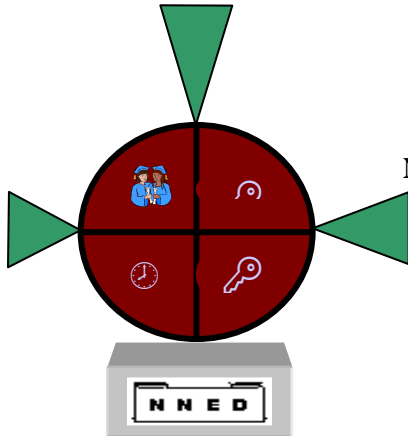


GHANA NATIONAL EDUCATION CAMPAIGN COALITION



NORTHERN NETWORK FOR EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

POSITION PAPER

**BRIDGING THE GAP IN BASIC EDUCATION –
THE RURAL AND URBAN DIVIDE**

**PRESENTED TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND SPORTS, GHANA.
EDUCATIONAL SECTOR ANNUAL REVIEW 2008**

JUNE 2008

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A PREAMBLE

Globally Civil Society Organisations (CSO) have played consistently and growing role in ensuring the provision of quality education by advocating for more resource allocation, effective supervision, effective teaching and learning, representing the voiceless and in ensuring that all sections of the population, more specifically the poor, vulnerable and excluded have equal access to quality basic education.

The **Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC)** and the **Northern Network for Education Development** have been working in partnership with Government of Ghana and development partners to leverage more resources to the basic education sub sector; monitor investments and expenditures in education, providing voice to the voiceless and demanding accountability from duty bearers, thus ensuring the provision of quality basic education. GNECC and NNED periodically undertakes research on pertinent issues, policies and practices that have an impact on education and issue statements and position papers to inform government policy.

At the national level GNECC and NNED lead a network of CSO's working in the education sector to participate in the Education Sector Annual Review Meetings. GNECC and NNED has participated in the last two ESAR meetings in 2006 and 2007 respectively and found it to be very interactive, educative, informative and productive. Once again GNECC and NNED has been invited to participate in this years meeting scheduled from 17th to 19th June 2008. It is in this context that GNECC and NNED members at national, regional and district level met on the 3rd and 4th June 2008 at Kingsby Hotel, Accra to deliberate on pertinent key issues in the education sector with particular emphasis on access, quality basic education and education financing in Ghana, and collate views of CS and issue some policy demands to further improve education.

Once more GNECC and NNED wishes to reiterate its commitment to partner with Government of Ghana and other key stakeholders to ensure equitable access to quality basic education in line with international and national education goals, such as; MDG's, EFA and NEPAD.

Recognising Education is a right, which all Ghanaian children must enjoy whether living in rural or urban district, GNECC and NNED in their capacity as lead Civil Society Networks in basic education in Ghana have resolved to pursue this agenda vigorously. Having every Ghanaian child of school going age benefit from a Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) is a constitutional obligation and a matter of right for the child as enshrined in the 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution.

This position paper highlights current issues in basic education in Ghana and the corresponding policy demands and recommendations. Practical and research based examples have been provided to illustrate some of the key issues.

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B THE POLICY DEMANDS

1 *Enhancing Access to Quality Basic Education in Ghana*

The **Fourth Republican Constitution 1992** stipulates that within 10 years of coming into force of the constitution, every Ghanaian child will enjoy fCUBE. With this in mind a comprehensive programme of action was drafted to guide implementation which ended in 2005. Has government achieved the objectives of the programme after it expired in 2005? What is the policy direction of fCUBE? Civil Society Organisations's (CSO) would like government to evaluate the FCUBE programme, assess achievements and challenges, draw lessons and re-launch another programme. Civil Society is calling on the Ministry of Education to lead the way for the review of FCUBE.

Civil Society (CS) is particularly worried and very concerned about the widening gap between rural and urban areas in basic education service delivery. Thus, the theme of this position paper "**Bridging the Gap in Basic Education – the Rural Urban Divide and its Impact on Quality Basic Education**" is devoted to raising and or sustaining awareness and mobilising the needed support for a concerted action to halt and reverse the trend. During the year under review GNECC conducted a study on the rural - urban divide and its impact on quality basic education. (See *attached research report*)

KG infrastructure in most parts of the country especially the three Northern regions are below acceptable standard. Furniture, Trained Teachers, Teaching and Learning Materials are either woefully inadequate or completely unavailable. Does the MOESS have a policy for pre school structures and the basic facilities, equipments, teaching and learning materials?

Civil Society endorses the idea of educating over aged children however, we recommends that over aged pupils should be separated from the regular children. In this regard CS is asking the MOESS to speed up the implementation of complementary education policy provision.

Recognising that time is of essence Civil Society is convinced of the immediate need for a louder voice to echo "**URGENCY**" on the Government of Ghana (GoG) in the processes leading to the passage of the **Education Bill** into an **Act** as quickly as possible.

2 *Promoting Quality Basic Education*

Using the performance of pupils in the BECE as a gauge for quality education; makes some interesting revelations between rural and urban districts. According to the findings of a study conducted by Consortium of Researchers on Education, Access, Transitions and Equity -CREATE and a paper presented by Prof. Djangmah at the CSO's pre-ESAR preparatory meeting there exist a wide gap in the performance of pupils in public schools in rural districts and urban districts. This is highly pronounced in terms of facilities and structures, enrolment, teacher supply, lower pupil teacher ratios, TLMs and consequently pupil's performance in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). In the rural areas the BECE pass rate averages 43% while that of the urban

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is 70%. This observation is not surprising comparing the variation in terms of inputs to outputs. The difference in performance is accounted for in part by availability of qualified teachers, Teaching and Learning Materials, effective supervision, school, teaching and learning environments. Civil Society is therefore urging MOESS and GES to first, institute immediate pragmatic and appropriate remedial measures to arrest and halt the situation and second find new and innovative ways to replicate these success stories and models to bridge the rural-urban gaps highlighted by CREATE and GNECC studies.

Quality teacher and quality basic education are inextricably linked. Improving the conditions of teachers which is at the heart of the current educational reform should be translated into action. Upgrading teacher training colleges, linking training colleges to universities, removing quota for intake into training institutions, redistribution of teachers in favour of rural districts provide multiple options for MOESS and GES to tackle the problem of teacher supply and equity.

Civil Society urges Government to motivate teachers who accept posting to rural areas, assist teachers on distance learning programmes with subsidy and other incentive packages will not only attract but help retain qualified teachers to rural areas thus bridging the gap.

3 *Financing Education*

Civil Society is reminding MOESS that the request (During ESAR 2007) for the creation of a threshold for rural schools under the Capitation Grant Policy remains pending with renewed emphasis. Furthermore GoG should take appropriate steps to minimise the delays in the release of CG at all levels (national, regional and district).

On the issue of education financing, our education and the structure of the economy are at variance. Civil Society supports the call on government to match the content of education and the structural characteristics of the economy. Government should channel more resources to science education. Resource allocation for study on science and technology must be channelled to basic schools and must be regular.

Regarding the establishment of Audit Implementation Committees in all MDAs to ensure probity and accountability, Civil Society is not sure to what extent has this directive been implemented. Civil Society is therefore calling on GoG to further strengthen structures and systems e.g. the audit implementation committee for transparency, effective utilisation of resources to the education sector.

D. KEY ISSUES AND POLICY DEMANDS TO BE PRESENTED TO ESAR 2008

To reverse the widening disparity between rural and urban basic schools, GNECC makes the following recommendations to the key issues and policy demands highlighted in this position paper.

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1. Access to Education

Key Issues	Policy Demands (Recommendations)	Responsible Agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitation Grant not released on time There are too many over-aged children in the normal stream of education. Lack of infrastructure for Kindergarten in the country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government/Policy makers must ensure that the actual Grant (i.e. the whole amount of the Grant) and not on piece-meal basis should be released 2 weeks before the beginning of each term. GoG should step up efforts at decentralizing Capitation Grant. Government should ensure the creation of Access classes for over-aged children (above 12 years) to prepare them to be integrated into the upper primary level of education. Government should expedite action on the provision of infrastructure to all Kindergarten in the country. Government should come out with a policy on what facilities should go into the establishment of Kindergarten to enhance monitoring. 	<p>MOESS</p> <p>GES</p> <p>MOESS/GES/DA</p>

2. Quality of Basic Education

Key Issues	Policy Demands (Recommendations)	Responsible Agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government policy on recruitment of the youth as teaching assistants (NYEP) Over bloated class sizes render teaching and learning ineffective Undue concentration of trained teachers in the urban areas The passage of the Education Bill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GES should develop a policy and provide resources to provide training for those employed as Community Education Teaching Assistants under the National Youth Employment Program. Proper coordination between the GES and the employment agencies is necessary. MOESS/GES should as much as possible follow the guidelines on class size (PTR-35/1) GES should still follow the laid down posting procedure to ensure that they are skewed towards rural areas Government should speed up work on the passage of the Education and ensure its passage by December 2008. GoG should remove all quotas placed on admissions into Teacher Training Colleges 	<p>MOESS</p> <p>GES</p> <p>MOESS/ Parliamentary Select Committee on Education</p>

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Education Financing

Key Issues	Policy Demands (Recommendations)	Responsible Agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the Capitation Grant amount, creating a threshold for rural schools, minimising the delays in the release and improving the management of the grant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government must increase the Grant and also review it bi-annually taking into consideration inflation. Government should create a threshold for rural schools to promote equity. <p>Jasikan District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2007 last tranche not received as at the beginning of May 2008 Only one tranche instead of 2 tranches had so far been received as at May 2, 2008 <p>Ashanti Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The last tranche of 2006/2007 capitation grant representing a percentage of the Grant was released at the end of 1st term of 2007/2008 <p>Central Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2006/07 only some part of the 3rd tranche was released at the end of the term. 2007/08 1st term nothing was released, but have received that of 2nd term 	MOESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government should give subsidy to teachers undertaking these programmes 	MOESS/GES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financing of Science Based Courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Half scholarship on all science and TVET programmes from SHS to tertiary level. 	MOESS/ GES

Conclusion

Civil Society commends the efforts being undertaken by GOG to improve the provision of quality education for its people. But however acknowledges the fact that there are still more gray areas to be looked at and that is the role being played by GNECC, NNED and other CSO's to draw government's attention to these issues.

If these policy demands and recommendations are carried through, Civil Society is of the firm conviction it will go a long way in improving and addressing key issues and challenges facing the basic education sector.

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