

## **REPORT ON ICT4D FORUM ON THE USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING.**

Information Communication Technology (ICT) has become a vital tool that is permeating lifestyles of nations, countries and influencing the professions of people. In spite of the great advantages that one can gain using ICT, teachers in Ghana are still tottering on the way to embracing holistically ICT and using it as a developmental tool to enhance their teaching and learning. Even though many frantic efforts has been made to give a face lift to ICT studies but most teachers still see technology as an isolated tool and not one that can improve their job performance. It was to dispel this notion that Savana Signatures in conjunction with Ghana Information Network for knowledge Sharing (GINKS) organized this forum to examine the challenges, successes and the way forward for women in ICT. This forum brought together teachers and members of the general public.

The speaker for the day, Mr. Alhassan Seibu, the Northern Region IT Officer of the Ghana Education Service lamented the low patronage of teachers in the manipulation, storage, retrieval, transmission and receiving of information digitally and said this needed to stop and urged participants to be more forward looking and not throw their hands in despair that ICT is difficult to learn. Mr. Seibu stated that a good teacher in contemporary times is one who Sets high expectations for both himself and his students, respects diverse learning styles and tries to include them in his lesson planning and delivery, supports active learning which only information technology can help realize. The best way to transform the classroom is to embrace the use of ICT tools like the computer, a projector and use the internet to update knowledge for onward transmission the students. Seibu tasked teachers all over the north to invest a little time and resources into the acquisition of ICT tools and not wait on central government, as it's usually the case to purchase the computers for them or organise training sessions for them. He admonished them to see it as a personal branding for the larger world.

Speaking on how technology can improve and transform teaching and translate into excellent performance, Mr. Alhassan reiterated the mainstreaming of ICT into teaching and learning in the classroom support the learner because it gives a lot of visuals to the students and also very interactive and thus the students can still learn effectively even in the absence of the teacher. Technology, he identified, serves as the active tutor that controls and directs the teaching process as well as being a mediating or communication tool for the teaching process and general classroom interaction. Particular mention was made of *Computer Supported Teaching and Learning* Systems that relies on the interaction of the user for problem solving.

The use of ICT in present time in the educational sector to enhance performance and save time and resources was also touched on. Mr. Alhassan said that with the power of ICT is manifested in Distance learning involving contact with instructor but not among students, distance learning that includes some group activities for class via interactive technologies and on-site class sessions extended to distance students via synchronous communication. Using this as a premise, he urged participants to realise that ICT transcends all our individual interests. He said that the Ghana Education Service in partnership with *R-LG* mobile

technology trained 155 teachers in the northern region on Basic ICT skills after they were supplied with the governments Laptops for students, but was quick to add that it was not enough. He accepted that the fact that there are enormous challenges confronting teachers and the Ghana Education Service in areas of ICT and how to mainstream it into the educational sector. He was therefore glad that Savana Signatures has begun a project to integrate ICT into education in some selected schools in the region. Ending his presentation, Mr. Alhassan said that teachers who try to incorporate ICT into their teaching stand a greater chance of not only building their knowledge and sharpen their intellect but also serve as fulcrums of knowledge for their students and are able to develop more innovative ways of making learning easy and beneficial to the learners.

Participants were grateful for the presentation and some of them wanted to know what plans the Education Service was putting in place to ensure that the *Top Down* approach to development in ICT is reversed to place the teacher and not the student at the centre. In his response, Seibu agreed with the fact that the policy targeted students primarily but said that trends are changing because ICT has been introduced as a core subject in Colleges of Education as a start and teachers already in the service are being trained gradually. Some participants felt challenged and pledged to enrol in computer classes as a way of preparing themselves for the world ahead.