

## BUSINESS SKILLS TRAINING

### **Business Training in Fragile and Conflict Affected States.**

SPARK has been working in conflict affected environments since 1994, to support young ambitious people to lead their post-conflict societies into prosperity. SPARK has developed a number of solutions and interventions designed to specifically support and target proactive entrepreneurs that either intend to start a business or grow an existing enterprise.

Micro Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in post-conflict societies experience specific hurdles and challenges. These are different for start-ups compared to existing businesses. SPARK assists both of these categories through tailored business skills training.

To date SPARK has conducted intensive training for more than 10,000 entrepreneurs in fragile states, through its different programmes. Materials have been translated into local languages and adjusted to cultural as well as conflict context of each of the countries we work in. SPARK has designed and delivers its own ISO certified <sup>1</sup> training modules for new start and growth oriented entrepreneurs, and the procedures are ISO (re)certified every year, following both internal and external evaluations.

SPARK Business Skills Training  
in Monrovia



### SPARK Training Approach:

The approach to training includes a high level of interactivity. The training encourages participants to use their creativity, knowledge and skills to develop important skills and business ideas through illustrative examples, practical exercises and discussion.

Training by example: SPARK integrates the presentation of successful, local business people into the training, and allows the discussion with participants in a classroom forum.

Before rolling out a training programme, SPARK conducts in-depth needs and capacity assessment for the level and type of training required. Training can be delivered to growth oriented firms, micro enterprises or even illiterate entrepreneurs. A cultural and conflict sensitive analysis is conducted to ensure final training materials are context specific. The training topics include:



Ahmet Govori  
Natyra - Kosovo

**Entrepreneurial Introduction:** Empowers potential entrepreneurs to start and manage their businesses successfully. SPARK recognizes this module as a strong foundation for comprehensive understanding of the phenomena of entrepreneurship;

**Business Plan Writing:** Business planning provides all technical and practical information to entrepreneurs on how to write their business plans, the structure of conventional business plan and how to present their unique personalities in their business plans;

**Project Cycle Management:** Increasing effectiveness and efficiency;

**Marketing and Sales:** Before entrepreneurs make sales and win income, they need to understand their target market through research, develop marketing plans and strategies to enhance their ability to increase their sales by improving their marketing and knowledge of their customers;

**Product and Service Development:** Product (or service) development includes a wide range of management activities ranging from the time there is a new idea for the product to eventually providing ongoing support to customers who have purchased the new product;

**Access to Finance and Internal Financial Management:** It addresses issues of access to finance, sources of funding, budgeting and setting up basic financial administration among other topics. These notions enhance the success rate of business ventures.

**HRM:** Human resources management is concerned with the recruitment, management and retention of high quality people who are best fitted to fulfil the company's objectives, defining and measuring levels of performance and providing continuous opportunities for training and development;



Ayah Mlatat  
Alokwah Sheep Farm

### Working with other methods

SPARK is also working frequently with other agencies to provide training according to their methodologies. For example, under a recent MoU with the International Labour Organisation, SPARK is able to provide all training modules of the "Know About Business" (KAB), Start and Improve Your Business" (SIYB) training programmes. Moreover, SPARK has partnered in the past with IFC's Business Edge as well as delivering the German CEFE training methodology.

### Beyond training

In the SPARK philosophy training is but one essential element to supporting new start and growth oriented MSMEs. In most countries we operate in we provide a full package of support, which typically also includes other services such as soft loans, market access support, coaching, etc.

For more information on our Business Skills Training or other MSME support services, please contact: [a.gonzalez@spark-online.org](mailto:a.gonzalez@spark-online.org)

## DONORS:

Throughout the years SPARK has been able to deliver results thanks to a number of donors. The following are just a few of our donors that greatly contributed to SPARK's achievements:

Chevron, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Commission, King Baudouin Foundation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UK Department for International Development (DFID), World Bank Group.

## OUR CERTIFICATES:

SPARK is committed to meet the highest standards of organisational practice and ethics. We are proud to hold the following certifications:

- International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001. is an international quality control standard-setting body composed of representatives from various national standards organisations.
- Algemeen Nut Beogende Instellingen (ANBI), are recognised charitable not-for-profit organisations by The Dutch Tax and Customs Administration. Donations to these are tax deductible.
- Centraal Bureau Fondsenwerving (CBF) is an independent foundation that monitors fundraising by charities and certifies them with the goal to promote trustworthy fundraising and expenditure.
- International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) is a multi-stakeholder initiative that seeks to improve the transparency of aid in order to increase its effectiveness in tackling poverty. Certified organisations provide open data and information on how they spend their funds.

