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EDUCATION - The government on Thursday April 03 launched a programme that aims to improve girl-child education performance in the country, supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and to be implemented by the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) Education Trust.

Speaking at the project's launch in Korogocho Nairobi, CfBT Regional Director, Kate Vorley said that the project will use an integrated approach to overcome the complex barriers to female education in urban slums by improving school enrolment, retention, attendance and learning outcomes for marginalized girls.

"Our focus is particularly on early grades; looking at the challenges that girls go through. So there is a community component, understanding the barriers to accessing education working with parents to really sensitize on the value of education," Capital FM quoted Vorley as saying.

"To achieve these outcome the project will drive changes in four dimensions; the community, the home, the school and the girl herself."

CfBT, the main partner in the project, received Ksh 2.4 billion in funding to initiate the project in 500 primary schools in different counties across the country starting with Nairobi and Mombasa.

“Together with our partners, the consortium will work in 250 schools in urban slums in Nairobi and Mombasa and 250 schools in rural districts in six counties namely, Turkana, Samburu, Marsabit, Kwale, Kilifi and Tana River,” said Vorley.

“These counties were selected in consultation with the Ministry of Education and taking into consideration other interventions targeting education in those areas,” she explained.

Assistant Director for Basic Education in the Ministry of Education, Bibiana Chege, said performance of girls in urban slums was on a decline in national examinations and the project was targeting to reverse the trend.

“Performance in urban slums is on a downward trend as compared to the rest of them in urban centers. This program is going to pull them to the same level to participate in equal manner with other urban areas,” she noted.

Though her ministry has noted an increase of student enrolment since the inception of free education system in the country, there are still about one million children who aren't enrolled in schools.

“Before the 2003 free primary education we had over five million children in school now we have over 11 million although we still have 1 million out of school,” she emphasized.

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