

A Situational Analysis of Special Needs Education in Ghana

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Acronyms

BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
BESIP	Basic Education Sector Investment Programme
CBRP	Community Rehabilitation Programme
CRDD	Curriculum Research and Development Division
CWD	Children with Disabilities
DDAC	District Diagnosis and Assessment Centre
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Development
ESR	Education Sector Review
FAWE	Foundation for African Women Educationalists
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GES	Ghana Education System
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MMDE	Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NVTI	National Vocational Technical Institute
PWD	People with Disabilities

SED	Special Education Division
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TTI	Teacher Training Institute
UCEW	University College of Education at Winneba
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

1.0 Introduction

The following report is the Education Sector Review (ESR) consultant's assessment of the situation of special needs education in the country. The objective of the situational analysis is to *examine the effectiveness of the Special Education Programme for Children with Special Needs*.

Methodology:

To ensure a full and thorough assessment of Special Needs Education in Ghana key areas in the Special Needs Programme had to be examined to ascertain the effectiveness of the programme. The key areas are outlined below:

- Review of policy targets, goals and guidelines established for Special Needs Education and the status of action towards fulfilling these goals.
- How effective the programmes for mainstreaming and integration of children with special needs have been in the sector.
- The effectiveness of teacher education, curriculum and provision of teaching and learning materials.
- The roles of the MOE, GES and the districts in executing the programmes at the district level.
- What type of results has the programmes for special needs children been able to achieve? (Child performance and scale of programming)
- Has the demand for services been able to meet with a supply of appropriate, cost effective and high quality service for children with special needs?
- The investigation involved a review and analysis of documents, consultation with key stakeholders, field visits and a workshop to review findings with the Special Education Division (SED), NGO's and other key agencies. The findings of this workshop are contained in the Special Needs Consultative Report.

Various methods were adopted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the areas mentioned above. The consultant reviewed existing data, evaluations and baseline studies. Conducted interviews with key people and organisations involved in the provision of special needs education and administered a questionnaire to some key stakeholders (see annex 2). Where there were documentation gaps the consultant requested research and opinion statements, which were undertaken by leading institutions and experts. For instance the University College of Education (UCEW) and the Special Education Division prepared several papers on the state of special education.

2.0 Policy goals, and targets

Within the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ghana Education Service (GES), the Special Education Division is the statutory agency for special needs education in Ghana. The division has the responsibility to provide educational opportunities and plan programmes for children with disabilities. Presently, Ghana has twenty-three schools at the basic level, which cater for the education of three disability groups--- the Blind, the Deaf and the Mentally Challenged. There is much less emphasis on

the educational needs of the physically challenged, learning disabled and gifted and talented children.

The UN and the *Salamanca Declaration* serves as a blueprint and global framework of action on Special Needs Education. At both international and national level, the Salamanca conference (1994) provided a unique opportunity to place special needs education within the wider framework of 'Education for All (EFA)'. It also provides a platform to affirm the principle and discuss the practice of ensuring that children with special educational needs are included in all education initiatives and have a rightful place in a learning society. The *Salamanca Declaration* is comprised of action points for the progression of Special Needs Education and further inclusion of Special Needs Children. It calls for a major policy and resource shift in most countries of the world, the setting of national targets, and a partnership between international and national agencies in the provision of quality education for all children.

The provisions of international declarations like the Salamanca Declaration should guide the Ministry of Education (MOE) and particularly the Special Education Division in developing its policy framework and programming in the sub sector. Currently the main thrust of the special education policy is focussed on inclusiveness and mainstreaming children with mild to moderate disability. More work is needed to translate the main components of the Salamanca Declaration/ agreements into practical strategic plans at national and district level to improve educational effectiveness in the future.

Government of Ghana Policy Framework

Special needs children are only beginning to become a visible minority with equal rights in Ghanaian Society. Up until 2000 there were no specific educational policy guidelines on special needs children apart from the Children's Act and Ghana Vision 2020. These documents all state the right of disabled persons to be mainstreamed into social and economic life of the society, providing a mandate for the provision of appropriate facilities and prohibiting any forms of discrimination. **The Children's Act (Act 560)** states, "A disabled child has a right to special care, education and training wherever possible to develop his maximum potential and be self reliant."

The other major policy document guiding policy and programming in the subsector is the **National Policy on Disability**. Parliament in June 2000 under the leadership of the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment (formally the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare), and several other Ministries including the Ministry of Education passed the Disability Policy, Alhaji Mohammed Mumuni Minister for Employment and Social Welfare stated 'we in government will do all we can to mobilize resources from all available sources to ensure implementations, monitoring and evaluation of the policy objectives'. The National Disability Policy Document outlines the following strategies in the education sector to "ensure access of people with disabilities to education and training at all levels". Table 1.0 outlines the main policy strategies and activities to achieve the objectives at different levels within the education sector.

Table 1.0: National Policy on Disability Strategies, 2000

Educational Level	Strategies
Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Restructure the national educational system gradually and systematically to increasingly become an open and inclusive education system, which fosters early socialisation of Children with Disabilities (CWDs). ➤ Build educational institutions for PWDs without architectural barriers and modify existing institutional structures to be more accessible to PWDs ➤ Extend inclusive education to all districts to get children with disabilities enrolled and get all schools changed to respond to all children.
Early Child hood Care and Development (ECCD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduce training on disability issues to attendants of early childhood development centres ➤ Ensure the education of CWDs as early as possible
Basic level Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide sufficient facilities and equipment for all children including CWDs in the ordinary school system ➤ Admit all CWDs into local ordinary school unless otherwise recommended by the RMPACs and equip all such schools to provide special needs for those who require such assistance.
Secondary School Ed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that PWDs obtain primary school education and are granted scholarships in both ordinary and special schools. ➤ Encourage young persons with disabilities to be inclusive at the secondary school level ➤ Provide support and equipment to such secondary schools and teacher training institutions, which admit PWDs.
Vocational and Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage PWDs to acquire technical and vocational education and training both in the public and private sectors.
Tertiary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage all Universities and polytechnics as well as other establishments of higher learning to admit qualified PWDs in all faculties.
Provision of Special Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage the continuation of special schools that will admit only cases referred to them by RMPACs but to transfer children in such schools whose progress is such that they can benefit from ordinary schools without hesitation. ➤ Ensure that children placed in such schools receive the maximum benefit of facilities, which will promote their progress.
Training teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improve professional training facilities in the area of disability ➤ Motivate PWDs to train and qualify as teachers and obtain teaching appointments in both ordinary and special schools. ➤ Incorporate special education in the curricula of Technical and Vocational Teacher Training Institutions. ➤ Ensure the teaching of Sign Language and Braille writing in Teacher Training Institutions (TTIs) ➤ Ensure the inclusion of inclusive education in the curricula of TTI's
Assessment centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish District Diagnosis and Assessment Centres (DDAC) and Appropriately equip them to carry out verification, observation and assessment of special needs, interventions and placements of PWDs.

(Excerpts related to the education sector from the National Disability Policy, 2000)

The National Disability Policy Document is comprehensive and includes a very strong emphasis on inclusive education and integration of children with special needs across the sector and at teacher training college level. The document should form the basis of further work in the sub sector since it identifies the major recommendations reiterated by most of the experts within the special needs sector. The policy document should assist the Special Needs Division gain a higher profile within the Government when it comes to financial support for the sub-sector.

Ministry of Education Policies and Strategic Plans

There are only a few documents, which outline special needs education targets for MOE and GES. These include the Ministry of Education's Policy and Programme Document (2001). The key vision for the MOE outlined in the document is that:

" The main thrust of the Special Education Policy is the integration of pupils where possible in the mainstream system. It is also to ensure the provision of adequate resources for special schools. In order to accomplish this, special programmes of teacher training are required. " (MOE, 2001 Page 14)

The Ministry of Education Policy and Programme Document (2001) clearly states the need for mainstreaming special needs children. Unfortunately the document does not go far enough in providing strategies and activities to meet the needs of special education children. The policy document simply states that it will:

- Improve the provision of Special Education in schools and colleges

The MOE Policy and Programme document (MOE, 2001) does acknowledge the need for reducing disability barriers by providing mainstream schools with more equipment, supervision and training so that children with disability can be integrated into the mainstream schooling. The second approach is to provide more special schools for children who cannot be integrated into the mainstream system. Nevertheless, one striking feature of the policy document is that the **strategic plans** outlined in the document do not mention Special Needs Education. The Special Needs Division acknowledges that there is a tremendous need to develop a special needs policy and strategic plan for the division.

Unfortunately, the fCUBE document did not include any mention of special needs education. This means that there was no costed budget for special needs under the Basic Education Sector Investment Programme (BESIP) or the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) in order to carry out strategies to meet the overall policy objective of inclusive education. The last five years the division has continued to operate a programme, which is mainly focussed on institutional support to children with special needs and has made only slight inroads into promoting inclusive education through the support of Sight Savers International. The Norwegian Association of the Disabled and SHIA have also supported inclusive education through the community based rehabilitation programme. A large part of the Special Needs Divisions service budget is also supplemented by the NGO sector in the form of free equipment but this is erratic and does not meet the needs of the division.

The Ministry of Education does acknowledge that there is the need for 'further policy development' in several areas including special needs education and "inclusive education for placing children into the mainstream system. (MOE, 2001, p22.)"

Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy

The Ghana Poverty Reduction strategy does not take into account the needs of children with special needs. The document does discuss issues of the vulnerable including street children, “trokosi” victims etc. They do not however mention children with special disabilities; the document makes only limited reference to adults who are physically challenged and those with no employable skills. There is no programming target addressing the problems of children with special needs.

Special Needs Division

The special needs division operates its plans and programmes "on an extension of the general education legislative provisions" although according to their assessment this is not adequate. The Special Needs Division has articulated in many of its documents the need for clearer legislation/ guidance on special needs education to give direction on the policy, implementation and forms of parental support. Particular issues include the interpretation of "free education for the disabled". Textbooks and equipment are supplied by Government free of charge to all basic schools.

The Special Education Division (SED) itself developed an internal policy document, in the late 1980's, which defines rules and regulations governing institutional care for children with special needs. This document is focussed on providing guidelines for establishing and resourcing special needs schools, although it does not outline strategies for mainstreaming special needs children. More work is needed to develop a system for moving towards a more inclusive policy strategy.

Many of the policies articulated in national plans have fallen far short in achieving their goals. The next section will provide a situational analysis of the supply and demand for special needs education in Ghana. Section 4.0 will examine the effectiveness of the current SED programmes based on results and data from the special needs schools, pupil performance and the level of integration of children into the mainstream.

3.0 Incidence and Provision of Special Needs Education

There is very little data on the exact number of children in the country who have disabilities (in school and out of school) and require special needs education. Neither the latest National Census nor the Ghana Demographic Health Survey acknowledges the issue of disability. Both these instruments would be the best means for measuring the degree of disability within the community, district and nation.

The most comprehensive information source available on disability at the regional and district level is the Ministry of Manpower Development, and Employment's

(MMDE) disability mapping data. The MMDE study investigated the number of disabled children and adults by district and region. The survey involved a comprehensive mapping exercise in all the districts in two northern regions and the central region. The study found that approx. **6%** of the population has some type of disability (mild to severe)¹. This may be an under-representation of the disability in the entire country since the northern regions have been known to have a relatively low number due to under-representation. The figure is also lower than the UN figures of 10-12% for most developing countries (UNESCO, WHO) Studies conducted by the Society for the Blind in the mid 1990's suggest that between 12,000 to 30,000 children have problems with low vision.

Lack of data has often resulted in many agencies conducting their own baseline assessment or using the UN figures of 10-12% of the population. This estimation is often higher for developing countries due to the undernourishment of infants and mothers. According to the Special Needs Division between 20-25% of children in regular schools experience some type of impairment which is often not readily discernible but can affect the child's performance resulting in either failure or drop out (Special Education Division, Sept. 2001).

The National Disability Policy Document outlines the main findings from the report as follows:

Table 2.0: Main Findings from the Disability Study

	Main Findings
Types of Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The "sight" disability ranks high for both males and females (59% for females and 55.1% for males). ➤ Difficulties in movement are the second leading category of disability. Learning disabilities makes up the next category (14% females and 13% for males) ➤ For the hearing and speaking category males recorded slightly higher at 11% and females at 10%.
By gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rates for females (55.1%) are higher than males (44.9%) in all regions of the country except for the northern regions
By region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Greater Accra has the highest rate of disability for both males and females ➤ Central region has the highest rate for females ➤ Rates for the three northern regions appear exceptionally low relative to other regions--possibly due to under-numeration and cultural hesitation to give information on disability
Educational background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 53% of women with disability have no education compared to 37.3% of males with disability. ➤ When Children with disability enter the system they hardly manage to complete primary school (17.5% of PWDs had primary education compared to 25% of the total population)

(Disability Policy Document, 2000)

The findings from the National disability study suggest that females are being discriminated against particularly when it comes to education. The under representation of disability in the north is also a cause for concern since several studies suggest the high level of stigmatisation and the potential for families to "get rid of" or even kill their children if they are found to have a disability.

¹ Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment Studies (1999; 2000) in Central region suggest disability rate of 6.5% and Upper East Region figures for disability was 5.5%.

3.1 Number of children participating in Special Needs Schools

The number of children represented in special schools is quite low if 6% of the population has some sort of disability or special need. The following table provides a breakdown of the number of male and females in special schools in 2000/2001.

Table 3.0: Number of Children in Special Needs Schools

Type of institution	Male	Female	Total number of students	Number of spaces available
Schools for the Deaf	1348	839	2187	
Schools for the Blind	332	152	484	
Mentally Handicapped	432	237	669	
Deaf /Blind	22	--	22	
Total	2134	1228	3362	

(Special Needs Division, Sept., 2001)

One can see that there is a tremendous gap in servicing children with special needs particularly blind children and the mentally handicapped through institutional care if figures for disability are as high as 6% in some regions of the country. Studies by the Society for the Blind suggest that less than 10% of the Blind population in Ghana are being serviced through special needs institutions. There is a significant under representation of girls in these institutions particularly when taking into consideration the higher levels of disability among girls (National Disability Policy Document, 2000). Annex 3 provides the number of children currently in special needs institutions and some mainstream institutions.

Reports from the SED, District Education Officers and Head teachers in special needs schools suggest that low vision children who could be mainstreamed in the regular system are taking up spaces in the special needs schools. There appears to be a problem in ensuring that only the severely disabled children are given priority in admission to special needs schools and low vision children with low impairment are mainstreamed. Reports from SED officers and Heads of Special institutions suggest that parents want children to remain in institutional care due to the feeding subsidies and special care provided often-relieving parents of their own responsibilities. District officers have also had difficulty convincing Heads of special needs institutions to stop admitting low vision children particularly when there are inclusive education programmes running in the district.

3.2 Programmes and Institutions

Table 4.0 presents the current number of special needs schools under the auspices of the Ministry of Education that provide education for special needs children.

Table 4.0: Schools for Special Needs Children

Type of School	Number	Location
Public Schools for the Blind (Basic Level)	2	One in Akropong- (Eastern Region) One in Wa (Northern sector)

Type of School	Number	Location
Private integrated	1	Accra, De Youngsters
Integrated Senior Secondary Schools	3	Wa, Akuapem and Wenchi, Akropong
Vocational		
Public Schools for the Deaf (Basic Level)	12	Wa, Hohoe- Volta, Koforidua, Mampong-Akwapim, Sekondi, Kibi, Cape Coast, Savelugu, Jamasi, Bechem, Gbeogo, Accra
Religious Unit Schools	3	Swedru (Salvation Army)
Senior Secondary (deaf)	1	Secondary /Technical at Mampong Akwapim
Technical Institute	1	Bechem
Public Schools for the Mentally Handicapped	6	Asylum Down, Dzowulu, Sekondi, Kumasi, Kpando, Battor and Nkoranza
Private school for the Mentally Handicapped	1	New Horizon, Accra
Unit schools	3	3 units attached to the School for the Deaf at Hohoe, Wa and Koforidua Unit School; One inclusive school in Kpando; Kibi
Sheltered Workshops	1	Accra attached to the NGO run School for the Mentally Handicapped

Stakeholders in the sector report that there is a need for more schools for children with severe visual disability at the Basic level. The review also found that there are enough schools for the Deaf but more schools at the senior secondary level may be necessary by developing special education units to cater for Deaf Children.

The review also revealed that there are pre-schools attached to most of the special schools providing two-year programmes for children with special needs. This is a very large area, which must be further explored since pre school education for children with special needs can have a significant impact on their development later on in the formal system. Pre school training in the MOE and GES is limited to only one model pre-school in the country. More work is necessary to make pre-school teachers aware of the needs of children with disabilities and help them assess any early learning difficulties, which students may have.

3.3 Inclusive educational programmes

There are only **three districts** involved in inclusive educational programmes in Ghana. These programmes are supported through the Sight Savers International, the Special Education Division (SED) and the District Education Offices. Two districts in the Volta region and one in the Eastern region are helping children with low vision impairment integrate into mainstream schools. The programme has successfully integrated 87 students in schools in these three districts (31 girls and 56 boys). The programme involves teachers trained in special needs to act as itinerant teachers and visit children in the districts where they are being mainstreamed. This programme is not meant for children with severe handicaps. At least two itinerant officers along with the peripatetic officer working in each district are required, they are provided with motorbikes to visit the schools where children have been mainstreamed on a regular basis. The model shows the potential for scaling up and spreading inclusive education to more children with low vision, mild to moderate hearing impairment and possibly the mentally handicapped.

Inclusive education requires strong support by itinerant teachers and peripatetic officers at the district level as well as openness from the teaching profession and school authorities. SED division is planning to pilot test another approach for increasing the number of blind children in the mainstream by attaching special Blind units onto two special schools of the Deaf in Bechem and Cape Coast, and a School for the Mentally Handicapped at Bator in the Volta region. The ultimate aim of the programme is to prepare blind children for mainstreaming. These units will teach blind children the basic skills of braille and mobility skills; some students will remain as day students in the programme.

Other inclusive education programmes include a community based rehabilitation programme (CBRP) supported by Norway and the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment, which provide support to children and adults with disabilities in their various communities. The CBR programme is currently running in 38 districts in the Upper East, Upper West, Northern and Ashanti regions. The CBR programme is supported through the Norwegian Association of the Disabled its aim is "to raise awareness and mobilise resources at village level, thereby enabling parents to be more effective in helping disabled children to attend school, learn skills and participate productively in family and community life". The programme also seeks to establish links between service providers in health, education and community development, and strengthen associations of PWDs to enable them to play a role in the mobilisation of the community and promote human rights of PWDs. (Minister of Manpower Development and Employment, no date).

Communication

Some of the problems facing the special needs sub sector include disagreement over the most effective approaches for educating the Deaf children. This debate has resulted in the situation whereby no clear consensus is available on how to effectively teach Deaf children within the special education institutions (i.e. Schools for the Deaf) or training colleges and help them to integrate into the society. Over the last 40 years teachers have been trained to use communicative approaches, which encourage deaf children to speak if they have the capacity. This approach has now included the use of "Sign the Exact English" sign language. Very few people in the country are able to sign the Exact English approach resulting in the situation where very few deaf children are able to fully communicate at the basic levels of education.

Experts from the Special Needs Division and University College of Winneba are advocating for the use of Ghanaian Sign language, which is based on the American Sign Language system and integrates signs, which are more "Ghanaianised". SED has begun training key resource people in all Schools for the Deaf using this new approach. However there is a tremendous amount of work to be done to ensure effective communication strategies for Deaf children if this approach has to be pursued due to the lack of consensus and policy direction.

The Salamanca Declaration based on the World Conference on Special Needs Education (1994) states that "Educational Policies should take full account of individual differences and situations. The importance of sign language as the

medium of communication among the deaf should be recognised and provision made to ensure that all deaf persons have access to education in their national sign language. Owing to the particular communication needs of deaf and deaf/blind persons, their education may be more suitably provided in special schools or special classes and units in mainstream schools." In view of the individual difference and situations in choosing communication modes, options should focus on factors such as, onset degree of impairment, availability of amplification devices, interest and amount of skills and training received by children and parental concern. These factors with research will help in the choice of suitable communication for integration of teaching and learning.

3.4 Assessment Centres and referral systems

There are currently 9 Assessment Centres mainly located in Accra with one in Central Region (UCEW), 1 in the Volta and 2 in Ashanti Region. Most of these centres concentrate on the assessment of hearing problems. Assessment centres are also woefully under resourced sometimes only having a few types of equipment for testing hearing and sight. There is a tremendous need for more assessment centres in each of the regions in the country particularly the Western and Northern regions.

The disability policy recommends assessment centres be set up in all districts of the country. This proposal will assist MOE achieve increased capacity to integrate children into the mainstream but will require a larger number of professional staff at the district level. A better assessment process with stronger mandate for placement of special needs children into mainstream schools will also limit the number of low vision children attempting admission to special schools which should be restricted to children with severe disability and those unable to participate in inclusive education programmes.

3.5 Teacher Education

Most teachers in Teacher Training Institutes receive a basic level of orientation in special needs as part of their educational foundation course. According to experts from SED and UCEW, this is inadequate to prepare teachers to cope with children with even mild disability. The course only superficially touches on issues of disability not allowing teachers to fully recognise simple approaches they could use to help children integrate and become more accepted.

The only one teacher training college in Ghana devoted to preparing teachers for special needs education was the former Specialist Training College (STC) at Mampong- Akwapim, which trained teachers for specialist schools. Their enrolment between 1986 and 1991 ranged from 66 to 157 students. In 1986 STC was known as the Department of Special Education and in 1992 it integrated into the University College of Winneba.

Teachers wanting to pursue special needs education have the option of pursuing a diploma or degree course in education with special focus on Special Needs Education through advanced courses at the UCEW. In 2001/2002 the Department of

Special Education at UCEW had 603 students-- 248 females and 355 males. Between the years 1966-1991 approx. 412 specialist teachers were trained in the country (296 teacher for the Deaf, 100 teachers for the Blind and 16 teachers for the Mentally Handicapped). Table 5.0 presents the number of graduates of Special Needs Education over the last 10 years.

Table 5.0: Enrolment UCEW Special Needs Division from 1992/93 – 1999/2000 & 2001/2002

Diploma				Post-Diploma		
Year	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1992/93	33	9	42	–	–	10
1993/94	25	7	32	18	2	20
1994/95	32	19	51	–	–	31
1995/96	–	–	–	–	–	–
1996/97	33	15	48	45	8	53
1997/98	25	42	67	34	8	42
1998/99	46	79	125	51	13	64
1999/2000	114	97	209	25	7	32
Year	4yr B.Ed			Post-Diploma		
1999/2000	107	100	207	–	–	49
2000/2001	132	95	227	–	–	2
2001/2002	113	51	164	3	2	5
Total	658	514	1172	–	–	308

Source: Gadagbui, 2002a

The Special Needs department (UCEW) trained a total of over 502 graduates between 1995 and 2001. These graduates were composed of the following:

Table 6.0: Graduates from UCEW Special Needs Division (1995 to 2001)

Type of course	Male	Female	Total
3 year Diploma	195	83	278
2 year Post Diploma	77	30	107
1 year post Diploma (Regular)	26	18	44
1 year Post Diploma (Sandwich)	52	21	73
Total			502

(Gadagbui, 2001)

In 2000/2001 ---there were 216 graduates from the diploma programme and 111 from the four-year Bachelor of Education programme. Unfortunately, the vast majority of these graduates from UCEW do not want to teach as special needs teachers in special schools. According to the SED and UCEW, the large majority of graduate special needs teachers go back to the mainstream schools or find their way to the SSS level using their second area of concentration or opt out of teaching all together.

The problem of teacher attrition at basic level is quite high after teachers pursue diploma or degree courses but it is very severe within the special needs area (Acheampong, 2001). Interviews with experts in the field suggest that most teachers

do not want to teach special needs children but simply want the degree or diploma when they enter UCEW. The problem of teachers attrition was studied by Dery (1995) who found that out of a sample of 223 at least 77 teachers of the deaf had resigned between 1965 and 1988. The study revealed that the main reason for the high proportion of special needs teachers resigning was due to: long working hours, poor remuneration, new career choices, lack of opportunity for overseas training, pressure from family, lack of job satisfaction and frustration by administrators.

An informal investigation carried out by UCEW in 2002 indicated that 90% of the second year students in special needs education (241 in total) admitted that they had joined UCEW only for the degree and were not interested in teaching in the special education field (Gadagbui, 2002). UCEW is planning to put in place measures for admission to ensure entrance to the special needs programme to attract more dedicated students. Government should also consider extending the number of years a teacher could apply for study leave with pay. Currently, teachers only have to wait three years before going on study leave with pay causing a significant turnover in the basic education field.

3.6 Curriculum and Books

Children with severe handicaps who are blind and deaf are expected to follow the same curriculum, which is running in the mainstream schools. Where disability requires placement in special schools this will be provided. Children with deafness are given one extra year at JSS and SSS level to complete basic and secondary levels of education. Special schools for the blind use the same GES syllabus but books are not available since the Braille machine is out of action.

The MOE policy does acknowledge that “excessive financial burdens should not be placed on the government budget or on children and parents as a result of curriculum decisions. Therefore certain educational needs must be foregone if they constitute an ‘excessive financial burden’”. It is the lack of basic teaching and learning materials that results in poor quality teaching and learning. For instance, there is not enough special braille paper, and stylus in the Blind schools. This prevents children from taking notes, which are so essential when books are not available. The Government has recognised that ‘there has been a lack of focus on resources for special education. Additional budget lines will be added for the rehabilitation and running of the Braille press, and for allocations to develop special needs provision throughout the sector. The Special Education Division will receive additional resources to apply to prioritised special needs.’

The institutions and schools catering to the mentally handicapped have had to develop their own curriculum. The special needs public schools, with the assistance of GTZ, are in the process of developing curriculum for mentally handicapped institutions. Much more work is needed to increase the number of supplementary materials available for special needs children particularly those with moderate learning difficulties. Interviews and fieldwork revealed that the basic schoolbooks should also be developed with larger lettering for children with mild to moderate visual problems as ‘reading skills can only be maintained and developed if relevant

literature is available inside and outside school'. Some NGO's have been able to support the establishment of resource centres with adapted books for special needs children. For instance, FAWE has developed a library for children in the School for the Blind in Akropong.

3.7 Management

Currently, there is at least one peripatetic officer in almost all the 110 districts in the country. These officers are responsible for assessing children, supervising and providing support to teachers who have mainstreamed special needs children. The officers also are responsible for supervision of special needs schools in their areas and ensuring that proper assessments and referrals are taking place. According to the SED over 50% of these officers are reported "not working" since they do not have the necessary means to work and transport themselves to the field (i.e. motorbikes, fuel, transportation, assessment tools, incentives etc).

Some district education offices ensure that officers are provided with the necessary support but other education offices are not interested. If programmes for inclusive education begin to scale up, there will be a need to ensure that more support is provided to peripatetic officers, and itinerant teachers in the districts. Recommendations by the SED include that at least one itinerant teacher, trained by UCEW should be attached to a cluster of schools. The other option is that one school in each cluster develops a special needs unit for children who want to be part of the mainstream. These schools would be available to children who are having only mild to moderate impairment.

Conclusion

The services in the special needs education sector are very limited and often only support a very small proportion of the total population. The following are some of the main findings from this review. Studies by the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment suggest that:

- Special needs Services are provided primarily for urban based, specialist institutions covering only 2% of the needs of disabled people within Ghana
- Services are unevenly distributed across the country and are mostly located in urban areas whereas the majority of disabled people are living in the rural areas.
- Vocational training provided through the Government Rehabilitation centres are of relatively poor quality and are unable to help children enter the world of work.
- Special Education in special schools benefits only a very small number of the disabled children and rarely leads to employment in adult life.

The following section will review some of the learning outcomes of special needs children from the formal schooling system. No evaluative data is available on the effectiveness of the inclusive education system.

4.0 The Effectiveness of Special Needs Education in Ghana

The following section will review the learning outcomes and achievement rates of children involved in special needs education through special schools.

4.1 Learning Outcomes and Achievement levels of Children with Special Needs

Studies by Gadagbui (2002) indicate that BECE results for deaf children have experienced a steady decline between 1996, 1997 and 1998. The special schools, which are public, scored 100% between 1996 and 1998 in Mathematics (all pupils passing). There was a drastic fall in scores for English and General Science with less than 13% of students passing English and only 25% of students passing in General Science in 1998. Achievement marks in technical skills were more promising for state schools from 1996 to 1998. Bechem School maintained average profiles for Maths, Science and English (see annex 6 for details)

BECE performance for the visually impaired between 1994 and 2000 indicated a steady improvement (Gadagbui, 2002). The student enrolment was encouraging with the majority of candidates qualifying for SSS with aggregates between 12 and 24 on average. Individual performance at the Wa school for the Blind was better than the Akropong School in 1994, 1998 and 2000. See annex 8). Some pupil scores were as high as 09,09 and 06 respectively.

Educational attainment of the Deaf has generally remained very low at the basic level due to the communication difficulties outlined in section 3.3. Programmes for integrating the hearing impaired into basic schools have had to be suspended for lack of interpreters. There are less than 10 interpreters for the Deaf across the country. The main recommendations are as follows:

- Official recognition of the use of Sign Language as the medium of communication in schools for the Deaf.
- A review of the special education programmes at the UCEW to ensure that the teaching of Sign Language and interpreting has a larger part in the curriculum.

Blind Students also face significant challenges. Blind children are unable to pursue science and mathematics from the second cycle level (see section 4.2). This affects the selection of courses at the tertiary level for the blind students.

4.2 The Quality of Teaching and Learning

Textbooks: Textbooks supplied to the schools for the deaf and blind are inadequate. The division has made specific requests for these books. Most of the classrooms are without supplementary readers and stories of children with similar disabilities. There are no textbooks for technical subjects in the SSS/Tec schools in Bechem. There are no Braille textbooks for blind students at the secondary and tertiary levels. Lack of large print materials for children with low vision has impeded the smooth integration of many of these children.

The division depends on NGOs for the provision of Braille and brailon sheets for writing. Most schools do not have enough of these basic items making learning even more difficult in an environment with limited textbooks. Visits to the School for the Blind in Akropong revealed that the children at JSS level had only access to religious books and very few JSS readers were available.

Special Equipment:

The SED division depends on NGO's for specialised equipment and other assistive devices like audiometers, brailers, stylus, writing frames, magnifiers and hearing aids. The supply of this equipment is often irregular which affects the reliability of assessment procedures at the assessment centres and the learning abilities of students in special schools.

- The Special Education Division recommends that the provision for educational equipment and books be made available to disabled children meeting the Government's mandate to provide Free Education for All.

Teacher preparation: Some aspects of Special Education have been introduced into the curricula of teacher training colleges in 1989. The course mainly relates to the causes, identification of impairments and ability to make referrals. With the new policy for inclusive education all teachers at training colleges should be in a position to respond to children with mild to moderate disabilities. SED recommends that:

- The UNESCO teacher education resource pack is used to train teachers at the training colleges to deepen their knowledge and prepare them for integrating children into the main stream.

Teacher training:

Despite the training provided at higher levels of education there continues to be a high teacher attrition rate. According to SED over 50% of the teachers trained at UCEW in 2000/2001 did not report to their schools when posted by SED. Research by UCEW and SED suggest that the majority of teachers taking higher level degrees at UCEW are not really interested in teaching special needs children but simply want to get the higher degree or certificate. These teachers soon find there way to second cycle institutions after their studies. Another problem is that teachers do not see any future and there are no extra incentives given despite the fact that many teachers are expected to perform extra work for special needs children.

- Teachers should be required to teach a minimum of four years after graduating from UCEW at the basic level. Those with special needs education as a subject area of concentration should be placed in inclusive programmes or asked to develop special units in the schools they are placed in.

4.3 Access: the supply and demand for services

Reports from special schools around the country reveal that there is an unmet demand for spaces in some of the special schools. Reports from the Schools for the Mentally Handicapped in Dziowulu and some of the Blind schools indicate that there is a waiting list of children with severe impairment wanting to get into the schools.

The main concern for SED and the Heads of special schools is the need to complete existing buildings, upgrade and maintenance the existing Special Schools. The following table summarises the needs of the schools:

Table 7.0: Infrastructure Needs at Basic and Secondary level

Type of School	Needs at basic level	Needs at Second Cycle
Blind Schools	3 more schools needed (in Central, Volta and Brong Ahafo). Existing structures need completion	
Deaf	Adequate Facilities	1 more SSS needed for the Deaf (northern sector)
Mentally Handicapped	5 sheltered workshops should be established to serve as vocational training centres and exit points	
Older children with special needs		5 special units should be built on to existing technical and vocational schools. These should be identified in order to increase the integration of post SSS students with Special needs.
Assessment Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Need for at least 7 more assessment centres in the regions where there are no public or private centres available.➤ The new and existing centres need better resourcing and equipment	

(Special Education Division, 2002)

Enrolment data from some of the schools suggest far fewer girls are enrolled in these special schools than boys. There is a large number of rehabilitation centres around the country run by the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment. Most of these workshops are not well equipped and should be improved.

- MOE and MMDE should work together to try to improve the conditions of rehabilitation centres in order to increase the chance of youth becoming employed after basic education.
- NVTI should be asked to set up special units for training youth with special needs.

Integration and inclusive education strategies

There are only a few districts in the country where low vision children have been integrated in the system (3 districts). The SED Strategic Planning Team should design a more comprehensive approach to integration. SED suggests that an integration programme using a cluster school approach with itinerant teachers should be adopted as a model around the country.

- At least one region per year should adopt this cluster approach to ensure that new teachers from UCEW are retained and transferred to schools as itinerant teachers selected for the inclusive education.
- At least 5-10 basic schools per district should be selected as inclusive schools covering all the districts in the region. This will require that at least (5 teachers with special needs training are posted to each district as itinerant teachers each year).
- The UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack should be incorporated into the Teacher preparation programme at all the Teacher Training Colleges (TTC's) and the UCEW. This will ensure that all teachers are prepared to handle children with mild to medium disabilities once the cluster school system is fully operational.

Another approach, which will be tested this year, is the development of inclusive education units attached to Schools for the Blind where children can gradually be mainstreamed into the system.

4.4 Management for Efficiency

The Special Education Division needs a comprehensive policy framework and strategic plan to better manage the sub sector and achieve the basic goals outlined for inclusive education. The SED has already started developing a strategic plan with some of its key stakeholders and should be in a position for sector wide assistance within the next few months.

The SED division is in need of a consultant to assist the division develop a strategic plan, its goals and objectives for improving overall performance. A more comprehensive strategy for mainstreaming and implementing inclusive education should be considered once the policy and strategic planning process is underway for the sub sector. The staff at the SED division also needs to update many of their skills and knowledge in the area of special needs. More information from periodicals on special needs education needs to be made available.

- There is a need for a strategic planning team to be set up of key stakeholders and highly qualified people to assist in the strategic planning process with SED.
- More research is needed to identify the incidence of special needs children.

Research

Very little research has been carried out within the special needs sub sector. Some of the examples of evidence-based research carried out by UCEW include the following:

- Statistics on prevalence of hearing impairment around Central region and Eastern region (Essel 1992 to present)
- Communication Disorders among children and standardised tests for hearing and speech problems in Ewe, Akan and Ga (Gadagbui, 1998, 2001)
- Reading problems among school children (Boison, 2001)
- Learning disorders among JSS students in Winneba (Avoke and Donani, 1996)
- Ghanaian Sign Language (Oppong, 2001)
- Low vision among school Children (Ocloo, 200/2001)

More research is required to ensure a comprehensive and evidence based SED plan is developed and upgraded on a yearly basis. This will require a closer working relationship between UCEW, and the Special Education Division to ensure that policy decisions are evidence based and informed by the latest research findings.

4.5 Public Awareness and Concern

Ghana's special needs education sub-sector has been largely neglected by the MOE and within Ghanaian Society in general. Some of the signs of this are the low number of children in traditional institutions and the persistent negative attitudes towards children with disability. Other signs of neglect include:

- The negative stigma attached to children with special needs often resulting in abuse, neglect and sometimes death.
- The lack of mainstream institutions, and facilities equipped to cater to children with special needs be they physical or mentally handicapped
- The lack of public discussion on issues related to special needs and lack of advocacy for children with special needs.

There are very few agencies working in special needs education and no major donor support for special needs education in Ghana. The Special Education Workshop held under the auspices of the Education Sector Review concluded that there is a tremendous need to bring visibility to the sector and begin formulating a strategic plan for sector wide funding and donor support.

4.6 Financing

One of the greatest impediments to the development and improvement of special needs education in Ghana has been the woefully inadequate funding earmarked for the sub sector. According to the latest MTEF budget for MOE, the special needs

sector receives less than 0.4% to run its entire programming. The majority of this funding is going to service institutional care in the form of food for children in the institutions.

Visits to any of the special needs institutions in the country reveals the deplorable condition of buildings, lack of books for students and other endemic problems the entire sub sector is experiencing due to lack of basic funding. One of the many cases in point is the inability of the Special Needs Division to maintain and repair the Blind Press, which is the only machine able to produce basic books for the Blind. This machine has been in disrepair for several years depriving most blind children of any books.

There is an urgent need to ensure that the special needs children in the country are given their share of the education budget. A proportion of the Education Budget must be earmarked for special needs children commensurate to this amount of direct funding. This would make a tremendous difference to the lives of children in the special needs educational institutions and ensure that inclusive education is more widely implemented.

Budget item	Cost estimate
Insure that all children receive proper teaching and learning materials including their stationary and special learning equipment.	1,490,269,120.
Inclusive education strategic programme in at least 10 districts in the Volta region (with at least 2-3 itinerant teachers based at schools in the districts)	936,268,000.
Repair and maintenance of equipment (Braille machine etc)	950,000,000.
Completion of all unfinished buildings	15,000,000,000.
Construction of new buildings	10,500,000,000.
Capacity building of the SED to plan strategically and monitor their programme efforts	465,000,000.
Total	19,341,537,120

- Increase the number of spaces for children to be included into the mainstream. This would mean expanding inclusive education to a broader number of districts. Sight savers and other NGOs' should be asked to consider training other agencies to assist the SED implement this approach.
- Increase the number of day students and turn some of the special schools into day institutions particularly where parents are able to maintain children in their homes.

A more detailed analysis of the needs in the sector is contained in Annex 4.

5.0 Key Recommendations and The Way Forward

The Special Needs Division has requested assistance for the development of a strategic framework and plan, which will provide donors and MOE with the key priorities for input.

Increasing the thrust for inclusive education

The Special Needs Division should be given adequate financial support to ensure quality of education for children in the educational institutions and their involvement in inclusive education. At least 2-4% of the budget should be allocated to special needs children. One region of the country should be identified for an intensive programme for implementation of inclusive education. This would require:

- Teacher training colleges in all the regions must ensure that the UNESCO special education training packs are used to prepare all the teachers in the colleges
- Special in-service programmes using the UNESCO packs to upgrade teachers at the cluster level
- Each district education office in the selected region should draw up district plans for inclusive education with assistance from special needs divisions. These plans would identify the schools where mainstreaming would be concentrated and insure that itinerant teachers are posted.
- A large number of UCEW special needs graduates would be posted to the region where mainstreaming is intensively being focussed as itinerant teachers etc.
- UCEW and selected TTC's need to develop programmes for the training of interpreters to support deaf students included in the mainstream after basic education.
- UCEW needs to develop a programme to train speech and language therapists to assist hearing impaired children in the mainstream.

Assessment and equipment

Priority must be given to the establishment of at least 9 fully equipped and staffed assessment centres outside of Accra, and Kumasi. These assessment centres should be placed in all the regions where there are currently no assessment centres. This would ensure that children and adults with special needs are properly assessed before admission to any of the programmes or institutions, which the MOE or the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment are running. The assessment centres require the expertise and equipment for testing hearing, sight and learning disabilities.

A national statement and policy directive must be issued directing all institutions and programmes to begin using "Ghanaian Sign language" as the medium of instruction for severely impaired deaf children. This will ensure that institutions like UCEW and the teacher training colleges ensure that their programmes for teachers of the Deaf include a strong component of signing.

High priority must be given to repairing, maintenance and purchase of equipment for special needs schools. Funding to support the repair of the Braille machine and

potential purchase of a standby machine must be forthcoming in order to ensure that blind children are not deprived of the vital books they need to study.

Increasing access of special needs children to education

- Inclusive programmes should be supported by MOE in all the districts in the country. Approaches to inclusive education developed for low vision children in the Eastern region of the country should be used. This model involves itinerant teachers being posted to school clusters or special units attached to some schools where ongoing assessment and monitoring can take place. One region per year should be identified for conducting the strategy for inclusive education. Children with mild to moderate disability should be mainstreamed in these districts and UCEW graduates should be posted to support the process.
- Children with low vision, mild to moderate hearing and mild disabilities should not be admitted to special needs school/institutions when there is an inclusive education programme running in the district. Special needs schools/institutions should be restricted to children having a moderately-severe to profound hearing, learning and sight disability.
- There is also a need to establish more integrated secondary and vocational institutions, which can provide programming for children with special needs. This is particularly important for Deaf children who have been unable to enter higher levels of education due to limited communication.

Curriculum

The CRDD should explore ways of incorporating issues of special needs into the mainstream curriculum so that all children in the country will come to appreciate the special value of children with disability. Just as gender and the issues of girls' education have been mainstreamed across the curriculum, there must be an all out curriculum review to incorporate stories and examples of how children can accept and help one another. This will help in the implementation of the inclusive education policy.

Teacher education

Special needs education supplements at all training colleges should include more in-depth knowledge of special needs children particularly in light of the policy on inclusive education. All teachers in the country should be trained in the UNESCO pack, which provides basic approaches to helping children with special needs. The UNESCO pack is designed to assist all children with learning difficulties. A more comprehensive special needs education module should be developed for training colleges.

Teachers enrolled in the special needs programme at UCEW should commit to teaching a minimum of four years in basic schools or at district level as itinerant

teachers once they graduate from the UCEW. The MOE should ensure that these teachers are identified and work as special needs teachers possible through a bonding arrangement.

Public awareness

A great deal of public awareness is needed to change the negative attitudes towards children with special needs. Financial input should be allocated to NGO's and media practitioners to develop programming on radio and television, which promotes positive attitudes towards children and adults with disabilities. This will help with the integration of special needs children into the mainstream of society once they complete schooling.

Entering the world of work and higher education

- More community rehabilitation centres and vocational workshops for special needs youth should be attached to existing vocational/technical institutions. At least five such workshops should be developed across the country in collaboration with NVTI.
- There is also a need to provide special scholarships for students with special needs who are able to enter higher educational institutions.
- More research should be conducted to assess the degree of disability, scope of the problem particularly among children and youth, the best approaches to implementing inclusive education in Ghana and other issues identified by UCEW and SED.

Financing and Capacity building;

A larger proportion of the national education budget should be given to the special needs division in order to implement the inclusive education strategies, which require more resources in the form of teaching equipment, learning materials and in-service training for teachers at the basic level.

The special needs division will also be better resourced to ensure that basic equipment is operating and assistive devices are provided for needy children in order to ensure effective teaching and learning.

Human resource development plan should be available to upgrade teachers to meet the modern technological challenges in special needs education.

Conclusion

Much more work is needed at the basic education level to ensure that the majority of special needs children receive a basic education in order to become productive citizens. The review found that there is limited access for special needs children through the special schools often urban based. Estimates from the ministry of Manpower Development and Employment suggest that less than 2% of children with special needs or disability are being met through this approach. One problem, which

remains a significant problem, is the low numbers of female participation at all levels of the special schools. Average participation rates show girls remain under represented as they make up only 30% of special schools intake.

The schools that do exist are able to assist a few children through the system but there is a critical problem with the deaf education. Teaching and learning has not been effective for the majority of deaf children since appropriate communication modes have not been adequately researched, to meet children's needs. The medium of instruction has largely been American Sign Language. Now that Ghanaian Sign Language has been introduced, its learning should be intensified in the schools to enhance the level of understanding for most deaf children. The main problem for the Blind has been the inability to access Braille materials particularly at all levels in the system. Blind children continue to simply listen to their teachers and when they have Braille sheets they Braille the notes. Despite these set backs Blind children from Special Schools have been achieving remarkable scores on their BECE and many gain admittance to the SSS level a few moving to University.

The only way forward for Ghana is to implement a systematic programme for inclusive education preparing all its teacher trainees in simple approaches to identify, support and assist children with special needs in the mainstream schools. This paper has attempted to review some of the main strategies for implementing such an approach in the coming 10 years.

The Salamanca declaration signed by Ghana in 1994 states "the practice of mainstreaming children with disabilities should be an integral part of all national plans for achieving Education for All (EFA). Even in those exceptional cases where children are placed in special schools, their education need not be entirely segregated." We have a long way to go to helping special needs children in Ghana feel valued in our society. The challenge is for the MOE to ensure that the needs of all special needs children will begin to be seen as an urgent priority. The policy for inclusive education has been articulated by the MOE the main challenge remaining is for the strategic planning process to develop cost effective plans, which are easily implementable within the current context of Ghanaian education.

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Annex 1: People Involved in the ESR on Special Needs (i.e. Task Team)

Special Education	Agency or department	Type of participation in the ESR
Ms Margaret Kwawu	Special Education Division	Collect Documentation Providing insight
Mrs Kwadade	Special Education Division	Presented several papers to the ESR consultant
Mr Emmanuel Nyade	Special Education Division	Wrote and Presented two papers to the ESR consultant
Miss Grace Gadagbui	Dean, Division of Specialised Professional Studies in Education, University College of Winneba, UCEW	Conducted Research: Overview of Education of Children with Special Needs
Head teachers from Special Needs Schools	Association of Heads of Special Needs Schools.	Preparing Opinion Statement Conducted Interview
Director, Mr Peter Obeng Asamoah	Society for the Blind	Prepared documents
Dr Koray	Ghana Association of the Blind	
Director	Society for the Blind	Collect documentation
Mrs Francois	Director of School for Special Needs Children, Founder of agency for parents with special needs children	Prepared background papers
Mr Kumah	Special Needs Co-ordinator Department of Social Welfare, Ministry	Provided Baseline survey work by MESW
Ms Lesley Charles Mr Ben Hoefnagels	Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)	Working with the Special Needs Division on Strategic Planning Process.

Annex 2: Assessment of Effectiveness of Educational Programming for Special Needs Children

1.0 Introduction

The ESR has the responsibility to assist the MOE and the Ghana Education Service (GES) with a comprehensive analysis for improving the state of education and provide effective proposals to enhance the quality of education. The ESR process involves a review of the special needs education sub-sector. Special needs education forms an integral part of the General Education, Gender and the Disadvantaged consultancy area, which is one of the major areas for review under the ESR process. The special needs education review, looks at the ongoing programmes, challenges and what can be done to improve upon facilities that will enhance the education of the physically and mentally handicapped.

2.0 Objectives

The main objective of this paper is to assess the effectiveness of special needs education programming in Ghana. More specifically, the paper aims at assessing the effectiveness of educational programmes for children with special needs in the context of the following:

- Achievements of programmes
- Supply of special needs services
- Mainstreaming of special needs children; and
- Offer recommendations for consideration.

2.1 Methodology

A questionnaire was the main data collection tool used for this study. Twenty-one questionnaires were given out to stakeholders who participated in a one-day consultative workshop on special needs education. Questions ranging from special needs programme achievements, demand/supply of services to special needs children, and societal attitudes, problems and institutional challenges to programming were assessed. Interventions to improve performance were also elicited from the respondents. Eight questionnaires were completed and returned by institutions working in special needs education (four were NGO's, two were special needs institutions and one from the Special Education Division and the University sector). The completed questionnaires were later subjected to qualitative analysis in describing the effectiveness of existing educational programmes for children with special needs.

Respondents represented the following institutions:

- School for the Blind, Akropong
- Department of Special Education, University College of Education, Winneba (UCEW)
- Okuapeman Secondary School, Akropong
- Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)
- University of Ghana resource centre. Legon, Accra.
- Ghana National Association for the Deaf
- Special Education Division
- Ghana Society for the Disabled

3.0 Achievements of Programmes

Respondents suggested that there are a large number of persons with disabilities but there are not concrete statistics to support this. According to respondents, children who should have been dropped out as a result of their disability have been retained in school. Another respondent from the disability resource centre at the University of Ghana said that on the average, two students with disability graduate from the University each year. He however, indicated that job placements for graduate persons with disabilities are rather difficult. Another respondent from the Okuapeman Senior Secondary School (SSS) reported that on the average, three students with disabilities pass out from the school each year.

A respondent from the University College of Education (UCEW), teaching in the area of special needs, stated that persons who are mentally challenged are often not provided with adequate employable skills through the transitional programmes, and that there are very few rehabilitation centres once they pass out of formal schooling system. The Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), an international NGO working with disabled persons, said the controversy over the type of sign language to use, has impeded the efforts of two VSO volunteers at offering a computer training facility and the training of deaf students in information technology (I.T). Nevertheless, the VSO official indicated “providing IT skills to deaf children to a high level of proficiency in Mampong, is a significant achievement towards expanding educational opportunities for deaf children in Ghana”.

In the context of Integrated Education Programme (IEP), three special needs educators/resource persons from Okaupeman SSS, University of Ghana and the special needs education division respectively, said that mainstreaming of persons with disabilities, lead to better social life and acceptance by regular persons within the communities.

4.0 Attitudes of Society in which Special Needs Children Function

Most of the respondents acknowledged that there is generally, negative attitudes and stigma's towards persons with disabilities. They all emphasised that public awareness creation and organised educational campaigns by advocacy and lobby groups, are a major key to improving societies acceptance and integration of special needs children. It was revealed that presently, VSO is supporting organisations of persons with disability to lobby, advocate and raise public awareness on disability related issues in Ghana.

4.1 Supply of Special Needs Services

The responses based on the questionnaires revealed that the supply of services has not been able to meet the demand for special needs services. Four (50%) out of the eight workshop respondents felt there are not enough schools for the blind, the deaf, integration programmes and screening/assessment centres. Another two (25%) said

it is only the blind that lack enough schools, integration programmes and centres for screening and assessment. Only two respondents gave contrary views. While one of the two respondents felt the problem of supply of services stem from the inadequate integration programmes and assessment/screening centres, the other said it is rather the deaf that lack enough schools, screening and assessment centres.

The respondents enumerated the following as the major problems they face in meeting the demand for special needs services:

- Lack of teachers who can use Ghanaian sign language
- Lack of teaching and learning materials
- Lack of Senior Secondary School education for deaf in Ghana (only one SSS)
- No assessment centre in the northern sector
- Lack of specific policy on special needs education and commitments on the part of policy makers
- Lack of financial support and commitment by the government
- Lack of collaboration between UCEW and Special Needs Education Division.
- The problem of medium of communication and instruction for the deaf
- Lack of involvement of persons with disabilities in planning their education and intervention programmes.

4.2 Relevance of Services to children with Special Needs

Six (75%) out of the eight respondents indicated that in order for special needs services to be more relevant to the needs of children with disabilities, approaches to educational programmes should be reviewed and updated, and where necessary Information technology (IT) education should be introduced. An official from the Ghana National Association of the Deaf emphasised the need to offer in-service training in sign language and form pressure groups of persons with disabilities to lobby for the adoption of the proposed National Disability Policy. In a response to the question on whether the services are relevant to the needs of children special needs? The VSO participant said,

“To determine this, the key group to consult are the children with special needs and their parents. The children and their parents need to lead the process in determining what services are relevant to their needs; otherwise, how do we know? Can any of us specialists pretend to know more about this than these two groups?”

More work is needed to engage the key stakeholders directly in special needs programming (i.e. the parents and children themselves).

5.0 Effectiveness of Mainstreaming of Special Needs Children

Most of the respondents felt mainstreaming programmes for special needs children **have not** been effective. In the view of one respondent, mainstreaming has not been possible for the mentally challenged. Other respondents suggest that mainstreaming has generally not been effective at the basic education level except the IEP pilot programmes in Hohoe and Akuapem north. Even though, some of the respondents stated that they are satisfied with efforts toward integrated education programmes, according to them, the lack of specialist teachers in schools, and teaching and

learning materials have overshadowed the effectiveness of programming. The respondents identified the following interventions as measures which would enhance their capabilities to perform, scale up coverage and improve on the quality of services:

- Provision of assertive devices and other resource materials for special needs children.
- Increased incentives to motivate teachers.
- Provision of adequate learning and teaching materials.
- Provision of technical support by government, NGOs and donor agencies, to improve special needs education.
- Regular in-service training and;
- Public awareness creation.

6.0 Challenges to Special Needs Education

Lack of financial resources was noted by most of the respondents as the major challenge to special needs programming. Two (25%) of the eight respondents added that the controversy over which sign language to use as a medium of communication and instruction for the education of the deaf persons poses a challenge to programming. The respondents acknowledged that institutional problems and challenges, negative attitudes and perception of the general society about persons with disabilities were indeed major issues that hinder their efforts. The general lack of special needs teachers and resource persons as well as motivation for them were identified, as one of the major challenges facing their institutions in their efforts at improving special needs programming. It was revealed that the poor collaboration between the Special Needs Education Division, UCEW and other institutions involved in special needs programming obstructs their effort at improving special needs education programmes for special needs children.

7.0 Key Recommendations and Suggestions by Respondents

The respondents suggested the following recommendations for consideration:

1. A specific policy on special needs education should be developed and adopted for effective implementation of programmes
2. Vocational centres should be attached to integrated schools to cater for special needs children who may not be academically oriented
3. The controversy over the type of sign language to be used as a medium of communication and instruction should be resolved.
4. The roles of the various stakeholders within the special needs sub sector should be outlined.
5. The number of facilities for assessment should be increased.
6. Persons with disabilities and parents of children with special needs should be involved in programme planning to ensure ownership and relevance.

7. GES should organise regular in-service training for teachers to up date their knowledge and skills.
8. Government should collaborate with NGOs and other relevant agencies for the provision of improved services.
9. MOE should revisit the implementation of the inclusive education policy and provide support for the Department of Special Education and UCEW; to strengthen teacher preparation for effective special needs education.

8.0 Conclusions

Even though the Ministry of Education (MOE) recognises the fact that the full participation of every citizen is a right, nevertheless the education needs of persons with disabilities remains a major issue that the sector has been unable to address. As part of the efforts of MOE, Ghana currently has twenty-three schools at the basic education level that cater for disability groups such as the Blind, the Deaf and the Mentally challenged. In more recent times, Integrated Education Programmes aimed at mainstreaming persons with disabilities in regular schools are small scale but ongoing in order to compliment the MOE/GES efforts. Overall the investigation suggests that not much have been achieved in terms of special needs education for children with disabilities.

This paper has revealed that supply of services has not been able to meet the demand for special needs educational services. There are generally not enough schools and assessment centres for special needs education programming. Though it was widely acknowledged that mainstreaming of persons with disabilities leads to better social life and acceptance by regular persons within the communities, yet the programme has not been widespread at the basic education level. For instance, the integrated education programme for the mentally challenged and the hearing impaired were identified as major areas that programming very often misses out. The lack of special needs teachers in schools, and teaching and learning materials have contributed and continue to contribute to the ineffectiveness of the educational programming for children with special needs. In addition, the general negative attitudes and perceptions of society about persons with disabilities have contributed to the unsuccessful efforts toward mainstreaming and integration particularly after they complete school.

The investigation concludes that there is the need for public awareness creation through educational campaigns by advocacy and lobby groups to improving attitudes of society toward special needs children. It also calls on the government and all stakeholders involved in the education of persons with disabilities to recognise the need for a greater focus on special education.

Annex 3: SPECIAL NEEDS INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA – 2000/2001

SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF

No.	NAME OF SCHOOL	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	NO. OF STAFF	ENROLMENT		TOTAL
					M	F	
1	Secondary/Technical for the Deaf, Mampong Akuapem	–	√	20	66	38	104
2	Bechem School for the Deaf	–	√	29	182	111	293
3	Wa School for the Deaf	–	√	22	129	72	201
4	Savelugu School for the Deaf	–	√	14	126	65	191
5	Cape Coast School for the Deaf	–	√	30	110	91	201
6	Sekondi School for the Deaf	–	√	26	135	88	223
7	Ashanti School for the Deaf, Jamasi	–	√	32	137	115	252
8	School for the Deaf, Teshie	–	√	27	132	89	221
9	Volta School for the Deaf, Hohoe	–	√	26	115	59	174
10	Demonstration School for the Deaf, Mampong Akuapem	–	√	32	113	81	194
11	Unit School for the Deaf, Koforidua	–	√	14	75	76	151
12	Unit School for the Deaf, Kibi	–	√	19	97	61	158
13	Gbeogo School for the Deaf, UER	–	√	5	60	29	89
14	Presby Training College (Integrated)	–	√	1	1	-	1
15	St. Paul's Sec, Kukurantumi, ER (√)	–	√	1	3	-	3
16	De Youngsters JSS, Nima (√)	√	–	1	1	1	2

SCHOOLS FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED

1	Dzorwulu Special School	–	√	21	49	42	91
2	Garden City Special School	–	√	16	90	47	137
3	Twin City Special School	–	√	20	74	45	119
4	Castle Road Special School	–	√	3	20	7	27
5	3 – Kings Special School	–	√	6	44	27	71
6	Shalom Special School	–	√	6	48	28	76
7	Volta School for the Deaf, (M.H Unit)	–	√	2	8	2	10
8	Unit School for the Deaf, Koforidua (M.H. Unit)	–	√	2	30	7	37
9	New Horizon Special School, Osu	√	–	–	75	37	112
10	De Youngsters JSS, Nima (Integrated)	√	–	1	1	-	1

SCHOOLS FOR THE BLIND

1	Akropong School for the Blind	–	√	29	196	81	277
2	Wa School for the Blind	–	√	25	85	55	140
3	Wa Secondary School (Integrated)	–	√	1	12	5	17
4	Wenchi School	√	√	2	17	6	23
5	Okuapeman School	√	√	2	14	8	22
6	Wa Training College	√	√	1	3	-	3
7	Presby Training College	√	√	3	6	2	8
8	De Youngsters JSS	√	–	1	6	3	9
9	University of Cape Coast	–	√	2	7	1	8
10	University of Ghana	–	√	2	3	-	3

Annex 4: State of Inputs based on reports from Special Education Division

No.	Strategic Objective	Existing Facilities/services	Needed Facilities/services	Remarks
1.	Improving the Quality of Teaching/Learning	<p>Textbooks are supplied free to all schools for the Deaf. These are inadequate to accommodate all pupils.</p> <p>Textbooks on Technical subjects for the Sec/Tech Institute, Bechem are non-existent. The few technical books available are torn and obsolete.</p> <p>Brailled textbooks and other reading Literature: The Braille press is unable to Braille the necessary textbooks for blind students at the basic education level. Blind students in second cycle and at tertiary institutions go without textbooks. Large print materials for children with low vision are not available.</p> <p>Braille machines currently in use are obsolete and out of circulation making repair/maintenance difficult.</p> <p>Braille/braillon sheets; The division depends mostly on NGOs for the provision of Braille/braillon sheets for writing purposes.</p> <p>Equipment & Tools: There is inadequate supply of equipment/tools and other materials for practicals at both basic/second cycle levels for the blind, the deaf & mentally handicapped.</p> <p>Specialised Equipment: The division depends on NGOs for specialised equipment and other assistive devices like audiometers, brailers, writing frames, magnifiers and hearing aids. NGOs and philanthropists deny disabled students these devices due to low/irregular supply. Lack of specialised equipment affect the reliability of assessment procedures at the assessment centres.</p>	<p>Schools for the Deaf should be supplied with sufficient textbooks. Procure books on Deaf culture, deaf literature and storybooks on Deaf achievers for supplementary reading.</p> <p>Procure textbooks on technical subjects for students. Equip libraries with reference books on technical courses.</p> <p>Procure new Braille machines and other accessories to enable the Braille press function effectively. Blind students at all levels of education should make Braille textbooks and reading materials available for use.</p> <p>Children with low vision should have access to textbooks and other materials in large print.</p> <p>Writing materials for the Blind and stationery for the deaf and the mentally handicapped should be supplied by government.</p> <p>Funds should be made available for the procurement of all needed educational materials, equipment and tools</p>	<p>The deaf are unable to learn from incidental situations as others do. It is only in books that they get fuller understanding and meaning of what is taught.</p> <p>Textbooks and libraries stocked with supplementary reading materials can be a great support to the teaching/ learning process.</p> <p>The Braille press a unit of the special education division should be well resourced to enable it to provide the needed services. Whoever is contracted to print textbooks should have them in both print and Braille.</p> <p>The policy free education for the disabled should be clearly defined to enable stakeholders to make the right decisions concerning their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>The government should be responsible for the provision of educational opportunities for children with severe disabilities in special schools.</p> <p>Parents should provide uniforms and transportation.</p>

		<p>Education of the Deaf: Educational attainment of the deaf has generally remained at the basic level due to communication difficulties.</p> <p>Programmes integrating the hearing impaired have had to be suspended for lack of interpreters.</p> <p>The Education of the Blind: Blind students are unable to offer science/mathematics at the second cycle. This affects the selection of courses at the tertiary level for the blind students.</p> <p>Some elements of special Education were introduced into the curriculum of initial teacher training colleges in 1989. These were mainly on causes and identification of handicapping conditions and ability to make referrals.</p>	<p>Official recognition for the use of Sign Language as the medium of communication in schools for the deaf should be considered.</p> <p>Review special Education programme at UCEW to emphasise the teaching of Sign language.</p> <p>All inputs for the teaching of science/mathematics should be provided.</p>	
2.	Improving Management and Efficiency	<p>National Level: The need for expert advice, guidance and direction.</p> <p>Staff development: No staff at the headquarters has had the opportunity to interact/share ideas and experiences with their counterparts from more advanced countries.</p> <p>Current books/periodicals etc: There is information in the field of special education for intellectual enquiry and reflection.</p>	<p>The need for consultants in the field of special education to help plan and articulate the goals and objectives of the division is paramount to its overall performance.</p> <p>Attendance for overseas conference/seminars for headquarters staff to update their skills and competencies is necessary.</p> <p>Reports on world/regional conferences on special education: Periodicals and journals and new publications on special needs Education issues need to be made available to professionals in special education.</p>	

School Level

No.	Strategic Objective	Existing Facilities/services	Needed Facilities/services	Remarks
1.	Improving Access and participation	<p>BASIC SCHOOLS</p> <p><u>Blind</u> Two schools exist at the basic level.</p> <p><u>Deaf</u> Twelve schools exist.</p> <p><u>Mentally Handicapped</u> Nine schools exist.</p>	<p>Two more schools for the blind needed at the basic level.</p> <p>Schools for the deaf at the basic level are considered adequate.</p> <p>Five sheltered workshops should be established strategically for mentally challenged children to serve as vocational training centre</p>	<p>Uncompleted structures should be completed.</p> <p>Should complete structures started to decongest existing schools.</p>

		<p>SECOND CYCLE</p> <p><u>Blind</u> Three integrated senior secondary schools exist. Two integrated Post SSS Teacher Training Colleges.</p> <p><u>Deaf</u> One Secondary/Technical One Technical school for the Deaf exist.</p> <p>TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS None exist for the Special Needs</p> <p>INTEGRATION Three districts are practicing integration of low vision children at the basic level supported by sight savers Int. (SSI). Thirty-eight other districts are practicing inclusive education on the CBRP also supported by the Norwegian Association of the Disabled.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT AND RESOURCES CENTRES Four assessment and resource centres exist.</p>	<p>as well as exit point.</p> <p>One more senior secondary school for the deaf is needed.</p> <p>Five existing ordinary technical and vocational schools should be identified for integration of post SSS students with special needs.</p> <p>Integration programme using the cluster school approach and itinerant teaching model should be adopted and pursued. This should begin with one region each year.</p> <p>Ten assessment and resource centres exist.</p>	<p>One school should be sited at the northern sector of the country.</p> <p>Units should be attached to the existing vocational and technical schools.</p> <p>The Need to enhance assessment of children is vital for early identification and intervention. The centres should be well equipped and resourced.</p>
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Annex 5: Schools for the Mentally Handicapped Children Including Units

Name of School	Location/Region	Year
Castle Road Special School (Psychiatric Hospital School)	Asylum Down, Accra. Greater Accra Region	1956
Dzorwulu Special School	Dzorwulu, Accra. Greater Accra Region	1968
New Horizon	Cantonments, Accra. Greater Accra Region	1972
Koforidua School for the Mentally Handicapped (Unit)	Koforidua, Eastern region	1975
Twin City Special School	Sekondi, Western Region	1976
Garden City Special School	Kumasi, Ashanti Region	1977
Unit for the Mentally Handicapped, Hohoe	Hohoe, Volta Region	1989
The Three Kings special School, Battor	Battor, Volta Region	1994
Child Development & Assessment Centre, University of Cape Coast	Cape Coast, Central Region	
Shalom Special School	Nkoranza, Brong Ahafo	
Unit for the Mentally Handicapped, Wa	Wa, Upper West	

Source: Gadagbui, G.Y. (2002) Overview of Special Needs Education in Ghana. Unpublished Presentation.

Annex 6: BECE Results for the Deaf Students' Performances in Core Subjects (Maths, English and General Science)

Subject	Year	Schools & Passes		
Maths		State School	Demo Deaf	Bechem Deaf
	1996	100%	63%	64%
	1997	100%	0%	75%
	1998	100%	27%	100%
English	1996	100%	75%	100%
	1997	60%	50%	100%
	1998	13%	9%	46%
General Science	1996	100%	100%	100%
	1997	25%	100%	–
	1998	25%	18%	–
Passes in Technical Skills				
	1996	100%	85%	0%
	1997	100%	8%	47%
	1998	50%	18%	100%

Notes: Aggregate 6-30 is a pass grade for the BECE.

Source: Gadagbui, G.Y. (2002) Overview of Special Needs Education in Ghana. Unpublished Presentation.

Annex 7: SSCE Results – Sec/Technical for the Deaf, Mampong-Akwapim

Subjects	NO. of Candidates in 2000	Percentage Pass in 2000	NO. of Candidates in 2001	Percentage Pass in 2001
Core Subjects:				
Maths	22	90.9%	15	33.33%
English	22	6.66%	15	0%
Integrated Science	22	0%	15	6.6%
Electives:				
Woodwork	3	100%	5	60%
Technical:				
Management in Living	7	42.85%	7	0%
Visual Arts:				
Graphic Designs	6	50%	2	0%

Source: Gadagbui, G.Y. (2002) Overview of Special Needs Education in Ghana. Unpublished Presentation.

Annex 8: BECE Examination Results

Wa School for the Blind		
Year	No. of Candidates	Grades
1994	2	24,24
1995	5	09,21,21,21,21
1996	5	14,18,27,32,40
1997	8	12,12,14,18,19,26,36,40
1998	9	09,11,12,13,18,21,21,22,23
1999	10	13,13,14,14,16,18,19,20,23,24,
2000	8	06,10,12,13,16,16,20,24,
Akropong School for the Blind		
1994	15	12,14,14,18,18,19,19,21,21,23,27,28,29,31,33
1995	–	
1996	15	13,15,15,17,18,19,20,21,21,22,24,24,28,28,37
1997	17	11,12,13,13,13,14,14,15,15,16,16,17,18,19,22,23,27
1998	16	14,14,15,15,16,16,16,17,17,19,19,20,23,24,24,27
1999	10	11,12,14,14,15,16,16,21,22,23
2000	–	

Source: Gadagbui, G.Y. (2002) Overview of Special Needs Education in Ghana. Unpublished Presentation.

Annex 9: Assessment Centres

Assessment Centres	Region	Administration
1. Achimota	Greater Accra	GES
2. Reg. Assessment Centres, Hohoe	Volta	GES
3. Jamasi	Ashanti	GES
4. Military Hospital	Greater Accra	Government
5. Korle Bu	Greater Accra	Government
6. KATH – Kumasi	Ashanti	KNUST/Gov't
7. UCEW	Central	UCEW
8. HASS	Greater Accra	Private
9. Sound Tone communication	Greater Accra	Private

Source: Gadagbui, G.Y. (2002) Overview of Special Needs Education in Ghana. Unpublished Presentation.