



SEEDA

SEEDA Development Volunteers Programme 2006 – 2011

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Background to DVP	4
3. SEEDA Resource Persons (RPs)	6
4. SEEDA Missions – Sierra Leone	9
5. SEEDA Missions – Ghana	14
6. Conclusion	19

Introduction

About AFFORD

AFFORD was formed in 1994, its Mission “to extend and enhance the contribution Africans in the Diaspora make to African development.” For the first 10 years of its life AFFORD focused on policy, advocacy and capacity building, it has gained recognition as a pioneering African development thinktank and charity.

AFFORD’s groundbreaking research, advocacy and policy development activities have helped highlight Diaspora issues; and led to international recognition of the role of Diasporians in development. AFFORD has a key strategic goal to assist in creating and maintaining employment in Africa through enterprise development. The way in which AFFORD is working on making this happen is by facilitating job creation in Africa by harnessing Diaspora resources (skills, know-how, funds) to support local/grassroots enterprise development in Africa.

“Africa needs to create 8 million new jobs every year to absorb those coming onto the job market.”

According to the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

As in most countries, the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector is the biggest generator of jobs across Africa, AFFORD recognises this and so has been positioning it’s work and focus in Africa on contribution to the growth and sustainability of the SME sector.

What is SEEDA?

In 2005, AFFORD created the thematic programme called Supporting Entrepreneurs and Enterprise Development in Africa (SEEDA). Through SEEDA, AFFORD helps Africans in the Diaspora contribute to job creation and business development on the continent.

AFFORD has effectively created and carried out projects since 2006 that have helped Entrepreneurs in the UK, America and Africa develop skills and knowledge to start a business in a new environment or develop their businesses further. The projects include:

- Development Volunteers Programme (DVP)
- REMADE

The REMADE project took learning from the DVP project and assisted Diaspora to start or expand their businesses in Ghana. This publication will focus on the DVP project and outline how the project was structured, the clients and the outcomes.

Development Volunteering Programme (DVP)

“The prospect of an established and flourishing small business class in Sierra Leone is more than just an exciting ideal. It is a reality that can be arrived at through conscious development by ordinary individuals.”

Angela Kiire, SEEDA DVP RP, Sierra Leone December 2006

The Development Volunteering Programme (DVP) was a partnership project with VSO funded by DFID. The project had its first mission to Sierra Leone in March 2006 which saw Diaspora Resource Persons (RPs) with experience in running a business, book-keeping, accounting or other business related skills share these with entrepreneurial counterparts in Africa.

This programme is a unique model that leverages the skills and resources of UK Diaspora Africans into struggling businesses in Africa. The idea, in line with AFFORD's overall approach, is to reduce poverty by creating jobs and wealth – particularly in the small and medium sized enterprises that dominate in Africa (and create more jobs in all economies).

Operationally, SEEDA merges business management workshops with physical site visits. This is to provide assistance that balances theory and practice in the business support it delivers. It also allows the Diaspora Resource Persons (RPs) to get to know and understand real-life challenges that face the entrepreneurs they assist.

To date DVP has:

- Mobilised over 200 Diaspora professionals between 2006/2011 to invest over £300,000 supporting over 600 small businesses in Sierra Leone and Ghana
- Created 5 business centres in Sierra Leone in 2007/2009, these have trained 25 business coaches who provide practical business support to 100s of local businesses and entrepreneurs (in partnership with Comic Relief & University of Sierra Leone).
- Worked with banks, micro-finance institutions and trade associations in African countries to help small entrepreneurs become more structured and efficient.
- Through DVP's intervention 40 clients in southern Sierra Leone have so far secured affordable credit as a result of the networking opportunities and support the programme provides. The RPs also provided the entrepreneurs better access to policy makers in Sierra Leone.
- 30 Sierra Leoneans were sponsored to take business-coaching courses, to set up a further 14 SEEDA centres across the country.

Background of the DVP Missions

The SEEDA missions came from the outcomes and natural progression of other AFFORD projects. The first influencer was in 2004/5 AFFORD had a strategic review which concluded that AFFORD should 'Embed ourselves in Africa'. This led to AFFORD conceptualizing what the work in Africa would look like. At the same time Comic Relief had a grant called Hello Africa which led to AFFORD working in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Ghana. The outcome of the project resulted in very good links in Ghana and Sierra Leone as well as giving AFFORD an understanding of working with partners on the continent.

AFFORD, along with other Diaspora organisations, had been in talks with the Volunteer Overseas Service (VSO) regarding encouraging African people to become volunteers. Finally, a project called Opportunity Africa which was working on getting young people internships on the Continent and encouraging them to see Africa differently was coming to an end. The project had successfully sent young people to six African countries and so there was a great deal of learning that came from it.

AFFORD developed a volunteering programme taking on board all the learning, experience and internal goals to create a thematic programme that responded to the interests and needs of AFFORDs stakeholders, SEEDA.

Since the first SEEDA mission to Sierra Leone in March 2006, 11 further missions have been undertaken, supported by Voluntary Services Overseas Diaspora Volunteering Initiative.

RPs have travelled to Sierra Leone (March 2006, November 2006, April 2007, and October 2008) and Ghana (July 2006, July 2007, January, May, June, July 2009, July and September 2010) to support the SME sector. Each Mission had a group of enthusiastic and skilled participants offering business planning workshops to committed grass-roots, informal and formal entrepreneurs.

The entrepreneurs connected to AFFORD via women's groups, youth groups, associations, networks and Chambers of Commerce. The entrepreneurs shared certain key characteristics, they were keen to improve or expand their business, gain skills, interested in meeting with people from the UK Diaspora for potential business partnerships and committed to improving the way they worked.

SEEDA attracted local and international partners to the project, mainly the Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) who supported AFFORD with funding, capacity building, in-country training and in-country resources. These included Barclays Bank in Ghana who have an SME business centre, Rokel Bank in Sierra Leone, and the London Borough of Southwark, which is twinned with Koidu Town, Sierra Leone. Through partnership with local stakeholders, SEEDA has built relationships in-country with corporate, investment clubs, hometown associations, local government and other integral partners.

The Enterprise Missions developed workshops and business support mechanisms to support on-going relationships with the target client group and the SEEDA programme. The following is an overview of what the programme offered:

The engagement with participants took various forms:

- a. One-to-one business advice sessions
- b. Site visits
- c. Workshops
- d. Action Planning Sessions
- e. Evaluations

A. One-to-one business advice sessions: RPs sit with the entrepreneur, carry out a business analysis, discuss the business and any queries the entrepreneur has brought

B. Site visits to the businesses: to physically observe and get a 'hands-on' experience of how each client's business is organised and functions

C. Workshops: Workshop days were organised working with groups on the following business development areas:

- Business Planning
- Marketing
- Basic accounting and book-keeping and record-keeping
- Financial and capital procurement
- Financial planning (particularly managing cash flows)
- Marketing and customer care
- Human resource management
- Customer service/care

D. Action planning sessions to chart a way forward and form the basis for continued virtual support post-mission

E. Evaluations at each stage of the above process. This was done from vocal feedback, evaluation forms and group evaluation sessions.

SEEDA Resource Persons (RPs)

"I felt like I was giving something back to Ghana, I was helping people."

Alice Aggrey, RP Ghana mission, 2008

The response to the SEEDA project was very well received by members of the African Diaspora who had been looking for a way to connect. SEEDA gave them a way, an opportunity. The criteria for the Resource People focused on two areas:

Hard	Soft
Business Skills/ Knowledge/ Experience	Patience
Moderate training experience	Respect
Ability to travel for two weeks	Flexibility/ Adaptability
Management experience	Interest
Financial knowledge	Sense of humour

A key element of all the RPs was their motivation, their desire to go to an African country and 'Give Back' in some way. For many the experience was to enable them to learn about a new culture or the culture of their heritage that they were unfamiliar with.

The RP's were individual and unique yet they shared a joint interest in contributing positively to the programme. They brought with them a mix of knowledge, attitudes, skills; money & influence to the programme and to AFFORD. Regardless of skills, experience, or status the RP attitude was facilitative & collaborative, rather than hierarchical & top-down.

Another element of the role of the RP is to assist alter unhelpful perceptions such as gender abilities. Gender inequality and accepted gender roles are a key issue in many African countries and has an impact on the ability and freedom for women to participate in business. Therefore, as much as possible we ensured gender balance within each Resource Pool as well as an awareness of gender issues as they pertained to grassroots enterprise in Ghana & Sierra Leone.

RPs have generally shown themselves to be people who want to 'give back' and are happy to have found a programme that enables them to contribute so meaningfully. The programme also enables the RPs to gain an understanding of a country that is new to them or that they have been away from for a long time. Connections are made, ideas of how to stay involved are born and experiences that are invaluable and create personal growth are developed.

The Mission

I've been selected!

To be an RP is a position of responsibility and taken very seriously, so prospective RPs had to apply, do a day of testing, be interviewed and have references checked. This was to ensure we had people who are suited to the project and who the project is suited to.

Following the selection process the successful candidates would meet at the pre-travel meetings to get to know each other and start team building.

The project is a funded project however RPs did make a contribution towards the logistics and upkeep, this enabled the project to do more for the RPs while in-country and also provide more resources and activities for the entrepreneurs.

The RP contribution also showed the RPs commitment to the project and what they were coming to be part of. The responses in the applications and during selection showed the strong desire of these Diaspora professionals to contribute to the continent and also to learn something new about the Continent and themselves.

Why two weeks?

Our RPs make up our Resource Pool and what they have in common is that they are busy people. They are people with their own businesses or in employment positions at various levels so we have to ensure that they are able to comfortably not only give of themselves but also their time. Two weeks is generally the maximum time a person can take leave or take a pause in their business and feel comfortable, so we took this into consideration in the planning of the missions.

There have been occasions when an RP wanted to stay longer and carry on their work; this was often arranged to the benefit of all concerned.

What happens in two weeks?

As the time period is not extensive the mission was highly organized, intensive, & orchestrated in stints of two weeks duration. During this time, RPs partnered with individual organizations and developed ongoing contact, interaction, & support once the initial two-week period in-country came to an end. RPs then worked with their partners in mutually agreed ways to provide support on the implementation of business plans. This included investing directly, leveraging in other finance partners, mentoring entrepreneurs, providing advice & general support, brokering contacts, and other ways that they agreed with the entrepreneurs they could assist.

The programme also allowed individuals in the Diaspora to navigate their way (back) in to Africa in a safe, flexible, & staggered manner. The home-based RPs also gained fresh insights into the society in which they live as well as opportunities to interact with Diaspora counterparts.

Legacy of Aid on RP missions

RPs had to be made aware of the fact that some of the people in the countries visited would have 'dependency culture' given the relationship between the global West and South being economically uneven and the perceptions that people hold. Equally RPs had to be made aware of their own attitudes and perceptions of those in Africa, as while some in Africa may have an attitude of dependency those from the West often have an attitude of superiority. In both cases the impact of the media and socialization cannot be underestimated regardless of the fact that in this case the RPs had a connection with the continent.

AFFORD ensured that RPs were clear and understood our principles especially regarding funds. RPs were strongly discouraged from giving funds to those they worked with as 'handouts'. However, if they

had a strong desire to financially assist a company they were to make it clear that if a solid business plan was developed and implemented, then they were happy to assist. In this way they would be highlighting the business plan as a tool for the entrepreneurs to possibly access finance in the future.

The Return

The work continued when the RPs returned to the UK, the connection the RPs had made with those they had helped and the assistance they wanted to extend to AFFORD was encouraged and willingly committed too. RPs were able to connect via:

- Bringing their skills to AFFORD
- Assisting SEEDA clients in Africa remotely
- Going on repeat trips
- Holding events to highlight their experience to their community in the UK
- Relocating to Africa, either to a programme country or inspired to go to another country in Africa.
- Representing AFFORD at different events sharing their experience

The mission not only gave the RPs an experience of business life and culture in an African country but also created links with like minded people in the UK; many of these relationships are still strong and supportive.

Sierra Leone



SEEDA Missions – Sierra Leone

AFFORD started its SEEDA programme in Sierra Leone in 2006 with the first two missions in March and November, a third in April 2007 and a fourth in October 2008. The training was conducted in 5 provinces: Freetown, Bo, Makeni, Koidu & Kenema. The missions engaged 60 RP's and in 2007 strategically trained business coaches who would train the clients and be in a position to continue AFFORDs work.

The first mission also involved meetings with Government, business associations, local groups of entrepreneurs and a press conference.

1. 13th - 27th March 2006
2. 17th November – 4th December 2006
3. 13th – 27th April 2007
4. 12th – 31st October 2008

13th March – 27th March 2006

RPs – 16 RPs from the UK and one from within Sierra Leone made up the first mission. The gender breakdown was equal with eight males and eight females.

Target clients – Women, youth organisations and small business associations

Partners

Sierra Leone: High Commission, Njala University, Rokel Bank, Sierra Leone Ministry of Youth and Sport, Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM), Sweissy Jewellers Association, Bike Renters Association, Women Taxi Drivers Association

UK: The SEEDA programme has generated unique Diaspora, private and public partnerships with Voluntary Services Overseas, Department for International Development, Diamond Trading Centre, Southwark Council, Barclays, and microfinance institutions

Successes

- Establishment of two business centres in Freetown and Bo (Southern Region in SL).
- University of SL - Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM) is the host for the business support centre in Freetown and they had started the Business Coaching Short Course at IPAM; targeting would-be business coaches to work in the Business Centres. There are scholarships for our Local Partners in SL to attend these courses so as to increase their ability to take the business support further in the regions where AFFORD is working.
- A Resource Pool of over 60 people who have travelled to Sierra Leone was established
- This resource pool has already invested over £120,000 of their money and time to share their skills, knowledge, know-how and contacts

- An additional 100 people have shown interest and will soon be established in a virtual Resource pool to support businesses in Africa, as well as fundraise
- The Resource pool members who have travelled to Sierra Leone have had their confidence and skills improved in a number of areas, including leadership, management, project planning, problem solving etc.
- Worked with the Sierra Leone government as part of its Poverty Reduction Strategy to focus on youth employment
- The SME strategy will also seek to empower enterprises by increasing access to micro-finance or credit with favourable lending terms, especially for youth groups & women.

17th November – 4th December 2006 - RPs: 23 - male x 13 / female x 10

13th April – 27th April 2007 - RPs: 14 - male x 4 / female x 10

The goal of the above two missions was to increase participation of young people and women in remunerative, productive entrepreneurial activities that would lead to job creation and poverty reduction.

The mission will cover Freetown, Bo, Makeni, Kenema and Koidu. During the mission, Diaspora RP's will work with the Sierra Leone Indigenous Business Association (SLIBA) as a partner - to train key members to train other members on basic business management, entrepreneurship, negotiating, etc. RP's shall also work with SLIBA members to help develop business plans for future ventures they have in the pipeline.

Working with their grassroots entrepreneurs in Africa the RPs focused on building skills and knowledge in - Entrepreneurship; Employability; Equal opportunity; & Employment creation, especially in regards to women. In the long-term this will help to create sustainable jobs for them & others in their communities.

Successes

- The direct target group consisted of young entrepreneurs (aged 18-35 years) based in 14 locations benefited from RP business support
- A Gender framework was adhered to reflecting the gender discrimination women face in Sierra Leone.
- Supporting grass roots entrepreneurs largely operating in the informal sector
- To train key members of SLIBA to train other members on basic business management, entrepreneurship, negotiating, etc.
- Establishing key links between educational institutions to explore ways of developing a full curriculum of business management subjects, starting from very basic levels
- Developing links
- Capacity building of business coaches as well as partners and programme staff

12th – 31st October 2008 – RPs: 6 male x 2 / female x 4:

This mission was a development of previous missions where the RPs worked with entrepreneurs who had training contact with AFFORD RPs on previous missions.

SEEDA RPs supported the following four client groups:

- 1 **Existing SEEDA entrepreneurs in Freetown, Koidu and Bo** – They provided business skills development support (book-keeping/customer services/business planning etc) to a section of SEEDA clients this time they worked directly with trained business coaches to meet clients.
- 2 **AFFORD's trained business coaches:**
 - a. RPs provided further training to business coaches by shadowing them
 - b. They ran specific value-added workshops and were available to answer questions during the duration of the trips
 - c. AFFORD's exit strategy as well as its vision for its business coaches was that they would run successful businesses supporting clients and therefore would be able to leave AFFORD's employment and work independently
- 3 **AFFORD business centre development support:**
 - a. To develop Bo business centre into an income generating enterprise e.g. internet café, business centre targeting Bo and Kenema based NGOs and offices including conference room facilities, sub let one or two of the offices for business professionals e.g. accounting firm
 - b. Help find a group of independent business coaches in Bo to support Bo clients while they build up their own business coaching businesses.
- 4 **Organisational development support for new business associations:** Kline Salone, Bike Riders Association and Photographers Association
 - A. **Initial briefing session:** Between RPs, AFFORD-SL, local partners/ business coaches and VSO SL office reps (if available).
 - B. **Site visits:** RPs to do this with business coaches.
 - C. **Workshops:** As and when required for client groups.
 - D. **Evaluations:** These are questionnaires that RPs must get their clients to fill out with their feedback on the work that has been carried out with them. This happens towards the end of the mission.

The Missions to Sierra Leone were an unforgettable experience for the RPs, Entrepreneurs and partners. The learning and sharing that took place helped open all stakeholders eyes to what worked and what needed to be revisited. But also by being able to see the work they were doing through different eyes as they taught, learned or observed they were able to develop their knowledge to be relevant to the environment and the needs of their clients, members and themselves.

All RPs came away having developed an affinity and special relationship with Sierre Leone following their time there.

Ghana



SEEDA Missions – Ghana

The training was conducted in three main areas: Accra, Tema and Kumasi.

- 10th - 24th July 2006
- 14th – 30th July 2007
- 25th January - 8th February 2009
- 4th - 17th May 2009
- 14th – 28th June 2009
- 19th July - 2nd August 2009
- 21st July – 4th August 2010
- 19th September - 2nd October 2010

10th to 24th July 2006 - RPs: male x 4 / female x 4

The training was conducted in 2 areas: Accra and Kumasi.

Target clients

Accra: Barclays Bank Business Club

Kumasi: Barclays Bank Business Club

Partners

Ghana: Barclays Bank

Successes

- A total of 50 SMEs benefited from business planning, marketing, customer service advice.
- SMEs highly appreciated the personal advice given, especially the on-site visits by RP's. The visits gave them a sense of moral support and personal encouragement to implement the business action plan that they jointly developed with RP's.
- SMEs are now more determined to put their business ideas/plans onto paper for presentation to the bank and other sources of finance. However, as earlier mentioned, for the grass-root entrepreneurs, low literacy levels pose a real challenge
- SMEs in both Accra and Kumasi committed to organising themselves to set-up their own independent business associations for the purpose of collectively airing their business concerns/challenges to the Bank, Government and other business support bodies/organisations. In Kumasi, the association has been named 'SEEDA'
- Strong support of the mission by the Government
- Links have been established with the newly-established Government Micro-finance and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC). AFFORD to develop a short paper on the initiative and ways in which AFFORD can work with MASLOC to make effective use of a Government 5-year US\$50million SME development & support fund. Paper to be presented to MASLOC by end of August 2006
- There is a vibrant community of entrepreneurs with excellent business ideas in Ghana. There is a need for more business support in order to develop and improve their businesses

- The SMEs also appreciated the fact that whilst collateral is required by the Bank for loans above the 50 million Cedis mark, it is equally important for SMEs to take every reasonable step not to default on any loans. Barclays Bank currently has quite a high loan re-payment default rate by SMEs
- Barclays Bank and the SMEs were able to exchange views about their concerns during the final evaluation session this had not been done before and new awareness will improve the service they offer to their clients
- RP's from the diaspora identified opportunities to invest in areas for collaboration with the SMEs they worked with

13th – 27th April 2007 - RPs: Male = 4 Female = 10

14th – 30th July 2007 – RPs: Male = 4 Female = 4

Target clients – Stanbic Bank Business Club

Partners

Ghana: Stanbic Bank Ghana

Goal

To increase participation of young people and women in remunerative, productive entrepreneurial activities that lead to job creation and poverty reduction.

Purpose

To develop accessible, affordable and co-ordinated business development services nationwide through harnessing a combination of domestic and diaspora resources, and to contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for entrepreneurship.

25th January - 8th February 2009 - Accra and Tema - RPs: no males / 4 females

4th - 17th May 2009 - Accra and Tema - RPs: 11 - male x 2 / female x 9

Partners

Ghana: Women's World Bank Ghana (WWBG) - a bank whose clientele were aligned to SEEDA's objectives (gender, grassroots, geographical reach) with a great deal of growth potential, Women's Assistance and Business Association (WABA).

Stanbic Bank – SEEDA RPs met their clients in both Tema and Accra – there were a total of 50 clients and 23 were seen. Of which 22 attended the 4 workshops – 3 of whom were women and 19 men.

Successes and developments

- 33 WWBG, Sinapi Aba Trust, VSO Ghana Clients
- 25 Stanbic Clients
- 50 TEMA Woodworkers Manufactures Association
- Provided continued support to clients – confirmation Missions are of support to grass roots clients
- More detailed workshops requested a need which could generate an income stream
- More information and networking with sources of finance requested now financial training improved client understanding
- Maintain networks with each other - sustainability
- HR workshops which is a new need requested

New connections developed:

1. REMADE Ghana – (Returning Enterprising Migrants Adding Employment) A Dutch NGO and AFFORD partner working with Ghanaians in the Netherlands, UK & Ghana.
2. Sinapi Aba Trust – NGO that provides small and micro-credit services to viable small and micro enterprises which lack financial assistance from the formal banking institutions.
3. SIFE Ghana – An international organization that mobilises university students around the world to make a difference in their communities while developing the skills to become socially responsible business leaders

14th - 28th June 2009 - Accra and Tema - RPs: 15 – 3 males / 12 females

19th July - 2nd August 2009 - RPs: 13 - 8 males / 5 females

The above final missions for 2009 focussed, alongside the former two previous missions in January and May 2009, on developing accessible, affordable and co-ordinated business development services nationwide. This was to be done by harnessing a combination of domestic and diaspora resources, and to contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for entrepreneurship.

Revisiting clients seen on previous missions and providing additional training and business support; whilst working alongside partners and supplementing our services with theirs to assist their clients businesses to develop sustainably. The mission provided one to one sessions and workshops as had been done previously.

As a result of the support SEEDA's key successes included:

- 40 RP's support from the diaspora – diverse backgrounds and skill sets
- 60 WWBG clients supported
- 45 WABA members supported
- 1 VSO follow – up from 2008
- Up to 75% of businesses supported are implementing support given – i.e. book keeping
- Training and advice have supported clients business planning applications for bank accounts and loans
- Accounting staff have been employed to support several businesses

- 2 clients successfully re-launched their brands based on support received
- Partnership relations maintained – Stanbic Bank and WWBG especially
- Strategic partnership with VSO Ghana (VSOG) for their agriculture sector clients
- Media coverage, 10 minute promotional SEEDA DVD produced

21st July – 4th August 2010

RPs Male – 2 Female = 9

Partners – JCI, Waves, WABA, Ashesi University (Labone)

Target clients – Youth, women

Goal

The aim of the mission was in line with previous missions that took place, to work with women and young people in business. Utilising varying tools available to us to support, teach and assist them to develop and grow, also to assist entrepreneurs have a better understanding of business and why they were doing it.

Purpose

To work directly with business owners so the RPs could get an understanding of the clients and their needs, therefore they would be able to do a short term plan for the period of the mission and a longer term plan for after the mission.

- Worked with 28 businesses directly through one to one assistance.
- Provided customer relations support to 25 people from JCI.
- Workshop day to 62 Ghanaian business owners from our partner organisations.
- Specialised sessions with 35 women entrepreneurs with WABA.
- Three Ghanaian tourism companies taken to visit the Deputy Minister of Tourism.
- Radio appearance providing a talk on marketing.
- Workshop to 97 Ghanaian business owners from the Chambers of Commerce.

19th September - 2nd October 2010

RPs Male - 4 Female – 8

Partners – JCI, Waves, WABA, Fab Fems, Chambers of Commerce, AGI, KNUST

Target clients – Youth, women, SMEs

Goal

To reach a large number of our target clients and provide information to our partners so they can continue to support their members.

Purpose

This mission was the last of the project and so the main purpose was to have contact with as many members of our target clients as possible. The mission also wanted to leave our partners with the tools, knowledge and know how to continue to assist their members after the project came to an end.

As a result of the support **SEEDA's key successes included:**

- Workshop to 111 Ghanaian business owners for our partners.
- Workshop session to 86 young entrepreneur students.
- Networking session with 25 people.
- RPs went on three radio stations and two TV programmes to talk about their work
- Worked directly through one to one sessions with 33 businesses

The mission had a profound impact on the resource people who participated on the Ghana missions. It was an opportunity for them to engage with some very exciting and dynamic young entrepreneurs and also use their skills to really help and assist other people who openly appreciated the information and valued the time volunteered.

The key to this project is that it listened to the needs of the partners and responded to them so the assistance was relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries. This type of engagement was a very positive experience and learning opportunity for all stakeholders. SEEDA has paved the way for other forms of engagement of this nature.

Where are they now?

Following the missions, the RPs took varying paths some opting to stay in the UK, others finding ways to connect with the country they had visited as an RP and others moving to their visit country or another country on the continent.

Conclusion

Over the period of the project AFFORD was able to take over 200 resource people to Ghana and Sierra Leone who were able to reach thousands of beneficiaries. The value of the work and time that the RPs volunteered equated to £300,000 but the real value was in the experience for all involved.

The missions helped the RPs see the African countries visited differently, as places of opportunity, potential and exciting possibilities. It opened their eyes to a different way of thinking, being and living that informed how many wanted to move forward in life and business. The experience also showed them their value as people and repositories of important information and knowledge.

For the partners and their members the feedback from their experience was very positive and showed the partners how serious their members were about developing their business knowledge. Many stayed in touch with AFFORD and the RPs who had worked with them and have gone on to build productive relationships.

What the SEEDA programme through the DVP project has shown is that entrepreneurs on the continent, much like entrepreneurs the world over, are open and eager for assistance to help them build their enterprise. This type of AID assistance is extremely important in the bid to eradicate poverty, create jobs and see developing countries progress into sustainable and self-sufficient nations.

The DVP project was a definite success and a positive growth experience for all stakeholders, an example to highlight the way forward for real sustainable development.