



## **IHDN - THE KEY TO MY NEW WORLD**

by Kwaku Caruthers Dzramedo

When I look back to that day in June 1998 when it all began, I cannot but wonder if I am dreaming. But I am reassured everyday, because I wake up every morning and it is there. It is still with me, I use it everyday I go to work, and instead of finishing, it keeps on improving day after day, opening up new worlds for me to explore, worlds which I knew only existed in novels and fairytales.

It all began in June 1998. I had graduated from the University of Ghana with a BA in Economics. I initially planned to get a job in Accra. Unfortunately this did not materialize, so I had no other option than to travel to Agbozume to spend some time while awaiting my national service posting. It was when I got home that I was informed of the IHDN program. I realized then that this was an opportunity for me to acquire the computer skills which I really needed.

As usual, the skeptics were at work. They kept on telling me that it was a waste of time, and that I shouldn't do it. They were of the view that I should just wait till I got a job, and my employer would give me the needed training. At a point I was almost gave in to this advise, but a special friend, SELI SALU, encouraged me that we should just register and go through it. She maintained that it was a steppingstone, and I eventually gave in to her advice.

The day of examinations came and we both made it. When the classes actually began, we were introduced to our wonderful teacher, Mr. Tim Rice. Admittedly we were all nervous in the first session. But Tim (now Torgbui Tim I), thank God for him, quickly allayed our fears. He constantly reminded us that we shouldn't be overwhelmed by what we saw or heard, that the most important thing was to listen attentively, practice, and learn, and we would make it.

We were taken through 5 weeks of training in hardware and software programs like DOS and WordPerfect. Our instructor kept reminding us that the most important thing was not the number of application programs that we were able to go through before he leaves, but being able to switch on the computer and knowing what we could do with the PC. To be honest, we were all able to go through the lessons successfully because of the wonderful tutor that we had.

One message that he kept on repeating and which I have never forgotten is that he has given us the Key, and it was now up to each and every one of us to go and open all the doors that we want to. I saw the similarity of his message with the parable of the Talents. I therefore resolved to make good use of my new skills and improve upon it so much so that when he comes back, he would not be discouraged, and so that IHDN would become a permanent institution giving the needed skills to others like me.

After our instructor had left for the US, I was posted to the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research for my National Service as a Research Assistant from December 1998. My first test was to boot and shut down a PC properly. I worked there for six months. My duty was collecting, entering, and analyzing data using software packages such as Excel, SPSS, and SAS.

In April 99, Maersk Ghana Limited employed me as an Assistant Trucking Coordinator. All this was made possible because of IHDN and most of all, Torgbui Tim I. I still communicate with him via e-mail. He gives me assistance any time I have problems.

My prayer is for IHDN to receive sponsorship from world bodies like the UN, World Bank, IMF and other international NGOs. I believe that it is not enough to just give food to hungry people, the most important thing is to give them skills that would enable them to find local solutions to their local problems.

Long live IHDN, and may the Almighty continue to bless the whole team and especially Torgbui Tim I and his family.

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