

## Article

# “For the first time in my life, I have attended a Workshop to Build my Capacity as a Records Officer” - Kwaku Ofofu’s Story.

*How JICA’s Technical Cooperation is building Capacity of Staff of the Local Government Service to improve Records and Fixed Assets Management in Ghana.*

13 November 2023

Mr. Kwaku Ofofu is a Senior Executive Officer with the Bia East District Assembly in the Western-North Region of Ghana. I caught up with Mr. Ofofu during the Results-Sharing Workshop of the Project to Strengthen the Technical Capacity of the Local Government Service in Records and Fixed Asset management. Mr. Ofofu was part of a contingent from the Bia East District who were invited to share the successes and lesson learnt in the District’s implementation of the Records and Fixed Asset Management activities. Bia East emerged as one of the top districts at the zonal level competition, during the assessment of best practices of records and fixed asset management during the implementation of this project across the country.

In my interaction with Mr. Ofofu during a break-out session, something struck me about his demeanour, revealing a certain level of excitement, positivity, and engagement at the result sharing workshop. I therefore took interest to engage him some more to understand what was fuelling this excitement.

In my conversation with him, I first asked how he felt about the support to strengthen the records and fixed assets management system in his District. Mr Ofofu grinned with a smile and started talking about how the commencement of the project has changed the entire outlook of his chosen profession. He started by giving details of how records were kept in his district before the start of JICA’s project. He highlighted the disregard for due process in records keeping in his district, one that was without, understanding, standards and order. However, since the project began, significant changes have started to manifest in records keeping in the district. He added that proper business processes had been introduced to records management with the development of an operational manual and a new, customised classification scheme.



*“At first, some Heads of Departments, were creating their own files, giving their own file numbers, and also keeping the files to themselves, but with the introduction of the new classification scheme, they now come to the RMU (Records Management Unit) for reference numbers and management of the files”. Mr. Kwaku Ofofu*



Mr. Ofofu, giving a presentation on improvements made to records in Bia East District at the result-sharing workshop.

His answer aroused my curiosity regarding how his work had changed over the last three years the project has been implemented, and so I continued to engage him some more. “Tell me what changes this project has brought to your work?” I quizzed further. He started to disclose how, for the first time in his career, management of his District Assembly is giving attention to his office- the Records Management Unit (RMU). He further added, how his role was now being acknowledged and given centre-stage in the administrative processes of the Assembly, adding that management now gives due recognition to the indispensable role of the Records Management Unit.

*“Initially when we came to the Assembly, we were not attending management meetings, but with the introduction of the reforms in records management, I can confidently say that I now attend management meetings and also the recorder of management meetings.” Mr. Kwaku Ofofu*

The Local Government Service have been grappling with a persistent challenge of poor and unsatisfactory records and asset management within the Service. This challenge has been adequately documented in the annual performance assessment reports of the Service, the DDF/FOAT (now DACF + RF/DPAT) Assessment reports as well as the District League Table Surveys on Metropolitan, Municipal and Districts Assemblies (MMDAs). Key challenges identified in records keeping included Inadequacies and incoherence in documentations, filings, processing, storing and retrieval of records.

Determined to address this, the Office of the Head of Local Government Service (OHLGS) requested JICA to support the service re-engineer its records and fixed asset management system. Through its Technical Cooperation, JICA dispatched an expert to the Service to lead the process with the objective of strengthening the administrative processes of Local Government Service to deliver effective, efficient, and responsive services through the improvement of its records and fixed assets management systems and structures.

The Project which ended in October, 2023 with an evaluation of its impact revealed remarkable improvement in records Management at the MMDA and RCCs. Some of the visible impact included High-performances in incoming correspondence handling, accurate entry on paper and Excel registers, Speedy file finding processes, the successful migration to a new LGS classification scheme and the effective collaboration between RMUs and other departments, and the capacity strengthening of staff of the Records Management Units within the Local Government Service.

*“For the first time in my life, I have attended a Workshop to Build my Capacity as a Records Officer”*  
**Mr. Kwaku Ofofu**



The Neatly arranged achieve unit of the Records management Unit of the Eastern Regional Coordinating Council

Mr. Ofofu’s enthusiasm, excitement, and optimism about his career in records management is a reflection of How JICA’s Technical Cooperation is building the capacity of public servants, injecting renewed energy and vigour, and creating the right environment for innovation to enable them deliver on their task. It also reflects how JICA’s capacity enhancement supports builds competence and trust in the capabilities of public servants, placing them at a level where their role can be recognised by their respective institutions.

*The Writer, Mr. Sylvester Bayowo, is a Program Specialist in-charge of Governance at JICA Ghana.*