As the much awaited raining season starts, let me welcome you to the May edition of the ‘Edu’ newsletter; full of the latest information from the Education programme - progress reports from the projects, interesting thoughts, upcoming events, and of course the hot topic: the future of education; abandon or recover the past? Hope this newsletter finds you well; enjoy the read, Mama Owusu 😊.

**Hot topic: The future of education; abandon or recover the past?**

Over the years whilst working in education, I have pondered the question; does planning for educational futures require us to abandon or recover the past? And gradually I have come to the conclusion that to abandon the past is to throw away the bath water with the baby in it. History has a purpose. For ‘inasmuch as understanding always occurs against the background of our prior involvement, so it always occurs on the basis of our history’ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2009: online).

The past has with it experiences, gained knowledge, and lessons to be learned. For example, the changing landscape of family structures over the years; from extended families in earlier times inclusive of servants, to the more recent nuclear families, families made up of half siblings, absent genetic parents, and the increasing trend of lone parent families, would have an impact on how education systems are structured in the future. A different approach would need to be applied in supporting a single parent educate their child (extra-curricular activities to engage the child until the sole parent returns) as compared to an extended family set up with shared childrearing duties that absolves the school of such a responsibility. So to abandon the past is to abandon the preceding knowledge.

Rather, it is in reflecting on lessons from the past, the preceding knowledge, that more suitable, applicable and acceptable evidence based decisions can be made for the challenges of the future. Thus through these past and emerging trends, more suitable educational ideals can be modeled for a preferable future.

The summary results of the INSET programme’s mid-term review held from Feb. 17 – Mar. 10 2011 is as follows: the overall findings were that the project showed some progress due to the hard work of the project team, but more needed to be done. More specifically under the 5 evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability), the project was evaluated as follows:

(1) Relevance: the project is judged to be of high relevance because it is consistent with the policy objectives of the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA), the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2010-2020, and the Pre-tertiary Teacher Professional Development and Management (PTPDM) policy, as well as being in line with JICA Ghana’s rolling plan and the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in Japan’s foreign aid policy. (2) Effectiveness: from the perspective of “structure”, the percentage of primary schools implementing six (6) School Based INSET/Cluster Based INSET (SBI/CBI) sessions per year is low. On the other hand, the average ratings of teachers’ satisfaction with SBI/CBI within a 1-4 four-point scale have increased from “2.48” to “2.67” in the sampling surveys conducted in 2009 and 2010 respectively, although it is difficult to measure whether the impact of a quality INSET can be achieved in a few years. Also, budgetary constraints from the government of Ghana severely affected the schedule and quality of the Nationwide INSET Programme in 2009 and 2010. It has been found that the approved budget was not disbursed as planned, and the Mid-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) did not function as expected. The identification of the budgetary situation is one of the top priorities for smooth operation of the Nationwide INSET Programme.

(3) Efficiency: the inputs to achieve the outputs are not sufficiently allocated as planned so as to conduct the project activities, this is because reassigned counterpart staff need to be replaced, the sourcebooks printed is not sufficient to distribute to the districts, and even though National Trainers (NTs) have been trained in INSET delivery and monitoring, they cannot be assigned to training or school monitoring unless the District Education Offices (DEOs) disburse the required budget. (4) Impact: although the improvement of teachers’ teaching skills is the overall goal of the project, it is too early to assess the achievement at this moment. However, teachers presently promote collaborative works for discussing their lessons with colleagues unlike previously.

(5) Sustainability: due to decentralisation, the project’s sustainability will depend on each district prioritizing INSET and incorporating INSET operations into their plans and budget. Also, monitoring activities at the school level by the National INSET Unit (NIU), the NTs, the District Teacher Support Teams (DTSTs) and the Circuit Supervisors (CS) are quite important to improve and retain teachers’ teaching skills, continue SBI/CBI sessions, and, for teachers to be able to obtain appropriate teaching skills through the lesson observations by NTs, DTSTs, Curriculum Leaders (CLS), and their colleagues. The incorporation of INSET into the ESP 2010-2020 as part of the PTPDM is also a positive sign, although the policy is yet to be finalized and approved.

Following on from these findings, recommendations were made for the NIU in the Teacher Education Division (TED) to play a more important role as a facilitator of INSET activities in order to secure the district budget for INSET operations, including orientation/training for stakeholders for INSET activities, as well as school monitoring by district teacher supporting members. It is also expected for the Teacher Education Division (TED) to give more customised support to districts to meet their unique demands at different times. The project team has made efforts to provide support to districts more effectively in order to get districts’ commitment and meet their demand. The project design was also modified and the appropriate indicators set to coordinate with the current situation surrounding the project. Further detailed information on the review results is available on request.

Other news: the TED plans to organize a Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) meeting in June to share the full evaluation results and a new Project Design Matrix (PDM). The project team in reaction to recommendations from the evaluation will organize an INSET Sourcebooks revision workshop in July to fully align the materials with the on-going decentralisation. Also, annual progress reports submitted indicated that the need for training for Head teacher (HT) and CL was relatively strong in pilot districts as the number of HT/CL has been decreasing since 2008 due to replacement or
The extension phase of The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVETS) project commenced in April 2011 and will end in December 2011. The project has been involved in the reform of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) using the Competency Based Training (CBT) approach in Ghana. The project purpose is to strengthen institutional capacity of the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET), to improve operational mechanism over TVET delivery through lessons learned from piloting Competency Based Training.

During the first phase, the project supported COTVET in the harmonization of TVET qualifications to ensure quality TVET delivery through the established standing committees. Two TVET forums were held during this period for TVET stakeholders, the first to launch the Skills Development Fund, and the second to share lessons learnt in the implementation of the CBT piloting programme.

The project conducted training workshops for instructors in the three pilot institutions (ATTC, NVTI-PTC and Accra Polytechnic) on facilitation skills and developing training packages (curriculum and syllabus) for the students. In other activities, the project was involved in the publication of newsletters on the project and COTVET activities, a sensitization video on the reform of TVET, and established a website for COTVET: www.cotvet.org. One of the major activities of the original phase was the holding of the 2nd TVET forum in February 2011: with the first CBT certification to the graduating trainees for ATTC welding certificate II and NVTI-PTI electronic certificate I.

As part of the extension phase activities, the project is presently assisting COTVET in training the ITAC Sub-committee members in the generation of Occupational Standards and training materials. The project will continue with activities to enhance capacity of COTVET staff to enable them perform their functions effectively, and also continue the support to the pilot institutions in developing new training packages for students. More information about the project can also be found at: www.jica.go.jp/project/english/ghana/0604633/index.html
week of May, annual regional review meetings have been conducted. For the meetings, all regional education offices have produced their annual regional performance reports (ARPRs) and enjoyed intensive discussions on their performance during the meetings. This time round, the unit proposed a unified template for the ARPR for the first time, in cooperation with the Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation (PBME) Division of the Ministry of Education (MoE), and had an orientation meeting in March with regional officers for planning and statistics. Together with the ARPR template, the unit also proposed a minor change of the template of annual district performance reports (ADPRs) so that their reported items could be easily compiled to the ARPRs. The result of this attempt was that some regions and districts took this opportunity to improve the quality of their reports while others struggled to fulfill requirements of the templates. Communication between districts and regions was not as speedy as expected; some regional offices faced difficulties with compiling information of districts. It is expected that all regional officers will meet again to discuss lessons learnt from this year’s process.

Meanwhile, this unit has completed its study on the quality of Annual District Education Operation Plans (ADEOPs) and Annual District Performance Reports (ADPRs), the report on the review can be downloaded from this link: https://sites.google.com/site/audembed/advisory-note/ADVISORYNOTE-AN003-2011.pdf?attredirects=0&d=1. Though documents from all districts could not be reviewed, those from 65% of the districts were reviewed and some recommendations have been made to improve the planning and review process in districts. The most serious issues found in this study are 1) disconnection between the plan and the review, 2) irrelevant budgeting in ADEOPs, 3) review of activity results instead of indicator review, 4) lack of periodic orientation opportunities for district officers on formulation of ADEOP and the ADPR and 5) insufficient quality checking and document storage in regional offices and the HQ on these district documents. The study then recommended that the GES take the following actions: 1) revising manuals and guidelines, 2) providing periodic orientation and training, 3) some system development to facilitate data analysis, and 4) redefining roles of regional offices and headquarters in the process of planning and review. The GES is expected to take these issues into serious consideration to improve the quality of education sector management at the decentralised levels.

Finally, Mrs. Elizabeth Quarmyne, one of the unit members, retired from the GES at the end of March. We would like to say thank you for her hard work, and congratulate her on her happy retirement☺

School construction project progress report

Official project name: The Project for Improvement of Access to Basic Education in Deprived Areas in the Republic of Ghana. Whilst the first phase of the project in the Central region is still ongoing, with the construction of 16 school facilities and the supply of school furniture in the Assin South and Assin North districts of the Central region. Construction works of the second phase commenced in December 2010.

The first phase of the project has seen progress recently; the superstructure work has been completed at 14 out of the 16 sites, and work is still ongoing at the remaining 2 sites. In addition, roof work has been completed at 11 sites, with another 2 sites having roof work in progress.

The project’s second phase would also initially involve the construction of 17 school facilities, teachers’ accommodation and supply of furniture to four districts (Bunkpurugu Yunyoo, Sawla Tuna Kalba, Central Gonga and Karaga) in the Northern region of Ghana. To date, excavation work for the foundations of most of the sites has been completed, with others having completed the ground beam work.
JOCV activity: fashion on the “pure-water” side with Mari Kagami

Miss Mari Kagami, a Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) working at Kumasi Polytechnic as a dress-making instructor, participated in the “K’poly Final Fashion Show 2011” held on 29th April 2011 at the polytechnic.

As a guest designer, Mari came up with the idea of making clothes by recycling the plastic bags of “pure-water” (drinking water ubiquitous in Ghana). She believed that putting together bags with various interesting designs printed on them would create clothes with unique designs. Mari collected approximately 3,000 used plastic bags and made 8 outfits (4 men’s and 4 women’s) using the bags. The bags had to be taken apart, sewn together then washed and dried. Various obstacles such as the breakdown of the sewing machine frustrated Mari. During the months of March and April, she was totally consumed making the outfits, which often only allowed her to sleep 3 hours at night.

Finally, on the day of the show, 8 other JOCVs, who work in various regions in Ghana, came to Kumasi to act as models wearing the outfits Mari had made. The models walked gracefully (and sometimes humorously) on the catwalk, receiving huge acclamation from the audience. Mari hopes that making the best use of waste plastic bags would also contribute to environmental conservation in Ghana.

Upcoming events in the Education sector

- The National Education Sector Annual Review (NESAR), 30th May to 1st June 2011: this year’s NESAR is scheduled to take place at the Alisa Hotel, for approximately 250 participants from across the country. The NESAR is organised by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with stakeholders, with the aim of providing an opportunity for stakeholders to participate in the review of the education sector’s performance, as well as propose recommendations to tackle any short comings identified. Participants would be divided into 7 technical groups (management, TVET Science and ICT, Quality, Access, Finance, Tertiary and Non Formal Education). JICA will be co-chairing the TVET Science and ICT technical group with COTVET, and the Finance group with DFID and the GES FC, as well as being represented at the other groups by a combination of project experts and counterparts.

Useful website(s)

- Checkout the JICA Ghana website for information on JICAs activities in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia: [www.jica.go.jp/ghana/english/index.html](http://www.jica.go.jp/ghana/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/ghana/english/office/others/newsletter.html](http://www.jica.go.jp/ghana/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_oson_rep@jica.go.jp   Thank you.