

**REPORT ON
THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY DURBAR OF BPI
HELD ON THE 27TH FEBRUARY, 2016 AT THE BRITISH COUNCIL ON THE
THEME, EDUCATION AND WELLBEING-A TWIN NECESSITY FOR NATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

INTRODUCTION

Every organization need to be known by the public for what it does to enable the public identify them and seek for their services in relevant matters concerning the organization and its operational areas. BPI is a Think Tank whose ultimate objective is to impact positively on Society. BPI was established two years ago and has done quite a number of programmes over the two year period of its existence. It was therefore significant to begin making itself more assertive through frequent programmes and occasionally showcasing itself on those activities it undertakes. It is against this background that the 2nd Anniversary Durbar was organized by the institute on the 27th February, 2016 at the British Council Hall in Accra. The Anniversary was under the general theme: “*Education and Wellbeing - a twin necessity for National Development*”. The theme was chosen to reflect what BPI stands for and its core operational areas which are, improving education and general wellbeing of people.

Durbar Objective

To present BPI and its programmes to the public and to further establish deep relationship with all relevant stakeholders.

Expected Impact

The 2nd Anniversary Durbar seeks to put BPI on the Public lime light and create networking with stakeholders for effective collaboration.

The Durbar

i) Attendance

The Durbar was attended by a total of 204 Participants from various stakeholder organizations and institutions. Some of the key Participants included;

1. The Director of Secondary education division, Ministry of Education who represented the Minister of Education
2. The Executive Secretary of the National Council for Tertiary Education, NCTE
3. The Director of the Pantang Mental Hospital who represented the Director of the Mental Health Authority.
4. A member of Council State and a Senior Lecturer from the University of Ghana
5. Mr Alhassan Andani, MD of Stanbic Bank Ghana ltd and also the Board Chairman of BPI
6. Senior Administrators, Research Fellows and representatives of several public and private institutions.

The programme was chaired by Mr Alhassan Andani, Board Chairman of BPI.

ii) Speeches by the Executive Director and President of BPI

In his Welcoming remarks, the Executive Director of BPI, Mr. Haruna Zagoon-Sayeed, thanked participants for responding to the invitation. He indicated that the Durbar was a platform to create a discourse amongst stakeholders in the development tray and all agents of change. He noted that whiles education is the prime catalyst for any developmental efforts, our wellbeing, both physical and material, must be the ultimate goal for any developmental agenda; as such the theme for the anniversary was carefully chosen to drive this course. He also indicated that, the new BPI Development Magazine, “The Baraka” will be launched as part of the anniversary. The magazine is an informative piece on development discourse.

Delivering his address, President of BPI, Mr. Salem Kalmoni, who is also the Managing Director of Japan Motors Co. ltd, noted that although Ghana has several Policy Institutes, founders of BPI saw education as a tool with the most impact on National development emphasizing that “for national cohesion and peace, as well as economic growth, we need to get education to all corners of our country and to all members of our society- the poor and marginalized need our help most” he noted.

Mr Kalmoni stressed the need for the nation to provide quality education to its citizenry. He mentioned “We owe it to ourselves as individuals and a nation, to bring quality education to the

most underprivileged in our Society.” This, he explained was the motivation for making education with its three facets: **access, quality and relevance**, the number one priority for BPI.

Mr. Kalmoni noted that as a Think Tank working to promote the overall wellbeing of the citizenry, it is open to any pressing issues of the day that need a push and believes as such the need for a coherent National Alcohol Policy to regulate the promotion of alcoholic drinks was needed.

He seized the occasion to urge Government and policy makers to expedite action in drafting and passing the pending National Alcohol Policy to regulate the promotion of alcoholic drinks, stressing that Ghana can take a cue from several African countries such as South Africa and Kenya who have been successful with alcohol legislation.

Mr Kalmoni re iterated BPI’s mission “We strive for the general wellbeing of people especially the vulnerable in society through advocacy, promotion of social justice, policy analysis and the conduct of research in selected and relevant areas of national development”

iii) Delivery of Lectures

Two lectures were delivered on the following topics;

- 1. “Inclusive Educational Planning- a pre requisite for Sustainable Development”**, which was delivered by Professor Mohammed Salifu, the Executive Director of the National Council for Tertiary Education, NCTE.
- 2. “ Dealing with Substance Abuse- The Need for Control and Policies”**, which was delivered by Dr Frank Banning, the Director of Pantang Mental Hospital (represented Dr Akwasi Osei, CEO of Mental Health Authority)

In his lecture, Professor Mohammed Salifu stated that Inclusive education and its planning was key to any positive yielding educational goals. He mentioned that Inclusive Education highlights a particular approach or type of education which an adopted will yield to realizing national educational outcomes. He made reference to sustainable development goal number four (4) for which the goal is to ensure inclusive and equitable, quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

“In inclusive education, all students attend and are welcomed by their neighborhood schools in age appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute, and participate in all aspects of school life. This will include those who would otherwise be marginalized either because of disability, or poverty, or because they speak a different language or because they are girls and not boys”. Prof Salifu stated. According to him, the single most important advantage of inclusive education planning is the possibility of developing individual strengths and gifts and fostering the culture of respect and understanding for diverse abilities and also harnessing all the valid talents across the different shades of national development.

Prof Salifu indicated that enormous progress was made in achieving target for universal primary education globally and nationally. For example, the total enrolment rate in developing countries is 91% over 90% in 2015 and worldwide the number of children out of school dropped almost half, during this period there is dramatic increase in literacy rate and many more girls are in school. However, in spite of the successes, inclusive education in Ghana needs to do more to give full expression and meaning to the policy particularly in relation to persons with disability, according to Prof Salifu. Using data from the 2010 census, he mentioned that, persons with disabilities constitute about 3% of the national population, 44% of these persons lived in rural areas which accounted for 49% of the total population, there were more people with disabilities living in the rural areas than those living in the urban areas. Visual or sight impairment accounted for 40% of all the disabilities reported. Significantly, therefore, less than 5% of all persons living with disabilities (PWDs) nationally had an education beyond Secondary School. This he said was far below expectation and the nation needed to work towards achieving inclusiveness in our educational agenda.

Dr Frank Baning, the Director of Pantang Hospital in his lecture highlighted the effects of substance abuse on both the individual and society. He took the audience through a thorough understanding of drug/substances that are abused and its prevalence level in Ghana. He mentioned that the current prevalence rate of substance abuse in Ghana is between 25%-40%. He called for Multi-disciplinary framework approach in tackling the drug situation which has alcohol as one of the highest. He mentioned the approach in dealing with the substance abuse as follows;

- A Drug demand reduction approach from state institutions and organizations especially civil society like the Baraka Policy aims to achieve and,
- A Drug supply reduction approach which primarily concerned with legal authorities which can sanction players in the industry.

Dr Baning called for a well coordinated legal regime to deal with the substance abuse situation in Ghana before it got out of control.

3. Remarks by the Hon Minister of Education

Launching the BPI biannual development magazine, the Minister of Education, Prof. Naana Jane Opoku-Agyeman whose address was read on her behalf by Mrs. Wilhelmina Asamoah, Director of Tertiary Education at the Ministry of Education noted the theme was very apt explaining that a nation that fails to educate its people is deliberately opting out of developmental efforts.

She commended BPI for their commitment in research and advocacy on education and assured that the Ministry will continue to partner and support its activities.

She observed that the proposed 40-year development plan as a country will inure to nothing without positioning education at the centre of the entire plan as such the Ministry of education will work together with the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) towards this goal.

Key outcomes from the Anniversary Durbar

1. A call on the Government and policy makers to expedite action in drafting and passing the pending National Alcohol Policy
2. Policy makers in the education sector were reminded on the need to always consider special needs of people when planning educational policies and goals
3. A commendation on BPI for its resolve to contribute towards the progress of society and for standing for the less privileged in society