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FOUNDATION

RAYS OF HOPE

Inspiring stories from the Ghana Grows Program

Edition 2

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508k
ONBOARDED PARTICIPANTS.

**40 IMPACT
STORIES**

These stories reflect how behavioural changes are tracked throughout the Ghana Grows program from issue identification to decision-making.



Rays of Hope

Inspiring Stories from the Ghana Grows Program

Over the years, we have been privileged to encounter stories that speak not only to the resilience of the human spirit but also to the quiet revolutions taking place in communities across Ghana, led by young people, especially women and persons with disabilities, who dare to dream.

Rays of Hope is more than a collection of individual testimonies. It is a living archive of transformation, of young people who found purpose through agriculture, confidence through vocational skills, and community through mentorship. It is a celebration of what becomes possible when the right opportunities meet readiness, curiosity, and courage.

The Ghana Grows Program, in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation, has served as fertile ground for this transformation. Through initiatives like Focus Group Discussions, Empower360, Youth Ambassadors, and the Community Girls Clubs, countless lives have been touched. In this volume, you will meet some of those lives and voices from across the country that remind us that change often begins with a single step, a single yes.

As executive publishers, it has been an honour to shepherd these stories into print. Each page affirms that when young people are seen, supported, and equipped, they not only rise, they shine.

May these stories inspire you, as they have inspired us, to believe again in the power of youth, the dignity of labour, and the beauty of collective growth.

Comfort Ocran & Albert Ocran
Executive Publishers



Acknowledgements

The Springboard Road Show Foundation extends its deepest gratitude to the Mastercard Foundation for the visionary partnership that gave birth to the Ghana Grows Program. Your unwavering commitment to the youth of Ghana and Africa continues to ignite transformation across the continent. Through your diverse interventions, countless lives are being changed many in ways that may never be publicly told, but whose impact is immeasurable.

We also recognize the incredible passion and dedication of the Springboard team across the country. Your leadership of the Ghana Grows Consortium is reshaping perspectives and inspiring a generational shift towards agriculture and ATVET careers.

Our sincere appreciation goes to our outstanding program partners and collaborators: Lyme Haus, Meraki Africa, Axis Human Capital, Young and Vibe, Ghana Psychological Association, Federation of Associations of Ghanaian Exporters, Light of the World, Ghana National Tailors and Dressmakers Association, Ghana Hairdressers and

Beauticians Association, Food and Drugs Authority, and the Ghana TVET Service.

We are grateful for the remarkable network of industry experts, mentors, clinical psychologists, and counselors who volunteer their time and expertise to walk with these young people on their journey.

Special thanks also go to our traditional rulers, queen mothers, market queens, regional and municipal officials, local authorities, community leaders, families, private sector champions, and trade associations who have embraced the Ghana Grows program wholeheartedly.

Above all, we pay tribute to the resilient and courageous young women and men of Ghana. Your stories filled with grit, hope, and inspiration are the heartbeat of this initiative. The narratives captured in this compendium represent only a glimpse of the remarkable change you are leading across our nation.

This work is dedicated entirely to you. Thank you for being the true face of transformation.



About Ghana Grows

Ghana Grows Program is an initiative of Mastercard Foundation in partnership with Springboard Road Show Foundation.

It is a youth-led series of interventions that inspire young people to discover career opportunities and supports them in pursuing decent and fulfilling jobs in Agriculture, Agribusiness, and the Technical and Vocational Skills sectors.

The programme is aimed at young women, young men, and persons with disabilities aged between 15 to 35 in 48 selected districts in Ghana. The goal is to change the negative perceptions that young people have about focus sectors at individual, community, and systemic levels.

Ghana Grows interacts with the youth using in-person community engagements as well as media and online interventions. It offers expert and peer mentoring, counselling, psychological support, career guidance, and job readiness programmes.

Our flagship e-Learning Media Education airs on 43 media channels every week. The episodes are available in English, Akan, Dagbani, Ewe, and Ga, with sign-language interpretation and subtitles in video messages. These episodes along with a wide range of personal and career development materials are accessible for free.

The program leverages Community Information Centres (CICs), Information Vans, Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and Bluetooth Sound Boxes to extend its message to disadvantaged communities, especially those without internet connectivity.

Professionals from various industries engage with young mentees in one-on-one and group mentoring sessions at least once weekly. The counselling intervention enables young people from all over the country to interact with professional counsellors through the Call Centre.



Our innovative High School Next Level program connects young women and men in Senior High Schools to opportunities in the chosen sector. Ghana Grows learning clubs for girls have been established in various communities and institutions.

Additionally, the programme organises various activations and outreaches, including drama and dance performances (Theatre for Change), community youth durbars, and faith-based organization roadshows, while actively engage stakeholders at all levels.

Signing up to Ghana Grows and participating in all its activities is ABSOLUTELY FREE! If you are a young person aged between 15 and 35 years, dial *718*50# on your phone (all networks) to sign up. You can also call or WhatsApp the Ghana Grows Call Centre at 0308-255-775. Alternatively, visit www.springboard.com.gh and click on Join Ghana Grows at the top right corner.

Ghana Grows!
Hope Dey!!

Editorial

Rays of Hope is a compilation of stories that trace the journeys of young Ghanaians in the Ghana Grows Program, navigating life, growth, and transformation. These are real accounts of young women and men who have dared to rewrite the script of their lives.

Each story carries the weight of resilience, ambition, and the quiet power of determination. From planting seeds to overcoming stage fright, to starting businesses and more, these individuals are crafting new realities one courageous step at a time.

This book was thoughtfully curated, written, and edited by a dedicated group of young men and women from the Ghana Grows family, people whose own experiences reflect the resilience and determination shared in these pages.

Dear reader, with every page you turn, may you be encouraged to defy the odds, believe in possibility, and reach for your own rays of hope.

Wholeheartedly,
The Editorial Team, Young Voices of Ghana Grows

*“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead
where there is no path and leave a trail.”
— Ralph Waldo Emerson*

TALES FROM
NORTHERN
GHANA

Trading Doubt for Confidence

Asana Masahudu

My name is Asana Masahudu. I'm 28 years old and live in Yendi in the Northern Region. I grew up watching my mother work hard as a trader, and naturally, I followed in her footsteps. Today, I traveled to Techiman to buy tomatoes and plantains and sell them back in Yendi. It's a trade I understand, and it gives me a sense of independence.

I was introduced to Ghana Grows through my uncle. He heard about a community engagement event taking place in our area and encouraged me to attend. I went and what I heard that day made a deep impression on me. The speakers talked about opportunities for young women in agriculture, agribusiness, and ATVET. The message was simple but powerful: Agriculture isn't just about farming. It's a full value chain, and there's room for all of us to grow.

Before Ghana Grows, I didn't have any formal business training. I was just doing what I saw my mother do, buy and sell. There were no records, no plans, just movement. I knew I could sell, but I didn't know how to manage or grow a business.

I also believed that business success only came with formal education. I had dropped out of school, so I assumed there was a limit to how far I could go. On top of that, I didn't think much of digital tools like WhatsApp or TikTok for business. I saw them as distractions. Today, I know better.

Some friends even mocked me for selling in the market. But I believed in my work. My hands were building something, and Ghana Grows gave me the tools to understand just how far I could take it. The program didn't just inspire me, it equipped me. Through Ghana Grows, I was introduced to topics like bookkeeping, customer service, marketing, and mental health. I started learning how to track my income and expenses, something I had never done before.

One of the biggest surprises for me was the use of social media for business. I learned how to post my product on WhatsApp and TikTok, and the response was overwhelming. It changed the

way I saw my business. I wasn't just a trader anymore; I was a digital entrepreneur.

The daily SMS messages from Ghana Grows weren't just about agriculture; they talked about motivation, mental health, and personal development, which was something I looked forward to. They made me feel seen and encouraged.

Thanks to the confidence I've gained, I've also started mentoring my younger sisters. I teach them how to deal with customers, how to handle money, and how to believe in themselves. My mother remains my biggest supporter, but I've become a role model in my own right.

Business is growing. I've gone from just selling to building a brand. I now dream of becoming a wholesaler and owning a large shop in Yendi within the next five years. I want to expand my market, reach more customers, and prove that with skills, vision, and hard work, anyone can succeed.

If this is what one year can do, I can't wait to see where I'll be in five.



Passion to Practice



Alhassan Saeed

My name is Alhassan Saeed, and I come from Katariga in the Tamale Metropolis of the Northern Region. I've always had a strong interest in agriculture. As a student of Agriculture and Home Economics at the Bagabaga College of Education, I was actively looking for opportunities to start something practical on my own.

After registering my details at school, I received an SMS invitation to participate in the Ghana Grows "Grow Your Own Food" challenge, led by QET Organic Farm & Consult. That message was the beginning of a journey that's now shaping my future in agribusiness.

Even though I had classroom knowledge in agriculture, I didn't have hands-on experience managing a farm on my own. I knew I needed to learn more about farm planning, crop care, and how to turn my interest into a sustainable livelihood. I had the passion, but I lacked a structured starting point, and that is exactly what Ghana Grows provided.

I signed up for the 60-Day Agribusiness Challenge and chose cucumber as my primary crop. It was my first time managing a farm from start to finish by myself. Each stage, planting, watering, monitoring, and harvesting, came with new lessons. I learned about patience, time management, and the discipline it takes to grow food. By the end of the challenge, I wasn't just experimenting anymore. I was farming with intention.

As part of the post-challenge package, I received tomato seeds and basic tools. I used them to start a small tomato garden, and seeing the plants flower and bear fruit felt like a major breakthrough. I've taken pictures of the progress so I can keep track of how far I've come. It's a reminder that even small beginnings can grow into something meaningful.

Through the Ghana Grows Career Clinics, I also got exposed to broader career possibilities within agriculture. I began to see that this field isn't limited to subsistence farming, it's a space full of opportunity, innovation, and business potential.

The sessions gave me ideas about how I could combine my crop farming with other ventures.

I've now taken steps to diversify. Alongside crop farming, I've started a poultry project, raising guinea fowl and turkey chicks. It's a modest start, but it's part of a bigger vision to build a mixed agribusiness that includes both livestock and crops. I continue to research, learn, and test new approaches to improve my work.

The Ghana Grows experience gave me the confidence and motivation to act on my goals. Today, I'm not just dreaming of becoming an agripreneur, I'm living it. I still have a lot to learn, but I've taken the first big steps. With the right support and consistent effort, I believe I can grow something impactful that supports both my future and that of others around me.

Thank you to Ghana Grows, Springboard Road Show Foundation, QET Organic Farm & Consult, and all partners involved. This program has truly planted seeds of change in my life.



Passion to Purpose



Sylvester Longue

My name is Sylvester Longue, and I'm a 29-year-old agricultural entrepreneur based in Bulenga in the Wa East District of the Upper West Region. I grew up in Wa Sombo, where farming wasn't just a way of life, it was the rhythm of our days and seasons. From childhood, I was involved in small-scale farming with my family, raising animals and growing crops while pursuing my education.

That balance between hands-on work and classroom learning shaped my understanding of what agriculture could be. After completing a degree in Agricultural Engineering at Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University and finishing national service, I decided to fully commit to my passion by relocating to Bulenga to access better farmland and scale up my operations.

Today, I manage between 30–50 acres of farmland across Wa East and Wa West, cultivating maize, groundnuts, soybeans, watermelon, and sorghum, while also raising goats, pigs, and birds. But agriculture, for me, isn't just about produce it's about people. That belief led me to establish the Foundation for Rural Development, a non-governmental organization working to empower youth and women through training in smart agriculture, financial literacy, job creation, and health. We now reach over 1,800 individuals across 10 communities.

I first heard about the Ghana Grows program through a community engagement event held in Wa. The team explained the vision of the program and the various interventions available. What kept me consistently connected after that was the SMS follow-ups. I found them helpful. They reminded me of training sessions, encouraged me to explore opportunities, and kept me engaged with the wider community of young farmers.

Before joining the program, I was already active in farming and community work, but I felt I lacked



structured knowledge in some aspects of agribusiness. I wanted to learn more especially about how to diversify my activities and how to use modern farming practices to scale responsibly. I had a long-standing dream of venturing into fish farming but lacked the technical insight to start.

Being selected for the Ghana Grows Young Innovators Awards in Koforidua as part of the AgroFusion event was a turning point. It wasn't just an award it opened doors. I got the opportunity to travel to Kenya as part of a learning exchange program. That trip broadened my vision and introduced me to new agribusiness models. It also helped me connect with other changemakers across Africa. The award gave me confidence and renewed energy to lead.

I've actively participated in the Ghana Grows Career Clinic sessions, especially those delivered online. I make time to attend most of them and always leave with something new. One of the most useful was the session on catfish farming which gave me exactly the insight I needed to move from interest to implementation.

Today, I've started my own poultry and fish farming initiatives, thanks to the knowledge I gained from those sessions. I've also shared the clinic links with others so they can benefit like I have.

Since engaging with Ghana Grows, I've expanded my understanding of agribusiness and grown my impact. My NGO continues to run empowerment programs in rural areas. I've coordinated community projects like health screenings for farmers through my collaboration with Fame Ghana. In spite of challenges including a fire outbreak that set back some of my work I've stayed committed. I've rescheduled activities and continue to push forward.

My next big move is a 150-acre agribusiness training hub I'm launching in partnership with Sly Farms and US-based collaborators. This hub will focus on groundnut production and processing, while also serving as a skills development center for young farmers across the Upper West Region.

Ghana Grows has helped me build connections, deepen my skills, and reinforce my belief that agriculture is not just a profession, it's a platform for transformation. My journey is far from over, but I'm already seeing the difference. For me, this is just the beginning.



Doubt to Determination

Jamani Alhassan

My name is Jamani Alhassan, and I live in the West Gonja District of the upper Region. For a long time, I saw agriculture as something basic, just farming. I didn't think of it as a space where someone like me could build a real career.

My mindset began to shift when I was invited to participate in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) organized by Ghana Grows. I joined out of curiosity, not expecting much. But that moment sparked a new way of thinking.

During the session, we explored the agricultural value chain, from production to processing, marketing, access to finance, and even agri-tech. It was the first time I saw how wide and dynamic the sector really is. Agriculture wasn't just about digging the land. It was about systems, innovation, opportunity, and creating value. I realized how much I had underestimated the sector.

Before the Ghana Grows FGD, I lacked direction. I wanted to do something meaningful with my life, but I didn't see how agriculture fit in. My exposure was limited to the traditional style of farming I'd grown up around. It looked hard, uncertain, and unrewarding. I also didn't have access to information, mentors, or training to help me think differently. Nobody in my immediate circle saw agriculture as a serious career option, so neither did I.

The Focus Group Discussions changed everything. Listening to young people talk about agribusiness opportunities, challenges, and real solutions sparked something in me. I saw that I wasn't alone in my doubts, but I also saw that others were choosing to do something about it.

What stood out the most was learning from people who had already taken steps in the value chain some had started agribusinesses, others were getting trained or working in processing and packaging. I began to imagine myself in that space. I've since become more intentional. I read, ask questions, and seek out opportunities to learn. I've realized



that agriculture is not a fallback option, it can be a future.

I'm still at the early stages, but I now have direction. My goal is to get practical training in areas like vegetable farming, agribusiness management, or processing. Eventually, I want to run a business that supports local farms helping them connect to markets and improve how they grow and sell their produce. I want to be an example to other youth that agriculture can be a smart, forward-looking career path.

Expanding My Understanding and Growing My Agribusiness

Oruma Baku

My name is Oruma Baku, I first heard about the Ghana Grows Program during a community engagement session. It was at this session that I was introduced to the full agricultural value chain and the role agriculture and ATVET (Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training) play in national development. Before that, my understanding was quite limited. I only knew about the farmer who grows the crops and the person who sells them at the market. That session helped me see that there are many more opportunities along the chain, and that gave me a new perspective.

Before I joined the Ghana Grows Program, financing was one of my main struggles. I was interested in farming and had already started, but I didn't have the resources to expand or manage it well. At the same time, I was running a small business, and I found it difficult to keep both going. I didn't have a proper system for setting prices, keeping records, or tracking expenses. I mostly guessed my way through decisions and didn't think much about changing my approach.

A friend showed me the advertisement for the Ghana Grows e-mentoring program, and I decided to apply. Through the mentoring sessions, I listened to others share their experiences and picked up useful lessons in both farming and running a business. I learned how to plan properly, calculate my costs, set reasonable prices, and manage my activities in a more organized way. These lessons helped me take a more focused approach to both my farm and my small business.

As I got more involved, I joined the Girls Club. Through this platform, I learned hands-on farming



techniques and how to apply agricultural inputs like local fertilizers properly. I also learned how to start and manage a small business, including keeping records, providing better customer service, and promoting my products.

One of the things that stood out to me was the lesson on value addition. I had never thought about turning fruits and vegetables into juice, but now I know it's possible. This opened up new ideas for how I could increase my income without needing to grow more crops. These skills, along with the encouragement from others in the group, helped me feel more confident. I noticed real changes in how I ran my business and farm, and it became easier to track progress and stay motivated.

Learning, Earning, and Growing

Lukman Khadija

My name is Lukman Khadija, and I come from the West Gonja District in the Savannah Region. I first learned about the Ghana Grows Program through a friend in Tamale. She invited me to join a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) that was part of the initiative. That conversation opened the door for me to explore something I had always been curious about but never had the chance to pursue properly, agriculture.

Before joining the program, I had little knowledge about agriculture and no experience with vocational skills. I didn't know where to begin or how to take the first step. Even though I was interested, there weren't any clear or accessible opportunities for someone like me to explore agribusiness or technical training. It felt like the space was closed off, especially for young women.

I joined a Focus Group Discussion held in my community with 10 other young people. During the session, I engaged in conversations with other young women and listened to the facilitators as they explained the goals of the Ghana Grows Program. That was the first time I understood that agriculture involves much more than farming. I learned that it also includes processing, creativity, and ways to earn an income through value addition.

Ghana Grows later organized a community engagement session in my community, where I took part in a gari processing training. I paid close attention and began applying the skills I had learned. I am currently a student at the Damango Nurses and Midwifery Training College, and I now process and sell gari to support my education.



The training gave me a practical skill that I could use right away, and it has helped me manage my expenses while in school.

I want to grow my gari processing into a structured business that can supply both local and external markets. I also plan to share the skills I've learned with other young women, especially those still in school.

I aim to show that agriculture and vocational training can provide useful tools for young people to support themselves and create opportunities.

Empowered to Lead

Abdallah Barikisu

My name is Abdallah Barikisu, and I come from the West Gonja District in the Savannah Region. I first heard about the Ghana Grows Program through a friend who introduced me to the initiative. I started off by joining a Focus Group Discussion and later had the chance to serve as a moderator during one of the sessions held in Damongo. That opportunity helped me become more involved with the program and learn more about what it offered.

Before becoming involved with Ghana Grows, I was unemployed and didn't have access to decent work opportunities. I had a limited understanding of how skills, especially in agriculture or technical areas, could lead to financial stability. Like many others in my community, I didn't see clear options for building a future through these sectors.

I participated in a Focus Group Discussion that brought together young people in the community. During the session, I began to understand that agriculture and Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) were not just traditional practices. They could also provide opportunities for self-employment and income generation. With the right approach and knowledge, I saw that many of the barriers I once believed in could be addressed.

When Ghana Grows advertised the Youth Ambassadors opportunity, I was interested and wanted to become an ambassador. I was selected and joined the Youth Ambassadors training sessions, which were organized in August 2024. During the training, we were taught how to serve as agri-ambassadors, how to take on leadership roles, and how to engage others in agriculture-related conversations. As an ambassador, I connected with other young people, took part in discussions on agriculture and youth development, and learned how to share what I had

learned with others. The training helped me build my communication and leadership skills and gave me a clearer understanding of how young people can contribute to change in their communities.



No Barriers, Just Growth

Kapre Nyuripoa Victor

My name is Kapre Nyuripoa Victor, and I live in Damongo in the Savannah Region. I am a teacher by profession, but my journey into agribusiness started in a rather unexpected place a Youth-Led Focus Group Discussion organized under the Ghana Grows Program.

I joined the session out of curiosity. I hadn't thought of agriculture as something that concerned me. But that meeting turned out to be one of the most eye-opening experiences of my life.

Before my encounter with Ghana Grows, I held strong reservations about agriculture. I associated farming with poverty and struggle, not progress or prosperity. In my mind, it was a job people turned to when they had no better options. As someone living with a disability and already working as a teacher, I didn't see how agriculture could fit into my life or offer any real opportunity.

I lacked exposure to modern agricultural practices and saw farming as physically demanding and unrewarding. The idea of engaging with it let alone building a livelihood from it felt completely outside my world.

Everything began to shift during the Youth-Led Focus Group Discussion. That conversation helped me realize how much potential the agricultural sector holds, especially when viewed through the lens of agribusiness and skills development.

Through Ghana Grows, I learned about ATVET and was introduced to modern farming innovations that make agriculture more accessible and productive. These discussions challenged the assumptions I had carried for years. The program also showed how agriculture can empower people with disabilities by providing adaptive tools, training, and the right market linkages.



I participated in sessions that explored agriculture as a value chain, not just crop production, but also processing, packaging, and marketing.

That changed how I viewed the sector. I began to see it as a viable space for young people, including myself, to grow and thrive.

Today, I combined teaching with farming maize and groundnuts. What used to be idle land is now productive and supports my household. I apply a business mindset to my farming, planning carefully and seeking to improve my yields and income. The knowledge I've gained from Ghana Grows has made all the difference.

I want to expand my farm and explore more agribusiness opportunities. Long term, I aim to create a sustainable business that offers employment to others and contributes to food security in my community.

I've taken it upon myself to encourage other young people in Damongo to reconsider their views on agriculture. I tell them it's not a last resort but a real, dignified career path.

*“You may not control all the events that happen to you,
but you can decide not to be reduced by them.”*
— Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

TALES FROM
CENTRAL
GHANA

“A New Me”



Stella Adjei

My name is Stella Adjei, a hairdresser based in Oforikrom, Kumasi. While I’ve always respected agriculture as the hardworking heart of Ghana’s economy, I never had any direct exposure to it or to technical and vocational programs growing up. In my circles, such paths were rarely discussed, they just weren’t considered.

That began to change when a field officer introduced me to the Ghana Grows program. At first, I was curious. But as I got involved with the Community Girls Club, my curiosity turned into confidence and deep admiration.

Before I encountered Ghana Grows, I had tried several times to pursue makeup artistry. Once, I nearly paid 3,000 cedis to learn from a professional makeup artist. I struggled to gather the money and eventually gave up, but the passion remained in my heart.

People around me didn’t always support this dream. In fact, when I was selected for the second cohort of Empower 360, many of my friends and family discouraged me from traveling to Accra for the training. “It’s probably a scam,” they warned, comparing it to other false programs they had heard about.

But I wasn’t discouraged. I had quite faith that this opportunity was real, and that it was meant for me.→

The Community Girls Club was my entry point. It gave me a safe space to explore new ideas, ask questions, and interact with other young women who were exploring agribusiness and vocational skills. Seeing women confidently building their futures, and even leading others, shifted my thinking. I no longer see technical and vocational careers as “less than”. I began to see them as powerful.

Being selected for Empower360 was a moment I’ll never forget. I traveled to Accra and received hands-on training in makeup artistry, something I had dreamed of for years. But this wasn’t just about learning how to apply makeup.



I was taught about branding, customer care, pricing, and professionalism. The Empower360 experience gave me the tools to not only do makeup but to build a business from it.

I also gained exposure to other skills and met peers from across the country. It was empowering to know I wasn’t alone in my dreams and that there were systems in place to support women like me.

Since returning from the training, I’ve become an unofficial ambassador of Ghana Grows in my community. I talk to other young women about what’s possible. I encourage those who feel stuck or uncertain about their future to consider vocational paths. I share my story not just the successes, but the fears I overcame, because I know many girls are where I once was.

My journey isn’t just mine; it’s a message to others that you don’t have to wait for perfect conditions. Sometimes, all you need is one opportunity and the courage to take it.

Today, I’m building a stronger business and making plans to mentor young girls who, like me, once dreamed of becoming makeup artists but lacked the support or opportunity.

Thanks to Ghana Grows and Empower 360, I am no longer the woman who doubted or hesitated. I’m someone who took a leap of faith and found a new purpose.

“So Far So Good”

Esther Agyapomaa



My name is Esther Agyapomaa, and I come from Asante Akim South. Since completing polytechnic in 2014, I've always dreamed of becoming an entrepreneur. I never wanted to work for anyone. I wanted to build something of my own. But for years, I found myself stuck doing menial jobs, struggling to find consistent work, and constantly battling uncertainty about my future.

Then one day, someone from the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in my neighborhood introduced me to Ghana Grows. That moment turned out to be a turning point. I joined the Ghana Grows Community Club, where I found mentorship, guidance, and most importantly, hope.

Before Ghana Grows, I had ambition without direction. I had dreams, but no resources. No real path forward. Every effort to become self-employed felt like a dead end. I admired resin art when I saw it in shops or on social media, but it never crossed my mind that I could learn it myself, let alone turn it into a business. I needed more than motivation and opportunity.

The club became more than just a weekly meeting; it was a safe space where I felt seen, heard, and supported. For a long time, I had struggled with self-doubt and uncertainty about what the future would hold. But in this circle of young women, I began to rebuild my confidence. We shared stories, learned from one another, and talked about things that truly mattered: independence, purpose, and the courage to try again. The club helped me believe that I, too, could do something meaningful with my life.

When I heard that Empower360 was launching a second round of hands-on training for young women, I immediately became interested. They were offering training in various skills, including resin art, something I had never tried before but was curious about. I applied with hope and was thrilled to be selected as one of the 32 women. That selection was not just a training opportunity,



it felt like someone finally saw potential in me. The first day of training was emotional. I realized I was finally stepping into a space where I could learn something practical and turn it into a business.

The training sessions were intense, exciting, and eye-opening. I learned everything from mixing techniques to molding, coloring, and finishing resin products. It was hands-on and practical, and I picked it up quickly. For the first time in a long while, I saw a path forward that I could walk with my skills. The starter pack we received after training was a game-changer. I didn't have to wait or borrow money to get started. With the materials and tools provided, I could begin producing and selling resin crafts immediately. It felt like I had been handed both the skills and the keys to my future.

After the training, I launched my own small resin art business from home. I started creating custom items like keyholders, trays, earrings, and other decorative pieces. With every sale, my confidence grew. I used to wonder where the next income would come from, but now I had a steady stream of customers who appreciated my work. The income I now earn is not just money; it is stability, pride, and dignity. I no longer see myself as someone waiting for help. I see myself as a creator and an entrepreneur. And I know this is just the beginning.

Agriculture, Reimagined

Appiah Kumi

My name is Appiah Kumi. I first learned about the Ghana Grows Program during a community engagement session organized by the Springboard Road Show Foundation. I was drawn in by the program's focus on empowering young people, especially women and persons with disabilities, through skills training and entrepreneurship support. This focus made me curious to learn more and eventually participate.

Before I joined, my understanding of agriculture was shaped by stereotypes. I believed farming was mostly for those who lacked other opportunities. Because of this, I did not consider agriculture as something I could be part of or succeed in. I had not been exposed to the full range of opportunities that exist within the agricultural sector.

Things changed when I started participating in the Ghana Grows community sessions. The conversations helped me look at agriculture differently. I learned that agriculture is not only about farming, but also about creating value, supporting communities, and contributing to the country's economy.

The training helped me understand how agriculture can involve technology, entrepreneurship, and leadership. I began to see how young people can have a role in it, whether through innovation or running Agri-based businesses. These new ideas helped me let go of the misconceptions I held.

I'm still learning, but I now feel more open-minded about agriculture. The Ghana Grows Program has helped me see the sector more clearly and realistically.

I want to keep learning and hopefully get involved in projects that use agriculture to support local communities. I also want to speak to other young people who may have the same doubts I once had. Agriculture is not the same as it used to be, and there is space for us to explore what it offers.

In the future, I hope to work in areas that support youth participation in agriculture, especially in ways that make the sector more attractive and better understood. With the right tools and information, more young people can make informed choices about their future.



From Dreaming to Doing



Abigail A. Okiajah Oblie

My name is Abigail Ayele Okiajah Oblie, and I live in Nyakomago in the Ahafo Region of Ghana. I run a small daycare and have always been a hands-on, creative person. Back in high school, I studied Visual Arts, and I've loved painting and handcrafts ever since. I even barber my own hair and make my own wigs but until recently, I never thought of my creativity as something that could earn me a living.

My introduction to Ghana Grows came through a field coordinator who was working in our area. She spoke passionately about an initiative called the Community Girls Club, and something about it really resonated with me. I wasn't just interested, I felt called. I offered to help set up a club in my own town because I believed young women around me needed something like this, a safe space where we could grow, dream, and feel seen.

That's where I first heard about Empower360, a program under Ghana Grows that focuses on agribusiness and hands-on vocational training. When they announced a training opportunity in resin art, my heart skipped a beat. I knew I had to be part of it.

Before Ghana Grows, I had discovered resin art online, mostly through short reels on TikTok. The vibrant colors, possibilities, and the creativity fascinated me. I wanted to learn more, maybe even do it myself. But once I started researching, I realized the materials and training were expensive, way beyond what I could afford.

As a caregiver and a mother, any money I received went straight to taking care of my family. Resin art became a quiet dream, something I admired from a distance but never thought I could pursue.

I didn't just join. I helped establish one. My motivation was simple: I wanted to strengthen and bring hope to the young

women in my community, which was part of the goals of the Ghana Grows girls' Club. We met regularly, shared our struggles, encouraged each other, and discussed life, work, topics, and possibilities. For many of us, it was the first time we felt like we belonged to something meaningful.

Through the club, I was introduced to Empower360, and when I heard resin art would be one of the training modules, it felt like the universe was finally giving me a "yes." During the training, I learned everything: how to mix and pour resin, add pigments, cure the pieces, and turn my designs into products people would want to buy. I also gained important business skills like pricing, customer engagement, and packaging. After training, I started producing my resin trays and earrings. I began making small sales, and little by little, I started to believe I could do this.

Thanks to Ghana Grows, a once-distant dream is now a real and sustainable business. I've gone from watching TikTok videos in admiration to creating and selling resin products with pride. For me, this is more than a side hustle; it's a second chance at a dream I thought I had to bury. Now, I get to pass that dream on.



Stitching a New Future with Agribusiness

Lydia Mawuli

My name is Lydia Mawuli, and I live in the Asutifi North District of the Ahafo Region. I work full-time as a seamstress, a craft I picked up out of both passion and necessity. Although I love sewing, it was not providing a reliable income. I was constantly anxious about how to take care of myself and the two children of my late sister, who depend on me.

One day, during a community outreach and sensitization session held nearby, I encountered the Ghana Grows team. I didn't know much about agribusiness or youth-focused livelihood programs, so I stopped listening. What caught my attention wasn't just the mention of agriculture or training, it was the way they talked about dignity, self-reliance, and creating new paths for young women. That message stayed with me.

Before this, my tailoring business was inconsistent. Clients would bring in fabric but delay picking up their clothes or refuse to pay after delivery. At times, some disappeared altogether. I had no steady income and couldn't make plans or save. The pressure of being a guardian to two children added to the weight. I had skills, but no support system or access to better opportunities.

My journey with Ghana Grows began when I attended a community outreach and sensitization session held in Asutifi North. It wasn't something I planned; I just happened to be nearby when a group of facilitators set up for an awareness event. At first, I listened out of curiosity. But as they spoke about agribusiness, vocational training, youth empowerment, and especially the focus on young women, something clicked inside me.

For the first time, I began to see a connection between my reality and bigger opportunities that I didn't have to stay stuck in unstable work or wait on clients who might never return. It was a turning point. The team didn't just share information; they gave me hope, and that hope made me take the next step.

In March 2024, I was selected to participate in the Youth Ambassadors training. This opportunity allowed me to connect with other young people and use my voice to encourage others, especially girls, to explore new opportunities. Through the training, I developed leadership, public speaking, and community engagement skills.



I began hosting small sessions in my area and became a visible presence in the district. People started turning to me for guidance. That responsibility helped me grow. I started to see myself not just as someone looking for change, but as someone helping to create it.

From Hairdressing Apprentice to Agribusiness Enthusiast

Gifty Ofori

My name is Gifty Ofori, and I live in Kenyase in the Ahafo Region. I'm currently an apprentice in hairdressing, a field I've always enjoyed and hope to pursue professionally. I first heard about Ghana Grows during a community engagement session held in my area. A field coordinator shared how the program supports young women through skills training and personal development. This caught my attention.

Until then, I had assumed that agriculture and technical training were mainly for people with limited formal education or from remote areas. However, the coordinator helped me see agribusiness differently, as a field that involves innovation and practical opportunity, even for people like me.

Before joining the program, I had limited exposure and very few options. As an apprentice, I didn't earn a steady income. Most of what I made went into supporting my training or covering basic needs. I believed hairdressing was my only viable path and never considered exploring other areas like agriculture or creative work. I also didn't have a network of peers or mentors who could help me think beyond my current situation.

The first step was joining the Community Girls Club, a safe and empowering space where I connected with other young women in my community. We met regularly to talk about leadership, self-worth, entrepreneurship, and how women could thrive in areas traditionally seen as "male" or "non-academic." The club helped me believe that my dreams were valid, and that I wasn't alone.

I got the opportunity to be part of the Empower360 mushroom training through my participation in the Ghana Grows Girls' club. This was a new area for me. We were taught how to prepare substrate, manage hygiene in production, and care for the mushrooms. The sessions also covered how to price our products, brand them, and keep basic financial records. I appreciated the hands-on approach and found the process



both practical and manageable.

After completing the training sessions, we had a graduation ceremony, where I received a starter pack with materials that marked the end of the Empower360 program, but marked the beginning of something new for me. It was a moment of reflection and helped me feel part of a wider group of young people working to improve their lives through new skills.

I started growing mushrooms shortly after receiving the starter pack. I produced, packaged, and sold them within my community. The extra income has helped me support my basic needs and continue my training as a hairdresser. Mushroom farming has become a second source of income for me, and I'm gradually learning how to manage my small farm and my hairdressing apprenticeship.

The Growing Vision

Baffoe Abraham



My name is Baffoe Abraham, a 33-year-old farmer from Tano North in the Ahafo Region. I've been farming for over a decade, ever since completing senior high school. I decided early on to follow in my father's footsteps, not just to help support my family, but because I truly believe agriculture holds the key to Ghana's development.

It was my brother who first told me about the Ghana Grows program. He thought it would be a great opportunity and signed me up. Soon after, I began receiving messages about upcoming interventions. One day, I got an SMS inviting me to a Career Clinic session. That first session was on fish farming, and out of curiosity, I joined. I didn't know it then, but that decision would change my entire approach to farming. By the time I joined the program, I had already tried my hand at a range of farming activities—cucumber, rice, cabbage, okro, and even animal farming, which I had to abandon due to lack of funds. I was doing well enough to get by, but I wanted more. I needed updated knowledge, access to reliable networks, and new farming practices that could help me expand.

Farming can feel isolating, especially when you're trying to solve problems on your own. I was managing pests, planning irrigation, and marketing produce without much guidance. I also didn't have many peers in the field whom I could learn from or share ideas with. I needed a fresh perspective, better strategies, and a way to connect with others who had the same goals. Joining the Ghana Grows Career Clinic was like being reintroduced to farming with a wider lens. The first session I attended on fish farming sparked my interest immediately. I hadn't considered it as a viable option for me before.

But the real game-changer was the organic composting session. Learning how to produce and use compost for my vegetables felt like unlocking a new tool that could save me money, improve yields, and reduce dependency on

chemicals. I've already started experimenting with compost on a portion of my farm.

Another session that had a big impact was on mental health and stress management. As farmers, we face uncertainty almost every day, from rainfall patterns to market prices. These sessions helped me take a step back and manage my mindset. I learned to plan more efficiently, set realistic goals, and take pride in small wins. The interactions with facilitators and other participants also gave me a stronger sense of community. I wasn't alone anymore. I was part of something bigger. Since the Career Clinic, I've taken action. I've started compost production in a small way and am actively planning to return to animal farming, this time with better financial discipline and a more strategic approach. I also have firm plans to explore snail and fish farming, gradually building multiple income streams to secure my future and that of my family.

I'm no longer just trying to survive through farming; I'm building a sustainable business and mentoring others around me. I've already shared what I've learned with a few younger farmers in my area, and I hope to do more of that.

Agriculture has always given me purpose. But thanks to Ghana Grows, I now have tools, confidence, and a community to back that purpose. I've gone from working in isolation to being part of a growing movement that sees farmers not just as workers of the land, but as entrepreneurs, innovators, and leaders.



From Invisible to Influential: A Mother's Agribusiness Rise

Patience Gmengbon

My name is Patience from Kintampo North in the Bono East Region. Before Ghana Grows, life was incredibly difficult. I am a physically challenged single mother, and for years, I survived by working on a fufu machine. I pounded fufu for others, earning only ₵20 a day. The work was physically draining, especially given my condition, but I had no alternative. I had to care for my child, and that job, no matter how tough, was the only source of income I had.

Everything began to change the day I attended a local community engagement event. That was where I first heard about the Ghana Grows Program. What drew me in was not just the promise of learning skills that could help me earn an income. It was the way they spoke about young women like me, women who are often overlooked, as people worth investing in. For the first time in a long time, I felt seen and valued.

Before joining Ghana Grows, my life was filled with uncertainty. I had no formal training or employable skills. My disability made physical labor even more difficult, and each day felt like a struggle just to get by. I had no savings and very little independence. I couldn't imagine a future that looked different from the hardship I was already living.

Shortly after the community engagement, I was invited by a friend to join the Ghana Grows Girls Club, and this was where things really changed. The Girls Club gave me more than a seat at the table. It gave me a voice. I found a sisterhood of women who, like me, had seen hard times. But we weren't just there to share pain, we shared hope.

Through discussions, mentoring sessions, and group activities, I regained a sense of confidence that I hadn't felt in years. It was also through the Girls Club that I was



identified as a strong candidate for the next step, and I have been transformed into a great leader.

Later, I was selected for the Empower360 program, which focused on mushroom farming. That opportunity changed everything for me. At first, I felt nervous because I had never farmed mushrooms before, even though I had always loved eating them. But the facilitators were very patient and supportive.

They didn't just teach us how to grow mushrooms. They taught us how to run a business. We learned how to create the right conditions for growth, control pests, harvest at the right time, and prepare our products for sale in the market.

After the training, I was given a starter pack to help me begin my mushroom farming journey. It came with everything I needed to start producing right from my home. The setup was done in a small space within my compound, and that made it easy for me to manage it on my own. With what I had learned and the materials I received, I was ready to start my own business.

Today, I am selling my mushrooms locally. On average, I earn between ₵200 and ₵300 a week from my sales. This income has made a big difference in my life. I can now take better care of my child and support our household without depending on the hard physical labor I used to do. For the first time in years, I feel financially stable and hopeful about the future.

Today, I've started sharing what I've learned informally with members of the Kintampo Disability Association, known locally as Babato. I talk to other people with disabilities and show them what is possible through mushroom farming. Many of them had no idea this kind of work could be an option. I haven't started full training sessions yet, but I've begun opening that door, and I'm excited to keep walking through it alongside them.

My dream is to grow my farm and one day provide

full training and mentorship to others, especially women and persons with disabilities, who face the same hardships I once did. I want to create a ripple effect, where others are inspired not just by what I grow, but by how far I've come.

Ghana Grows gave me the opportunity. Now, I want to pay it forward, building a livelihood that not only supports my family but also uplifts my community.

Job Seeker to Job Creator



Regina Darko

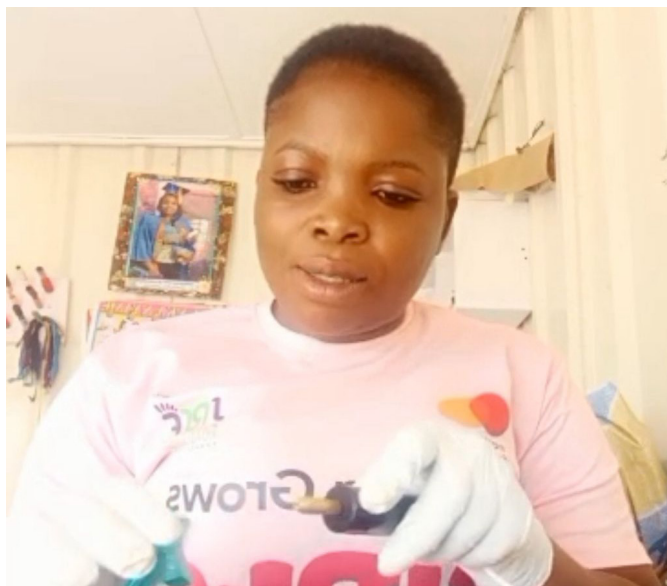
My name is Regina Darko, and I'm from Techiman. For a long time, I never imagined myself getting involved in agriculture or technical and vocational skills. Like many others, I believed ATVET (Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training) was meant for the less educated or those with fewer options.

In my search for stability, I began an apprenticeship, which led me to attend a GNTDA (Ghana National Tailors and Dressmakers Association) meeting. It was there that I met field coordinators from the Ghana Grows program. Their passion, clarity, and commitment made me see ATVET differently, as a pathway to empowerment, not limited to.

After years of disappointment in the formal job market, I began to lose hope. I had skills and ambition, but no opportunities to grow or be seen. The pressure to succeed, especially as a young woman, was overwhelming.

But Ghana Grows came into my life at just the right time, offering not just information, but belonging, leadership, and growth. After connecting with Ghana Grows, I was inspired to help form a Community Girls Club in my area. The club quickly became a safe, inclusive space not only for me but for other young women like me who needed encouragement, peer support, and a sense of belonging.

We meet regularly to discuss leadership, entrepreneurship, and skill development. We



talked openly about our struggles and dreams. For many of us the club gave us confidence to Learn, lead and to co-create solutions in our community.

But the real turning point came when I was selected for Empower360 resin art cohort. That experience still feels like a dream. I remember walking into the training on the first day feeling unsure but from the moment we began, I was drawn in. There's something beautiful about mixing colors, creating designs, and watching my work transform into real, tangible products. I made keyholders, coasters, and even custom jewelry. The training wasn't just technical. We learned how to run a business, how to price our products, talk to customers, and even keep simple financial records. I remember the first time I calculated my production costs and realized I could make a profit. That moment made it all feel real.

Even more powerful was the mentorship. We weren't just trained and sent away. We were guided, supported, and reminded that we were capable of greatness.

Her Stage, Her Story

Gloria Amponsah

My name is Amponsah Gloria, and I am from New Juabeng in the Eastern Region. I am currently a student at the University of Ghana, but my journey into the arts and Agriculture Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) began long before I stepped onto campus.

At Oti Boateng SHS, I had the privilege of participating in the Theatre for Change program under the Ghana Grows initiative. We explored acting, dancing, modelling, and singing, but beyond the performances, we learned about the transformative power of ATVET. I listened to inspiring stories from students who once hesitated to pursue agriculture or vocational skills because of societal stigma. Today, they are thriving and proud of the paths they've chosen.

For me, the program was more than an activity; it was the spark that ignited my passion for the performing arts. I was cast in the Ghana Grows Theatre for Change series, and that experience opened doors I never imagined. With guidance and encouragement from Meraki Arts Africa, I gained admission into the University of Ghana's School of Performing Arts and even landed my first audition with Farmhouse Productions.

The journey hasn't been without challenges. My family initially struggled with my choice, believing I was "too intelligent" for the arts and expecting me to take a more traditional path. But through persistence and visible growth in confidence, skills, and opportunities, they've come to fully support my dreams.

Inspired by my own transformation, some friends and I founded the Beauty with Brains Girls Club. Our mission is to empower young women through fashion, modelling, and mentorship. We train girls in leadership, public speaking, modelling, and confidence building. We also encourage them to enter talent competitions and participate in community charity projects, because giving back is part of growing forward.

Ghana Grows didn't just introduce me to ATVET and the arts; it gave me a voice, a platform, and a sense of purpose. I've built valuable connections, grown in confidence, and discovered a passion I never knew could become a career.

I have no regrets. Through mentorship, community, and hard work, I know I'll go even further and I'm committed to bringing others along with me.



Doubt to Dignity

Love Maku Osei

My name is Love Maku Osei, a single mother living in Yilo Krobo in the Eastern Region. I've worked as a hairdresser for years while living in an extended family home. For a long time, I viewed vocational and agricultural skills as options for people with no academic future. That mindset began to shift when a friend introduced me to the Ghana Grows Girls Club.

Although I had always dreamed of becoming a professional makeup artist, the cost of training was too high. As a single mother, I had to prioritize essentials like food and shelter. Despite having passion and natural talent, I lacked the means to pursue training. In my community, discussions about vocational paths were rare, and I had no mentor or network to turn to.

Everything changed the day a friend invited me to join a Community Girls Club under the Ghana Grows program. I was hesitant at first, but I decided to attend one meeting. That decision marked the beginning of a shift in how I saw myself and how I saw my future.

Even though I had a steady hand and a real talent for beauty, I had never received professional training in makeup artistry, something I had always dreamed of. The cost of training was just too high. As a

single mother, every cedi I earned from hairdressing went straight into food, school fees, and household expenses. I couldn't take the risk of investing in myself.

To make things even harder, no one in my community discussed opportunities for women to learn trades or access skills training. I had no mentor, no network, no roadmap, just a quiet hope that something would change. Through my involvement in the Girls Club, I was selected to join Empower360, an initiative of Ghana Grows designed to help young women learn hands-on, income-generating skills. This was where everything shifted from theory to action. I chose to train in makeup artistry, finally receiving the guidance and structure I had longed for.

The Empower360 sessions didn't just teach me how to apply makeup professionally. They taught me how to treat it as a business, how to price my services, engage clients, and build a brand around my talent. I also learned how to present myself with confidence, a skill I had previously struggled with.

And after the training, I received a starter pack to launch my business. That changed everything. I wasn't just skilled, I was equipped.

Later, I participated in a Career Clinic



session organized by Ghana Grows. It was there that I began thinking beyond the daily hustle. I was introduced to the idea of long-term career planning, personal branding, and how to access more formal opportunities. For someone like me, who once thought vocational work was small-scale, this was eye-opening.

Today, I am no longer just a hairdresser trying to survive. I am a professional makeup artist and entrepreneur. I earn more, feel more confident, and most importantly, I believe in myself. Every time I see a client smile after a makeover, I'm reminded of how far I've come.

Speaking Growth, Living Change



Dorcas Awo Kwetey

I am Dorcas Awo Kwetey, I was running my fruit business in Okwenya when my brother introduced me to the Ghana Grows program. He had attended one of their community outreaches in Yilo Krobo in the Eastern Region and thought I would be interested. He was right. The moment I heard the program was recruiting young people for its Youth Ambassadors initiative, I applied. I was grateful to be selected, and that moment marked the beginning of a life-changing journey with Ghana Grows.

Before joining the program, I faced the everyday challenges of running a small business without any formal training. I was not keeping proper records, and I had never thought of branding my products. Although I had a strong passion for public speaking, entrepreneurship, and organizing events, I lacked the structure and platform to channel these interests in a meaningful way. I was also a member of a girls club in Okwenya, but the group had collapsed due to inactivity. That loss affected me because I believed in the importance of young women coming together to uplift and support one another.

One of the first major steps in my

journey was being selected and trained as a Ghana Grows Youth Ambassador. The three-day training session was intense and incredibly eye-opening. The two things that stood out for me are branding and record keeping. These may sound like simple things, but they changed my entire outlook. Today, I carefully package my fruit, take attractive pictures, and promote them online. My business now looks more professional and attracts a broader customer base.

Returning to my former school, Okwenya M/A Junior High School, as a Youth Ambassador was a great moment. I stood before the students and told them my story. I explained how agriculture, once seen as a last resort, had opened doors for me. I wanted them to see that agriculture is not just about digging the soil, but about creating businesses, building independence, and shaping futures.

The reactions I received after sharing my story at Okwenya M/A Junior High School were deeply inspiring. Students were curious, engaged, and eager to learn more. That experience gave me the confidence to extend my advocacy beyond the classroom. I began speaking on local radio programs to promote

the Ghana Grows program and highlight the many opportunities within the agricultural sector. These radio sessions have allowed me to reach a wider audience, especially young people who may not yet see agriculture as a viable path. I use these platforms to challenge outdated perceptions and show how agribusiness can lead to real growth, income, and empowerment.



When Ghana Grows suggested starting a girls club in Okwenya, I knew we didn't have to start from scratch. There was a club before, but it had collapsed. I offered to help revive it because I believe in the power of girls coming together to support each other. With the help of the program, we brought the club back to life, and I now play a lead role in its direction and activities.

The mentoring sessions were rich and engaging. I learned how to plan events from start to finish, coordinate with teams, manage time effectively, and create experiences that truly impact the community. These were not just lessons. They were tools I immediately put to use. Since completing the mentoring program, I have helped organize our community's end-of-year celebration and led the planning of a local music concert. Each event taught me something new, boosted my confidence, and sharpened my leadership and coordination skills.

Then came Empower360. The training started in December 2024, and I remember how excited I was to be selected. One of the most impactful moments was an industrial visit to a functioning mushroom farm. Seeing how the process worked in a real-world setting opened my eyes to the possibilities. I realized that mushroom farming was not just theory. It was a viable and profitable business that I could actually pursue. After the visit, my motivation grew even stronger.

The hands-on training that followed was practical and detailed. We were taken through every step of mushroom production, from preparing compost to harvesting and marketing. At the graduation ceremony, I felt a deep sense of pride. Not just because I had completed the training, but because I had acquired skills I could use to build something of my own.

The highlight for me was receiving a starter pack at the end of the program. It was not just materials. It was a symbol of trust, hope, and opportunity. I took it seriously. With



that support, I launched my own mushroom farm, applying everything I had learned. I monitored the growth carefully, and soon, I began harvesting. Today, I proudly call myself a mushroom farmer. I have added mushroom sales to my fruit-selling business, and that additional income has made a meaningful difference in my life.

In April 2025, I was selected to serve as a Field Operator for the Ghana Grows Program in the Yilo Krobo District of the Eastern Region. The Ghana Grows team saw that I was bold, articulate, and my strong connection to the community through my earlier engagements.

In this role, I visit various communities across the district to engage young people, introduce them to the Ghana Grows Program, and explain the many opportunities it offers. From community meetings to one-on-one interactions, I help others understand how this program can change their lives, just like it changed mine. This new responsibility has allowed me to not only grow as a leader but also contribute meaningfully to shaping the futures of other young people in my area.

Her Hands, Her Hustle

Buernor Orphelia Mamle

My name is Buernor Orphelia Mamle, and I come from Yilo Krobo in the Eastern Region of Ghana. I first heard about the Ghana Grows program through my neighbor. At the time, I was assisting on someone else's farm, helping to grow chili peppers, 'kpakpo shito', and sometimes watermelons. Eventually, I began cooking for the farm owners, but deep down I always wished to run something of my own.

My interest in mushroom farming was sparked when I once saw a woman making mushroom startup packs. I approached her and asked to be taught, but she declined. So, when I was invited to participate as a Youth Ambassador under the Ghana Grows program, and later introduced to Empower360, I knew it was my opportunity and I took it.

Before Ghana Grows, I had no specialized skills or reliable income. My livelihood depended on seasonal labor and cooking jobs. I was always willing to work, but I had no guidance

or structured path to follow. There were no training opportunities, no mentors, and no way to build something sustainable. I wanted to learn, but I had nowhere to go.

My relationship with Ghana Grows began with the Youth Ambassadors initiative and it was the first time I truly felt seen and heard. As a Youth Ambassador, I was not just a participant; I was a leader in training. We were taught to see ourselves as changemakers in our communities, and I started to believe that my dreams were valid and within reach. The training equipped me with tools for communication, mentorship, and mobilizing others. I became part of a network of motivated young women each with her own struggles and aspirations success could look like beyond traditional paths.

Soon after, I was selected to join Empower360 mushroom farming. I was finally able to pursue what had sparked my

interest years earlier: mushroom farming. In the Empower360 sessions, we learned everything through hands-on experience. We were taught how to grow mushrooms, manage pests, maintain hygiene in production, price and package our products, and even keep proper financial records. I paid close attention, always remembering the day I was denied access to this very knowledge. Now, it was mine.

I graduated from the program and received my starter pack. That day felt like a dream. The pack contained everything I needed to start small-scale mushroom production.

Since then, I have started producing mushrooms from my setup. The first few sales gave me so much joy. People from my community have been supportive, buying my mushrooms and even placing orders ahead of time. I am now earning income consistently, and while it's still early days, I see clear signs that this can grow into a full business.



For the first time in my life, I have something that is mine. Something I built with my hands and heart. The journey from watching others succeed to creating my own path has been empowering. And I am just getting started.

Balancing Motherhood, Poultry, and a New Path in Agribusiness

Felicia Ademai

My name is Felicia Ademai. I am a single mother of four, doing my best each day to raise my children while keeping food on the table. I first learned about the Ghana Grows Program through the Youth Ambassadors platform. That space opened a door I didn't even know existed.

At the time, I was already doing a lot. I was running a small poultry farm with local birds and also selling yams, rice, and fresh tilapia. But no matter how much I worked, the financial returns were very small. I was always stretching money and time, trying to survive from day to day. It was exhausting.

Before joining Ghana Grows and Empower360, I was stuck in a cycle. I lacked financial stability even though I had multiple small businesses. I had never received any formal training in business or agriculture, and I didn't know the legal steps involved in running a registered enterprise. I had no exposure to different ways of earning income, and I often felt like I was working so hard with nothing to show for it.

In March 2024, I was selected to participate in the Ghana Grows Youth Ambassadors training, and that experience was great. The training took place at GIMPA over the course of three days. It was intense but incredibly rewarding. We were taught practical skills like bookkeeping, how to run a sustainable business, and most importantly, how to become agri-ambassadors and advocates for change in our communities.

That training gave me purpose. I began to see how I could use my voice and experience to inspire others, especially young people, to see agriculture differently. Soon after the training, I had the opportunity to visit Okwenya M/A Junior High School with two other ambassadors. We spoke to the students about the vast value chain in agriculture and TVET, helping them see that agriculture goes beyond just farming.



It includes so many opportunities in areas like processing, marketing, packaging, and technology.

Being part of the Youth Ambassador program helped me understand how young people like me can take part in shaping the future of agriculture. It also changed how I approach my poultry business. I now pay more attention to how I plan, manage, and present my work, knowing that agriculture is not just a fallback option but a serious and rewarding path.

Together with two other friends, we started the Girls Club in Okwenya. Our aim was to bring young women together to share knowledge and support one another. Many

of us were facing different challenges, especially in areas like starting or growing a small business. Through our regular meetings, we talked about leadership, managing a business, and the difficulties women often face in agriculture. It became a space where we could speak openly and learn from each other. Being part of that group helped me stay focused and more intentional about the steps I was taking in my own journey.

Before joining Empower360, I had never considered mushroom farming, but I was open to learning something new. The training was very practical. We were taught how to prepare the compost, manage humidity, handle pests, harvest properly, and package the mushrooms for sale. One of the most useful parts of the training was learning how to prepare my own startup materials. This helped me reduce costs and gave me more control over my production.

After the training, I received a starter pack to begin production at home. It included compost bags, spores, and the basic materials I needed to get started. The Ghana Grows team helped me set up a small growing area and began producing mushrooms on my own.

Since then, I have started selling to people in my community. The extra income has helped me support my children and manage household expenses more consistently. It has also allowed me to gradually reinvest in the business and plan for future expansion.

Beyond farming, I learned how to package products, manage finances, and set prices. One of the most eye-opening lessons was about formalizing a business. I had never registered on my poultry farm, I didn't even know I had to. That simple insight changed my mindset completely. I began to treat my work like a real business, not just day-to-day hustling.



I plan to expand both my poultry and mushroom businesses, running them side by side for a more stable and sustainable income. I also hope to learn more about branding and marketing to reach a wider customer base.

“Rooted in Resilience”

Abigail Badu

My name is Abigail Badu, and I come from Koforidua Akwadum in the Eastern Region. I first heard about the Ghana Grows Program during a community engagement session held in my town. At the time, I had just completed senior high school. I was home without a job, had no skills, and wasn't sure what direction my life would take.

During the session, the facilitators spoke about agribusiness, leadership, and vocational training for young women. That information caught my attention. I felt that if I was given a chance to be part of the program, I would be ready to take it seriously.

Before joining the program, life was challenging. I lived with my mother, and we struggled even with basic needs like food. I didn't have any source of income, and I wasn't trained in any skill. Without direction or a plan, I couldn't see how to change my situation. I knew I wanted to do something meaningful, but I didn't know where to start.

I first joined the Girls Club, which was my entry point into the Ghana Grows Program. The club brought together young women in similar situations. We discussed confidence, setting personal goals, and exploring options for our future. The sessions helped me see that I wasn't alone, and they introduced me to new ways of thinking about what was possible. The group became a space where I could learn and grow with others.

From the Girls Club, I was selected to join Empower360, a hands-on training program under Ghana Grows. I was trained in mushroom farming, which was something I had always been interested in. The training covered everything from moisture control and pest management to packaging, pricing, and basic bookkeeping. It was practical and easy to understand.

After the training, I received a starter pack, which allowed me to begin my mushroom business without delay. This support made it possible for me to take what I had learned and apply



it immediately.

Today, I produce and sell mushrooms and earn between ₵150 and ₵300 a week, depending on how much I'm able to produce. I can now take care of my own food, meet my personal needs, and contribute to the household. I no longer depend fully on my mother, and being able to support myself has brought a lot of relief at home.

I want to grow my mushroom business and one day train others in my community who are interested in learning the same skill. I believe many young people, especially young women, could benefit from this kind of knowledge. My goal is to build a sustainable business and also help others find a way to support themselves through work they can manage and grow.

Sowing Possibility, Reaping Purpose



Emmanuel Twene

My name is Emmanuel Twene, and I'm the CEO of QET Organic Farms Ltd and SABET AgriConsult. My passion for agriculture has always gone beyond growing crops. I've been committed to sustainability, reducing post-harvest losses, and helping farmers see agriculture not just as survival, but as a viable business. When I was introduced to the Ghana Grows Program, I saw in it a platform that aligned with everything I believe about agriculture innovation, people-centered solutions, and transformation through knowledge.

Through their partnership approach, Ghana Grows gave me an opportunity to contribute meaningfully, not just by expanding my work, but by mentoring others across the agricultural value chain. That was the beginning of a new chapter not just as a farmer or agripreneur, but as a trainer and guide.

Even though I had already built a farm and consultancy business, I often felt the challenge of scale. How could I train more people, reach rural communities, and pass on sustainable practices in a way that sticks?

My vision was to equip youth, women, and vulnerable groups with practical tools, but platforms for that were few and far between. Many people still saw agriculture as low-skilled work, and it was hard to convince young people that farming could be both profitable and innovative. What I needed was a structured way to engage and mentor people at scale especially those who had the desire but lacked opportunity or support.

I was invited to be a lead facilitator for the Ghana Grows Empower360 training, where I trained 24 young women including persons with disabilities in mushroom farming. I taught practical skills around cultivation, business management, and food safety. One of the best parts was seeing confidence grow in participants, many of whom had never imagined they could run a business in agribusiness. The sessions were interactive and peer-led, which made

it easier for participants to open up, learn from each other, and develop a real sense of ownership over their futures.

Through SABET AgriConsult, I partnered with Ghana Grows to roll out the "Grow Your Own Vegetables" initiative. It was designed to promote food security, home gardening, and healthier eating. Ghana Grows supported with outreach, training tools, and logistics. We distributed seeds, compost, and user-friendly guides so families could set up their own backyard gardens. Watching individuals harvest their first vegetables and share their progress was one of the most fulfilling parts of my work. It reinforced the belief that small actions, supported properly, can lead to big change.



I also serve as a facilitator at Ghana Grows Career Clinics where I speak to young people about the realities and opportunities within agribusiness.

The goal is to shift perception, agriculture is not just for those who have no other option; it's for innovators, leaders, and problem-solvers. Through these sessions, I've been able to help youth discover new paths in organic farming, sustainable business models, and value addition. Being featured on Springboard Hangout also gave me a national platform to advocate for these ideas.

What stands out with Ghana Grows is the follow-up. Participants from the Empower360 training were placed in WhatsApp groups where we continue mentorship, problem-solving, and sharing best practices. It ensures that what we started during training doesn't end there. It becomes a lifestyle, a mindset shift.

Receiving the Ghana Grows Young Innovators Award was a proud moment not just for me personally, but as recognition that sustainable agribusiness is worth celebrating.

Over the past four years, I've trained over 1,500 people, including women, persons with disabilities, returnee migrants, and refugees. Ghana Grows has given me the tools, visibility, and partnerships to expand this impact further.

I now see my role not just as an entrepreneur but as someone building a movement for sustainable, inclusive agriculture.

Agribusiness is the future of this country. Through platforms like Ghana Grows, we are rewriting what that future looks like, one where youth are equipped, women are empowered, and agriculture is respected as a path to prosperity. My goal is to continue mentoring, training, and building ecosystems where people thrive not just survive in agriculture.



Awakening the Voice Within

Victoria Adjei

My name is Victoria Adjei, and I come from Nsawam. I'm currently a level 100 student at the University of Ghana, studying Family and Consumer Science. My journey into this course and the confidence I carry today both trace back to a single moment that changed everything, an encounter with the Ghana Grows team while I was still in senior high school.

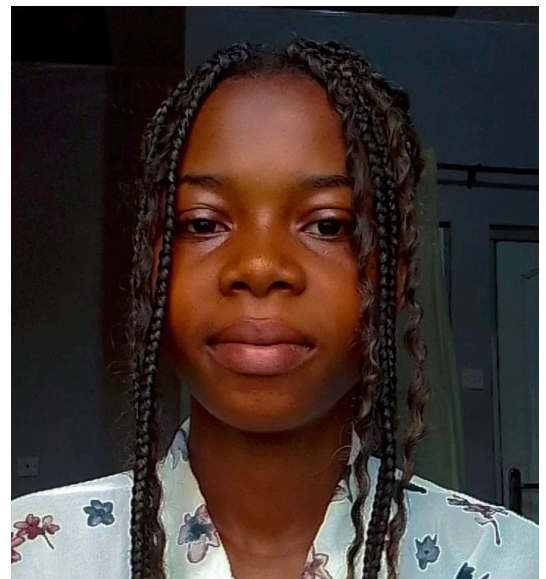
In 2024, Ghana Grows came to Nsawam SHS, my alma mater, for a community engagement event. It was full of music, dance, drama, and vibrant energy. I had always been shy and kept to myself, but something about that day sparked a different energy in me. My friends encouraged me to join the drama performance, reminding me of the little acting I used to do with them. Nervously, I agreed.

Stepping into that role helped me realize that my shyness had been holding me back far more than I thought. That one decision, saying yes to acting, planted the first seed of the confidence I now carry.

Before joining the Ghana Grows activities, I struggled with self-confidence. I couldn't speak in front of a crowd, and I had never truly seen myself as capable of leading or expressing myself in public. I also didn't have a clear direction for my future. I was leaning toward nursing simply because it felt safe. But after being introduced to Ghana Grows and learning about agriculture and technical vocational education and training (ATVET), I started to see another path. The exposure helped me realize how wide and impactful the agricultural sector really is, and I wanted to be part of it.

That first drama session was just beginning. I joined the Theatre for Change team and continued acting with them. It wasn't just about performing; it was about discovering my voice. I learned to carry myself with confidence and speak clearly in front of others. Today, public speaking no longer

scares me. I welcome it. Later, I participated in the Ghana Grows Career Clinic. Through that, I learned more about agriculture, ATVET, and how to build a career that connects with my passions. These sessions introduced me to real stories and practical ideas for what I could do after school. It made me realize that agriculture is not just about farming, it's about food systems, sustainability, entrepreneurship, and people.



Today, I'm studying Family and Consumer Science at the University of Ghana. I chose the program specifically because of the exposure Ghana Grows gave me. I want to deepen my understanding of agriculture and use that knowledge to contribute meaningfully to food security and public health. If I hadn't met Ghana Grows, I might have walked down a different path, never realizing how powerful my voice and my choices could be.

Handmade Hope

Bless Darko

My name is Bless Darko, and I come from Kadjebi in the Oti Region. I'm the proud daughter of a farmer, and agriculture has always been a part of my life. My father's dedication to farming made me deeply appreciate its value and impact. But while I admired his work, I never imagined that I would one day become a pioneer in a completely different, yet equally hands-on space.

My journey with Ghana Grows began when a church member introduced me to the program. I had seen it before on TV3, but I didn't think I would ever be part of it myself. That conversation led me to meet a field operator, and from that moment, my engagement with Ghana Grows grew stronger.

Before Ghana Grows, I was passionate but unsure of how to use my creativity or leadership abilities. I had always loved trying new things, but in my community, options for women, especially in technical or vocational areas, were limited. I wanted to step beyond traditional paths, but I lacked the support system, training, and opportunity to do so.

I was especially drawn to the idea of the Community Girls Club. The focus on leadership, mentorship, and skills development spoke to me. It made me think beyond just agriculture and opened my mind to TVET and the larger agribusiness value chain. I wanted to challenge myself and prove that I could do something unfamiliar and impactful.

My first real connection came through that church conversation and my meeting with a field operator. It was informal but powerful. I was introduced to what Ghana Grows stood for: youth empowerment, practical training, and agribusiness as a vehicle for transformation.

At that moment, it planted a seed of curiosity. I started to learn more about how the program wasn't just about farming, but about the entire value chain, including areas like TVET, business, and artisan skills. It was more than I had expected, and more than I thought was even possible for me.



Joining the Community Girls Club was a defining moment. I was introduced to the Girls Club by the field coordinator. The club created a safe, empowering space where young women could come together, not just to learn, but to share, grow, and be seen.

Here, I learned how to lead discussions, how to mentor other girls, and how to think boldly. The topics went beyond vocational skills; we explored leadership, self-esteem, entrepreneurship, and the role of women in agribusiness. It wasn't just a club; it was a movement of transformation.

For me, it became a family. The kind of community I had always longed for. It gave me the courage to say yes to opportunities I might once have been too afraid to pursue. When I was selected to participate in the Empower360 program, it felt like destiny. The cohort I joined was focused on resin art, a field I had never imagined myself in, but quickly fell in love with. My love for colours made me choose this field. Through the program, I learnt how to design, mix, pour, and cure resin into beautiful pieces, trays, earrings, and decorative items.

But it wasn't just about craft. I also gained business skills: pricing, packaging, branding, and customer service. For the first time, I saw how my hands, mind, and heart could work together to build something of my own.

Now, I'm making and selling my resin products, and I'm building a small but growing business. I am no longer just the daughter of a farmer. I am a creator, a leader, and a changemaker in my own right.

Today, I continue to grow not just as an artisan but as a mentor and voice within my community. My dream is to mentor other young women, especially those who feel boxed in by societal expectations. I want to help them explore new paths in agribusiness, art and leadership in Ghana.

Ghana Grows didn't just give me a skill; it awakened my sense of possibility. And with every resin piece I create, I'm reminded: you don't need to fit the mold to be valuable, you just need the right hands to help you shape your future.



Healing, Leading, Growing

Princess Mortty

My name is Princess Mortty, and I come from Adaklu in the Volta Region of Ghana. Until 2024, I had never heard of Ghana Grows. I didn't hear about it through community meetings, school clubs, or training sessions. In fact, I had no idea a program like that even existed.

One day, my sister sent me a link online. It was an application for a policy roundtable workshop organized by Ghana Grows. The title mentioned youth voices, agriculture, and development policy. Something about it caught my attention. I had always wanted to be part of something bigger than myself, something that could drive change. So I said to myself, "Why not?" I applied and I was accepted. That single decision opened a door I didn't even know was there, and it changed the trajectory of my life.

Before joining the program, I was doing all I could to survive. I braided hair in the mornings, sold pineapples in the afternoons, and prepared Indomie and spaghetti in the evenings. But everything came to a halt after I was involved in a motorbike accident. The injuries forced me to stop all activities, leaving me physically weakened and financially unstable. I did not know where to turn next.

My journey with Ghana Grows began at a policy roundtable. I did not know it then, but walking into that room was the beginning of a new life. I was just there to listen, still in pain from my motorbike accident and unsure of my next step. But when I heard the speakers talk about agribusiness, youth empowerment, and women taking the lead in agriculture, something in me clicked.

I had never thought farming could be for someone like me, someone who braided hair, sold Indomie, and did whatever it took to survive. In fact, I did not even know



that these things I was doing were part of the agriculture and ATVET value chain.

My journey with Ghana Grows began on April 20, 2024, at a policy roundtable held at the Volta Serene Hotel in Ho. I walked into that room not knowing what to expect. I was still recovering from a motorbike accident, trying to find my feet again, and unsure of what my next chapter would be.

As I listened to the speakers talk about agribusiness, youth empowerment, and how young women could take the lead in transforming their communities through agriculture, I decided to take action.

I approached the Ghana Grows team to ask how I could start mentoring clubs for young women in my community, Adaklu Kpodzi, a rural farming area where many girls were dropping out of school and teenage pregnancies were on

the rise.

With their encouragement, I went back home, and, within a week, I had started two mentoring clubs. One began with 30 girls and the other with 15. By the end of the month, the total number of girls had grown to 60.

Today, the clubs are thriving, and these young women now have a safe space to learn, share, and grow together.

Then came the opportunity that changed everything. I was selected to participate in the Empower 360 Mushroom training. The training took place in December 2024. I had no prior experience in mushroom cultivation, but I was determined to learn something that could offer a long-term source of income.

The sessions were hands-on and easy to follow. We were taught how to prepare the substrate, maintain hygiene, monitor the growth process, and harvest the mushrooms properly.

After the training, the Ghana Grows team came to my home to help set up the space for production. They supported me with the starter pack, which included substrate bags, protective gear, a watering can, and other materials. Receiving that pack felt like a turning

point. It was more than just items. It was an investment in my growth.

I started my first cycle shortly after, and within a few weeks, I was able to harvest and sell fresh mushrooms. I sold them to neighbors and vendors, and the feedback was encouraging. Now I earn a steady income from the sales, and it has helped me support my personal needs.

I also took part in the EmpowerHer sessions, which were intimate conversations and trainings designed to strengthen us as women leaders. They taught me how to own my story, how to speak up, and how to lead with empathy.

One of the highlights was the panel discussion on “Breaking Barriers: Women in Male-Dominated Spaces.” This was followed by small group breakout sessions that gave us the chance to go deeper into the topics. Each group was led by experienced facilitators and industry experts, and we talked about leadership, entrepreneurship strategies, and how to care for our mental and emotional well-being.

The sessions were interactive and practical. We shared our experiences, learned from one another, and picked up skills we could apply immediately.

More than anything, the breakout groups helped build a strong sense of community. It felt good to be in a space where women were supporting each other, exchanging ideas, and receiving personal guidance.

Comfort Ocran, the Executive Director of the Springboard Road Show Foundation, spoke powerfully at the event. She celebrated the progress women in Ghana are making and reminded us to carry forward the lessons and relationships we had built. Her message about sustaining support networks and growing from each other’s success stayed with me.

Today, I serve as a Field Coordinator under the Ghana Grows program in the Ho District of the Volta Region. It is one of the greatest honors of my life. I don’t just farm anymore, I lead. As part of my work, I organize sensitization meetings, visit schools and youth groups, and talk about the opportunities Ghana Grows offers. I encourage women to step out of their comfort zones and consider new paths like agribusiness or mentoring clubs. I let them know that there is dignity in every beginning, and that their pain doesn’t have to define their future.

My future is filled with hope and ambition. I plan to expand my mushroom business by securing a larger production space, increasing output, and continuing to produce my own startup packs. I also want to mentor and support more young women, especially those who feel stuck or have faced hardship to show them that with persistence, passion, and the right support, they too can rise. My journey proves that setbacks can lead to powerful new beginnings.

White-Collar Dreams to Creative Confidence



Bridgette Bisiriwu

My name is Bridgette Bisiriwu. I'm a university graduate and a working professional from Hohoe in the Volta Region. I'm also a person with a disability (Physically challenged), something that has shaped my journey in both visible and invisible ways. Growing up, I was determined to pursue education and land a white-collar job, because I believed it was the only path to dignity and respect, especially for someone like me.

For years, I saw technical and vocational careers as second-tier something for those who didn't do well in school. In my mind, they were fallback options. That perception stuck with me until my brother, also a person with a disability and a member of the Ghana Federation of Disability, introduced me to the Ghana Grows Program.

At first, I was hesitant. I didn't think a vocational program would suit me or match the image I had of my future. But something about the way he spoke about the program stirred my curiosity. He invited me to a Community Girls Club meeting in Hohoe, and that one meeting began to shift everything I believed in success.

There, I met young women confidently leading conversations around skills training, agribusiness, and entrepreneurship. Some were mothers, some were disabled like me, and yet all were hopeful and empowered. I realized I had placed unnecessary limits on myself, and I was ready to change that.

Joining the Community Girls Club was like stepping into a mirror that showed me what I could become. I saw young women, including some with disabilities, embracing vocational skills and creating lives they were proud of. For the first time, I saw TVET not as a

fallback, but as a platform for self-expression, dignity, and financial independence. It made me reconsider everything I had believed, and it opened a door I never thought I'd walk through.



After the training, I received a starter pack, which allowed me to produce my first resin pieces. Since then, I've begun selling to friends and community members, and I'm slowly building a brand of my own.

Through the Girls Club, I was introduced to the Empower360 initiative, and I enrolled in a training program focused on resin art because I once heard of it and wanted to try my hand on. I had no prior experience with it, but I was curious and excited. The sessions were practical and hands-on. I learned how to mix and shape resin, how to design functional pieces, and how to care for the details that make handmade products special. Beyond the art itself, I was also trained in entrepreneurship, how to price, package, and market my work. I gained new confidence in myself, not just as a creative person but as a potential business owner.

Today, I live with the pride of someone who has broken free from limitations, not just societal ones, but the internal ones I once placed on myself. I still work professionally, but I now see myself as more than my job title. I'm a creative entrepreneur, a woman with a disability who embraced vocational training, and someone who is turning passion into purpose.

My goal is to grow my resin business into a full-time venture, to explore new designs, and eventually mentor other women, especially those with disabilities, to show them that their creativity and capabilities are valid, powerful, and needed.



Adding Value, Growing Vision

Edem Wisdom Letsa

My name is Edem Wisdom Letsa. I am a 33-year-old farmer from the Volta Region, where I grow maize, cassava, and beans. I first heard about the Ghana Grows Program through a friend who had already joined. He introduced me to the youth ambassadors training, and I became interested. Out of curiosity and a genuine interest in improving my work, I traveled to Accra to attend the training.

As a farmer myself, I always knew that farming could be a beneficial and lucrative venture. However, one of my biggest challenges was staying motivated when things didn't go as planned, especially during seasons of loss or poor harvest. Maintaining the farm through tough times was mentally and financially draining. I also recognized that I needed more knowledge and exposure. While I was already into farming, I wanted to build new connections with other farmers and gain fresh insights that could help me improve my work and outcomes.

I joined the Youth Ambassadors training in April 2024. Until then, I saw farming mostly as planting and harvesting. The training helped me see a fuller picture. I learned about the food value chain and how important it is to also think about processing, packaging, and getting produce to the market. This changed how I think about my work. Now, I approach farming with more planning and a clearer idea of how to grow and improve what I've already started.

I first saw the Ghana Grows e-mentoring programme advertised on Facebook and decided to give it a try. I joined both the entrepreneurship and farming groups, and the sessions opened me up to new ideas and practical techniques I could apply to my work. One of the things I learned was how to process cassava into cassava powder, which is used to prepare Banku. Unlike the traditional



cassava dough, this powder lasts longer and doesn't need refrigeration. That change alone has been a breakthrough. I now make some extra income from selling the powder, and people in my community have noticed the difference. It has helped me shift from just growing crops to adding real value.

The program also taught me how to plan and organize my work. The sessions on marketing and business helped me think more carefully about what I do each season. I now farm with a plan, from when I plant to how and where I sell what I harvest.

Looking ahead, my main goal is to scale up production. I want to increase the volume of crops I grow, especially maize, cassava, and beans, so I can serve larger markets and meet growing demand. I also plan to expand my processing activities to add even more value to what I produce. With the knowledge, skills, and networks I've gained through Ghana Grows, I'm confident that I can grow my farming business into something much bigger and more impactful.

Farming My Way Forward

Godson Agbekudzi

My name is Godson Agbekudzi. I'm 25 years old, and I live in Ho in the Volta Region. I have a degree in Business Administration from KNUST, where I majored in Marketing. Like many recent graduates, I was trying to figure out my path what to do next, where to apply my skills, and how to build something meaningful.

In early 2024, I came across an advert for the Ghana Grows program on Facebook. At first, I scrolled past, but the message stuck with me. It spoke directly to young people, encouraging us to explore agribusiness and create enterprises that could be both profitable and impactful. Something about it felt different it wasn't just about farming; it was about building a future. That post became a turning point. I followed the page, read more, and eventually signed up to learn what it was all about.

Before joining Ghana Grows, I had no real experience in farming. My background was in business, and agriculture wasn't something I had seriously considered. But I was curious. I wanted to learn something new and

practical. I knew I wanted to start something of my own, but I lacked the hands-on experience and network to get started in agribusiness. I was also beginning my national service with the Ghana Revenue Authority, so time and resources were limited. Still, I believed that with the right support and knowledge, I could find my footing.

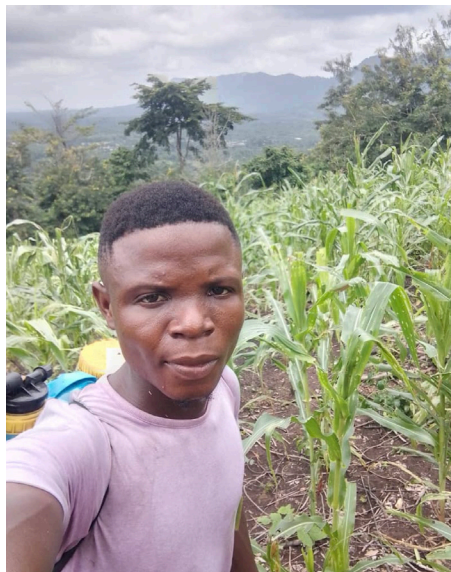
What helped me the most was learning to approach farming as a business. I applied some of the marketing principles I studied in school to identify which crops had demand, what buyers were looking for, and how to position myself as a reliable supplier.

Today, I'm balancing my national service at the Ghana Revenue Authority with active farming. It's not easy, but I've found a rhythm that works for now. I sell to local buyers and food vendors in my area, and I'm gradually building a network.

The biggest shift has been in my mindset. I used to see agriculture as something others did, something you turn to when other options fail. Now I

see it as a business with serious potential not just for income, but for impact. I want to grow my farm, employ others, and one day become a resource for other young people who are unsure of their next steps.

Agriculture is now part of my long-term plan. Once I complete national service, I intend to scale up. I'm considering value addition processing some of the crops I grow and creating a brand that reflects quality and consistency. My dream is to build a farm that's not only profitable, but that also shows young people that farming isn't a fallback. It's a smart, viable, and future-ready career.



*“The best way to predict the future is to create it.”
— Peter Drucker*

TALES FROM
SOUTHERN
GHANA

The Rise and Rise of Mary Tetteh

Mary Tetteh

My name is Mary Tetteh, and I'm a 35-year-old physically challenged entrepreneur. I live at a community called Galilea near Amasaman in the Ga South District.

I heard about the GG program from the coordinator of our Ghana Federation Disability Organizations who called to introduce me to what the program entails and what it seeks to achieve. I was interested and wanted to know more about the program.

My contact was passed on to the program's call centre, and a representative reached out to me. During the call, I received additional information about the program and its interventions. I was also educated on the agricultural value chain, ATVET, and potential career opportunities within these sectors. The call concluded with me consenting to be onboarded onto the program and receiving guidance on how to participate in the various interventions.

At the time, I was into the sale of Tom Brown, a local cereal made from roasted corn and which is used for porridge. Sales were generally poor. I struggled to compete with alternatives available on the market. I also realize now that the packaging was not suitable. I had several questions but did not have an experienced person in my field or a mentor to ask for guidance or help. I have not had any formal education in food processing. I only ventured into it because I identified the need and believed that I could do it. As a person with disability, I had limited career options. Once this came up, I seized this opportunity with both hands. Any time I felt I needed information or guidance; I



would talk to my friends. Sometimes it worked, but at other times I felt I needed more support. In the semi-rural community where I live it is like “everyone for herself”. I typically couldn't get access to the support, resources, guidance or facilities I needed to grow my business.

I got a call from my GFD district coordinator to inform me that I had been nominated as a Youth Ambassador. It was the first time I had been selected for such an opportunity, and it meant a lot to me and my family when I told them. I attended a 3-day training at Sun Lodge Hotel in Tesano, Accra on August, 2024. I was taught about personal grooming, communication, Confidence, financial literacy and opportunities in the Agribusiness and ATVET Value Chain.

As part of the training, I participated in an industrial visit to E.S Agritech, Adenta with the 23 other Youth Ambassadors of Ghana Grows. I discovered the immense value of mushrooms, which sparked my interest in mushroom farming. I realized that I had little or no appreciation for mushrooms, neither their nutritional benefits nor their financial potential. I began to consider it as a possible business I would move into one day..

In December 2024, it was put on our Youth Ambassadors WhatsApp platform that 24 young women including persons with disability were being selected for a pilot training in mushroom farming. Immediately I heard mushroom I confirmed my interest and availability to participate. The training was held in East Legon in Accra. We learnt about how to start a business, leadership, customer service, safeguarding, teamwork, food safety and the main business of mushroom farming.

My favourite session was the time with Madam Joana from Light of the World who spoke on Disability and Inclusion. I was inspired by the stories she shared about how persons with disabilities were doing well in various sectors. It was a practical session and the more I learnt the more I felt I could do it.

As part of the training, we also had sessions with Albert and Comfort Ocran and other facilitators where we were encouraged to ask questions. I learnt from the questions asked and the experiences my colleagues shared. We had two site visits to QET Organic Farms (Mushroom Farming) and Akwaaba Fine Foods (Cashew Processing). That trip taught me about quality packaging and food safety. At Akwaaba, we were

made to wear white gowns, masks and sanitize our hands upon arrival. I noticed the various production processes and the quality of the packaging that was being done. Our host informed us that her products were being served on Delta Airlines and United Airlines flights. It was an eye-opener. I told myself that one day I would also go international.

By the time of graduation my mind was made up. I knew that I could go fully into mushroom farming. I was given my certificate and shown a starter pack as a gift from Ghana Grows. In the video that was recorded I promised everyone that I would one day



add mushrooms to my Tom Brown cereal. I went home very delighted. A month after the training (In January 2025) I was visited by the team from Springboard with the facilitator of the training Mr. Emmanuel Twene.

They brought the starter pack as promised, helped to identify a suitable place and set it up for me. My family and friends were excited because I had told them about it and they witnessed the installation. All 24 of us were put in a WhatsApp Group with our facilitator and a Springboard representative.

The group allows us to share learnings and experiences and to ask questions about various challenges we encounter along the line.

Four weeks after the starter pack was installed, I harvested my first mushrooms. It was a Tuesday morning. I opened the mushroom house to water them and there it was. I had been expecting it but didn't know what to do. I have never felt so powerful. I shared the pictures on the platform and called Emmanuel for guidance. I was able to sell in the local market without much problem. Later on, Emmanuel sent me some packaging materials.

I was now also drying the mushrooms and package them to last longer. Initially the customers preferred the fresh mushrooms but after encouraging them to try the dried ones, they found them equally good. T

he savings I made from selling the initial stock became my capital. When the first 200 mushroom stalks run out I called Emmanuel to restock. He congratulated me for being the first to restock among my colleagues. Once again, I felt even more proud because I was discovering that I could compete even with my disability.

I have slowly built my customer base and I am saving to buy a second mushroom house. Most importantly I have fused the dried mushrooms into the Tom Brown as promised and it is currently my fastest selling product. My Ghana Grows experience has been life changing.

After hearing how well my mushroom business was doing, Springboard contacted me to share my story with other young people. The first day, it felt so good sharing my experiences at the Girls Club in Ga South and having other young women and persons with disability ask me questions. Another high point was when I was invited to join the Ghana Grows year two review meeting at the Mastercard Foundation. I was so delighted to share my experiences because it meant that my story was one of the best.

I am determined to be a good ambassador and to challenge young women to look into the Agribusiness value chain for career opportunities. If my life has changed so much in the past year, I believe the future is greater not just for me but for the young people of Ghana, especially for persons with disability. Ghana Grows!!! Hope Dey!!!!

Bold, Visible, and Growing

Bernice Yawo Agboada

My name is Bernice Yawo Agboada, and I live in Ashaiman in the Greater Accra Region. I am a proud young woman living with albinism, and today, I see myself as an empowered agripreneur. But it hasn't always been this way.

I first heard about the Ghana Grows Program through a friend. She mentioned an opportunity to join the Youth Ambassadors initiative, and something about it caught my attention. At the time, I was hesitant. Life had not been easy, and I had learned to be careful when people spoke about "opportunities." Still, deep inside, I held on to a small hope that maybe this could be the chance I needed to rebuild.

When I eventually joined the Youth Ambassadors training, I didn't fully understand what Ghana Grows was all about. But as I took part in the sessions and got to know the facilitators, I began to see that this was more than just a program. It was a movement that believed in people like me.

Before joining the program, life was incredibly difficult for me. I had to stop street hawking because of my physical disability. The harsh weather and the strain on my body became too much to bear. Without any source of income or financial support, I found myself stuck at home, unsure of what the future held. I tried affiliate marketing just to keep myself busy, but it didn't last. Things got so bad that I faced physical abuse from a relative who had once helped me. That time in my life was one of the darkest I have ever known.

My journey with Ghana Grows truly began when I joined the Youth Ambassadors initiative, and from that moment, everything began to change. Becoming a Youth Ambassador gave me something I hadn't felt in a long time, a voice. I was trained to lead, to advocate, and to serve as a role model for other young people in my community. I began to speak with confidence, share my story openly, and stand for something greater than myself.



Through that experience, I discovered that my story, my strength, and even my struggles could inspire others, especially young people with disabilities who often feel unseen or unheard.

One of the turning points for me was participating in Empower360, one of Ghana Grows' initiatives that provides hands-on training in agribusiness and entrepreneurship. That's where I was introduced to mushroom farming. I still remember my first session, how I paid close attention, absorbed all the knowledge, and asked questions freely without any fear of being judged. We learned everything, from how to grow and harvest mushrooms to how to price, package, and



keep proper records. But beyond the technical skills, the biggest lesson I walked away with was this: I am capable. The Ghana Grows team didn't see me as just another participant. They saw me as someone with real potential. That belief changed everything for me.

Before the training began, I had the opportunity to go on an industrial visit as part of the Empower360 experience. We visited QET Organic Farms and Akwaaba Fine Foods. The visit to QET organic farms exposed me to the real world of agribusiness. I saw how mushroom farming was being done on a larger scale, and for the first time, I was able to connect the theory to practice. It gave me a vision of what was possible, and I came back feeling inspired and eager to learn more.

Soon after the visit, I went through the full Empower360 training program, one of Ghana Grows' flagship initiatives focused on hands-on skills and entrepreneurship in the agribusiness value chain. That's where I was introduced to mushroom farming. I still remember my first session, how I listened carefully, soaked in knowledge, and asked questions without fear. We were taught everything, from cultivation and harvesting to pricing, packaging, and recordkeeping. Beyond the skills, what I gained was confidence. The training made me feel capable. It reminded me that I had value and something

to offer. By the time I graduated, I was not the same person who walked in on the first day.

After completing the training, I was provided with a mushroom starter pack to begin production on my own. The pack came with the basic materials I needed, including substrate bags and essential items for growing mushrooms. This practical support made it possible for me to take immediate action on what I had learned. It was a clear sign that Ghana Grows did not just train us but believed in our ability to succeed. Even after the training, I was not left on my own. I received regular mentorship and follow-ups from the Ghana Grows team and my mentor, Emmanuel Twene. Whenever I had challenges or questions about the mushrooms or packaging, someone was there to support me. That mentorship kept me going, especially during moments when I doubted myself or faced difficulties. Knowing that someone was rooting for me made all the difference.

Today, I harvest mushrooms from my small setup and sell them in my community. What started as training has now become a small business that brings in income. For the first time in a long while, I have something of my own, something that gives me pride and a sense of purpose. I no longer hawk on the streets or wait for help. I am building a future for myself, and I dream of training other young women,

especially those with disabilities, to do the same.

Not long after, I was invited to take part in an e-learning and media engagement through the Springboard Hangout, organized under the theme of International Women's Day. It had a special focus on empowering Persons with Disabilities. During the broadcast, I shared my story with people across the country. I didn't speak as someone who had suffered, but as a woman with a purpose. That moment reminded me that my journey matters, and it gave me the courage to keep going.



Grease, Greens, and Growth

William Kwame Kyeremeh



I am William Kwame Kyeremeh, Motor Vehicle Engineering at Biriwa Technical Institute. Even though my formal education is in automotive technology, I've always had a personal connection to agriculture. I started gardening as a child, and over time, it became a hobby that helped me relax and stay grounded.

I first heard about Ghana Grows through my school principal. He mentioned a community engagement session being held at the University of Cape Coast (UCC) and encouraged anyone interested to attend. I showed up, listened, and got immediately drawn in by what the program was offering. That's how my journey with Ghana Grows began.

My first real interaction with the Ghana Grows team was at UCC helped me understand how agriculture could be more than just subsistence or backyard gardening it could be part of a broader movement involving young

people, innovation, and opportunity. It gave me a new perspective.

Soon after, I joined the "Grow Your Own Food and Vegetables" challenge that was shared through the Springboard Road Show Foundation's WhatsApp community. Over the course of 60 days, I cultivated vegetables like carrots, lettuce, cucumber, spring onions, beetroot, okra, and pepper. It was a fulfilling experience but also came with real challenges.

I battled pests, especially garden snails that attacked sprouting plants. I had to wake up early each morning to handpick them, sometimes collecting 20 to 30 a day. I gave them to a neighbour who enjoys eating snails, so nothing went to waste. I also had to deal with free-range chickens damaging my seedlings, and water shortages that forced me to switch from rainwater to a household well for irrigation.

Time management was



another major challenge. While running this garden, I was also on industrial attachment as part of my motor engineering training. I had to create a disciplined routine: watering in the early mornings and evenings and doing garden maintenance on weekends. It was a tough balance, but I made it work.

One of the proudest moments was seeing my niece start her own garden without my help. She had watched me for a while and eventually decided to take it up on her own. She's doing great. Knowing that I influenced someone else even within my own household means a lot to me.

After the challenge, I received okra and pepper seeds from the program. I planted them and harvested a good amount, reinforcing my belief that with commitment and a little support, something small can grow into something valuable.

Even though I'm a mechanic by profession, agriculture remains close to my heart. I'm currently developing a new product, mushroom chips. Ghana Grows has helped me strengthen my sense of purpose, sharpen my planning skills, and reconnect with my agricultural roots in a more structured way. Agriculture may not be my full-time job, but it will always be part of who I am.

The Bold Pivot

Jacob Awe

My name is Kwewe Jacob. I'm a 35-year-old website developer based at the 37 Military Barracks in Accra. Growing up, I had dreams of becoming an animal farmer, but over time, I found myself working in tech, building websites for clients while still holding on to that childhood dream of doing something more hands-on.

One day, I came across a post about Ghana Grows on Facebook. It caught my attention immediately. I registered via the short code *718*50#, and not long after, I received an SMS inviting me to a Career Clinic session. I signed up without hesitation, not knowing that this decision would completely change my path.

At the time, I was unemployed and stuck at home. Farming had always been a passion of mine, and I had even started exploring catfish farming on my own. But without proper guidance, my first attempt was a painful failure. I lost over 1,000 fingerlings, and it discouraged not just me, but also those around me. Friends and family told me to stop, but deep down, I knew this was something I truly wanted to pursue.

When I joined the Ghana Grows Career Clinic, I realized where I had gone wrong. The training on

multiple streams of income and catfish farming opened my eyes. I understood for the first time the importance of planning, risk management, and marketing. That loss I experienced before joining the program taught me one thing: don't give up just do it smarter.

I joined the Career Clinic series and focused on sessions related to farming and agribusiness. The catfish farming module gave me practical advice I could immediately apply. The trainers broke things down in a way that made it easy to understand and gave me the confidence to start again, with knowledge this time, not just passion.

The e-mentoring support that followed was exactly what I needed. Having access to a community and mentors who could answer questions and share advice helped me troubleshoot in real-time. This support made a big difference. I learned how to manage risk, improve water quality, and reduce mortality.

With that knowledge, I restarted my catfish farm. It's been three months now, and things are finally taking shape. I'm currently planning to acquire land to expand operations. I want to build



a sustainable system where fish waste fertilizes crops, creating a closed-loop model that integrates aquaculture and farming. I'm also exploring snail farming as an additional income stream.

Ghana Grows gave me more than training. It helped me reconnect with an old dream and taught me how to move from ideas to action. Today, I'm not just thinking about farming. I'm doing it and doing it well.

The most valuable lesson I've learned is this: success doesn't come from waiting for the perfect time. It comes from starting with what you have, learning from failure, and pushing through. That's exactly what I've done, and what I'll keep doing.

I Chose Me: Finding Freedom Through Vocational Training

Belinda Eyison

My name is Belinda Eyison, and I'm a 29-year-old beautician based in the Ayawaso West Municipality of the Greater Accra Region. I first encountered Ghana Grows through a community engagement event that featured the Theatre for Change Program. I wasn't sure what to expect, but that experience turned out to be the spark I needed. The performance and discussions that followed made me reflect deeply on my future, and for the first time in a long while, I saw a new path open before me.

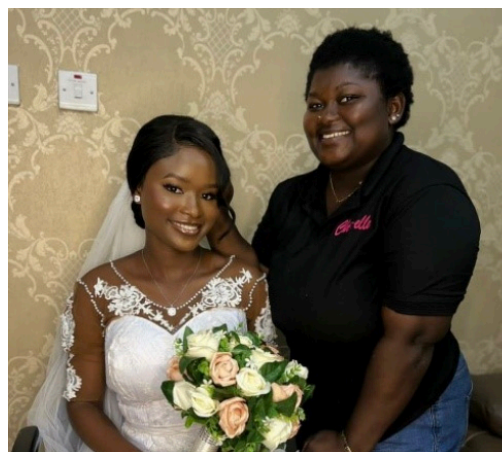
Growing up, I always wanted to become a nurse. It was a dream I shared with my family and one they wholeheartedly supported. But along the way, life became complicated. Family challenges and a lack of financial support meant that I couldn't pursue that dream the way I had imagined. I found myself unsure of what direction to take next. It was hard watching others move forward while I stayed stuck, with no resources and no real

plan.

After participating in the Ghana Grows Theatre for Change, I felt encouraged to consider new opportunities. That's when I heard more about ATVET and vocational paths that could lead to real careers. I chose cosmetology. It felt like a natural fit. I enrolled in a certified training school and paid my fees with money I had saved myself. For the first time, I wasn't just dreaming, I was taking action.

The Ghana Grows messages and community events continued to motivate me. They highlighted stories of young people creating their success through trade and skills. I began to believe that my journey had value too.

I have completed my cosmetology training, and I specialize in makeup, waxing, pedicures, manicures, and nail care. This journey has helped me rebuild confidence and earn respect from my family. They now see the path I've chosen not as second-best, but as a



powerful statement of independence and resilience. I've stopped feeling pressured to follow anyone else's script. I've found my voice.

I'm now actively promoting my services and looking to gain hands-on experience at a well-established spa. The beauty industry in Accra is growing rapidly, especially in places like Madina, East Legon, and Spintex. I see that demand, and I'm preparing to meet it with both skill and passion.

My bigger dream is to open my spa. But it won't just be about beauty. I want it to be a space for empowerment where other young people, especially those who feel stuck like I once did, can learn, grow, and build careers. I hope to offer free training and services to help others get started.

Redefining Dreams Through Dance

Harry Daniels

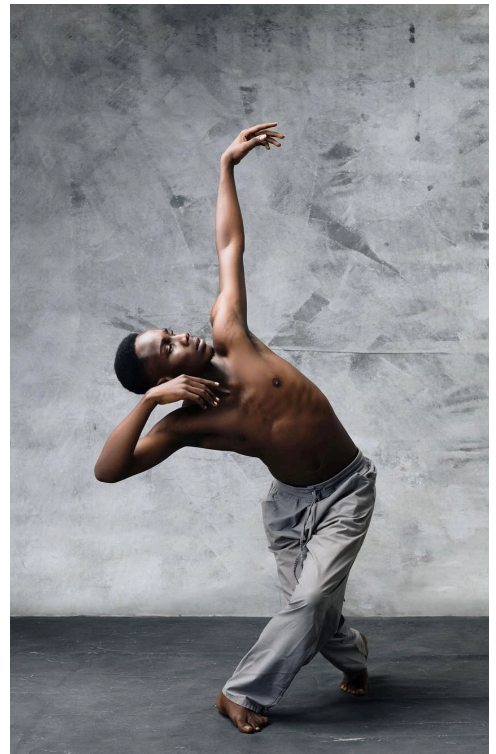
My name is Harry Daniels, and I'm a performing artist based in the Ayawaso West Municipality of the Greater Accra Region. I work with Meraki Arts Africa, a creative arts organization that uses performance to spark dialogue and inspire change.

Before Ghana Grows, agriculture and vocational training were not areas I paid much attention to. Like many young people around me, I had always viewed these fields as last resorts for those without academic prospects. That changed when Meraki Arts Africa introduced us to the Ghana Grows Theatre for Change Program. Through performances, community dialogues, and engagements with other creatives, I started to understand the value of agriculture and vocational skills as viable and fulfilling career paths.

Growing up, I always had a passion for the arts, especially dance and performance. But my environment didn't always support that dream. Most people, including my mother, wanted me to become an architect. Others thought I was wasting my time. I often found myself defending my choices, and that took a toll on my confidence. I didn't have many role models who were thriving in the creative space, and I struggled with limited access to training, mentorship, or even platforms to showcase my talent.

More importantly, I didn't fully understand how my passion could translate into a sustainable career. I had no background in agriculture or technical trades, so I never considered them relevant to my journey. It wasn't that I wasn't interested, I simply didn't know enough.

My engagement with Ghana Grows started through the Theatre for Change program led by Meraki Arts Africa. We used drama to start conversations in communities around mindset, youth empowerment, and vocational opportunities. It was here that I was exposed to how the arts could connect with broader social



issues, including agriculture and technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

Through the process, I learnt how to research social issues, structure my message, and communicate effectively. These workshops helped me grow, not just as a performer, but as an advocate. I started speaking more confidently about vocational options in my own community. For example, I encouraged my aunt to consider a vocational path for her daughter who is finishing SHS. I also started mentoring younger boys in the neighborhood who were already learning trade, helping them to appreciate the long-term value of what they were doing.

The more I got engaged, the more I realized how much I could offer and how much I could learn. Ghana Grows gave me a platform where I could meet people from different backgrounds, including those in the diaspora who followed my work on social media. These experiences expanded my worldview. I began to see that my skills in dance and performance could be used for education, advocacy, and social transformation.

With this newfound clarity, I've set my sights on growing beyond performance alone. I dream of building a business around performance starting with designing and producing stylish costumes for stage artists. Although I haven't started sewing yet, it's a skill I've committed to learning. I also plan to pursue a Master's degree in Performing Arts and open a dance academy where I can train and mentor others.

Thanks to the Ghana Grows experience, I've become more than just a performer. I'm now an advocate for vocational training and creative careers. The

program has helped me challenge stereotypes in my community, build my self-confidence, and use my art to inspire others to look beyond traditional career paths.

Ghana Grows didn't just expose me to new ideas, it helped me believe that my voice matters and that my talent has a place in Ghana's future. I'm committed to growing, giving back, and helping other young people discover their own paths.



SheCan, SheDid, SheGrows

Esther Araba Acheampong

My name is Esther Araba Acheampong. I'm a Level 300 Hospitality Management student at Accra Technical University. Before I gained admission, I worked in a restaurant to save up for school. With no financial support, every credit I earned went into making sure I could pay my fees and start the life I wanted.

I first heard about the Ghana Grows program through my SRC Women's Commissioner. She mentioned the EmpowerHer Conference and I was curious to find out what it was about. At the time, I was running a small snack business on campus selling spring rolls, water, and drinks to classmates. I didn't have a fridge of my own and had to rely on friends to store my products. My products would get eaten without my knowledge. It was frustrating, but I pushed through because I knew I had something good.

Running a business while in school was draining. Between lectures and assignments, I had to manage inventory, serve customers, and stay focused on my studies. I had

no formal business training, and everything I was doing was based on instinct. I was simply surviving.

I registered for EmpowerHer, hoping to learn how to grow and sustain my business. I didn't know just how much that one decision would change everything for me. At the conference, I had the opportunity to pitch my spring roll business and won GHC 2,000. That moment changed everything. I used the money to buy my first fridge. No more relying on friends or losing stock. I started preparing in bulk, storing properly, and meeting growing demand. Sales picked up immediately, and I started to feel like a real entrepreneur.

One session that stood out was the SheCanic workshop. Hearing stories of women in male-dominated spaces challenged me to think bigger. It wasn't just about snacks anymore; I started seeing myself as someone who could own and run a full catering business. It gave me the belief that I could build something sustainable.



After the training sessions, we stayed connected. We had WhatsApp groups where we shared updates and ideas, and I kept learning from other participants. The community gave me a sense of belonging. I have employed two of my classmates and am paying them from the income I made.

In June 2025, I joined the soap-making training organized by Ghana Grows right on our campus. Edna Vorsah taught us how to make bar soap and liquid soap and I loved how hands-on the session was. I realized I could eventually diversify and use these skills to earn even more income.

If there's one thing I've learned, it's that you don't have to wait for perfect conditions to start. You begin with what you have, you ask for help, and you keep showing up. That's what I've done and it's working.

The Juicepreneur Journey



Munkaila Mohammed

My name is Munkaila Mohammed, a young entrepreneur from the Central Region of Ghana. I grew up in a farming community where fruits like mangoes, oranges, and watermelons were abundant during the harvest season, but sadly, a large portion of them went to waste due to post-harvest losses.

I first encountered the Ghana Grows program during one of Springboard Road Show Foundation's regional roadshows in Cape Coast. At the time, I was invited as one of the young exhibitors showcasing local products. I had started a small juice business, producing natural fruit juices using very modest tools like a colander because I couldn't afford a proper juice maker.

While setting up my stand and engaging with visitors, I noticed the Ghana Grows team interacting with young people about agribusiness opportunities, mentorship, and market linkages. I became curious and approached one of their representatives to find out more. After hearing about my passion for reducing post-harvest losses through juice production, they introduced me to the Ghana Grows interventions and what the program sought to achieve for young people like me.

My details were taken, and I was onboarded. I received a follow-up call from the program's team, who explained the various opportunities available, including mentoring groups, career clinics, and youth advocacy sessions. I was invited to join the e-Mentoring Program, specifically the agribusiness mentoring group. That single encounter at the Cape Coast Roadshow turned out to be a major turning point in my entrepreneurial journey.

Before joining Ghana Grows, my biggest challenge was unemployment and the lack of decent work opportunities in my community. I had the idea of starting a juice business to address post-harvest losses and create value, but I didn't have the tools, resources, or any formal mentorship to support me.

I was operating with very limited resources, sometimes using just a colander because I couldn't afford a juice maker or blender. I lacked mentorship and career education and had no clear understanding of the agribusiness value chain. Also, there was little appreciation in my community for youth-led agribusiness ventures. Most people thought juice production was a hobby and not a serious business. I had no access to business management tools, funding pathways, or a community of like-minded.



After joining the Ghana Grows agribusiness mentoring group, I began attending regular virtual sessions on topics like branding, business management, food safety, and value chain opportunities. The mentors were experienced agribusiness entrepreneurs and development facilitators. I asked many questions and learnt practical business tips from my peers in the group.

In June 2024, I was nominated to participate in the Ghana Grows Youth Ambassadors Training held at Sun Lodge Hotel in Accra. The 3-day training focused on personal development, confidence-building, communication skills, financial literacy, youth advocacy, and opportunities within the agribusiness and ATVET value chains. This was my first time attending such a structured personal development program, and it boosted my confidence and broadened my perspective on agribusiness careers.

One of the most valuable sessions I participated in was on branding and packaging. I realized that no matter how good my juice tasted, poor presentation would limit its market appeal. The facilitators taught us about product labeling, customer perception, and market positioning. I applied these lessons by redesigning my juice labels and using clean, branded bottles.

Through the mentoring platform, I was invited to participate in a youth policy dialogue (International Youth Day) session where young entrepreneurs shared the challenges they faced in agribusiness. I spoke about post-harvest losses and how young people could be supported to start agribusiness ventures. It was the first time I shared my business story on such a platform. Ghana Grows connected me with other young farmers and producers in the region. Initially, I worked with just one farmer, but through these connections, I expanded my partnerships to 25 farmers who now supply me with mangoes, oranges, and pineapples.

Motivated by the progress I was making and the business tips from the mentoring sessions, I decided to formalize my business operations. I saved from my early profits and purchased a tricycle to improve my supply chain and distribution. This enabled me to collect fresh produce from different farms and deliver

juice products to market centers quickly.

In October 2024, I was nominated for the Ghana Grows Young Innovators Award, an award scheme designed to celebrate outstanding young people creating social and economic impact within their communities through agribusiness and innovation. I was shortlisted alongside several other promising youth entrepreneurs. At the awards ceremony in Koforidua, I was announced as one of the winners. It was one of the proudest moments of my life. The award came with a citation, a grant to support my juice production, and further exposure to new networks and opportunities. This recognition boosted my confidence and positioned me as a role model within the Ghana Grows community.

Inspired by the platform Ghana Grows gave me, I have since taken it upon myself to not only share my story but also build the capacity of other young people in my community. I organize both one-on-one coaching sessions and group training sessions in juice making for youth and young farmers who often struggle to find economic opportunities outside the farming season.

In my sessions, I work closely with young people who are serious about starting their own juice businesses. I teach them how to produce natural fruit juices using simple tools and progressively introduce them to improved methods for hygiene, flavor, and packaging. I also offer them personalized guidance on sourcing fruits, pricing, and marketing. During these sessions, I teach participants how to turn excess fruits from their farms into healthy, natural juices for home use and for sale. I show them the simple, practical techniques I started with, like using a colander, and the importance of maintaining high standards of hygiene and quality.

I also use these gatherings to share lessons I picked up from the Ghana Grows mentoring and Youth Ambassadors training, including branding, customer service, and exploring value chain opportunities beyond just farming. The turnout for these sessions has been encouraging, and some of the young people who participated have already started small-scale juice businesses in their neighborhoods.

Tailoring a New Future

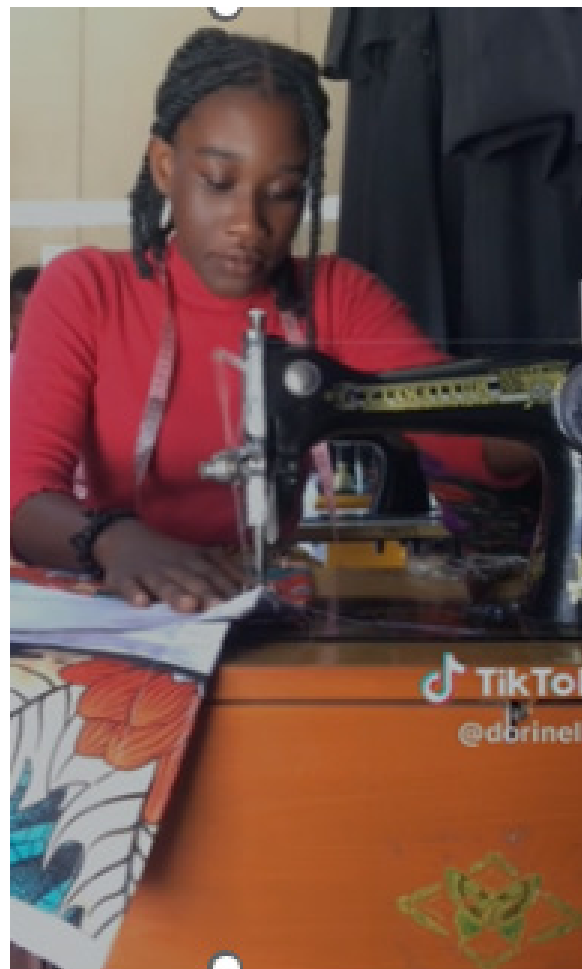
Doreen Ama Essuman

My name is Doreen Ama Essuman, and I live in Assin Central. For as long as I can remember, I dreamed of joining the Ghana Immigration Service. I waited for two years, full of hope and expectation, but I never got the call. It was a painful moment. I felt stuck, lost, and unsure of what to do next.

Out of frustration and just to keep busy, I started spending more time at my father's tailoring shop. At first, it was just something to fill the gap. But little by little, I found myself learning how to thread needles, fix hems, and eventually sketch and sew my own outfits. What started as a way to pass time slowly became something I looked forward to.

Then came a turning point. I got introduced to the Ghana Grows Program through Theatre for Change, a creative outreach led by Meraki Arts Africa. Their team created a space for young people like me to express ourselves, share our stories, and build confidence through performance and vocational training. That's how I became part of the Ghana Grows family.

Before Ghana Grows, I didn't fully believe that fashion or any trade could be a serious career path. Like many young people, I thought success had to come through formal institutions or white-collar jobs. I saw tailoring as something informal, something temporary until I began getting compliments on my designs. People liked what I made. Some of my friends even became my first clients. Still, I had my doubts. I hadn't received any professional training, and there were moments when I wondered if I was good enough.



Emotionally, I was still carrying the disappointment from being rejected by the Immigration Service. I didn't talk about it much, but it weighed on me. I was also unsure about the future whether to continue sewing, focus on school, or try for another job in the security services. It was hard to fully commit to any one path.

My first big change came when I joined the Theatre for Change workshops under Meraki Arts Africa. These sessions were part of the Ghana Grows initiative and focused on confidence-building, storytelling, and vocational awareness. On stage, I learned how to express myself. In group discussions, I met others who had also faced rejection and setbacks. Their stories gave me strength. They helped me see that disappointment doesn't mean defeat. Sometimes, it's just redirection.

Being part of this space pushed me to take my sewing more seriously. I began exploring fashion as not just a skill, but a career. With support from mentors and peers, I started dreaming again but this time on my own terms. I saw how vocational skills could lead to sustainable livelihoods, not just as backup plans but as real careers with impact.

Today, I'm pursuing a degree in History and Sociology at Akim Oda Training College. It's part of an agreement I made with my father: complete my first degree, and then fully commit to fashion. My parents have been supportive of my creative work, and they're proud of the direction I'm heading.

After my degree, I plan to enrol in fashion school to upgrade my skills and learn professionally. I also hope to become a runway model and open my own fashion studio where I can mentor young people, especially those who feel stuck after life doesn't go

according to plan.

Ghana Grows helped me find my voice. It gave me the space to heal, grow, and reimagine my future. I now know that what feels like rejection can actually be the beginning of something beautiful. And I'm committed to turning this passion into purpose not just for me, but for others like me who need a reminder that there is hope after disappointment.

Owning the Stage, Owning My Voice

Tracy Sam

My name is Tracy Sam, and I live in Mfantseman. I was working as a teacher when I first heard about the Ghana Grows program through a community engagement activity in Saltpond. At the time, I didn't think much of it. I assumed it would be just another pastime. But that encounter became a turning point.

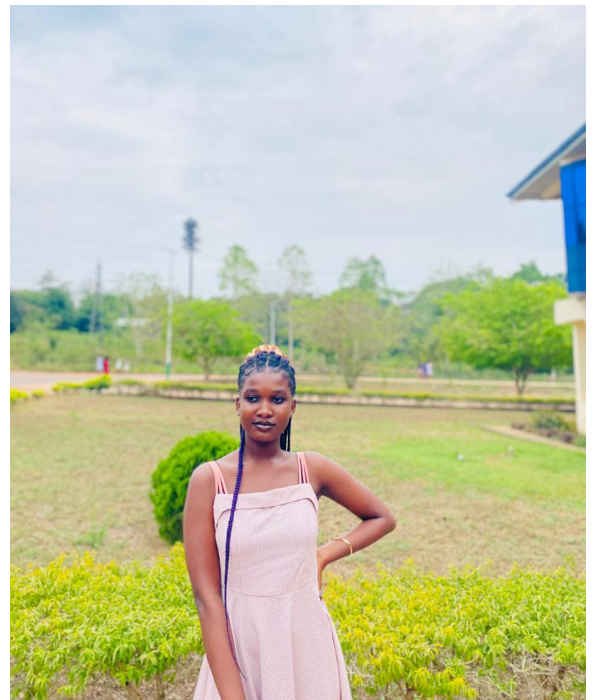
Before joining Ghana Grows, I was very shy and struggled with confidence. I loved to dance and act, but I didn't believe I had the right skills or presence to perform in front of people. I had no intention of pursuing anything in theatre because I felt I wouldn't be taken seriously. My fear of judgment often held me back.

After that first event, I joined the Theatre for Change sessions. The environment was safe and encouraging, which made it easier for me to take risks. Performing in front of others became less scary. I even took part in a Ghana Grows broadcast where I shared my thoughts on mental health. That experience made me feel heard and valued.

With time, I gained the confidence to act on stage and speak openly. I was no longer just a quiet teacher; I was someone people listened to. The Ghana Grows team gave me space to express myself and challenged me to grow. I became more outspoken and began to support others who also struggled with shyness.

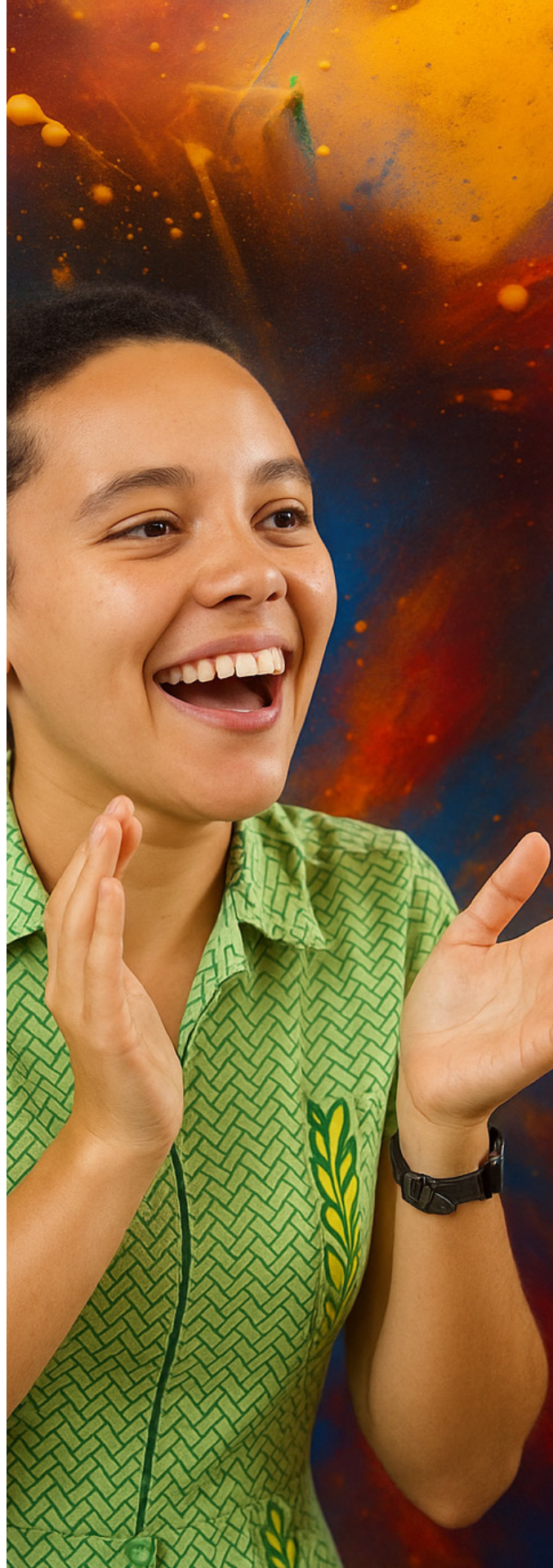
Ghana Grows helped me discover a part of myself I never thought I'd use. Today, I perform, speak, and lead with purpose. The community support, mentorship, and practical opportunities gave me confidence not just in theatre, but in life.

I'm now pursuing a degree in Electronic Marketing at the University of Cape Coast. I want to use digital tools and storytelling to empower others, especially young girls who feel overlooked or unheard. One day, I hope to work with Ghana Grows and contribute to the same change that shaped my journey.



“No one

is too small to start, too late to learn, or too lost to lead. Growth begins the moment you believe it can.”



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