

EP03 - Education: Transforming Lives, Transforming Africa

0:00:06

(Hon. Joseph Nsengimana Minister of Education | Republic of Rwanda)

We have enough knowledge on the continent to be able to solve our problems. We just need to share.

0:00:12

(Sherita Edinam Gbafah Alumna, Pedagogy Training | LIT Ghana Program)

Learners look up to teachers a lot. And whatever we tell them, it stays with them.

0:00:17

(Robin Todd Executive Director | Transforming Teaching, Education & Learning Ghana)

It's about freedom to make mistakes, freedom for the teacher not to always be the expert, but the teacher say, OK, what do you think of that?

0:00:24

(Isabelle Byusa Lead, Education & Skills | Mastercard Foundation, Rwanda)

A lot of these investments in education, you don't see the result right away. It takes time to really see the progress and the impact.

0:00:34

We have encouraged them. We have supported them, we have empowered them, we have gone beyond, way ahead, the Ghanaian society and even in our homes.

00:00:45

Hon. Moustapha Mamba Guirassy

Minister | National Education, Senegal

A good education system is to see tomorrow, to be generous, to invest for 15, 20, 25 years. It's about raising education and refusing to put it in a sectoral drawer.

.....

0:01:15

(VO)

Education is one of the few decisions societies make, whose impact is felt long after the classroom is empty. and every education system makes a promise to young people, to families, and to the future.

0:01:30

Hon. Moustapha Mamba Guirassy
Minister | National Education, Senegal

Unfortunately, very often we have overlooked the big issue of education, which we have often confused with instruction. So it is limited to discipline, teaching, instruction, and transmission of knowledge.

But today it is much deeper, and we are in the middle of this. On the side of professional training, there is a lot of effort being put in by the Ministry of Professional Training. Remember that here in Senegal, we have Higher Education, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.

0:02:19

(VO)

But none of that works without the people who bring it to life.

0:02:22

(Isabelle Byusa Lead, Education & Skills | Mastercard Foundation, Rwanda)

The Leaders in Teaching program is a program that started in 2018 with a vision to improve teaching and learning quality in the country, and particularly learning outcomes.

0:02:44

The single most important factor that can drive or can improve the learning outcomes for young people, it's actually teachers. So teachers are the backbone. And so the program was designed to really look at the entire life cycle of a teacher, so looking at how they come into the profession, how they are trained, looking also at the school leadership that can guide teachers to improve the learning environment, and then finally the motivation of teachers so that they can actually stay and be retained in the profession.

0:03:27

(VO)

And for some teachers, it starts with passion.

0:03:31

Francine Mujawayezu
ICT Teacher | Ghana

I joined Leaders in Teaching under 2019. I was passionate. I was liking to help other students to learn new things. Yes, that really caused me that Leaders in Teaching helped me to reach on the way that was helping me to improve my level of teaching.

0:03:51

(VO)

In some places, that work has been unfolding. decades, guided by a belief that no learner should be left out.

0:04:00

(Speaker)

It was started as a modest secondary school, and over the years, I think in 1984 specifically, we started the inclusive education. So we are 41 years today now in our inclusive education. And for our inclusivity, we have visually impaired students with us. We have a student population of a little over 3,500 and on the average, every year group has about 20 visually impaired students. So basically we have about 60, not less than 60 visually impaired students on campus.

0:04:45

(Robin Todd Executive Director | Transforming Teaching, Education & Learning Ghana)

Starting in 2021, the Government of Ghana agencies came together developed a plan to introduce a new curriculum, a curriculum written by Ghanaians.

So Leaders in Teaching, LIT in Ghana, it is a government of Ghana program led by the Ministry of Education, working in partnership with MasterCard Foundation, and then transforming teaching, education and learning, TTEL, as a lead implementing partner.

It is a series of secondary education reforms that started in 2021, that is helping the government of Ghana to develop an education system focused on critical thinking, communication, national values, collaboration.

0:05:30

(VO)

Those systems only start to matter when people step into them, often not because they plan to, but because something pulled them in.

0:05:39

(Sherita Edinam Gbafah Alumna, Pedagogy Training | LIT Ghana Program)

I went on early retirement to pursue teaching. To be honest, I didn't have teaching in mind. I just wanted to do something different. Then I realised when I went to Ghana, university, I engaged myself in everything teaching. I then realized I had a passion for teaching.

0:06:09

Seth Kwame Ativor
ICT Teacher | Ghana

Most of the visual impaired students and graduates go into teaching because we have logistics that go into the other subject's business sciences and things like that.

We heard in the news that there's going to be changes in the curriculum and new things are going to be done and things like that. I came face -to -face with it during the PLC, that's the professional learning community thing that we do every week here. It was during the PLC sessions that I got introduced to the program.

0:06:47

VO

Those sessions are also where support starts to show up in practical ways.

0:06:53

Benimana Mary
Biology Teacher | Ghana

CERA program, it is a program that gave us a training on English proficiency as a teacher of secondary. After hearing that I'm going to do an English training, I was very happy.

0:07:14

(VO)

What teachers feel in the classroom often mirrors what's happening at a much wider level.

0:07:20

Hon. Moustapha Mamba Guirassy
Minister | National Education, Senegal

We realize that African youth in general need profound change, absolutely want to participate, and the Senegal authorities, aware of this paradigm shift and this profound aspiration of society, They are accompanying the educational system and putting a particular emphasis on education of young girls and boys, and on secondary education, and then transferring it to higher education and vocational training. So today, Senegal is, compared to other countries, the basic education in a reform logic, I would even say a refoundation. You have also heard about the transformation agenda of higher education. We are also in a profound reform, reform also at the level of professional education.

0:08:34

(VO)

That kind of thinking only matters if it changes what schools actually do. You see those ideas most clearly in the way schools are run.

0:08:47

(Robin Todd Executive Director | Transforming Teaching, Education & Learning Ghana)

What we did in Ghana collaboratively With the Ghana Education Service, they introduced weekly professional learning community sessions. So in each of our 712 senior high schools across the country, the teachers come together for 90 minutes every week to learn about the new curriculum, to learn about pedagogy, about group work, about social and emotional learning, about how to integrate ICT so that the curriculum can be implemented as planned.

0:09:14

(Sherita Edinam Gbafah Alumna, Pedagogy Training | LIT Ghana Program)

I thought I had it all to be a teacher. So I entered purposely because it was mandatory and you need to be certified in order to start your service. So that was the mindset I had going in. But I think it changed on the second day because all the trainings we had, we had seasoned facilitators who came to take us through all we needed to know before entering the classroom. It was two weeks, but it was very intense.

0:09:42

(VO)

As teaching starts to change, the way learning is assessed has to change with it.

0:09:48

(Robin Todd Executive Director | Transforming Teaching, Education & Learning Ghana)

And secondly, on assessment, the West African Examinations Council have been a fantastic beacon for change in this area. When we looked at the ones that we've been writing in the past, 90 % of the questions have been focused on rote memorization and recall. That's why we have the chewing, pouring, passing, and forgetting.

But WIAC have written a new one where only 30 % of the questions are focused on memorization, 40 % are focused on the skills of conceptual understanding and 30 % are focused on critical thinking and extended problem solving.

So what that means is when you put that into the system and teachers are being trained on assessment, there's a new continuous assessment system so that when learners complete senior high school in 2027, if they want to go to tertiary education, they have to bring a school transcript that talks about their behavior, their performance, as well as just having the final certificate. Once those things are put in place, I'm very confident that we will see a transformation of teaching and learning in Ghana.

0:10:50

VO

Elsewhere on the continent, the same question is being asked. How do you connect knowledge to real competence?

0:10:57

(Hon. Joseph Nsengimana Minister of Education | Republic of Rwanda)

So I think that the policy of the country has been really geared towards promoting this kind of learning, right? Competency -based learning, for instance. The introduction of this way of learning was geared to sort of like promote where you learn and you become competent, you know, fully increase the competency in the subject. But the way in which that happens, as I indicated, is to actually connect the mind and the hands. You learn by doing. And I think that's sort of like what we've been trying to do.

0:11:37

Isabelle Byusa

Lead, Education & Skills | Mastercard Foundation, Rwanda

When you look at how students learn in terms of math, in terms of sciences, the teachers need to be equipped in terms of the mastery of these subjects of course in primary school, but especially in secondary school, where some of these subjects become even more complex. And in a world where we know that young people, for them to learn, you need to vary how they learn, bring in digital tools, bring in experiential examples and so on. We had partnerships that were actually driving that and really also ensuring gender responsive teaching.

0:12:39

(Sherita Edinam Gbafah Alumna, Pedagogy Training | LIT Ghana Program)

I didn't know that I needed to even share them into groups. when it comes to, you know, so I can bring a topic, share them into small groups, get them to do presentations and all that, maybe instantly, or we give them some two or three minutes to put their thoughts together.

So, it's really changed how I deliver my lessons. Back then, maybe I'll just come to class, talk, talk, talk. Do you understand? Yes, madam. Do you understand? Yes, madam. And then we call it a day. But I think it's really changed how I deliver my lesson.

0:13:16

(VO)

That shift works well in many classrooms, but it also raises questions about who it works for.

0:13:25

Seth Kwame Ativor
ICT Teacher | Ghana

For a very long-time persons with disabilities have been afterthoughts. Provisions have been made for regular students without any budget line, without any support for the visually impaired students. This new program is heavy on inclusion and the introduction of especially mathematics and science to visually impaired students.

We've tried in the past, but not very successful. And so when they mentioned that as part of this program, We're going to introduce mathematics. Well, I was wondering if this time we could, you know, make it.

0:14:05

(Speaker)

You know, the inclusive nature of our school demands that visually impaired students also have classes in the otherwise conventional classrooms with sighted students. So what it means is that they take subjects that are not so much quantitative. they take liberal subjects, general arts, they are limited in the number, the kind of subjects that they can take. For me, as a social being, as society is gradually driving towards inclusive society.

0:14:45

(VO)

Even with those limits, schools are trying to include as many learners as they can.

0:14:51

(Speaker)

For us at Okuapa Mind School, I think we have gone beyond, way ahead, the Ghanaian society. And even in our homes, where some homes are so patriarchal, it is only the man, man, man's voice. We have gone ahead to include our minority handicaps in students, if you will permit me to use that word.

0:15:15

(VO)

If young people are to be ready for life and work, that preparation has to start early.

0:15:20

Hon. Moustapha Mamba Guirassy Minister | National Education, Senegal(French)

We think, for the child to be in the professional training or in the sector of professional training to begin to get used to it or to familiarize it with certain technologies or certain training. Very early, it must be decomplexed. Very early, it must especially at the secondary level, to learn, to understand, to become familiar with certain professions.

And there is a very deep commitment because we connect this question of science, this question of schooling, of school performance, to the big question, once again, of values. We are convinced that it is the intangible that shapes the tangible.

0:16:26

(Robin Todd Executive Director | Transforming Teaching, Education & Learning Ghana)

The vision is to ensure that we have a country where all young people, regardless of where they were born or where they went to primary or junior high school, where all young people are able to complete senior high school prepared to further study to enter the world of work and for adult life.

So that means making sure they have a rounded education so that they are responsible citizens as well as just having the content knowledge.

VO

This way of thinking raises expectations and schools have to respond to them.

0:16:56

(Speaker)

The irony of our story is that it has not come easy. The challenge with us is equipping the IT lab to meet their daily demands. Quite apart from that, we have introduced mathematics for the first time for visually impaired students. The unique nature of them and the demand and the introduction of unknown subjects or otherwise unknown subjects to them, places a great deal of demand in terms of resource for them.

0:17:27

(VO)

What they're describing is the reality many schools are working through, where expectations are rising, but resources don't always rise at the same pace.

0:17:47

(Robin Todd Executive Director | Transforming Teaching, Education & Learning Ghana)

So there are numbers of very significant challenges, I think the first is the inequity in the system. We have a very, very considerable range of learners in senior high school. So one of the great things about Ghana now with the free senior high school policy is that anybody can benefit from second education, regardless of what they did before. But then it means that we have many learners, particularly in some of our more remote schools, who are not able to read and write effectively. There are also issues of gender inequity 75 % of our senior high school teachers are male.

0:18:18

There's a real need for more female teachers, more role models. We've supported the government to introduce a postgraduate diploma in education, a PDG, in pedagogy, and we're providing scholarship, particularly to young women, to be able to go and teach subjects such as STEM, engineering, social studies, where we have a shortage, to try to redress that balance in the system and ensure that we have more female teachers in our senior high schools.

0:18:43

(Sherita Edinam Gbafah Alumna, Pedagogy Training | LIT Ghana Program)

I think one of the challenges I had was when I developed the passion for teaching, I had wanted to go back to school to pursue it. But where are the funds? Who was I going to tell? They had taken me through nursing.

I decided to quit. I've now chosen a passion because when I was fitting this and everyone was like, why would you want to fit a profession that gives you ready job as a family woman, you cannot just come back from work and then have your laptop in front of you that you are learning. So, they divided attention and then the work. It got to a point I almost gave up.

0:19:19

(VO)

Sherita's experience isn't unique. Across schools, teachers describe different moments where their commitment is tested.

0:19:27

Francine Mujawayezu
ICT Teacher | Ghana

Convincing teachers that Francine is going to teach a secondary student, yet she looks like a young one. Teaching the students who are with the same age, almost the same age, was the biggest problem. Just convincing my fellow teachers was the biggest problem.

0:19:47

(VO)

The challenges teachers describe don't stop at the classroom door. They shape the kind of systems that need to be built around them.

0:19:55

(Hon. Joseph Nsengimana Minister of Education | Republic of Rwanda)

It's more than connecting schools. It's connecting schools, but it's also use of data. We find that a lot of this curriculum, for example, yes, they're digitized, they're made available to students, but they're not very interactive.

So, we want to up the game, so to speak. We want to make it more interactive. We want to make sure that we have a system that can fully be a hybrid system, that learners can use it and therefore is sustainable.

0:20:26

And God forbid we have another COVID -19, that learners are not completely cut out of learning. So that's the kind of system we want to build. And that's gonna require, you know, retuning of the policy, but also more investment in this space. And that's what the government is trying to do.

0:20:26

Hon. Moustapha Mamba Guirassy
Minister | National Education, Senegal (French)

With the support of the Ministry of Digital Education, we are organizing ourselves to ensure connectivity at all schools. But beyond the issue of connectivity, it is the digitization of classrooms, because the issues are not the same.

0:21:02

(Hon. Joseph Nsengimana Minister of Education | Republic of Rwanda)

So there is the issue of connectivity, there is also the issue of digitization of classrooms. And we don't expect digitalization anymore. We don't expect connectivity to be present everywhere to ensure the digitalization of classrooms. With digitalization, we can have on-board tablets.

0:21:38

(VO)

That urgency is shared across borders.

0:21:42

(Robin Todd Executive Director | Transforming Teaching, Education & Learning Ghana)

We have supported the government of Ghana to introduce the first ever Ghanaian Sign Language curriculum that's been written and approved by NACA. And from this academic year, it will be rolled out all the way from primary school through to senior high school.

So, it means that you'll be able to take Ghanaian sign language. It's the 13th Ghanaian language in lessons. We've also worked to identify all the visually impaired teachers in the country. We have 123 visually impaired senior high school teachers.

0:22:11

(Robin Todd Executive Director | Transforming Teaching, Education & Learning Ghana)

They've been provided with learning material in Braille. And we've also provided them with laptops, assistive devices, so that they're able to participate fully in the professional learning

communities and what's going on. And we've also introduced the first mathematics curriculum for the blind at senior high school that's being piloted in Okapema Senior High School.

0:22:31

(VO)

You really see it day to day. In what students are now able to use and access?

0:22:56

Seth Kwame Ativor
ICT Teacher | Ghana

So far so good, the students have now all the materials all the pamphlets, they even have some access to the internet now. They are able to research on their own they are able to use their computer. There are about 80 % are using computers to write the AWASI, which was not the case during our time.

0:23:06

(VO)

What begins with access and resources often leads somewhere else. For many teachers, it changes how they see themselves.

0:23:15

(Sherita Edinam Gbafah Alumna, Pedagogy Training | LIT Ghana Program)

So it taught me that I can actually do anything I put my mind to. There are no limitations. So I think it's boosted my confidence. It taught me how to do a lot more research than I usually would do.

0:23:32

(VO)

And for learners, the classroom itself begins to feel different.

0:23:37

(Robin Todd Executive Director | Transforming Teaching, Education & Learning Ghana)

If you go to a classroom today, you'll see the learners working in groups. They are set an assignment, set a topic by the teacher, then they'll do their own independent research. So learning has become much more interactive, learning has become much more practical, and learning has become much more focused on Ghanaian culture and values.

0:23:55

Isabelle Byusa
Lead, Education & Skills | Mastercard Foundation, Rwanda

Education is truly the bedrock of any society, right? And teachers really hold the key. They hold the key to help unlock learning and young people can then be inspired, can discover themselves,

they can discover their surroundings. So teachers keep doing what you're doing because you're doing an amazing job and we're here to support you and we trust you.

0:24:28

(VO)

That trust is echoed across institutions, working hand in hand to sustain change.

0:24:34

Seth Kwame Ativor
ICT Teacher | Ghana

We should all support this new intervention to ensure that everybody is able to go through. One, we do not leave any student behind. One, we support everybody. We're helping our own future.

0:24:52

(Sherita Edinam Gbafah Alumna, Pedagogy Training | LIT Ghana Program)

The world is evolving, and once you are not tech -inclined, you are going to be left behind. So I think more participants should be put in place to include technology in teaching.

0:25:08

(Hon. Joseph Nsengimana Minister of Education | Republic of Rwanda)

We want to be able to create an environment where our children can learn and can prosper, can acquire knowledge, can acquire skills. That's where we're starting from. And then from there, we realize how can they do that?

How can they use technology to even improve that learning process? And once we understand that, we can then say, what kind of technology should they be using? Is it a technology that understands where they're coming from, right? Or is it a general, generic technology that might be using realities that does not match their own realities?

0:25:48

(VO)

That question demands long -term thinking, beyond projects, beyond sectors.

0:25:55

Hon. Moustapha Mamba Guirassy
Minister | National Education, Senegal (French)

Unfortunately, it doesn't match a good educational system. A good educational system is to see tomorrow, it is to be generous, it is to invest for 15, 20, 25 years and it is to raise education and refuse that education is stored in real sector drawers.

It is to give all the dignity to education. But I also invite my colleagues to free themselves, to be much freer in thinking, in the way of doing things and to reconnect with the endogeneity, with what we are.

0:26:46

(VO)

And that future, increasingly, must be shaped from within.

0:26:52

Isabelle Byusa

Lead, Education & Skills | Mastercard Foundation, Rwanda

The future is very exciting. A lot of these investments in education, you don't see the result right away. It takes time for you to be able to see, to really see the progress and the impact thanks to the Ministry of Education that has also set the bar high, you know, because again, we come in as a leaders in teaching program to support, you know, as the MasterCard Foundation, but we are supporting a vision of the country.