



GHANA
DIGITAL
INNOVATION
WEEK

PROJECT REPORT

GIZ STAKEHOLDER MEETING

ROAD TO GDIW 23 - KUMASI EDITION

Date: 18 OCTOBER 2023

Venue: MIKLIN HOTEL



Organized and prepared by:



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1.0 Background



hapaSpace Innovation Hub has been designated as the official organizer for the Ashanti Region segment of the Ghana Digital Innovation Week 2023 (GDIW). A pivotal component of hapaSpace responsibilities include hosting a stakeholder meeting that brings together a diverse array of participants, including MSMEs, academic representatives, civil society organizations, MSME associations, innovation hubs, and government officials.

On October 18, 2023, hapaSpace, in collaboration with GIZ, hosted this significant stakeholders' gathering at the Miklin Hotel in Kumasi. The primary objective of this meeting was to provide a platform for stakeholders to exchange insights, discuss strategies for enhancing the adoption and scalability of digital innovation among Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs), and deliberate on the necessary policies and systems to support such innovation initiatives.

The Ghana Digital Innovation Week represents a nationwide series of events aimed at showcasing and celebrating pivotal achievements within Ghana's digital innovation ecosystem. The regional events, referred to as the "Road To GDIW 23," are designed to generate interest and anticipation for the main event scheduled to take place in Accra.

2.0 Participants

The meeting convened 60 stakeholders representing various sectors as mentioned earlier. Among the participants, there was an equitable distribution, comprising 35 males and 25 females. One of the delegates is a person with disability.

3.0 Welcome and Opening Discussions

Gideon Brefo, the CEO of hapaSpace, warmly welcomed participants to the event, urging them to actively engage in the discussion. He expressed gratitude for the generous support from the GIZ for both this meeting and the Ghana Digital Innovation Week (GDIW) initiative.

During his address, Mr. Brefo focused on the digital landscape within the Ashanti Region, highlighting the diverse tools and infrastructure available for digital innovation, such as computers, smartphones, and internet connectivity. He also emphasized that despite the significant benefits technology offers, it remains underutilized, particularly by Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) and informal sector businesses. Mr. Brefo stressed the need for increased education, mentorship, and support to bolster digitization efforts, underscoring the importance of the gathering.

Throughout the session, the participants actively engaged by asking questions, sharing personal experiences of how digital platforms have positively impacted their work, and contributing valuable insights to the discussion.



4.0 Presentation by Digital Transformation for Sustainable Development in Ghana (DTEG)



Stephanie Boanya-Mensah took the lead on behalf of the DTEG team to showcase GIZ's work in the digital domain. During her presentation, she highlighted the significant progress made over the past three years, emphasizing the project's dedicated support for women and women-led businesses. She discussed how GIZ has equipped them with essential skills and logistical support to enhance their business operations. Stephanie emphasized the critical

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importance of deliberately targeting women as a central focus within GIZ's programming, and she appealed to stakeholders for their active support in advancing women's digital empowerment.

Benson Adjei, her colleague, echoed the imperative of involving women-led MSMEs in the digital transformation process. He pointed out that this rationale underpins their collaboration with hapaSpace to launch a micro digital mentorship program for ten women engaged in the timber industry.

5.0 Experience Sharing

In a demonstration of the practicality of gender-transformative approaches within the digital realm, delegates from Self Help International, Women in Timber Ghana, and the Fabulous Woman Network (FAB Hub) shared their firsthand experiences. They shed light on how women are harnessing digital tools to boost business efficiency and augment their income.

5.1 Self Help International:

Benjamin Kusi, representing Self Help International, presented tangible field evidence illustrating how supporting women has led to the development of human capital at the household level, resulting in increased household income and business growth.

“It is fulfilling to empower women. Empowering a woman has a multiplying effect.”

- **Benjamin Kusi**, *Lead, Self Help International*

He emphasized the significance of recognizing that women are actively engaged in various entrepreneurial ventures and stressed that empowering them through initiatives can yield transformative effects, both at micro and macro levels. Benjamin urged stakeholders to proactively address limitations that hinder women's digital adoption, advocating for a more intentional approach to support their participation in the digital realm.

5.2 Women in Timber Association Ghana:



Betty Boante Abeyie, representing the Women in Timber Association Ghana (WiTG), provided the stakeholders with insights into how GIZ's support has empowered them to mobilize women and fortify women-led businesses through comprehensive training, coaching, and essential input support. Notably, GIZ's assistance has facilitated an expansion of association membership and equipped them with indispensable digital skills training, including the utilization and navigation of apps on

smartphones. The WiTG representative underscored a significant transformation resulting from GIZ's support, particularly in the historically male-dominated leadership of timber industry associations. This transformation has substantially amplified women's voices, both locally and nationally.

Additionally, these empowered women have taken independent initiatives, engaging in negotiations with government institutions. They have successfully replanted approximately 20,000 seedlings in Techiman, situated in the Bono Region, as part of their dedicated contribution to the Government's green agenda, exemplifying their newfound leadership roles and heightened influence.

5.3 Fabulous Hub:

Ama Duncan, the CEO of Fabulous Hub, aptly noted that a substantial obstacle hindering women's engagement with digital and technological tools is the "mindset." She emphasized the importance of development partners and stakeholders in nurturing confidence and instilling a "can-do" attitude among women. Ama highlighted that women are often juggling multiple responsibilities, making it challenging to commit to training or activities that demand extensive time commitments. She stressed the need for tailoring support to accommodate the unique demands of women's professional lives. Ama urged stakeholders to ensure that training and support mechanisms are specifically designed to address the distinct challenges faced by women, thus enabling them to fully leverage and reap the benefits of technology.

“Women require motivation and intentional support. There is a need to create a space for other women to share their lessons, challenges, and breakthroughs. This makes sessions as this more critical to women empowerment. “

-Ama Duncan, CEO, Fabulous Hub

6.0 Overview of GDIW – Kumasi Edition.

Dr. Kwasi Gyimah, a consultant affiliated with hapaSpace, shared additional details regarding the forthcoming Ghana Digital Innovation Week (GDIW), specifically the Kumasi Edition, which hapaSpace is organizing with the support of GIZ. He introduced "The Road To GDIW 23 - Kumasi Edition," a precursor to the national GDIW 23 event taking place in Accra. This event is scheduled to take place at the Prempeh Assembly Hall on Friday, November 3, 2023. Dr. Gyimah encouraged all participants to disseminate this information within their networks, ensuring that many individuals can benefit from the valuable insights and opportunities that will be presented during the event. He emphasized that GDIW offers an expansive platform for networking and collaboration.



7.0 Presentation by Support to the Private and Financial Sector in Ghana (PFS) Project



The project's primary focus lies in delivering essential skills training to micro-enterprises, established businesses, and budding startups. Additionally, it has been instrumental in providing startup kits to support entrepreneurial endeavors. Beyond this, PFS plays a crucial role in assisting government organizations, particularly the Labor Department, in rendering employment and job-related services to both youth and individuals returning from overseas. A notable accomplishment of the project has been its ability to facilitate the reintegration of returnees into society through logistical assistance, counseling, and dedicated mentorship support.

During the stakeholder engagement, the project team also elucidated GIZ's broader initiatives, which revolve around establishing regional networks to enhance access to valuable information, skill sets, and resources. Notably, the project is actively involved in shaping a framework to comprehensively map out the various actors and stakeholders within the regional network, aiming to optimize the benefits derived from this collaborative effort.

These discussions sparked lively interactions, with a particular emphasis on leveraging technology to augment access to employment information. Participants explored ways to strengthen connections between the Labor Department and innovation hubs, as well as business advisory centers, all while infusing technology into the core activities of the Labor

Departments. The consensus underscored the crucial role of stakeholder support in driving these endeavors forward.

8. The Call

In light of the insights shared during the stakeholders' meeting, it is clear that participants recognized the invaluable significance of these collaborative engagements. They underscored the importance of establishing an enabling framework that fosters the growth and prosperity of businesses, with a particular emphasis on empowering women-led enterprises. The discussions illuminated the fact that the digital innovation interventions championed by GIZ and its partners have the potential to serve as catalysts for innovation and substantial business growth.

This collective understanding highlights the urgency and commitment among stakeholders to harness the transformative power of digital innovation, thereby unlocking new opportunities and pathways for businesses to flourish. It is imperative that we build on this shared vision and continue to work collaboratively to create a thriving ecosystem that supports and uplifts businesses, especially those led by women, fostering a future of innovation and prosperity.

9.0 Suggestions From Participants

Include financial stakeholders in subsequent meetings. This recommendation underscores the importance of involving financial institutions and investors in the innovation ecosystem, ensuring that financial support is readily available to nurture innovative ideas and projects. This inclusion can foster a more robust and sustainable innovation environment in Ghana.

Dr. Akomeah (Lecturer at KNUST)

There need to be more incentives to encourage individuals to put into practice what they've been taught. Often, individuals invest time and resources in learning new skills and technologies, but without proper motivation, they may not fully utilize this knowledge. This concept emphasizes the importance of providing tangible incentives that inspire individuals to apply their newly acquired skills, ultimately contributing to the growth of the digital and innovative landscape in Ghana.

Richard Tetteh (KNUST / BIRD)

10.0 Conclusion

The stakeholders' meeting was undeniably a resounding success, with an impressive turnout of approximately 60 attendees. What made this achievement even more heartening was the striking diversity that characterized the gathering. It was indeed a testament to the inclusivity and broad representation of voices within the Ashanti Region's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Participants hailed from a multitude of backgrounds, reflecting a harmonious blend of women entrepreneurs, distinguished members of academia, active civil society advocates, individuals with disabilities (PWDs), forward-thinking private sector professionals, committed government officials, and engaged representatives from various associations.

The hallmark of the meeting was its remarkable interactivity and the wealth of constructive ideas that permeated the discussions. The dynamic exchange of thoughts, insights, and proposals resonated throughout the event, underlining the collective commitment to nurturing innovation and entrepreneurship in the Ashanti Region. The meeting served as fertile ground for the cross-pollination of ideas and the forging of collaborations. It was a clear demonstration of the unwavering dedication of the participants, who recognized the potential for significant positive change within the regional ecosystem.

The diverse perspectives and voices represented at the meeting enriched the discourse and underscored the pressing need for cohesive efforts to foster a thriving entrepreneurial landscape. The forward-looking suggestions put forth during the discussions are poised to drive the initiatives of the Digital Transformation for Sustainable Development (DTEG) to new heights in the Ashanti Region. The meeting, with its spirit of inclusivity and innovation, serves as a promising prelude to a future marked by transformative growth, collaborative endeavors, and an unwavering commitment to advancing digital innovation and entrepreneurship. It is clear that the insights and momentum generated during this gathering will continue to fuel the region's journey towards greater prosperity and innovation.