

Pilot 2019: Start-up financing Global South - Project report

How can young people in Ghana be supported in their search for educational opportunities and work? The MedAASE project

- **Department at the TU Berlin:** Cognitive Psychology and Cognitive Ergonomics
- **Partner country:** Ghana
- **Partner institution:** Asedaye N.G.O.
- **Priority Addressed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):**



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SDG 1: No poverty

SDG 4: Quality education

SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

School education is one of the first steps towards an independent and successful life. The project "Media Assistance of Ghanaian Adolescents Searching for Education and Work (MedAASE)" aims to show how young Ghanaians can be supported on their way to a successful future through digital media. It also explores how small businesses can benefit from digital tools. MedAASE is a cooperation between the Department of Cognitive Psychology and Cognitive Ergonomics at TU Berlin and Asedaye N.G.O. in Dormaa Anhenkro, Ghana.

In order to be able to develop the project idea for a third-party funding application, it was first necessary to meet potential partners in Ghana and to collect some data. For this purpose, the start-up funding of the TU Berlin for cooperations with partners in the Global South was used. Specifically, it enabled a two-week research stay at the Ghanaian Asedaye N.G.O. to investigate the conditions in the local education and business sector.

Various data collection methods were used during the visit, including a survey of students, graduates and trainees. A specially designed questionnaire was used to record how the respondents

The interviews were also conducted with employees of the Asedaye N.G.O. and official representatives of the education sector, such as the Municipal Director of Education of the Dorma Municipal District. In addition, numerous interviews were conducted with employees of the Asedaye N.G.O., official representatives of the education system, such as the Municipal Director of Education of the Dorma Municipal District, and company founders.

Initial results of the survey and focus groups show that Ghanaian students (junior high school - JHS, and senior high school - SHS) already have clear ideas about their professional future. However, clear plans of young students (JHS) blur as they get older. It seems that they lack the relevant information needed to achieve their goals. The interviews with the official representatives of the education system show that there are sensible ideas and regulations on the topic of career guidance, but the resources to implement them are lacking. It is also clear from the interviews with the students that digital media, especially social communication tools such as WhatsApp, can give them access to career-related information. Older students (SHS) and trainees also see their teachers as an important source of information. Friends and relatives, on the other hand, do not play a significant role in career issues. It is also evident that educational opportunities vary greatly between rural and urban areas.

Future and current young business owners reported that although they had innovative ideas for promising growth businesses such as local transportation or sewing workshops, they lacked the necessary start-up funding. Anecdotal evidence suggests that they also lack knowledge of business management processes and principles to successfully run a business.

The results of the project show that support for young people should start at the beginning of school education (JHS). Knowledge should be imparted about the prerequisites and career opportunities of extracurricular education, for example, with regard to training in a skilled trade, going to university or starting their own business. Digital media could support and improve the educational path of young people. A knowledge platform and a job exchange that provide vacancies, necessary qualifications and contact addresses are conceivable. In addition, any form of career guidance service (analog or digital) would help people find employment. Barriers to the introduction of a digital support service are the lack of necessary technical devices, such as smartphones and computers, among students, graduates and trainees, as well as the unstable power supply on site.