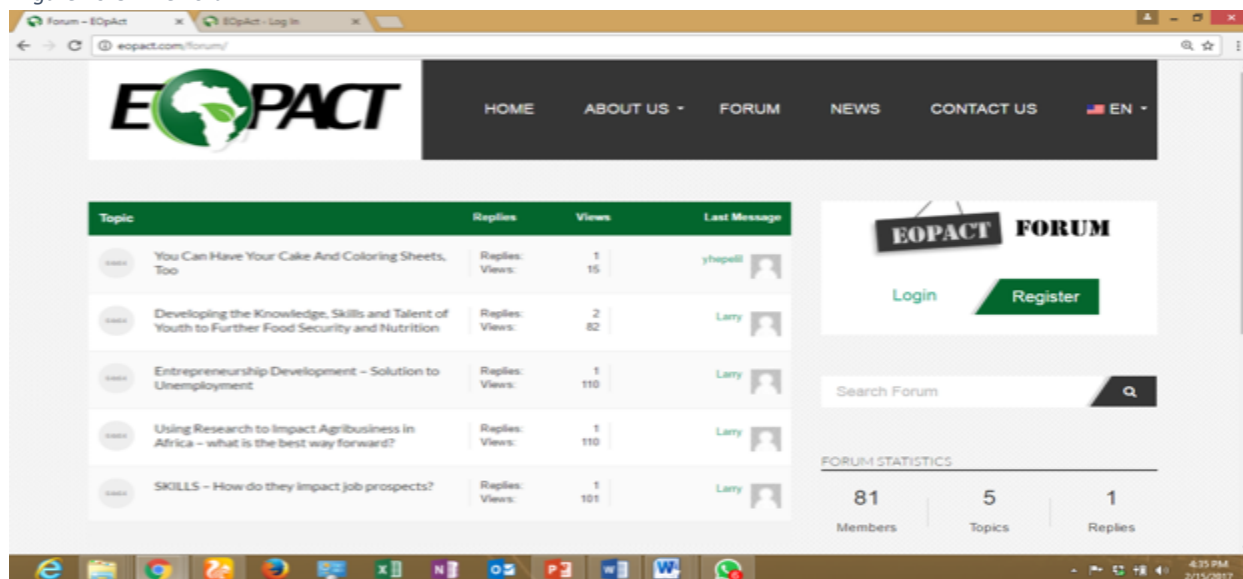


Figure 9: Page for Interns

Additionally, ASNAPP setup a forum on the EOPACT website to generate discussions for firms and interns on topical issue. Although this was created, it did not garner much interest as was expected.

ASNAPP continues to work to improve interactions amongst the firms. ASNAPP rolled-out a student membership-based network starting with students at KNUST as part of its long-term engagement plan. The program intends to register 500 students – 25% - 30% of agriculture students in two years on an annual subscription fee basis. The first phase of Interns that registered were trained during the long vacation and linked to internship opportunities.

Figure 10: Online Forum



3.1.5 Progress made towards the achievement of Objective 1

The above activities described under objective 1 contributed to expanding Africa Lead II's existing network of intern hosting companies. Currently, the network has been boosted with over 40 agribusiness firms across Africa as against the targeted 15.

3.1.6 Lessons Learnt in implementing Activities under objective 1

1. Completing the needs assessment form was a major challenge for some companies as they felt it was too lengthy. They had reservations about signing an MOU too as they felt the program was too short to warrant such long term commitment. To make the process less cumbersome, ASNAPP completed the forms for some firms after a meeting between the two for only validation and signing by the host firm. MoUs provided a clear outline of each party's responsibilities and commitment and firms bought into the concept.
2. Beyond stipends for beneficiaries, some companies wanted the program to support them either financially or provide resources. This was a real issue which caused one firm to withdraw from the program. This however did not cut across all firms as some firms realized the need to contribute some resources to make the program successful.
3. Accessing the website in Liberia was difficult due to the existing internet infrastructure in the country. Hard copies of forms were therefore completed, scanned and sent to the Ghana office via email or skype for enrolment.

3.2 OBJECTIVE 2: Provide a matching service by recruiting, placing, and supporting interns in appropriate host companies/organizations

3.2.1 Recruiting and Training Interns to Meet Requirements of Companies

Following on from the firm assessments was the search for suitable candidates to match the needs of the selected firms. Internship vacancy notices were crafted and posted on the program's website and social media platforms (Facebook). Some notices were also placed on students' whatsapp group platforms and the University of Ghana Guidance and Counselling Session website. For Liberia, The University of Liberia nominated six students/graduates to be considered by the Program. Applicants that qualified based on the request of firms were invited for interview and evaluation.

Selected applicants were then trained on team work, ethics, critical thinking, innovation and entrepreneurship in a 2-5 days pre-internship program by a combined team of consultants and ASNAPP staff. In some cases, further technical training in greenhouse vegetable production was provided to prepare applicants adequately prior to placement.

For Liberia, Mr. Bility the DEAN of Student Affairs at AME Zion University and Amos Smith (Lecturer at the University of Liberia) served as training experts and part of the interview panel.

For South Africa, a slightly different approach was adopted. ASNAPP South Africa selected SMEs and provided handholding and mentoring support to these firms whilst serving additionally as host companies. For example, for Ikamva, trainings on Finance/administration/Human Resource Management and Greenhouse Management were carried out as part of an ongoing process;

Finance/administration/Human Resource

- ASNAPP assisted the coop to identify a Financial and Administration person to be trained and mentored in Financial Management systems, (Ms Lindiwe Qwanti-Director)
- An email account was created for Ikamva's financials and is administered by Ms Qwanti
- ASNAPP trained and mentored Ms Qwanti in the financial systems, i.e. filling, payment requisition compilation and authorization, record keeping.
- The SME was trained in the compilation of a 12 month cashflow. They were tasked to compile a cashflow in order to assess their knowledge, get them thinking and assess their training needs.

Greenhouse Training covered;

Weekly Planning, Irrigation, Climate Control System, Crop Establishment, Greenhouse Preparation, Sowing of Seeds and aftercare, Transplanting of Seedling and Crop Management.

In Ghana, Panto farms received technical support, seeds and some growing containers to support their farm operations within the city of Accra while Selasie Foods was provided training on Good Manufacturing Processes/Food Safety Practices to prepare the SME for food certification that will enable the firm to export baby foods to the US and European Markets.



Figure 11: Training at Selasie foods

Additionally, ASNAPP relied on Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CUPT) in South Africa to introduce the program to the horticulture course students. CPUT cooperated and provided interns that were matched and placed with firms.

A flagship approach of the programme was the prior training provided to selected interns to give them introductory work place skills whilst also targeting behavioural and attitudinal change to ensure productive fit with host firms. Host firms were highly appreciative of this prior training and indicated it set the interns apart in terms of their attitude to work and output. Figure 12 below depicts the key topics covered in the 2-3 day training session.

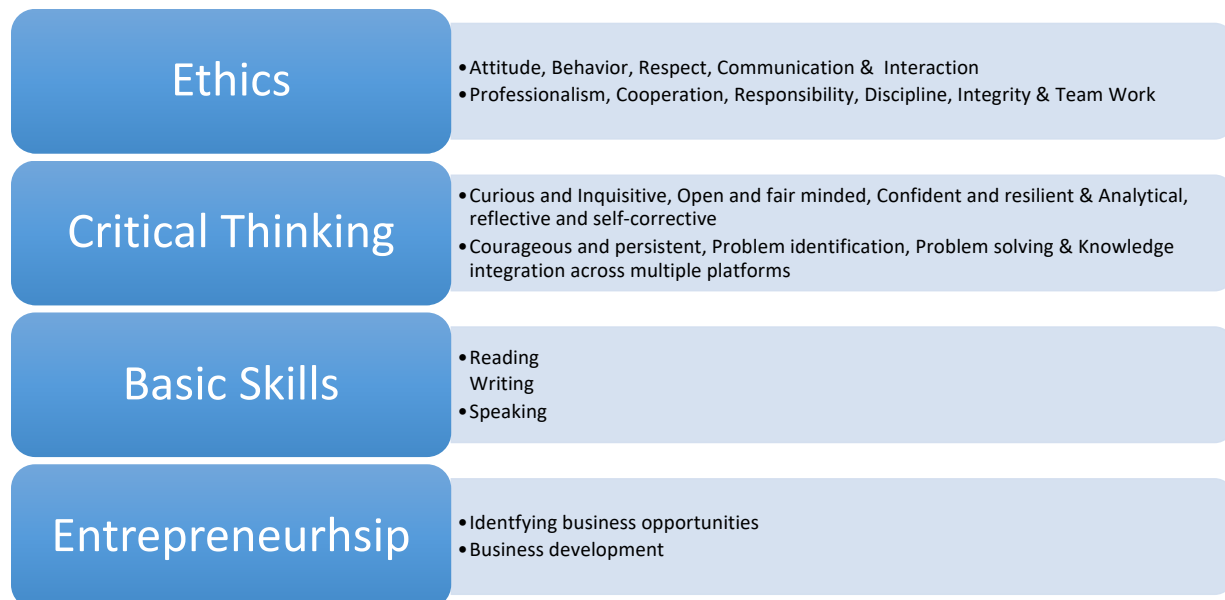


Figure 12: Key Topics covered during the training

Prospective interns were also taken through report writing and how to complete monitoring forms developed by the project team.

The BEEE principle (Becoming Entrepreneur, Employer or Employable) was very attractive to many of the graduates who applied. Beyond the prospects of securing jobs after internships, the opportunity to acquire “on-the-job” training skills and identify industrial gaps to be further explored for enterprise development were very attractive to most graduate applicants. For a greater number of host companies, the internship provided a real opportunity to address the gap between industry and academia.



Figure 13: Training Pictures

3.2.2 Placing and Supporting Interns with Host Firms

After the training, interns were matched with firms by sending profiles to firms for final assessment and acceptance. For most firms that responded and accepted the profiles of interns attached to them, MOU's were developed and/or appointment letters provided interns to commence work immediately. MOU's/Appointment letters were drafted to suit the specific requirements of the firm and the intern.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed covered areas such as;

- Profile of host company
- Name and contact of supervisor for intern(s)
- Name of intern(s)
- Expected date of intern(s) arrival
- Duration of internship (start – to – end dates)
- Resources to be provided
- Roles/duties intern(s) will undertake and
- Benefits intern(s) will gain

Interns were provided monthly stipends to cover the period of the internship. They were also provided with forms for submitting bi-weekly reports. ASNAPP provided transportation for interns that were posted beyond their regions/counties of residence.

3.2.3 Progress made towards the achievement of Objective 2

The recruiting, training and matching approaches described above made the achievement of this objective very successful especially the emphasis on attitudinal change, results driven orientation and targeted placement. Of the expected **75** interns (Students/Graduates/SME's), **95** were recruited, trained, placed and supported in host firms out of the **over 300 applicants. Fifteen (15)** of the interns withdrew mid-way on the grounds of securing jobs elsewhere, gaining school admission and or personal issues. **Twenty-seven (27)** secured employment varying from 2 months to 12 months with other pursuing postgraduate studies. ***This implies 60% of graduate Interns secured jobs exceeding the 50% target.***

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF HOST COMPANIES SIGNED	NUMBER OF INTERNS POSTED	TARGETS	# OF JOBS
Ghana	23	46	37	20
Liberia	3	3	4	2
Senegal	1	5	4	1
South Africa	8	20	20	4
Zambia	5	10	10	0
Total	40	84	75	27

Figure 14: Intern Placements by Country

3.2.4 Lessons Learnt in implementing Activities under objective 2

1. Most of the graduate applicants were job-seekers who had applied for jobs prior to joining EOpAct. Some had even attended interviews and were waiting for feedback. At short-notice, such graduates signed off the program. Prior to training and placement, resumes of successful applicants are sent to companies for review and particular interns selected by the host firm. However, some interns failed to show up for work after this elaborative process mostly because they had secured jobs. And this really affected the relationship with the host firm. ASNAPP increased scrutiny of the screening and referencing process to minimize this challenge.
2. During the project under review a number of challenges were also identified and resolved in Liberia 1.) Companies' capacity to host interns were limited 2) Most of the firms in Liberia are owned and controlled by foreigners and this caused delay in making decision. Providing some technical support and guidance and sustained follow ups with interested firms helped addressed these challenges. Expectations were very high in term of compensation but making students and graduates understand the intended purpose of the program minimized these expectations beyond the stipends provided.

3. **Ten P farms** for instance requested for SHS or HND Graduates living in specific areas of the city center. To honour this request, ASNAPP had to drop the criteria bar (graduate) for the interns to be able to process applicants in that category. His request was solely for marketing of Tilapia and fresh vegetables. The focus therefore had to shift beyond agriculture related students to enable us meet his requirements as an agribusiness firm.
4. **Panfida:** A small animal farm located in Gomoa in the Central Region, main challenge was finding the right person with the right attitude to manage the farm and provide animal husbandry support to the farm. She made the request after attempts to get these skills and attributes herself proved futile. It took ASNAPP over five (5) months to find a best-fit after placing several adverts on social media and visiting some tertiary institutions. Keeping the interest of the firm for that long was a challenge but with regular communication of progress the hurdle was surmounted.

3.3 OBJECTIVE 3: Build the capacity of companies and organizations to develop their own in-house internship programs

3.3.1 Experience Sharing, assessing firm Growth and Strategic plans aimed at setting up internship system

An introductory workshop was organized to sensitize participants on the benefits of internships. Twenty (20) attendants, representing 9 agribusiness companies took part in the workshop and appointments were subsequently made to assess their growth and strategic plan. Furthermore, opportunities to assist interested companies establish in-house internship system were explored. Host firms were exposed to the need to regularize internship as part of the human resource strategy rather than on ad-hoc basis. ASNAPP shared its organizational lessons and successes with internship over the period to help firms appreciate its importance.

As part of efforts to provide post internship support to interns and host firms to either setup businesses or improve upon their business operations, ASNAPP introduced the firms to an IT firm (Active Business Solutions) with the aim to promote their businesses using ICT. Eleagbe Shea Company Ltd and Selasie Foods are currently seeking support from Active Business Solutions to design their websites and increase their presence on social media after meeting at the workshop organized by ASNAPP for firms and interns to interact.



Figure 15 :Training Pictures

Six firms (Selasie Foods, Agri Commercial Services Limited (ACSL), Ponto Farms, ELWYN Farms & Green Paradise and Ten-P Farms) were successfully assessed using structured questionnaires along five themes – Growth Prospects/ Strategy, Market Prospects/ Strategy, Operational Performance, Financial & Accounting System and Management Team.

All six firms assessed indicated their willingness to institutionalize internship as part of their growth strategy due to the experiences gained during the project phase. With the expression of Interest from these firms, ASNAPP paid regular visits to host firms to interact with managers and assess the readiness of these firms to make internship a regular feature as part of efforts aimed at institutionalizing internships for the companies.

As part of ASNAPP own sustainability measures and plan to facilitate and continue the internship placements, ASNAPP is working with these firms in the following areas;

- 1) Agreed scope, requirement and approach for the institutionalization of the Internship.
- 2) Presented the tools used for the internship by ASNAPP.
- 3) Adapting the tools to suit the needs of firm.
- 4) Developed an in-house process based on tools that involves orientation for interns, assigning interns with supervisors, monitoring and evaluation of inter performance
- 5) Signed of an MOU to operationalize and monitor the adoption of the internship system



Figure 16: Firm Visits

- Three MOU's have been finalised and two signed (one in Ghana and one in South Africa) to operationalise internship system as a long term feature of the institutions. The third in Ghana has been referred to the Board of Directors and still waiting for Board approval.

3.3.2 Progress made towards the achievement of Objective 3

The above activities described under objective 3 were designed to identify at least 5 host firms that will express interest in institutionalizing internships by developing in-house internship programs. Six (6) firms indicated their interest in institutionalizing internship in their organization and took steps to institutionalise it with two MOU's signed.

ASNAPP has completed the profiling of 25 successful internship programs that exist across the continent. The document details why these programs exist, how they are structured, lessons learned, benefits of these programs.

3.4 OBJECTIVE 4: Report on and publicize the results achieved by the IPN

3.4.1 Monitoring Interns Work Performance

ASNAPP designed forms for reporting by the Interns and Attendance sheets to be completed and signed by immediate supervisors. Sections on the form required that interns met the supervisors to set bi-weekly or monthly targets for assessment. Additionally, WhatsApp groups were created for all the different Cohorts to ensure group cohesion as well as to monitor the activities of interns during the internship period and post internship period.

Reports were submitted either in hard or soft copies depending on the means available. These were reviewed together with the attendance sheet before monthly stipends were paid.

ASNAPP paid random visits to the interns to check on interns' progress of work. During these visits, ASNAPP interacted with supervisors to generate feedback on interns' performance. The feedback was communicated to interns concerned and supported to either keep up the good work or improve upon their performance. The table below presents the current status of interns placed.

Monitoring Pictures

Figure 17: Interns working with Host Firm



Figure 18: Interns working with host firm



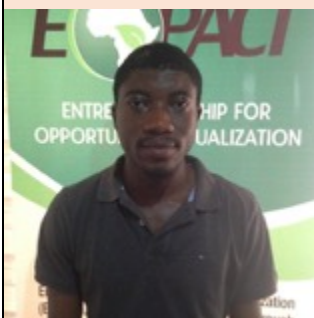
Figure 19: Interns in Senegal performing quality checks



One of the Interns with his supervisor during the training session at Greenfield Liberia

3.4.2 Selected Stories from Interns and Host firms

Patrick Tiase (Ho Polytechnic) – Ghana Grain Council Intern



Patrick Tiase was punctual and exhibited professional behaviour and attitude to work. He communicated his ideas and concepts clearly and related well with co-workers effectively. He is open to new ideas and experiences, ever willing to learn and incorporate them in his work activities. Patrick has a great potential to excel tremendously his analytical capacity, if nurtured. He fitted well with the norms and expectations of the organisation and sought to support the objectives of the firm.

I am confident that he would continue to show commitment and diligence in his endeavours. I hereby recommend him to any organisation that will seek his assistance.

Supervisor - MR. ORLEANS CHINERY

Owusu Boadu (UDS) – Ghana Grain Council Intern



I had the pleasure of working with Boadu Owusu during his internship program at our firm. Boadu is a willing person, opened to new experiences and positions himself to acquire information. During the internship program, he was punctual and brought a sense of integrity to the job. His professionalism and attitude were exemplary and fits in with the norms and expectations of the organisation.

Boadu impressed with his ability to communicate effectively and demonstrated high analytical potential. He will be a strong advocacy and policy development professional in the near future, if nurtured. Boadu exhibited great leadership potential and innovativeness and would be an invaluable asset to any firm. He showed respect to inputs and ideas from colleagues and workers and is a good team player.

He has displayed excellence in all that he puts his mind to and thus has my highest recommendation to any organisation that seeks to engage him.

Supervisor - MR. KWADO O. ANTWI

Owusu Boadu and Patrick Tiase - Vegetable Masters

Owusu Boadu, Patrick Tiase and Andrew Dzatse after their internship at GGC were supported with post-intership services to either identify opportunities or establish their own business. Owusu and Patrick took the initiative to start their own business when they were exposed to huge opportunity in marketing and sales of vegetables. They even turned down jobs offered to them because they were confident of success in the enterprise they have established. To date Vegetable Masters have supplied fresh vegetables worth over GHC20,000 (\$4,000)



JAMES KOLLIE



James studied plant pathology at the University of Liberia. In addition to his university education, James is knowledgeable in procurement and logistics including cash crop production. Internship was not new to James because after school, he served as election officer after graduation from the university. EOpaAct internship was a great opportunity for James to acquire more industrial work experience.

SEC provided pre-internship training support to James in administration, resource and client management as well as marketing for two months. From there James was recruited by VPA Support Unit.

“I participated in an internship program with SEC based on intensive capacity building programs designed through workshops, indoor training and meetings; I shadowed most directors, principal organizers of meetings and workshops. Intermittently I was able to secure a robust job---- I hereby commend ASNAPP –Ghana/SEC for this great opportunity granted me to participate in EOpaAct (IPN) Project” said James Kollie.

Wisdom Simpini (Ho Polytechnic) – Now a Production Manager at ACSL - Wenchi



Working with Wisdom Simpini during his internship program at our firm made me never regret joining the EOpaAct train. I have requested for more interns due to value he added to my firm. During his tenure at our firm, he was punctual and showed

positive and constructive attitude. Wisdom showed tremendous capacity to learning new things and demonstrated analytic tendencies in his field of work. He was an active participant

and carried out his assigned duties effectively. Wisdom respects the inputs and ideas of people and had the ability to co-exist with fellow colleagues and workers. He has an excellent sense of responsibility, professionalism and respect for corporate objectives. His overall performance to our firm is good and I am happy to act as a reference for Wisdom and recommend him to firms who seek his skills set and assistance.

Supervisor - MR KWABENA ADU-GYAMFI

Wisdom envisions a career path in the agricultural sector. His educational background and extracurricular pursuits in crop production and management clearly marked out the interest he has in the prospects the sector provides. Today, Wisdom continues to make significant progress to realize his dream through the intervention of EOpAct.

His rich experience in crop production, soil and farm implement management made him the best match for Agri Commercial Services Limited (ACSL). ACSL produces tomatoes on commercial scale largely on open field and in greenhouses. ASNAPP provided prior-internship support training in greenhouse vegetable production over two months. Wisdom acquired rudimentary skills for greenhouse production of vegetables which includes fertigation, trellising, manual pollination, harvesting and some aspects of disease and pest identification as well as nutrient deficiency symptoms.

Wisdom brought his expertise to bear during his internship. Not only did manage properly both greenhouse and open field production of vegetables – tomatoes and cucumbers, he services broken down tractor implements and assisted with sales and marketing produce. Presently, he is goal is to rise to the position of production manager at ACSL.

Ruffai Abdul Hamid – Student Intern

Ruffai Abdul Hamid, a second-year student of KITA, applied to Agri-Impact Consult for on-field practicum during the long vacation from May to August, 2016. He was enrolled unto EOpAct for two months internship at the greenhouse structure at GAEC managed by Agri-Impact Consult. In addition to field work, all student interns were taken through intensive practical training in report writing, presentation skills and Microsoft Office Suite packages (Word, Excel and PowerPoint).

EOpAct received the following feedback from Ruffai when he returned to school. He reports; *“After the internship at the greenhouse at GAEC managed by Agri-Impact, I have been able to manage very well the plastic tunnel in our school, Institute of Tropical Agriculture – Kumasi (KITA). The returns have been relatively excellent. And I have gotten a lot of compliments from colleagues, staff, lecturers and the director. Very big thanks go to Agri-Impact for the opportunity to have an attachment with them.”*



EMEFA FIADZOE - MAS



Emefa's interest in internships was driven by her passion to grow and sell vegetables as a cottage venture. Although she studied human resource management at school, she was looking for opportunities to acquire skills in crop production and management. Her quest was great, however, she did not know where to start from. The opportunities to acquire hands-on training and mentorship through the internships EOAct offered appealed greatly to her.

Her background in business and human resource management made her a perfect fit for the request made by Meridian Agricultural Services (MAS) – an agribusiness firm

that provide support services to actors in the agricultural sector. Through the requisite orientation and training programs prior to internships, Emefa learnt about ethics, team work, critical thinking and innovation, as well as entrepreneurship. During the internship period, Emefa carried out office administrative duties, resource management and capacity building training programs for farmers and agribusiness firms.

Today, Emefa worked as human resource manager at MAS and earned a monthly salary of GHC 1,000.00 after the program. She is moved on and currently working with Invest in Africa.

Ferdinand and Shyllock are presently second year undergraduate students in Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). It is a requirement for all agric students to complete internship or industrial attachments on the third year of their studies. However, both Ferdinand and Shyllock applied for internships during the 4 months' vacation. Their goals were to acquire hands-on practical training in crop production and explore prospective career paths after school.



Ashesi University at Berekuso. Together with other student interns, they went through the essentials of greenhouse production of vegetables; and fundamentals of report writing, presentation, and computer skills. Ferdinand had a change of mind about computers when he realized it has become an essential tool for research and office work. Formerly, he was of the view that computers were for playing games. He now knows the basics of using Microsoft Office suit programs such as MS Word, MS Excel and MS PowerPoint.

3.4.3 Notable Benefits to selected Host Firms

Most host companies benefited immensely from the output of interns.

Host Firm	Before Intern Placement	After Intern Placement
Ghana Grain Council (GGC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records of 160 members of the council were stored in the traditional paper file system and difficult to track and retrieve information about members rapidly. It was difficult to tracking training reports at the end of the year as the data was loosely organized The firm had no staff member updating the website. The last update was in 2010 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interns created MS Access database of members and entered details of members unto a computer system. Due to the aggressive membership drive by Interns, membership increased to 172, with active members of 102. Template for tracking records of field training and workshop to make annual reporting easy The interns dedicated their time to writing and periodically updating the website. They also provided support in the redesigning of the website
Agri Commercial Services Ltd (ACSL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The firm was faced serious maize and vegetable production constraints largely due to mismanagement and lack of know-how by workers. Farm implements were not maintained regularly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EOpACT identified and trained an intern on greenhouse production as well as other Good Agricultural Practices before placing to ACSL. The intern instituted a weekly routine maintenance system for the farms' implements (tractor, harrower, ridge, plough and boom sprayer; and improved tomato production on 1.5acre plot controlling fruit borers and blight infections. He was able to undertake minor and routine servicing for some of the

		tractors due to his background. This has proved very helpful to the firm
PANFIDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The farm produced both poultry (~3,000 birds) and pig (~100) for local consumption. The challenges faced bordered on feed preparation and drug administration. The desire to produce vegetables in addition to the livestock production had been on the drawing board for a long time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Intern's expertise was in livestock production which he performed creditably managing the livestock – poultry and pigs. Furthermore, he assisted the firm to produce cucumber which generated additional revenue. 6 sacks of cucumbers were harvested and sold at approximately GHC 250.00 per sack for the first week harvest only.

Figure 20: Benefits to Host Firms

3.4.4 Contributions from Host Companies to support the Internship Programme

As part of measures to ensure the project sustainability, ASNAPP encouraged firms to make cash or in-kind contribution to the EOAct program. Below is a list of selected contributions made.

HOST COMPANY	CONTRIBUTIONS	ESTIMATED COST (GHC)
Ghana Grains Council (GGC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stipends for 2 interns was paid over the internship period 	1,800
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internship for 3 interns was extended for 3 to 4 months and stipends paid for all 3 interns 	3,600
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracts were offered to interns, yet interns declined them to pursue their own business – Vegetable Masters On the job training 	2,000
Meridian Agricultural Services (MAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stipends for intern was paid for intern 	900
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training 	1,500
Impact Capital Microfinance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Half of the stipend was paid for intern 	500
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training 	1,500
Agri Commercial Service Limited (ACSL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation and lunch for two interns 	420
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training 	2,000
Selasie Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lunch for accommodation 	600
Eleagbe Shea Company Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training 	2,000
Total		16,820

3.4.5 Lessons Sharing Workshop

ASNAPP organised one major lessons' sharing workshop with participants from South Africa, Liberia and Ghana. The workshop afforded participants the opportunity to share experiences in implementing the programme in the various countries and from the perspectives of the host firms and interns. Present were Interns, Host firms, Africa Lead, Development Organizations, Banks, The Universities and the Media.



Figure 21: Lessons Sharing Workshop Pictures

The Deputy Minister for Youth and Sports-Ghana, Honourable Pius Enam Hadzide was the guest speaker. He touched on the theme “**Driving the Agro Industrialization Agenda in Africa - The Critical Place of Skills Development**”. The theme chosen was in line with the Governments flagship programmes, ‘**Planting for Food and Jobs**’ and ‘**One District, One Factory**’ which sought to create jobs for the youth and encourage the development of young enterprises.

He commended ASNAPP and USAID/AfricaLead, on implementing its Internship Partnership Network (IPN) program, EOpAct, which focused on bridging the skills gap between academia, graduates and industry and creating avenues for the youth to exploit opportunities in the agriculture sector in the country. He indicated the willingness of Government to invest and partner with ASNAPP and other organisations in their resolve to providing internship programme platforms for skills development.

The workshop was adjudged successful by all participants. Lessons shared by the country managers, host firms and interns are documented in the workshop report.

3.4.6 Progress made towards the achievement of Objective 4

The documentation of lessons learnt and monitoring of interns' performance continues to be undertaken as it forms part of ASNAPP broad sustainability plan and fundraising tool. Key outcomes, critical success factors and challenges as well as possible solutions were shared with participants at the recently held workshop in Accra. Participants from four African countries are

beneficiary of the documented lessons learnt. The event went viral on the electronic and print media.

3.4.7 Lessons Learnt in implementing Activities under objective 4

1. The Project had no budget line for travelling to the other implementing countries to monitor progress of work and provide technical assistance when needed. This caused unnecessary hold ups and delayed implementation and reporting. This was due to the eleventh hour redesigning of the program to cover more African countries. For continental wide program, there needs to be funds to cover monitoring country programs.

3.5 Project Sustainability

Based on experiences and lessons learnt, most host firms are not in the position to pay for the full cost of the Internship. Host firms generally agreed to pay part or full stipends whilst ASNAPP or any other firm bear the cost of recruitment and initial training.

Host firms were also unwilling to setup a whole internship machinery at their firms but were willing to commit to taking interns should another firm provide the service of recruiting and training interns.

To this end, ASNAPP has implemented a number activities to ensure the continuity of this program after the funding phase.

- ASNAPP will continue to provide support to the firms that have signed up to internalise the internship program in their organizations to ensure long term sustainability
- ASNAPP has rolled out the minimal fee paying student module to part cover the recruitment and training costs while the firms bear the stipend and hosting costs.
- Working with Development Partners and Government agencies, ASNAPP Ghana is exploring funding that will cover for ASNAPP facilitation cost. The Government of Ghana through the YEA indicated their willingness to rely on ASNAPP to train interns/incubatees for its modular internship program at the just ended workshop. ASNAPP is therefore re-aligning EOpAct activities to ensure better fit with the YEA program to be able to serve as the training arm for the YEA to generate additional resources. It is expected that over time, host firms will increase their contributions and eventually fully pay for the recruitment and training cost.
- ASNAPP South Africa is also re-aligning its activities to match the AFGRI project in South Africa to be able to provide the internship matching service at a fee whilst receiving funding support from Government as well.

Appendix: Host Companies

HOST FIRMS	VALUE CHAIN
GHANA	
Ghana Grains Council (GGC)	Grains
Agri- Impact Consult	Horticulture
Agri Commercial Services Limited	Horticulture
Meridian Agricultural Services	Horticulture
Rosh Pinnah	Horticulture
African Agribusiness Incubation Network (AAIN)	Agribusiness Network
Impact Capital Microfinance	Agribusiness Finance
Panfida Farms	Livestock
BLVGMCS- Atomic	Horticulture
AETI- Berekuso	Horticulture
Crop Science Department - KNUST	Horticulture
Ten P Farms	Horticulture and livestock
Eleagbe Shea Company Limited	Agro- Processing
Selasie Foods and Groceries Company	Grains and Legumes
Amazing Grace Farm	Horticulture
Ponto Farms (SME and Intern)	Livestock and Horticulture
Legacy Crop Improvement Centre (LCIC)	Grain and Legumes
ROPRYN	Horticulture
ECOSIB/PEEVA	Seed
Fresh Logistics	Horticulture
ASNAPP Projects (CASH P/ Premier Foods WAFM Project)	Grains
Livelihood Diversification and Support Project (LDSP)	Horticulture
ELWYN Farms	Horticulture
SOUTH AFRICA	
Stellenbosch University of Department of Agronomy	Horticulture
Bitou Plas Project	Livestock
Ikamva Tunnel Farming Cooperative	Horticulture
Free Heim Eggs Cooperative	Livestock
Health Grow Farming Enterprise	Horticulture
Klein Karoo Tunnel Farming	Horticulture
ASNAPP, Welgevallen Experimental Farm	Horticulture
De Fyne Nursery	Horticulture

Nduli FS	Horticulture
ZAMBIA	
Nduli Food Security	Horticulture
Klein Karoo Tunnel Farming	Horticulture
Ikamva Tunnel Farming Cooperative	Horticulture
De Fynne Nursery	Horticulture
SENEGAL	
Sahel Agriculture Durable Environnement Et Energie Vert (SADEEV)	Horticulture
LIBERIA	
Society for Environmental Conservation	Agribusiness/ Forestry
Farmers Associated to Conserve the Environment	Seed/ Forestry
Green Field Liberia Incorporated	Seed/ Horticulture