

6000 female students benefit from Mastercard Foundation Scholars Programme

BY AGNES OPOKU SARPONG

A TOTAL of 6000 young women and girls from senior high school through to tertiary education have benefitted from the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Programme at CAMFED Ghana for over a decade.

The programme, launched in 2012, sought to empower girls and young women with the necessary skills to become leaders of change.

It provided comprehensive support to academically gifted young women in rural communities within CAMFED's operational regions to access secondary and tertiary education.

Speaking at the Scholars Programme Partnership Convening, Ms Fairuza Safian, National Director, CAMFED Ghana, said the beneficiaries were selected from 32 districts across 12 regions of Ghana.

She said the objective of the programme was to unlock the potential of a critical mass of academically bright yet disadvantaged young women from rural Ghana in secondary and tertiary educa-



• Some of the beneficiaries at the programme

tion, as well as prepare them for enrichment and service leadership opportunities.

"The Scholars Programme was also designed to build a network of visionary educators at second cycle schools and universities who share the objective of inclusive, equitable and high-quality education," she said.

The programme, she said, also provided a unique platform to

create an alumnae network that catalysed the transformative power of individual scholars.

Ms Safian, said the Scholars Programme had provided full scholarships, psychosocial support services, personal development support, career services, networking opportunities, and leadership development training to girls and young women.

Moreover, she said the pro-

gramme also created pathways for the scholars' transition to dignified jobs, entrepreneurship, or further education.

She said, "The comprehensive nature of the scholarship meant that each secondary scholar got items such as text and exercise books, school uniforms, school bag, sandals, mathematical set, menstrual pads, and dry food rations."

"A tertiary scholar, on the other hand, received a laptop, modem, laptop bag, stipend, money for textbooks and transportation. In addition to these, their tuition fees and accommodation or hostel fees were also paid," she explained.

"The scholars gained skills, values and competencies needed to succeed in the economy and make positive social impacts in their communities," she added.

Ms Safian was optimistic that the Scholars Programme over the years had strengthened the education system, adding that CAMFED Ghana worked with secondary schools, tertiary institutions, government, and other stakeholders to design interventions that created a more supportive environment in which all young people, including marginalised girls and women, could thrive.

The Former Registrar, University of Development Studies, Yapei Wura, Dr A.B.T Zakariah, Commended initiators of the programme for the successes chalked.

"Most of these brilliant but needy students will not have had the opportunity to develop themselves and compete favourably with their peers from wealthy backgrounds if not for the support," he said.