

A woman wearing a white hijab and a green jacket is focused on her work in a kitchen. She is holding a white jar with a blue label and using a spoon to stir its contents. The background shows a cluttered kitchen with various items on shelves. The image is part of a document cover with blue and white design elements.

spark

SME
Coaching
Manual

Introduction to SME Coaching Manual

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in the global economy as they provide more than 50 percent of employment worldwide. In developing economies, their significance is even greater, oftentimes contributing up to 40 percent of the national income. Considering their role in inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and innovation, SMEs are also essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, access to finance and a lack of information (e.g. on regulations and legislation) are the main obstacles entrepreneurs face when trying to start or grow their own businesses.

SME Support

Supporting SMEs and young entrepreneurs to attain technical skills and get access to finance is, as such, of major importance. Since 2016, SPARK started its Local Employment in Africa for Development (LEAD) programme to do exactly that. By focusing on coaching existing SMEs (70%) and start-ups (30%), over 2,000 jobs have been created so far. **As additional support for SMEs in fragile and conflict-affected regions is much needed, we produced an SME Coaching Manual, which can serve as a useful guide in establishing similar SME Coaching programmes.**



Manual

The SME Coaching Manual is meant to be as practical and hands-on as possible and therefore includes many real-life examples, lessons learned and ready-to-use templates. Highlighting the main elements of setting-up an SME Coaching programme, the manual is divided into the following sections:

Phase 1: Business leads generation:

- Analysing the (labour) market;
- Publishing of call for proposals;
- Selection and disqualification criteria;
- Identifying prospective SMEs.

Phase 2: Needs assessment:

- Performing SME SWOT analyses;
- Performing SME impact assessments;
- Selecting expert consultants;
- Designing a plan of action.

Phase 3: Collaboration agreement design:

- Drafting a collaboration agreement;
- Setting specific activities and KPIs;
- Stating costs shares and payment terms;
- Connecting deliverables with a timeline.

Phase 4: Implementation:

- Establishing an operational plan;
- Training, coaching and capacity building;
- Implementing Quality Management Systems (QMS);
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluating.

Phase 5: Follow-up:

- Collecting results;
- Performing site visits;
- Verifying job creation and tracking hiring data.

Who is this manual for

This manual is intended for practitioners – organisations or individuals – who (plan to) design and/or implement SME Coaching programmes in fragile regions.

Key results:



SPARK has provided technical assistance to over 1,500 SMEs;



Over 7,000 businesses have received financial and/or technical support;



Through worldwide programming, more than 26,000 jobs have been generated since 2015.



SPARK

SaadPlast plastic company, SIAD,
Gaziantep, Turkey

About SPARK

SPARK is an independent, non-profit international development organization, with over 100 staff members working in fourteen offices in thirteen countries. Established in 1994, SPARK has over 20 years of experience in working in post-conflict regions of Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

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Other Manuals:

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