

December 2010

Welcome to the newsletter of the Department for International Development - the government department leading the UK's fight against global poverty.

This newsletter is designed to keep Ghanaians, and those in the UK with an interest in Ghana, informed of the work we are doing to reduce poverty.

Message from the UK's Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development, Stephen O'Brien MP



I was delighted to have had the opportunity to visit Ghana recently and see the impact of two decades of economic growth on the country's development. But a trip to Tamale in the north also brought to life the reality that a quarter of Ghanaians still live in poverty. The UK government is proud to be supporting the development of a civil society in Ghana that has the means and influence to hold the government to account, and ensure all Ghanaians benefit from the country's rising prosperity.



NEWSLETTER

ON DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA

UKaid supports Civil Society

Ghana's goal to reach middle-income status has drawn much closer recently and the country is preparing to enter the oil era. With greater influence, Ghana's civil society organisations can help ensure the country's growing wealth benefits the poorest Ghanaians. This newsletter focuses on a new UKaid-backed civil society programme and reflects on what has been achieved by Ghana's vibrant civil society over the past six years.

Empowering the Voiceless

Civil society organisations are set to become more influential in Ghanaian society, thanks to a new five-year programme, backed by the UK, Denmark and the European Commission.

Funding from the Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana (STAR-GHANA) programme will enable a range of organisations to engage with government and traditional authorities, to ensure they deliver more and better services for poor people.

Ghana's 1992 constitution protects the right of civil society to participate in decision-making. But it is still not common for citizens, particularly the poor and marginalised, to come together with government to declare their rights.

By 2015, STAR-Ghana will have involved around 360,000 people in monitoring and improving the delivery of vital services, such as healthcare and education. Greater civil society scrutiny of policies and services will help to ensure the government is accountable to Ghanaians.



Margaret Alledin, a beneficiary of the Rights and Voice Initiative, speaking at the programme's closing ceremony

A Better Life for Thousands of Ghanaians

STAR-Ghana will build on the achievements of two major programmes that are drawing to a close: the [Ghana Research and Advocacy Fund \(GRAP\)](#) and [Rights and Voice Initiative \(RAVI\)](#).

165 local NGOs, civil society organisations and think tanks across the ten regions of Ghana have benefited from support through these programmes.

Since 2004, UKaid support to civil society through these programmes has helped to:

- Improve the provision of services such as water, electricity, healthcare and education in 37 districts.
- Educate 2500 vulnerable and marginalised people on human rights issues.
- Pass the Domestic Violence and Disability Acts.

For more information about these programmes, visit:

<http://www.ravighana.org/>
<http://www.g-rap.org/>

For more information about DFID Ghana, write to us at:

DFID Public Enquiry Point
Eaglesham Road
East Kilbride
G75 8EA
Email: enquiry@dfid.gov.uk

Or visit:
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/where-we-work/africa-west-central/ghana/>



Michael Amoah (right) speaks to an operator at the corn mill

Breaking the Chains of Disability

Support from the Rights and Voice Initiative boosted a campaign by one branch of the Ghana Association of the Blind (GAB) to access their local District Assembly Common Fund for disabled persons.

“We were going back and forth with the Assembly without any progress until RAVI, through its Government Citizens Engagement Programme, came to educate us on how to engage the Local Government Authorities” said Michael Kwami Amoah, President of the GAB in the Birim Central District.

The Association invested the money received from the Common Fund into a corn mill business. Income from the business is helping to provide welfare support and credit facilities to 243 members on a daily basis.

“The Corn Mill has helped most of us to become self reliant,” said John Kwadjo Donkor, 71, who used a loan from the Association to start a kenkey manufacturing and selling business. “My wife now supplies kenkey to some people outside this community.”



DFID's Gifty Sakyi speaks to a fisherman in Ghana's Western Region.

A Reality Check

Gifty Sakyi, a native of Dawu in the Eastern Region of Ghana, is in charge of IT in DFID Ghana's Corporate Services Unit. Gifty recently visited a fishing community in Western Region that is benefiting from the support of *Friends of the Nation* – an implementing partner of the Rights and Voice Initiative.

Friends of the Nation is supporting the fishermen to raise concerns directly with the government about issues such as the potential impact of offshore oil rigs on the fishing industry.

“If it hadn't been for *Friends of the Nation*, we would speak and nobody would hear us” said Edlove Quarshie of the Line Hook Canoe Fishermen Association.

Training through RAVI has also encouraged the fishermen to revert to sustainable ‘hook and line’ fishing methods, rather than engaging in illegal practices, such as dynamite fishing, which are harmful to sea life.

“It is extremely rewarding to see that my work as IT Manager helps to set up and manage projects that are safeguarding the livelihoods of people in poor communities,” said Gifty. “I can't wait to go on my next reality check”.

People Count in Ghana

UKaid recently supported the 2010 population and housing census in Ghana, which counted Ghana's estimated 24 million citizens.

“The census is essential for the Government to be able to provide services such as health and education where they are most needed,” said DFID's Director for Western and Southern Africa, Mr Jim Drummond CBE, on a recent visit to Ghana.

Preliminary data on Ghana's population should be available between March and June 2011.

