I.N.S.P.I.R.E. PROJECT LAUNCH EVENT

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Italian Cooperation rolls out 6 entrepreneurship programmes under INSPIRE

June 18, 2025

Italian Cooperation rolls out 6 entrepreneurship programmes under INSPIRE

June 18, 2025 0

The Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development (AICS) has launched six new entrepreneurship programmes to increase job opportunities for Ghanaian youths, with a special focus on women and people with disabilities.

One of the project's primary objectives is to create 1,620 direct jobs for youths, with 35 percent of these jobs going to women and those with disabilities.

AICS has expanded its collaboration with Ghana to enhance access to health, education and agriculture/agribusiness initiatives through six new programmes within the next three years. Eco-friendly products

The project, dubbed 'Implementing New Solutions for the Professional Integration of Human Resources in Ghana's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem' (INSPIRE), aims to boost long-lasting, inclusive and sustainable growth as well as full, fair and productive employment in Ghana.

The INSPIRE initiative – to be rolled out in five regions, namely Greater Accra, Ashanti, Northern, Bono, and Western – is designed to onboard 12 technical, vocational, education and training (TVET) institutions and six universities.

The implementing consortium of institutions included the University of Professional Studies Accra (UPSA), Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UCSC), E4Impact Foundation, CRISP, VIS and Don Bosco Youth Network (DBYN).

Italian Ambassador to Ghana, Laura Ranalli, expressed that this initiative follows Ghana's designation as a priority country for the Italian Government through its AICS development programmes, reflecting the strong bilateral relationship between the two nations.

She emphasised that by assigning 35 percent of these jobs to women, the scheme directly addresses gender imbalances in the Ghanaian labour market.

Minister for Youth Development and Empowerment, George Opare Addo, highlighted Ghana's youthful population as a key asset for both local and global economies if equipped with the right skills. Eco-friendly products

"We are grateful to the Italian Government for this initiative. The programme is aligned with the government's programmes to give the youth opportunities to explore, like the National Apprenticeship programme, Ajuma Wura, One Million Coders, and Feed Ghana Programme," he said.

Director of Programmes, E4Impact Foundation, Fabio Petroni, elaborated that in terms of increasing employment opportunities for young Ghanaians, the project will strengthen school-to-work transition pathways and employment guidance services to foster demand-supply alignment.

“Our implementing institutions will organise workshops through public-private partnerships (PPP) to align school programmes with industry demands in all five regions, focusing on the competitive advantage of the area,” he said.

Key highlights of INSPIRE

Direct employment creation remains a key focus of the initiative, with about 1,620 jobs estimated to be provided, 35 percent for women and one percent for individuals with disabilities. There is also the focus of providing education and training to 4,615 youths, improving SME competitiveness and workforce absorption for 570 local firms.

Export import management

West Africa Business Development Manager, E4Impact Foundation, Savior Agortimevor, shared that under the education and training arm of the programme, it will partner with universities, TVET institutions and entrepreneurship hubs to provide targeted technical and vocational training in high-growth areas.

The project is investing in the creation of realistic, market-oriented curricula and training programmes tailored to the changing needs of the business sector.

This aims to improve soft skills, including communication, leadership, teamwork and digital literacy; provide mentoring and education for emerging entrepreneurs; and internships and apprenticeships opportunities with hands-on industry experience.

The INSPIRE project also recognises that empowering SMEs is an important step toward long-term job creation; hence, will support SMEs through business development services such as coaching and strategic planning, access to affordable financing and investment readiness support, training in digital transformation and operational efficiency, and human resource development.

Italian Innovation Centre, UPSA

A very significant component of the initiative is the establishment of an 'Italian Innovation Centre' at the University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA) Campus.

Eco-friendly products

The centre will be host to Italian businesses who visit the country and an exhibition of Italian and Ghanaian technologies.

It will also develop four innovative entrepreneurial content for boosting the Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme and launching the SME growth, corporate innovation and internationalisation programmes for 540 local SMEs.

The centre will also roll out general and tailor-made business services.

My Joy Online – Ghana News

Nearly 2,000 direct jobs to be created for youth following launch of I.N.S.P.I.R.E Project

June 20, 2025

National

Nearly 2,000 direct jobs to be created for youth following launch of I.N.S.P.I.R.E Project

20 June 2025 7:21pm

A bold new initiative to reshape Ghana's youth employment and entrepreneurship landscape was officially launched last week at the University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA).

The I.N.S.P.I.R.E Project (Implementing New Solutions for the Professional Integration of Human Resources in the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Ghana) is set to create over 1,620 direct jobs, with 35% reserved for women and persons with disabilities, and to provide renewed momentum for skills development and SME competitiveness across the country.

The project is led by the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore and the E4Impact Foundation, with funding from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS).

It is implemented in collaboration with UPSA, CRISP, VIS, and the Don Bosco Youth Network (DBYN) — bringing together academic, public, and private sector actors to collectively address one of Ghana's most pressing development needs: preparing young people for meaningful economic participation.

Held at the UPSA West-Wing Auditorium, the launch event brought together a dynamic mix of local and international stakeholders, including youth leaders, entrepreneurs, development experts, and government officials. The ceremony was emceed by celebrated broadcaster and entrepreneur Bola Ray, setting a high-energy tone for the event.

In his welcome address, Prof. John Kwaku Mensah Mawutor, Vice Chancellor of UPSA, described the project as a transformative opportunity for young people and educational institutions alike.

“This is your chance to grow, innovate and contribute to job creation—embrace it!” he urged.

He also announced the establishment of two landmark institutions on UPSA’s campus as part of the initiative:

- The Italian Innovation Centre, a space dedicated to SME training and access to Italian technology
- A Labor Market Observatory, which will provide data and insights to better align education with employment trends

Representing the vision behind E4Impact’s Africa-wide efforts, Prof. Mario Molteni, CEO of the Foundation, reflected on the long-standing partnership between Italy and Ghana.

“We are committed to promoting a new generation of African entrepreneurs who combine economic, social, and environmental performance—creating jobs and inclusive development.”

Echoing this, H.E. Laura Ranalli, Italian Ambassador to Ghana, emphasized that the project is part of a broader and strategic cooperation agenda:

“The core mission of INSPIRE is to strengthen linkages among the TVET sector, academia, and the private sector — to better align skills with labour market needs.”

Emanuela Forcella, the newly appointed Director for AICS in Burkina Faso and Ghana, has outlined the new direction of Italian Cooperation in Ghana. She emphasized the pivotal role of the INSPIRE initiative in empowering young Ghanaians through skills development and the creation of sustainable job opportunities.

The Ghanaian government has also expressed strong alignment with the initiative’s goals. George Opare Addo, Minister for Youth Development and Environment, highlighted the urgent need to rethink how young people are prepared for the future:

"As a government, we believe the future lies in rethinking how we educate and empower our youth. Programs like INSPIRE reflect our shared belief that entrepreneurship and practical skills development are the keys to unlocking Ghana's next generation of leaders."

A speech delivered on behalf of Haruna Iddrisu, Minister for Education, reinforced this message:

"INSPIRE is timely and necessary—it bridges the gap between academic training and real-world experience, giving our youth the tools they need to thrive in Ghana's evolving entrepreneurial landscape."

Saviour Agortimevor, Country Manager for E4Impact Ghana, added that the project's strength lies in its holistic approach:

"Our interventions will focus on key sectors such as the agri-food sector, civil construction, hydraulics, welding, IT, and electronics... we aim to simultaneously strengthen both the job supply and demand in these areas."

Spanning a 36-month period, the project will be implemented across five regions — Greater Accra, Ashanti, Northern, Bono, and Western — and will work through eight vocational training centres to reach thousands of youth and entrepreneurs. It directly contributes to Sustainable Development Goals 4, 8, 9, and 10, with a focus on decent work, quality education, innovation, and reduced inequality.

The launch of INSPIRE signals more than just a new project — it marks a renewed commitment to collaboration, local ownership, and regional leadership. It positions Ghana not just as a beneficiary of development cooperation, but as a hub of innovation and entrepreneurship for West Africa.

3 News

Employment opportunities for young Ghanaians through the I.N.S.P.I.R.E project

June 11, 2025

Employment opportunities for young Ghanaians through the I.N.S.P.I.R.E project

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Introduction

Ghana, like many other African countries, suffers substantial issues in young employment. Despite economic progress, many young Ghanaians are unable to find stable, well-paying work due to skill gaps, restricted access to entrepreneurial training, and insufficient job creation in critical industries. To solve these difficulties, I am confident that I.N.S.P.I.R.E. (Implementing New Solutions for the Professional Integration of Human Resources in Ghana's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem) would

provide employment possibilities. The project, which is funded by the Italian Agency for Cooperation Development (AICS) and implemented by a consortium of institutions including Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UCSC), E4Impact Foundation, University of Professional Studies Accra (UPSA), CRISP, VIS, and Don Bosco Youth Network (DBYN), aims to close the labour supply-demand gap in Ghana. The I.N.S.P.I.R.E Project aims to empower young Ghanaians, notably women and people with disabilities, to succeed in the job market by focusing on skills development, SMEs' competitiveness, and inclusive employment creation. This article examines the project's objectives, which include job creation, educational advancement, and SME development, as well as how these efforts contribute to Ghana's long-term economic progress.

Overview of the I.N.S.P.I.R.E Project

The I.N.S.P.I.R.E. Project is a multifaceted program that aims to boost Ghana's entrepreneurial ecosystem by matching labour skills to market demands. The project operates in five core regions—Greater Accra, Ashanti, Northern, Bono, and Western Regions—and targets young unemployment using three primary strategies:

- Direct employment creation (1,620 jobs, 35% for women and 1% for individuals with disabilities).
- Providing education and training to 4,615 young Ghanaians.
- Improving SME competitiveness and workforce absorption for 570 local firms.

Direct job creation

One of the project's primary aims is to create 1,620 direct jobs for young Ghanaians. This objective focusses not just on number but also on inclusivity, with 35% of these jobs going to women and 1% going to those with disabilities. By assigning 35% of these jobs to women, the scheme directly addresses gender imbalances in the labour force. Cultural norms, educational gaps, and caregiving duties frequently make it more difficult for women in Ghana, particularly in the project's target regions, to find work. By assuring female participation, the project promotes gender equality and women's economic empowerment. Furthermore, by allocating 1% of job openings to people with disabilities, I.N.S.P.I.R.E. promotes an inclusive

atmosphere that acknowledges the population's different capacities. This part of the initiative is critical, as people with disabilities in Ghana frequently face limited prospects due to access issues, societal stigma, and a lack of appropriate vocational training.

Enhancing education and training

The I.N.S.P.I.R.E. Project recognizes that closing the education-to-employment gap requires more than just job placements; it also necessitates a fundamental overhaul of the educational and training ecosystem. To that end, the project is investing in the creation of realistic, market-oriented curricula and training programs tailored to the changing needs of the business sector. The project partners with universities, vocational training institutes, and entrepreneurship hubs to provide targeted technical and vocational training for high-growth areas.

- Improve soft skills including communication, leadership, teamwork, and digital literacy.
- Mentoring and education for emerging entrepreneurs.
- Internships and apprenticeships offer hands-on industry experience.

Boosting SME competitiveness

Small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) constitute the backbone of Ghana's economy, employing more than 80% of the workforce. Many SMEs, however, confront problems that limit their ability to expand and hire more employees, such as a lack of access to funding, inadequate management capacity, and outmoded technology. The I.N.S.P.I.R.E. Project recognizes that empowering SMEs is an important step towards long-term job creation. This is accomplished through business development services such as coaching and strategic planning, access to affordable financing and investment readiness support, training in digital transformation and operational efficiency, and human resource development and inclusive hiring practices.

Conclusion

The I.N.S.P.I.R.E. Project is a game-changing project that combats young unemployment in Ghana by creating jobs, developing skills, and fostering entrepreneurship. By focussing on 1,620 direct jobs, upskilling 4,615 youth, and enabling 570 SMEs, the project provides the groundwork for long-term economic stability. The project coincides with Ghana's aim for equitable development by taking an inclusive strategy that prioritises women, people with disabilities, and disadvantaged regions. As it proceeds, the I.N.S.P.I.R.E. Project will not only eliminate unemployment but also inspire a new generation of talented professionals and entrepreneurs, propelling Ghana towards a wealthy future.