Welcome to the February 2014 edition of the ‘Edu’ newsletter, the first issue in the New Year and in the month of love. A belated Happy New Year to you. Hope the year is going well for you so far. In this edition we have new beginnings for some projects, the latest information from the ongoing projects/activities in the Education programme, interesting thoughts, upcoming events, and of course the hot topic: unveiling the solar sport (bike). Hope this newsletter finds you well. Enjoy the read, Mama Laryea 😊.

Hot topic: Unveiling the Solar Sport (bike)

The dream of Mr. Masayoshi Maruko, a Senior Volunteer attached to Kumasi Polytechnic, is that the Solar Sport as he calls it, a solar bike to be precise, will be an absolute and ideal vehicle taking the place of present passenger cars which will precious gasoline, make noise and contaminate our total globe. Now it is a reality.

The solar bike, with the support of a team from Kumasi Polytechnic, was initially designed for disabled people but has now been adapted for all people’s use, with braking, reversing and steering handling systems.

Mr. Maruko has already visited Tamale Polytechnic to make a presentation about the solar bike and solar energy to students. The solar bike will be on display and available for test driving at the World Trade Fair from 28th February to 10th March 2014 at the Trade Fair Center in La, Accra. See you 😊.
We are pleased to report on the project for Improvement of Access to Basic Education in Deprived Areas. Three schools in the Northern region, specifically in the districts of Central Gonja and Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo were handed over this month. The Central Gonja site comprises of a 3 classroom Junior High School block with a headmaster’s office. The Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo site on the other hand is a 3 classroom block. Staff of Japan International Cooperation Systems (JICS), the procurement agent, attended the handing over ceremony at the Bunkpurugu-Yunyoo site, where school teachers and students celebrated the completion of the school.

As of February 2014, 25 schools out of the target 33 had been handed over: 14 schools in Phase 1 (Central region) and 11 schools in Phase 2 (Northern region). Hopefully we will be handing over some more schools in the coming months, with the target of completing all schools within the scope of JICA by May 2014.

Nationwide INSET programme progress report

Building on the achievements of the JICA supported GES teacher In-Service Education and Training (INSET) project that had been supporting the Teacher Education Division (TED) of the Ghana Education Service (GES) to implement the Nationwide INSET Programme, the GES is continuing to implement INSET nationwide. Two activities have been successfully undertaken recently.

The first is training on the GES Lesson Observation Sheet (LOS) for Assessment Officers from the 57 Ghana Partnership for Education Grant (GPEG) districts and Colleges of Education (CoE) hosting the Untrained Teacher Diploma in Basic Education (UTDBE) programme. The objectives of the workshop were for participants to effectively observe and assess teacher trainees and serving teachers at district and school levels, and to harmonize the LOS with assessment tools used by the CoE in the assessment of UTDBE trainees for quality teaching/learning in their respective districts. After several sessions of fruitful discussions, it was agreed by all participants that the GES LOS must be used in assessing all teacher trainees and serving teachers for quality teaching and learning.

The second activity was the Annual INSET Progress Report (AIPR) collection/collation workshop for two Regional INSET Committee (RIC) members from the Regional Education Offices (REO) for the 2012/2013 academic year. The objectives of the workshop were to find out the
progress of INSET activities in the districts, to list all trained and untrained stakeholders (those at post and retired) for instance District INSET Committee (DIC) members, District Master Trainers (DMTs), District Teacher Support Teams (DTSTs), and to identify the strengths and challenges, and make recommendations for the way forward. At the end of the workshop/collation, the table below shows the performance of each region. With this categorisation the NIU can determine the performing and non-performing districts so far as INSET is concerned, in order to target more monitoring and support to the non-performing districts, and to use the performing districts as models/support for other districts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Districts in Region</th>
<th>Districts in Category 1</th>
<th>Districts in Category 2</th>
<th>Districts in Category 3</th>
<th>Districts in Category 4</th>
<th>Districts in Category 5</th>
<th>Non submitting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Central</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Northern</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Category 1 – Average of SBI/CBI organised by schools is more than 3.0, Category 2 – Average of SBI/CBI organised by schools is below 3.0, Category 3 – Average of SBI/CBI organised by schools is below 2.0, Category 4 – Average of SBI/CBI organised by schools is below 1.0, Category 5 – Schools did not organise any SBI/CBI.

**Upcoming projects:**

As reported in the November 2013 edition of this newsletter, there are two exciting upcoming projects for 2014.

1) **Supporting the teacher development policy:**

The first is the Project for Supporting Institutionalization of the Pre-Tertiary Teacher Professional Development and Management (PTPDM) policy. The Record of Discussions (R/D), the official document of agreement for the project between JICA and the Ghanaian authorities, was signed on 13th January 2014, with the project due to start from April 2014, for four years. Piloting in five districts (yet to be selected), the aim of the proposed project is to formulate a replicable career progression mechanism that utilises training records and School-Based INSET (SBI) and Cluster-Based INSET (CBI) practice of pre-tertiary teachers. Thus linking School-Based INSET (SBI) and Cluster-Based INSET (CBI) practice of pre-tertiary teachers to their classroom practice and ultimately to promotion as well as teacher licensing, using a modified version of existing databases on teachers. It is hoped that through the nationwide implementation of the PTPDM policy, SBI and CBI will be more firmly institutionalized to provide further opportunities for teachers to strengthen their teaching capabilities in the classroom and, as a result, improve the quality of education in Ghana.

2) **Expert for decentralised education management**

The second is the Advisory Unit on Decentralised Education Management (AUDEM), which was supported by Mr. Daisuke Kanazawa, a JICA Expert who completed his assignment period at the end of September 2013. At the request of the GES, a proposed follow up, now approved, is to have another expert for Decentralised Education Management
attached to the Basic Education Division of the GES, but this time focused on strengthening the capacity of the GES on decentralized education management between the school and district level. The assignment period is yet to be determined. Selected expected activities are (1) Studying the process of planning and performance review between districts and schools to identify any gaps, (2) identifying possible solutions to the problems in a participatory manner, and (3) piloting the proposed solutions, if feasible, to make them implementable policy options. In the interim, the outputs of the AUDEM’s work including all the Advisory Notes issued and several sector documents are still available at https://sites.google.com/site/audembed/

Some more interesting thought(s) / fact(s)

Parents and students in India’s western state of Gujarat are up in arms. Why? School textbooks full of glaring errors. The textbook reportedly makes statements such as: "Japan dropped a nuclear bomb on the US during World War II," and "Proportion of poisonous gas CO3 has increased due to cutting of trees," as well as "Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated on October 30, 1948." Interesting still is the official response to the issue. Read the full article from www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-26325994 (last accessed: 26/02/2014).

Mr. Seena Kitami (a Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV)): my time in Ghana

Mr. Seena Kitami is a Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) attached to the Tamale Metropolitan District Education Office in the Northern region. After nearly two years of working with the Education directorate Mr. Seena Kitami writes about his experience as follows.

My time in Ghana is almost ending by now. It has been a precious time for me since I learnt a lot from Ghanaians. I came to Ghana to support the teaching of mathematics and Science at the primary school level, even though I have never taught in Japan. When I arrived in Ghana, I was worried about my experience and wondering what I can do “for” Ghana. But with time I realized the worries were going after meeting and being friends with Ghanaians. The time spent in Ghana made me realize what is important for me as a volunteer. I was not working “for” Ghana, but rather working “with” Ghanaians. This perception changed my activity much better and made it more meaningful. For example, I noticed that Ghanaian teachers have their own unique ideas on Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) and the ways of using them. I realized my role is to assist their learning process by organizing some opportunities for teachers to learn from each other, by organizing TLM competition and INSET amongst others.

So I organized TLM competition. The competition was initiated by getting the support of Circuit Supervisors (CS) from the GES Office. I asked each CS to choose a talented teacher from their circuit. The teachers elected by the CSs were then invited to show their own ideas of TLMs at a gathering. The topic was “TLM for teaching multiplication”. 20 teachers participated on the day, and they all...
presented their TLMs. It was a great opportunity for all of us to learn from each other. For the Ghanaian teachers especially, the experience of finding out their colleague’s idea was something more impressive to them than from other people. I hope this kind of event is continuously organized for the future even without me.

The TLMs demonstration formed part of INSET support for the teachers, which I have been involved in as one of my main things to do. There were some Head Teachers (HTs) who asked me for help in organizing INSET at their schools. I normally take part in the INSET as a demonstrator or facilitator. By showing my ideas, teachers were asked to use the TLM and develop their own method of teaching. After the INSET, I usually monitor the school for their practice of the new learning.

Aside of the INSET, I have also organized Peace events at a primary school and at Ghana Senior High school in Tamale. The Peace event is organized by JOCVs every year in Ghana. The objective of the program this time was to think and act for a peaceful society by knowing the Japanese experience of Hiroshima Atomic bomb in 1945, and the Tsunami disaster in 2011. We were amazed of the serious participation from students; after all we are in Ghana which is one of the most peaceful countries in Africa, though we should know the gracefulness brought by peace condition. The events were also a great time for us Japanese participants to think about peace too as one of the students wrote in a message card: “Peace is the only weapon of a nation. Let’s make peace and develop our Ghana”.

Upcoming event(s) in the Education sector

Out of the six originally announced, five new JOCVs would be arriving in March 2014, including a Senior Volunteer (PhD holder) to teach statistics at the University of Cape Coast, an auto mechanic for Tema Technical Institute and two Information Communication Technology (ICT) teachers for a College of Education and Kaleo Vocational/Technical school.

Useful websites

- 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 topic in this issue, the address to use is: gn_oso_rep@jica.go.jp Thank you.