

## From Digital Skills to Employment: Derick's Journey of Transformation Through the RCA Project:

Derick Owusu, a 19-year-old adolescent from Sunyani, is one of the young people whose life has been significantly transformed through the Resilient City for Adolescents (RCA) Project. His story reflects the project's broader vision of equipping adolescents with practical skills, confidence, exposure, and opportunities that prepare them to participate meaningfully in society and pursue sustainable livelihoods.



Figure 1: Derick Owusu, A 19 year old and a beneficiary of the RCA project in Sunyani.

Before joining the project, Derick had limited exposure to digital technology, leadership opportunities, and professional working environments. Like many adolescents within rapidly urbanizing communities, he faced challenges in accessing practical employability skills and mentorship opportunities that could help shape his future career path. Although he had a strong interest in technology and learning, he lacked the platform and resources to develop his potential.

His turning point came when he enrolled in the RCA Project's Digital Innovation Programme (DIP), implemented in partnership with the Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT. Through the programme, 45 adolescents were trained in practical digital and innovation skills as part of the project's effort to expose young people to the digital space and strengthen employability opportunities for adolescents interested in technology, innovation, and digital leadership.

During the training, Derick acquired practical competencies in computer applications, digital communication, and technology-based problem-solving. Beyond technical skills, the programme also strengthened his confidence, communication abilities, and exposure to professional environments through participation in leadership and civic engagement activities linked to the project.

Reflecting on his experience, Derick explained that the RCA Project fundamentally changed how he viewed himself and his future.

"The project really boosted my confidence. Before the training, I had little exposure to digital technology, but now I can use computers confidently, speak in public, and engage people without fear."

Through the RCA Project, Derick actively participated in several key engagements, including community forums, policy dialogues, the Adolescent Parliament, the Medaakye radio programme, and stakeholder meetings. These experiences helped improve his public speaking skills, broaden his understanding of leadership and governance, and increased his ability to interact confidently with institutions and professionals.

His growing confidence and digital competence soon began creating opportunities beyond the project itself. His school headmaster later recommended him to support the IT unit at his church, where he now assists in typing and managing digital notes during church services. He also joined his school's robotics activities, further deepening his passion for technology and innovation.

One of the most remarkable milestones in Derick's journey came when he attended an interview at Chardose Micro-Credit for a position as an accounts assistant. During the interview, Derick shared his experience and training under the RCA Project. According to him, the manager became particularly interested in the practical skills and confidence he had gained through the Digital Innovation Programme.

***"When I mentioned the training I received through the RCA Project, the manager was impressed by my confidence and skills, and he offered me the job immediately."***

Today, Derick works as an accounts assistant, supporting loan entries and financial record management while continuing his education. The opportunity has not only improved his practical experience and exposure but has also strengthened his sense of responsibility and independence.

Importantly, Derick's journey has gone beyond personal transformation. Due to his school schedule, he introduced another adolescent beneficiary of the RCA Project, Ahmed Boadi, to support the organization during his absence. He now mentors his colleague and transfers the same knowledge and workplace experience he acquired through the project.

***“Because of my school schedule, I introduced Ahmed to assist when I'm away. My boss accepted him too, and now I'm helping him learn the work.”***

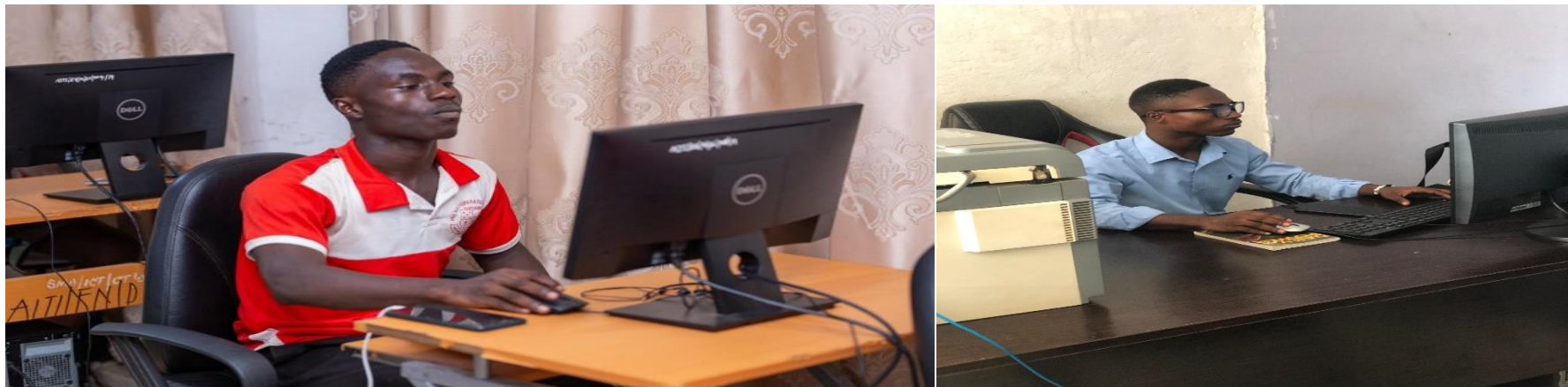
Derick's story demonstrates how investments in adolescent digital skills and leadership development can create real pathways to employment, mentorship, and economic participation. It highlights the importance of linking youth training programmes with practical opportunities, exposure, and confidence-building interventions that allow adolescents to transition successfully into the world of work.

Today, Derick serves as an inspiration to many young people within the municipality, proving that when adolescents are provided with the right support systems, skills, and opportunities, they can move from vulnerability to leadership, productivity, and self-reliance.

#### ➤ Key Systems Shifts Demonstrated

- Digital skills training linked to real employment opportunities
- Increased adolescent confidence and leadership capacity
- Peer mentorship and youth-led knowledge transfer
- Growing private sector recognition of adolescent potential
- Stronger pathways between skills development and economic inclusion

Derick Owusu's journey reflects the transformative power of digital inclusion and youth empowerment under the RCA Project. From participating in the Digital Innovation Programme to securing employment as an accounts assistant, his story demonstrates how investments in adolescent digital skills can create pathways to confidence, leadership, mentorship, and economic independence.



*Figure 3: Derick Owusu, a beneficiary of the RCA Project's Digital Innovation Programme, transitioned from ICT training at the Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT to a professional working environment as an accounts assistant. His journey reflects how digital skills, confidence-building, and mentorship can create real employment opportunities for adolescents.*