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Improved learning in private schools is our concern – DEEPEN

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By Seyi Taiwo-Oguntuase - *Reporter, Lagos*

The Team Leader of the Developing Effective Private Education Nigeria (DEEPEN) Dr. Gboyega Ilusanya has affirmed that the major concern of the programme is to ensure improved learning outcome in private schools especially among the low income households in Lagos state.

He stated this at the official launch of the new programme funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) in Lagos, expressing optimism that the objective of the programme would have been realised by 2018 when it is expected to be concluded.

Recounting that DFID has been supporting public sector education in Lagos through the Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria since 2008, he stated that recent research works have revealed that about 15,000 private schools, many of which are unapproved, are yet provide education to about 1.5 million children in the state.

“Although private education is often labeled elite, many of these schools actually serve the poor. While government schools remain important, they alone cannot cope with the ever growing demand,”

“Given the large number of private schools, DEEPEN will therefore work to address the constraints in this market, in order to improve the quality and demands for better private education,” he added.

According to him, “What we expect to happen is that these children will affect or afflict our economy, possibly the child goes to private or public. People who do not want to attend public schools chose the alternative of the private sector”.

However he explained that a recent census conducted in 2010, 2011 in the state on private school education revealed that 57 per cent of the children are in private schools and 118,000 are being employed in the private sector and that in year 2010 alone about 969 schools were registered newly.

“We look at this and we see that there is a need to support private schools. The programme is focused on improving learning outcome in private schools, especially for children from low income households in the state,” he added.

He added the outcome of the choice of Lagos state for the pilot programme will to age extent determine if it will be extended to other states in the country.

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