



## 2nd Annual Forum on Government, Industry and Academia Collaboration.



ANNUAL FORUM ON  
GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY &  
ACADEMIA COLLABORATION

# 2018 REPORT

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Organized by:

**AFRICAN BUSINESS CENTRE FOR DEVELOPING EDUCATION (ABCDE)**

Supported by:

**The BUSAC Fund**

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**Ghana Academy of Arts & Science, Accra**

**Rapporteur: Naa Dedei Botchwey**

Theme:

**DEFINING THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH IN THE  
COMMERCIALIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH:  
ESTABLISHING AN ALTERNATE SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT FOR  
THE YOUTH**

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## **Opening Ceremony and Introduction speeches**

### **Dr. Ekwow Spio-Garbrah**

“Good morning BUSAC, Distinguished Representatives from the Ministry of Food & Agriculture, friends from the Mass Media and all protocols observed. The subject matter for today is **'how to promote employment in the agribusiness based on the effective commercialization of scientific research'**. The Directors from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research which is a part of the Ministry of Environment, Science & Technology will speak in the course of the day and explain the functions of the council and the subsidiaries of the Research Institutions of the CSIR. There are 12 members of the Council for Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR). It is a fact that though a lot of research is being done, there are various Academic Institutions of which the CSIR is a part. It is also a practical research institute. Many Ghanaians do not get to know much about the research that has been done by these institutions, so we hope that all of us become better acquainted with what the various institutions have done by the end of the forum. Many of us know that cocoa is something we eat in the form of chocolate or beverages or even in cakes and ice cream.

There are more than 20 potential uses of cocoa alone. Other Agricultural products also have what they do. Many of our youth who are currently unemployed & are seeking jobs can find jobs in these fields. ABCDE is concerned about how the youth take advantage of the country's vast resources for business development. There is so much to learn from the Internet so it amazes our foreign partners that we are so well endowed and yet unwilling to take advantage of our resources. I trust the ministry of agriculture will put in place policies, regulations and incentive schemes to support the youth who want to venture into Agriculture.

We are grateful to the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences for allowing us to use their facility; and to Professor Matilda Araba Bentil- Andam and her colleagues for commending the work of ABCDE.”

### **Mr Nicholas Gebera, Fund Manager; Manager**

“In March, 2017, the BUSAC Foundation was approached for the first ABCDE forum, seeking support to forge a closer relationship between Government, Academia and Industries for socio – economic development. The centre considered this as highly laudable. The proposal was a unique

one. It was fully aligned to BUSAC's objectives. With the rise of economies and globalisation, the job market has become highly competitive. The required demand of skilled and specialised manpower from the Industrial sector have not been met, as a large section of graduate institutes of higher learning lack the necessary critical thinking and skills required by industries. ABCDE engages highly in public-private dialogues and activities which are aimed at increasing its alignment and partnership between Government, Academia and Industry. ABCDE has identified that there is a mismatch between the number of white colour jobs available to graduates and the new graduates coming out of the University and Technical Institute. Agriculture in Ghana is an important contributor to Ghana's export earnings and the major source of input in the manufacturing sector. It has the potential to become one of the leading sectors and become an engine of growth and reliable source of job creation. This forum brings us together to discuss how to identify commercial opportunities in the Agribusiness sector so that it becomes a source of employment for the youth. The forum will harness those public and private opportunities available to the youth while giving young people the opportunity to engage it's relevant stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. The interactions between public and private sectors should lead to identifying specific commercial pilot projects that can be developed and constitute a reliable source of livelihood for the youth. On behalf of our developing partners, DANIDA, USAID and EU, the BUSAC Fund will like to wish all a successful forum and discussion. THE BUSAC Fund wishes the leadership of ABCDE good luck in facilitating the dialogue on promoting youth employment in Agricultural Business.”

**Mr. Klutse Kudomor, National Coordinator; Youth In Agriculture Programme Read On Behalf of Hon. Owusu Afriyie Akoto, Ministry Of Food & Agriculture.**

“Agriculture has remained a central driver of Ghana's economy despite the structural modifications that have occurred over the years. For a sector that employs 35.95% of the active labour force; and that is a major source of revenue for the government, a substantial growth is likely to have a huge impact on the economy. In 2015, Ghana's total revenue from non-traditional exports alone amounted to US\$2.522 billion (GHc 9.210 billion). Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ghana Export Promotion Authority, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and other public organisations are implementing specific programmes to enhance Agribusiness development in Ghana, in collaboration with department partners. Ministry of Food and Agriculture plays a significant role in sourcing funds, writing grant proposals, signing

bilateral agreements and creating awareness of the credit resources from which Agribusiness actors can obtain access. This is a core service for Ministry of Food and Agriculture because most Agribusiness activities cannot be carried out without funding. The central government plays a key role, especially in securing loans and bilateral agreements, because Ministry of Food and Agriculture may not have the capacity to do this itself. Over the years, research institutions and universities have developed agricultural production and processing technologies that can be obtained and used by players in Agribusiness. On the 2018 AFGAIC topic; *Commercialization of Scientific Research : Promoting Youth Employment In Agribusiness*, I have the following to say: The government has initiated various flagship programmes – Planting For Food and Jobs, Planting For Jobs and Rural Development, One Village One Dam and One District One Factory – that will revolutionarize agriculture and feed into the processing industry.

1. We need research to provide a one stop shop for the promotion of agribusiness. You may call it RESEARCH FOR BUSINESS (R4B).
2. The private sector must support in engaging the youth as their commercial business partners to develop youth businesses.
3. The youth need to take advantage of the various programs and create sustainable and viable agribusiness for themselves.”

## **Abstract**

Agriculture can be challenging because of its various impediments including poor conditions of land, hostile weather, no or little rain, irrigation problems and lack of capital. However, the youth have a responsibility to learn about the industry before they venture into it. This gives them a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges of the industry. Unfortunately, many young people prefer the prestige of white colour jobs and so they hardly venture into agriculture. Government also has a responsibility to put measures in place and take initiatives that makes the agricultural industry more attractive to the youth.

The GES curriculum, unfortunately, does not position agriculture as an attractive field and does not encourage students to think about Agribusiness as a thriving carrier. Every segment in the society including businesses, family and churches has a role to play in the quest to make agriculture more attractive to young people.

Information technology and digital communication platforms are examples of existing resources that can be adapted to expedite the positioning of agriculture as a trendy industry, so that it can appeal to the youth.



<b>Session One</b>	<b>The Role of Government and the Public Sector in the Commercialization and Development of Agribusiness in Ghana</b>
<b>Moderator:</b>	Professor Samuel Nii Odai
<b>Panellists present</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dr. Charles Tortoe (Deputy Director, CSIR – Food Research Institute)</li> <li>2. Mr. Jeremy Agyemang (Head, Agribusiness Unit; Ministry of Agriculture)</li> <li>3. Mr. Selorm Branttie (Strategy Director of mPedigree &amp; Founding Member for Imani)</li> <li>4. Mr. William Manu (Executive from the Agribusiness Sector of the Association of Ghana Industries, AGI)</li> </ol>

## **Presentations by panellists**

### **Dr. Charles Tortoe (Deputy Director, CSIR – Food Research Institute)**

Dr. Totoe who defined commercialisation in terms of research spoke about how the use of technology can be developed into an enterprise. He took the audience through the processes by which CSIR works together with the government in Ghana to create enterprising opportunities for the youth in the research sector. He mentioned that the 13 institutions under the CSIR are think-tanks that work to develop the Agribusiness sector. He urged the youth to take interest in the sector, but also made it clear that government has to create favourable conditions to make this possible.

### **Mr. Jeremy Agyemang (Head, Agribusiness Unit; Ministry of Agriculture)**

Mr. Agyemang shared some of government’s activities and initiatives that include the youth in agricultural programs and use information technology to improve the benefits of agribusiness. He said that the Ministry of Agriculture engages the youth in commercial Agriculture through their

programs. He gave insights into the specific segments of Agriculture, including Production & Processing and Transportation & Logistics. He mentioned that measures are in place to expedite the tech savviness of the youth for the improvement of the agricultural sector. He said the government has set up a greenhouse at Dowunya where young people go to buttress their trade and make it modern. The government believes that the youth can use incubation programmes as a channel to get into Agriculture. The National Planning Development Commission is responsible for planning cycle, so all Ministries work with the NPD.

**Mr. Selorm Branttie (Strategy Director of mPedigree & Founding Member for Imani)**

Mr. Branttie defined commercialisation in terms of creating an eco-system where one can gain value at every angle because it is self-sustaining. However, he raised concerns about gaps in the system. Between the farmer and the final consumer, the gap is very big. As an entrepreneur, one can use that gap to maximise whatever has been produced or transported. He believes that a big part of the responsibility in this field falls on the youth, since the youth forms a greater part of the Ghanaian population. The youth make up more than 50% of the population and they have the biggest nutritional needs. They need to stay strong and healthy, and that is highly dependent on their nutrition which is in turn provided through agriculture. In his opinion, this makes them very determined and also very vibrant. Due to their demand state, this makes their purchasing power better than what it used to be. “People couldn’t afford any food at first.

We don't need a populist Base approach when we talk about one or two hundred thousand people. One good entrepreneur can employ all of them in an endeavour that can spread in the industry and create very good value for money; and we believe that it is about time we looked at the disruption that is; we do not rely on the same pre-emptive methods of Agriculture but look at a new synergy and apply new technologies that will make Agriculture and Agribusiness more effective.”

**Mr. William Manu (Executive from the Agribusiness Sector of the Association of Ghana Industries, AGI)**

Mr. Manu defined commercialisation in terms of individuals from the private sector combining their strengths and using synergy to control larger agricultural markets. He cited the example of Burkina Faso where he said people are more prone to combine their resources for greater gain in the import and export sectors for instance. “In Burkina Faso, people export more tomatoes, onions

and rice among other agricultural products than we do in Ghana.” He also addressed the benefits of using technology in Agriculture.

### **Questions & Commentaries**

- **Zaida:** “With regards to the information, I will take the Science and Maths Quiz as an example. Many people never had interest in it and never paid attention. About one-tenth of Ghanaians watched it; however, ever since it got the social media, it has become the more popular. Many people want to know whom their school is competing with, who has bragging rights and who is representing the school. Can Agribusiness take advantage of social media in the same manner?”
  
- **Emmanuel Ampofo:** “How can a person attend school for four years, graduate with a degree in Agribusiness and be posted to the street to direct traffic as a National Service Personnel? In my opinion, the school system is a waste of time and does not support the modern day student.”

<b>Session Two</b>	<b>Financing The Application of Scientific Research in Agribusiness, How To Grow and Fund An Agriculture Business Idea.</b>
<b>Moderator</b>	Mr. David Asiamah
<b>Panellists present</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mr. Abdullah Ishawu, (Rural Financial Officer , Rural Enterprise Programme)</li> <li>2. Mrs. Akosua Koranteng Adayi, (Director; Beige Foundation)</li> <li>3. Mrs. Tenemba Anna Samake (CEO, MBC Africa)</li> <li>4. Madam Philomena Gyane: (Acting Director, Policy Monitoring and Evaluation, National Board For Small Scale Industries- NBSSI)</li> </ol>

## **Presentations by panellists**

### **Mr. Abdullah Ishawu (Rural Financial Officer, Rural Enterprise Programme)**

Mr. Ishawu said as someone who deals with access to rural finance on a daily basis, he would refer to the challenges that reoccur as “the normal ones that do not change.” “We always hear about interest rate, issues of collateral, financing, agribusiness and agriculture, the perceived rates that banks always talk about, the seasonality and the weather. These among a few are what the MSE face when they approach the financial institution for financing.” He said that there are funds available, however, there isn’t enough information directing people to the appropriate institutions that are positioned to support their specific type of businesses. “The rural enterprise has a certain fund given to the rural farmers. They should borrow at a very reasonable rate and also lend to us the MSE at the same reasonable rate.” However, Mr. Ishawu could not confirm whether the MSEs were aware of this information.

### **Mrs. Akosua Koranteng Adayi (Director; Beige Foundation)**

Mrs. Adayi laid emphasis on the definition of Agribusiness, stating that even though the term is mostly associated with farmers and farming, that is not what it is all about. “When we talk about

Agribusiness our focus is always on farmers but Agribusiness is not farming. There is a whole value chain to it. So if a farmer does not get financial support, it does not mean the company does not support Agribusiness. That company did not support the farm but supports other areas of the value chain. Let us note that.” She said about the issue of fund, that, her company is not concerned about the size of the agribusiness but rather about how prepared the entity is to receive the fund. She lamented the unavailability of records and network of the young people who come to her in search for funds.

The lack of records becomes a stumbling block for her organisation as well, because they are in the business of providing funds but are unable to provide it to an entity they cannot trace. “Individuals scattered everywhere walk in for loans and when interrogated, they are not even part of any network that can support them when the need arises. The money is there. A start-up can come for a loan but ensure you have what it takes to make us believe you. Network is important.”

**Mrs. Tenemba Anna Samake (CEO, MBC Africa)**

Mrs. Samake blamed problems faced by farmers on the entire farming industry saying that “if an element gets faulty, it affects the system completely, which when not resolved, will cause us to be running and running but it still will not work. When a farmer is well financed through an off-taker, the level of productivity is monitored and if it turns out low, then there has been dishonesty and that is a big challenge in financing and agribusiness because whatever he or she does, the SME needs the product from the farmer.” She said if a farmer does not provide quality, values or whatever is agreed on, it affects the finances of the SME being invested into. “In business, being holistic is key.”

According to Mrs Samake, the best way to solve problems facing Africa for instance, is to do so holistically, which is why collaboration is important. The challenges double in Agribusiness. We still depend on the rain and other natural occurrences to produce agricultural goods but we need to go beyond that. SMEs have their own problems too. They are expected to have the right people and the right team with the right resources as well as technologies. Investing in start-ups is a big risk which requires that several factors are considered. Government is keen on funding research to boost the initial level into this process, which is the business ideation level.

**Madam Philomena Gyane (Acting Director, Policy Monitoring and Evaluation; National Board for Small Scale Industries- NBSSI).**

Madam Gyane focused on the need for institutions to work together to promote research. “Research is very expensive. One must have all the factors coming to support it. If it is left for the government alone, they will not get there on time.” She lamented about government’s inability to publicise research even though they have all the resources available to them for conducting good researches. As a result, businesses are kept in the dark about findings that would have been instrumental to their growth. She advised that the government must collaborate with private entities including industries, institutions and academia to find a solution and bridge the gap “because other firms are ready to not only support but tap into some wisdom and learn.” She said that as a people, Ghanaians do not collaborate for work because individuals like to do things their way and take credit for the work done.

She blamed this on the educational system, saying that people refuse to share information even when it is needed to achieve something important, feeling as though they have lost something by sharing that information.

**Questions & Commentaries**

- **Michael Osei:** “When it comes to financing Agribusiness, the ‘value chain point of view’ is that the farmer is the only person funded. The farmer produces and provides a lot but where does he sell his products? The days of free things are over. This is the time to find money and support our Ghanaian farmers.”
  
- **Emmanuel Ampofo:** “Rome was not built in a day and patience moves mountains. The youth of today must slow down the quest for quick money and venture into Agriculture and Agribusiness. That way, they can make big money over time.”

<b>Session Three</b>	<b>Agribusiness; A solution to the problem of unemployment</b>
<b>Moderator:</b>	Joseph Gakpo
<b>Panel Present:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Corbus De Toit (Director General For John Deere/ AFGRI)</li> <li>2. Emmanuel Ampofo (Co- Founder and Chief of Operations, Trotro Tractor)</li> <li>3. Tutuwa Ahwoi (Co- Founder, Nokware Skin Care)</li> <li>4. Jamie Saleeby (CEO, Sankofa Foods)</li> </ol>

## **Presentations by panellists**

### **Corbus De Toit (Director General for John Deere/ AFGRI)**

Corbus De Toit presented on the need to be independent minded as an entrepreneur. He said that entrepreneurs do not always have to wait for governments to supply equipment and other essentials before they get to work. People must learn to be responsible for their own farming businesses, a culture which is more likely to produce results. He said that irrespective of the industry a person belongs in, it is important to keep abreast with technology and to educate oneself about trends in the industry. He emphasized the importance of Brand loyalty, reliability, consistency and value for money to business success. He encouraged the youth to be hard working.

### **Emmanuel Ampofo (Co- Founder and Chief of Operations, Trotro Tractor)**

Mr. Ampofo shared the story of how his Trotro Tractor business came to be. He spoke about how he sold his car to sponsor a reality TV show after he refused to secure sponsorship from entities. Unfortunately, this dream was not realised; however, he did not give up. His perseverance and determination saw him participate in events that broadened his knowledge in the field and led him to like-minded people, some of whom have now become his co-founders. He stressed the importance of not giving up, being innovative and making sacrifices for what one believes in. He concluded by urging young people to join their ideas together, and take advantage of social media marketing.

### **Tutuwa Ahwoi: Co- Founder, Nokware Skin Care.**

Tutuwa Ahwoi emphasized the need to “test the waters” many times before settling on a final business venture. She urged young people to focus on growing their businesses within the first few years and not expect to make profit immediately, adding that within her eight months of operations, she has paid the people she hired but has not paid herself yet. She encouraged young entrepreneurs to purchase and promote the Ghanaian products and to dare into the import and export sector. She appealed to the Ghana Standard Authorities and Food and Drugs Board to expedite this venture by making terms flexible for new entrepreneurs. She ended her presentation by advising young people to take advantage of social media for business development.

### **Jamie Saleeby: CEO, Sankofa Foods.**

Jamie Saleeby shared the story of his determination to return to Ghana and establish an agricultural company. He took the audience through setbacks and victories during his journey and the role that external factors played in his achievement. He recounted support from his parents and the bold move to use all his savings abroad to start the business. He also recounted setbacks from the Ghana Standards Authority and Food and Drugs organisation. His ultimate advice to young people was to never run out of stock as that could cause the customer to lose interest in the product, which would ultimately lead to loss of money. He emphasised that it is good to “pull the right people to your side” and tap into their knowledge.

### **Questions & Commentaries**

- **William:** William commented on the need to stop over relying on government and focus on combining individual forces towards developing our ideas. He said that the major problem individuals face is not a failure from government but an inability to identify their own needs. He urged people to engage in networking activities.
  
- **Prof Samuel Nii Odai:** Prof Samuel lamented the tendency of television networks in Ghana to show telecast soap operas for long hours but demand huge payments from young people who seek the opportunity to air their grievances on air. He urged government to take action to develop national interest in youth and agriculture.



## **Forum Outcomes**

- Government must endeavor to create a voice for the youth in Agriculture. They must be given platforms to share their achievements and challenges.
- Government must support the youth to develop their ideas and turn them into profitable ventures.
- Entrepreneurs do not need a huge capital in order to start a business
- Some young people are not properly positioned to receive the support they ask for
- Branding is very important in any line of business. A package well decorated, can attract the attention of a potential buyer.
- Perseverance is important for the survival of businesses



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