Welcome to the November edition of the ‘Edu’ newsletter as we head into the festive season and bring the year to a close. The Edu newsletter as usual is full of the latest information from the Education programme - progress reports from the projects, interesting thoughts, upcoming events, and of course the spotlight on JICA’s cooperation in Ghana’s education sector. Hope this newsletter finds you well; enjoy the read and Merry Christmas, Mama Laryea (formerly Owusu) 😊.

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Spotlight on: JICA’s cooperation in Ghana’s education sector

This time of year brings with it the need to review one’s activities for the year as well as looking ahead to the coming years. And in looking back I realized that one of the constant queries answered over the year was: ‘so, what does JICA do in Education in Ghana?

Japan, like the rest of the international development community accepts that Education is the cornerstone of any kind of development. Japan focuses on promoting “self-effort” and “self-reliance” from its counterparts, by working together for “capacity development.” JICA, as the implementing agency of the Government of Japan mainly utilizes the scheme of technical cooperation.

In the education sector, Japan’s assistance to Ghana is mainly focused on the improvement of basic social services in deprived areas, and human resources development needed for the industrial sector. The education cooperation in Ghana focuses on basic education: math and science and TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training). These focuses are in line with the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2010-2020 objectives.

The current Education projects in country include the School construction project (Mar 2010 – ongoing), for improving access to basic education in deprived areas. A grant of 605 million Japanese Yen (approx. USD 6.8 million as of early 2010) is to provide classrooms for primary and junior high schools, teacher’s accommodation, toilet facilities and educational furniture in approximately 33 schools. An advisor for Decentralized Education Management (Oct 2010 – Sep 2012) has also been posted at the Basic Education Division of the Ghana Education Service (GES) to strengthen the GES’s capacity on decentralised education management at the national, regional and district levels.

A Technical and Vocational Education and Training Support (TVETS) project (Apr 2007 – Dec 2011), aimed at supporting the Government of Ghana to introduce Competency Based Training (CBT) approach into TVET delivery, and
develop accreditation and qualifications system is also ongoing. And, an In-Service Training (INSET) project (Jun 2009 – Mar 2013), aimed at improving the teaching abilities of public primary school teachers in the area of mathematics and science through School and Cluster Based INSET (SBI/CBI) training is also ongoing.

Aside of these projects, there is the allocation of JOCVs (Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers) to work together with local people at District Education Offices, Schools (Primary, Junior and Senior), Colleges of Education, TVET institutions, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) amongst others. There are 84 JOCVs at present in country. Numerous training courses also complement the education programme. Training programs take place in Japan and other third countries including Kenya and Malaysia to help transfer knowledge and technology. This practice aids participants in creating solutions for their country’s specific needs. The JICA education team also works with other Development Partners such as the World Bank, DFID, UNICEF, WFP, and USAID amongst others to align our work. Details of the progress of each project mentioned above are provided in the remaining pages of this newsletter, and at quarterly intervals through this newsletter. We hope you continue to keep informed of JICA’s cooperation in Ghana’s education sector.

Schools at last! The school construction project progress report

As explained in the August edition of this newsletter, the school construction project is currently running two phases. Phase one in the Central Region (Assin North, Assin South) comprising 16 schools. Phase two in the Northern Region (Karaga, Bunkpurugu Yunyoo, Sawla Tuna Kalba, and Central Gonja) also comprises 17 schools.

The August edition of this newsletter also mentioned that the progress of the first phase of the project is behind schedule, but nonetheless two schools were scheduled to be completed by August ending. The progress to date is that three schools, one more than expected, have been completed. To the left are selected pictures from one of the completed sites under phase one. We also informed you in our previous article that roofing works for one school at Karaga will be completed by the end of August. The contractor has lived up to his words and now painting works has commenced.

Preparations are also in progress to call for tender for furniture supplies for the phase two schools. More updates on the school construction project’s activities will be provided in the next edition of the Edu newsletter.

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

Does empowering school teachers to offer treatment to sick pupils pay dividends in Malawi? Full story at www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/education&id=58630&type=Document

The Advisory Unit on Decentralised Education Management’s progress report

During the period from September to November 2011, the Advisory Unit on Decentralised Education Management (AUDEM) in the Ghana Education Service (GES), which is supported by Mr. Daisuke Kanazawa, JICA Expert, issued three...
Advisory Notes (ANs). Two of the ANs are summarised as follows. On 19th September, the AUDEM issued an AN to submit the final drafts of the guidelines on the Annual District Education Operation Plan (ADEOP) and the Annual District Performance Report (ADPR). After the previous drafts submitted in June, there were three consultation opportunities to develop the final drafts. First, the draft guidelines were circulated to divisional and regional directors in July for their comments. Second, a validation workshop was held on 5th September 2011, of which 62 officers participated. And thirdly, the draft guidelines were circulated to development partners through e-mail (on 13th September 2011). Having accepted the AN, the acting Director General of the GES issued the guidelines on 20th September, disseminating the guidelines to the regions and districts. At the same time, all district directors were requested to submit their ADEOPs for 2012-14 based on the new template by the end of September in order for them to be used in the budget formulation process. However, submissions to date are quite slow. As of 11th November, only 41 ADEOPs out of 170 had been received. The remaining districts are being encouraged to submit their ADEOPs. The AUDEM is planning to propose a possible training process for district and regional officers as the next step.

The second AN was issued on 28th October to show findings on the School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) and the School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM) report. Every school is supposed to develop a SPIP for each term in a year and to review results of the term through the SPAM. The AUDEM has gone through 109 SPIPs and 79 SPAM reports to see whether or not plans and reviews at the school level are properly functioning. The main findings on SPIPs/SPAMs are as follows: 1) the current SPIP is not a plan aimed at improving school performance comprehensively because the plans are not based on visions and missions of schools, and there are no annual performance targets shown in the plan. Rather, the SPIP is functioning just as a requirement for the release of the capitation grants, 2) the SPIP template itself creates difficulties for the plan to be result-oriented, 3) there is no SPAM reporting on results of the SPIP, 4) most SPAMs focus on basic morale issues in schools such as absenteeism and truancy rather than issues on academic performance. The AN recommends that a management cycle on school performance should be established in each school with more result-oriented SPIPs, based on school performance indicators and with SPAM reports focusing on results of the SPIP and issues on academic performance. We hope that these ANs are useful for the GES to further strengthen decentralised education management.

TVETS project progress report

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Support (TVETS) project organized a number of activities from September to October 2011, including workshops on Competency Based Training (CBT) method orientation, Oil and Gas CBT orientation, a TVET Forum, and Workplace Experience Learning (WEL) for the CBT pilot students. Details are as follows.

In September (5th to 9th) a Competency Based Training (CBT) method orientation workshop was held in Kumasi. The workshop was to sensitize teachers from Technical Institutes and the University of Education’s Kumasi campus about the TVET reforms and the CBT concept. This is to ensure that teachers being produced at the University and the Technical Institutes will have a full grip of the CBT concept so as to make the programme roll out in Ghana effectively. In October (10th to 14th) a CBT orientation workshop for teaching Oil and Gas skills was also organized in Takoradi. The workshop, which focused on the CBT as a method of teaching and learning oil and gas was for technical institutions in and around the Western Region, and the Maritime University in Accra.

Aside of these workshops, a TVET forum was also held on 22nd September 2011. About 109 participants made up of CBT pilot institutions, trade associations, technical institutes, development partners and industry representatives were invited to discuss the TVET reform and the harmonized CBT model. Presentations made on the day covered TVET policy
reform, partnerships in implementation of CBT, the JICA TVETS project, the Skills Development Fund, and the future of CBT in TVET.

And finally, a Workplace Experience Learning (WEL) was organized for the CBT pilot students from mid-July to October 2011 as well. The WEL is an integral part of the CBT students are receiving. The WEL involves placing Learners in relevant industries to enable them learn skills and competencies in real work situations. A total of about 86 students made up of 40 plant engineers from Accra Polytechnic, 10 welders from Accra Technical Training Centre (ATTC) and 36 electronics engineers from the National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) Pilot Training Centre were placed in about 30 industries across the country. More information about the TVETS project can be found at: www.jica.go.jp/project/english/ghana/0604633/index.html.

Recent JOCV activities in Ghana by Shigeru Jonishi (JOCV)

A special programme on science, mathematics and creative arts was held as a part of the science and mathematics JOCV subcommittee activities on 3rd November 2011 at Bagabaga College of Education in Tamale. The programme targeted second year students in the college, with the aim of introducing locally available Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) for science, mathematics and creative arts, which will be helpful for the teachers and the children in primary schools. As lecturers and programme assistants, 22 JOCVs from the Northern, Upper West, Upper East, Volta, Eastern, Ashanti and Brong-Afahoe regions participated in the program. Pictorial highlights of the activities are shown below:

Locally available TLMs were demonstrated for static electricity and electric circuit in science

Easy, quick and fun multiplication exercises were introduced and demonstrated

The importance of creative arts and activity with recycled materials were demonstrated

Nationwide INSET programme progress report

The Nationwide INSET programme has continued to support the human resource development of its Ghanaian Counterparts. The training in Okayama University (Japan) from 11th July to 8th September 2011, which was reported in
the August edition of this newsletter, has been successfully completed. 12 participants (District Training Officers, District Teacher Support Teams, District Master Trainers and Curriculum Leaders) from three districts (Lower Manya Krobo, New Juaben and Asuogyaman in the Eastern Region) which are expected to be INSET model districts in the future have successfully completed training on Science and Mathematics, and acquired skills in planning and delivery of child centred lessons. After their return to Ghana, the National INSET Unit (NIU) organized a 2-day dissemination and validation workshop for their District Directors in Kumasi at the Kumasi Technical Institute (KTI) on the 3rd and 4th of October 2011. In addition to these three districts, the three other districts that participated in the 2010 training in Okayama also participated in the dissemination workshop. In this workshop, the 2011 participants studied from the 2010 participants about how to disseminate the knowledge and skills acquired with other teachers in their districts and schools.

Also as reported in the August edition of this newsletter, JICA and GES had agreed that JICA support the printing cost of the Sourcebooks while GES delivers the printed sourcebooks in order to maintain the quality of INSET. Since then JICA has ordered the printing of the INSET sourcebook modules 3, 4, 5 and 6. The sourcebooks should be ready by December 2011. These modules were not revised as their contents are somehow universal. However, as decentralization of the education sector is on-going, there is a need for modules 1/2 (district guidelines and manuals) to be revised. In lieu of this the JICA experts had a series of meetings with the National INSET Unit (NIU) in September to determine a revision policy. These discussions culminated in the organisation of revision workshops at Alisa Hotel (26th – 28th Oct and 2nd – 3rd Nov), attended by the Basic Education Davison of GES, Inspectorate Division of GES and Accra Metropolitan Education Office. The revised version, which will be the third edition of modules 1/2 (district guidelines and manuals), will be published in March 2012.

Aside of the module revision, the third Sampling Survey was also conducted from 10th to 21st October 2011. The Sampling Survey is to identify impacts and challenges of the School Based INSET (SBI) and Cluster Based INSET (CBI) by following up on how and in what degree the SBI/CBI is bringing changes in teaching and learning, as well as improving collegiality within the school atmosphere through the years. The third Sampling Survey report will be available in February 2012.

Upcoming events in the Education sector

- TVET forum on 30th Nov. 2011, 9.30am at Coconut Grove hotel, to review the JICA TVETS project
- The final Joint Coordinating Committee meeting of the TVETS project on 6th Dec. at Noguchi Memorial Institute

Useful website(s)

- See the latest edition of the Anigye newsletter, a publication of JICA Ghana office covering all cooperation programmes in country: www.jica.go.jp/ghana/english/office/others/newsletter.html
- Checkout the JICA Ghana website for information on JICAs activities in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia: 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

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 spotlight in this issue, the address to use is: gn_oso_rep@jica.go.jp Thank you.