



*Serwaa Abass training her apprentices in Bogoso, Prestea Huni-Valley Municipality of Ghana, in June 2018  
(Photo Credit: WAGES)*

## **FROM ZERO TO SHERO**

***A Case Study on Serwaa Abass  
By Noble Tagoe – June 2018***

*Serwaa Abass is a seamstress in Bogoso, in the Prestea Huni-Valley Municipality. With little prior knowledge on financial management, her business was struggling to survive, despite her having more than ten years of experience. After attending WAGES training, she now maintains business records, saves money and is continuously building positive relationships with her customers and apprentices. With her savings, she purchased a knitting machine for her business, which in turn has reduced her time and cost of sending her knitting elsewhere. The knitting machine also brings in additional income, since other tailors and seamstresses now bring their knitting to her shop.*

## Her beginning:

Serwaa Abass is a 45-year old CEO and founder of God's Way Training Center, a dressmaking business, in Bogoso, in the Prestea-Huni Valley Municipality, located in the Western Region of Ghana. While she had over a decade of experience in the field, she struggled to run her business; she was unable to expand her business or to improve the standard of living for her family. She took steps to improve this situation and to expand her business but found no success. She even joined a bank in order to save and obtain a loan, but she simply wasn't saving enough to expand her business. She had limited trust in her apprentices and had to constantly keep a check on them to ensure they were not stealing from her.

## The intervention:

The World University Service of Canada (WUSC) and the Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI) aim to support sustainable economic growth in two Districts, in the Western Region of Ghana, through their joint initiative, the West African Governance and Economic Sustainability in Extractive Areas (WAGES) project. Prestea-Huni Municipality is one of the two areas where the project is implemented. Under the economic development component, the project works with multiple stakeholders to empower entrepreneurs by enhancing their technical and business management skills. As such, the project works with the Business Advisory Center (BAC) to organize trainings for various associations across the Municipality. The BAC is a branch of District government, responsible for the development of local Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, and for the provision of Business Development Services. Serwaa is a member of the Tailors and Dressmakers Association in Bogoso, through which she received an invite from the BAC to participate in the training.

## Her success:



*Serwaa Abass' shop in Bogoso in June 2018  
(Photo Credit: WAGES)*

At this training, she learned about time management, bookkeeping, and customer and apprentice relations. Over time, she was able to implement this newly-acquired knowledge into her business and within 7 months, she saw the changes that she had been wishing for, for over a decade. At the WAGES training, she also learned about the importance of maintaining visibility of a business. Upon her return, she immediately organized for a sign board to be put up outside of her shop.

As she continued implementing these new practices, she saved up and purchased a knitting machine. The machine in turn has brought about an increase in savings because previously, she used to have to send her work elsewhere for knitting, which in turn cost her time and money. With her new knitting machine, not only does she save on time and money, but she also has additional income, because other tailors and seamstresses bring their knitting work to her shop.

The table below shows the increase in her income as a result of the knitting machine:

Date	Workshop Income (A)	Knitting Income (B)	Without Knitting (A-B)	With Knitting (A+B)
December 2017	915	10	905	925
Jan & March 2018	460	123	337	583
April 2018	250	30	220	280
May 2018	500	35	465	535
June 2018	220	35	185	255
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2345</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>2112</b>	<b>2578</b>

*Table 1: Serwaa Abass' income with & without her knitting machine, December 2017 to June 2018*

With her savings, she has achieved her dream of expanding, recently moving into a bigger shop. Serwaa is therefore very grateful for the WAGES training she attended and the impact it has had on her business. She hopes for more trainings and hopes to continue expanding her business.

The WAGES project aims to break the vicious circle in which local communities, especially women and youth, are excluded from the benefits of mining investments. Through WAGES, **World University Service of Canada (WUSC)** and the **Center for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI)**, work in three regions of Burkina Faso, Ghana and Guinea impacted by extractive industries. The project works to empower local communities, and specifically integrate women and youth, to participate fully in local governance, economic opportunities and the sustainable development of these areas. The project collaborates with local and national governments, select mining companies, as well as small and medium-sized businesses and civil society organizations to attain those objectives. Global Affairs Canada funds the implementation of WAGES from 2016 until 2022. For more information on the project follow this link: <https://resources.wusc.ca/project/wages>