

## **THE LADY VOLTA GREEN TECH ACADEMY**

### **Reshaping Development Communication: Insights from Ghana**

In Ghana's Volta Region, the Lady Volta Green Tech Academy (LVGTA), supported by Village Exchange Ghana (VEG) and Social Venture Africa (SVA), has undertaken a significant initiative to examine how language shapes the development work supported by Village Exchange Ghana (VEG) and Social Venture Africa (SVA). The initiative comes in the context of an active discussion in the development sector about the appropriate use of language by NGOs. This discussion concerns both the language used in local communities and for fundraising activities, and it is seen as an integral part of the journey towards more equitable and respectful development practices. Our aim is to evaluate and improve cross-cultural communication and management with respect for and understanding of local conditions and inclusive decision-making.

#### **Results of a First Survey**

Kofi Nyalimba, an experienced social worker and researcher, conducted an initial survey in October 2024 as part of a wider initiative. This study involved interviews with 9 LVGTA team members in Ho (Volta Region) and its insights will inform additional community surveys and workshops on how we can evolve our communication practices and improve cross-cultural leadership and inclusive decision-making.

The findings of the study highlight both strengths and areas for growth in cross-cultural communication. While respondents generally felt that international partners showed respect for local customs, they also indicated opportunities for more culturally appropriate language in organizational communications.

LVGTA's mission statement to educate and empower disadvantaged youth, especially women, was broadly supported in the staff survey. A key theme emerged around the importance of local voice in organization's narrative. Staff members expressed confidence in sharing their ideas, suggesting a strong foundation for collaborative dialogue around communication choices. The survey reveals areas for growth in cross-cultural communication to better reflect local perspectives and cultural context. In particular, the survey helped us to identify opportunities to evolve how we describe skills, experience, and roles to better reflect mutual learning and shared expertise. The improvements in cross-cultural communication can help our organization to better harness local competence and to incorporate local perspectives and cultural context more deeply into our communications in a way that reflects true partnership rather than hierarchical relationships.

#### **The Path Ahead**

The insights from this study are informing a broader community survey and a series of workshops and discussions about how we can evolve our communication practices. We see this as part of a larger journey toward more equitable and respectful development practice.

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This research is part of our ongoing commitment to meaningful partnership with the communities of Ghana's Volta Region. We view it as a crucial step towards a more respectful and effective development practice.