

GHANA PROPOSAL

COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION FUND

**SUBMITTEDBY:
CEF TEAM**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Activities of CEF in Ghana commenced in July 2002. The activities have aimed at promoting understanding, ownership and management of the fund by a wide spectrum of CSOs across the country, strengthening partnership among the CSOs and building their capacity to constructively engage with government and other players in education: So far national and regional teams have been formed to direct and co-ordinate activities supported from the fund. Awareness about the fund and child education issues have been and is still being disseminated across the country through broader CS consultative meetings and public awareness creation through the media; knowledge gained at a national level training on some government education-related policies on which CSOs can engage with stakeholders in education, is being disseminated to the local level through similar training workshops.

The above are but some of the activities outlined in the initial CEF interim national plan, which spanned October 2002 - February 2003. While the process of implementing and tracking the outcomes of the above activities will continue, substantial progress has been made to start the other activities – training in budgetary processes and documentation. This document, which is a strategic plan for CEF Ghana 2003 - 2004, would therefore contain a roll over of some of the activities in the interim plan.

2.0 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Basic Education in Ghana refers to the first nine years of schooling of a child, from primary to JSS level. This programme is recognized by the Government as the fundamental building blocks of the country within the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and in response to formulate a national strategy for poverty reduction. Collaborative efforts have been mobilized in undertaking a nation-wide long-term approach to expand, strengthen and produce a relevant Basic Education system for Ghana. Government is therefore committed, as a constitutional obligation, to making schooling from Basic stage 1 through to 9, free and compulsory for all school age children, and to increase enrolment to 100% by 2005. This effort is not only aimed at expanding access but also improving quality of teaching and learning.

In spite of all these, 25% to 30% of children of school going age are still not in school. In addition about 40% of those who enrol drop out before they complete basic education, girls are in the majority. This means that a considerable number of pupils do not acquire the necessary skills needed to either equip them for life or qualify them to pursue higher education.

2.1 Education Reform in Ghana

Within the last twelve years, two major reforms in education have taken place in Ghana. These are the education reform of 1987 and the free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) programme of 1995, launched in October 1996. These reforms are geared towards making education more accessible to all children of school going age. The programmes also aim at improving equity and the quality of education as a whole, as well as making education more relevant to the socio-economic requirements of the country. About 78% of school age children are in school (EMIS, MOE, 2002). However there are still more children especially in

deprived and poor rural areas who are still not in school. Factors mitigating against improved access and equity, includes the following;

- Lack of strong inter and intra partnership among other stakeholders and government
- Inadequate infrastructure
- Inadequate number of teachers and logistics supply
- Low community involvement in education
- Poor school management

All these have contributed to exclude children from very poor communities from obtaining quality education and schooling.

In recent times, much more resources have been mobilized, partnerships developed with bilateral organizations, donors and NGO communities. There has also been much efforts directed towards developing more cooperation with NGOs and CSOs to achieve fCUBE goals and objectives, which basically addresses the concerns of EFA goals. On- going activities include the following:

- FCUBE evaluation
- Education Reform Review (ERR)
- Education Sector Review (ESR)
- Sector- Wide Approaches (SWAPs)
- Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy Planning (GPRSP)
- Education For All and National Action Plans (EFA-NAP) process
- Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) initiative

2.2 The FCUBE evaluation

After six years of fCUBE implementation, (1996-2002), the Ghana Education Service (GES) has developed a statistical database for assessing the first half of the implementation period to identify achievements, weaknesses, and constraints. This is with the view to mapping up strategies for improvement and to fashion a way forward. The fCUBE stocktaking exercise was done through a series of workshops with target groups with particular reference to access and participation. The following were reviewed;

- Progress made towards putting every child of school going age in school by 2005 with special emphasis on the girl-child.
- Equitability in distribution of all infrastructure and services
- The extent of community participation in the delivery of good quality education
- The delivery of quality of teaching and learning.

Some achievements of the fCUBE implementation among others are as follows;

- The number of primary schools rose from 12, 236 in 1997 to 14, 370 in 2000 representing an increase of 17.5% over the period.
- Enrolment in primary school rose from 2,334, 746 in 1996/1997 to 2, 654, 006 in 2000/2001 representing an increase from 44.1% in 1996/1997 to 46.9% in 2000/ 2001.

2.3 The Education Sector Review (ESR)

This is a sector-wide examination of education programmes, projects and activities and their organization for effective delivery. The effort is to establish a base for formulation of enhanced strategies that promote intra-sectoral co-ordinations. The exercise has involved reviews of past evaluation reports on policy implementation, projects, programmes and activities within the context of GPRSP, MTEF, EFA goals, FCUBE and the participation of private sector groups, cooperate bodies, CSOs/NGOs in the context of implementation of education programmes. ESR has created linkages between different levels of education and the combating of the scourge of the HIV/AIDs pandemic.

The task involved the assessment of:

- Access and efficiency
- Demand, supply and retention of teachers
- Quality and equity
- Linkages and transitions between basic, secondary and tertiary levels of education.

2.4 The President's committee on Education Reform Review

The team was to review the whole education sector programmes over the last twelve-fourteen years. The outcome of the committee review was the fact the poor quality education was a result of poor teacher motivation and the lack of allocation of 1% of the total education budget to support Vocational education. Even the 1% was argued as being grossly inadequate and not in line with the constitution, which is to provide free basic education. The process is still in the final stages.

2.5 The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy Planning (GPRSP)

This process has taken on board the provision of the following; accessible and affordable education at all levels; quality senior secondary in each of the 110 districts; pre-school education as part of primary basic education. All efforts are to ensure mobilization of human resources through effective education programmes for poverty alleviation. Key education programmes have been developed into 27 indicators.

2.6 Outcomes of Government's interventions in education

- **Literacy achieved**

It has been established that the national illiteracy rate has reduced from 69% in 1985 to 53% in 1995 according to sources quoted from the Non-Formal Education Division –Ministry of Education (2000). The outcome is as a result of the successful implementation of phase 1 of the Literacy Programme (1992-1997) whereby 1.2 million adult learners passed out.

- **Gender parity in enrolment**

The government is committed to the education of all children, particularly that of the girl-child and geared towards gender parity in enrolment. Commitments of government have led to the creation of the Girls' Education Unit, Minister of State for Basic Secondary and Girl-Child Education, Ministry for Women and Children Affairs (MOWA), all focussing on the rights to education and the development of girl- child and other welfare issues. New strategies and improvement of existing efforts to improve access to girls' education have been worked out especially in

the policy guidelines under the FCUBE programme, which has been launched. These include:

- The establishment of girls' education Scholarship Schemes by 15 to 25 District Assemblies with the lowest girls enrolment. In addition to the girls' education Scholarship Scheme, all districts are being encouraged to allocate 50% of all forms of Scholarships to be awarded by the District Assemblies to girls to ensure that costs are lowered for parents to send their girls to schools.
- Increasing the admission of women into Teacher training Colleges whilst cutting down on the excessive enrolment of male students.
- The current programme of promoting the interest of girls in science, technology and mathematics education is being reviewed to cover basic schools and also decentralized to district levels.
- Awareness and sensitization programs by many NGOs like the forum for Africa Women educationist (FAWE)

- **Quality of Education**

Government has worked hard in the its to achieve quality education for all. Efforts made include;

- Improvement in the supply of teaching and learning materials
- Decentralization and strengthening of school supervision and management
- Removal of disparities in the education system

One of the measures instituted to improve quality was to assist MOE in administering the criterion Reference Test for monitoring achievements in English and Mathematics at Primary 6,

2.7 Education For All and National Action Plans (EFA-NAP) process

The national efforts on the EFA-NAP process started quite late in Ghana, even though the education reforms of the 1987 and fCUBE of 1996 basically address the same issues of accessibility and quality of basic education. A national committee on EFA was formed in July this year (2002). The committee's main task is to strengthen the existing national education plans with concrete strategies for achieving the Dakar goals. Task force on EFA-NAP was also in place to help fast-track the preparation process in consultation with all groups in society including community leaders, teachers, parents and learners. Six broad based working teams were set up to pull together all information in each of the 6 areas to supplement the national consultative process by the EFA-NAP task force. In addition, outcomes of the national education reviews informed the work of the task force. The process has culminated into the development of a 15-year national education strategic plan, which addresses the goals of the EFA.

2.8 Contribution of Civil Society in Education Sector

Civil society has been collaborating to a level with the state in the development and promotion of education in the Country. There are networks/coalitions supporting the development of education in Ghana.

The NGO community has developed expertise and resources for dealing with people's problems at the micro level. Self reliance and collective efforts, community participation in planning and implementation of projects have been enshrined in NGOs strategies and these and other factors make NGOs more responsive to

community and people's problems than the state. NGOs and CSOs have also been involved in the following activities; advocacy, research, training of community-based structures (PTA and SMCs); provision of logistics supply (textbooks, furniture, infrastructure); innovation and alternate approaches to education. These programmes have contributed enormously to the achievement of the key areas of fCUBE, namely; access, quality in teaching and learning and management for efficiency. Some unique interventions among these are; Action Aid's Shepherd Schools and Rural Education Volunteer Scheme (REV), Plan International and World Vision's infrastructure development, Child Sponsorship Programmes (ChildScope), ADRA's text book support programme, School for Life programme and FAWE girl's education programme. These interventions have succeeded in creating opportunities for excluded children to gain access to education especially in the area of girls' education.

2.9 Synergy

It is expected that these varied attempts at improving access and quality of education will develop into a synergy with the national EFA committee as a pivotal point for holistic approaches to be adopted. However, as much as the government tries to create space for CSO participation and in spite of the goodwill of most CSOs and NGOs in education in support of government's efforts, several CS groups lack the capacity to engage constructively with government for the provision of quality education for the children of Ghana. Many CSOs/ NGOs are busy pursuing their programmes and raising funds, meeting programme deadlines that they hardly follow up on and monitor government plans and progress. The few, who show interest and would want to engage with government, more often than not lack adequate information as well as competencies to raise issues of credibility.

The best practices of government, private sector, CSOs and NGOs need to be shared so that resources can be pulled together to enhance effectiveness.

2.10 Major gaps in CSO participation in EFA efforts in Ghana

The purpose of the CEF is to address identified gaps in the efforts of CSO in support of government education programmes. Some of the gaps identified include;

Weak structures for local, regional and national education coalition

- Inadequate knowledge of CSOs on key policy issues
- Lack of knowledge and interest in government expenditure
- Weak inter and intra partnerships among stakeholders and government
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- Low community involvement in educational planning and schools management
- Poor involvement of CSOs in government plans and programmes.
- Inadequate knowledge and analytical skills of CSOs on budgetary processes in Ghana
- Lack of advocacy/ lobbying, communication and research skills of CSOs
- Lack of information sharing to enhance replication of best practices.

Specifically, the CEF will be used to address the following:

- Skills acquisition for communication, research, training information gathering, documentation advocacy and lobbying
- Knowledge and information on policy and on-going processes; data on basic education, characteristics of excluded children and issues of equity
- Learning and sharing through seminars, workshops and publication
- Creative approach to provide education opportunities for children of every poor people.
- Actual engagement with decision makers at the local and national level.

3.0 NATIONAL CEF PROCESS

The processes leading to the development of the CEF national strategic plan has been one of consultation. It begun in the week of February 10th with consultative meetings in all the regions. At these meetings, the regional teams reviewed earlier activities proposed in the interim national plan and updated it with some more activities.

This was followed by a national consultative meeting held in Accra on February 21st 2003, at which 15 regional representatives presented their plans for discussion and fine-tuning. Members of the national CEF co-coordinating team also participated. As expected participants represented the interest of various CSOs across the country.(e.g. local and international NGOs working in education and child right issues, Pressure Groups, Regional Networks for Education Development, Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) and Civil servants association).

These presentations were then consolidated into a national strategy made up of detailed plan of activities for 2003 and broad activities for 2004 and 2005. The consolidated strategy was then shared with some members of the national CEF team for their final comments.

There are still efforts to contact the private sector and boards of trades unions.

4.0 NATIONAL CEF STRATEGY

ActionAid Ghana has seconded a Senior Programme Officer to the post of the CEF Coordinator up to June 2003 after which a substantive person will be recruited to do the job. The Co-ordinator will work with the national CEF team to handle strategic issues for CEF Ghana.

At the regional and district levels, Regional Coordinating committees (RCC), made up of between 5 – 7 members, selected from CSOs/ NGOs, in all the 10 regions, will continue to be responsible for overall consultation, monitoring and reporting on all activities supported from the fund, and will work in collaboration with the CEF coordinator to ensure the smooth running of the programmes.

The building of stronger alliance of CSOs around the EFA/CEF goals will be a major focus of this strategy. Efforts will be made at enabling the GNECC and Northern Network for Education Development (NNED) to provide a co-ordinated platform for the operations of the regional and national CEF teams, and their member organisations.

CEF National Plan of Activities - 2003

Priority 1: To strengthen NGOs/CSOs participation in the design and implementation of national and local education plans especially the education components of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy

Objective	Activity	By Whom	Period	Expected Results	Indicator
- To ensure an effective platform or coalition of NGOs/CSOs in education-related advocacy	Quarterly Meetings between grassroots NGOs/CSOs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - District levels - Regional - National 	Regional and national coordinating teams, District EFA committees, NNED, GNECC	April, July, October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A permanent coalition is created and meets regularly. - Improved commitment to networks by member CSOs/NGOs - Stronger linkage between local and national coalitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of organisations regularly participating in network meetings/activities -Number of meetings held. -Minutes of the meetings
	Form more district structures/support strengthening of coalitions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - District - Regional - National 	GNECC, NNED Regional and National CEF teams.	April, July, October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Streamlined and strengthened operations of education coalitions. - Coalition activities broadened at the local level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plans developed and implemented by coalitions. - Number of district structures for education-related advocacy formed
	Hold a seminar with the private sector	GNECC, NNED, National and regional teams		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commitment of the private sector to support campaign for improved access to basic education increased. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of private sector organisations participating.

Ensure that basic education is appropriately prioritised in the National EFA Plan	Collaborative input into the national EFA plan - Data collection - Sensitisation workshop - Development of coalition position - Focus meetings with MPs, MOE, Media etc	GNECC, Regional and district teams	April - December	- Basic education given higher priority by government in the 15-year national education plan. - Appropriate support (funding, infrastructure, etc) for basic education.	Amount of financial support given to basic education. Level of political commitment
Improve the skills of local groups to advocate for increased enrolment and retention of all children in schools.	Train CSOs/Networks on research, advocacy, lobbying and communication at the: - National - Regional	GNECC, NNED, National and Regional Teams	May	- CSOs are equipped with appropriate skills to advocate/lobby for increased access to quality education	Number of CSOs with new/improved skills. Participation of SMCs in education-related advocacy
	Participatory Action Research on enhancing enrolment, retention, equity	National and regional teams, PTAs/SMCs	June – October	- Children enrolled and retained increased	- Enrolment rate - Retention rate
	Create awareness/Campaign on education & family responsibility on the education of the child	National and regional teams, PTAs/SMCs	June – October	Children enrolled and retained increased	- Enrolment rate - Retention rate
	Production of campaign/lobbying materials on education in all the regions.	- National and Regional Teams	October	More awareness increased leading to increased enrolment and retention	- Enrolment rate - Retention rate

Promote platforms for learning and sharing between CSOs.	Fora for learning and sharing linkage between participatory approaches to adult literacy and child education.	- National team, Pamoja Ghana, GNETPA D	April, July	Improved tools and approaches to enhance the support of adult literacy to child education	- Meetings held
	Support the publication of newsletters.	National and regional teams, ActionAid	October	Improved public awareness on education.	Newsletters produced
Priority 2: Build the capacity of local communities to monitor government spending on education					
Enhance resource mobilisation/allocation and utilisation for basic schools.	Train CSOs in budget tracking and analysis	National and regional teams, ISODEC, POSDEV	March / April	CSOs equipped with appropriate skills to track education budgets	Number of CSOs trained.
	Analyse and monitor budgets of schools using participatory tools.	SMCs, Regional Teams, District EFA committees, ISODEC, POSDEV NGOs	May	- Enhanced interest of CSOs and parents in budget analysis and monitoring.	- Number of organisations and communities engaged in budget tracking.
	Create a dialogue forum with key decision makers around education budgets and spending at the local level.	POSDEV, ISODEC, district EFA committees, Regional Teams	June, December	- CSOs and communities influence the allocation and use of education resources.	- Number of organisations and communities engaged in budget tracking. Network reports

Priority 3: Supporting innovative initiatives for civil society to ensure that all children especially girls and the most vulnerable and disadvantaged have access to good quality education in Ghana.					
Promote effective strategies for the education of excluded children.	Document the characteristics and plight of excluded children and publicise nationally	National and regional Teams, the media	August	- Public awareness on the education of excluded children improved. - Commitment of stakeholders to the education of excluded children improved	- Enrolment and retention rate of excluded children
	Hold regional Conferences of traditional rulers to analyse traditional/customary obstacles to full enrolment/retention.	Regional Teams, Regional houses of chiefs,	August	Attitudes and customs towards education of the child improved	- Examples of changed attitudes, customs
	Advocate for girl's education policy	National and regional teams, GNECC, NNED	April, July		

CEF Activities - 2004 and 2005

Priority 1: Strengthen civil society participation in the design and implementation of national and local education plans and frameworks (including the education components of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy).

1. 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.
2. Support CSO collaborative input into and monitoring of the implementation of the EFA National plan of action.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Support advocacy work on the flexible language policy, alternative approaches to staffing, curriculum development, etc.

Priority 2: Building the capacity of local communities to monitor government spending on education, both at the national and local level

1. 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.
2. Support activities that will increase the participation of local groups in the analysis and tracking of all resources allocated to basic education at the local and national levels.

3. Support the institutionalisation of dialogue fora on education spending between local community groups and key decision makers/stakeholders at the school, district assembly and national level.
4. Support research into issues related to cost of educating children at the basic school level.
5. 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.
6. Strengthen initiatives to step up the contribution of the private sector to basic education.

Priority 3: Supporting innovative initiatives for civil society to ensure that all children especially girls and the most disadvantaged have access to good quality education.

A lot more of room is reserved to support creative and innovative activities proposed by CSOs and other players that have the objective of increasing access to quality basic education for excluded children: girls, children with disability, rural and deprived children, children excluded as a result of customs/traditions, etc. It is anticipated that the proposals would centre on (but not exclusively) the following areas:

1. Sensitisation of the public on the characteristics and plight of excluded children.
2. Innovative community-based methods and programmes that would contribute directly to removing obstacles to full enrolment and retention for all children, especially the excluded.
3. Advocate for policies or policy changes that would promote education of the excluded.

5.0 LINKAGES

The structure of CEF is a link on its own. There is a CEF national coordinator who will coordinate CEF activities in the ten- (10) regions and will be relating with ten other contact persons, representing regional coordinating committees. Efforts will also be made to link up internationally with other CEF country projects.

At the national level, CEF relates to all stakeholders in education development, many of who work with participatory approaches in education and therefore are part of National Reflect Practitioners Forum and Participatory methodologies network. Interactions between regional co-ordinating teams will be encouraged. At this level the links are mainly for collaborations, to enhance learning and sharing of innovative ideas on the development of basic education in Ghana.

There are also links with sub-regional structures like ANCEFA and PAMOJA. GNECC holds the coordination of the West Africa network on education campaign.

6.0 GENDER ISSUES

In Ghana, it is evident that girls have problems stemming from poverty, ignorance and community's attitude towards their education. No wonder therefore that all these tend to frustrate the efforts of females in keeping pace with their male counterparts in their quest for education. According to available statistics at the national level, out of 100 pupils in primary school, 45 are girls and the remaining are boys. At the JSS level, 41 out of 100 pupils are girls while the number of boys increases to 59. By the time the pupils get to SSS, for every 100 students, there are only 33 girls compared to 67 boys. At the University level, the percentage of females reduces to 22 while that of males increases to 78.

Government is therefore convinced that by equipping the girl-child with the tool of education we are not only tapping the potentials of our country's most valuable yet marginalised resources but we would be paving an effective way of breaking the vicious cycle of ignorance, exploitation, poverty, hunger and disease that hold developing nations in bondage. In view of the foregoing, serious efforts continue to be made to bridge the gender disparities.

FAWE and other groups have gone really far with emphasis on girl child education and spearheading awareness on gender. Within the Ministry of education, a lot of work has gone on to that effect. This is because the societal norms tend to benefit boys more than girls, especially at the basic level of education and in rural areas. Girl's education promotion and support is therefore particularly encouraged and planned for as activities to be carried out. CEF will collaborate with FAWE and Girls education Unit of MOE to mainstream gender in all the activities that will be implemented.

6.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A participatory approach will be used for monitoring and evaluation. Stakeholders at all levels will do monitoring of activities funded from the fund. The first step is that coalitions, NGOs and other CSOs applying for the fund will indicate their monitoring and evaluation plans, monitoring indicators and other information that would serve as the baseline. Implementing CSOs will be required to submit periodic progress reports to the CEF regional co-coordinating teams who will in turn submit quarterly reports to the national team for the preparation of quarterly national reports. These reports will be the basis of on-going assessment (at the district, regional and national quarterly meetings) of the level of contribution towards the achievement of the CEF objectives. Field visits will also be made by the regional and national teams to observe progress made.

There will be external evaluation: a mid-term evaluation will be conducted by the middle of 2004 and an end of project evaluation in 2005. The indicators for the evaluation will include:

- Existence of structures for education campaign in the districts, regions and at the national level.
- An effective linkage between micro and level structures.
- Increased and diversified membership of education coalitions
- Level of CS participation in engagements with government on education plans, policies, practices and budget is strengthened.
- Level of participation of local community groups in the management of school resources is improved.
- Enrolment and retention of all children, especially girls and other deprived children is increased.

7.0 RISKS/ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that

- There is sincere commitment on the part of CSOs to build broad, strong and enduring alliance
- CSOs have the minimum required capacity to design and implement programmes related to research, advocacy, budget tracking, etc
- Civil society understands the importance of developing basic quality education and is ready to collaborate with others to ensure the goals of EFA.
- Civil society understands the goals and functioning of CEF and ready to make it achieve the desired goals.
- Political stability will continue both internally and across the sub-region
- Macro and Micro economic development will be enhanced
- Governments commitment to education will not wane