



GHANA BEYOND AID: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF HUBS IN CLOSING THE SOCIAL  
IMPACT GAP

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Business Administration Department  
Ashesi University

By:  
Emmanuel Derry Wanye  
Management Information Systems '19

Supervisor:  
Gordon K. Adomdza (PHD)

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this undergraduate thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: .....

Candidate's Name: Emmanuel Derry Wanye

Date: April 2019

I hereby declare that preparation and presentation of this undergraduate thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of undergraduate thesis laid down by Ashesi University College.

Supervisor's Signature: .....

Supervisor's Name: Dr. Gordon K. Adomdza

Date: April 2019

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## ABSTRACT

The transition of Ghana into a middle-income country meant a lot of resultant changes due to internal and international reactions to the new status attained by country. Prominent among some of these consequential outcomes is the move by donor countries and agencies to switch from aid to trading with Ghana. To this effect, the government of Ghana has responded with a national agenda called Ghana Beyond Aid which generally seeks to enhance Ghana's chances of obtaining maximum benefits out of the era of trade. However, this initiative does not cover all the possible struggles Ghana stands to face after aid has stopped coming into the country. For instance, the imminent gap in social impact since the advent of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), brought a lot of foreign aid to help the country meet the goals. This study does a qualitative study about technology and business hubs in Ghana. The objective is to understand the operations of these civil society organizations, and how they can reorient themselves to help Ghana fill its social impact gap after aid has ended. The study concludes that since these hubs already have access to funding opportunities to implement specific SDGs, they can continue this if they can first, adopt proper tracking and documentations of their progress in order to build more credibility, then leverage on that to attract more funds. The other recommendation is for the hubs to consider viable means of harnessing internal generated funds to sustain their operations.

Key Terms: Foreign Aid, Civil Society Organization, Social Impact.

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CHAPTER 1

**1.0. Introduction**

The United Nations (UN), by 2004, had agreed that the only innovative way to boost chances of achieving the millennium development goals (MDGs) in developing countries was to increase official development assistance (ODA) to such countries. The UN report clearly mentioned that the means to find an extra \$50 billion to fund the MDGs was to “focus on the flow of resources from high-income countries to developing countries” (United Nations Report, 2004). Roger Riddell (2009), captured this flow of resources from developed to less developed countries as “foreign aid”. In his words, he defined foreign as “assistance from richer to poorer countries whose purpose is to address and promote the welfare and development of the later” (Riddell, 2009). This fact about resources to support MDGs introduces a deeper discussion about how foreign aid given to developing countries, like Ghana, are meant to create or promote social-impact-driven projects. That is, projects aimed at enhancing the livelihoods of people and safeguarding the environment. If this general assertion about the motive for foreign aid is true, then, there is the need for beneficiary countries like Ghana, who must leap beyond receiving foreign aid, to consider how to promote social impact without foreign aid. This study concerns a social impact gap in Ghana without foreign aid, and how civil society organizations, specifically business and technology hubs and incubators can help fill that gap.

## 1.2. Social Impact

Burdge & Vanclay (1996) defined social impact as “all social and cultural consequences to human population of any public or private actions that alter the ways in which people live work, play, relate to one another, organize to meet their needs, and general cope as members of society”. This definition considers both the positive and negative consequences of everyday public and private actions in our societies. However, for the purpose of this study, the meaning of social impact is narrowed to only the positive effects and defined to fit more with Taylor-Ide & Taylor (1995) definition of “sustainable human development”. The authors defined it as:

*development that not only generates economic growth but distributes its benefits equitably; that regenerates the environment rather than destroying it; that empowers people rather than marginalizing them. It gives priority to the poor, enlarging their choices and opportunities, and provides for their participation in decisions affecting them. It is development that is pro-poor, pro-nature, pro-jobs, pro-democracy, pro-women and pro-children – Taylor-Ide & Taylor (1995).*

Combining insights from Burdge & Vanclay (1996) & Taylor-Ide & Taylor (1995), The discussions of social impact has been limited to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their outcomes (MDGs and SDGs are further explained in the next sub section). Hence, the MDGs and SDGS implementations are considered as the “public or private actions” mentioned in the definition of social impact by Burdge & Vaclay (1996). And carrying out these goals are expected to yield “sustainable human development” by Taylor-Ide & Taylor (1995) as social impact outcomes.



### **1.3. Brief Overview of MDGs and SDGs**

The millennium development goals (MDGs) were adopted in 2000 when 189 heads of state signed a pact which enjoined them to collectively work towards enhancing the livelihoods of the people living in their respective countries and to also protect their environments. The 8 broad goals included: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, improve maternal health, ensure environmental sustainability, reduce child mortality, promote gender equality and empower women, develop global partnership for development, achieve universal primary education, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases, expand universal basic education (United Nations-Ghana, 2015). As 2015 came by, following the improvements and experiences in pursuing the MDGs, these 8 goals were redefined and expanded into 17 specific goals to cover pressing global challenges. These goals adopted by the United Nations were termed as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They serve as the main developmental frameworks to guide respective countries in tackling global issues related to poverty, hunger, climate change, gender inequality, education etc. from 2015 to 2030 (United Nations.org, nd).

### **1.4. Foreign Aid for Social Impact through MDGs & SDGs in Developing Countries**

Giving out development assistance or foreign aid to less developed countries did not start with creating the global development goals (used to refer to both the MDGs & SDGs). However, McArthur (2013) explained that the global goals (with specific reference to MDGs) provided constructive frameworks to use foreign aid in a way that directly impacts citizens and societies of beneficiary countries by solving pressing contextual challenges. He supported his claim by describing situations before the crafting of MDGs. He says “many rich countries cut their foreign aid and focused on domestic priorities ... the results of this were troubling. Africa suffered a generation of stagnation, with rising poverty, child death, and drops in life expectancy”

(McArthur, 2013). Then he further explained that the advent of MDGs informed aid initiatives such as debt reliefs for underdeveloped countries – a means to empower them to tackle specific social challenges in health and education (McArthur, 2013). Thiele, Nunnenkamp, & Dreher (2007) also did a study about the allocation of foreign aid to developing countries, especially sub-Saharan regions, and found out that some specific MDGs, like fight against/AIDS, determined the allocation of foreign aid to recipient countries.

Also, a joint publication in 1995 by UNICEF and other world organization talked about the implementation of the “20/20 Initiative”. A fundamental component of this initiative is the deal between developing and industrialized companies to provide adequate support for “basic social services” in areas of education, reducing maternal and child mortality, reducing poverty, etc. in developing countries. Specially, part of the deal meant that donor countries needed to commit 20% of ODA to support such basic social services (UNDP, et al., 1995). Apparently, this step was to ensure an effective way to mobilize funds to support vast “unmet basic needs in developing countries” as portrayed in *figure1* below.

Nancy Alexander (2001) review of aid allocation by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, revealed that \$15 billion went solely into supporting education in developing countries between 1990 -1998. Out of the quoted amount, African alone benefited from \$5.7 billion, representing more than a third of the \$15 billion (Alexander, 2001). It is important to note that Education stands tall among the global development goals. As such, although 1998 is two years before the MDGs were officially adopted as global goals, this finding by Alexander supports the broader argument that aid allocations to developing countries are influenced by donor’s quest to foster social-impact-driven initiatives.

**Unmet basic needs in developing countries (figures in millions)**

Indicators	Sub-Saharan Africa	Middle East & N. Africa	South Asia	East Asia & Pacific	Latin America & Caribbean	Total
Annual under-5 deaths (1996)	4.2	0.7	4.2	1.8	0.5	11.4
Maternal deaths (1990)	0.219	0.032	0.224	0.080	0.022	0.577
One-year-olds not immunized against measles (1995-1996)	9.7	1.3	7.4	2.6	2.4	23.4
Illiterate adults (1995)						
Total	134	76	395	208	42	855
Women	82	47	245	150	24	548
Children (6-11 years old) not in school (1993-1997)						
Total	44	11	61	6	8	130
Girls	24	6	35	4	4	73
Population without access (1990-1996) to						
Safe water	308	63	266	622	115	1,373
Adequate sanitation	334	92	877	1,208	144	2,655

Figure 1 Sourced from UNDP, et al., 1995

**1.4.1. Evidence of foreign aid used to support social impact in Ghana**

The event of foreign aid donations to Ghana is generally not new phenomenon. However, the aftermath of Ghana's intentions and commitment to the implementation of global development goals caused a remarkable hike in the inflow of aid into the country. Nyarkoh and Intsiful (2018), wrote an article that explored the responsiveness of donor countries and agencies to Ghana's call for support to promote education in the country. Undoubtedly, education stands tall in both the MDGs and SDGs. Specifically, MDG 2 promoted "universal basic education" and the SDG 4 says "quality education) (UN.org, n.d). The authors recounted that the move by successive governments of Ghana to pursue quality and accessible education triggered multilateral and bilateral donors to respond massively in the form of aid assistance to the country. They mentioned that in the last two

decades, foreign aid towards educational policies doubled (Nyarkoh & Intsiful, 2018). The specified period by the authors falls within the same timeline when the global goals agenda was initiated.

The HIPC (heavily indebted poor country) initiative is one of the MDGs practical reinforcement programs rolled out to support developing countries in escaping the tight poverty brackets to pursue stronger social policies. In short, a key essence of the initiative was to boost social spending among beneficiary countries like Ghana. That is, debts reliefs granted to beneficiary countries would help them save more to support social interventions in health, education, among others (IMF.org, 2016). Ghana joined the HIPC initiative in 2001. The then British Secretary of State for International Development, Ms Clare Short, said that Ghana stood the chance of benefiting up to **200 million dollars** in debt relief under HIPC (Ghanaweb, 2001). The former president, John Agyekum Kufuor who headed the country at that time, is quoted to have pointed to the national health insurance scheme as one of flagship national social intervention program which was made possible through joining HIPC (Azumah, 2018).

Data also available indicates that aid inflows increased tremendously from 2000, just about the time when the MDGs were adopted by the country. From the World Bank, Net Official Development Assistance (Net ODA) coming into Ghana consistently rose between years 2000 and 2012. Specifically, by 2012, Net ODA had risen from **\$600 million** in 2000 to **\$1.77 billion** in 2012 (World Bank) This represents **almost a 300%** increment in Net ODA inflows to Ghana. This is not surprising because as conveyed in the 2015 MDG report for Ghana, the partnership goal (MDG 8) almost obliged donor countries and agencies to give out more ODA to support developing countries. The report says that “MDG 8 required donors, for instance developed countries, to increase ODA to developing countries to at least 0.7 percent of gross national income

(GNI) by 2015” (Ghana MDG Report, 2015). According to the same report, countries like Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Luxembourg, had even exceed the 0.7% mark in their ODA donations to Ghana. Evidently, creating and driving social impact had become the central driving ODA inflows into the Ghanaian economy.

Another article published by Social Watch, an international organization focused on alleviating poverty and gender justice, stated that between 1999 and 2005, around the time when the MDGs came into force, foreign aid, especially grants, experienced a cumulative increase of about 464% and Ghana’s domestic share of capital expenditure fell from 48% to 20% (Social Watch, 2006). Certainly, this fact explains how foreign aid was key in supplementing Ghana’s available resources to fund her internal expenditures including social development interventions.

Again, even in the 2018 budget, about **¢586.76 million, 0.2% of GDP**, was to be sourced from grants to support various social development projects (Ministry of Finance, 2018). Although 0.2% is a meagre figure relative to total GDP, the anticipated impact and benefits to be derived from the projects which will be funded by this amount cannot be overestimated. Stephen Yeboah, who is in the Development Planning department of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), made a general statement that “the economy of Ghana, believe it or not, has been shaped to fully depend on aid from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), donor countries and agencies for an improved budget in a fiscal year” (2009). It might be extreme to describe Ghana’s economy as fully dependent on foreign aid. Regardless, Yeboah’s argument cannot be completely discounted without acknowledging some subtle truths, especially the reliance of Ghana on foreign aid to advance social development interventions.

### **1.5. CSOs: Business Hub & Incubators, their relevance in Implementing SDGs & MDGs**

(Batliwala, 2002) highlighted on the reliance of local civil society organizations on international support (cash, material resources, or expertise) to boost their local activities and impact in their societies. In Ghana, this phenomenon is same at the grassroots level. The indigenous participation by CSOs in the implementation of the global development goals to drive social impact across the country has equally received massive donor support. A specific example of in Ghana, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) like Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Business and Technology Hubs, can be considered as the active players on the ground in spreading social impact. These organizations, due to their committed roles in helping the country attain the development goals, attract partnerships and funding from donors to sustain their activities. The business & technology hubs and incubators network in Ghana is an emerging community and not as popular as NGOs in Ghana. There are about 20 of them scattered across the country with majority of them based in Accra (regional capital of Ghana). They exist as “physical body which help young people, government agencies, technologist, private sector, and civil society in problem-solving. They function as incubators, accelerators, co-working spaces, fab labs, makerspaces, hackerspace, and other innovation spaces ([tech-businesshubsgh.org](http://tech-businesshubsgh.org)). Some examples include Ispace (Accra), Kumasi Hive (Kumasi), HopIn Academy (Tamale), Grassroot (Kenyasi & Sunyani), Ashesi D: Lab (Ashesi Campus), Ghana Climate Innovation Center (Ashesi Campus), etc.

In 2018, the United Nations Development Agency (UNDP), through partnerships with some CSOs, had invested \$2.7 million in a climate change social intervention program (Entsie, 2018). Another example is the British Council collaborating with Hapaspace, a technology and business hub in Kumasi, to educate 110 high school girls in computer literacy ([hapaspace.com](http://hapaspace.com)). There is also the Grassroot Hub which in partnership with foundations like Melton Foundation and Global Alliance

for Development Foundation (GADeF), gets funded to groom businesses whose innovations are centered on the SDGs (Grassroothub.net, n.d).

### **1.6. About the cut in foreign aid**

In July 2011, Ghana leaped from lower-income to a lower middle-income status. The World Bank explained that the discovery of oil, amidst steady economic growth pushed up the gross domestic product (GDP) and even forecast a further GDP growth of about 13.4% (World Bank, 2011). The Danish government, the European Union (EU), and other donors responded to this development with plans shift engagements with Ghana from aid to trade. For instance, the Danish government announced that it would completely cut aid to Ghana by 2020. The Danish Ambassador to Ghana, Tove Degnbol, in a report, stated that the Danish-Ghana partnership will transition to base on trade, investments, political cooperation and research (Embassy of Denmark in Ghana, 2017). The UK Ambassador to Ghana, Jon Benjamin, also explained that UK's decision to cut aid to Ghana is because of the country's attainment of lower middle-income status. He however said that even though the UK was cutting aid to Ghana, they (UK government) were willing to support Small and Medium Enterprises for them to become engines of growth in the country (myjoyonline.com, 2016). These statements were followed by an official announcement by the government of Ghana through the finance minister about the inevitable cut in foreign aid inflow into the country. Hon. Ken Ofori Atta confirmed that foreign aid that has been flowing into the country has begun "shrinking" and will soon cut completely. He further emphasized that this new development is due to the Ghana's attainment of middle-income economic status (Kwakofi, 2017).

On a whole, the lower middle-income status attained by Ghana is good news. But the associated event of losing foreign aid donations to trade is a cause for alarm. Evidences provided in the previous section proves that foreign aid donations formed the main support for Ghana's social

impact policies. This then means social impact policies and their implementations in the country are bound to suffer a halt as foreign aid support stops coming to the country.

### **1.7. About Ghana Beyond Aid Agenda**

In 2013, IMF approved \$918 million to support a medium-term economic reform initiated by the government of Ghana. According to a press release from IMF, this support was extended with the aim to “foster return to high growth” (imf.org, 2013). This assistance fell in line with a grand scheme and a general call, after the attainment of middle-income status, for Ghana rapidly attain a stable level of development where it will not depend on aid. For this to happen, it requires strong political will on the side of the government of Ghana. In line with this grand scheme, the president of Ghana, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, in 2017, launched the “Ghana Beyond Aid” (GBA) agenda as a surviving strategy. GBA is said to be an overall plan for Ghana to survive in the era where aid will gradually be replaced by trade. Global trends in bilateral and multilateral relations among countries and organizations have experienced a massive evolution. A prime aspect of this evolution is the concept of “aid for trade” which the World Trade Organization explains as “an initiative that encourages developing governments and donors to recognize the role that trade can play in development” (wto.org, n.d). Essentially, this global initiative, supported by powerful countries and multinational agencies, is driving focus away from giving and receiving foreign aid remittances to trade. Hence, developing countries like Ghana, under this initiative, would have to brace themselves to shy away from receiving foreign aid to trading with their donor countries and the rest of the world.

As such in explaining Ghana’s surviving strategy, the president said that GBA means building a “Ghana which looks to the use of its own resources” for its own development (Jotie,2018). Furthermore, he says GBA is concerned with creating “an economy that is not dependent on charity



and handouts, but an economy that will look at the proper management of its resources as the way to engineer social and economic growth in our country” (Jotie, 2018).

From the president’s definition of GBA, it is very clear that Ghana’s strategy is concerned with appropriately managing existing resources to grow “social and economic” prosperity in the country. However, GBA agenda is taking place around the same time when foreign aid which supported social-impact-driven developments is ending. Thus, the need to consider how Ghana can support its social impact growth in the era of Ghana-Beyond-Aid.

### **1.8. Practical lessons from other countries**

Dadzie (2013), said that “for sub-Saharan African countries such as Ghana to develop, they must carefully study experiences of countries like Malaysia”. Well, it is not just Malaysia, but the development history of countries like India, China, Vietnam, Singapore, etc. provide insightful perspectives for anyone to constructively analyze the current position of Ghana, where Ghana wants to be, and means by which Ghana can get there. Their histories leave pragmatic clues about sustainable social development.

For example, Ho, Noor, & Ramayah (2016) reported that a key success factor in the Malaysian social and economic transformation can be attributed to small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) which contributed significantly to development at the grassroots level. They cited some statistics which showed that SMEs contributes 32% of Malaysia’s 2014 GDP. From 2005 to 2013, SMEs contribution to the Malaysian economy rose from 29.4 to 33.1% and SMEs creates 59% of jobs in the Malaysian economy. Vietnam, another country that has experienced drastic social and economic transformation, also focused direct investment into the citizens and building their communities. Peter Vanham (2018) explained that a key feature of the Vietnams transformation strategy was “investing heavily in human and physical capital” (Vanham, 2018). His article also

mentions education a major area through which Vietnam invested in the Vietnamese people. The result, as explained, shows that Vietnam's youthful population became readily available skilled labor to fill employable positions created by industrial investments by both the locals and major foreign companies like Samsung (Vanham, 2018).

### **1.9. Purpose of Research**

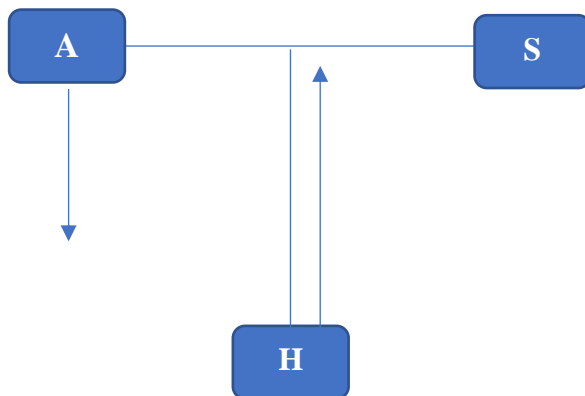
In 2016, the Council on foundations, a nonprofit leadership association in the US that helps promote philanthropic works across the globe, declared their intentions to help amass funds to continue to support philanthropic works that aligns with specific SDGs. An excerpt of a report from the councils says that "between 2002 and 2012 the foundation made \$30billion in grants towards the MDGs ... over the next 15 years, it is estimated that funders could direct as much as \$360 billion in grants toward the SDGs" (Edwards, Rosen, & Rose, 2016). This suggests that all things being equal, from now till at least 2030, there is going to be some amount dedicated for supporting the global development goals. Also, as indicated by both the UK and Danish government, it is not that these donor countries (or agencies) are cutting ties with Ghana. Rather, they are now switching their support from aid to trade. Thus, regardless of cut in aid to Ghana, there still seem to be available support that Ghana might be able to tap into, to foster social impact policies in the era of "no aid". The question is, what could be the way out?

Already, some technology and business hubs in Ghana are working with institution who provide grants and other forms for assistances to support SDGs related programs carried out by these hubs to create direct impact in their respective communities and beyond. Therefore, the researcher is asking the question that is there a way for these technology and business hubs to reorient themselves to continue to source resources available to still push social impact through SDG related implementations, during "Ghana Beyond Aid"?

This research is relevant because

- For those in academia and even the general public, this study will contribute to the available local pool of knowledge on technology and business hubs in Ghana.
- For policy makers, this study opens another view for considering pragmatic steps to help Ghana survive beyond aid.
- For technology and business hubs, beyond publicity, finding from this study could be adopted and implemented in useful forms in their operations to enable them to enhance their influence in the society.

**Below is an imagery representation of the research framework.**



**A** – Foreign Aid

**S** – Social Impact Development

**H** – Business & Technology Hubs

If aid supports social impact in Ghana, then the research wants to find out how hubs and incubators can rise to maintain social impact in Ghana after aid has cut in the era of “Ghana Beyond Aid”

## CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.0. Overview

This chapter carefully probes into available literature related to the topic. The discussions will cover main components of the study such as: foreign aid, social impact, and civil society organizations, specifically, tech and business hubs and incubators. The underlying theory for the discussion is the *Seed-Scale Theory of Social Change* which is a social development approach developed by a UNICEF (United Nation International Children Emergency Fund) commission headed by Daniel Taylor-Ide and Carl Taylor, put together in 1995. Seed-Scale prioritizes locals as the main engines of sustainable community developments, with the guidance and innovation of expertise, and overall support of governments and other higher institutions (Taylor, 2017).

### 2.1. Explaining the Seed-Scale Theory of Social Change

Taylor-Ide & Taylor (1995) provide a background of the Seed-Scale theory as outcome of a thorough study of success stories in community-based projects by UNICEF in several communities in developing countries. Originally, the name of theory stands as a combination of two acronyms: S.E.E.D and S.C.A.L.E. The S.E.E.D stands for “Self-Evaluation with Essential Data”. Whereas the S.C.A.L.E. takes three separate interpretation. i) SCALE – Selecting Community As Learning Example. ii) SCALE – Self-help Center for Action Learning and Experimentation. iii) SCALE – Sustainable Collaboration for Adaptative Learning and Extension. These three separate interpretations are equated to three respective phases for scaling community-based projects. The table below summarizes the match between the phases and various interpretations.

Acronym	Meaning	Corresponding Phase of Scaling Community-based-projects
<b>SCALE</b>	Selecting Community As Learning Example	Identifying a successful local project for social development
<b>SCALE</b>	Self-help Center for Action Learning and Experimentation	Transforming it into a community-based action learning center
<b>SCALE</b>	Sustainable Collaboration for Adaptative Learning and Extension	A systematic process of facilitating community-to-community extension

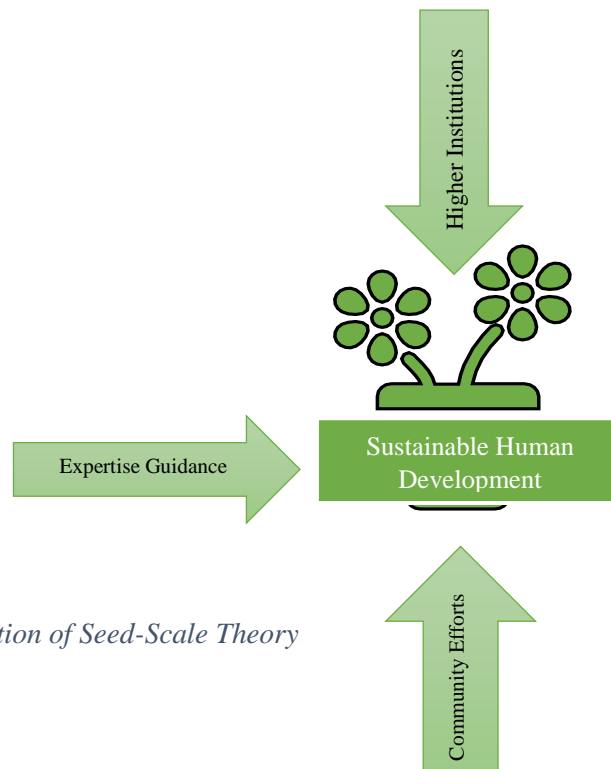
Table 1: Data sourced from UNICEF Publication

Further information provided on the theory shows there it functions based on three founding principles:

- *Sustainable human development evolves from a self-reliant understanding of local needs and resources*
- *Action must grow from a combination of a bottom-up and top-down programming. That is, decision making involves*
  - *The whole community: both the disenfranchised as well as those with power. Women, youth, poor, ethnic minorities, are typically considered because they often bear the greatest problems in the community and their efforts are utilized in solving the problems*
  - *Government & Agency Officials: all agencies, governmental and non-governmental. Leaders in religion, culture, entertainment or business.*
  - *Experts: people with information or useful skills including academic and research workers, media representatives.*

- *Sustainability is possible only when action grows from community participation and self-reliance.*

In general, the seed-scale theory of social change underlines an approach for sustainable community development by putting the community folks in charge of their own growth. They are supposed to identify opportunities out of their contextual problems and diligently contribute their energies in solving the problems to better their own lives. This grassroots efforts are supposed to be showered with needed support (mostly financial) from powerful governmental and non-governmental institutions. Lastly, very pivotal to this growth process is the technical or expertise guidance to perfectly combine grassroots efforts with the resources/support made available to attain the expected sustainable outcomes. The diagram below depicts a summary of the Seed-Scale theory of Social Change.



*Pictorial Illustration of Seed-Scale Theory*

## **2.2. How the Seed-Scale Theory ties into Ghana Beyond Aid**

In applying the seed-scale theory within the context of the Ghana Beyond Aid Agenda, the involvement of the masses of Ghanaians in initiatives aimed at contributed to the positive transformation of the societies and ensuring their well-being, will count as the bottom-up or community efforts (as indicated in the diagram above). When the governmental institutions and other organizations (both local and international) make resources available for the masses to use to use in carrying out those projects, that will count as the top-down or higher institution contribution (as indicated in the diagram above). The efforts of individuals, groups, or organizations to create enabling platforms for the masses to access the coaching needed to maximize output of the available resources, will count as the expertise guidance or contribution (as showed in the diagram above). In general, the Ghana Beyond Aid Agenda can be practicalized using the seed-scale theory approach when there are grassroots commitment and efforts towards positive social transformation, and available expertise guidance is used to enable these grassroots efforts make maximum use of resources provided by the government or other higher local or international organization.

## **2.3. Practical Application of the Seed-Scale Theory in other Jurisdictions**

Hu, et al. (2017), studied the evolution of a community-based health systems in rural areas in China which started in 1968 that trained and distributed about 1.5 million “barefoot doctors” (rural farmers who have undergone health training) to provide health care for about 0.8billion rural Chinese population. This system is still in existence after having gone through some changes over time. But more importantly, the authors focused their studies on how developing countries could learn lessons from this community-based health system to meet the universal health coverage under the SDGs. They found that success of the system was a balanced intersection of efforts from

Chinese indigenes who worked as the “village doctors” under the expert training and guidance of professional health officers or the formal health system. Then the government provided subsidies to fill the incentive gap.

Deepak Bajracharya (1994), also explored an intervention made by UNICEF in Nepal’s cottage industry to expand income sources for some rural dwellers. Started in 1981, after about 10 years, the joint training and marketing program between UNICEF and rural farmers who produced “lokta” (local raw material for making paper), had expanded from 282 beneficiary families to reach over 1,400 families. More importantly, the author establishes that the prospects of this local program mean it can travel nationwide. Moreover, he says this will help expand local traditional craft, expand income generation, and further solve social issues related to women, water, wood, and wealth (Bajracharya, 1994). Again, this study follows the principles of seed-scale theory where there is local involvement in driving sustainable human development, with the support of higher institution like UNICEF. Definitely, it also fits into the SDGs, especially with respect to poverty reduction and gender parity (women empowerment).



## CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

### 3.0. Overview

The main variables of the study include foreign aid in Ghana, social impact development (mainly implementations of the MDGs & SDGs), and civil society organizations (mainly business & technology hubs in Ghana). This chapter provides more information about these variables. It also touches on the research design as well as the methods used in the collection and analysis of data.

### 3.1. Explaining Research Variables

#### 3.1.1. Defining Foreign Aid

Generally, foreign aid is one of the terms which has been differently defined by various schools of thoughts based on diverse perspectives. Wolf, Wang & Warner (2013) captured very high-level definitions adopted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and China. According to the authors, the OECD go by two main definitions for foreign aid based on their development aid programs.

- *Official Development Assistance (ODA) consists of technical aid, official grants, or loans promoting economic development and welfare, and having concessional terms, with a grant element of at least 25%.*
- *Official Development Finance (ODF) consists of non-concessional development lending by multilateral financial institutions and other official flows for development purposes (including refinancing loans) which have too low a grant element to qualify as ODA.*

These two, ODA and ODF, per the authors, are the definitions used by OECD to encompass all forms of foreign aid. The other definition which was adopted by the authors came from the Chinese White Paper on foreign aid. They claim the Chinese explained foreign aid as a:

*Mutual help between developing countries, focuses on practical effects, accommodates recipient countries' interests and strives to promote friendly bilateral relations and mutual benefits through economic and technical co-operations with other developing countries.*

Aside these formal and institutional-level definitions for foreign aid, Chenery and Strout (1966) also loosely defined foreign aid as the flow of resources from developed countries into underdeveloped countries. They stressed on the fact that resources involved in foreign aid transcends funds but also include skilled labor and technical assistance delivered from developed countries to underdeveloped countries. Another individual, Morgenthau (1962), briefly explained foreign aid as the transfer of money, goods and services from one nation to another. What is new about this definition is the fact that he does not try to create any distinction between the source and recipient of the money, goods or services. Unlike the preceding descriptions where foreign aid is said to be always flowing from developed to less developed countries. However, Ali and Zeb (2016) strongly argued that the definition provided by Morgenthau is very vague. They indicated that transfers such as export credit, foreign direct investments (FDIs), or commercial bank loans may move from one country to another but may not necessarily be counted as foreign aid. Ali and Zeb went on to quote John White who defined foreign aid as any transfer of resources from rich countries to poor countries which the former chooses to call aid. This definition tends to suggest that an inflow of resources into a country is termed as aid if the recipient assesses it and deems it as such. From all the above definitions, it is predominantly clear that foreign aid concerns the transfer of resources from countries who have the capacity to provide, to other countries that are either lacking or having inadequate amounts of such resources under flexible conditions.

### 3.1.2. Social Impact and the global development goals (MDGs & SDGs)

Social impact is the expected or unexpected effects of social interventions such as: policies, plan, project, and programs (Vanclay,2003). In any society, the occurrence or conceptualization of social impact, as put by Vanclay (2003) take several outlets. He listed some of them as:

- i. *People's way of life: how they live, work, play, and interact with each other daily*
- ii. *Culture: shared beliefs, customs, values and language*
- iii. *Community: its stability, cohesion, character, services and facilities*
- iv. *Their Political system: decision making processes, democratization, and associated support systems*
- v. *Environment: the quality of air, dust, noise, availability and quality of food they eat, the level of hazard or risk, sanitation, physical safety, access and control over resources*
- vi. *Health & Wellbeing: state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing, and not merely the absence of infirmity.*
- vii. *Personal and Property Rights: particularly whether people are economically affected, or experience personal disadvantage which may include a violation of their civil liberties*
- viii. *Fears and Aspirations: perceptions about safety, their fears about future of their community, and aspirations about future or future of their children.*

On a global scale, the millennium development goals and the sustainable development goals, stand as the largest global channels for pushing social impact. This can be realized from the fact that most of the individual goals intersect with the outlined areas through which Vanclay suggests social impact is conceptualized in any setting. Another thing is that although Vanclay mentions

that social impact could be positive or negative, the MDGs and SDGs are viewed as rather ensuring positive social impact. The images below show the list of MDGs and SDGs respectively.



Figure 2: The MDGs. Sourced from [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)



Figure 3: SDGs. Sourced from [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

Comparing the global development goals and the areas for conceptualizing social impact as listed by Vanclay (2003), both contain issues of health and wellbeing, sanitation and water, human rights, environmental safety land preservation, employment, human rights and gender parity, among other commonalities. To a larger extent, this justifies the conclusion that the global development goals

serves as wheels for driving social impact in the areas where they are implemented and the world in general.

### **3.1.3. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)**

(Abdulai & Quantson, 2009) explained CSOs as “all voluntary associations that actively participate, at least periodically, in influencing public policies without trying to take direct control of the state”. Within their localities, civil society organizations act as active grassroot forces to engage other locals in various community-based activities which are ultimately geared at enhancing social good. Their involvement in their communities, span from educational contributions, to health, water sanitation, among others. Even before officially launching the MDGs, the United Nations had made it point to enlist a vast number of these non-governmental organizations to serve as promoters of the developmental goals worldwide. Their focus areas would range from water and sanitation, children, health, education, environmental issues, among others (Hulme, 2009)

In the 90s, the United Nations (UN) created a fertile platform for growth and recognition of nongovernmental actors to engage in national and global policies on environment, population, human rights, economic development and women (Batliwala, 2002). According to Batliwala (2002), this development emanates from a worldwide acceptance that “governments could not achieve development goals without the participation of civil society” (Batliwala, 2002). In another studies, Abdulai & Quantson (2009) also found out that in the last two decades, there has been an increased engagement of civil society organizations (CSOs) by governments in developing countries. Using Ghana as a case, they indicated that these non-governmental players were engaged to contribute in the implementation of poverty reduction strategies (Abdulai & Quantson, 2009).

Further down the ladder, usually at the community level, business and technology facilities also exist as systems which help in advancing social impact. They function as co-working space, makerspaces or fabrication labs, and learning centers, etc. And they are usually community-based centers where locals gather to learn, share ideas, build and construct items, and generally promote social innovations (Wang, Dunn, & Coulton, 2015; Capdevila, 2013; Troxler, 2010). Gershenfeld (2005) did a study and concluded that a prominent problem with keeping such spaces is financial constraint. He posited that conventionally, investors are willing to invest in ideas or products that will grow profitably but not the process or support system for grooming the idea or product. However, authors like Lindtner (2017) portrays significantly, the importance of business and technological facilities in creating and advancing social innovation and impact in local areas. She further explained how the Chinese Prime Minister, Li Kiqiang, set up a policy to encourage mass establishment of makerspaces to foster “mass innovation” and “mass entrepreneurship”.

In Ghana, there are currently about 20 business & technology hubs and incubators scattered across the country. They exist in the form of incubators, accelerators, co-working spaces, fab labs, makerspaces, hackerspaces, and other innovation spaces. Aside providing physical spaces, they play “facilitator roles” in innovative problem solving, and job creation (tech-businesshubsgh.org).

### **3.2. The Research Design**

This study is a qualitative study. Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009) described a qualitative research as the kind that is used when the aim is to produce a detailed narrative account or understanding of the object(s) of study in a real-life setting. They also mentioned that for the sake of finding deeper meanings, qualitative research is usually applied with small size samples. Specifically, this research is generally designed to first use semi-structured interviews to collect data from sampled hubs in Ghana. Ahlin (2019) described semi-structured interviews as “organized conversations”

used by the researcher to gather new data from research respondents. Semi-structured interviews are preferred for this study due to the advantage of the researcher to main clear boundaries during data gathering without necessary missing the needed details. Hence, instead of using structured interviews and missing some details, or unstructured interviews and going over board, “guided conversations” as put by Ahlin, proves most helpful. The transcribed data will be presented in summaries during the analysis of the data. The thematic analysis will be done using these summaries. Moreover, guided conversations allow the responded the level of ease needed to freely share information with the researcher.

### **3.3. Research Scope**

#### **3.3.1. Study Population:**

The targeted population for gathering primary data in this study is business hubs and incubators. Generally, there are about 20 of them in the country. Majority of them are set up in Accra with least concentration in the northern regions.

#### **3.3.2. Sample Frame**

In each hub, the targeted respondents used in this research are the hub founders or hub managers and at about 2 tenants who have relations with the hub. Among the tenants, there needed to be a respondent who has started his or her business venture. Additionally, careful attention was paid to ensuring gender balance even though the researcher could not guarantee that due to the issues related to availability and willingness of the respondents.

### **3.4. Sampling Technique**

The sampling technique used to select participants for this study are purposive and snowballing. In each of the hubs, purposive sampling was used to in selecting the hub’s founder or main lead of

the hub. Then founder in turn referred a tenant or tenants who will also led the researcher to other tenants of the hub. This is considered as snowball.

### **3.5. Data Collection**

The main data collection tools questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The researcher first sends the questionnaires to participants who have voluntarily agreed to partake in the research and follows up with a face-to-face conversation. In many instances, the participants did not fill the questionnaire. They only looked at the questions to prepare, somehow, for the interviews or conversations.

### **3.6. Data Analysis**

Interviews were transcribed, and summaries generated from the transcribed interviews. Then a thematic analysis used to derive broad themes to help answer the main research question.

### **3.7. Limitation**

Natural cases of indisposition stalled the research and forced the researcher to abruptly hasten some aspects of the research which might have needed more time to produce better results. Additionally, most of the respondents, especially the tenants, found it difficult in meeting for an interview due to their commitment to their newly started business initiatives.



## CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH DATA & ANALYSIS

### 4.0. Overview

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the data collected during the research. The data collection was done through semi-structured interviews, more like guided conversations with the research participants. There was also a focus group discussion in one of the hubs since the respondents, due their busy schedules, wanted to have the conversation at the same time. In all, there were a total number of 14 semi-structured interviews and 1 focus group discussion. These respondents came from 5 hubs, each located in a different region in Ghana. The regions are: Upper East Region, Western Region, Ashanti Region, Greater Accra Region, and Ahafo Region.

### 4.1. Describing Research Participants

In each of the hubs, the researcher purposely chose the Hub Founder or Hub Manager who recommended at least two participants, either tenants or facilitators in the hub, based on their willingness and availability. In terms of education, the highest level is an MPhil, and the lowest is middle school (according to the old educational system in Ghana). Out of the 17 participants, 4 of them were females. The table below provides a complete breakdown of background details of research participants. The names of the participants and their hub names have been provided as pseudonyms.

Participant Name	Educational level	Hub Name	Role	Region
Nathaniel	MPhil	UpperHub	Founder	Upper East Region
Adongo	Masters	UpperHub	Tenant	Upper East Region
Adamou	Bachelor's Degree	UpperHub	Tenant	Upper East Region
Michael	Masters	WesternHub	Founder	Western Region

Bempah	Middle School	WesternHub	Tenant	Western Region
Karen	Undergraduate Student	WesternHub	Hub Intern	Western Region
Gideon	Undergraduate Student	WesternHub	Hub Intern	Western Region
Araba	Undergraduate Student	WesternHub	Hub Intern	Western Region
Wendy	Undergraduate Student	WesternHub	Hub Intern	Western Region
Boakye	Masters	AhafoHub	Founder	Ahafo Region
Hudson	Bachelor's Degree	AhafoHub	Past tenant & Founder of an Educational Social Enterprise	Ahafo Region
Hubert	Bachelor's Degree	AsanteHub	Hub Manager	Ashanti Region
Stephen	Bachelor's Degree	AsanteHub	Tenant	Ashanti Region
Kusi	Bachelor's Degree	AsanteHub	Tenant	Ashanti Region
Sackey	Quit University	AccraHub	Founder	Greater Accra Region
Dominica	Undergraduate Student	AccraHub	Tenant	Greater Accra Region
Vivian	Undergraduate Student	AccraHub	Tenant	Greater Accra Region

*Table 2: Demography of Research Participants*

## **4.2. Presenting Research Data**

The data presented below are summaries of the discussions which took place in each of the hubs.

### **4.2.1. UpperHub**

#### **Hub purpose and activities**

The hub was founded in 2014 to tackle unemployment, especially among the youth and help reduce poverty in the Upper East Region by creating an enabling platform for the natives to be reoriented to spot business opportunities out of the many challenges in the region, create business solutions and make a living out of the created solutions. The main target is graduates who are forced to travel to the southern part of the country to search of non-existing greener pastures. The hub runs seminars for large groups and personalize training which focus on both personal and business development. The personalize training last for three months. Participants go through training in areas such as self-discovery, self-discipline, personal and business integrity, maintaining positive and growth mindset, business proposal writing and presentation skills, customer discovery and customer service, marketing, bookkeeping, human resource management, among others. Some of the ventures born out of the hub's training include a construction firm, printing and multimedia business, sachet and bottle water business. All these ventures are situated in Bolgatanga, the capital town of the Upper East region.

#### **Resources; generation and use**

The hub currently runs on internally generated funds. The funds come from registration fees paid during seminars or personalize training. The charge for seminars range between ₵100-₵200 per head. While the personalized training ranges from ₵500-₵1500 depending on the financial strength of the participants. It has a rented office space and the only permanent employee is the Hub

Founder. Other human resources engaged on temporary bases include facilitators who belong to the network of the Founder. Some of them volunteer while others charge fees to handle specific aspects of the training.

### **Success Stories or Impact**

Seminars organized by the hub always receive massive patronage. At least there are about 150 people in attendance. And the feedback afterwards is very positive which means that the people find them impactful. Moreover, some ventures have been born while others have experienced positive growth through the hubs training.

- The construction venture was formed through a collaboration between two friends, one with an architectural background and the other with a degree in building and construction technology. *“the masons in this area could not fully implement my architectural designs so I teamed up with my friend to start a firm so that I can do the design and he does the building” – Adamou, Co-Founder.* Currently, the business employs 3 other permanent workers together with the two founders of the business. It also employs up to 60 contract workers through its construction and renting activities. *“one way I can say this training has helped me is teaching me about the importance of reading and research. Because through reading wide and research on the internet, I am able to create beautiful designs for my customers”-Adamou.*
- The printing and multimedia business is a family business. *“I am physically challenged and the income from my job as a curator in the regional museum is not enough, so I started this business to leverage on my design skills to add an extra income source” - Adongo.* The business employs my wife full time, and other two workers. The business already existed before Adongo joined hub, but the training is what has helped his business to be reformed

and is currently growing. *“until I came here, all I was that I was doing business. I did not care about bookkeeping, or customer service or even business integrity. I did not think they all matter in business. But now I have the mind to do business and to succeed. I am serious with the business now”-Adongo.*

## **Challenges**

Financial constraint remains the main challenge of the hub. Most of the youth who express interest in the hub’s programs are unable to afford the charge for it. Since there are no supporting grants or external sources of funds, it is difficult to enrol such people. This limits the number of people the hub can reach. Additionally, most of the youth are still not abreast with the concept of entrepreneurship and business incubation. Hence, they do are not motivated to spend their time and other resources to be part of the program. This problem was the biggest challenge when the hub started but gradually, especially with initiative like the National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program (NEIP), the youth are beginning to consider prospects in creating their own business venture.

## **Future of the hub**

The medium to long term plan of the hub include relocating to a bigger space where there will be a dedicated space for computer and IT training. At the moment IT is absent in the training programs that the hub offers. If there are enough funds available, the hub hopes to start supporting ventures with some capital to help them launch or grow their businesses. *“This is something that we do but the money is small and not enough for everyone to get”- Nathaniel.* Moreover, grants support can open up the chance for those who cannot afford entry fees to have free training.

#### **4.2.2. AhafoHub**

**Hub purpose and activities:** the initial purpose of the hub was to assist NGOs working with under an umbrella organization called GADEF (global alliance for development foundation) within the mining communities in the Ahafo region to transition into community-based social enterprises. Aside this, the hub later discovered the need to promote and harness innovations by the youth to solve problems in their societies. The AhafoHub is described as “*an eco-entrepreneurship and SDG Innovation Lab with global community of grassroots making impact and social good. It educates, innovate and incubate start-ups and connect them to accelerators, leading companies, research institutions, foundations, non-profits, and investors*” – Boakye, Co-Founder. The activities of the hub are centered on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, the hub recruit businesses or business ideas and mould them into sustainable social ventures which deliver solutions based on at least one of the SDGs. The applicants go through an online registration to enrol in the hub’s programs. *Impact journey* is the adopted phrase used to describe the intensive business training program that the hub mainly runs. It involves problem-solution fit, field trips, and a lot of interaction with social entrepreneurs to learn more about their failures and successes.

#### **Resources and Partnerships**

About 50% of the hub’s funds are sourced through grants from organizations like GADEF, Ford Foundation, Melton Foundation, French Embassy, Newmont Ghana, among others. Then 40% comes from internally generated funds which is mainly out of renting hub’s space to companies and other organizations to hold their meetings. The remaining 10% comes from “*forward fund*” which is the contributions of ventures who have made it through the hub to support the activities of the hub. Usually, training programs organized by the hub is prefunded, thus, participants end

up paying nothing. In terms of partnerships, the hub works with several local and international organizations. Locally, the hub collaborates with other hubs during the “*impact journey*” during which participants are taken on tour to places in the country to have first-hand interactions with elements of their training located in those areas. Usually, these hubs host them and take them through their style of training. Internationally, the hub works with UNLEASH which is a global innovation lab with gathers people from around the globe to collaborate on solutions to meet the SDGs (unleash.org). Partnership with UNLEASH allows some of the trainees of the hub to attend international conferences to study more into or pitch their SDG-based innovations. The main training curriculum and content used by the hub is developed by SEED, a global partnership program started in 2002 between UN environment, UNDP, and IUCN, to promote sustainable development and green economy. SEED develops contents for enterprise support programs, and they gear their content towards eco-inclusive entrepreneurship ([www.seed.uno](http://www.seed.uno)). The curriculum and content used by the hub is a modification of original materials created by SEED. The hub is working with the University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR) in Sunyani to establish another branch over there.

### **Success Stories and Impact**

- The hub has received, Non-Profit Award (2017), Youth Philanthropy Award, and WATER Award.
- Our incubator training program has produced about 58 social enterprises since the hub transitioned to incubate SDGs-based Start-ups.
- A remarkable impact we have made is our collaboration with the local Kenyasi District to put together case studies which the district used to outbid other districts to win a water project sponsored by the Hilton foundation and implemented by World Vision

- In the area of research, the hub is in a collaborative work with the KNUST to develop a Master's Degree program in the Philanthropy and Social Entrepreneurship
- An example of a social enterprise born out of the hub is “*kyere me wo fie*” which provides remedial support students who due to the deprived nature of their schools and poor backgrounds, are unable to progress to high school. The first set of students obtain a 100% pass with the least aggregate of 12. *“the hub has really been helpful. We got a freely designed logo, website, we use the hub’s space for free, even the students we teach came through the network of the hub. We attribute our success to the support of the hub” – Hudson, Co-founder of Kyere me wo fie*

### **Challenges**

A major challenge the hub faces comes from its current location, Kenyasi. The place and its surrounding communities lack a lot of basic infrastructural development: tarred roads, potable water, electricity, internet access, accommodation facilities, etc. Some workers hired by the hub have refused to honour the offer due to the underdeveloped nature of the place. The small size of the rented hub space, and unstable access to internet impedes smooth operations of the hub. Additionally, though the hub has targeted the youth, most of them are still bent on seeking opportunities in the mining companies. This sometimes makes it difficult to get enrolment from the mining communities. However, gradually, that is changing since the mining companies themselves are beginning to collaborate with the hub to redirect the excesses they cannot employ into the area of entrepreneurship.

### **Future of the Hub**

The immediate future step is a collaboration with UENR in Sunyani, the regional capital, to establish another branch over there. That new space is meant to solve problems associated with



the current locations of the hub. Beyond that, the hub has also secured a land and the long term plan is to build a hub complex to provide the needed space to contain all the programs of the hub. The hub is working with to establish a partnership deal with the mining companies. This deal will allow the companies to invest in the hub and in return the hub will carry out co-planned social interventions as cooperate social responsibilities on behalf of the mining companies. This one of the sustainability plans of the hub. Lastly, to reach a larger audience, especially, people outside Kenyasi, the hub hopes to customize a virtual platform owned by UNLEASH.

### **4.2.3. WesterHub**

#### **Hub Purpose and Activities**

The hub became fully operational in 2018. It is a social enterprise that promotes the idea of combining STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and entrepreneurship, to create business innovations that solve social problems. *“after my experiences in the UK and Australia during my higher education, I wanted to inspire the younger ones to focus on making a living for themselves by being innovative and solving problems around them” – Michael, Hub Founder.* Located in Takoradi, the hub uses an approach, termed as 3Cs to indulge kids, university students, and small business owners to create “quality and viable businesses”. The 3Cs are:

- **Create:** provide an enabling environment where motivated individuals, especially college students, kids, and young women in the society, can meet, team up, learn and share ideas, then ultimately create great innovations which will yield into great businesses ideas for them and the community.
- **Code:** here the hub particularly pushes these motivated individuals or groups to study, master, and use technology. The goal is to ensure that any businesses idea is centered on the application of technology.

- **Care:** this is a complete supportive stage set to nurture any born idea from the conception stage, to implementation, to financial guidance, essential entrepreneurial training, even marketing and distribution.

Last year, the hub run its first training program called the “Internship Program”. The program was designed to mainly engage students from the Takoradi Technical University during their long holidays in an intensive technology, business, personal development, and entrepreneurship training. The participants were freely enrolled through the Liaison Office of the University, and for a period of three months, they received training in web design, robotics, programming in python, accounting, research and design, enterprise resource planners (ERPs). The final stage of the training required them to identify and research into a problem in the Takoradi community and implement a solution by applying knowledge from school and they have learnt from the hub’s training program. The participants identified problems in transportation and waste management. The participants are fed with lunch and snacks, and they also receive transportation allowance. This is some form of incentive for them to fully commit to the program. Aside the internship program, the hub also has a business development support program for small businesses, especially the ones in the informal sector. It has started with a small craft business focused on wood carving, handmade guitars.

### **Resources and Partnerships**

The hub uses a rented space relies on volunteers to facilitate training sessions. *“I have friends who are also willing to do something to impact the society and cause change. So, I just tell them about the program and if they are available, they come”* -Michael, Hub Founder. The hub’s activities are fully funded by external sources (the interviewer held back on mentioning names). It has

partnership with the Takoradi Technical University to directly recruit students from them for its internship training program.

### **Success Stories and Impact**

As a very new hub, the success story is being able to settle quickly and starting some of the training programs, for instance the internship program. The internship program, so far, is achieving its purpose of engaging these youth, whom otherwise stay at home during the break. *“my name is Araba. I am student of University of Cape Coast, but I live here in Takoradi. The program has taken us through excel training, mobile app development, and a lot of knowledge in computer. Now, I can use my computer for more things than before. Now, I am more than an ordinary communication student and I would recommend this training for everybody” – Araba, Participant in Internship Program.* The hub’s support for the small craft business has been helpful so far. *“the WesternHub has helped me a lot. At first, not many people knew what I was doing. But they put my story on their website. Aside the publicity, the hub is also helping me restructure my business to be able to attract investments” – Bempah, owner of craft business.*

### **Challenges**

Financial limitation is the biggest challenge in terms of the sustaining the hub. For instance, volunteerism is not a sustainable way of getting people to come and facilitate activities of the hub, but the hub does not have enough money to pay people to come. Also, there are programs designed that we have to put on hold until there is money to carry them out. For instance, a program for design to promote computer programming and robotics among kids. Soon, the internship program will be rolled out at a fee, but it would have been great to keep it as a free entry program.

## **Future of the Hub**

For now, the hub is concerned with promoting itself to gain acceptance in the Takoradi community and beyond. Some of the future activities of the hub includes a program to connect small businesses owned by women to grant opportunities. The hub already has data on women in some areas of Takoradi and the businesses they are engaged in. Hence, the hub is working on getting interested parties to support these women with grants. There is also “ladies in coding” which is meant to empower the ladies in the area of computer programming. In the coming years, the hub seeks to become a leading center for innovation, creativity and STEM to help people use their skills to benefit themselves and the society.

### **4.2.4. AsanteHub**

#### **Hub Purpose and Activities**

This hub is a European Union funded project which came through SOS (Netherland & Ghana) and is being implemented in collaboration with the Asokore Mampong Municipal Assembly in Kumasi. The bases of acceptance to fund the project is that it is meant to promote local economic development and youth empowerment. When the proposal went through and the grants were approved, Asokore Mampong in Kumasi, was chosen because SOS has a branch located in the Municipality. More importantly, the Municipality contains a lot of “Zongo” communities and hosts many migrants from the northern part of Ghana who come to seek greener pastures in Kumasi. As such, recruitment is only limited to youths (between the ages of 18-35) living within the Asokore Mampong Municipality. The registration process starts with a mini-durbar called “Reach Out”. This helps to educate the gathering about the newly formed hub, its objectives, programs run in the hub, and description of the main application process. Afterwards, applicants fill online application forms either independently or with the guidance of hub employees. The latter option

is only available for those below tertiary education level. Selected applicants undergo an aptitude test and an interview at the final stage of screening. The final shortlisted applicants are admitted into 3 different cohorts based on the individual's highest level of educational. Gamma group for tertiary level, beta group for high school, vocational, and technical training institutes, and then alpha for those without education up to junior high school. In terms of training, the content used is developed by Next Economy. Next economy is an SOS program and supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It develops guides for equipping youth with employable skills or transforming ideas into start-ups ([next-economy.com](http://next-economy.com)). Generally, the first half of the 6 months training is dedicated to developing core life skills: self-discovery, team work, financial literacy, life goals setting, decision making, conflict resolution. Afterwards, the participants are allowed to choose either to follow the entrepreneurship track or track to develop employable skills. This is typical for the gamma and beta groups. However, for the alpha group, mainly consisting of porters (locally known as *kayeyes*), *the delivery* styles and workload within a session have been customized to fit to them. For instance, they meet only during the weekends when they are likely to be available. Their sessions are purely hands-on with little theory attached. The alpha groups usually do things such as beads making, soap making, photoshop, graphic design, digital marketing, etc. Then a slight blend of network and communication skills. Beyond the training, there no tangible support like a loan or grant available for the participants. However, for those who are entering to the start-up phase, the hub supports them with about €100 on condition that they are able to show an equivalent amount of their own.

### **Resources and Partnerships**

The hub depends fully on funding from the E.U. At the moment, it only runs free training programs and does nothing in addition to internally generate funds. The communication hierarchy is such

that, the hub reports to SOS Ghana, who in turn reports to SOS Netherland, and then the E.U. There are about 20 facilitators who handle training sessions and they are all paid. Most of them came from the network of the Hub Manager. *“Since I have been working in the hubs space for a while, I usually rely on my networks and their networks to get trainers. They all submit applications with their CVs. Some of the qualities we look for include their experience in training, whether they have a business of their own or not, basically if they have start-up experience or not”* – Hubert, Hub Manager. Other institutions working together with the hub include training centers like NIIT in Kumasi. Like NIIT is noted for computer literacy training, these institutions are brought on board to take care of participants who have interest areas aligned with what they do. The main advantage of this is that the hub does not need to acquire all the necessary tools and extra space needed for training in all the varying areas of interest to happen. Otherwise, for instance, the hub would have needed probably a workshop space with sewing machines for those interested in Fashion and also a computer lab for those interested in IT.

### **Success stories and Impact**

The hub measures its success and impact based on the objective of starting the hub. So far, some of those who have been through the program have graduated and either started their business or gained employment. The start-ups ventures are into production of solar gadgets, urban farming, specifically rabbit rearing, landscaping, painting, among others. For those interested in getting employed, some of them are working with NBC Ghana, a financial company, Legacy Hospital, Exponential Education, among others. *“an amazing thing is that the one working at Legacy Hospital is a disabled person and this came as a great opportunity”* – Hubert, Hub Manager.

Above all these, the hub also pride itself in how it empowers all the trainees with the needed knowledge, experiences, which will guide them to succeed at whatever they are doing. *“I really*

*appreciate the things that I have learnt from this place. My father had a lot of livestock, so rabbit rearing occurred naturally to me. However, NBU taught me all the other skills needed to have a good rabbit business. For instance, they brought people from the bank to come and talk to us, and lawyers to educate us on legal matters related to our business, especially signing contracts. NBU is a wonderful program. They even used to feed us: lunch and snacks” – Stephen, owner of rabbit business.*

## **Challenges**

The grant provided by the E.U. is meant to only last for four years, after which the hub either folds up or continues independently. This reality is a huge challenge to the sustainability of whatever good work the hub is doing beyond the four years. The best the hub is doing about this is that it is collaborating with other hubs to know some of the ways they sustain themselves beyond grants. The other major problem that threatens the success of the program emanate from socio-cultural practices dominant in this area. It was an original plan to get 60% female participation in all the hub's programs. However, getting the expected proportions of gender representations is difficult. In the gamma group, 60% are males. In Beta, even though, 60% are females, more than half the them are married with kids. Their marriage and kids usually distract them, and it is difficult to get their full commitment to the activities from start through to finish. Another subtle threat related to this area is the fact that it is a very politically vibrant zone. Some have already attached political inclinations to certain people or decisions of the hub. The fear is that if these political views increase, it will not be seen as a neutral ground for local development and youth environment which defeats the purpose of the hub. *“For instance, there was an ICT lab that the Municipality wanted to give to the hub, that would have saved the time and money spent in renting and renovating this current space. However, some sections of the assembly said it has be earmarked*

*as an ICT lab and cannot be used for anything else but that. The heightening political tensions surrounding the building made us finally settle on renting this place” – Hubert, Hub Manager.*

### **Future of the hub**

The future of the hub could go two ways. After the grant, SOS could withdraw and if the Municipality has no interest in continuing to support the hub, it folds up. Otherwise, in the absence, of the grants to fund all the operations of the hub, there will first be a scale down. That is, cut down on number of staffs, focus on a kind of training program, basically do what they hub can afford until there is enough money to expand. In the meantime, the hub is engaging a consultant on how to keep the hub running after the grant period has ended. *“Hopefully, SOS Ghana may to decide to keep it since beyond child care, they are looking at empowering the kids when they get to their youthful age” – Hubert, Hub Manager.*

### **4.2.5. AccraHub**

#### **Hub Purpose and Activities**

The AccraHub started around 2013, roughly 6 years ago. The founder of the hub was triggered by concerns of tech entrepreneurs to have a facility where they could conveniently use as co-working space and a hopefully enrol into accelerator programs which connect them to investors. *“The hub came out of desperation and passion. I was desperately in need of funding to do anything since I was not employed. Then the passion came when participants of the mobile app challenge told me that they needed a space to work, and platform to connect to investors. I ask, if Kenya and Nigeria are getting grants to support their entrepreneurs, why can’t Ghana do same?” – Sackey, Hub Founder.* Beyond this primary objective of starting the hub, the vision of the hub has grown to focus on *“building an ecosystem that supports tech entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship as*



*whole. Thus, an environment to promote the use of technology to solve social issues in education, health, and even corruption” – Sackey, Hub founder.* This vision has pushed the hub to focus more on capacity building in the areas of technology and entrepreneurship. The technology part of the training covers computer programming capacity building in areas such web development, mobile app application development, graphic design, video editing and animation, among others. The entrepreneurship training also involves product design, branding, marketing, and business development in general. Tenants also receive soft skills training in communications and management. The hub is “community driven”. It organizes programs based on what the community really wants. Recruitment into the hub happens in diverse ways. There is “pitch zone” which is a monthly program organized to allow people to pitch their business ideas. Winners of the pitch sign an agreement and are enrolled into the hub to further develop their business idea for launching and investment opportunities. Other hubs also refer people from their place to be enrolled in some of the training programs of AccraHub. Generally, individuals with business ideas and passion to work on them can go to be enrolled in some of the hub’s training programs.

### **Resources and Partners**

The hub’s operations are funded by external partners. At the moment, most the programs carried out by the hub are free so there are no internally generated funds. Locally, the hub has not been successful at getting partnership deals with some of the institutions in the country. *“Usually, the problem is that some of their terms come at the expense of the hub or these companies fail to deliver on their end of the bargain. For instance, Vodafone wanted the hub to paint its space in its colours and a company like Surfline did not supply the internet service they were supposed to. There are other who after learning about what you do, run off to start exactly what you wanted to do in collaboration with them”- Sackey, Hub Founder.* For the existing partners working with the

hub, their main expectations in line with the objectives of the training programs they are funding. They check the number of beneficiaries of the program, sometimes, specifics like number of female participation or number of participants who are physically challenged. In terms of human resources, the hub has its own mentors' network; a pool of skilled people. Some of the mentors are graduates from the hub's program.

### **Success Stories and Impact**

*“Success for us, is relative to the milestones that you set. For instance, if you say you want to provide a space for people to conveniently work, and you achieve that, it counts as success” – Sackey, Hub founder.* Over the past years, the hub's programs have produced or assisted some tech companies like: Farmerline, Soronko Solutions, Odikro, among others. *“the success about these ventures is that they are also creating jobs for others”- Sackey, Hub Founder.* The hub has done partnership programs with the government. It includes the National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program (NEIP) and a teacher training program sponsored by Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communication (GIFEC). *“Especially for the GIFEC program, if it continues, the impact will be great. Because we are training teachers to know computer programming so that they can teach their students at school. The rippling effect of teaching 8, 9, or 10 years old how to code, will not be realized now but it is great”-Sackey, Hub Founder.* Two Female tech-based ventures of the hub recently received an award as the best Female ICT start-up. The hub has received an award for a Smart City project undertaken by the hub. *“Generally, we try to maintain a great sense of community. The people who come here are not high-class people, they are those in the neighbourhood. Some of them sleep over, we feed some of them, at times, the hub pays for visa and tickets for them to attend international events” – Sackey, Hub Founder.*

*“my name is Vivian, an undergraduate from KNUST, I am here for a technology and business development training. This place is a good place. I have free accommodation because I come from Mankesim. I receive ₵30 from Monday to Thursday and ₵70 on Friday. That is for my feeding and transportation. My business idea is based on fixing nails because I have a passion for it and want ladies to have fun while keeping beautiful nails” – Vivian, Tenant.*

### **Challenges of hub**

The main challenge of the hub is human capital. It is difficult for the hub to find skilful people to fill various roles within the hub. This forces the hub to spend much of its resources in developing the people who come in to help run the operations of the hub. *“for instance, you have people applying for positions that they have no idea of what it entails. When they come, you invest in them and train them to become as you want them. Then just when they become good at what they do, others spot them and poach them from the hub”- Sackey.* Moreover, it is hard in finding skilled mentors and facilitators to coach businesses that are incubated in the hub. *“There are a lot of wolves in sheep clothing. Most of those who claim to be mentors are not skilled at what they do. On the flip side, there are those who can do the job well but because of their elitist attitude, they refuse to work with you. So the Hub is gradually putting together its own network of mentors.”- Sackey, Hub founder.*

### **Future of the Hub**

In the future, the hub looks at having a good feedback and tracking system to help it track the progress of all the ventures that go through the hub. *“one thing that we have not done well is being able to document and tell our success stories”.* Already, the hub has been able to extend some of its programs outside the Greater Accra Region; to places like Kumasi and Takoradi. However, in

the future, the hub would want to have spaces in other parts of Ghana, Africa, and Europe. “it is expensive to operate in Accra, so if we can have the same skills needed available in other regions, the hub will move there and neglect Accra... In Europe, there are African demographics who want to do entrepreneurship and need spaces like this” – Sackey, Hub Founder. Another future plan in terms of sustainability is to shy away from “charity” and sign contracts with ventures that go through the hub for them to pay remittances to the hub. “at the moment, most of them vanish after you have helped them to get funding. Some of them get between \$2000-\$5000 after the final pitch. They access free co-working space, internet access, among other free benefits. This module is not sustainable – Sackey, Hub Founder”

### **4.3. Data Discussion and Analysis**

#### **4.3.1. Discussion in Relation to the Seed-Scale Theory of Social Change**

The data presented shows that the general organization of these hubs, their engagement of the people within and outside their respective localities, and their partnerships with local and foreign institutions, fall in line with the seed-scale theory of social change. Essentially, the three basic principle which underpins the practice of seed-scale social theory of change have been satisfied based on the setup, operations, and partnerships of these hubs.

First, the principle that states that sustainable human development emanates from an independent understanding of the local needs and resources. All the hubs presented in this study were created as a result of the founder or founders recognizing particular problems within their respective communities. For instance, in the case of UpperHub, the founder, recognized the widespread poverty within the region and decided to start actions that will enable the youth to explore business opportunities out of the social challenges in their communities. Additionally, the founder of AccraHub also mentioned that he created the hub out of “desperation and passion” after he realized

the concerns of entrepreneurs about lack co-working spaces and facilitated platforms to connect to investors.

The next principle also states that actions to effect the needed social change or development takes place through a bottom-up and top-down collaboration. The data shows that beyond the Hub founders and Managers, members of the various communities have accepted and are committed to participating in the training programs of the hubs to be able to generate lucrative solutions to prevailing social challenges. These efforts by the members of the community fits the bottom-up contribution aspect of the seed-scale theory. Then to support these efforts coming from the communities, partners of the hubs, international institutions and the government, channel resources through the hubs to boost these efforts at causing development. Clearly, this fits a bottom-up and top-down collaborative effort at achieving the same goal – effecting positive social change. When the expertise provided by the mentors and facilitators of the hubs are attached to this collaborative effort, it perfectly fits the image illustration of the seed-scale theory showed in Chapter II.

The last principle says development in communities are sustainable only when there is community participation and self-reliance. At the moment, the hubs have been able to draw participation for community members and most of them are considering ways of sustaining themselves in the future. For instance, in the case AsanteHub, the hub has already engaged a consultant to help the hub create a survival plan after the grant support from the E.U. has ended. The founder also mentioned plans to scale-down immediately after the grand period ends, should the hub continue to operate. In his view, reducing the number of staffs, mentors, and focusing on specific training programs, will cut down cost of operations and may sustain the hub.

#### **4.3.2. Discussion based generated themes from data**

#### **4.3.2.1 The Hubs are Operating as CSOs**

From the objectives and operations of the hubs, they fall in line with what Abdulai and Quartson (2009) described to be CSOs. Aside, the AsantiHub, all the other hubs are initiatives of private individuals or group of people who decided to voluntarily amass resources and use them prudently to effect good in their respective societies. For instance, Sackey, the AccraHub Owner answered that the hub came about out of personal “desperation and passion”. Even with the AsanteHub, regardless of having the involvement of the local government Assembly, it is still operated and controlled under provisions and supervision. From the data provided, SOS (Ghana and Netherland) play the main management role while the local assembly serve as close collaborators.

#### **4.3.2.2. The Hubs’ Activities are centered on Social Impact**

The activities of the hubs and the results that they are yielding fits perfectly with how social impact has been explained so far. In this study, social impact has been defined as the positive outcomes of implementations of the MDGs and SDGs. Talylor-Ide and Taylor (1995) also went deeper to explain social impact as results which “give priority to the poor, enlarging their choices and opportunities, and provides for their participation in decisions affecting them”. They further listed the poor people in the society, children, women, nature, and even democracy as direct objects affected with such positive changes. From summaries provided, hub activities in education, poverty alleviation, promoting technology among females, youth empowerment, solar-based innovations, among others, are implementations of the global development goals (MDGs & SDGs) in their respective communities. Below is a table that summarises some of the activities and achievement of the hubs, and the specific global goal it maps to.

<b>Hub</b>	<b>Activity/Achievement</b>	<b>Corresponding MDG</b>	<b>Corresponding SDG</b>
UpperHub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Helped tenant to start a construction company that employs 5 fulltime workers and 60 contract workers</li> </ul>	Goal #1: eradicating poverty by providing gainful employment	Goal #8: creating good jobs and economic growth.
AhafoHub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Produced a social enterprise provides remedial classes for basic school children in poor mining communities</li> <li>- Aided the local assembly to secure grant to supply potable water to some communities</li> <li>- Assisting KNUST to launch new Master’s Degree in Philanthropy</li> </ul>	Goal #2: the remedial classes for deprived basic school supports the achievement of universal basic education	Goal #4: the remedial classes supports quality education. Goal #6: aiding the assembly to secure grant for potable water supply supports the goal for clean water and sanitation. Goal #17: collaborations with the University to start a mainstream course is in line with partnership to achieve the goals
WesternHub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promoting tech and entrepreneurship among college students and encourage social innovations among them.</li> </ul>	Goal #3: encouraging female participation in technology is form of women empowerment, at least in technology	Goal #4: promoting tech and entrepreneurship among kids and college students is in line with ensuring quality education Goal #5: encouraging female participation in

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tech training for kids and females</li> <li>- Providing business development support for a small-scale crafts venture</li> </ul>		<p>technology is a way of ensuring gender equality in the area of technology</p> <p>Goal #8: the business development supports having good jobs and economic growth</p>
AsanteHub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing training for some tenants to start businesses like rabbit rearing, landscape venture, etc. while others also get employment</li> <li>- Maintaining a higher quota for female participation in hub programs</li> </ul>	<p>Goal #1: eradicating poverty by aiding tenants to create or find jobs</p> <p>Goal #3: having a quota for female participation supports women empowerment, especially, economically.</p>	<p>Goal #8: creating good jobs and economic growth</p> <p>Goal #5: encouraging women participation is in line with gender equality</p>
AccraHub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Winning award for smart city project</li> <li>- Providing free accommodation, feeding, laptops to some of its tenants during capacity building in technology and entrepreneurship</li> <li>- Female team from hub</li> </ul>	<p>Goal #3: encouraging female participation in technology is form of women empowerment, at least in technology</p>	<p>Goal #5: supporting females to create ICT start-up is in line with achieving gender equality, specifically, women economic empowerment</p> <p>Goal #11: carrying out smart city project is in line with building sustainable cities and communities</p>



	<p>winning best female ICT start-up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assisting firms like Farmerline, Odikro etc. by connecting them to investors</li> </ul>		<p>Goal #17: assisting firms and linking them with investors is in line with promoting partnerships for the goals</p>
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**4.3.2.3. Financial Resource is the Foremost Needed Resource to Sustain and Expand Operations of Hubs**

All the hubs placed much priority on the fundamental role of money in the daily operations of the hub. For example, the UpperHub, being the only hub operating fully on internally generated funds, makes money from seminars, and entry fees paid by tenants who want to enrol in personalized trainings. The founder also indicated that this module, however, limits the immediate extension of the hub’s interventions to many people who cannot afford the entry fees. For the AhafoHub, aside grants from international partners, the hub also rents out its hub space and gather contributions from beneficiary business ventures to run the hub. AccraHub, however, pointed human capital as the most important resource. The Hub Founder explained that due to the less availability of skilful people run man the operation of the hub, his hub ends up investing its resources, including money, to build the competencies of its human resources.

**4.3.2.4. Location of the Hub has an Impact on the Hub**

Social, cultural, and infrastructural developments of the location of a hub can affect the hub in a number of ways. For instance, in the case of the AsanteHub, due to the issue of early marriages and low participation of females in higher education, affected the ability of the hub to achieve its 60% quota for female participation in its gamma group. In the case of AccraHub, although operational cost of being in Accra is far above operating in other regions, it will be difficult for the

hub to easier access to skilled human capital to man the operations of the hub. Eventually, the hub would have to spend more resources and training hired workers to fit specifications of the hub if it moves to other regions. This is quite similar to the situation faced by the AhafoHub which suffers adversely from the low infrastructural development within Kenyasi and its surrounding communities. The Hub Manager indicated that some hired workers refused to work for the hub because of the infrastructural deficit of the area. A rather surprising notice based on the locations of these hubs is that the UpperHub in the Upper Eastern Region of Ghana is able to run a fee-paying entry system and hubs in Accra and Takoradi, relatively more developed areas, are running free-entry systems.

#### **4.3.2.5. There are Future Plans for Expanding Operations**

Concerning the future of these hubs, data collected shows that there are clear intentions to grow the activities of the hubs to cover more places, more people or more programs. For instance, the AhafoHub have collaborated with UENR in Sunyani to establish a new branch of the hub to serve the people closer to the Sunyani and its environs. Beyond this, the hub has also secured a land and hopes to raise enough funds to build its own larger space. The founder of AccraHub also mentioned the hope to have branches of the hub in other places in Ghana, Africa and even Europe. In terms of programs, the UpperHub, also hopes to inculcate ICT training into its training programs. The WesternHub also plans to have dedicated computer programming training for kids. The only hub with an uncertain future is the AsanteHub which is fully funded by a grant from E.U. and also completely managed by external organizations who would determine if the hub stays or folds after the grant period.

On a whole, the summary of these discussions is that at least, based on the data gathered from these sample hubs, it is true that the hubs in Ghana are actively involved in implementing some of

the SDGs in the country. Furthermore, their activities are producing beneficial outcomes currently, and with the possibilities of growth, innovation and expansion, these benefits could grow also.

## CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

### 5.0. Briefing

The objective of this research is to study about the operations of the business and technology hubs and incubators in Ghana in relation the “Ghana Beyond Aid” agenda rolled out by the government of Ghana. Specifically, to understand how these hubs operate in order to answer the research question:

*Is there a way for technology and business hubs in Ghana to reorient themselves to continue to source resources to still push social impact through SDG related implementations, during “Ghana Beyond Aid”?*

Borrowing from Burdge & Vanclay (1996) and Taylor-Ide & Taylor (1995), a generic definition for social impact was formed to fit this study. This study defined social impact as the positive outcomes of implementations of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Based on this definition of social impact, the study looked at the event of MDGs and SDGs in Ghana and its relations with foreign aid inflow to the country. Secondary data confirmed that the commitment of both government and civil society organization, to advance the implementation of MDGs and SDGs in Ghana, triggered incremental flow of foreign aid in the form of funding support, into the country.

Narrowing down on civil society organizations, the study focused on technology and business hubs and Incubators in the Ghana. Generally, the emergence of these organizations in Ghana is due to the sudden drift towards the merging of the typical profit orientation of businesses and social

impact – social entrepreneurship. The data collected on sampled hubs for 5 regions in Ghana showed among other insights, the following:

- The operations of technology and business hubs in Ghana are mostly directly related to specific MDGs or SDGs
- Their works harness grassroots support members belong to both immediate and distant locations of the hub to carry out the implementation of these MDGs and SDGs
- Some of the hubs relied solely on grants from international donor agencies to run their operations.
- Other hubs combined grants from international organizations and internally generated funds to run the operations of hub
- There existed a hub which solely run on internally generated funds.
- The hubs are opened to innovations which will keep them sustainable over time. This also speaks to the hopes of future expansion of hubs.

### **5.1. Conclusion**

From the above insights derived, the resulting answer to the question is that hubs can still push social impact in Ghana even after foreign aid has stopped flowing into the county. And the following as some of the possible ways of the hubs can ensure that

- Developing better tracking and documentation system to record past progress the hubs have made in implementing the specific SDGs. This will enhance the credibility of hubs to attract resources sources which are solely dedicated to promoting the SDGs without necessarily looking at the Ghana's leap from aid to trade.
- Hubs should focus on internally generated funds as a source funding support for their activities. They can revise their entry processes to accept payments from tenants who can

afford. This means, even if grants are still coming in, it will be channeled to a larger number of people who cannot afford rather than distributing it among both those who can and cannot afford. Aside the entry process, the other hubs can implement the “forward fund” initiative of the AhafoHub to generate funds on their own. The forward fund allows ventures who have succeeded through their direct or indirect association with the hub, to pay contributions to support the hub. In connection to the first recommendation, a proper record and tracking of these beneficiaries, could facilitated an easy and wider collection of these contribution.

## **5.2. Recommendation for Further Research**

Based on the outcomes of this study, below are some areas that other research works can be directed to for the sake of deepening the understanding of the operations of hubs, their sustainability, impact.

- Further research can be conducted into how the location of hubs in relation to their style of operation and level of sustainability
- Researchers can look deeper into the possibilities of hubs becoming fully independent of grants and rely on internally generated funds.

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## Appendix

### Interview Guide for Founders/Hub Managers

#### Personal Details

- Full name:
- Contact Information (email and phone)
- Role (e.g. Hub Founder, Employee)
- More on Founder's Background (education & profession)

#### Hub Information

- The founding of the hub (what was the trigger?)
- The objectives/goals/visions of the hub and overview of the early efforts (challenges and triumphs)
- Philosophy and approach – how they fit together to define the hub/incubation program

#### Recruitment Process

- The start-up entrepreneur discovery process – how do you identify your startups and what processes do you go through to get to the specific ones you engage with. Name some factors used to pick them.

#### Training Process

- In-house start-up entrepreneur engagement process. How do you help them develop their hub identity? How often do they come in etc. Do you pay them? They pay you?
- Training. The approach to training, focus areas, emphasis, boundaries, perceived and realized effects. Peculiar observations. E.g. how do you train start-up entrepreneurs differently?

#### Outside Relations

- The effects of the organizational relationship between your funders and you. What are the rules of engagement? What do your funders want from you?
- Support network and resource mobilization: Mentors, partners, vendors and others. E.g. how do you engage them? what do they expect? What do they receive?
- The facility (space, place) – how does it or doesn't plug into other ecosystems? What programs is the hub involved in in the eco-system?

#### Beyond Training

- Graduation – What happens to graduating ventures? What is the evaluation process? What happens to the ventures that do not succeed? What do alumni programs look like?

- How is your model different from that of other hubs: you provide equity, loans, grants, none.  
Who is your closest comparison in Ghana, West Africa?

### **Achievements**

- What achievements respond to goals and objectives?
- What are some of the areas of achievements for graduates from your space?
- Sample success stories of graduates from your space?

### **Sustainability Module**

- In terms of sustainability, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current model you run (organizational, training etc)?
- Given the goals/vision for the hub and the changing socio-economic environment, what will be is the ideal state of the hub in 5 years, 10 years? What will you want to be doing then or become?
- What socio-technical issues confront management in terms of innovation of your business model? E.g. is it easy or difficult to attract recent grads?
- In what ways can the business model be innovated? E.g. alternative funding models? Other income streams?
- What areas of the model will need to be updated/changed for sustainable deployment?
- What are the costs of innovating the business model? e.g. completely changing what you do
- Your answer

### **Scaling up**

- what are the scale goals and why are they important ? e.g year 1 for optimization, year 2 for growth and year 3 for scale. How big a scale?
- What are the scale-up options with the current model? Growth at one location, growth in multiple locations, growth in virtual presence given the number of national/regional/international applicants?
- What are the advantages of keeping the current model or an innovated version of the model? Will growth in one location enrich the current eco-system? Will growth in multiple locations present strengths in distributed eco-systems?
- What about growth in virtual presence? How will that impact the current model? What role will it play in a growth model?
- What are the challenges with each option considering the current model or an innovated version of the model? E.g. For multiple locations, will the costs of local familiarization mean a different models for different locations ?

### **Final comments**

- Any information you deem useful to the research.

### **Interview Guide for Hub Tenants or Entrepreneurs**

#### **Background**

- Full Name
- Contact Information (email and phone)
- Relations with hub
- Education and Professional Background

#### **Venture Information**

- The founding of the venture (what was the trigger?)
- The objectives/goals/visions of the business and overview of the early efforts (challenges and triumphs)

#### **Relationship & Training with hub**

- Hub philosophy and approach – How will you describe the hub? Why did you decide to join?
- The start-up entrepreneur discovery process – Describe the process of joining the hub. What was great and not so great?
- Start-up entrepreneur engagement process. What is your relationship with the Hub? How often do you go there?. Do you pay them? They pay you?
- Training. The approach to training, focus areas, emphasis, boundaries, perceived and realized effects. Peculiar observations. E.g. how do you see the training? How is it different from training in other hubs?

#### **Evaluations After Training**

- Graduation – What happens when you graduate from the hub? What is the evaluation process? What happens if you dont meet the graduation expectation? Are there alumni programs?

#### **After Training Support**

- What do you need to get more support beyond the training (e.g.grow user base, get supplier contracts etc)
- Support network and resource mobilization: Mentors, partners, vendors and others. E.g. how do you engage them? what milestones do they expect from you in order to provide support? (e.g. At least one supplier contract).
- The facility (space, place) – how well plugged are you into other ecosystems? What programs do you participate in in the eco-system?

### **Experiences with other hubs**

- Compare this hub to others: do they provide more or less equity, loans, grants. Who is your hub's closest comparison in Ghana, West Africa?

### **Achievements**

- What achievements have you realized yet? Which responded to goals and objectives?
- What are some of the areas of achievements for most graduates from the hub?
- Can you provide an example of one of the achievements from one of the graduates other than you?

### **Sustainability and Scaling up of Venture**

- In terms of sustainability, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current model you run (e.g. mobile health care etc.)?
- Given the goals/vision for your business and the changing socio-economic environment, what in your view, will be the ideal state of your business in 5 years, 10 years?
- What socio-technical issues confront you in terms of innovation of your business model? E.g. is it easy or difficult to attract recent grads or sign supplier contracts?
- In what ways can the business model be innovated? E.g. alternative funding models? Other income streams?
- What areas of your model will need to be updated/changed for sustainable deployment?
- What challenges do you face in sustaining your business?
- Which challenges are surmountable and which ones are not?
- What will be the 2 or 3 key factors that determine whether you will grow or not?
- After sustaining your model, what are your scaling goals and why are they important? e.g. no scaling considerations yet, year 1 for optimization, year 2 for growth and year 3 for scale. How big a scale?
- Where will you likely get the funding to support your scaling option if was possible?

### **Final Comments**

- Any words that will be good for the research?