

Youth**Action**Net[®]

CASE STUDY SERIES

School Farms:

Working toward food security
through the school system

A partnership between:



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

School of Foreign Service
Global Human Development Program



Introduction

This is one of a series of case studies produced by students enrolled in the Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University through its partnership with the International Youth Foundation (IYF). Students enrolled in a course exploring the role of social enterprises and social entrepreneurs were paired with young leaders of social ventures identified through the IYF's YouthActionNet® program. The students were given the assignment of analyzing the venture's assets, successful methodologies, and opportunities for investment to increase impact. Through this experiential learning process, the student consultants gained hands-on experience and exposure to the needs of social enterprises. The ventures, too, benefited from student insights into their strengths, areas for growth, and recommendations for enhancing their impact and sustainability. The Georgetown practicum is part of YouthActionNet's larger efforts to partner with institutions of higher learning around the globe to integrate social change into the academic experience and career interests of students.

International Youth Foundation

The International Youth Foundation (IYF) invests in the extraordinary potential of young people. Founded in 1990, IYF builds and maintains a worldwide community of businesses, governments, and civil society organizations committed to empowering youth to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens. IYF programs are catalysts of change that help young people obtain a quality education, gain employability skills, make healthy choices, and improve their communities.

www.iyfnetwork.org

YouthActionNet®

Since 2001, YouthActionNet, a program of the International Youth Foundation, has provided founders of social ventures, ages 18 to 29, with the training, networking, coaching, funding, and advocacy opportunities they need to strengthen and scale their impact. These young social entrepreneurs have pioneered innovative solutions to critical local and global challenges, resulting in increased civic engagement, improved health, education reform, economic opportunity, environmental protection, and more inclusive societies. Our work is carried out through a network of 23 national and regional youth leadership institutes that collectively support over 1,350 young social entrepreneurs globally.

www.youthactionnet.org

Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University

The Global Human Development Program of Georgetown University is home to one of the world's premier master's degree programs in international development. An innovative, academically rigorous skills-based graduate program, the Master of Global Human Development degree prepares the next generation of development professionals to work with public sector agencies, private businesses, and non-profit organizations that advance development. Through coursework, extracurricular activity, and practical fieldwork experiences, our graduates develop the insights, skills, and experiences necessary to become leaders in development and make a difference in our global community.

<https://ghd.georgetown.edu>

INTRODUCTION

Meet Alfred Godwin Adjabeng: Founder of School Farms

Alfred Godwin Adjabeng is the Founder of School Farms and acts as the current Executive Director of the Reach Out to Future Leaders Movement (ROFLM), the organization that now manages School Farms. ROFLM seeks to improve local development in Ghana through ensuring that young people are, “educated, empowered, and engaged.” Alfred was the recipient of the 2018 African Youth Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Achiever of the year and is a current Youth Action Net Fellow. He is passionate about community-based youth empowerment, especially in his home country of Ghana.



After recognizing that more than 60 public high schools in northern Ghana would not reopen due to a lack of food for school meals in 2013, Alfred was moved to action knowing that he could make a difference. What started as a pet project has transitioned over to ROFLM and their board of dedicated youth who work to advance not only School Farms but other projects that seek to empower Ghanaian youth.

School Farms works toward food security through the educational system

By providing hands-on agricultural skills training to students at rural schools in Northern Ghana, School Farms is not only able to enrich the educational experience of students but allow them to contribute to their school’s meal program. In this way, the produce harvested from School Farms is then consumed by the students to improve the quantity and quality of foods provided.

The Problem

- Rural schools in Ghana, particularly those in the three northern regions, are closing as they are unable to fund and provide school meals. This problem is exacerbated by delays in the release of government grants promised to schools for this purpose. As schools go into debt trying to provide for their students, further barriers come in the form of rises in the cost of foodstuffs.
- In low economic areas, students may struggle to focus on school when the more pressing concern of food security looms. School attendance and retention are being impacted as

schools' struggle to provide meals and students who remain in the classroom are less engaged.

- The average age of an African farmer is 60 years old¹ and in Ghana that number is slightly lower at 55 years old. In either case, those employed by the agriculture sector are aging and reaching a point where they are no longer engaged in their work at the capacity in which they once were. Despite the fact that agriculture remains the largest economic sector in rural areas, accounting for 54% of total Ghanaian GDP², youth are not following in the footsteps of their parents and grandparents.
- Ghana is able to provide 90%¹ of their own foodstuffs through domestic agriculture. However, with an aging agricultural workforce and younger generations leaving rural farmland for job opportunities in urban areas; the future of this statistic is uncertain.

“There is no efficient transfer of knowledge ‘on a hungry stomach’.”

Alfred Godwin Adjabeng

The Solution

Drawing upon the adage, *give a man a fish he can eat for a day, teach a man to fish he can eat for a lifetime*; School Farms helps to address the growing burden of supplying food at the program's initial 6 boarding schools. Through deployment of an innovative practical application program, Agriculture Skills Development Program for Rural Young People (ASDPYP), School Farms bridges youth involvement in agriculture with the need for nutritious food. Thus, bringing farming to future generations.



Alfred Godwin Adjabeng understands that to attract young adults to the industry, new technology and mentorship must be deployed. To meet this, leaders from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture Ho Municipal, along with local extension officers, work with students to provide *agro-mentoring*. The school farms not only produce staple crops like

¹ “Securing the Future of Agriculture in the Face of an Ageing Farmer Population.” *Farmerline Securing the Future of Agriculture in the Face of an Ageing Farmer Population Comments*, 29 May 2019, farmerline.co/2019/05/29/securing-the-future-of-agriculture-in-the-face-of-an-ageing-farmer-population/.

² “FAO.org.” *Ghana at a Glance | FAO in Ghana | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, 2020, www.fao.org/ghana/fao-in-ghana/ghana-at-a-glance/en/.

corn/maize, sorghum, cassava, and cowpea, but native fruits and vegetables including cabbage, lettuce, gboma, okra, garden egg, watermelon, and pawpaw. Due to the varying growing cycles of these crops, there is always something in season for students to send to their school's kitchen. This diversity of plants also allows for students to learn technical skills surrounding the care of a multitude of crops.

OPERATIONAL MODEL

Community engagement is a key area which diversifies School Farms from other agriculture focused education programs. Since the initial pilot school in 2014, communities have proved to be key stakeholders and partners in the success of the program. This special relationship can vary from land donation in some situations and spans to technical assistance from community members and donations of key inputs from businesses.

Structure (150-200 words)

As School Farms has transitioned from a stand-alone organization to the flagship project of ROFLM, the program organization too has transitioned from the sole management of the founder to that of an executive board. This team of dedicated volunteers works diligently to achieve their goal- assisting two schools in each region of Ghana achieve food security through student education and involvement.

The organization runs as a non-profit and is sustained through a portion of production sales, charitable donations, and through community support. From each school's harvest, 70% of the crop is kept by the school to be enjoyed by students while the remaining 30% is taken to the local market and sold. From the proceeds of sales, 20% is invested in the school's farm to be spent on supplies, equipment, and other inputs, leaving 10% to be reinvested in the School Farms organization to help fund expanding operations and continued program activities.

Accountability/Governance

While Alfred's role may have changed from the social entrepreneur of School Farms to the Executive Director of ROFLM, he remains the School Farms program manager where he continues to be an active agent of change. Currently, he is studying in the United Kingdom and while he is away for his studies the rest of the ROFLM team has each inherited additional responsibility to ensure continued program advancement and success. Key figureheads of the board include the Policy and Programs Director, Richard Glalah, the

Administrative and Finance Director, Augustina Sena Afordofe, and Josephine Agbeko, the Program Coordinator.

Systems and Processes

While maintaining the individualized structure and attention to each school, the School Farms team developed a *Model Toolkit* which can be utilized by schools who are looking to take a more independent approach to program implementation. The program established a nursery after receiving a plot of land from the Sokode and Tanyigbe traditional councils in November 2017. This allows not only a playground of sorts for students to explore, experiment, and learn new techniques in agriculture, but allows the program as a whole to function rather independently as schools can transplant saplings from the nursery to their long-term homes on school grounds.

Ways of Working

By maintaining mutually impactful relationships with traditional council leaders in the communities where they operate, the School Farms team has been able to grow their nursery operations and implement technology including drip irrigation. They frequently host school groups and other community organizations to showcase their youth empowerment program. Working with local NGOs including Associates for Rural Sustainable Development as well as agriculture supply companies like Agriseed have allowed for subsidized inputs and other in-kind donations. These types of partnerships are at the heart of the community focused development work School Farms seeks to promote. As students continue to work with individuals and businesses engaged in agriculture, they form a network of support which hopefully can lead them through successful careers. As explained on the program website, it, “creates the space where young people are morally, psychologically, and spiritually prepared for the future, and creates a platform for cross-cultural relationship building.”

SECTION 3: KEY ASSETS & SUCCESSFUL METHODOLOGIES

Engaged students and volunteers remain School Farm’s greatest assets. While their program is innovative in addressing the needs of schools with limited resources while simultaneously promoting school attendance and knowledge share; it relies heavily on the talent of stakeholders and volunteer board members. Their farm to market approach allows for sustainable programming through reinvestment into the agricultural inputs of school farms.

From School Farm to Market



Section 4: CONCLUSION (150-200 words)

In line with the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals, School Farms seeks to address MGD 2: Achieving Universal Primary Education and MDG 1: Eradicating Extreme Hunger and Poverty. As it relates to the more relevant Sustainable Development Goals, the program aligns with SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. As their farms use drip irrigation, the program also helps to promote sustainable agriculture and responsible water utilization. By promoting the growth of native crops, they are able to maintain traditional species and growing practices. By targeting rural schools, School Farms is able to promote food security through the school system for not only this generation but many to come.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOL FARMS

- [School Farms Website](#)
- [School Farms Second Webside](#)
- [School Farms Facebook Page](#)
- [Reach Out to Future Leaders Movement Facebook Page](#)

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