Would you believe a month has just gone by? Well it has, I have survived my first month at JICA Ghana 😊 and it’s September so welcome one and all to the latest edition of the Ghana education newsletter, Vol. 9, this September 2007.

This edition of the newsletter takes a walk on the lighter side of life so sit back, relax yourself and enjoy the read! Mama

This issue’s contents include:

- **HOT topic (Issue of the month): Education Reform**
- **Capacity development in Education Planning project progress report from our expert Ms Kamei**
- **Images from the Summer School activities in Tamale from 23rd to 27th August 2007**
- **TVET project progress report from our expert Mr. Hashimoto**
- **Some more interesting facts**
- **INSET project progress report from our expert Mr. Nagumo**
- **Upcoming events in Education and JICA**
- **Useful websites**
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HOT topic (Issue of the month): Education Reform

It’s September 2007 so as planned the Education reform kicks off in Ghana with the new academic year. As such we had planned to discuss the education reforms as our hot topic at our (17th) Education Sector Monthly Meeting scheduled for 14th September 2007, but as time and other activities taking place on the day would have it, we could not carry on as planned. But so as not to miss the opportunity, I will use this space to highlight the key reforms taking place this month.

Education Reform at a Glance: Universal Basic Education shall now be 11 years made up of: 2 years of kindergarten; 6 years of Primary School; 3 years of Junior High School (JHS). The medium of instruction in Kindergarten and Lower Primary will be a Ghanaian Language and English, where necessary. At the basic level, emphasis shall be on Literacy, Numeracy, Creative arts and Problem Solving Skills. After JHS, students may choose to go into different streams at Senior High School (SHS), comprising General Education and Technical, Vocational and Agricultural Education and Training (TVET) or enter into an apprenticeship scheme with some support from the Government (The Director General of Ghana Education Service has actually gone on Talking Point to say that the Government is prepared to pay money and the customary drinks (including schnapps) given to the master tradesman / women before apprentices start their training).

And, a new 4-year SHS will offer General Education with electives in General, Business, Technical, Vocational and Agriculture options for entry into a tertiary institution or the job market. Already the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS) has posted online (downloadable Word and PDF files) the syllabus for some subjects. Of course not all subjects are available, but our sources tell us the ministry is in the process of printing the new syllabus and it should be ready for distribution in October. Personally I think it’s a positive step to have the syllabus online, especially for the international community and development partners working together with Ghana, although for the local or in some instances very remote rural areas, this action may not be of any use to them.

[Source: http://www.edughana.net/index.htm]

Capacity Development in Education Planning project progress report from our expert Ms Kamei

MOESS including Ghana Education Service (GES) has submitted a combined proposal to JICA on the possible way forward for JICA and the Ministry once the current project ends. Meanwhile, activities planned for the project in August include the finalization of the Preliminary Sector Performance Report; which has already incorporated received comments and has been circulated internally and externally to development partners; now awaiting printing before it is disseminated to all regions and districts.

Also preparations for training counterpart personnel in Japan involving consultations with MOESS and GES management has been ongoing, the training will focus on “local education administration and school management”, and its planned to take place in Hiroshima and Kanazawa for 2 weeks in November. As well as the preparation of an internal 2 days exercise / workshop for PBME staff to refine Terms of Reference for each unit and to think about how to improve efficiency and accountability of its operation has already been agreed upon by the director of PBME, however a good facilitator and resource person are yet to be secured for the workshop.

There hasn’t been any progress on the facilitation of the development of the ADEOP manual. On the other hand, the drafting of an annual operation cycle to ensure necessary activities start in a timely manner and are well sequenced is underway.
On the whole, the Summer School and volunteer activities organized in Tamale was a good opportunity for the students involved to learn in an exciting environment, and a good opportunity for the JOCV volunteers to improve their teaching skills and learn from each other. Personally it was a good opportunity for me too; to meet several volunteers and key personnel of an INSET district. Below are selected images from the trip:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Images from lesson observations</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Students dissecting a real cow’s eye in a biology class”</td>
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<tr>
<th>An image from the sports festival</th>
<th>An image from the Northern Sector Inter-Regional league Basketball competition</th>
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<tr>
<td>“tug of war”</td>
<td>“The presentation ceremony”</td>
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**TVET project progress report from our expert Mr. Hashimoto**

A lot of activities have been taking place on the TVET project, including:

- Compilation of policy implementation guidelines which includes needs assessment guideline, NTVET qualification blueprint and guidelines for implementing a CBT Pilot.

- The review of TVET Reform including a review of the operationalisation of COTVET thus a review of the CPTC report in light of the COTVET Act and the implications for its operations.

- Identifying guidelines needed for CBT under COTVET Framework which includes developing guides to development of Qualification Blueprint, Development/Approval of Occupational Standards/Qualification and Development of Curriculum amongst others.

Other activities of note are preparatory Works for Third Country Observation Tour, as well as ongoing efforts to re-connect to the internet having been disconnected from Ghana Telecom for over 3 months. Also the project is working on the Introduction of Fuel Cards for its drivers.
Otherwise, the announcement of a vacancy for a Project Administrator has been posted online to the JICA website.

**Some more interesting facts**

- The women of Iceland earn two-thirds of their nation’s university degrees.
- The average person in the United Kingdom drinks as much tea as 23 Italians.
- There are 11 countries where the average woman has more than six children. Ten of them are in Africa. [Source: www.nationmaster.com/facts.php]

**INSET project progress report from our expert Mr. NAGUMO**

As a continuation of activities from last month, more activities are planned for the months ahead. October 14th – 27th sees ASEI&PDSI Workshops at Ajumako with personnel from SMASE (Kenya) and Sierra Leone expected to attend. Within the same month, training is being arranged for two high level counterpart personnel to go to Hiroshima, as well as courses offered by GIMPA on “Human Resources Management” (for 5 weeks, 20 people) and “Accounting for Non-Accountants” (for 2 weeks, 14 people) being offered.

Monitoring activities has also been taking place at pilot districts (from Dangme West to Kassena-Nankana) over the period of 20th August to 6th September 2007, to help monitor management activities and give necessary advice where needed.

On the Information Management front, pilot districts are having difficulties using internet for data/information exchange due to cost and the lack of landlines; as such the project is testing alternatives. Otherwise, GES / TED have submitted a proposal to JICA for the next project after INSET ends, and the project newsletter is under final modification, expected to be distributed this September. The project website: http://project.jica.go.jp/ghana/0604654/02/news.php also has all the latest news.

**Upcoming events in Education and JICA**

- The education team of JICA Ghana office is organizing a seminar on Elementary School Education in Japan, taking place at Akatsi Teacher Training College on 28th September 2007 with support from Ms Fujihara (JOCV); the seminar aims to aid discussions amongst trainee teachers on alternative practices in education, and help them review their teaching methods.
- News: Mr. Jintaro Yazaki joins the Education team for on the job training; welcome Mr. Yazaki

**Useful websites:** www.ghanadistricts.com is a repository of all districts in the republic of Ghana; you can find detailed information for all districts in the country.

**Have your say:** and finally, a big thank you goes out to all those who commented positively about the last issue of the newsletter. Your reports, views and comments make up this newsletter so please do not hesitate to send anything you think might be useful to share. The address to use is: gn_osr_rep@jica.go.jp Thank you.

Change of clothes for Eduko-san