Welcome back to the New Year, and the first 2008 edition of the Ghana education newsletter, Vol. 12. The Edu newsletter as its informally known took a bit of a backstage role during the last few months due to other equally important commitments but hopefully the numerous emails, memos and business trip reports circulated in the interim period served to keep readers engaged and informed of all the “going-on’s” in the Education sector.

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.

This issue’s contents include:

- **HOT topic (Issue of the month): To train individuals or to train groups?**
- **TVET project progress report from Mr. Ishiyama and the project team**
- **The individual effort of an ex-training participant**
- **INSET project progress report from Mr. Nagumo**
- **Some more interesting facts**
- **Capacity Development in Education Planning project progress report from Ms Kamei**
- **News / what’s happening in the Education sector group (JICA Ghana)**
- **Useful website(s)**
- **Have your say**

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**Hot topic (Issue of the month): To train individuals or to train groups?**

In building the ability of countries to develop themselves, do we train individuals one at a time or do we train groups of people from a specific area in one go to gain momentum? Recent conversations by the Resident Representatives of JICA and GTZ on a courtesy call brought up for me the question of training individuals to build their abilities (capacity building) for national development as opposed to training groups to gain momentum. Something the GTZ Director referred to as “institutional capacity building in a more systematic way”, i.e. training a focused mass of people from a specific area. What sprung to mind was the World Bank’s recent Singapore workshop on Leaders in Education and Training for Sustained Growth in Africa, which in one go took over 22 people from 3 interrelated Ministries (Education, Manpower and Finance) from Ghana to observe new ways of doing things. The immediate visible impact is that most people who attended the training, often high level policy officials present at the numerous Ministry meetings are now thinking along the same path; ‘how can we make things work like we saw in Singapore?’, in a way displaying the existence of sufficient momentum in such a way that the momentum is becoming self-sustaining and could fuel further growth. As such not much time is needed or being spent on convincing each other on what is the best route of action.
A challenge which befalls the many individual ex-training participants who return to Ghana month on month, seeking to appeal to their superior’s better judgement to allow them time and space to implement their action plans. But for the Singapore group, it’s now a question of ‘how’ do we implement what we all saw not ‘how do we get our boss to support us?’ JICA’s approach although could be said to combine both individual and group training, the term ‘group’ being used in this instance refers to training a critical mass or group of people from the same organization, school, or Ministry to effect the visible impact in the short term we all so much desire. A possible immediate impact on group thinking is reaching a critical mass to produce positive waves of action as a response.

Is it time we started discussions on best practices for achieving results, and results that matter? I’m thinking aloud here, what’s your view? Have your say through the usual channels available through this newsletter.

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**TVET project progress report from Mr. Ishiyama and the project team**

The TVET project has undergone some changes with the recent departure of the Chief Project Advisor Mr. Yoshiyuki Hashimoto; we wish him good luck with his future endeavors. Nevertheless its business as usual as the project team with the assistance of Mr. Ishiyama continues to undertake planned project activities such as April’s planned activities which include (1) Drafting Guides to Certification, (2) Implementation of CVT Piloting including the establishment and training of technical teams on the occupational standards generated by the TVETS Project, (3) Conducting monitoring and evaluation on the occupational standards training, (4) Compiling data from the Baseline Survey, and (5) Conducting monitoring and evaluation on the Baseline Survey.

**The individual effort of an ex-training participant: a workshop on “Teaching & Learning Materials improvisation for JSS science and primary teachers” in the Avatime area (27th Feb. 08)**

In spite of the need for group training to gain the critical mass for building abilities, one such individual who continues to share the knowledge he gained in his training in Japan is Mr. Sylvester Adzamli, a counterpart to the JOCV Mr. Kato at Avatime Secondary School. His latest effort in a string of actions taken by him is to organize and deliver a workshop on using locally available materials to improvise as teaching aids for science classes. Some of the locally available items on offer on the day included empty Milo tins, cooking oil and candles, as can be seen in the images below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locally available materials: candle, cooking oil, matches, etc</th>
<th>An experiment to show that exhaled air contains less oxygen than inhaled air</th>
<th>Participants actively working on a task set them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.jpg" alt="Image of locally available materials" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.jpg" alt="Image of experiment" /></td>
<td><img src="image3.jpg" alt="Image of participants" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INSET project progress report from Mr. NAGUMO and the project team

The INSET project had a successful Joint Coordination Committee meeting in February; minutes of the meeting including the project’s third progress report have been published and are currently being circulated. Also the Third Country Training for CEMASTECA (Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa) scheduled to take place in Kenya has been cancelled due to security concerns. The project’s 4th Newsletter has also been published as part of its awareness raising activities. Apart from these, future scheduled activities include: (1) District INSET Coordinator Meeting - 16th of May, Venue: GESDI, Agenda: Monitoring (Collection of data), (2) National Guideline Workshop - 19th / 20th of May, Venue: GESDI, Agenda: Revising National Guideline, (3) 2nd National Guideline Workshop - 29th / 30th of May, Venue: GESDI, Agenda: Revising National Guideline, (4) Dissemination Seminar – June 08, Venue: All regional capitals except Accra, Agenda: Sensitization of all District Director’s of Education. The project website (Japanese) has more info: http://project.jica.go.jp/ghana/0604654/02/news.php

Some more interesting facts

- Nepal’s flag is the only one in the world that isn’t square or rectangular
- Sick of crowds? Move to Greenland! Greenlanders have 38 square kilometres of land per person.
- Libya’s full name is the Great Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

[Source: www.nationmaster.com/facts.php]

Capacity Development in Educational Planning project progress report from Ms. Kamei

The project is currently having a terminal evaluation done by a local Consultant as the project is due to end in May 2008. Otherwise update activities include: Internal workshop for PBME organised on March 4-5, financial support to Performance agreement for District Directors, Orientation training on management for newly appointed District Directors, and Printing of school evaluation manual and booklets for 36 special schools.

News / what’s happening in the Education Sector group (JICA Ghana)

- In April 08 the Education team will be looking to commission research to review the Education sector in Ghana for a situational analysis of the sector; its current success / challenges, and to help identify possible areas for JICA’s possible future interventions.
- Perhaps the biggest news of the moment is Ms Kobayashi’s move to newer fields; not too further away to neighbouring Sierra Leone from 25th March 08. Thank you Ms Kobayashi for all your hard work in Ghana and we wish you all the best in your new role. May we also take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Wakasugi as the new section chief for Education & Industrial Development.
- Don’t forget we are online; old/new copies of this newsletter are available via the JICA Ghana English website: http://www.jica.go.jp/ghana/english/others/index.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_osu_rep@jica.go.jp

Thank you.