Welcome to the November edition of the ‘Edu’ newsletter, the last publication of the year 2012. The newsletter as usual is full of the latest information from the Education programme - progress reports from the projects, interesting thoughts, upcoming events, and of course the hot story: the 2012 national best science teacher - Mr. Zakaria Abdulai. Hope this newsletter finds you well. Enjoy the read, Mama Laryea 😊.

**Hot story: Mr. Zakaria Abdulai, Juaben Senior High School, the National Best Science Teacher in secondary schools for 2012 (Best teacher awards)**

Zakaria as he is fondly known is a science tutor and the head of science department at the Juaben Senior High School, a District Master Trainer of the Nationwide INSET programme, and an ex-training participant of one of JICA’s Training and Dialogue Programs in 2009. In spite of his many accolades, Zakaria is an affable gentleman who saw his self-initiated efforts rewarded this year with the national best science teacher award.

Zakaria tells his own story and journey to date as follows. Zakaria: sometime back my school (Juaben Senior High) requested for and received a Japanese volunteer, with whom I worked as a counterpart. During this period I was selected to take part in a group training programme in the practice of science education in secondary schools from 4th August to 28th September 2009 in Hiroshima University, Japan. The course was basically on experimental skills in science teaching and the use of locally available materials to prepare teaching and learning materials. When I came back from Japan I started organizing workshops for teachers and students on my own...
initiative. Many organizations and individuals recognized my effort and started including my activities in their programmes. The following are some of the programmes I have been doing since I came back from Japan.

1) Training workshop for all science and technical teachers in Junior High Schools of Ejisu-Juaben municipality on science project development; 2) Workshop for private schools teachers (63) in the district on practical teaching of electronics; 3) Simple science experiments using local materials at the National Girls Summer camp at Ashanti Mampong; 4) Sharing my experience and success stories with other JICA ex-training participants in the northern part of Ghana (over 100 participants); 5) At the national conference of the Ghana Association of Science Teachers at Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School, I did a workshop of practical skills for science (in Physics); and 6) Since I have been selected as a District Master Trainer (DMT) for the Nationwide INSET programme (science) in the Ejisu – Juaben district, I have taken part in the training of the District Teacher Support Team (DTST), all Head Teachers (HTs) of basic schools, and all Circuit Supervisors (CS) and Curriculum Leaders (CL) in the district. I have also monitored many School Based and Cluster Based INSETs (SBI/CBI) in the district.

In 2012 I was nominated the best teacher in my school and so my name was submitted to my district. I contested and won the best district science teacher out of many teachers so my name was forwarded to the regional level (Ashanti). Among the many science teachers from all the districts in the Ashanti region, I was selected as the best science teacher for secondary schools in the region. When the Ashanti regional education directorate presented me to the national level, the Ministry of Education (MoE) considered my contributions to education and on 5th October 2012, I was awarded the national best science teacher in secondary schools.

I will like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of the Government of Ghana, the Government of Japan, JICA, Hiroshima University, the Ashanti Regional Director of Education, the Ejisu – Juaben Municipal Director of Education and the headmaster of Juaben Senior High School. **Story by Mr. Zakaria Abdulai.**

### The school construction project

We are pleased to report on the project for Improvement of Access to Basic Education in Deprived Areas, the official name for the school construction project. We have not recorded any major progress at our sites recently. We however carried out additional works at our site at Amanbete in the Central region. The additional work involved constructing retaining walls at the site because anytime it rained the school buildings were filled with muddy soil thereby leaving the place in quite a mess. The constructed retaining walls should help to hold back the soil. To the side is a picture of the retaining wall. We will give you updates at our other sites in our next article.

### 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 SBI/CBI. The project started its fourth year from May 2012. This update informs progress from August to November 2012. The project welcomed the terminal evaluation team from 31st October to 22nd November, prior to the project completion in March 2013. The evaluation team assessed the progress and output of the project based on the Project
Design Matrix (PDM) through interviews with relevant parties such as the MoE, the GES, development partners, project experts, and observed the SBI/CBI in model and non-model districts.

**Results of the terminal evaluation** are that the project has produced tangible results, which are establishing a Nationwide INSET Management system, capacity development of stakeholders at central, district and school level, development of the INSET monitoring system, and strengthening of the institutional support system for INSET. Some supporting evidence of findings is the development of “team-spirit” at schools: teachers consulting fellow teachers and learning from each other has become easier than before because the SBI/CBI provides a mandatory forum for such peer teaching. **Feedback from School Level Stakeholders included:** “I call the DMT when I encounter challenging topics”, “I learned how to teach electronic circuits in CBI from the DMT”, and “we invite district supervisors when we hold SBI/CBI. They come at least once a term and give helpful advice”.

The evaluation team concluded the project purpose will be achieved and the project completed as scheduled, but sustainability issues remain. From the financial perspective, although funding is secured for at least the 57 target districts of the Ghana Partnership for Education Grant Project, for the rest of the districts, it is uncertain especially as budgetary constraints were experienced during the project.

**Recommendations made** by the evaluation team included the need to launch and implement the teacher professional development policy, continuous engagement by the MoE/GES with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning for budget disbursement for the Nationwide INSET Programme, continuous monitoring and training of district stakeholders by the National INSET Unit (NIU) to ensure stakeholders have sufficient knowledge and skills to manage and implement INSET, and provision and revision of the INSET Sourcebooks as and when required. A minutes of meeting was signed on 21st November to end the evaluation.

Aside of the terminal evaluation, monitoring is an important task of the NIU to promote all 170 districts to continuously implement the INSET model. Submission of the Annual INSET Progress Report (AIPR) to the NIU is a mandate of the District INSET Committee (DIC) to report their INSET status. To support this process, the project organized workshops in three locations: Kumasi, Tamale and Koforidua from August to September. 169 districts attended the workshop and submitted the AIPR to the NIU successfully. In addition to this, the project supported the NIU to monitor districts using a telephone monitoring instrument, which is a cost effective monitoring means developed by the project to follow-up challenges identified at the AIPR workshop. These monitoring revealed: some districts had done very well in improving the SBI/CBI implementation rate since the last year. The majority reported that schools implemented SBI/CBI more than twice in the last two terms, which meet the minimum requirement of the project. Only a few districts reported that schools implemented SBI/CBI less than once in a term.

Similarly, evaluating the impact of INSET is also important. The project surveys its impact annually through the sampling survey at the school level. The last survey occurred from September to October 2012 in the targeted 48 primary schools from the selected 12 districts. They include Wa Municipal, Bongo, Nadowli District, Yendi, Central Gonja, Tano South, Sefwi Wiawso, Assin North, Mfantsiman, Asuogyaman and Adaklu - Anyigbe. Questionnaires were administered to HTs, CLs, primary 5 (P5) and 6 (P6) teachers and pupils, and lessons observed. The survey result shows that the Nationwide INSET programme has positive impact on teaching in classrooms. Teachers in schools where HT/CL were trained by the programme got higher teaching skills and higher satisfaction of SBI/CBI. Teaching skills of teachers who had participated in SBI/CBI were marked higher than that of teachers who had not. This means that participation in SBI/CBI has a significant positive impact on improvement of teaching skills.
Some more interesting thought(s) / fact(s)

Since it implemented huge education reforms 40 years ago, Finland's school system has consistently come at the top for the international rankings for education systems. So how do they do it? It's simple — by going against the evaluation-driven, centralized model that much of the Western world uses. For instance:

- Finnish children do not start school until they are 7. They rarely take exams or do homework until their teens
- There is only one mandatory standardized test in Finland, taken when children are 16
- Teachers only spend 4 hours a day in the classroom, and take 2 hours a week for "professional development"


The Advisory Unit on Decentralised Education Management’s progress report

From Sept. to Nov. 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:

Collection of Annual District Education Operational Plans (ADEOP) 2013-15 In July the GES HQ requested all district education offices to develop and submit their ADEOP 2013-15 by 21st August 2012. Though most of the districts could not meet the deadline, all the ADEOPs had been submitted by the end of September. This is an outstanding achievement because it took more than 6 months after the deadline last year to receive all the ADEOPs. This change could be attributed to 1) enhanced understanding of the importance of the ADEOP among district offices, 2) the notion of the use of ADEOPs for the budget formulation process, and 3) persistent reminders from the AUDEM to non-submitting districts.

All the ADEOPs have been uploaded to the AUDEM website after the necessary revisions were made on their enrolment projection formulas. This time around, an attempt has been made for regional offices to review contents of the ADEOPs within their jurisdictions, instead of the AUDEM. On 17th October, planning and statistics officers from all the regions received an orientation on how to review ADEOPs and ADPRs through checklists made by the AUDEM. All the submitted ADEOPs will be revised according to the review results from the regional offices for their finalisation.

Review of Annual Regional Performance Reports (ARPR) 2011-12 An Advisory Note has been issued to present detailed findings on the quality of ARPRs submitted by all regional offices in May 2012. The findings were that, overall, the quality of the ARPRs has improved especially on the arrangement of key indicator targets and recommendations for the next ADEOPs. But there are still many challenges. Visions and missions are still mixed up. Analysis of key indicators did not show any improvement. Reporting on results of ADEOPs was still ignored by many regions. Greater Accra region, Upper East region and Central region demonstrated good quality reports.

Establishment of MoE/GES joint taskforce for Education Management Information System (EMIS) Responding to the technical recommendations made by Prof. Arun Mehta from the National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) in India, who visited Ghana from 26th Aug. to 5th Sept. to make a technical review of the EMIS, a joint taskforce was established in Oct. to improve the EMIS. The taskforce consists of the EMIS team at the MoE, the AUDEM, the private school coordinator and the ICT Unit of GES, reporting to Mr. Adu and Dr. Pealore. Among the numerous recommendations made by the professor, the taskforce decided to focus on the following three for the upcoming school census: 1) intensified involvement of circuit supervisors in the Annual School Census, 2) improved feedback from private schools, and 3) improved accessibility to the EMIS database for report generation and piloting data entry through computer network by establishing an EMIS data website linked to the GES and MoE home pages.

Brief survey on student-teacher relationship and school management influence on BECE results in Greater Accra Region An Advisory Note was issued in Oct. to present findings and recommendations from a brief survey conducted to look at relations between BECE results and pupil-teacher relationship in schools and school management at 20 selected public/private schools in the Greater Accra Region. The survey found a big difference between the schools with the
best and worst BECE results. The former has close and fair relationship established between students and teachers while the latter have little trust between them. In terms of school management, teachers in the best performing private schools were found to be well supervised and motivated though their salary was generally lower and the teachers were mostly untrained than those in public schools. Moreover, many parents were very active in participating in school management. On the other hand, supervision of teachers was ineffective or flexible and parents were not supportive to schools in the worst performing public and private schools. All the Advisory Notes including the ones mentioned above are available at https://sites.google.com/site/audembed/

Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs)/Senior Volunteers (SVs) activity: Fufu Mama innovation

Mr. Masayoshi Maruko, a Senior Volunteer (SV) at the Kumasi Polytechnic in Electronic Engineering has a strong belief that Ghana has a good potential to apply Solar Energy Technology to various occasions in ordinary people’s daily life. To this end he has come up with the idea to apply technology to the process of making fufu and developed FuFu Mama, an automated fufu pounding machine powered by the sun. Below are selected images of the Fufu Mama.

Mr. Masayoshi Maruko with his Fufu Mama invention

The solar panel that powers the Fufu Mama

As the electricity produced by the solar panel is stored, the fufu pounding machine can be used any time of the day. The whole system (Fufu Mama) was exhibited at the International Trade Fair held in Accra in March 2012 and drew the attention of a lot of visitors. Kumasi Polytechnic, where Mr. Maruko works as a volunteer, has received several enquires about the product and hopes the invention motivates more students to be interested in studying electronics. Mr. Maruko is now working on a Solar Model House in which all the electric appliances will be operated by solar panels.

Upcoming event(s) in the Education sector

- Five new JOCVs including science, electronics and computing teachers will be arriving in March 2013

Useful websites

- Eternal India on the move: read the full story in JICA’s World publication at www.jica.go.jp/english/publications/j-world/1210_vol18.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 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 story in this issue, the address to use is: gn_osorep@jica.go.jp Thank you.