



Grassroots Business Initiative



International Finance Corporation
World Bank Group

STEP Support and Training Entrepreneurship Program

Burkina Faso & Mali



Background

Burkina Faso and Mali are both land-locked countries in West Africa, and two of the poorest nations in the world. With 45% and 65% of their populations living below the poverty line, respectively, and the vast majority, around 90%, engaged in subsistence farming and fishing, Burkinabe and Maliens continue to suffer from economic disenchantment, continued conflict in neighboring Ivory Coast, and fluctuating commodity prices. Foreign aid and structural adjustment programs have demonstrated some positive impacts, reflected in positive economic growth, but there is a great deal of work ahead in building infrastructure and institutions and equipping and empowering the citizens with sustainable opportunities.

What is STEP?

The Support and Training Entrepreneurship Program (STEP), is aimed at imparting business etiquette and management skills to micro and small scale entrepreneurs operating in the informal sector. The goal is to nurture fledging businesses into viable commercial enterprises, that will be beneficial to the country's economic prosperity and future.



The program's objective is two-fold. The first is to bolster the capacity building of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) that dominate the economy, but lack access to the financing and business development services they need to grow.

The second is to create a team of well-trained consultants with the business savvy to offer adequate business services to micro and small enterprises or start their own sustainable commercial enterprises, after 2-3 years of participating in the STEP program.

The program started in July 2003 in Mali, and is now providing technical assistance to micro-enterprises and artisans through one-on-one consulting services and training. These services are delivered by 19 young and dynamic consultants located in Bamako, Kati, Ségou, Sikasso, Koutiala and Mopti. The consultants, all university graduates in business, accounting or entrepreneurial studies generally work with about 14 entrepreneurs at a time. They provide business development services at a subsidized price to their clients for one hour, at least once a week, for a period of 3 to 6 months.

GBO Profile

In July 2006, STEP Burkina Faso was launched as a pilot program, with 4 cadets stationed in Ouagadougou (3) and Koudougou (1). The Program has been an important step in bridging the divide between trained service providers and micro-entrepreneurs seeking assistance.

STEP's main activities include:

- Consulting: Diagnosis, problem solving, and weekly one-on-one support at the entrepreneurs' work place during 3 months after which the contract can be renewed.
- Business training: accounting, inventory management, marketing, customer relations, business plan development, and organizational management skills.
- Intermediation with other BDS service providers and Micro Finance Institutions.

IFC's Involvement

IFC's Grassroots Business Initiative (GBI) supports STEP by:

- Financing the program's operating costs and international and local consultants for the training of the juniors consultants;
- Providing technical assistance for the development of the program's strategies and monitoring and evaluation system;
- Helping them source funding and create good credit history and relationships with micro finance institutions and other BDS providers; and
- Developing sustainable models that can be replicated in countries.

Results To-Date

# of STEP Cadets Trained	28
Total # of client contacts established	1500
# of entrepreneurs assisted	700
# of indirect beneficiaries	4,500
# of Jobs created	1,524
Total Revenue Generated	\$16,000