



2016 Group Development Programme

ED&F Man has launched its Group Development Programme (GDP) for 2016. The programme recruits a diverse range of candidates and supports them to become future leaders in our Group. This is a senior-level induction into our world for people who have already gained at least three years' work experience. The programme attracts candidates from around the world and places them into demanding roles. It's open to current ED&F Man employees as well as external applicants. We asked Ben Smith, Head of Human Resources for Sugar, and some former GDP participants to explain the benefits.

"We're looking for people who have already achieved something in their career." explains Ben. "We need natural leaders who are sharp, persistent, motivated, and innovative. In a varied international company like ours, a sense of adventure is also a must."

Successful applicants who have the right qualities join a sophisticated training programme in professional, business and soft skills and receive support from a senior mentor.

Where will the GDP take you?

Jeremy Mpalampa is a former GDP participant who is now a coffee trader based in Uganda. He says "The role was 'hands-on' from day one. Right from the start I was given the opportunity to run a trading book, to get involved in the business and make decisions. That was very exciting."

Jeremy is a former banker with experience in treasury, exotic options pricing and risk analysis, plus a master's degree in financial analysis and fund management. He joined ED&F Man's programme because he wanted something more hands-on: "I was assigned to coffee, and immediately went to work at origin in Uganda as a trainee trader. I was taken through various aspects of the business including quality, logistics, treasury and finances before sitting on the trading desk.

Alex Smith, another successful GDP entrant, joined the programme in 2013. Alex has a master's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Loughborough and the National University of Singapore and is working towards becoming a chartered engineer. "Since I started, I've worked in London, France, Switzerland, Ukraine, the Middle East and India. Now I'm based in Royal Ingredients working on project engineering. I would not have such a varied role with so many learning opportunities in other firms' development schemes." he adds.

On-the-job learning and mentoring

Jeremy says the mentoring has been particularly valuable: "In the beginning, I was monitored by a senior sugar trader who had worked in the Group for over 15 years in various African locations. There have been lots of situations that I have faced while working on the desk that my mentor had already encountered. That support continues throughout the programme. The company also sponsored my place on a derivatives course and a chartered investment analysis programme, and you get training in important 'soft skills', such as public speaking, negotiation and networking."

Compared to other schemes, ED&F Man's demands are steep, but as Ben highlights, this is necessary preparation: "GDP candidates quickly find themselves in positions of responsibility often in remote locations. They need the confidence to deal with issues autonomously, but also understand when to ask for help."

Early exposure to interesting challenges

Akosua Asantewa-Nkansah joined the finance stream of the programme in 2015. "During my eight months, the Company undertook a number of major acquisitions, departmental changes and a Headquarters relocation, all of which had a real impact on my job. The greatest challenges in my first role as a Group Accountant included my first Year-End, taking part in the Group's transition to a new financial and regulatory reporting framework, and accounting for the Group's major acquisition of IANSA".

But Akosua isn't fazed by the challenges "It may sound corny but I can say with confidence that this experience has made me a better accountant. The augmentation of my problem-solving, technical and organisation skills in such a short time is unparalleled in my career so far. At no point can I say that I have stopped learning while I have been here. The exposure you gain to senior management is also unrivalled; it is apparent that they really care about inducting you as a member of the programme and as a part of the company".

Where will I be in ten years' time?

Ben says there are many opportunities for growth: "A GDP participant may start on a trading desk in London, develop through the trading ranks and grow within a specialism. Over time they may take on more responsibility and eventually could be accountable for one or more profit centres. Several former programme members are now in senior leadership roles, for example Head of Raw Sugar Trading, Andres Galindo and Futures and Options Trader, Kenny Walaron, and there are many others."

Opportunities are not restricted to trading: "Another participant might start at origin, perhaps as an assistant general manager responsible for a set of assets. Following this path, they could become a Country General Manager and then a Region General Manager. We also have programmes for operational and finance people too."

Demanding and rewarding

Jeremy has advice for GDP newcomers: "ED&F Man is a very challenging and interesting environment to work in. A lot of opportunities are there right from the outset. These opportunities continue developing as you perform better a particular role. The culture encourages pushing harder and performing well, and this effort is recognised."

Alex agrees, adding: "There is no denying that this is not an easy ride, nor a nine-to-five job. Some of the situations you may be presented with will be unique and challenging. They will involve diplomacy, with a need to understand and accept cultural norms in different environments. But wherever you move, you work with a group of people who are part of the ED&F Man family – you know you will be surrounded by a certain type of person who is confident and happy to include you in what they are working on."

For more information on the selection criteria and the roles available, take a look at the GDP section of the ED&F Man [website](#).