



# Capacity development through education and training

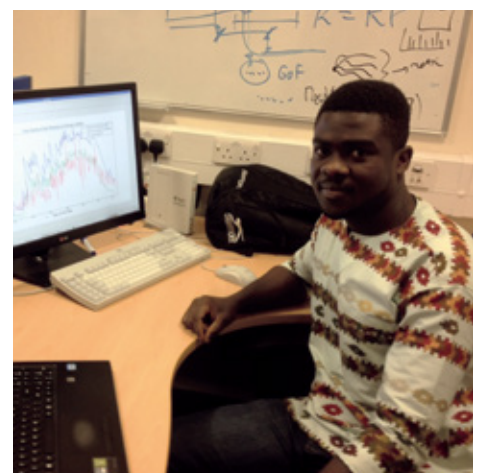
## **WMO fellowships supported by the UK Voluntary Co-operation Programme**

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Voluntary Co-operation Programme (VCP) provides equipment, services and training to support national meteorological and hydrological services and encourage capacity development in developing countries.

As part of this programme, the Met Office, the UK's national weather and climate service, supports students from developing countries to complete an MSc in Applied Meteorology and Climate with Management at the University of Reading in the UK.

Mr Frederick Otu-Larbi, a meteorologist at the Ghana Meteorological Agency (GMA), studied for a Masters degree with the support of the WMO/UK VCP fellowship scheme in order to broaden his understanding of the weather and improve his ability to produce weather forecasts.

The degree has a strong emphasis on practical weather forecasting and climate modelling, and Frederick was particularly interested in addressing the challenge faced by GMA in terms of drought early warning systems. The MSc also supports fellows in developing



Mr Frederick Otu-Larbi

managerial skills that can prove invaluable when looking to progress within an organisation.

In this interview Frederick shares his thoughts on the fellowship scheme.

## Did you need to study further to be able to progress your career?

As a civil servant, my career progression will be based on my qualification and this provided additional motivation in deciding to study for a Masters degree. Even though there is a Ghanaian university that offers an MSc in meteorology, the reputation and prestige attached to obtaining a UK certificate was too attractive to ignore.

The fact that the programme was organised at Reading meant that this prestige was even higher because the University of Reading is a world leader in terms of the teaching and learning of meteorology.

## Were there parts of the course that were particularly useful in overcoming certain challenges?

During the dissertation phase of my MSc programme, I worked together with my supervisors from the TAMSAT (Tropical Applications of Meteorology using SATellite data and ground-based observations) group in developing a drought monitoring system based on soil moisture for northern Ghana. Early results are promising and we hope to scale this up to cover the entire country in the future.

The Met Office has been very helpful throughout the year that I have been studying at Reading. They generously sponsored me and my colleagues for the PRECIS (Providing REgional Climates for Impacts Studies) training and also organised forecasting training for all MSc students at Reading. My research work would not have been possible without the use of the Met Office land surface model JULES (Joint UK Land Environment Simulator).

## Do you think your met service will be more effective and efficient because of the skills you take back?

This MSc has improved my understanding of meteorology and also given me managerial and leadership skills. These skills and knowledge will be very beneficial in my duties as a forecaster at GMA. More importantly, through this Masters I have developed a prototype drought warning system that could be improved and used to address a major problem facing Ghanaian farmers. I feel that I've been very well equipped over the past year to contribute more meaningfully to my met service in particular and my country at large.

I am very grateful to the WMO and the Met Office. Without their support I would not have been able to study in the UK.

*"I was excited when I got news that I had received one of four WMO scholarship awards for the 2014/2015 academic year because it was an opportunity for me to improve myself and to make better contributions to the development of my met service in Ghana."*

**Mr Frederick Otu-Larbi**  
Ghana Meteorological Agency

For more information  
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