



## ***The Quality and Inclusivity of Basic Education across Ghana's three northern regions: a look at change, learning effectiveness and efficiency***

### **Policy Brief**

**Research under the Tackling Education Needs Inclusively (TENI) Project**



**Date: May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013**

**By: Dr Leslie Casely-Hayford, Dr Alhassan Seidu, Ms Sheena Campbell, Mr Thomas Quansah, Mr Kojo Gyabaah, and Ms Adam Rukayatu,**

**Associates for Change (TENI Research Team)<sup>1</sup>**

[www.associatesforchange.org](http://www.associatesforchange.org)

Tel: (233) (21)245 612 /3

---

<sup>1</sup> Supported by Mr. Bukari Francis, Dr Abdullai Abubakari, Mr Imranah Adams Mahama, Ms Marian Owusu Afriyie and Ms Charity Bukari. Please see Annex 1A in full report for a list of all field researchers.

## **1.0 Background to the Quality of Education Research**

*What is at the centre of quality education is whether children are learning “basic skills”, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life. (EFA Goals, UNICEF, 2010)*

One of Ghana’s greatest developmental challenges over the last 20 years has been the attempt by state and non state actors to improve the quality of public education particularly at the primary and Junior High School levels. The Government of Ghana spends a large proportion of its GDP (6.3% in 2011)<sup>2</sup> and annual national budget (25.8%)<sup>3</sup> on the education sector. Yet consistently, research suggests that the education and learning outcomes among Ghanaian children continue to be among the worst in the world; with less than 25% of Ghana’s Primary class 6 children able to read and attain basic literacy skills after six years of public schooling (MOE, 2012; Casely-Hayford, 2011). Despite significant donor contributions to the sector (over 3 billion USD as of 2010), the quality of basic education for the vast majority of Ghana’s rural poor remains substandard and in many cases a loss to family welfare when comparing the opportunity costs for families experiencing extreme poverty in the northern regions of Ghana (Korboe, et al., 2010; Casely-Hayford, 2000).

According to the 2012 Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2012) Ghana has made significant strides particularly in respect to access and participation of children at primary level. The cancellation of school fees and the introduction of capitation grants in 2005, the introduction of compulsory pre-school education in 2007, and the achievement of gender parity in basic school enrolment in 2010, has enabled Ghana to be one of the leading countries in Sub Saharan Africa in terms of reaching the EFA Goals for 2015. However, the EFA report (2012) also reveals that literacy levels among Ghanaian children graduating P6 are still very poor.

The VSO Ghana through its work under the “Tackling Education Needs Inclusively” (TENI) has made significant strides in supporting a longitudinal research project with its partners which opens up the debate on why children are not learning in Ghanaian classrooms across the Upper East, Northern and Upper West Regions. The three Northern regions performed poorly in relation to the National Education Assessment Test which assesses the proficiency in English and Maths of P3 and P6 pupils.<sup>4</sup>

The research was designed to provide policy makers, government officials and NGO advocacy groups at national, regional and district level with sufficient evidence to act on findings and ensure that qualitative change and learning outcomes are improved within the education sector.

---

<sup>2</sup> This is based on the rebased GDP figures in the Annual Education Sector Performance report, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Taken from Spending report in Annual Education Sector Performance report 2012

<sup>4</sup> The percentage of students achieving proficiency in Maths at P3 was: 13% for Upper East, 11% for Northern and 9% for Upper West as against national average of 18.2%. The achievement rates for P3 English were 13% for Upper East, 19% for Northern and 11% for Upper West compared to the national average of 24.2%. In P6 maths, Upper East had 9%, Northern 4% and Upper West had 8% as against national average of 16 %. In English, the percentage achieving proficiency for P6 was: Upper East had 20%, Northern 17% and Upper West 16% as compared with the national average of 35%.

The main objective of the Quality Education Study under the Tackling Education Needs Inclusively (TENI) research project was to investigate the drivers and inhibitors of quality basic education across the three northern regions of Ghana. The research question that sought to address this was: “*What are the key drivers of change that promote or inhibit the achievement of inclusive education, with emphasis on the education needs of girls and children with disability?*” (i.e. retention, transition and performance of disadvantaged children particularly girls and children with special needs). The initial research project was designed as an ongoing process of supporting partner interventions among the Ghana Education Service (GES) and civil society sector in order to strengthen inclusive education, improve quality and address the key learning questions arising in the project. The TENI Research on Quality Education, a collaboration between VSO and AfC, started in August, 2012 and involved 4 weeks of field research across three regions of Ghana with 24 researchers visiting 54 schools, interviews with 250 teachers, observing 86 classrooms and interviewing over 500 parents and children on the question of learning and why learning is or is not taking place in Ghanaian primary and JHS classrooms.

## **2.0 Research Design and Sampling Criteria**

The design of the study included both qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore the key promoters and inhibitors of quality and inclusive education. The study sampled six districts in the three northern regions, one TENI project and one Non TENI project district in each region (see section on TENI interventions)<sup>5</sup>. In each district the most recent Performance Monitoring Test (PMT) and School Education Assessment (SEA) data for English was used to identify and rank high and low achieving schools. A cluster selection of schools approach ensured that two primary schools and one JHS were selected in close proximity to one another. The cluster sample approach also ensured that at least one high achieving and one low achieving primary school were sampled in each of the clusters. The schools sampled in a cluster were also within a short distance of each other with one or both primary schools sending children to the nearby JHS selected for the study. Other sampling considerations were that all schools should have a full complement of class levels (i.e. P1 through to P6; JHS 1 to JHS 3). The schools were within a 2 hour drive from the District Capital. This enabled researchers to reach the schools in remote areas within a realistic time frame to conduct one day of research and maximise the time taken with the teachers and students at the school.

School selection also took into account rural and urban dichotomy<sup>6</sup>. The sampling design also considered well-resourced schools where there was adequate community support and supply of teaching and learning inputs compared to poorly resourced schools. One third of the schools were in urban areas and two-thirds of the sampled schools were located in rural areas (i.e. 3 urban and 6 rural per district). These contextual factors provided a varied sample to explore and

---

<sup>5</sup> The main interventions implemented by the TENI partners in Talensi-Nabdam District (Upper East), West Mamprusi District (Northern) and Jirapa District (Upper West) included school performance review processes, strengthening of inclusive education practices by teachers and district education directorates, community awareness raising and action planning, and the creation of gender clubs.

<sup>6</sup> Nine schools were selected for the research in each district; this selection took into account the rural/urban dichotomy. One third of the schools were urban and two-thirds rural (i.e. 3 urban and 6 rural per district). In each district the most recent Performance Monitoring Test (PMT) and School Education Assessment (SEA) data for English was used to identify and rank high and low achieving schools.

compare across the different sub-categories of the research questions. The following were the key research questions:

1. What are the key drivers of change that promote or inhibit the achievement of inclusive education, with emphasis on the education needs of girls and children with disability? And the retention, transition and performance of disadvantaged children?

Research Question 1: What are the factors promoting and inhibiting systemic change in educational quality and inclusion at basic education level with emphasis on girls and children with disabilities?

Sub-research questions included:

- To what extent does teacher attitudes/profile impact on education quality and inclusiveness of basic education in Ghana?
- How can we create/generate demand for improved education quality, learning outcomes and performance among marginalized and disadvantaged communities and children?
- What are the most important roles, practices and strategies at school/community level for improving education quality and inclusiveness (i.e. retention, transition and performance) among disadvantaged and marginalized children in Ghana (i.e. girls and disabled)?
- What good practices ensure community participation in improving quality and inclusiveness in basic education in Ghana?
- Why are disabled children not entering, accessing and/or remaining for the full cycle of primary schools in northern Ghana? (Baseline)
- What policies, resourcing and implementation processes are needed to bring about quality education and inclusiveness in northern Ghana?

Consultations with the Implementing Partners (IPs) and GES revealed that there should be four spheres of inquiry for the research: the child/home setting, community setting, the school and the classroom setting, and the policy level in order to fully analyze the inhibitors and promoters to quality education. The team also interviewed a range of regional and district level stakeholders concerning the issues surrounding the quality of education. The conceptual framework for the study was developed based on the quality of education frameworks used by the World Bank and UNESCO for investigating school quality, inclusivity and learning effectiveness across education systems<sup>7</sup>.

### **3.0 Key Findings from the Quality of Education Report**

Three key documents were produced as part of the Quality of Education Study: a full research compendium of the detailed analysis from across the three regions, a synthesis report which summarises the main findings supported by evidence and the executive summary/policy brief. Two other volumes are also available which complement the study - the detailed annex and a

---

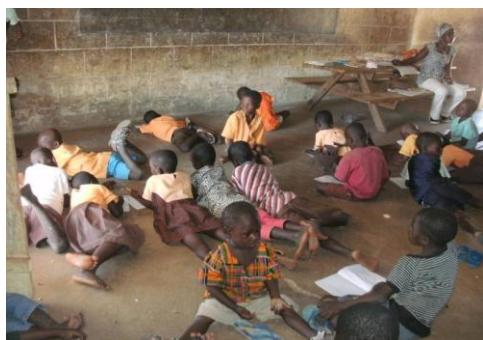
<sup>7</sup> The research team used the EFA Quality Framework and the Heneveld's Framework (World Bank, 1994) as the core conceptual frameworks to guide the research study design across the research districts, community sites, school and classroom learning environments.

volume of case studies. This policy brief serves to briefly outline the key findings and implications for actors planning interventions in the education field and policy makers.

### **3.1 Creating an enabling environment for teaching and learning at district levels**

Data collected from the six District Education Directorates and 54 research schools indicate that there are major challenges being encountered in the delivery of quality basic education in Ghana. These challenges include the inadequate supply of exercise books and lack of textbooks/syllabuses, inequitable teacher deployment and a high and growing prevalence of untrained teachers particularly in rural areas. The study also found very few female trained teachers in the rural schools across the study districts. There was also a growing number of community service teachers who were being paid by the communities in which they taught in order to supplement the lack of teachers in rural primary schools. The findings suggest that there was generally a higher pupil teacher ratio in rural classrooms which further exacerbated the difficulties faced by rural schools.<sup>8</sup> Evidence from interviews with staff at each of the District Directorates indicates that these were considered some of the main inhibitors of quality delivery of education.

*(Class in a Rural School in Upper East)*



The key quality of education challenge across all the six study districts was the very high rates of teacher absenteeism and lateness experienced by children in the basic schools. The study also found that teacher commitment levels to their students and work was very low and this had a significant impact on their ability to provide quality instruction in the classroom. Teacher absenteeism and lateness to school was caused by teachers travelling on average one hour to reach their schools, participation in distance education programmes

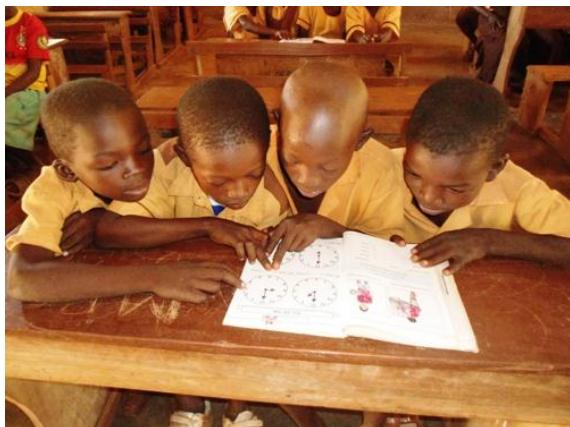
could impact on teacher attendance and teachers' engagement in other economic activities took teachers out of school. The study found a high level of collusion taking place between circuit supervisors and teachers particularly in relation to the non-disclosure of recalcitrant and absentee teachers particularly in the Northern Region

### **3.2 School Characteristics and Learning**

The evidence from the school observations across the 54 schools reveals that the majority of head teachers and teachers observed demonstrated a lack of commitment to their roles and responsibilities which had devastating impact on the learning effectiveness and school quality. The Quality of Education Research revealed clear management and oversight lapses within the teaching force due in some cases to lack of enforced disciplinary procedures by District Education offices and Head Teachers. Evidence from both the head teachers and the teaching staff revealed that in most schools there was very little onsite supervision, mentoring and support

<sup>8</sup> The trend of higher PTR in rural schools is reversed in the case of the sampled schools of the Upper West, due to the higher proportion of RC schools sampled in the urban centres of this region.

by circuit supervisors and in general there were poor levels of mentoring and/or professional development provided. The study found many examples of unacceptable head teacher leadership; in some cases head teachers were unable of promoting an effective learning environment due to weak management practices and poor leadership qualities, particularly in the rural schools visited. However, there were only a small proportion of head teachers (in less than ten schools) who demonstrated the strong leadership in facilitating school effectiveness in often very deprived school environments; head teachers of faith-based schools, mainly Catholic schools were found to be better able to manage their schools compared to head teachers of District Assembly (DA) schools.



With regard to physical infrastructure the evidence suggests that the majority of schools were not adapted for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Only 18 out of the 54 schools surveyed had access ramps to the classrooms. There was very limited usage of teaching and learning materials across all the observed classrooms in the three regions. In the majority of the classrooms there were no textbooks and in several classrooms teachers lacked access to the GES syllabus.

(P4 pupils sharing a textbook in the Upper West)

### **3.3 Inside the classroom: a look at teaching and learning**

Lesson observations revealed that in most cases there was little or no learning going on in the 86 classrooms observed and that the “basic skills” for literacy (referred to in Goal 6 of the EFA document source: UNICEF) were not being taught. This was often due to the fact that pupils could not understand the language of instruction (e.g. if it was wholly or mainly English) and the methods being used by the teacher were non participatory. The study also found that the demeanour of the teacher and their approach towards the children which was often harsh, and punitive with limited encouragement played a significant role in children’s learning experience and ability to participate in the classroom. The ability of teachers to use simple methods for teaching children to learn to decode and/or sound out simple words was a major challenge in their breakthrough to literacy in the classroom.

#### ***Language of Instruction***

The evidence shows that apart from the methodological challenges, one of the greatest inhibitors to learning in the classrooms observed was the language of instruction across the entire primary school. The Quality of Education Study found that at the primary level (particularly lower primary) the sole use of English as the medium of instruction inhibited quality learning, particularly in the rural schools. Each school in the sample was using their own approach to the language of instruction depending on the location, teacher background and policy of the school head.

### **3.4 Head Teacher Leadership and Management**

The main findings suggest that the process of helping children learn was not being facilitated by the majority of head teachers considering the high rates of teacher absenteeism, limited usage of time on task and lack of preparedness by teachers for classroom instruction (e.g. lesson notes or usage of teaching learning materials/textbook access). Fewer than ten head teachers<sup>9</sup> across the 54 schools demonstrated leadership skills that encouraged an effective learning environment (e.g. high learning, time on task).

### **3.5 Teaching Methodologies and structure to ensure inclusivity and quality learning**

Key findings from the classroom observation and FGD's with pupils suggest that teachers rarely used child-centred and child friendly teaching methods such as: class discussions, role play, demonstration, group work, brainstorming, experiential or hands on approaches. In the majority of classrooms observed, there was little evidence that the teachers had made any preparation for the lesson with only one third of the classrooms showing evidence of lesson plans and very few classrooms actively using TLMs. Fewer than three out of the 86 classrooms observed were using the NALAP materials. The majority of schools did not show evidence that NALAP had taken route as an early grade literacy approach. The Quality of Education study also found that teachers found it difficult to handle large class sizes, multi-grade classes and disadvantaged groups of children, and that there was a general lack of competence and confidence in the use of strategies to facilitate learning for SEN children.

### **3.6 Teacher Attitude towards Different Learner Needs**

Evidence from the field work revealed the key reasons why children with special needs were not entering, accessing and remaining for the full cycle of primary education in northern Ghana. Observation at the school and classroom levels suggests that teachers were often not creating and supporting a safe learning environment which made it even more challenging for children with special needs; lack of teaching and learning materials adapted for children with special needs and limited knowledge of how to teach children with special needs meant that SEN children were often ignored, isolated, or allowed to roam the school compound. Interviews with teachers suggested that other than adopting the strategy of sitting hearing or visually impaired children at the front of the class, they did not have enough training to ensure they were confident in handling SEN children and in some cases they confessed that there was little point in trying. Peripatetic officers at the district level also did not have enough resources to visit schools on a consistent basis. Lack of supervision at the school level was also a key barrier to the special needs child being enrolled and staying in school due to the high rates of bullying, stigmatization and abuse by other children. Observers noted at the schools visited, pupils were largely unsupervised and in some cases, schools were found to be dangerous for children with special needs; particularly those with severe challenges.

---

<sup>9</sup> Examples include: St Anthony in Jirapa, Manga primary school in West Mamprusi and Gomlana Primary, East Mamprusi, Adakudugu, Bongo, Zauringo in Talensi Nabdam

Another aspect of teacher sensitivity towards learners needs related to their ability to be **gender sensitive** in the classroom with respect to their treatment of boys and girls. Evidence from field level interviews with children and classroom observations suggests that in the majority of cases teachers were using strategies to ensure that both boys and girls were given the opportunity to participate in the lesson.

(*Female pupil with younger sibling in class in Northern Region*)



Where this was not the case, it was either because the lesson was delivered as a lecture and overall participation was sparse; or as some observers noted, that the teacher was focussing his/her attention on those pupils more able to answer questions or read a text – one example of this was a teacher who felt that girls were less able to understand the more complex aspects of science. The situation in terms of gender balance was quite different outside of the classroom, both in the school and the home context girls had the heaviest workload.

### **3.7 Assessment of Children's Learning**

The evidence from this study also suggests that there is a significant breakdown in the teachers' ability to assess children's learning in the classroom; this had a ripple effect on the parents' ability to assess the child's learning due to the fact that very few exercises were available on a regular basis for the parents to review. Performance monitoring tests appear to be very important mechanisms along with School Performance Appraisal Meetings (SPAMs) in order to ensure that teachers were held accountable for their work and the learning process of the child<sup>10</sup>.

## **4.0 Child Readiness**

Based on evidence from FGDs with pupils, teachers, SMC /PTAs and parents, the study concluded that child readiness in the three northern regions was challenged by a number of inhibiting factors. Although children are ready to learn, teacher attitudes, low levels of commitment and the poor school learning climate hampered pupils' readiness to learn. Poverty was a significant inhibitor of child readiness by preventing parents from being able to adequately support their children in school with their basic needs including adequate food. Poverty accounted for many children going to school hungry.

---

<sup>10</sup> The TENI programme implemented the School Performance Reviews (SPR) and School Performance Assessment Meetings (SPAM) which according to the mid-term review in 2012, led to greater awareness among parents of inclusive education, increased involvement in school development and community action planning; reports also suggest that greater efforts were made by community groups and leaders to outlaw negative cultural practices.



The field work revealed that child readiness was affected negatively by traditional practices of assigning specific roles to gender. In this regard children, mostly girls were affected by “forced marriage”, a heavy burden of household chores and other traditional roles which required supporting adults (including teachers) which made them more vulnerable and at risk of abuse. The study also revealed that the gender roles of children in the home were in the majority of cases transferred to the school realm with girls being responsible for sweeping the school compound and fetching water while boys did the weeding.

*(School Feeding in the Northern Region)*

## 5.0 Community Demand for Quality Education

Communities were highly active in contributing to the improvement of quality across extremely deprived areas and in families with poor socio-economic levels. Evidence from the Quality of Education study reveals that rural communities were often supporting the quality improvements in their schools by paying small stipends for community based teachers. Communities were also building kitchens and providing cooks and in some cases were providing food during the “hunger season”. But communities were also well aware that they were obtaining substandard educational outcomes and provision from the State. For instance, some communities were so disappointed with the results of the BECE tests that they directly confronted teachers with their complaints and then proceeded directly to district education authorities. District Assemblies were also well aware of the poor learning results from the schools across their district despite the heavy investment by DAs.

## 5.0 The Key Drivers of Change to Promote Inclusive Education for All

Findings from all three northern regions reveal several different quality promoters: the most important is a change of attitude towards the commitment of the teaching force and education administration to manage public basic education across these regions. Underlying the visible needs of school quality was whether the resources and supplies to promote school quality would be used effectively and efficiently. FGD with teachers, SMC/PTAs and Scorecard reports all concur that if local education authorities, education sub-committees of the District Assembly, Head teachers and teachers, opinion leaders, Chiefs and elders and SMC/PTA and parents work prudently and are committed to improving education quality, quality education in Ghana will be achieved in public basic education schools in the three northern regions. Unfortunately the study found that this commitment and dedication to education improvement was often absent particularly among the direct education providers (e.g. district education officers, heads and teachers)<sup>11</sup>.

---

<sup>11</sup> This will be further explored under the second TENI research study in 2013/14.

In some instances however, some synergy between head teachers, community and district education officials had been achieved and there was clear evidence of a few “high learning” schools across the schools sampled. The high learning schools in the sampled sites had a head teacher with strong leadership qualities and a clear vision for school development that included the ongoing training and support of his/her teachers. In “high learning” schools observed: the head teachers maintained links with the community and the community demonstrated an interest in ensuring the school had the necessary provisions to function. At the classroom level, the head teacher mentorship and support meant that even untrained teachers within the school were able to create a high learning environment for their pupils. However, while some of the schools identified as “high learning” environments fit this profile, there were far more schools which did not and were categorised as “low learning” schools.



(Enthusiastic pupils in class in the Upper East)

The study also found that despite significant resources being put into the public education system by central government and donor agencies in order to improve direct teaching and learning processes, instructional practice, and to increase access to relevant materials and teaching learning aids, these were not always adopted or sustained in schools which were poorly managed (e.g. NALAP, EQUALL, etc).

The poor teacher performance/output and incapacity of communities to hold teachers accountable constituted a major inhibitor to quality delivery of education. The findings also suggest that the District Education Offices who are responsible for providing oversight, management and the key to negotiate or uphold a level of accountability at the school level were often dysfunctional. Some head teachers who recognized that their own teachers were “*out of control*” felt that they alone could not manage the teachers under their authority since they had “*friends at the district offices who would find ways to overrule their decisions*”. Being a strong head teacher and school manager within this context was therefore becoming very difficult in northern Ghana where the vast majority of teachers observed were not focussed on serving their people.

The Government of Ghana, the Ministry of Education and the civil society sector are asked to improve the quality of education and learning outcomes among Ghanaian children in the north by:

- Fully externalise the oversight of teachers at the district levels. This is likely to involve the new assessment and inspectorate bodies (i.e. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, National Inspectorate Board, National Teaching Council)

- Strengthen teacher disciplinary procedures by enforcing sanctions on non performing and absentee teachers by using salary freezes and systems of demotion particularly for non performing head teachers.
- Ensure effective oversight of the District Education Office by the District Assembly, District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC)
- Track school progress and student achievement by implementing performance monitoring tests in every district (PMT's should be implemented by the District Assembly) and establish national standards/milestones in literacy and numeracy for primary schools<sup>12</sup>; reinstitute performance contracts with head teachers.
- Ensure that national assessment testing (e.g. Early Grade Reading and Numeracy Assessments, National Education Assessment) results are easily available to District Assemblies and District Education Offices in order hold schools/teachers accountable.
- Ensure clearer oversight to the recruitment of pupil teachers in order that committed and long serving community volunteer teachers receive opportunity for training and employment in the GES.
- Strengthen and/or set up child protection mechanisms which can ensure that complaints by communities, parents and children related to school based abuses can be reported. This system of complaints should involve an oversight committee at district level made up of District Education Office representatives, Social Welfare, CHRAJ, Police force and other selected child rights and protection agencies.
- Ensure the election of PTA/SMC assemblies at the district and regional levels in order to ensure that a representative voice of parents is strengthened and that complaint/follow up mechanisms of recalcitrant teachers/ dysfunctional schools are brought to the public attention.

The study also found that **teaching and learning practices** at the classroom level were in many cases not promoting quality learning outputs. As such the following recommendations are made to remediate issues around classroom discipline, teaching methodology (including the language of instruction used), and participation especially in terms of the inclusion of children with special needs, girls and other disadvantaged groups:

**Discipline policies** with regards to pupil discipline should be reviewed so that schools use child friendly guidelines for disciplining students and abolish corporal punishment in basic schools; review school policies to reflect these guidelines to ensure alternative strategies to verbal or physical abuse are instated<sup>13</sup>. Policies should be fully integrated into school and staff training and undertaken in collaboration with both parents and pupils to ensure that procedures are transparent and staff are held accountable.

**Language of Instruction:** policies for how and when teachers use pupils' first and second language of instruction across the primary system should be articulated to teachers by the

<sup>12</sup> This testing will be developed and designed by the District and use for monitoring by the district authorities to track school progress.

<sup>13</sup> Basic Education Division is finalizing a set of Child Friendly standards and procedures for schools based on UNICEF best practice globally.

MOE/GES as a matter of national urgency in order to ensure quality education. The National Accelerated Literacy Programme (NALAP) should be fully financially and technically supported by the Ghana Government on a yearly basis in order to ensure that this “flagship” programme is fully embraced and effectively implemented.<sup>14</sup>

**Child-centred methodology:** One of the greatest constraints teachers have in using child-centred and/or participatory strategies/methodologies is their attitude and relationship towards children in their classrooms. Therefore any trainings or guidance given to teachers needs to include practical strategies of child friendly behaviour amongst teachers, moral leadership qualities, emphasis on learning outcomes using child-centred teaching methods, peer teaching using participatory methods in under resourced schools with large class sizes. This training should be mainstreamed in the following areas:

- Review methods taught at training colleges and how teacher trainers are modelling participatory approaches;
- Encourage head teachers to mentor their teaching staff in an informal and formalised manner;
- Expand in-service training to all members of teaching staff, particularly untrained teachers
- Phonic methods for assisting teachers teach reading skills at primary level are needed;
- Sustaining programmes which use phonetic/syllabic and mother tongue approaches should be adequately financed by MOE (e.g. NALAP)

**Gender:** the majority of teachers were aware of the need to ensure that both boys and girls fully participate in teaching and learning activities. Inhibitors to girls’ access included poor sanitation facilities in schools, early age pregnancy, sexual abuse by male peers and teachers. The key recommendations include:

- Reviewing and implementing gender policies in schools which include: guidelines for distributing roles and responsibilities among children at the school, guidelines for how to deal with the incidence of school based abuse, guidelines for care, protection and counselling of girls. Ensuring re-entry procedures are in place for early pregnancy of girls in school.
- Implement, refer and enforce legal procedures for girls’ subjected to sexual abuse at school (e.g. Policy Force);
- Review and strengthen life skills curriculum to include sex education particularly with regard to strategies to avoid pregnancy.
- Ensure that there are sanitation facilities available in schools for girls;

**Inclusion:** The GES should review carefully its inclusive education policy and strategy to ensure that it is adequately prepared to work in unstable learning environments where the policy of integrating children is being promoted. Teachers need to receive much more current/relevant pre

---

<sup>14</sup> A high level meeting with key Government Stakeholders and the World Bank in Rwanda (2012) identified Ghana’s NALAP programme as one of the most successfully designed early grade reading, literacy and numeracy programs in Sub Saharan Africa.

and in service training on teaching methodologies for facilitating learning among differently abled children;

From a grass roots perspective, the key drivers of change for attaining quality education in Ghana will be to strengthen the voice and visibility of children and parents who are primarily suffering from poor quality delivery of education.

*(Discussion with Women's Group in the Upper East)*



Grassroots change will also require that much more work is carried out by civil society including NGO's in order to ensure that the mechanisms to seek redress by the PTA's and SMC's are available at the district and regional levels. Continuous awareness creation through TV and radio on the rights of parents and children to quality education should be pursued including their training on the teacher code of conduct and other child rights legislation and quality education delivery. Ghana has set up the legislative instruments and institutions to protect children's basic human right to quality education. Unfortunately, the population is still not fully aware of these mechanisms and institutions which are resourced to ensure that public primary education is able to provide acceptable learning outcomes for all Ghana's children.