Entrepreneurship training in Ghana
How to enhance the value of the training?
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Publication date:
2017

Citation for published version (APA):
Schmidt, L. K. P. (2017). Entrepreneurship training in Ghana: How to enhance the value of the training?
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How to enhance the value of the training?

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VIA University College
August 2017
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Preface

This report is the outcome of a research project about entrepreneurship education undertaken over the last two years. The project is part of the Research and Development Programme in entrepreneurship education at VIA University College (VIA UC). The research focus on entrepreneurship training in the Northern Ghana. Searching for ways to enhance the value of this kind of training.

The research is conducted in a collaboration between VIA UC and Ghana Venskab, a Danish NGO, collaborating with local Ghanaian NGO; Youth Empowerment for Life(YEfL) on youth entrepreneurship training in Northern Ghana.

Acknowledgements

A special thanks to Lise Grauenkær from Ghana Venskab who got the idea in the first place to collaborate on this project. It has been great to collaborate with Lise during the whole process. I would also like to thank the staff at YEfL and GDCA for being supportive to me during my three visits in Ghana. Special thanks should also be said to the local facilitators at the district teams in Karaga, Mion and Saboba. You all welcomed me warmly and you quickly understood the new way of thinking about entrepreneurship. Finally yet importantly, I would like to thank Anne Kirketerp, for encouraging me, and having confidence in me, to undertake this project.
Abstract

Due to the very high youth unemployment in Northern Ghana, there is a huge need for enterprising skills among young people. A natural focus in recent years has therefore been entrepreneurship training, focusing on training young Ghanaians to start-up businesses. Unfortunately, the young people seem to be meeting many constraints in their effort to build up sustainable businesses. The purpose of this paper is to address these constraints and search for ways to support the young entrepreneurs in turning the constraints into opportunities.

The hypothesis of this research project is that adding a focus on the young entrepreneur’s means, attitude and enterprising behaviour skills to the existing focus on starting up businesses, will increase the value of the Entrepreneurship training and support the overcoming of constraints.

The paper build on a design-based research project in collaboration with the local NGO YEfL. Based on relevant theory, a qualitative field research in Northern Ghana and a quantitative baseline survey a new Entrepreneurship Model has been designed. The new model was tested in autumn 2016 at three Entrepreneurship boot camps in Northern Ghana.

The study has revealed the five most crucial constraints, being barriers for young entrepreneurs in Northern Ghana. These constraints are; lack of start-up capital, a waiting attitude, culture and traditions not supportive, inadequate education system and a low trust level.

In conclusion, this research is able to add value to entrepreneurship training in Ghana by putting new focus on the training and shedding light on the crucial constraints. It is clear that effectual logic has much to offer when training entrepreneurship. Having to create a business plan in the first place might be an overwhelming task, not supporting the entrepreneurs to take actions. Seen in that light, it is valuable to make the young entrepreneurs start by taking small manageable steps and feel the success from each managed step.
Introduction with problem statement

Africa is currently the youngest continent on the globe, with a rapidly growing young population. The formal sector is unable to meet the employment demand of this growing young population (Kew, 2015). Entrepreneurship is widely considered to be an important mechanism for economic development. According to the latest Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report, Africa is the region reporting the most positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship (GEM, 2017). Given the global youth unemployment challenge, entrepreneurship is applied in the hope of equipping people with skills of starting and managing their own business (Schøtt, et al., 2015). Ghana too is challenged by huge youth unemployment. In order to reduce youth unemployment in Northern Ghana, YEfL has developed an entrepreneurship manual, piloted at entrepreneurship training boot camps in 2014. However, YEfL has not been satisfied with training outcomes because too few trained entrepreneurs succeeded in building sustainable businesses.

The aim of this study is to increase the value of the existing entrepreneurship training. Firstly, the study is trying to identify crucial constraints in relation to the young entrepreneurs’ long-term success. Secondly, the present study explores ways of supporting the young entrepreneurs to overcome these constraints. The aim is to create a new entrepreneurship model and manual, that can be practically useful at future YEfL boot camps and serve as an inspiration for other actors in their quest to reduce youth unemployment in Ghana or other countries. Finally the new model and manual is being tested in actual practice, in order to make improvements and document the effect of the training.

The research question of this study is:

How can YEfL verbalize and incorporate crucial constraints in the entrepreneurship boot camp model in a way that supports the participants in turning the constraints into opportunities?
State of the art

YEfL is one of many NGO’s working with entrepreneurship training in Northern Ghana. YEfL is a non-profit, non-governmental organization whose vision is to transform youth leading change. The organization operates in the Northern Region of Ghana and its’ thematic areas of intervention are youth empowerment and youth employment. YEfL has developed a Youth Entrepreneurship Boot Camp Model, piloted in 2014.

YEfL operates in the north of Ghana, with head office located in Tamale, the capital city of Northern Region. YEfL has district teams located at local Youth Centers in five different districts in the Northern Region. The district teams has field facilitators, who know the local youth and interact with them on a regular basis.

Data from AFROBAROMETER shows that living conditions in Ghana in general are quite bad. 73.9% of respondents answer very bad or fairly bad when asked about their present living conditions (Afrobarometer, 2015). In the Northern Region, this number is 59.9%, which shows that the Northern Region has slightly better living conditions according to this survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province or Region</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>Very Bad</th>
<th>Fairly Bad</th>
<th>Neither good not bad</th>
<th>Fairly good</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Missing</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GHA: Western</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHA: Central</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHA: Greater Accra</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHA: Volta</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHA: Eastern</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHA: Ashanti</td>
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<td>55.8</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHA: Brong Ahafo</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHA: Northeim</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHA: Upper East</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>GHA: Upper West</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>2400</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: data on living conditions (Afrobarometer, 2015).

When it comes to employment, about half of the respondent have a full time employment on national basis, as shown in figure 2
When studying the Northern Region, it shows that only 27.4% has full time employment, indicating that the unemployment issue is bigger in the north of Ghana (Afrobarometer, 2015).

The existing entrepreneurship training in YEfL

Since 2010 YEfL has initiated interventions in the areas of youth mobilization and offering opportunities for youth in Northern Region to develop their entrepreneurial talents. One of such interventions has been the Youth Entrepreneurship Boot Camp Model that YEfL piloted in 2014. In 2014 YEfL trained 70 young people from Tamale, Sevelugu and Kumbungu districts. YEfL aim for the participant to be 50% male and 50% female.

To promote the culture of savings the young entrepreneurial groups are introduced to the concept of the Village Saving and Loans Association (VSLA). A VSLA is a group of people who save together and take small loans from those savings. The activities of the group run in a certain period after which the accumulated savings and the loan profits are distributed back to the members. The purpose of a VSLA is to provide simple savings and loan facilities in a community that does not have easy access to formal financial services (VSL Associates, 2017).

The existing boot camp model included six modules.

1. Idea and opportunity: idea generation/opportunity recognition, mastermind groups, mentorship
2. Being an entrepreneur: what/who is an entrepreneur? The traits of an entrepreneur
3. Establishing a business: smart tips on starting a business/business plan, selecting your type of business, legal structure of a business
4. Branding your business: the young entrepreneur and branding, social networking as a young entrepreneur
5. Financial and record management: start-up cost, record keeping
6. Writing your business plan: business plan for start-up business, making your own business plan
The results of the first pilot boot camp was that 50 out of 70 participants wrote and presented their business plans to YEfL. Some of the business ideas however, was somehow quite unrealistic. As an example, a young entrepreneur wanted to start up an internet café without having any access to a computer, a location or a building for the café.

**About entrepreneurship in Ghana**

It is obvious that entrepreneurship is a well-known concept in Ghana, also among young people in the rural areas of Northern Ghana.

A Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) survey among Ghanaians in 2012, revealed a high level of youth entrepreneurship (Herrington & Kelley, 2012). When GEM speaks about entrepreneurship, they count people operating their own business.

GEM operates with the concept of the entrepreneurial pipeline, as shown in figure 3.

![Figure 3: The entrepreneurial Pipeline (Herrington & Kelley, 2012, p. 20)](source)

According to the pipeline GEM measure potential entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial intentions and TEA (Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity) in countries all over the world.

The GEM study in Ghana shows that 84% of Ghanaians regard going into business as a good career choice and 91% accord a high status to successful entrepreneurs (Herrington & Kelley, 2012). GEM define potential entrepreneurs this way: “Potential entrepreneurs believe that in the next six months there will be good opportunities for starting a business in the area where they live and that they have the knowledge, skills and experience to start a new business”. The survey revealed that 79% of Ghanaians have perceived opportunities, 86% perceived capabilities and only 18% have fear of failure as shown in figure 4 (Herrington & Kelley, 2012).
Entrepreneurial intentions are an important step in the pipeline. Here GEM counts the individuals who are planning to start a new business alone or with others within the next three years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key indicator</th>
<th>GHANA</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Opportunities</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Capabilities</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of Failure</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial Intention</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEA</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4: Key indicators (Herrington & Kelley, 2012)*

Entrepreneurship in Ghana primarily takes the form of self-employment, rather than job creation and the expectation from the entrepreneurs to create jobs is relatively low in Ghana. However Ghana is one of few countries, compared to the rest of Africa and also the whole world, having more female new entrepreneurs (38%) than males (35%) (Herrington & Kelley, 2012).

The overall conclusion of the GEM report on entrepreneurship in Ghana is that Ghana has a large supply of potential entrepreneurs. Ghana has many start-up efforts as well as long term sustainable businesses. Entrepreneurs tend to be younger with quite low education levels. Innovation level is quite low, with 86% stating that none of their customers consider their products and services to be new. Ghana has the highest level of entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector (Herrington & Kelley, 2012).
Relevant studies

In recent years there has been an increasing amount of research about entrepreneurship in Africa. A major part of these studies about entrepreneurship in Ghana deal with female entrepreneurship or SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) (McDade & Spring, 2005).

When it comes to motivation, entrepreneurs are often divided into two categories: necessity driven or opportunity driven entrepreneurs. However, research find that reasons underpinning young people’s decisions to start business are quite complex (Langevang, et al., 2012). Research undertaken in Uganda, find that entrepreneurship motivations and aspirations in the Ugandan context are socially embedded and inextricably interwoven with the socio-economic environment, social networks, family circumstances and life events (Langevang, et al., 2012). This research suggest, “that the key to supporting entrepreneurs is to recognise their diversity and dynamism and to understand how their motivations, aspirations and actions are embedded in social contexts” (Langevang, et al., 2012).

There are other studies searching for the biggest constraints for entrepreneurs. However these studies does not give many suggestions how to overcome these constraints. One example of a study about constraints entrepreneurs face in Ghana is a study that took place in the central Region of Ghana. The findings of this study reveal that youths perceive lack of capital, lack of skill, lack of support, lack of market opportunities and risk as the main obstacles to entrepreneurial intention. The recommendation in this study is to equip Ghanaian youths with entrepreneurial skills (Boateng, et al., 2014).
Research design

Definition of entrepreneurship

The focal point of this research project is entrepreneurship education. This research use the definition of entrepreneurship as being a social process, based on the individual’s own opportunities where ideas are discovered, created and exploited to create value for others. It is a particular way of acting and a method that can be learned (Sarasvathy, 2008) (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

A distinction can be made between three different forms of entrepreneurship education:
1. Learning to become an enterprising individual
2. Learning to become an entrepreneur
3. Learning about academic entrepreneurship
(Fayolle & Gailly, 2008, p. 581)

This project focuses mainly on point 1, training to become an enterprising individual. Enterprising behaviour is defined as a competence to perform a changing action of positive value to others (Kirketerp, 2000). You can look at enterprising behaviour as an attitude to life and it is essential for a good life. With this focus, the work with the young Ghanaians can have a broader impact on their lives, as it is not only focusing on starting up a business, but also focusing on attitude and how actions can improve conditions of life in general.

The focus of the existing YEfL entrepreneurship training is mainly point 2, leaning to become an entrepreneur and starting up businesses. It is a main hypothesis in this research, that the work of YEfL can benefit from also focusing on how to become enterprising individuals.
This study distinguishes between creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship as shown in figure 5.

![Diagram of Creativity, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship](image)

*Figure 5: definition of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship (own figure)*

The figure shows that building on opportunities is an essential part of entrepreneurship, which is why finding opportunities, is a major part of this study.

**Theory**

A main theory in this research study is the effectuation theory by Sara Sarasvathy (2008), which is an acknowledged theory in the field of entrepreneurship. According to Sarasvathy, expert entrepreneurs believe that people shape the future. They believe that if they can make the future happen, they don’t need to worry about predicting the future. This is what Sarasvathy calls “effectual logic”, which is opposed to “causal logic”, where people try to predict the future to get a feeling of control (Sarasvathy, 2008). According to Sarasvathy (2008), expert entrepreneurs use techniques that minimize the use of prediction and allow them to shape the future.

This study relies on five principles, making up the effectual logic. These principles are, firstly, the *Bird in Hand Principle*, where entrepreneurs start with their means and don’t wait for the perfect opportunity. Secondly, according to the *Affordable Loss Principle*, entrepreneurs evaluate opportunities based on whether the downside is acceptable. Thirdly, using the *Lemonade Principle*, entrepreneurs embrace surprises that arise from uncertain situations. Fourthly, the *Crazy-Quilt Principle* suggests that entrepreneurs form partnerships with people with different means. Finally, using the *Pilot-in-the-plane Principle*, entrepreneurs focus on activities within their control (Sarasvathy, 2008).
In order to focus on enterprising behaviour, the study brings in theory about enterprising behaviour, meaning “a person’s ability to convert thoughts into change-provoking actions of value to others” (Kirketerp, 2010).

According to Kirketerp (2010), enterprising behaviour can be seen as an attitude to life and as essential for a good life, which is why this focus has great value to the present study. Kirketerp (2010) argues that it is not enough to get people to see opportunities; we should also create the will and confidence to act on them. It is well known that long-term goals can kill many initiatives, which was also some of the problems with the existing training. If you focus only on the long-term goals, you can easily fail. However, focusing on small steps allows us to call all minor achievements a success. In that way, long-term goals are achieved in small, manageable steps.

Kirketerp (2010, p. 7) argues that “all processes are best conquered in small bites”. Along the way, we solve problems that seem impossible to begin with. We learn from the process, get a better perspective and see how things relate. In that way, in any process it is just a matter of getting started.

It is the hypothesis of this study that focusing on enterprising behaviour can support the entrepreneurs in the process when going from intentions to realizing the idea and get to the TEA stage, as shown in the entrepreneurial pipeline on p. 6.

To start focusing on how the entrepreneurs can create, deliver and capture value, I introduce the visual framework; Business Model Canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2009). This model is a simple, relevant and intuitively understandable model, which has been applied and tested in many organizations around the world. The model consists of nine basic building blocks that reflect the logic of how a company intends to make money. Three of the blocks; value propositions, customer segments and key activities, are built into the one-week boot, whereas the rest are built into follow-up training after the boot camp.

**Design Based Research**

The research design is based on the ELYK innovation model, shown in figure 6. This model is based on the Design Based Research (DBR) tradition (Christensen, et al., 2012). Central to the design Based Research tradition is focus on the understanding of real-world practice, with context being a core part of the research. The aim is to understand and innovate practice and to create pragmatic and application-specific research. With this approach, we intervene in practice in order to improve practice. Practitioners are seen as valuable partners in the whole process, both when identifying research questions, designing new models as well as when testing and evaluating suggested new
designs. This means that YEfL, the district teams and the local field facilitators has been very much involved in the whole process.

Figure 6: ELYK innovation model (Christensen, et al., 2012, p. 11)

In the following the research design is unfolded, going through the four different stages.

**Stage 1**

The initial stage is to gather knowledge about the context. First step was therefore a two week field trip to the north of Ghana in June 2015, exploring the new context. Primary data was collected through a number of interviews during the field visit.

Interviews with
- YEfL staff.
- YEfL Manager.
- three young people trained by YEfL (Boot camp in 2014)
- One young woman trained by NORSAAC
- Two other NGOs working with entrepreneurship in Northern Ghana (NORSAAC and Afrilead).
- young successful entrepreneur in Tamale, also facilitating at YEfL boot camps. (HopIn)
- lecturer Mikhail Abdul-Azeez in entrepreneurship training at Tamale Polytechnic.
- assistant lecturer at University of Professional Studies in Accra, Robert Lawrence Afutu-Kotey

These interviews followed a semi-structured question frame, mainly asking about the opportunities and constraints of youth entrepreneurs in Ghana.
In addition to the above mentioned interviews, four focus group interviews was also conducted with youth groups in Karaga, Pong, Kumbungu and Sang districts, asking the young people about their opportunities and constraints in relation to entrepreneurship. Furthermore, a workshop was held with YEfL staff on identifying constraints and opportunities for young entrepreneurs in the northern Ghana.

The outcome of the field research together with the study of contextual and relevant theory is a better understanding of the context and a list of five crucial constraints as mentioned already.

An extensive baseline survey was completed, in order to gather knowledge about the participants. Useful knowledge when designing the new model and boot camp manual. The survey include personal and educational information as well as information about personal income. In addition, the survey ask the participants to take a stand on a number of statements about entrepreneurship in order to get knowledge about their attitude and motivation. The baseline questionnaire included many multiple choice questions with rated responses using Likert scales. It also had a few open ended questions mainly asking about constraints and opportunities.

The baseline survey also served as basis for comparison with training assessment data collected after the boot camp, in order to document a given effect of the new model. The questionnaire was designed in Denmark by the researcher. The field facilitator at the local district teams carried out the collection of these baseline data.

It is also at this stage the research question is produced, when being able to identify the main problem.

Stage 2
At the second stage the new entrepreneurship model is designed on the basis of the knowledge gathered in the previous stage. This means that the new model incorporates knowledge about the five crucial constraints, the relevant theory mentioned before as well as comply with the existing model.

Along with the new model, a new manual with suggested exercises was also produced. The aim with this manual is to make a user-friendly training manual supporting facilitators working with entrepreneurship at organisations or institutions. The manual explain the basic theory and the entrepreneurship model. The model consists of 11 modules: Modules 1-8 are designed to be carried out in a boot camp training, whereas module 9-11 is designed to take place in a follow up training
after the boot camp. The manual suggest several exercises for each module, explaining objectives and descriptions of each exercise.

For further information about the manual, see http://www.yeef-gh.com/youth-entrepreneurship (Schmidt & Grauenkær, 2017).

**Stage 3**

In stage three, the new model and manual were tested in the local setting in August 2016. Firstly, there was a one-week training session with local facilitators. The new model was tested in a co-creation process where the local facilitators went through the training themselves. Secondly, during the one-week boot camp with 25 young participants from Mion District, the local facilitators were facilitating the process, and as researcher, I was observing and facilitating the local facilitators. Thirdly, in step three, the local facilitators conducted another two boot camps, one in Saboba district and another in Karaga district, using the new model. The research built on these three boot camps with young participants from three different local communities in Northern Ghana. Altogether 66 participants joined the boot camps.

The Field facilitators in the district teams were responsible for selecting the participants for boot camps based on their knowledge of the youth and given criteria:

*Selection criteria:*
1) 25 participants in each district
2) Geographic proximity (the participants need to be able to meet weekly for the VSLA)
3) Individuals who have a:
   - Existing passion or interest for entrepreneurship
   - Drive and curiosity
   - Natural ‘thirst for knowledge’,
   - Reflective on own competencies
   - Able to work with others in teams but still be independent
   - Youth who comes up with ideas and shows flexibility/open mindedness
   - Good at networking/use their networks
4) Literate (basic English)
5) Younger than 30 years old
Evaluation of the training

the training was evaluated regular in the process. Field facilitators were giving their opinions about each exercise as the training went along. Furthermore, there was a training assessment meeting at the end of the boot camp to evaluate the whole process.

It turned out that the evaluation was very positive. The field facilitators understood the whole concept very fast and they felt that the participants could benefit a lot from the training. The assessment revealed two areas of improvement for the training. Firstly it was difficult for the participants to match their means with the disharmonies found. They needed more facilitation to work on this part in order to find their opportunities. Secondly the training did not support the participants in creating new ideas.

Redesign of the model and manual

Due to the two areas of improvement the model and manual was redesigned, mainly in module 6 and 7, Opportunities and Qualifying opportunities. One more day was added to the boot camp, to give more time to find the right opportunities and bring in a whole new ideation aspect, helping the participants to create new ideas and see more opportunities.

It turned out that the participants had a hard time thinking abstract and imagining something in the future. For that reason more creative facilitation was embedded into all parts of the manual.

Stage 4

In step four, quantitative surveys among participants were completed as training assessment after the base camp in all three communities. The surveys contribute among other things with knowledge about the participants’ attitude to failure, waiting for help and needing money for start-up. Many of the questions in the training assessment was exactly the same as in the baseline survey, in order to compare these data. However, this intention was challenged by the fact that many participants were replaced after the baseline survey had been completed.

The baseline survey had 66 respondents whereas the training assessment had 55 respondents. This different arise according to the district teams because some young entrepreneurs were away for studying at the time of doing training assessment. However, when comparing the names of the respondents in the two surveys, it emerged that only 35 of the respondents were the same respondents according to their names. For that reason, the comparison of surveys before and after only include these 35 respondents. According to the district teams, this replacement of participants
happened because the original chosen participants did not live up to the given criteria, especially the age criteria of being under 30 years of age.

To gain knowledge about the effect of the training in the long term, a qualitative study was made in Ghana in June 2017. This study obtain data from interviews with field facilitators from the three district teams as well as interviews with participants from all three districts. I interviewed 3 participants from Mion district, 5 participants from Karaga district and 4 participants from Saboba district. The participants were chosen by the district teams. The criteria was to find 3 to 5 participants from each district. There should be a variation of participants, some who have not started business yet, participants who have started a business and participants who had expanded an existing business after the boot camp.
Findings

The study has revealed the five most crucial constraints for young entrepreneurs in Northern Ghana. In random order, these constraints are 1) lack of start-up capital, 2) a waiting attitude, 3) culture and traditions not being supportive, 4) inadequate education system and, finally, 5) a low level of trust.

The five constraints
In the following, these five constraints will be further unfolded.

Lack of start-up capital
A majority of the young Ghanaians interviewed express a lack of financial capital, in form of start-up funds. This constraint is also expressed by the GEM report, where access to financing is stated as one of the problematic factors when starting up a business in Ghana (Herrington & Kelley, 2012). It seem to be a common thinking among young Ghanaians that you need to get start-up funding before you can even think about making a business. However, the success rate of businesses that has been given start-up funding, does not seem to be high. Too many entrepreneurs have lost the money and they did not succeed in making their business grow. For that reason, YEfL has stopped giving grants to the trained young Ghanaians. The lack of start-up capital seem to a large extend to be a mental constraint, that stops young potential entrepreneurs from even trying, because they are waiting for grants.

A waiting attitude
Youth in Northern Ghana is experiencing what we call “waithood”, a period of suspension between childhood and adulthood (Honwana, 2015). During this time, without education or a job, young people cannot achieve the social markers of adulthood – independence, a living wage, building a family and a home. In this way, a large group of young people spend their best years waiting and it results in a debilitating state of helplessness and dependency.

During interviews, it was clear that many young people were waiting for various things. In the rural areas, they were mostly waiting for rain. During dry season, they could be waiting for four months, just waiting for rain.
**Culture and tradition not supportive**

Interviews with young Ghanaians revealed constraints concerning cultural and traditional support. The culture creates barriers to some business in particular. The food industry is an example. Here the cultural attitude in the Northern regions is that cooking, selling, processing and storage is work for women. Whereas production is for men.

Gender is also an issue when speaking about land ownership, because women do not own land. Even for men it is difficult to get land when they are young.

When young Ghanaians have their own business they are challenged by periods where they cannot put full attention on the business. The amount of cultural and family events they have to join for whole days are many. The young entrepreneurs cannot afford to employ a substitute, and even if they could, the substitute would most probably mess things up. So on these days the young entrepreneurs close down the business for the day.

Young entrepreneurs also have to be very clear about how to separate private economy from business economy and to communicate this to family and friends. The natural thinking in the culture is that if someone in the family has some kind of money, they will be asked to pay school fees and etc.

**Inadequate education system**

The GEM report state that the general education levels are low and that education systems are failing and that lack of skills and training are particularly problematic in the rural areas (Herrington & Kelley, 2012). My field research revealed that there seem to be a disconnection between real life and education courses. There is a read and pass culture, with teacher led teaching methods, not focusing so much on learning but more on following the rules. Curriculums are very theoretical, not updated and embody no creativity, innovation or entrepreneurship.

The afrobarometer survey (Afrobarometer, 2015) shows that the Northern Region is the region with the highest amount of citizens with no formal schooling.
However, the field research made it clear that many young people in the rural areas have some kind of training, mainly from either some kind of non-formal apprenticeship or NGO training, where they gained some useful skills.

**Low trust level**

Interviews with many young people in Northern Ghana made it clear that a common issue is low trust among people in local communities. Some did not even trust their own family. In addition, the trust in authorities in general seemed to be low.

However, working with entrepreneurship as a social process, it requires trust among people to a certain extend. You need to be sharing your ideas with other people, to collaborate with others, as
you cannot do it all alone. Interviews also indicated that partnerships was a rarity, which could be linked to the low trust level.

It appears that trust is low at all levels in Ghana. Here some examples.

- 11% of Ghanaians think that most people can be trusted. 26.6% in the Northern Region
- 51.6% of Ghanaians think relatives can be trusted a lot. 81.9% in Northern Region
- 22.2% of Ghanaians think you can trust your neighbour a lot. 56.4% in Northern Region
- 18.1% of Ghanaians trust the police a lot. 25.3% in Northern Region
  (Afrobarometer, 2015)

These are just some examples to show the trust level in Ghana. A positive finding here is that the trust level in the Northern region seem to be higher than in the rest of Ghana.

The new entrepreneurship model

In order to make a new entrepreneurship boot camp model, taking into consideration these five constraints, the relevant theory and respecting the already existing training model, eight fundamental modules are included in the new boot camp model. The model is designed to have a step-by-step logic.

![Figure 8: New entrepreneurship boot camp model (own figure)](image-url)
The process starts with Sarasvathy’s *Bird in Hand Principle*, focusing on the means of each participant. The second step incorporates the participants’ attitudes and challenges the waiting attitude. Thirdly, focusing on the constraints, this module seek to make the participants aware of their constraints and make them reflect on how to overcome these constraints. The fourth element focuses on collaboration between participants, i.e. how to start trusting others and drawing on other peoples’ means to support the entrepreneurs’ long-term success. The fifth element focuses on how value is created because entrepreneurship is about creating value for others. Looking for disharmonies in the participants’ lives or communities in general, help them to see how to create value. The sixth element focuses on opportunities, i.e. how to find the right opportunities matching the means of the participants - This element is very much about creativity and ideation. The seventh element is concerned with qualifying the opportunities found. This element draws on some parts of the Business Canvas Model (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2009). The last element is about finding the next best steps to take with full control. At this point, the participants search for realistic manageable steps to take in the nearest future after the boot camp. At the last step the participants produce a poster with the next best steps for them to take when they come back from the boot camp and the steps are presented at the end of the boot camp.

Important here is to say that the boot camp does not stand alone. As part of overcoming the financial constraint the concept starts with a VSLA group, with the same participants as those going to the boot camp. This VSLA should be started up 6-9 months before the boot camp, for the participants to be able to save enough to actually make a loan for start-up, right after the boot camp. The boot camp will be supported by follow up training at the local youth centres minimum three times after the boot camp. The aim of the follow up training is mainly to support the fragile start up process and to coach the entrepreneurs on their steps. Many entrepreneurs need help to change steps along the way or develop even further steps in the future. The follow up training also offer relevant training on how to brand a business, financial management and completing the Business Canvas Model (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2009).
The whole process consists of training before the boot camp, the actually boot camp and follow up training after the boot camp.

**THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP MODEL**
The steps to becoming entrepreneurial

**BEFORE THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP BOOTCAMP**

**AT THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP BOOTCAMP**

**AFTER THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP BOOTCAMP**

*Figure 9: The entrepreneurship model (own figure)*
What did the facilitators say?

The qualitative evaluation of the new entrepreneurship model among facilitators showed that all the facilitators found the model and manual very practical and simple to use. One facilitator said: “The model is simple and easy to take into action. It is not difficult. Anybody who went through the model at least can start doing something with it”. The facilitators agree that all participants made a progress, even if they did not start a business right after the boot camp. They mention that all participants have changed their attitude and that they started using their means. One facilitator said: “They know now that they don’t have to sit down and fold their hands, or wait for the rain”. They mention that the training motivated and provoked the young participants to start taking actions, to move ahead, to collaborate with others and to start doing small savings from what they have. The facilitators also state that the participants changed their attitude towards challenges. They still face a lot of challenges, but now they know that they can overcome challenges for instance by changing their steps when they meet challenges. One facilitator said: “Most of them think about challenges as something they can do something about”.

The facilitators estimate that more than 75% of the trained youth now have some kind of business. The reasons for not starting up are mainly lack of capital and the fact that some participants created too big steps at the boot camp, which kept them waiting. The facilitators mention that many of the participants changed some of the steps after the boot camp. Either they did not have the skills to do the steps or they simply had the wrong steps.

The facilitators pointed out the focus on means, networking and the creative facilitation tools to be especially important for the success of the training.

The facilitators express that the participants had quite a few means, but they did not know that they could use it. They did not know that they could start with that little money. One facilitator said: “They understand that they don’t have to wait, start doing something now. That attitude of waiting is gone with the youth we are interacting with, they are no more waiting for anything. They are now taking action, using their own means”. It is pointed out that the young entrepreneurs still lack financial capital, but they know now that they can start with their means.

The district team now see people with similar business ideas working together and many of the entrepreneurs now share their ideas with family and friends and ask for advice. They also see many entrepreneurs use their social network to get exactly what they need to proceed with the business. They have many stories about young entrepreneurs using their social network. One story is about a
young entrepreneur who, already in the bus back to his community from the boot camp, interacted with people in the bus and found a partner to sell his product in another community.

The creativity aspect seemed to be very useful in the process according to the facilitators. In the beginning the creativity part was quite hard, because the participants were not used to imagining. However, after the first task, they found it funny and they found themselves constructing something they could not even imagine. The creativity part took the abstract thinking into something realistic and practical and the participants were surprised about how many ideas and solutions they could come up with. In that way the participants learned how to create their own ideas.

When asked about if the new model has qualified the old model, the facilitators point out that the new model is much more practical. One facilitator said: “It is better of as compared to the old manual, the old one was training them to be entrepreneurs, but this one is trying to make them enterprising”. With the new model they believe that they provoke their minds and make them think out of the box. The facilitators said that they had difficulties in turning the entrepreneurship training into success with the old manual. They believe that the problem was, that they had too much focus on the goal, they were not concentrated on what the entrepreneurs could really do, meaning their means. One facilitator said: “you know, in the old training you could end the training and it could take you months before you could even see a few people starting, but this one immediately after we were finishing the training, they already have what they are into, because they are to use their means, and they don’t need to wait”.

It turned out that some of the facilitators got inspired by the model themselves. They explained how they had used their own means to start up business. One facilitator said: “I am doing steps, using the manual on myself”.

**What did the participants say?**

During the interviews with participants it was clear that they all remembered their steps to take. Some of them even showed the “My Way” poster they made on the last day at the boot camp, and explained the different steps and how they had worked their way forward. 11 out of 12 interviewed participants had taken steps, which left only one waiting. It turned out that this person had very big steps to take, steps that would take him years to take. All of the interviewed entrepreneurs had future steps to do. Some of them were somehow stuck at a step, and needed coaching on finding new or smaller steps to take. It was clear, that it was very important that each steps was manageable in the very near future for the entrepreneur. If the steps were too big it left the entrepreneur
waiting. Some of the entrepreneurs explained how they had been coached by the field facilitators in order to split a big step into smaller steps, others had not had this change yet and needed some kind of coaching on their steps.

Half the interviewed participants had a small business before they joined the boot camp. They all explained how they had used the training to expand their business. They explained how they had gotten courage to take some steps they would not dare before.

All the participants seem to agree that the most useful part of the whole training was about social networking. They explain how they have used their social network to get what they needed. One entrepreneur explained how he used his social network to get a very important appointment with a possible supplier and moreover he used his social network to guarantee for him, so he did not have to pay a deposit, which he could not afford. Another entrepreneur realised that he had a huge network on Facebook, and now he started using Facebook to sell his product. In general they expressed that the camp had opened their eyes towards their social network, and the fact that they are linked to a lot of people through their network. With their means and the means of their social network, they have seen how they can solve problems and do things they did not believe they could before, even without a lot of money.

Most of the participants mentioned that they have changed their attitude. They have mainly changed their attitude about needing money for start-up, waiting for help and how to use their social network. One participants said: “I thought I had to have a lot of money to start a business. The camp made me see through a channel of which I have never experienced. Business can be done without a pesua. Business is about working with people. Business is just like a game, there is a risk there, but you should not make it stop you. Business takes perseverance”. Another participant said: “Before I was waiting for my family to help me. Now I just started”.

Only 8 out of 12 interviewed participants joined a VSLA group and also 8 out of 12 joined the follow-up training. The reason for not joining a VSLA group was mainly because some participants had been replaced. Due to the fact that the age criteria of selecting participants for the training was not meet in all districts, the district teams had to replace some participants before the boot camp. The main reason for not joining the follow-up training was having business to do, illness or being away from the community.
Surveys before and after

When comparing the baseline survey with the survey after the boot camp it validates that the training has some effect as shown in figure 10 and 11 below.

The parameters where the effect seem to be biggest is about “being afraid to fail” and “waiting for someone to help start a business”. The respondent’s answers to these two statements are significantly different before and after the boot camp.

“I am afraid to fail”

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Figure 10: Before and after survey comparison on “I am afraid to fail” statement. (p = 0.007)

“Right now, I am waiting for someone to help me start a business”

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<td></td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Figure 11: Before and after survey comparison on “Right now, I am waiting for someone to help me start a business” statement. (p = 0.00001)
Conclusion

The first step to be able to verbalize and incorporate crucial constraints in the boot camp is actually to be aware of what kind of constraints the young Ghanaians meet as entrepreneurs. This research has revealed the five most crucial constraints for young entrepreneurs in Northern Ghana to be 1) lack of start-up capital, 2) a waiting attitude, 3) culture and traditions not being supportive, 4) inadequate education system and, finally, 5) a low level of trust.

These constraints are not easy to overcome for young entrepreneurs, especially because some of them have their origin in many years of traditional ways of thinking and the financial situation in Ghana. It is out of the hands of YEfL to change for instance the whole educational system in Ghana, but through the boot camps YEfL can push young people to start doing small things instead of waiting for things to get better.

The research has shown that the five principles of effectual logic has much to offer in relation to the young entrepreneurs. Especially focusing on Bird in Hand, who they are, what they can do and who they know is useful at the camp. Social networking seemed to be a really big eye opener to many participants, as they found it useful as an alternative to financial capital in some cases.

The entrepreneurs still have lack of capital, about 25% of the participants did not start any business because of that. However, the training gave many of them courage and motivation to find alternative ways to getting around the financial issue they have. They know that when they meet challenges they might be able to overcome them by changing the steps to take.

The focus on enterprising behaviour is also an essential part of the new model. Putting focus on how you can take action right now instead of only having focus on a long term goal. The theory about enterprising behaviour introduce the next best step, which showed to be very useful and easy to implement in the boot camp model.

It is clear that the best effect will be if the participants join all three parts of the training; the VSLA, the boot camp and the follow up training. In that way they will have the opportunity to get at loan from the VSLA and also to get coaching on the steps to take. The coaching from field facilitators showed to be very important, as many of the participants changed their steps when they came back from the boot camp. It was clear that those who created small manageable steps had higher chance to succeed, than those who created too big steps, they could not really manage afterwards. Those who had too big unmanageable steps were also those who were waiting instead of taking many steps.

Introducing a lot of creative facilitation tools turned out to be a very big benefit for the boot camp. It was not an easy task in the beginning because the participants were not used to imagine
and think abstract, but it turned out to be a great success for both facilitators and participants. Through the creative facilitation the participants created ideas and solutions they could not even imagine. This help them to find new solutions to their problems and can be useful when wanting to turn constraints into opportunities.

The research project created a new entrepreneurship model that can help YEfL in supporting the participants in turning their constraints into opportunities. The research show that the model can contribute in terms of changing attitude toward starting a business without money and using the social network as well as it can push people to start doing something instead of waiting.
Implication

Taking one way of thinking entrepreneurship into a completely new context has been very insightful. It turned out that the local facilitators found the new model inspiring. They perceived the effectual logic quite easy, in spite of the fact that they have a very strong tradition of more causal logic. The young entrepreneurs were very open-minded and positive towards any given exercise. This is in contrast to how Danish students condemn exercises on whether they find it directly relevant or not. The young Ghanaians plunged into all kind of creative adventures, not asking why to do it or refusing to do it. This was a real revelation when being used to Danish students hesitating to leave the comfort zone. It might be connected to the much higher fear of failure in Denmark than in Ghana. Seeing, surprisingly, how it was possible to affect the fear of failure attitude in Ghana, it could have great potential to seek to affect the fear of failure attitude among Danish students.

The need for finding opportunities matching means does not really limit to Ghana or any other country. This fact makes the entrepreneurship model useful in many different contexts. The eight different elements in the boot camp model are all relevant when working with entrepreneurship training. The specific exercises in each element could however change from context to context.

These different contexts could be all around the world, as well as in Denmark. Whenever people are waiting, not acting on their situation because of too many constraints, this research propose that it could be valuable to work with the boot camp model, focusing on effectual logic and enterprising behaviour.
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