Welcome to the August 2012 edition of the ‘Edu’ newsletter, this edition marks five years since I took charge of the newsletter. As a reflective exercise I looked back to the August 2007 edition, and was quite surprised to see that five years down the line, the issue discussed as the hot topic then still remains pertinent today: the professional ethics of teachers in Ghana.

For me, this realization begs the question that, having identified these challenges five years ago if not more, what have we as supporters of the education system done about it? Have we been just tinkering with the edges of the education system? Are we just tackling some of the peripheral issues and not the core issues of the sector? What are the core issues of the sector anyway (depends who you ask)? And whose responsibility is it to tackle these core issues? These are pertinent wider context questions that need answering both by the global community including development partners and Ghana as a country alike in going forward towards providing a relevant and sustainable educational development for all.

This edition of the newsletter republishes some of the original contents of the August 2007 publication including the hot topic: the moral side of education? As well as being full of the usual information from the Education programme - progress reports from the projects, interesting thoughts, interesting websites, and upcoming events. The original August 2007 issue of the newsletter can be viewed at www.jica.go.jp/ghana/english/office/others/pdf/eduNL_200708.pdf. Hope this newsletter finds you well; enjoy the read, Mama Laryea 😊.

Hot topic: the moral side of education? (Republished from August 2007)

Discussions were had at the 16th Education Sector meeting on 16th August 2007 about the moral side of education in Ghana as experienced by some volunteers in the sector. The questions raised included why teachers attended classes late, left the lessons too early, and so forth. A single answer could not be given on the reasons why selected teachers and I think the word selected has to be emphasized here because not all teachers engaged in these practices, were not morally responsible enough to start...
lessons on time and or deliver a full lesson. Some answers on why these practices may be happening included the lack of motivation on the part of teachers, selected teachers being part of the profession not as a matter of choice but as a backup profession until they secure other professions they are actually interested in, the conditions of service teachers operate in, and so forth. Discussions were very interesting with a suggestion that teachers that engaged in such practices needed to be punished, at least by society. This raised a further round of discussions on what society saw as a norm, in that if the surrounding society, that is the schools in which these practices were taking place, if these immediate society did not perceive the practice as bad, then such offending teachers were not likely going to be ‘socially’ punished by the school society. In other words, if the school culture allowed for teachers to be late to lessons and or leave lessons early without repercussion, then this same school would not be punishing the practice either.

For my part, the word “moral” is a bit of a strong word to use under these circumstances, I believe what is under question is the “professional ethics” or standards of these teachers. Also, it’s unfortunate that JICA’s work tends to be focused mainly in deprived areas and in the public sector, which means it is the worst case scenarios that are being experienced by Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) members. These experiences may not be representative of all teachers or education in Ghana; I believe there are private sector schools, and even public sector ones for that matter who engage in “best practices” when it comes to attending lessons and delivering. On the other hand, I accept that for that individual volunteer based at a remote location witnessing such practices, it is the face of Ghana they see. What is your view? Have your say (see page 5, responses could be published in the next edition of the newsletter).

JOCV activity: science experimental show in Upper East Region

Mr. Komatsu a Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) at Navrongo Senior High School supported by colleagues and a Senior Volunteer (SV) organized a science show to deepen the understanding of science in selected schools in Bolgatanga and Navrongo. The experiments were on oxygen and burning, capacitors, heat energy and rocket science.

**Experiment 1: how oxygen enables burning**

Baking flour was put into funnels tied to a wooden stand with each funnel connected to a hose. A number of candles were lighted and kept in the setup covered with transparent polythene. The blowing of air into the hose displaces the flour which then mixes with the oxygen trapped in the polythene, creating an inflammable medium which attracts fire from the candles. Because the flour is fine and mixed with oxygen, it burns faster producing carbon dioxide, pushing the polythene upwards.

**Experiment 2: the capacitor**

Two disposable cups were covered with aluminium foil, then putting the cups into each other with a piece of the foil in between the cups, parallel plate capacitors are formed. By rubbing a plastic pipe and tissue paper while holding the pipe close to the foil, the outer cup is charged, and by touching the aluminium foil separating the two cups the charge is transferred through you into the inner cup which produces an electric shock.
Experiment 3 was on heat energy: the principle is similar to the Matches we use in lighting fire these days and the two stone striking against each other method in the early days of man. A hacksaw blade, stone and very light steel is used to produce fire. A hacksaw blade is fixed into a handle, and is struck against a stone (igneous rock piece) into soft steel. Heat energy is generated from the striking which produces sparks of light and fire when the sparks fall on the steel.

Experiment 4 was on rocket science. Three water bottles were connected to a hose which was then connected to an inflator, by inflating the bottle while blocking the opening of the bottle, pressure builds up and at its elastic limit the bottle is shot upwards. Different bottles were filled with water at different levels and the experiment repeated. Another bottle design with wings was used to demonstrate the motion of a rocket; the wings enabled the rocket to move in a particular direction.

The experiments offered both teachers and students the opportunity to experience how science can be explained using locally available materials. One participating high school student commented: “these science experiments made me understand practically some theories I had learned in class”, whilst a teacher also commented: “from today’s sessions we teachers should regularly demonstrate these experiments to students by ourselves without the help of JOCVs”.

Nationwide INSET programme progress report

The In-Service Teacher Education and Training (INSET) project is supporting the Teacher Education Division (TED) of the Ghana Education Service (GES) to implement the INSET model. The project purpose is to establish and reinforce the nationwide management system of INSET in the form of School Based INSET / Cluster Based INSET (SBI/CBI). The project started its fourth year from May 2012. This update informs progress from May to August 2012.

As reported in the newsletter in February 2012, updated versions of the Sourcebook Module 1: District Guidelines and Module 2: Operational Manual for District Level INSET were printed by JICA and distributed to all 170 districts. In order to encourage district personnel to use the revised manual, training on the updated Sourcebook Modules for a total of 510 district officers was implemented. The 510 officers were made up of three officers from each district: the District Training Officer (DTO), the Deputy Director of Supervision, and one Circuit Supervisor (CS). The trainings were in three locations: Kumasi from 23rd May to 7th June, Koforidua from 28th May to 21st June, and Tamale from 11th to 21st June 2012. The training contained not only Module 1/2, but also how to use Lesson Observation Sheet (LOS). All 170 districts participated in the training, and the Sourcebooks and LOS were successfully introduced.

After implementing the above training, a 5-day District Master Trainer’s (DMT) training was implemented in July for 67 districts from 10 pilot and 57 first batch districts. The National INSET Unit (NIU) had previously implemented 5 days of INSET Delivery and 5 days of INSET Monitoring training separately for DMTs for the second batch districts in 2010 and the third batch districts in 2011, but the participation rate was low due to the districts’ financial constraints. To reduce the financial pressure on the districts, these two trainings have been combined into one 5-day training by removing low
prioritized contents and rearranging the order of each session. 85 percent of the expected 67 districts participated in the training in July. The NIU is planning to implement the DMT training for those who could not participate in the latter half of 2012. While establishing district structures and school level structures, the project has also been supporting the Ministry of Education through the TED of the GES to approve a teacher development policy (the Pre-Tertiary Teacher Professional Development and Management (PTPDM) policy) since 2009. The draft policy is now under preparation to be sent to Cabinet. As the policy will support institutionalizing INSET, this support is now highly prioritized.

Some more interesting thought(s) / fact(s) (republished from August 2007)

- There are 22 countries where more than half the population is illiterate. Fifteen of them are in Africa.
- Kids in Mali spend only 2 years in school. More than half of them start working between the ages of 10 and 14.
- Thinking of becoming a teacher? Head to Switzerland. Teaching salaries there start at $US 33,000.
- The women of Iceland earn two-thirds of their nation's university degrees.

[Source: www.nationmaster.com/facts/Education last accessed: 24/08/2012]

The Advisory Unit on Decentralised Education Management’s progress report

During the period from June to August 2012, the Advisory Unit on Decentralised Education Management (AUDEM) in the Ghana Education Service (GES), which is supported by Mr. Daisuke Kanazawa, JICA Expert, completed the following activities:

1) Review of ADEOP 2012-14: all district education offices are mandated to develop their Annual District Education Operational Plans (ADEOPs) with targets of key indicators, outputs of activities and required cost projections for the next three years. Last year the ADEOP guidelines and template were revised to improve quality. The AUDEM has reviewed the 164 2012-14 ADEOPs submitted to see the quality of the plans, and submitted the review result as an Advisory Note (AN) to the Deputy Director General (Q&A) of the GES. The review found that although most of the ADEOPs made good effort to follow the new requirements, there were significant problems on accuracy, consistency and availability of data and planned actions. To tackle these challenges the AN recommended that: 1) the template of the ADEOP include calculation formulas to ensure accuracy and consistency of figures and to improve quality of enrolment projection, 2) population projections should be updated with the latest population data released by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 3) technical orientation workshops should be organised by regional offices for districts, 4) ADEOPs should be used for the budget formulation process this year, and 5) data availability in districts should be improved.

2) Orientation for ADEOP 2013-15: following the AN on ADEOPs, the Excel template of the ADEOP has been revised and the GES headquarters with some capable regional and district officers organised an orientation workshop for regional officers on the revised template. Each regional office then organised the same workshop for planning officers of all districts. The submission deadline of the ADEOP 2013-15 is set to the end of August 2012.

3) Population projection: upon publication of the result of the 2010 population census, the GES has formally requested the GSS to produce projections of school age populations in all districts and regions from 2010 to 2030. The GSS promised to provide the projections by the middle of August, although at the time of publication it was not yet received.

4) Report on GES reporting process: the AUDEM has also made a brief study on the reporting processes in the GES from schools to headquarters by visiting 32 schools/offices and submitting the result as an AN to the GES. The study revealed that head teachers of two thirds of schools visited confessed that they have never written any report since they assumed their post. Detected also were critical problems such as late submission, no feedback, no penalty upon duty neglect and no use of reports for improvement. Some of the key recommendations from the study are: i) re-orientation
of school heads on their reporting duties, ii) sanctions and awards given to school heads and units for their performance, iii) Circuit Supervisors reshuffled at least every two years and formal handing over made for newly recruited Circuit Supervisors, and iv) a special unit set up in every district which would be responsible for collection and evaluation of reports. The ANs in their entirety are available at: https://sites.google.com/site/audembed/

Visit of NUEPA Professor: at the end of August, the unit will invite Dr. Arun C. Mehta, professor and head of the department of EMIS at the National University of Educational Planning and Administration in India to Ghana. It is expected that he will provide technical advice on what needs to be considered for enabling the EMIS database to be web-based and accessible from districts and regions. At the time of publication Dr. Mehta had arrived in country.

The school construction project
We are pleased to report on the project for Improvement of Access to Basic Education in Deprived Areas. Although there has not been much progress at the construction sites in the last months, two sites (Adiembra and Akoteyekrom) both in the Assin South district, Central region were handed over to the Ghana Education Service. At Adiembra a three classroom block including a headmaster’s office, teachers’ accommodation and two 3-seater latrines were handed over to the Assin South District Director of Education (DDE) by the local contractor Suretrack Contracts Services Limited. At Akoteyekrom Suretrack also handed over a three classroom block and one 3-seater latrine to the DDE. All classrooms are furnished with furniture for both pupils and staff. More updates will be provided in the next edition of this newsletter.

Akoteyekrom: classroom block with ramp, handing over keys to DDE, and community people checking the keys

Upcoming event(s) in the Education sector
- Eleven new JOCVs including a primary school teacher and computer instructors will be arriving in September 2012.

Useful websites
- Translation websites to help translate those Japanese only documents to English: www.freetranslation.com and babelfish.altavista.com (republished from August 2007)
- Sharing Japan’s reconstruction: disaster management experience and lessons, see the special edition of JICA’s World publication for full stories at www.jica.go.jp/english/publications/j-world/special01.html
- Checkout the JICA Ghana website for information on JICA’s activities in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia: www.jica.go.jp/ghana/english/index.html
- Don’t forget we are online, old/new copies of this newsletter including the August 2007 edition are available via the JICA Ghana English website: www.jica.go.jp/ghana/english/office/others/newsletter.html

Have your say: and finally, thank you for your reports, views and comments which make up this newsletter. Keep them coming including your feedback on the hot topic in this issue, the address to use is: gn_oso_rep@jica.go.jp Thank you.