The Springboard Scholars Program

**Country of Project Implementation:** Ghana  
**Sponsoring College:** Oberlin College  
**Project Lead:** Gideon Opoku Ampofo

The Springboard Scholars Program took place during the 23rd – 27th August 2021 at the BlueCrest University College in Accra, Ghana. The event was made possible by the help of the Davis Project for Peace Award and I am extremely grateful to the Davis Foundation for believing in my dreams and making this experience a reality. I am also very grateful to Oberlin Fellowship Office especially Nicholas Petzak and his team for their wonderful support every step of the way right from the idea stage to the implementation stage.

The one-week summer leadership camp featured keynote addresses, financial literacy training, workshops, panel discussions, a social innovation competition, and many more. The program brought together underprivileged students, youth leaders, business leaders, civil society experts, and influential personalities to discuss youth leadership and youth contribution towards building a better Ghana and a better world.

To this end, the League for Global Development partnered with organizations such as the Fidelity Bank, Divergent, Kandifo Institute, IOT Network, Festman Learning Hub, and EducationUSA to host some of the sessions. Having such influential bodies graced the occasion and provided students with unique perspectives that will shape their minds for the better tomorrow that we all yearn for.

**Pre – Leadership Bootcamp**

The Springboard organizing team opened applications for the Springboard Scholars Program on May 10th, 2021 and closed applications first week of August. We received a total of 429 applications from 9 different universities and 4 different high schools in Ghana and after review and interviews, 70 scholars were accepted to participate in the Springboard Scholars Program. 30% of our scholars were high school students and the remaining percentage university students. The scholars spanned from 9 different universities and all the 16 regions of Ghana were represented.

56% of our scholars identified as male and the remaining 46% identified as female. In an initial survey we sent out, over 50% of the scholars said they knew nothing about sustainable development or career development. Over 90% said they have never met with a guidance counsellor or career development advisor since high school.

We also partnered with Internet Society Ghana, SmartGrid Technology Limited, The John A. Kufour Foundation, Kandifo Institute, Fidelity Bank Ghana, EducationUSA Advising Center, IOT Network Hub, Divergent, and Festman Learning Hub. All the above-mentioned partners led training sessions in their respective fields of expertise. We also provided support in the form of transportation cost to about 20 participants who stated that transportation cost to event venue will be a problem.

**Opening Ceremony**

The opening ceremony of the LGD Springboard Scholars Program came off on Monday, August 23, 2021; at the BlueCrest College located at Accra, Ghana. The program was under the theme; “The Ghanaian Youth capacity building: a model for enhancing economic development”.

The opening ceremony began with a musical interlude. Subsequently, there was an introduction of the dignitaries from the various organizations we partnered with.

The welcome address was given by Master Gideon Ampofo, the Executive Director and founder of the League for Global Development (LGD), followed by the introductory remarks given by the Board Chairman of LGD. Next on the list was our guest speaker, Mr. Kwabena Boateng who gave a 30-minute
inspirational message on career path counselling dubbed, “Motivating Informed Decisions (MIND).” This session ended with a musical interlude of a patriotic song.

The conclusion of the opening ceremony featured a 10-minute keynote from Dr. Pascal Brenya (Life Coach, Human Capital Expert; HR & Training Consultant; founder and CEO, Focus Central Group; Coordinator, Kufuor Scholars Program), and finally a 5-minute inspirational video message summed up the opening ceremony.

**Session Highlights**

Over the course of the week, the Springboard Scholars participated in Career Development Sessions facilitated by Fidelity Bank Ghana and the John A. Kufuor Foundation, Design Thinking Workshops facilitated by Divergent, Financial Literacy Workshop facilitated by Fidelity Bank Ghana, Sustainable Development Workshop and Social Innovation Competition facilitated by the League for Global Development, Robotics and Innovation workshop facilitated by Internet Society Ghana Chapter and IOT Network Hub. Study Abroad Session facilitated by EducationUSA Advising Center, and a class on Data Analytics using Excel.

**Other Activities**

We had a sports day at the Marvels MiniGolf in Accra. The Springboard Scholars competed in a mini golf challenge. Three of the scholars emerged the best three setting record at the Marvels MiniGolf.

**Project Comments**

In terms of the project Idea, I came up with it myself in efforts to contribute my quota towards building a better global economy. It was supposed to be a residential program, but we could not house people due to last minute rejections by hostels due to the impact of COVID-19. My project really made me change the way I see the world especially seeing how some people are disadvantaged. One of the main challenges I faced communicating with people was due to lack of internet services in Ghana, a lot of the scholars could not respond promptly to emails. A lot of Ghanaian students do not focus on skills building because the system forces them to believe grades are the only things that matter. The Springboard scholars got the opportunity to learn about sustainable development and how they could be part of its implementation in Ghana. They also developed transferrable skillsets that they could take back to their various communities to impact the lives of the people around them positively. I personally define peace as a state in which everyone is happy because everything works and there are no disturbances.

**Personal Statement** – Springboard made me realize how young people can brainstorm and work together for good when given the opportunity and provided with the necessary resources.