

HoCs' field trip to Northern Ghana

Report

May 2019



Department
for International
Development



Introduction

Development Partners' Heads of Cooperation Group Tour Northern Ghana

Development Partners' Heads of Cooperation in Ghana, under the leadership of Philip Smith – Chair of Heads of Cooperation Group and DFID Country Director, embarked on a study tour of the Northern Region of Ghana. The purpose was to explore and abreast themselves with the development challenges in Northern Ghana in the context of Ghana beyond Aid. The tour, held on Wednesday 29th May 2019 was strategically scheduled to precede the official opening of the maiden Northern Ghana Development Conference in Tamale.

The Northern Ghana Development Conference was co-hosted by the five Regional Coordinating Councils in Northern Ghana (Northern, Savanna, North-East, Upper East and Upper West). The event, held on the theme: “Accelerating the sustainable development of Northern Ghana in the context of peace, security and Ghana Beyond Aid” was supported by STAR-Ghana Foundation with funding from UKAid, EU and DANIDA. This report provides a brief on the tour.

Engagement with Northern Regional Minister

The Northern Regional Minister, Hon. Salifu Sa-eed, welcomed the team on behalf of the President of the republic of Ghana, the five Regional Ministers, as well as the Chiefs and people of the North. He described the brief period of engagement as an opportunity to share the challenges and prospects of Northern Ghana with the team.

He expressed his appreciation of the support of development partners to northern Ghana.



Picture 1: Hon. Salifu Sa-eed, Northern Regional Minister

“We appreciate the support of development partners... sometimes we those in leadership and have some background in development work ask the question? If development partners haven't come into existence and even decide to come to Northern Ghana, what would have been our situation?”

Hon Sa-eed recounted the high level of vulnerability in northern Ghana by indicating that:

“If you look at development in general and the indicators of what can help people to develop from the vulnerability perspective, we are exposed to all the vulnerabilities in terms of income levels, where we live, and then also in terms of infrastructure, coupled with the fact that we share borders with countries that have terrorists.”

He bemoaned the poverty gap and inequality between the North and South of Ghana and called for synergy to mitigate the challenges.

“We need synergy, the synergy would have to come in by pulling the human resource and expertise, financial resources so that we can holistically approach the developmental challenges of our part of the country”



Picture 2: Members of Heads of Corporations Group interact with Northern Regional Minister ahead of the tour

Visit to AVNASH rice processing factory

AVNASH Industries Ghana Limited is a diversified foodstuffs producer currently trading in edible oils, soap, and rice. The US\$28 million state-of-the-art rice mill in Tamale has a capacity to process 450 metric tonnes/day, the largest rice processing plant in Africa. Through a partnership with the MADE project, smallholder farmers were supported to produce good quality rice by planting the market preferred varieties demanded by AVNASH to mitigate the challenge of insufficient quantities of good quality paddy rice. A situation that caused the factory to operate at less than 20% of the installed capacity.



Picture 3: Ranjan Ghushal, Northern Head of AVNASH leads the visiting team on a tour of the rice processing factory

Ranjan Ghushal, Northern Head of AVNASH received and welcomed the visiting team to the facility. He shared information on the work of the firm and indicated that the firm no longer has the challenge of unavailability of quality paddy.



Picture 4: Ranjan Ghushal, Northern Head of AVNASH

“People here never considered that paddy could give them economic earning, so they used to grow `lady finger` and pumkin in irrigated lands... Now after a while of communication they have started to grow paddy, that is a good sign, land is increasing for paddy and people are understanding” he said.

He was however quick to add that the major challenges confronting the operation of the firm is the relatively high expectation of farmers in terms of remuneration for the paddy they produce due to their relatively high cost of production particularly around cost of input.

He also mentioned the lack of patronage of local rice among Ghanaians as the current biggest challenge of AVNASH.

"We have the Plant, but we are unable to process the paddy, because after processing you have to sell the rice in the market... our price is the lowest in the market but still it is not moving, the reason behind? imported rice is cheaper... imported Vietnam or Thailand rice is ghs20 cheaper for every 50kg."

Mr Ranjan lamented of the monthly losses AVNASH incurs and their inability to purchase more paddy. “We have decided not to buy paddy anymore despite the frequent calls we receive from the farmers.” He said. He requested for Government of Ghana’s support to mitigate the cascading effects their decision could have on the over 8,000 – 9,000 farmers they are connected to in Northern Ghana.



Picture 5: Some members of the Heads of Cooperation Group touring the rice processing factory

After a series of conversations principally around the best alternatives to improve on the marketing of products from AVNASH, Philip Smith thanked the AVNASH team for hosting the HoC Group and requested for permission on behalf of the team to leave.

Complementary basic education and discussions with community

The visiting team visited one of the Complementary basic education (CBE) schools at Sankpala in the Central Gonja District of Ghana. The team was received by Fred Birikorang of the Ghana Education Service. After a moment of exchanging pleasantries, members of the HoC Group interacted with some parents, teachers and children who are direct beneficiaries of the CBE programme.

The Complimentary Basic Education (CBE) was a £27.9 million second-chance education programme which ran from June 2012 to November 2018. DFID Ghana built on the work of the School for Life (a local NGO) grassroots education initiative in Northern Ghana, and supported scale-up of delivery through non-state providers/civil society organisations. The programme supported 247,888 out-of-school children aged 8-14 years, who had never been to school or who had dropped out from primary school to learn and transition into the formal school system and contribute to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty.



Picture 6: Fred Birikorang of GES welcoming the team to the CBE school at Sankpala in the Central Gonja District of Ghana

On completing the programme, children were supported to enter formal primary schools at the appropriate class level, enabling children fast-track their schooling years and catch up with their peers. On average, over 96% of enrolled learners completed the nine-month CBE course, and over 92% of those who completed then transitioned into the formal school system.

The programme saw the strengthened capacity and leadership of the Government of Ghana in managing and implementing CBE programmes post-November 2018, with the establishment of a CBE Steering Committee chaired by the Ministry of Education Chief Director, development of a MoE CBE Policy, and incorporation of CBE into the Education Strategic Plan for 2018-2030, district level plans, processes and budgets.

The Ministry's buy-in was demonstrated by Ministerial approval of the CBE Policy in October 2018, agreement that 1% of the basic education budget would be allocated to CBE programmes from 2019 and incorporation of these provisions into the CBE Policy, ESP financing model and 2019 Budget.

Mr Birikorang in his presentation indicated that: the CBE programme's lack of financial resources to compensate facilitators of the CBE programme as its biggest challenge. As a result, the Programme hires non-professional teachers as facilitators. He was however hopeful that the situation could change for the better. This is because the programme had succeeded in arranging for National Service Personnel to take over the teaching/facilitation, a situation that will no longer present the pressure of remuneration for facilitators/teachers as National Service Personnel receive their allowances directly from the Government of Ghana.



Picture 71: Some beneficiaries of the CBE Programme in their classroom



Picture 8: Philip Smith – Chair of Heads of Cooperation Group and DFID Country Director

Philip Smith, expressed his appreciation of the commitment of the Government of Ghana to the programme and described it as a perfect example of ‘Ghana beyond Aid.’

“... this is an example of Ghana beyond because the Ghana Education Service has agreed to take on what was a DFID USAID funded programme. The Minister of Education has committed 1% of the basic education budget to the complementary Basic Education Programme (CBE) so he’s committed to continuing that work to get out of school children in Ghana, particularly in Northern Ghana back in school. That’s a live example of Ghana beyond.” He said.

Demonstration of Child Protection Toolkit at Guunayilli community

The visiting team ended the tour at Guunayilli community within the Tamale Metropolis where they observed a practical demonstration on the use of a child protection community facilitation toolkit. The team was welcomed with a colourful display of culture. This was after the team had paid a courtesy call to the chief of the community, who later joined a well organised durbar where the demonstration of the tool kit was held.



Picture 9: Demonstration photo: depicting the skewed household responsibilities of boys and girls and how it could affect their progress in life

Members of the HoC Group together with the Chief and People of the Guunayilli pledged to protect children from abuse. Members of the team had the opportunity to interact with the community folks and asked questions on the main protection issues that children face in the community.



Picture 10: Chief (middle) and some Elders of Guunayilli Community pledging to protect children from abuse

The Child Protection programme in Ghana is supported by Canada, DFID, KOICA, USAID, Norway, European Union, and the Netherlands Committee for UNICEF.

Since 2010, UNICEF Ghana, together with key actors in Child Protection have collaborated to work towards establishing and strengthening a Child Protection System in the country that sets standards for addressing issues in a holistic manner. These efforts culminated into the approval of the Child and Family Welfare policy which was launched in July 2015 and has a key focus on the prevention of violence, abuse and exploitation of children (VAEC).



Picture 11: Heads of Corporations on the trip in a group photo

To effectively facilitate discussions on prevention of VAEC, a child protection community facilitation manual and toolkits was developed to engage, families, children and communities to build a safe and protective environment. Key government and NGO partners have been trained to use these tools to stimulate dialogue at the community level and promote action towards behavioural change.

Having used the toolkits for nearly 3 years, feedback from community facilitators and users indicated that issues of adolescence, sexual and reproductive health, gender and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) were not adequately addressed, with yet many of the child protection/GBV challenges in communities being linked to adolescent protection and wellbeing. A new set of tools and additional module on these issues have been developed and training workshops are currently being rolled out nationwide. Closely related to this initiative is the Ghanaians Against Child Abuse (GACA) social drive which was launched by Her Excellency Mrs. Samira Bawumia in November 2017. The campaign seeks to reduce the acceptance of social practices that have negative consequences on children.



Figure 12: Heads of Corporations Group pose with the children of Guunayilli Community

Appendix1: Members of Heads of Cooperation/representatives on the Team and support staff

S/N	Name	Organisation
1	Philip Smith	DFID
2	Zoltan Agai	EU Delegation
3	Yukyum Kim	KOICA
4	Katja Lasseur	Netherlands
5	Verena Wiesner	Germany
6	Hiromoto Oyama	Japan E
7	Peter Eilshaw Olesen	Denmark
8	Oral Williams	IMF AFRITAC
9	Albert Touna-Mama	IMF
10	Hoshi Hirofumi	JICA
11	Sharon Cromer	USAID
12	Kevin Brown	USAID
13	Christian Tardiff	Canada
14	Rokya Ye Dieng	UNDP
15	Margaret Gwada	UNICEF
16	Sebastian Okeke	AfDB
17	Laura MacLean	DFID
18	Clara Osei-Boateng	DFID
19	Daniel Kwame Ampofo Adjei	STAR Ghana (Rapporteur)
20	Emmanuel Yankson	UNICEF driver
21	Joseph Houndebesso	UNICEF driver
22	Faustina Akoto	UNICEF driver
23	Isaac Okutu	UNICEF driver
24	Rudolf	MADE driver
25	William	MADE driver