It's that time of the year to start thinking of festivities, tinsel, crackers and the like; its November ending, and you are warmly welcome to the latest edition of the Ghana education newsletter, Vol. 11, this November 2007.

As usual the newsletter is packed with the regular project reports, interesting facts and of course the hot topic of the month. Enjoy the read, Mama.

HOT topic (Issue of the month): Highlighting the activities of our JOCVs

On a recent business trip by Mr. Yazzaki and myself it became evident the good work being done by JOCV volunteers throughout the country. One such JOCV is Ms. Nobuko UEKI who is dealing with Guinea Worm Eradication. We joined her on a sensitization run in the village of Nyankpala (Northern Region) on 8th Nov. 07. The JOCV was joined by village volunteers who knew the area well, and we were supposed to be joined by a Red Cross personnel but that did not happen. Nevertheless we went on foot from house to house for about 1 ¼ hours checking the sieving nets the households had been given were being used, and being and being used properly as well.

The damaged sieves were taken away to be replaced later, and in the meantime the households were advised to use clean folded scarves as replacements. There was no reported case of Guinea Worm in any of the households we visited.

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

The counterpart training is underway in Japan at the moment for three district directors. The training program is composed of 4 days in Hiroshima focusing on local education administration and 5 days in Kanazawa focusing on school management. Preparations for the planned internal workshop for PBME are still ongoing; technical and financial proposals were submitted by Management Development
and Productivity Institute (MDPI) and two consulting firms, interviews have been conducted duly and ideas exchanged as to how to convey the workshop in order to enhance performance of PBME.

On the ADEOP (Annual District Education Operational Plan) manual, although a team was working on updating the planning manuals for districts, the Planning Unit head of PBME has decided to postpone the development of the new manual on the grounds that the updating of the manual should be done only after the ministry revises the Education Strategic Plan (ESP), and sets new strategies and targets. As a consequence, the project has disregarded this component from its activity plan.

Images from an ex-training participants workshop on “Capacity building of head teachers and classroom teachers in the teaching of reading in pre and primary schools” in Tamale (8th/9th Nov. 07)

Two of our most recent ex-training participants; Mr. Amadu Ali Mohammed (Circuit Supervisor) and Miss Sumani Zuweira (Head teacher) who had just returned from training in Japan in October 2007 held a workshop with the above named title. An even positive aspect of the workshop was the involvement of last year’s ex-training participant as a resource person. The workshop highlighted the big issue of the lack of reading and speaking skills in the area, with some children in Primary 6 not being able to speak English or read Primary 4 books. Below are some of the images of the workshop.

Welcome address by Assistant Director - Tamale Metro District

Group work

Group presentation

TVET project progress report from our expert Mr. Hashimoto

For the second month running we start with a news flash for the TVET project: the last day of October saw the set up of the long awaited COTVET (Council for Technical, Vocational Education and Training). As such an activity that has been happening in November is the compilation of Staff Requirements and Job Description of COTVET Staff. The ones completed so far are for the Executive Director, and the divisions for: HR Development, Finance and Administration, and Women in TVET amongst others. The identified tasks for establishment of COTVET and proposals development for the composition and Terms of Reference for Industrial Training Advisory Committee and sub-committees, including Vision, Mission, and Strategic Objectives are also underway. Also, policy implementation documents and activities needed for piloting CBT for the next fiscal year are (1)Compilation of Policy Implementation documents such as Guide to CBT Assessment, Guide to CBT Certification, etc and (2) Undertaking pre-CBT Implementation activities such as Conducting Baseline Survey, Designing and Development of Programme contents (units and modules), etc. Planning for the estimated
Project Budget and Major Activities for fiscal year 2008/2009 has been completed. Looking ahead to December, planned activities include the (1) Compilation of Implementation Guidelines and Manuals and (2) Procurement process of equipment to be used at Accra Polytechnic (the piloting site) amongst others.

Some more interesting facts

- You can be imprisoned for not voting in Fiji, Chile and Egypt - at least in theory.
- The ten most generous countries are all in Europe; the top three are Denmark, Luxemburg and Norway. Japan ranks 13th, UK (8th) and USA (18th) – (measured on donor aid per capita).
- Libya is the only country with a single-coloured flag. [Source: www.nationmaster.com/facts.php]

INSET project progress report from our expert Mr. NAGUMO

As part of ongoing training / sensitisation from last month, plans are underway to organise more sessions as follows: (1) 1st Workshop to harmonize district INSET Model with the existing educational system, (2) 2nd Workshop to harmonize district INSET Model with the existing educational system - scheduled from 4th to 7th Dec. 07 at GESDI with about 23 staffs from various divisions at Ghana Education Service (GES) HQ, Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS) and District Education Office, (3) Curriculum Leaders (CL) Sourcebook Training 2nd session in pilot districts, and (4) Information Exchange seminar among CL and Head teachers. Activity (3) and (4) are scheduled from 29th Oct. to 14th Dec. 07 in the ten pilot districts. National Trainers have also been monitoring district level activities such as School Based INSET (SBI)/Circuit Based INSET (CBI) this month.

And here is a date for your diary: 9th Dec. 07, 7-8pm – INSET goes live on national TV (GTV) via the program “Talking Point” in a bid to sensitize decision makers about INSET. The guest speakers would be Mr. Micheal Nsowah (immediate past Director General of GES and Senior Consultant of the INSET project), either Director General of GES or Director of Teacher Education Division, and Ms. Ruth Wolanyo Zagblenu, District Director of Education, Akatsi district. In other news, the project obtained informal consent for releasing nationwide budget of INSET from the Financial Controller of GES (about GH¢ 1,600,000 for start-up including printing of Sourcebooks and GH¢ 920,000 for recurrent cost). GES will not earmark, but prioritise activities for INSET within districts. And finally, see the project website (Japanese): http://project.jica.go.jp/ghana/0604654/02/news.php for more project news.

Upcoming events in the Education Sector group (JICA Ghana)

- The seminar on Elementary School Education in Japan, after its very successful run at Akatsi Teacher Training College would next take place at Avatime Secondary School on 6th Dec. 07 for all 68 primary school teachers and head teachers within the area. The headmaster has kindly offered the school bus to ferry teachers to the seminar.
- And we are live, view old/new copies of this newsletter online via the JICA Ghana English website: http://www.jica.go.jp/ghana/english/others/index.html

Useful websites: the web is often the quickest place to look something up - if you know where to go. If you don't, you can always start with looking up words on these two websites - www.encyclopedia.com or type define: followed by the word you want to look up once on www.google.com to get the meaning of troublesome words.

Have your say: and finally, thank you for your reports, views and comments which make up this newsletter. Keep them coming, the addresses to use is: gn_oso_rep@jica.go.jp Thank you.