

# OPPORTUNITY INT. SWITZERLAND GHANA



150

young students are trained in the three-year Youth Apprenticeship Programme.

1,730

adolescents from six regions in Ghana have received an apprenticeship in a specific trade to date.

## **Giving Ghana's youth a chance to work**

Opportunity International Switzerland is a charitable Swiss foundation established in 2008 and based in Bassersdorf, Zurich. It is an associated partner of the Opportunity International Network with 40 local implementing partners in 25 recipient countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. It believes in the will and ability of the poor to free themselves from poverty. In order to help lift them out of poverty and give them a secure, professional perspective, it primarily promotes education and skills-training projects, such as the Youth Apprenticeship Programme (YAP) in Ghana. Furthermore, it strengthens small businesses through training and social microfinancing, supports community health-care projects, and helps promoting small-holders in order to ensure the food security of the community.

In Ghana, the Julius Baer Foundation supports the local Opportunity partner Sinapi Aba Trust in order to fight the high youth unemployment. The YAP provides 150 unemployed disadvantaged young adults with the opportunity to complete a three-year vocational training course with a state-approved qualification. During the training period, the students learn trades such as hairdressing, tailoring, catering, auto mechanics, carpentry, and aluminum fabrication from qualified and trained trade masters. Additional regular capacity building workshops in business management as well as health and life skills complete the curriculum and prepare the apprentices for life as qualified workers. In addition, after successfully graduating, the young professionals have the opportunity to apply for a start-up loan in order to set up their own businesses. With the prospect of a steady income, the young adults become bearers of hope for their families.



**Naomi Nsiah,**  
former apprentice and trade  
master in tailoring

“Unfortunately, I had to leave school after sixth grade because my parents could not afford the school fees anymore. I helped my parents at home and tried to earn some money as a day labourer. At that time, I had no hope for my future. Only through the Youth Apprenticeship Programme was I offered a real perspective. I applied for an apprenticeship as a tailor – and was lucky enough to be accepted! After successfully completing my apprenticeship in 2015, I launched my own small tailor shop. My shop is not big – but it means everything to me! Today, I am proud to be a trade master myself in the Youth Apprenticeship Programme and thus support other young people who would otherwise have no chance of escaping poverty.”

### Julius Baer Foundation

For more than fifty years, the Julius Baer Foundation has dedicated itself to making meaningful and impactful contributions to society. The grant foundation of the Julius Baer Group was founded in 1965 by Walter J. Bär to support all forms of art and culture, various sciences, and carefully selected charitable causes within Switzerland. The Foundation's reach has extended along with the growth of the Group, and today it collaborates with partner organisations worldwide in the core areas of Vocational Training, Recycling PLUS, and Wealth Inequality.

### How you can contribute

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### Creating ways to reduce youth unemployment

Through the three-year vocational training, the project provides access to the formal labour market for 150 young graduates. By establishing a structured curriculum and a state-approved certificate, the YAP takes the traditional and mostly informal apprenticeships to the next level. Therefore, disadvantaged youth earn the chance of gaining a foothold outside the informal economic sector. As trained professionals, it is easier for them to enter the labour market either as employees or as young entrepreneurs to permanently generate an income and support themselves and their families.

### Facts and figures: Ghana

Ghana was the first country in Africa to gain its independence from colonialism in 1957.

The country's democratic and economic development has been very progressive. However, Ghana still faces serious social and economic problems like youth

unemployment and poverty. The situation for young women and girls in particular is precarious. Insufficient work and training possibilities for the young generation lead to fragile employment even for older adults, often in the informal sector and without health insurance. Only 18% of the working population has a job with regular income. The number of vocational programmes in training centres, supported by the state, is very limited.

- Capital: Accra
- Population: 28.8 million
- Language: English
- Youth unemployment rate (15–24 years): 11.5%
- Ghana is ranked as Africa's most peaceful country by the Global Peace Index.

For more information about Opportunity International Switzerland, please visit:  
[www.opportunity.ch](http://www.opportunity.ch)

“Unfortunately, very few governments think about youth unemployment when they are drawing up their national plans.”

Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations