



Ghana

Country Context

Governments of Ghana have placed faith in education as a major instrument for rapid social and economic development. In line with this, the sector has over the years been allocated a large proportion of government recurrent expenditure. At various times, the education sector has been allocated as much as 40% of government recurrent expenditure. Beginning with the *Accelerated Development Plan for Education of 1951*, access and participation increased at all levels of education until the economic decline of the 1970s. Consequently, the educational reforms of 1987 were initiated to revamp the educational sector following the economic recovery programme started in 1983. In addition, the *Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE)* was launched in 1996 to address access, participation, quality and equity at the basic education level, which covers 6 years of Primary and 3 years of Junior Secondary School education. As a result of these reforms the number of primary schools increased from 9,569 in 1997/98 to 13,965 in 2000/2001. Despite all the reforms, the attainment of Education for All (EFA) continues to be a major challenge in Ghana. The indicators of quality, access, and accountability within the education sector have had modest and slow gains despite the large injection of donor funding over the last 15 years (MOEYS, 2004).

From 1997 to 2002, the primary Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) increased to 79.5%, which accounted for a 3.5% increase over the period; female GER grew at a faster rate of 5.3% over the same period. Unfortunately, the Millennium Development Goal of achieving gender parity by 2005 will not be achieved in Ghana (MOEYS, 2004). Ghana's primary education completion rate as of 2002 was 65.9% suggesting that a large proportion of children never complete primary education. Reaching the target of universal primary completion (UPC) by 2015 will therefore require a substantial effort to ensure that 34.1% of children who drop out of school are retained and complete the full six years of primary schooling. Achieving Universal Primary Completion (UPC) in Ghana will also require a much greater focus on Net Enrolment Rates (NER) in educational planning and targeting. The NER data for 2002/2003 suggests that between 40-55% of children across the three northern regions of Ghana remain out of school. The largest proportions of these children are girls living in the north whom due to poverty, parental neglect and socio-cultural practices fail to enter and stay in the formal education system (Casely-Hayford, 2004). Other factors that continue to exclude children from school are inadequate and poor infrastructure, inadequate number of teachers and logistics supply, low community involvement in education management, and inefficiency in education management.

The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2003 - 2015 was specifically developed to provide strategic framework for sector wide education development in Ghana.

Accordingly, the ESP incorporates policies, targets and indicators for Universal Primary Education (UPE), Gender Parity and the rest of the EFA goals. It provides clear linkages between its focal areas and the policy goals of the other sectoral and national development plans and instruments, i.e. the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), and the Ghana Poverty Reduction strategy. The ESP is also designed to target some of the most vulnerable groups including children with special needs, children living in extreme poverty, out of school children and girls. In 2004 the government issued a white paper on the report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, which reaffirmed government's resolve to address problems plaguing the education sector as whole. As part of measures to address problems facing basic education in poor communities, government instituted capitation grants for basic schools in 40 deprived districts in Ghana, but was extended to all schools in the country by the 2005 budget statement as a constitutional requirement. The challenge now is for civil society and other actors to hold government accountable for its promises and ensure that quality education reaches all Ghanaian children.

Key Achievements

- Traditional chiefs pledged to eliminate customary practices that inhibit educational enrolment as well supporting teachers posted to rural areas to promote quality and retention.
- Reactivation of community structures that supports community mobilisation and participation in education delivery such as SMCs, PTAs through the establishment of District EFA Teams (DEFATs).
- Budget tracking at community level is becoming popular through DEFATs.
- Diffusion of competition between GNECC and NNED through CEF support to both.

Breakdown by Criteria

CRITERION 1

CEF has successfully formed or reactivated education teams and structures. Working in collaboration with Oxfam, 50 District Education for All (DEFATs) were formed across 8 regions to lobby for the education of vulnerable groups, participate in implementation and monitoring of education plans and track the use of resources. DEFATs have engaged in advocacy on; fee-free education, inadequate infrastructure, teacher availability and performance and socio-cultural barriers to girls' education. They have heightened awareness of enrolment issues, sensitised girls to the negative impact of migrating to the south and lobbied successfully for more teachers to fill vacant positions. Chiefs, elders, communities and PTAs have been engaged in discussion on their roles and responsibilities for education. In some places, enrolment has increased along with exam pass rates. CEF partners have also addressed several significant policies and programmes and the MTR reports increased representation and engagement of civil society with government policy forums. However significant challenges still remain. There remains a great need to

continue building momentum of civil society in order to ensure their participation and input into key government processes. To a large extent DEFATs success is limited to the north. In southern Ghana they need to be strengthened to be really effective. Strategies for sustainability of the DEFATs are not yet well developed and they continue to focus on increasing membership and identifying various sectors of civil society, which they represent, engaging with the regional and district level structures.

CRITERION 2

Different methods of budget preparation, tracking, lobbying, and educational governance were promoted and supported in different areas through different educational groups and coalitions. Overall 37 communities were involved. There is greater participation in the planning of resources to address teaching and learning needs. Communities are now demanding accountability and there is increased information flow and transparency. Community stakeholders are much more aware of the resources available to schools and are demanding improved school infrastructure, better teachers and teaching materials. Service providers such as teachers now realise their responsibility to the community. Improved financial management, accountability and transparency and many schools now operate bank accounts and head teachers prepare quarterly revenue and expenditure reports. In some cases additional revenue has become available from donors as a result of these changes.

Key challenges that still remain are focused around the transfer of funds from national to district level. CEF partners have very little information on the bigger picture of national disbursements. In addition, an unwillingness to disclose information remains at almost every level from district Director of Education to head teachers to teachers.

CRITERION 3

The CEF programme in Ghana has recorded considerable success in working with traditional chiefs and leaders to engage the most marginalised groups in education. A significant outcome was the identification of the key factors inhibiting parents from sending their children to school. In addition some chiefs pledged to reduce and aim to eliminate many of these practices. The participatory production of a video encouraged six communities to undertake enrolment and retention drives. The communities demanded that education authorities take up their concerns, including the transfer of truant teachers from the urban areas to rural communities as punishment for absenteeism or lateness. The overriding challenge that the Ghana MTR recognises under this criterion is to identify sporadic but effective local innovations and then transfer them up to a national scale.

Case Study: Learning to lobby for more resources

In most of the participating communities involved in “budget tracking”, SMCs and PTAs now understand the need to accompany the teachers to the District Assembly and the District Directorate of Education in order to make demands for teachers, textbooks and other education resources. Many communities have learned key techniques of lobbying.

“We had inadequate teachers. The Assemblyman, SMC/PTA chairperson and the chief joined the head teacher to the District Directorate of Education to inform them about the teachers and textbooks situation in the community and one additional teacher has been provided at the primary level.”

“There is transparency. Resources mobilized are made known to the community through community meetings. There is accountability.”
Aponoapono community stakeholder meeting, Suhum-Kraboia-Coaltar District, Ghana

District Assemblies, NGOs and donors are providing support to address education challenges in the communities. The Aponoapono community in the Suhum District has received approval from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for the construction of a four-classroom block and a piggery project. The Kyekyewere community in the Upper Denkyira District has received ₵200 million (cedis) towards the construction of classrooms from the District Assembly. Now people have much better access to information on available resources and services provided.

“Before the Score Card exercise, information flow from the Ghana Education Service (GES) was very minimal. No information got to the communities. As a result of this exercise both the service providers and the communities have become aware that they needed information from each other that were not being provided. Some communities were under enrolled and others over enrolled in the Bongo Central community. At the community interface dialogue between the GES and the community it was revealed that World Vision was providing incentive packages in the over enrolled communities and that was why all parents were enrolling their children in those schools.”

Staff and Board Members of Northern Ghana Network for Development