



New Qualifications and  
Competencies in TVET



## Women in the Driving Seat tractor operation training

Innovation and Learning Practice

Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) Project

**Submitted by the Agriculture Engineering Services Directorate and the Women in Agriculture Development Directorate under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana**

The Women in the Driving Seat tractor operation initiative in Ghana literally places women behind the wheel of tractors and other machinery, providing a boost in quality, productivity and employment in the country's important agricultural sector

Start date: January 2018

End date: December 2019

Type of implementing institution: National body

Target group: Agricultural TVET system stakeholders and female trainees

## Agriculture Engineering Services Directorate and Women in Agriculture Development Directorate, Ghana

The Women in Agricultural Development Directorate (WIAD) and the Agricultural Engineering Services Directorate (AESD) are two of seven technical directorates of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) in Ghana. WIAD is tasked with developing effective policies that promote delivery of improved technologies and information on agricultural production and post-production in an environmentally sustainable manner with a focus on women. The mission of the AESD is to ensure the availability and adoption of appropriate agricultural engineering technologies in the country.

## Description of activities

Women in the Driving Seat tractor operation training aims to break barriers for women in agricultural mechanization, a traditionally male-dominated area. The programme seeks a long-term increase in women's participation and leadership in agricultural machinery operation in Ghana through a tractor training and certification process for women only. When it was launched in 2018, the Women in the Driving Seat training programme was the first of its kind in Ghana and was a pioneer in gender-sensitive training delivery. Its training modules include:

- equipment operation,
- maintenance,
- business opportunities, and
- bookkeeping.

Private sector players in agribusiness supported the curriculum development and offered workplace learning opportunities for the women tractor operators. The objectives for the selected trainees included improved skills, better access to information, strategies to ensure gender equity relating to machinery, strengthened local support networks, diversification of income and improved financial and economic status.

## Relevance

### Why is a specific emphasis on women in agricultural mechanization necessary in Ghana?

Despite women's significant role in the agricultural development in Ghana, they are systematically marginalized and their contributions as farm machine operators and towards increasing agricultural productivity are regularly undervalued. Men are usually the ones who conduct commercial transactions of agricultural mechanization services at the farm level, meaning men usually make decisions and control resources required

to invest in mechanization (especially capital). The lack of role models who operate and manage farm machinery has discouraged young women from taking up related occupations. Women are unable to take advantage of job positions that require competencies in farm operation and management, which is why the Women in the Driving Seat training programme is particularly necessary in the Ghanaian context.

### How is including women in agricultural mechanization better for the sector overall?

In the past, Ghana's agribusiness has struggled due to frequent breakdowns of agricultural machinery caused by improper use of equipment. This was often due to insufficient competencies by operators, mechanics and technicians. A MOFA survey revealed that almost all Agricultural Mechanization Service Enterprise Centres (AMSEC) were operated by male tractor operators who lacked skills about safety and handling of agricultural machinery and equipment. Women in the Driving Seat training provided a window of opportunity for the inclusion of women and the development of the sector in terms of skills quality. While not part of a qualification framework, the training materials and approach developed in the programme have been adopted and institutionalized as a training component for tractor operator refresher courses and trainees undergoing a one-year certificate in general agriculture.

## Added value

### Beyond putting women 'in the driving seat', what are additional impacts of the initiative?

Developing gender-sensitive TVET interventions challenges practitioners to adopt the mindset of the people they are trying to reach, instead of trying to think for them. In the case of Women in the Driving Seat, this meant looking at the challenges women face outside of training and helping them deal with issues like socio-cultural beliefs, gender stereotypes and how to position themselves in male-dominated areas. The Women in the Driving Seat initiative also changed employers' perceptions towards women in the workplace; the female trainees in the programme were often the first women to had work placements in the companies where they worked. Thus, the initiative contributed to achieving a broader impact by challenging the society to reimagine women's roles at home, at the workplace and in the community. The young Ghanaian generation can pursue opportunities that were once closed off.

### How did the women who participated benefit beyond the training and drivers license certification?

Trainees were attached to commercial farms located mainly in rural areas for their three-month workplace experience learning. This was to support the women in securing job offers, but there was another benefit: they served as role models in the community and helped with sensitization activities at the community level to ensure societal norms and values regarding women in workplace settings were explored. The women also become multipliers for the knowledge they gained during their training; **one recently-certified tractor operator shared**

### her agricultural know-how through a radio programme.

Finally, the Women in the Driving Seat training includes a module on business opportunities in tractor operation, which exposes the trainees to options in developing businesses around tractor operation.

### In what ways does the programme permanently advance gender inclusion in TVET?

Before training began at the two participating TVET institutions, a gender-sensitive tractor operation curriculum was developed, trainers received gender-sensitivity training, and management at training centres learned about gender issues to create an enabling environment prior to roll-out. The training was tailor-made and targeted to create opportunities for women to enter a male dominated profession. The fact that the partnering training providers adopted the training material and approach after the pilots were concluded speaks to their effectiveness, innovativeness and sustainability. The presence of women tractor operators in the communities has contributed to changing norms and values in the workplace, at training centres and in ministry policy. This has led to further trainings specifically targeting women and also encouraged women to be part of refresher training courses.

## Transferability

### Are there broader 'proofs of concept' that can be observed from the initiative?

The Women in the Driving Seat initiative is a unique selling point programme designed using the Competence Based Training (CBT) approach to build knowledge, skills and attitudes of trainees to be readily employed. The curriculum with unit specification, learning materials, and assessment instruments complements the existing curriculum in agriculture mechanization and includes the following units:

- **Introduction to tractors,**
- **Environmental health and safety,**
- **Wheel tractor control and instrument,**
- **Agricultural machineries,**
- **Maintenance agricultural,** and
- **Business and management.**

### What are some considerations for implementing a similar initiative in another context?

By hosting women trainees during work placements, employers' perceptions and actions regarding the inclusion of women changed as a result of the Women in the Driving Seat initiative. Therefore, implementing a similar project requires consultation and inclusion of all key stakeholders to sensitize them to the potentially significant mindset changes that are required for such a project to achieve sustainable and replicable success. The approach can be replicable in the agriculture sector and beyond, as a model for gender-sensitive TVET intervention and helping women to position themselves confidently in male-dominated areas.

Women in the Driving Seat tractor operation training is one of the BILT project's Innovation and Learning Practices that address systemic challenges within the five work streams of the project. Specifically, the Women in the Driving Seat initiative addresses new qualifications and competencies in TVET:



### New Qualifications and Competencies

- *Identifying new qualifications and competencies in a timely manner;*
- *Integrating them into appealing and flexible curricula and training regulations; and*
- *Implementing them in innovative training approaches*

### Additional Innovation and Learning Practices cover the following areas:



#### Digitalization in TVET



#### Entrepreneurship in TVET



#### Greening TVET



#### Migration and TVET

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For more information about this practice:  
Watch a video about '[Women in the Driving Seat](#)'

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## About the BILT Project

UNESCO-UNEVOC's Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) project is a reference point for innovation and learning in TVET. It utilizes the international UNEVOC Network to create opportunities for collaboration and a platform for bridging innovation and learning between Europe, Africa and the Asia-Pacific region. BILT complements developments at the national level in supporting innovative, market-oriented and attractive modes of learning and cooperation in TVET.

The BILT project explores the process of identifying, integrating and implementing new qualifications and competencies in TVET. This is known as the 'three I's process'. In addition to the broad focus on new qualifications and competencies, BILT addresses four complementary themes: Digitalization and TVET, Greening TVET, Entrepreneurship in TVET, and Migration and TVET.

For more information, please visit

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## New Qualifications and Competencies in TVET

- Identifying new qualifications and competencies in a timely manner;
- Integrating them into appealing and flexible curricula and training regulations; and
- Implementing them in innovative training approaches

## Entrepreneurship in TVET

Unlocking the potential of innovative entrepreneurial activities and fostering entrepreneurial culture

## Greening TVET

Responding to new development paradigms for sustainability and reduced environmental impact

## Digitalization in TVET

Providing response to new skills demands, as technology has permeated the world of work and is changing the profile of jobs

## Migration and TVET

Accelerating the integration of migrants into their host communities, and allowing them to become productive members of the workforce

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