Welcome to the February 2015 edition of the ‘Edu’ newsletter, the first of the New Year. Wishing you a belated happy New Year. In this edition we have the latest information from the ongoing projects and activities in the Education programme, interesting thoughts, upcoming events, and of course the hot topic: Decentralisation. Hope this newsletter finds you well. Enjoy the read, Mama Laryea 😊.

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The field of international development has expounded various education policies for nation states’ education sector development. Central to these is the question of how to manage education resources and delivery efficiently; the policy problem. The emerging thinking to address this need is decentralisation; ‘giv[ing] local government a clear mandate, …functions, and considerable discretion over the use of …funds and implementation, to obtain alignment with local preferences’ (Ferrazzi 2006: 4).

Nation states within the sub-Saharan Africa region especially have borne the brunt of this emerging thinking, as they predominantly remain the recipient countries for international development efforts. To date, the results of these interventions are varied, as Rossi (1999: 14-15) writes that ‘[p]revious experiences with decentrali[s]ation are just about as varied as its underlying concepts, and seen as a whole they cannot be deemed conclusive. While a whole string of nations (Uganda, ... India ... Honduras, etc.) register encouraging results, in other countries (Ghana, ..., Bangladesh, ... Colomba, etc.) they appear to be less satisfactory’.

What could be the reasons (historical perspectives, driving forces and socio-political contexts) driving such a slow pace in implementing the decentralisation policy in Ghana? Probably a critical analysis of the puzzle of the causation of the slow pace of implementing the decentralising education management policy, some 27 years after its initiation and continued reform is needed. One could argue that the Ghana government’s intention to decentralise administratively, as against the differing perspective of decentralisation being externally driven is the crux of the cause of the slow pace of implementation. Then again, there could be several divergent reasons for the slow pace of

Ms Nakazawa, the expert for decentralised education management arrives, hurray!!!

As reported in several editions of this newsletter, we had been expecting one more exciting project for 2015, in the form of an expert for decentralised education management, as the successor to Mr. Daisuke Kanazawa, the expert that set up the Advisory Unit on Decentralised Education Management (AUDEM) at the Basic Education Division (BED) of the Ghana Education Service (GES). Finally the expert, Ms Junko Nakazawa, is here. Below Ms Nakazawa introduces herself.

Konnichiwa! My name is Junko Nakazawa. I am assigned to work as an advisor in decentralized education management for GES. My expected role is to strengthen the collaboration between schools and district under the decentralization policy and to strengthen their capacity. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to work with people in Ghana!

Here is my background. I worked for school based management project, called “school for all” in Niger and Burkina Faso for a while. Just before moving to Ghana, I was in Tanzania to work for decentralization project. Also I was a JICA volunteer in Tanzania a long time ago. Therefore I have been in Africa for 10 years.

Currently I am living with my husband and our 2 year old son, Ken. Ken speaks several languages, including Swahili, local language in Tanzania. He is also a big fan of Africa like his parents! I do hope he learns at least one of the local languages in Ghana. Beside work, while staying in Ghana for 2 years, I would like to explore cultural events, traditional food and so on to be an expert of Ghana! 😊

Ms Nakazawa will be stationed at the BED of GES whilst working with counterparts from the national, regional, district and school levels of the education system. Some expected activities of Ms Nakazawa 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. Progress reports of Ms Nakazawa’s activities will be posted in subsequent editions of this newsletter but in the interim, the outputs of the AUDEM’s work since October 2010 including all the Advisory Notes issued and several sector documents are still available at https://sites.google.com/site/audembed/

Update on the PTPDM (Pre-Tertiary Teacher Professional Development and Management) policy support project

The implementation of the Pre-tertiary Teacher Professional Development and Management (PTPDM) policy support project in Ghana is ongoing. The project aim 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. One expected activity of the project will be reviewing and modifying the proposed career progression framework for teachers (including licensing and registration) for operationalization. The Teacher Education Division (TED) of the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the National Teaching Council (NTC) in collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has since the launch of the support project in April 2014 undertaken a number of activities in the first three pilot districts: Ajumako/Enyan/Essiam in the Central region, the Upper Manya Krobo district in the Eastern region, and the Shai Osudoku district in the Greater Accra region). One such recent activity is the induction training for Beginning Teachers (teachers newly posted to schools on completion of teacher training). Details are as follows.

**Induction training**: following the five-day Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop in November 2014 at GNAT (Ghana National Association of Teachers) hall, Koforidua, the Teacher Education Division (TED) of the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the National Teaching Council (NTC) in collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have organised a one-day orientation for Headteachers (HTs) of schools where Beginning Teachers (BTs) are, and a five day induction training for BTs in the three pilot districts. All trainees were from basic schools.

The training was organised concurrently in the three pilot districts. The training was on the PTPDM policy, teacher appraisal system for BTs, conditions of service, code of professional conduct, professional development and INSET, communication and relationship-building and finally teaching and learning process.

The main objectives of the training were to introduce the PTPDM policy to the HTs and BTs; for the BT to adequately explain the PTPDM policy as it relates to their chosen profession; for the BT to compare the new career structure of teachers with the old career structure; for the BT to be able to state essential conditions for promotion of BTs and for the BT to explain the processes and procedures for teacher appraisal. The workshop used lecture/discussion style, powerpoint presentations and group activity as key methodologies. The total number of participants present were as follows: Shai-Osudoku BT 57, HT 15 and Circuit Supervisors (CS) 6. Upper Manya Krobo BT 54 and HT 12. Ajumako Enyan Essiam BT 45 and HT 29.

Mr. Shota Nakamura, a JICA volunteer, on his experience in Ghana

Mr. Shota Nakamura is a JICA volunteer working in Navrongo, in the Upper East Region as a primary school teacher. Mr. Nakamura writes about his experience as follows.

I work at Kassena Nankana East, at the District Education office. The District has about 90 primary schools. My work is to go around schools observing lessons and delivering lessons. I mainly teach mathematics and science for students. In all the schools I have visited, there are many teachers who try to do good lessons and use some Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) but they use few types of TLMs and some do not know how to use these items well. In addition to this
One is using TLMs. TLMs are not only useful but also interesting for students and teachers. Useful TLMs can help students to understand lessons, but if the TLM does not have interesting points or I cannot introduce the fun points of the TLM, the teacher will be advised to use the TLM only once and not to use again. So first, I try to introduce the interesting point of the TLM for teachers. This way the teacher can enjoy using the TLM and students also can get a chance to use the TLM.

The other is creating enabling situations that affords students the opportunity to think by themselves and with friends. Almost all students are afraid of making a mistake. So they do not attempt to answer my questions except for the ones they know the correct answer to. I want students to say what they are thinking and find so I try to allow the time for them to think by themselves and present what he or she is thinking to every one using questions and group work.

In addition to teaching mathematics and science, I also teach Physical Education (PE) especially martial arts as self-defense. Before I came to Ghana, I had been learning about Japanese traditional martial arts skill as self-defense named “Shorinji Kempo” for about 14 years, so when I begin my activities I also aimed to teach my self-defense skill for Ghanaian children.

On my day to day visits to schools, I realized some schools do not have PE plans or lessons so students play freely during the timetabled time for PE. I try to teach martial arts using PE lessons. I think introducing martial arts skills as self-defense during PE lessons has some advantage for students.

First, my skill is one of a famous Japanese traditional culture, for example, my uniform is one of Japanese traditional training wear named “Dougi” so Ghanaian students can experience Japanese culture during my lessons. Secondly, my skill can promote improving their health. One of my lesson’s objective is health promotion so at the beginning of lessons we do some flexible exercise. The idea is flexible body can prevent some injury when a person is involved in a dangerous situation so continuing flexible exercise can make a strong body. Strong body can prevent not only some injury but also some disease. Thirdly, through the exercise of the martial arts as self-defense, the use of pairwork and group work is possible too. Martial arts treasures group exercise so almost all practice of the skill cannot be done by one’s self. Doing pair work and group work gives the students time to teach each other and help each other so they are able to use friendly competition to make themselves learn hard. I think pair
work and group work is very useful for children not only for learning martial arts skills but also for learning other subjects every day. It is because of these reasons and objectives that I teach my skills to primary school students.

Further, I belong to the JICA volunteers subcommittee of mathematics and science. This group is formed by some JOCV education volunteers from all parts of Ghana. This subcommittee continuously thinks about more useful support methods for the development of the Ghanaian educational front and promotes improvement and progress of each activity by exchanging opinions between members.

One of the main events of our subcommittee is holding workshops. We plan to hold workshops several times in a year. Workshop can invite many people and influence a wide radius. We can get on with Ghanaian students and teachers and use the opportunity to develop each other during workshops. The next workshop of the subcommittee is to be held in Jasikan, Volta region on 26th February 2015. We are going to perform the event that matched the element of the subject of science and mathematics with Jasikan’s seven primary schools during this workshop. This workshop can show Ghanaian students and teachers Japanese traditional school event, and what’s more, we can introduce some interesting teaching materials and how to use it. We have also prepared some games that include elements of mathematics and science for students to try. Students can compete in their school groups, giving them motivation to study these subjects, and teachers can get new ideas to teach. I trust that this workshop can make not only Ghanaians but also us JICA volunteers enjoy learning and teaching. We’ll try to do such activities.

Finally, I really enjoy the Ghana life. I like teaching primary schools and mix well with children in Ghana. Sometimes I face difficulty to speak the local language and English but the students and teachers try to understand what I say. It is very happy for me. I will continue teaching in some primary schools hard and enjoy teaching until my two year activity term is over.

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


Upcoming event(s) in the Education sector

- Updated: 10 new education related JICA volunteers will be arriving in March 2015; they range from primary school science and mathematics teachers, to youth activity, to Senior Volunteers in electronic engineering for the polytechnic level. Let us welcome them warmly when they arrive.

Useful websites

- Peace building - toward a conflict - free society, read the full story in JICA’s World publication at www.jica.go.jp/english/publications/j-world/1501.html
- Checkout the JICA Ghana website for information on JICA’s activities in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia: www.jica.go.jp/ghan/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/ghan/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.