As we enter the second month of the 2010 Fiscal Year (FY2010), may I welcome you to this first and bumper edition of the ‘Edu’ newsletter in FY2010; full of the latest information from the Education programme - progress reports from the projects, interesting thoughts, upcoming events, and of course the hot topic: Decentralization. Hope this newsletter finds you well, enjoy the read, Mama.

**Hot topic: Decentralising Education management: a socio-political analysis**

The policy area of decentralizing education management ‘is arguably one of the most important phenomena to come unto the educational planning agenda in the last 15 years’ McGinn and Welsh (1999: 7). The main idea being to ‘give’ local government a clear mandate, architecture, and functions, and considerable discretion over the use of its funds and implementation, to obtain alignment with local preferences.’ Ferrazzi (2006: 4)

However, in Africa, especially Ghana, the idea does not seem to be taking root. What could be the reasons; political ideological context, assumptions and values driving such a slow pace in implementing decentralization? Decentralizing education management origins, especially for Africa, can be traced largely to, according to Gershberg and Winkler (2003:1) ‘the context of increasing financial resources for basic education, strong country commitments to use additional resources towards that end, and rigorous monitoring by donor countries (in the context of the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs] and the Education for All [EFA initiatives]’.

Ayee (2008) also indicates ‘Ghana’s decentralization program began in 1988 with an objective to promote effective and accountable local government in Ghana... Consequently, the DAs [District Assemblies] have been given 86 functions that empower them to provide de-concentrated and devolved local public services’, amongst which is the education service. This happened within the political context of rule, a regime ‘[p]olitically and economically... inspired by socialist ideas’ Crawfurd (1996). Within this same period, a strong IMF/WB structural adjustment programme support to a country facing financial challenges was being sought by the regime, efforts which were eventually ‘rewarded with new loans by the IMF’ Crawfurd (1996). Many research points the origins of decentralization in Africa to super state agencies such as the United Nations agencies, including the World Bank, and the IMF. As Sharma (2004: 11) quotes Andhra Pradesh in India, ‘[t]hese agencies themselves oblige (by politics
of aid) the countries who seek their help to undertake reforms as they dictate’, amongst which is management reform. Thus aside from the many reasons quoted for decentralization, I agree with Sharma (2004: 11) that ‘it won’t be too wide off the mark to state that international agencies ..., who are investing enthusiastically in spreading “understanding” through dissemination of academic literature supporting their philosophy are in fact themselves one of the crucial forces working behind the trend’.

This neoliberal ideology of the supra state agencies are in most cases in contrast to the local socialist movement at the time of the policy initiation; a movement that sought to advocate the rights and interests of the ordinary people in the interest of equality. Although the military rule ended in 1992, the National Democratic Congress party, a social democratic political party emerged out of the then military turned democratic movement. The party went on to win the first two elections of 1992 and 1996, and then lost power in 2000. The NDC have just returned to power having won the 2008 general elections.

In between the almost continuous socialist party governments, the New Patriotic Party, a liberal democratic party superseded the NDC government, going on to pass a number of laws in support of education decentralization, including the White Paper on education reforms 2003 and the Education Act 2008: making the policy on decentralization unambiguously clear; that District Assembly would be the education service provider at the district.

Although the newly elected NDC socialist government continues to support decentralization, locally, a strong political or ideological orientation to decentralize cannot be detected. Could these conflicting political ideological contexts and values be driving the slow pace of implementing decentralization in Ghana?

[The full list of references for this article can be found on the last page of this newsletter]

School Construction project progress report

We are pleased to introduce our project. The project name is The Project for Improvement of Access to Basic Education in Deprived Areas in the Republic of Ghana. The project would be in two phases, constructing 37 school facilities and supplying school furniture. The first phase entails the construction of 16 school facilities and supply of school furniture in the Central Region. The second phase would also involve the construction of 21 schools and supply of school furniture in the Northern Region. The completion time for the first phase is August 2010.

We take this opportunity to explain to you about the procedure of the construction. The construction site was selected and confirmed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in early 2009, and the design is basically the same as the local standard which was provided by the Funds Procurement and Management Unit (FPMU) of the MoE, but upon the request of the Ministry, the design has been modified a little bit in order to improve and show some difference from previous projects.

In December 2009, the national tender was advertised in newspapers specifically the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times and about 90 tenderers participated. After the evaluation, four contractors were selected. In February 2010, we began to set out the building line with wooden pegs at each site in order for the community members of the various sites to know the location and give approval to the selected contractors for construction at the site.
Construction has already started at the 16 schools (Phase 1) in the Central Region with the cooperation of the Ministry Education and GES. Our target is not only to complete the Project on time but also to ensure the quality. We would also like to transfer the basic construction technology to the contractors and our staff involved in this project. To be continued............

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

- Hard choices for South Africa's school leavers, story at http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/andrewharding/

Nationwide INSET programme progress report

The In-Service Teacher Training (INSET) model, which was developed by Teacher Education Division (TED) of the Ghana Education Service (GES), with JICA’s cooperation in 2008 for public primary teachers in science and mathematics, is now being introduced nationwide as a principal method of continuous teacher professional development.

As of April 2010, 413 members of District INSET Committee (DIC) in 69 districts and 474 members of District Teacher Support Team (DTST) in 63 districts were trained including the 10 pilot districts where the INSET model was introduced in 2008. Most of these districts however could not organize training to school level personnel such as head teachers (HT) and curriculum leaders (CL) due to a cut in the district’s budgets. Therefore school-based INSET (SBI) and cluster-based INSET (CBI) are conducted in a limited number of districts at present. The Teacher Education Division (TED) and JICA Project Team continue to support these districts to complete the training, and at the same time plan to induct 23 new districts to the Nationwide INSET Programme in 2010.

The TED has also made progress in developing the policy backbone for the Nationwide INSET Programme. In the National INSET Committee meeting, a draft Pre-Tertiary Teacher Professional Development and Management (PTPD) Policy was shared with wider stakeholders including key Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service divisional heads, the Minister of Education, and Development Partners, as a core framework for the Continuous Professional Development of pre-tertiary teachers. The draft policy has already been captured by the revised Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2010-2020. The approval of the PTPD policy will be a milestone for the education sector in order to establish a structured Continuous Professional Development programme, including an INSET system for teachers in the country.

JOCV activity: helping students improve their calculation ability by Masaki GOTO (Elementary School teacher, and former JOCV mathematics and science teacher in Ghana)

Many Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) and experts in mathematics are worried that most Ghanaian primary school students are not good at calculations. According to recent survey made by one of the JOCV, only 10.7% of some selected Ghanaian high school students could answer $\frac{6}{\frac{14}{3}}$ correctly. Why are they not good at calculations?

Generally in Ghanaian schools, teachers explain topics and students listen and write down points. In other words, students don’t try to learn by themselves.

However, students are very attentive and interested in learning in class.

If students are given more opportunity to learn by themselves, they will show their wonderful ability. In my effort to help students improve their calculation ability, I developed the
calculation sheet.

So what is the calculation sheet? There are two kinds of calculation sheets, one with questions such as $3 \times 2 = ?, 4 \times 5 = ?, 2 \times 8 = ?$, and so on. The other is an answer sheet with complete equations such as $3 \times 2 = 6, 4 \times 5 = 20, 2 \times 8 = 16$, and so on.

Working in pairs, each pair takes a question and answer calculation sheet. The student with the question sheet says the question and attempts to answer the question. The other student with the answer sheet gives the response “Yes or No” depending if the answer is correct or not. When the answer is wrong, the other gives the correct answer. This goes on until all questions are completed. The sheets are then exchanged and the other begins to exercise in turn. This exercise is very useful to both students, because the two students can do the calculations at the same time. Actually, some students have improved calculation ability by using the sheets.

50 copies of the calculation sheets have been given to every primary school in Adansi North District with the support of JICA. Each headteacher will decide the class which needs the sheets most. It is my hope that this method of learning together will be extended to many schools in Ghana.

TVETS project progress report

Objectives of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Support (TVETS) project: the TVETS project is supporting the Government of Ghana to introduce Competency Based Training (CBT) approach into TVET policy. TVETS aims at improving the structure and mechanism of TVET through: a) developing their organizational as well as policy making capacity at Council for TVET, and b) creating a CBT model through piloting CBT in three trades (electronics, welding and plant engineering) of mechanical engineering at three pilot Institutions; National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI), Accra Technical Training Centre (ATTC) and Accra Polytechnic (Ac-Poly). The project has two outputs:

OUTPUT 1 – Capacity Development of COTVET and its Standing Committees: to realize CBT – TVET it is essential not only to standardize the contents of trainings and education but also to amend and harmonize the occupational standards, qualification and quality assurance system. In this regard, the project has developed a Human resource Development and Training Plan for COTVET and its Standing Committees, which are responsible bodies to implement the CBT policy and mechanism. This plan will guide COTVET to enhance their functions and develop its manpower. The project also is supporting COTVET to expand the linkage with industries and to support the website update for providing the information of CBT – TVET to the public. Other sensitization activities such as conferences and advocacy have been provided, and video and newsletters will be published soon.

OUTPUT 2 - Improve operational mechanism over TVET delivery through piloting: the project aims to improve operational mechanism over TVET delivery through piloting. The pilot institutions through the assistance of the project have been developing units / curriculum and training/learning materials for piloting CBT as well as the training of teachers or instructors. One of the outstanding developments for the CBT training pilot courses is the work place experience planned to start in the coming month (June 2010). This is the important training component of CBT to enable students / trainees to strengthen their knowledge and skills through on the job training, so as to acquire occupational competency based on industries and its market needs. The project is also creating new monitoring and assessment system for measuring the effectiveness of CBT at schools and to apply for future CBT development in the country. More general information about the TVETS project can be found at: www.jica.go.jp/project/ghana/0604633/english/index.html
News / what’s happening in the Education programme of JICA Ghana

- **Follow up of (Education) Training and Dialogue Programs ex-participants (2000 – 2010):** Training and Dialogue Programs (TDPS) are a core component of developing capacity, the underlying concept in JICA’s operations. The Education sector of Ghana has been in receipt of numerous TDPS, under the themes of improvement of school management, practice of science education, management of vocational training institutions, educational evaluation and monitoring amongst others. Since the year 2000 to 2010, 282 Ghanaians from the education sector have been on these TDPs. A nationwide follow-up seminar is being organized, tentatively scheduled for 1st (Southern area) and 3rd (Northern area) June 2010, to strengthen follow up operations, as well as for ex-training participants to share their experiences among themselves and motivate each other to continue using the new knowledge gained.

- **Expert for Decentralized Education Management:** efforts are still ongoing to dispatch an expert to support the Basic Education Division of the GES in strengthening **Decentralized Education Management** at the District and School levels. In support of the Government of Ghana’s efforts to decentralize its functions. The period of dispatch is expected to be 2years, from September 2010.

**Useful website(s)**

- http://www.jica.go.jp/ghana/english/office/others/newsletter.html Don’t forget we are online; old/new copies of this newsletter are available via the JICA Ghana English website

**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_osorep@jica.go.jp Thank you.

**References** [Hot topic: Decentralising Education management: a socio-political analysis]


Online at http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/196/