

BizATE TRAINING REPORT

Prepared by Asif Noorani
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OVERVIEW

In August 2018, as part of the CET funded BizATE Programme, a number of workshops were held to deliver distinctive and culturally aware training for ATE supported Small Business Owners (SBOs).

Workshops were also held to train local trainers and consultants, who deliver the BizATE programme.

In this extremely poor, rural and neglected part of Ghana, business skills training works sensitively for SBOs with low levels of literacy and numeracy. The August 2018 workshops built on the learnings of previous workshops, enabling delegates to develop their marketing skills and plans.

Specific Ghanaian attitudes and behaviours which are their own obstacles and limit the ability to seize opportunities, were also addressed.

The training is designed to significantly increase SBO's capacity to run sustainable and profitable enterprises.

ACTIVITIES in AUGUST 2018

Date (2018)	Training	Led by	Participants
20 August	Formal planning and briefing session	Asif N	Staff team
21 August	Train the Trainer Workshop	Asif N	Staff team
22 August	Consultant training workshop	Asif N	Staff team and 20 consultants to attend SBO training workshops
23-25 August	SBO training workshops (x3)	Habib A & Asif N	SBOs in 3 separate groups: Day 1: mechanics & tradespeople (11) Day 2: petty traders & dry season farmers (30) Day 3: weavers and manufacturers (8)
27 August	Evaluation workshops	Asif N	Session 1: Consultants (6) Session 2: SBOs (6)
29 August	Staff training: Evaluation & Coaching Workshop	Sarah A & Asif N	Staff team



IN A NUTSHELL

The training workshops were a huge success, building on previous BizATE training:

- Conducting 3 smaller training groups, based on business type
- Providing sales, marketing and planning focus with new techniques to inspire thinking and incite action
- Training ATE staff to reinforce and enhance the necessary skills to meet the objectives of the SBO workshops.

In the unforgiving sub-Saharan environment, BizATE workshops deliver a remarkable experience for SBOs: a rare opportunity to take a step back; learn new skills; reflect on their businesses; plan for tomorrow and network with peers.

The relationship and communication between consultants and SBOs was described as superb in the staff team evaluation. The train the trainer and consultant training sessions reaffirmed the role and responsibility of consultants, activating improved behaviours and deepening engagement.

“the workshop has motivated me to set new marketing targets for myself and deliver something I can talk about in time for our next workshop.”

Male SBO (chicken farmer)

“ATE provide a grant and basic skills when we start, and this workshop helps us plan how to find customers and build our businesses.”

Female SBO (petty trader)

“the participation levels were very high and some people who had begun to lose hope in the future had their hopes revived by these workshops.”

ATE consultant



The BizATE programme delivers a fundamental spring of progress, which generates hope for the entrepreneurs of Lawra.

SBO WORKSHOPS

The focus on the technical skills of selling, marketing and planning was well received as building on the core skills, developed in earlier workshops. This fits within broader ambition to equip all SBOs with core and technical business competencies.

Life is on a precipice for many SBOs. Planning is lost in the noise of day to day challenges (daily threat of malaria, food shortages, lack and cost of healthcare, extended family responsibilities). BizATE finds a way to make SBOs aware of the errors which threaten the future of their businesses and marketing opportunities that exist.

Marketing principles were introduced in ways to allow people to act with an awareness of the consequences of their action or inaction.

By avoiding complex or theoretical models, the workshops gave participants routes to access imagination and creative potential. It is important to show that ideas participants may have regarded as crazy at the start of the session, can be a solution they endorse by the end of it.

Case studies (of imaginary local businesses and residents) were a critical tool in these workshops to encourage critical thinking.

A number of cultural challenges exist (e.g. honesty, sharing failure not success, short term orientation) which were brought to the attention of participants courtesy of the case studies. When cultural norms are seen as habits the issue is not so much to change people's habits, but to encourage discussion of the habits and consequences on their businesses.



Beyond case studies a number of techniques were used to stimulate fresh thinking and develop realistic ideas. Each SBO completed the workshop by submitting a budgeted marketing plan to ATE.

For new ways of working to become a behaviour we need reinforcement and opportunity. With this in mind the SBO marketing plan submissions will be assessed and two winners selected from each workshop.

The winners will be rewarded with a grant to subsidise their plan.

TRAIN THE TRAINER WORKSHOPS

This workshop exists to develop the skills of the local trainers so that they can better deliver ATE training courses. Training the SBO's is a demanding area of learning due to the demanding nature of this region:

- traditional Ghanaian education methods
- multiple languages (Dagaare, Twi, Wali, English)
- two dominant faiths (Islam, Christianity)
- inability to plan for future, as a consequence of the hand to mouth existence

Good progress was made in terms of supporting the core competencies: exploring strategic planning, critical need to establish trust and honesty, and techniques to elevate engagement of consultants and SBOs were particularly effective and insightful for the core team.

The training demonstrated to participants the value of the pathway from knowledge through to reinforcement.



CONSULTANTS TRAINING WORKSHOP

Each consultant works directly with individual SBOs; providing vital support and guidance. Consultants must demonstrate a level of education and commitment to be part of the ATE team.

The training workshop for the staff team and consultants, was a success and the impact evident in the SBO workshops which followed.

As many are teachers and nurses, but have grown up in culture of hierarchical policing not supportive coaching, we built on their natural capabilities and reinforced their responsibility as consultants by encouraging:

- Exploration & questioning
- Optimistic and positive outlook

By inviting consultants to explore their role, undergo role play of desired behaviours and see positive behaviours in action by the staff team, we emphasised their importance in the journey of each SBO and the success of the workshops to follow.

EVALUATION WORKSHOPS

This is a summary of feedback from separate groups of staff, consultants and SBOs.

- This training programme delivers quality and effective training, and thanks to the smaller sized groups, staffed by credible and insightful consultants, offers an experience which boosts confidence, motivation, and networks.
- The opportunity to look at things in new ways and imagine ‘what if’ was truly valued, though the reality of life inhibited the elevation of possibility in the development of ideas.
- The use of case studies was uniformly regarded seen as the most effective route to allow SBOs to consider their own business challenges and opportunities.
- This exercise common to all workshops, has introduced a talking point and new language for all attendees.

“the case study brought to life key issues we must think about in our own businesses. It made me realise I must step up my marketing.”

Female SBO (manufacturer)

“the workshops presented new ways to think about my business.”

male SBO (farmer)

“the workshops allow us to meet and sit with people who are running their own businesses and have things to say we can also learn from.” *Female SBO (petty trader)*

“the workshop fired our minds, allowing us all to think deeper.”

Male SBO (plumber)

“the smaller workshop allows us to spend more time with SBOs and answer the questions they have.”

ATE consultant

“we had lots to think about and discuss which helps build trust.”

ATE consultant

SUGGESTIONS TO BUILD ON

- Workshops should involve no more than 15 SBOs. While dry season farmers are a welcome addition to the petty traders workshop, the larger size of the workshop inevitably impacts on opportunity for each SBO to participate.
- It would benefit SBOs and consultants if there is recognition of ‘local’ SBO stars and good practice via social media, celebrating success and reinforcing possibility for businesses in Lawa.
- To build on consultant engagement, a thank you note from the CEO should go out to all consultants thanking them for their contribution at the workshops.
- Ghanaian education does not support imaginative or creative activities. Further training is needed to help consultants communicate the gist of case studies and principles rather than searching for direct translation of works, without appreciating context.
- Access to a list of SBOs and suppliers in the region would assist in strengthening the BizATE cohort, which has been established.

BIZATE UNLOCKING LAWRA'S POTENTIAL

Beyond the core intention of the workshops, we noted this investment provides invaluable additional benefits, value and support for all the people of the Lawra region.



Networking

The workshops provide a networking opportunity for SBOs, who often live isolated lives and have very little, if any opportunity, to hear from peers or experts in their area of business. BizATE creates this valued opportunity to make connections and feel part of a bigger project, supporting Lawra's development.

Tackling food shortages

Food security is a key issue for the region and at the heart of sustainable development. BizATE's work with dry season farmers, not only supports the farmers and their families but plays a noticeable part in maintaining food supply for the wider community.

Gender

Woman SBOs and consultants have a strong presence in BizATE workshops. In Africa, women are the backbone of communities and the continent's greatest potential to unlocking economic growth as they provide the majority of labour with the least amount of resources. BizATE demonstrates that entrepreneurship is without gender bias.