

## PRESENTATION ON CEF GHANA AT THE MEETING OF CEF CO-ORDINATORS IN LONDON – 19<sup>TH</sup> to 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER, 2003

### **Primary education**

Education in Ghana was started by the early missionaries and later supported by the colonial government. Access to schools during this period was very limited as schools were few. The country saw an expanded access to education with the passage of the 1961 Education Act during the first republic. This entailed fee free 6-year primary education as well as the establishment of many primary schools and other pre-tertiary and tertiary institutions including teacher-training colleges, agricultural institutions and Universities.

A major education reform was initiated in 1987. Among others the reform reduced pre-tertiary education from 17 to 12 years but other problems it sought to correct still persisted as at 1995. Some of these included: poor quality teaching and learning; inadequate access to education services; and weak management capacity at all levels of the education.

To address the persistent problems, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme of 1996 – 2005 was launched. This means that by 2005, every school-aged child must be in school and that basic education comprising 6 years primary and 3 years Junior Secondary School is free. Under this policy government will supply teachers, equipment, tools and other teaching and learning materials free of charge to all basic public schools; Textbooks will also be supplied free of charge to all basic public and private schools.

### **Types of Primary Education**

In Ghana, we have public and private formal primary schools. Some of these are special needs schools catering for needs of children with disability, etc. There are also a few non-formal schools run mostly by NGOs.

### **Access to Primary Education**

Though, there has been a general increase in physical access to primary education under the FCUBE, enrolment and retention rates remain low especially in rural and deprived areas. The gross enrolment ratio at the primary school level is for e.g. 80%. Out of this number, boys always outnumber girls. At the primary school level, while boys account for 52.8% of the gross enrolment, girls account for only 47.2%. The gross enrolment rates for girls has hovered around 49%, 47% and 45% at pre-school, primary and Junior Secondary Schools respectively.

### **Quality of Primary Education**

The quality of education has also not been good. The Criterion referenced test results in 1999 indicates that only 8.7% and 4% of pupils in public primary reached a mastery level in English and mathematics respectively. Disturbing as the performance appear, it was the best since 1992.

### **The challenges faced by the education sector include:**

- **Expanding access:** ensuring equitable access to education by all children including girls, disables, children in conflict areas and hard-to-reach communities, etc; removing attitudinal, customary and other factors that inhibit enrolment, attendance and retention, ensuring that basic education is free.
- **Improving quality:** teacher training and development, improving on teacher commitment, adequate and equitable distribution of teachers and teaching and learning materials, improving upon supervision, etc
- **Enhancing participation in the management of education:** ensuring participation of all stakeholders at all levels of education planning and management. Stepping up CSO participation, empowering communities to support in school management and control

- **Increased funding for education:** (Government provides 91% of education financing, about 80% of this goes pay teachers' salaries) Ensure optimum utilisation of education resources, ensuring increased government budgetary allocation to education at the local and national levels, mobilising non-state resources from the private sector to support education.

### **Government Education Policy**

Articles 25 and 38 of the constitution of the Republic of Ghana provide the mandate and basis for educational development in the country. Following from the constitutional provisions, the FCUBE policy and work programme was developed and implemented. Currently, The Education Strategic Plan – (ESP) 2003-2015 that provides a strategic guide for sector wide education development in Ghana. Accordingly, the ESP incorporates policies, targets and indicators for primary education.

The ESP provides clear linkages between its focal areas the policy goals of the Education Sector Policy Review Report and the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), the priorities of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), the findings of the Education Sector review report and the Education for All goals. \*A national EFA plan is being drawn\*.

### **CS Consultation in the Development of the ESP**

The national framework of the ESP was greatly informed by the findings and recommendations of various committees that reviewed education in Ghana:

- Previous ESP (1998 to 2002)
- Education Sector Policy review report (August 2002)
- Education Sector Review (October 2002)
- Meeting the challenges of Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (the report on the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, October 2002).

Apart from having CS serve on these committees, we also had CS serve on the ESP planning team. Also in doing its work, the committees consulted with a wide variety of education practitioners and the general public. They collected memoranda from the groups, made press briefings, visited institutions, regions and districts. Significant as CS involvement in the development of the plan may be, it was no way co-ordinated.

### **Education Budget**

Since 1997, annual recurrent budget for the education sector has accounted for the 35% of national recurrent budget. About 90% of the education budget is spent on personnel emoluments, leaving only 10% for investment into infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, etc. The pre-tertiary education sector accounts for between 75 – 80% of total education budgets. Actual expenditures on education have often been less than budgeted. For instance in 2001, the amount of spending per primary school pupil was less than 20% of the budgeted amount. In addition the real spending per pupil continues reducing as a result of inflation and increase in enrolment. e.

### **Role of the International Community**

Though, the government of Ghana bears the chunk of 91% of the education budget about 90% of this goes into payment of salaries. Investment in infrastructure and other teaching and learning materials have therefore been greatly provided with the financial support of donors, including DFID, USAID, JICA, UNESCO, etc. They have also given technical support to the Ministry of Education. Notably however, much of the support the international has gone to the basic level.

### **Education Policy Makers**

The education policy makers are mainly the government and donors. There is a growing trend of CS involvement.

### **Civil Society**

NGOs, CBOs, FBOs and other civil society organisations have been supporting government in the development and promotion of education in the Country. CSOs have developed expertise and harnessed resources for dealing with educational problems at the micro level. Thus promoting capacity building for self-reliance and community effort, and community participation in the management of projects supported by NGOs. NGOs have been involved in research and advocacy. The government and the public at large therefore see CS to be very responsive to the educational needs of deprived communities in particular. They therefore perceive NGOs more as service providers.

### **CS Involvement in Policy Analysis**

Government has given recognition to the role of CSOs and have therefore created opportunities for CS involvement in processes of policy analysis. This is evident by the representation of CSOs (including GNECC, Concerned Parents Association, AAG, Christian Council of Ghana, etc) on national level committees that have reviewed educational policies and programmes.

### **History NGOs/CS Working Together**

The Ghana Private Voluntary Organisations in Development (GAPVOD) is an umbrella organisation of all voluntary organisations including NGOs and CSOs. It has been in existence for over a decade. There exist other thematic area networks of NGOs and CSOs existing permanently and others formed in response to emerging issues.

### **Education Networks**

In the area of education there exists two main networks of NGOs, FBOs, teachers Union, traditional authorities, etc. These are GNECC and NNED formed in 1999 and 2001 respectively. Though they profess the same goal (of EFA) they have not concluded any definite arrangement of working together, until recently (facilitated by CEF). They have made some gains: mobilising appreciable membership, established structures at the national, regional and district levels, creating awareness about some educational issues (e.g. girl child education) and campaigning for some changes in educational policy. To facilitate an enhanced working together, the networks would have to deal with the following among others:

- Weak inter and intra partnerships among stakeholders and government
- Lack of information sharing on government policy and programmes, best practices, etc.
- Lack of advocacy/ lobbying, communication and research skills of CSOs.

### **Role of Politics**

For CS to work on policy it would undoubtedly require an enabling political climate: freedom of expression guaranteed, a government that is open and prepared to listen to and work with CS, etc. This climate is growing in Ghana.

### **CEF Intervention**

CEF Ghana has put in place CEF Management Committee, and recruited a Co-ordinator and an Accountant. It has developed a three-year strategic plan (2003 – 2005) that is approved. The plan is set to:

- Support the growth, strengthening and streamlining of the operations of existing education campaign coalitions and networks, ensuring that there is effective linkage between micro and macro level structures.

- Support CSO collaborative input into and monitoring of the implementation of the EFA National plan of action.
- Support CSO engagement with government and district assemblies on issues of equity, access and quality based on the monitoring outcomes of the implementation of the EFA national plan and other experiences.
- Build the capacities of child-education-focussed coalitions aimed at providing them with skills in areas such as rights-based advocacy, research, proposal writing etc.
- Support the capacity building of CSOs in the use of participatory techniques that are useful in engagement with community level actors and contributes directly to increased enrolment and retention, especially of girls, rural children and other disadvantaged children.
- Support platforms and activities that promote learning and sharing among CSOs and coalitions that promote the education and welfare of children. This will be done within and outside Ghana.
- Support advocacy work on the flexible language policy, alternative approaches to staffing, education for hard-to reach children, curriculum, etc.
- Build the capacity of CSOs in monitoring and evaluation, especially of budgets on education. This will include the development of simple participatory monitoring tools for use by all stakeholders, especially local community groups like PTAs/SMCs
- Advocate for alternative ways of increasing funding to basic education. This will include abolishing of user fees at the basic school level and increased allocation of the Ghana Education Trust (GET) fund to basic education.
- Support initiatives to step up the contribution of the private sector to basic education.

### **What has CEF done?**

- Supported awareness creation on CEF and other education issues on radio and TV.
- Supported the strengthening of regional branches of the national coalition.
- Supported the establishment district EFA Committees.
- Supported training of CSOs on Education policies.
- Supported regional traditional rulers conference to analyse traditional and customary obstacles to full enrolment and retention.
- Supported the production of a documentary on promoting enrolment and retention through the use of drama and other participatory techniques.
- Supported PAMOJA REFLECT West Africa practitioners forum.
- Started the process of restructuring GNECC and harmonising the work of GNECC and NNED.