



**"I FEEL MORE CONFIDENT AS A TRAINED TEACHER..."**

## **IRENE AKABAWARE ACHANGA** **ST. JOHN BOSCO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**



### **Improving children's learning through new resources for teachers and strong partnerships - Irene's Story**



*I have found the Student Teacher Handbook not only a great resource for teaching practice, but for my career development in the field. The Handbook clearly outlines the teaching practice process, so that every student teacher knows from day one in college what to expect in teaching practice and how they must prepare to do it well."*

Irene's tutors observed that during teaching practice Irene was engaged and happy, because she felt ready to execute the Competencies she had learned about in the Handbook and in college lessons. T-TEL is working with Ghana's public Colleges of Education to ensure teachers receive the best possible education and training for the modern-day classroom. Part of this is ensuring teachers know and can hold firmly to the standards and competencies expected of them, once they graduate as teachers. As Irene has just graduated from her college and will shortly start working as a fully qualified teacher, she has been keen to work with modern teaching materials and enrich her knowledge and skills to prepare for becoming a successful teacher. She says:

**Becoming a schoolteacher in modern-day Ghana is no easy task. It's hard to know what is expected of you, in order to make sure children learn well in the classroom and succeed at school and beyond.**

**Irene Achange is a recent student of the St John Bosco College of Education** in the Upper East Region of Ghana. She recently completed her off-campus practical experience of teaching in schools with the award of a distinction, a vital part of teacher education being supported by the Government of Ghana and the UK Government through Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL). Irene's studies and practical work have been supported by T-TEL's Student Teacher Handbook, which provides a detailed description of Teacher Standards and Competencies. She feels these are clearly explained in the handbook, a crucial resource that was previously difficult to access.

*I feel more confident as a trained teacher and hopeful of being an effective leader in the classroom.*

Before receiving the handbook and interacting with T-TEL, Irene didn't know what teacher competencies were or what was expected of a good teacher. She says there was a fair amount of confusion amongst her peers, and there were no materials or lessons making this clear. Irene's tutor at St. John Bosco College has really noticed the change in her skills and behaviour. She says:

*If Irene continues in this way, I'm certain she has a strong chance of emerging as one of Ghana's National Best Teachers in the Education Service.*

Student teachers are receiving a much-improved level of teaching practice in schools before they graduate, resulting in better levels of teaching and learning delivery. A teaching practice journal introduced by T-TEL is also encouraging more gender-responsive practices. The journal is like a diary in which student teachers record remarkable lessons during their teaching practice journey from Year One.

*"I initially had difficulties knowing how to treat both boys and girls in the classroom, while being a female student teacher was quite challenging. But with the Teaching Practice Journal, I was able to manage both boys and girls and challenged the traditional roles set up for them.*

*For example when I was given a particular class to teach, I realized from the classroom roster that no boy was taking part in that activity. However, with the help of the journal I was able to talk to the students on the importance of challenging these roles and the boys were henceforth added to the timetable."*

T-TEL's focus on enhancing partnerships between Colleges of Education and schools has been central to its work ensuring teachers are well prepared to excel in the classroom. This is also being supported by stronger partnerships between colleges and District Education Offices (DEOs), who ensure colleges connect and work well with good schools. This development is being applauded by all stakeholders in teacher education; tutors, student teachers, District Education Officers, circuit, school and partnerships staff.

It's certainly making a difference to Irene, who currently teaches English Language at Sandema Preparatory Junior High School in the Busila North District of the Upper East Region, Ghana. We'll be following her journey as a teacher and wish her every success for the future.



**Figure 1:** Irene making reference to a T-TEL Teaching Practice Handbook in class



**Figure 2:** Irene engages pupils during an English lesson