



# The Success Through Entrepreneurship Program (STEP):

## Empowering Beninese Entrepreneurs for Sustainable Economic Growth

An Analysis of the Benin STEP Program

June 8 - June 14, 2023



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# ABSTRACT

This report presents an overview of the **Success Through Entrepreneurship Program (STEP)** conducted by Auburn University's (AU) Office of Outreach Global and Harbert College of Business in Cotonou, Benin, from June 8 to June 14, 2023. The program was funded partly by the U.S. Embassy in Cotonou. AU instructors Dr. LaKami Baker and Dr. Elizabeth I. Quansah successfully **trained 107 local participants**, focusing on empowering aspiring entrepreneurs with essential skills and knowledge to thrive in the business world. The STEP program has had a significant positive impact on the participants and contributes to the socio-economic development of Benin.



Dr. Elizabeth I. Quansah, Director of Auburn University Outreach Global, leads session during STEP program.



# Mission, Vision, and Goals

The 2023 Success Through Entrepreneurship Program (STEP) was a transformative initiative undertaken by the AU Office of Outreach Global and the AU Harbert College of Business in collaboration with local partners, the Benin Ministry of Development and Coordination of Government Action (MDC), Center for Partnership and Expertise for Sustainable Development (CePED), and the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) – Benin. The program aimed to equip local entrepreneurs, students and youth, with vital skills and knowledge, fostering sustainable economic growth and development in Cotonou, Benin. This report presents an evaluation of the program's success and its impact on participants and the broader community.

## Program Partners:



AUBURN  
UNIVERSITY

Raymond J. Harbert  
College of Business



MINISTÈRE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT  
ET DE LA COORDINATION DE  
L'ACTION GOUVERNEMENTALE  
RÉPUBLIQUE DU BÉNIN



LAMBASSA  
ICA - BENIN

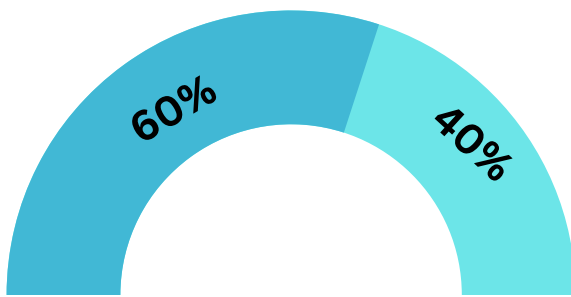
# Program Description

The STEP Training Program took place over five days, from June 8 to June 14, 2023. Participants received comprehensive lessons in various aspects of entrepreneurship, including marketing, product pricing, branding, public speaking, and team building. The training sessions culminated with participants presenting their business pitches to the class, applying the newly acquired marketing techniques to promote their products.

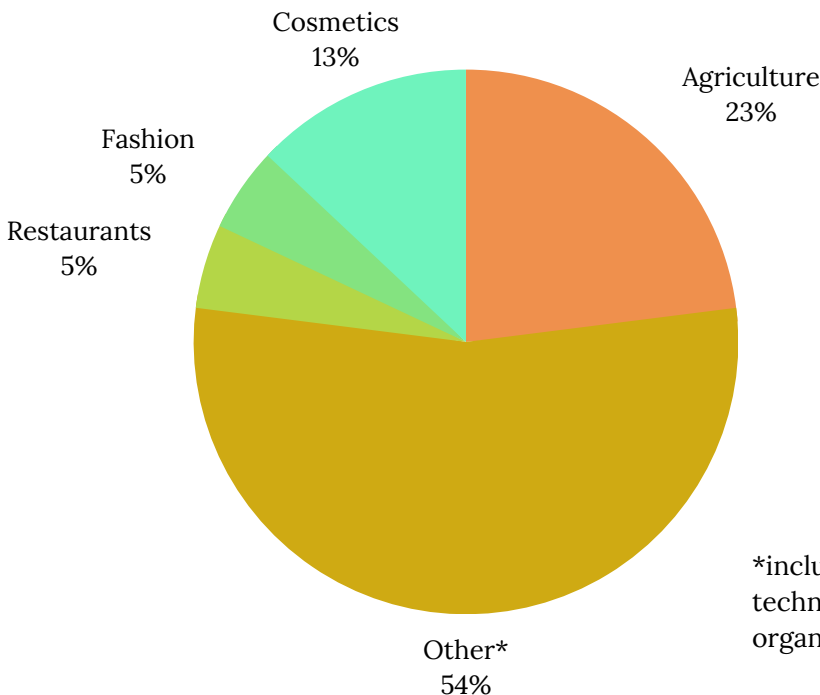


# PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

The program successfully trained 107 local individuals, of whom approximately 60% already had businesses in various sectors. The remaining 40% expressed an interest in starting their own businesses in the future. Among the participants, 23% showed a keen interest in agricultural and livestock businesses, with 12% already running such ventures. Additionally, cosmetology (13%), fashion (5%), and restaurants (5%) were identified as other popular business interests.



**60% of program participants already had a business when attending the training program.**



**Business Interests of Participants**

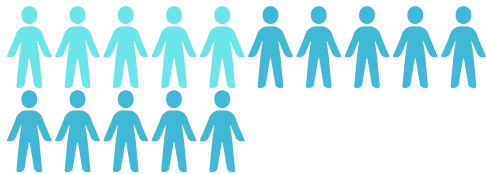
\*includes development, governmental, technical/engineering, trade, and teaching organizations or companies.



## Gender Inclusivity

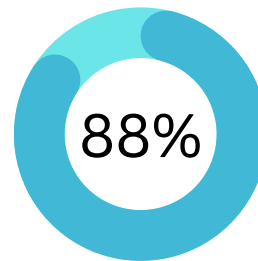
The STEP Training Program demonstrated efforts towards gender inclusivity, with approximately 33% of the participants being women. This represents a significant achievement in promoting women's entrepreneurship and empowerment in the region.

**Approximately 1/3 of program participants were women.**



## Educational Background

Approximately 88% of the attendees possessed some form of tertiary education, ranging from Professional Licenses, Bachelors, to Masters degrees. Furthermore, around 3% of the participants held doctoral degrees, indicating a high level of academic achievement among the aspiring entrepreneurs.



**Participants with a level of tertiary education.**



**Dr. LaKami Baker leads session on entrepreneurship.**





## PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIALS

### Ghislaine Binzaon Satchoua



*"I have a business that specializes in selling drinks – spirits, wine, and champagne. During this training, I learned how to set a price and also how to highlight the value of my products to customers. I attended the previous Auburn University training as well, where I learned how to speak in public and how to present my products."*

*In 5 years, I want to be a very successful business person. In 10-20 years, I want to expand my business internationally and across the region."*

### Joseph Adjagborin Kouassi

*"Since 2021, I have had an innovative agricultural business that specializes in the transformation of tomatoes. In 5 years, I wish to become a prosperous businessman that finds agricultural solutions to aid the public. I thank the university for this occasion and opportunity. I discovered new things that will help me to restructure my business and to create new projects in the future."*





## CONCLUSION

The Success Through Entrepreneurship Program (STEP) executed by Auburn University's Office of Outreach Global and Harbert College of Business in collaboration with local organizations, MDC, CePED, and ICA – Benin, proved to be a successful endeavor. The program effectively equipped aspiring entrepreneurs with essential skills and knowledge, empowering them to excel in their businesses and contribute to the growth of the local and national economies. The dedication of all involved parties, including the U.S. Embassy in Cotonou, highlights the transformative power of knowledge and its potential to create a positive impact on society. The Auburn University Office of Outreach Global eagerly anticipates the continuation of the STEP Training Program to foster sustainable economic growth and prosperity in Benin.



Dr. Quansah leads students in public speaking and team building activity.



Dr. Quansah (center) and Dr. Baker (right) present gift to Mr. Yacoubou Amadou (left), Deputy Director of the Benin Ministry of Development (MDC).

For questions and inquiries about the STEP program, please contact:

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