

Youth Entrepreneurship and Livelihoods in the Mobile Telephony Sector in a Developing Country City, Accra

Robert L. Afutu-Kotey¹

¹University of Ghana, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, Accra, Ghana

rlakotey@gmail.com

Liberalization of the telecommunications sector in 1995 brought private mobile telephony operators into operation Ghana. The mobile telephony sector has since witnessed tremendous amount of growth in terms of total number of subscribers and this growth has run in tandem with the number of young people or the youth engaged in various forms of entrepreneurial activities which enable them eke out a living from the sector. Some of the key activities involve sale of mobile telephony airtime, mobile phone repairs, and sale of mobile phones and accessories. However, activities within the sector have not been static, but fast changing over the years. In the not too distant past, most of the youth were engaged in *space-to-space* activities. However, this activity is no longer a dominant activity. The literature on mobile telephony has mostly focused on the various uses to which mobile phones are put, with little attention being paid to entrepreneurial and livelihood activities within the sector. This paper attempts to bridge this knowledge gap, especially within the Ghanaian context by highlighting issues of innovative entrepreneurial and livelihood activities within the mobile telephony sector in urban Accra. The paper argues that the increasing changes ongoing within the sector are affecting the livelihoods of the youth, but the youth are responding to these changes in various innovative ways which enable them continue to sustain their livelihoods. The paper concludes that the youth through their innovative entrepreneurial activities constitutes major agents as well as subjects of change.