

Speech: DFID Ghana Country Director's speech at CBE Lesson Learning workshop

Honourable Minister of Education,

Chief Director of Ministry of Education,

Director General of Ghana Education Service,

Mr Chair,

Team Leader of CBE,

Distinguished representatives of Government,

Country Directors and other representatives of CSOs/NGOs,

Members of the Press Corps, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon everyone.

As Country Director for the UK's Department for International Development in Ghana, it is a pleasure to join you today to celebrate the long history of achievements of the Complimentary Basic Education (CBE) programme.

Education has the power to change lives and to open the door to better employment, more active citizenship and well-informed health decisions that can benefit future generations.

A good education can transform the prospects of poor and marginalised children and CBE is a programme where we have seen this happening.

With children unable to go to school due to poverty, distance to schools or family demands, this programme has enabled almost 250,000 children to have a second chance at an education and given them the opportunity to transform their lives through DFID and USAID funding.

The evidence base that you have heard about today demonstrates the impact of the programme:

- In improving learning outcomes – in the last cycle 55% of learners had reached proficiency in numeracy from a baseline of just 4%;
- In forming a bridge to education that enables children to progress and stay in school – 90% of learners from the first cycle (2013/14) have remained in school.
- And, in contributing to creating a positive learning experience for children and changing the perceptions of parents and communities about education.

As we reach the end of this phase of support from DFID/USAID for CBE, it is

evident that the capacity-building approach of districts, Implementing Partners and the Ghana Education Service working together and supported by Crown Agents, has paid dividends in order to enable CBE to be sustained in future years by the Government of Ghana.

But whilst we celebrate CBE's achievements today, the scale of the challenge remains. Approximately 450,000 children between the ages of 6 and 14 remain out of school in Ghana.

These children represent a lost opportunity for Ghana's development. We must continue to ensure the sustainability of CBE's approach, which has proven to be effective and successful, as Ghana moves beyond aid and aims to deliver on its commitment to achieving SDG 4.

Honourable Minister, the UK commends the Government of Ghana for its admirable vision of Ghana 'beyond aid'.

His Excellency the President's vision for a self-reliant Ghana is inspiring and is applauded by the UK and all development partners. In the long term, economic development with investment and, critically, jobs is the sustainable pathway to self-reliance.

However, "Ghana Beyond Aid" must also address the issue of why, despite record economic growth, inequality in Ghana is rising. New data from the GLSS shows that the gap between regions and between rural and urban areas remains wide, and in some cases is worsening.

We need clarity on how the "Beyond Aid" will be implemented. It has so far focused only on investment, infrastructure and trade and there is a risk that Government, and development partners, shift their gaze from the immediate task of improving the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable in Ghana.

Ghana Beyond Aid can't just be about Ghana's "self-reliance" through industrialization. It has to address the "self-reliance" of the poorest and most marginalized Ghanaians – including the 450,000 children who remain out-of-school in Ghana.

And that is what is particularly exciting about the CBE programme. What we have here is a programme that has been truly transformational for many of the poorest, rural children and communities – giving them access to an education, supporting them to learn basic literacy and numeracy skills, and ensuring that they continue to learn and progress through the formal school system.

What is also exciting is the partnership with the Ministry of Education and its agencies on this programme, their commitment to directly implement and put in place the policy environment to oversee their own implementation but also that of others, effectively engaging other partners to invest in Ghana's children.

CBE is a programme that demonstrates the Ghana Beyond Aid agenda in practical and tangible terms – and a Ghana Beyond aid that looks to a day when Ghana's education sector is financed to enable every young child, boy and girl, to have access to education.

As the UK, we are proud to have supported and worked with the Government on the CBE programme. DFID will continue to support the Ministry of Education to reach and transform the lives of some of the most marginalized children in Ghana.

As the Government takes on the leadership and funding of this programme, DFID will support that transition with technical assistance and some continued transitional funding.

We are grateful to all stakeholders for CBE's achievements and I want to acknowledge and thank our partners on CBE:

- The Ministry of Education, the Ghana Education Service and the National Service Secretariat for their enthusiasm and commitment to the CBE programme;
- Our Implementing Partners (Afrikids, Action Aid, ProNet, LCD, GILLBT, Care, PLAN, IBIS/OXFAM, School for Life, and World Education);
- I want to acknowledge and thank Crown Agents, Associates for Change and UNICEF, as well as our research partners IMC Worldwide, the University of Sussex, the University of Cambridge, RTI, PAB consulting and JEAVCO Associates;
- I want to particularly thank Janice Dolan, DFID's Education Adviser, who leaves Ghana this month after 3 successful years.

Finally I want to pay tribute to the communities and the community based facilitators who have made the programme the success that it is.

We have all been on a journey together for the past five years, one which has transformed the lives of almost 250,000 Ghanaian children.

We thank you for joining with the United Kingdom and the USA in this venture and we hope that CBE will continue to provide disadvantaged children across Ghana with a second chance at an education.

Thank you.