

# Draft Report on the Roundtable Discussion with the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education



Regarding...

## Research on Teacher Deployment and the Capitation Grant in Quality Basic Education Delivery in Ghana

March 5, 2008

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## Appendix 1 – Research Findings

### ABBREVIATIONS

CETA	Community Education Teaching Assistant
DA	District Assembly
EFA	Education for All
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GES	Ghana Education Service
GNECC	Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
OECD	Overseas Economic Cooperation for Development
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TLM	Teaching Learning Materials
YEP	Youth Employment Program

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC) is a network of civil society organizations working to improve the quality of basic education in Ghana through the power of informatively based advocacy and lobbying at local, national, and international levels. As a part of the Coalition's efforts to raise important and justified issues regarding basic education, the organization commissioned a research into key issues that affect education in line with national and international concerns on the importance of quality. One of the most touched upon issues is that of access, which the Government of Ghana has attempted to rectify with the introduction of the Capitation Grant in 2005 that seeks to publicly provide GH¢ 3 for every child attending school to help eliminate basic fees. Since the introduction of the Capitation Grant, enrollment levels in basic schools in Ghana have improved greatly, but with negative effects to the quality of education. These problems of quality are what GNECC chose to focus their research on through the issues of teacher deployment, disbursement, and conditions of service in basic education.

The research was conducted in mid 2006 by a research consultant hired by the Coalition, Dr. William Ahadzi. The final report detailing the findings of the research and policy recommendations was collected and distributed in October 2006 for the use of GNECC's campaigns in advocating for quality basic education. Since the release of the report, it has been used to bolster advocacy issues at the district and regional levels throughout Ghana. Disseminated at the local level, the report was used to sensitize community members and became the basis for a video documentary on teacher quality created by GNECC and IBIS. In order to lobby the national government, this report formed the basis of a roundtable discussion that was held on **March 5<sup>th</sup> 2008** at the **Airport West Hotel** in Accra with members of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education.

There was a total of **18 participants** present at the roundtable discussion made up of civil society and government representatives. The three representative's for civil society present at the meeting were Mr. Kofi Asare, Program Officer for GNECC and presenter of research, Mr. Geoffrey O'Cansey, Acting Program Officer for GNECC and moderator, and Ms. Courtney Strutt, GNECC Representative and rapporteur.

From the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education, eleven Members of Parliament were present and four Officers of Parliament. The MPs included: Hon. Joe Gidisu, Hon. Martin A. Kwaw, Hon. Andrew K. Mensah, Hon. M. A. Awuwi, Hon. Paul Okah, Hon. Samuel Adu Gyanfi, Hon. Joseph Agbenu, Hon. M. I. Abass, Hon. I. Dawusle, Hon. Alex Tettey Enyo, and Hon. S.K. Baladoo Manu. The four officers were in the persons of Rosemary Sewkedie, Morgan Aiquah, Priscilla Appiah, and Mildred Adom.

## 2.0 PURPOSE OF THE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

In line with the work and initiatives of the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition, an important aspect of their work at the Secretariat level lies in the Coalition's ability to lobby government and policy makers on critical issues of basic education in Ghana. As the moderator of the discussion, Mr. O'cansey stated that the purpose of the roundtable discussion is to provide an open and informed space that allows civil society and government to share ideas and communicate on issues facing education in Ghana today, with the current discussion focusing on issues affecting teacher deployment in the country. Mr. Asare added to this by saying that, "We all know that here in Ghana issues of

quality in education are paramount. This gathering is occurring because of the emphasis that Ghana places on its education system. Central to the issue of quality is the quantity and quality of teachers, hence the importance of this report commissioned by GNECC in order to find out what issues are affecting teachers on the ground". The end goal of this roundtable discussion was to facilitate fruitful discourse on these issues and come up with action steps or communiqués for all parties involved in order to take steps in the fight for quality education.

In identifying the purpose of the roundtable from the government perspective, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee, Hon. S.K. Baladoo Manu, addressed the group to relay the perspective of the government. He began by thanking the Coalition for the opportunity to engage in discussion and to be in collaboration with civil society in developing a stronger education system in Ghana. He emphasized the importance of this partnership by stating the key role that civil society organizations like GNECC play in oiling the work of the Committee as an oversight body by informing them of which issues to legislate for and against and what to look for in oversight trips. He then stated that the Committee was happy to be present at the roundtable discussion to learn and to share, as well as to listen and deliberate.

### **3.0 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Amongst the goals of the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition is to source credible information to engage policy makers with and disseminate to the public in order to increase awareness and facilitate change within basic education in Ghana. In keeping to this goal, it was decided that a research should be conducted on factors affecting the quality of education, with a focus on teachers. The role of teachers in securing quality basic education is indisputable and yet it has been noted that teachers and teaching receive relatively less attention in efforts to reform education. Teacher distribution in Ghana is problematic due mainly to the unavailability of teachers in the right numbers as well as poor conditions of service and the wide variations that exist between teacher's in rural and urban areas. Against existing policies, shortage of teachers has led to multigrade teaching at the basic level and some teachers are compelled to combine classes. Teaching materials remain inadequate and a large number of unqualified teachers (pupil teachers) have remained as a stopgap arrangement beyond the allowable time. In effect, the mode of admission into teacher training colleges is a factor for low quality education. The issue of teachers has become more critical as a result of the introduction of the Capitation Grant, which has led to increased enrollment.

Due to the significant role these issues play in the achievement of quality education in Ghana, GNECC commissioned research to take place on the issue of teacher deployment within quality education delivery in Ghana. The objectives of GNECC's study were to assess the state of quality basic education in Ghana with an emphasis on teacher distribution, teacher delivery, and general conditions of service in relation to teaching within international goals such as the MDGs and the EFA objectives as well as national and regional policies. This was done through conducting qualitative and quantitative situational analysis of quality education in order to determine the effect of teaching methods on the quality of education.

The main findings of the study highlighted key areas that have a bearing on the effectiveness of teaching such as teacher demographics and qualifications, effect of the capitation grant, pupil-teacher ratio, contact hours and supervision, and availability of TLMs. Ultimately, through the study's main research findings, GNECC is looking to identify innovative approaches for improving the teaching profession.

#### **3.1 Recommendations from Findings**

The recommendations made by the researcher had two components for teacher quality; those suggested by the teachers and those contrived from the research findings. Teacher suggestions for improving quality of teachers was to improve on teacher training, make TLMs readily available, promote teacher discipline, allow for the Capitation Grant to cover exam fees, and motivate teachers through incentive programs.

The recommendations contrived from the research included improving teaching and learning quality through the use of active and cooperative learning in class, adopting dynamic assessment and evaluation systems, shifting from standardized tests to performance based assessments, and moving from teaching based models to learning based

models. In terms of policy recommendations, the researcher suggested reviewing the Teacher Deployment Policy and making key changes such as providing fully paid study leaves for teachers in deprived areas, linking salaries of teachers to improved conditions in schools and academic performance of pupils, and recognizing the important role teachers play in achieving EFA/MDGs by providing an institutional framework for effective partnership with teachers.

Other key recommendations which would broaden the quality of teaching across the nation at all levels would be expanding access to Teacher Training Colleges, stepping up supervision at the District level, creating a deliberate policy to give proper training CETAs before entering the classrooms, and pressuring OECD countries to fulfill their pledge of 3% of GDP to developing countries since the education sector dominates our budget.

## 4.0 DISCUSSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The deliberation portion of the roundtable discussion began with an address by the Chair of the Select Committee stating the Committee's understanding of the information presented in the report and opened the floor for questions and clarifications. Among the prominent issues that were pulled from the above research were access to teacher training colleges, delay in the disbursement of the capitation grant, and the training of Community Education Teaching Assistant's (CETAs) to ensure a better education for basic school children. A topic that also received some attention during the discussion was that of teaching methods and the reward or incentive systems that exist for teachers. Both of these issues have merited a lot of discussion in the wider national scheme of education, and thus were not major topics for this round table discussion, however the Coalition did get the point across that a better system of incentives for rural teachers is needed as these areas lack the skilled, trained, and motivated teachers that populate urban areas. Participants from both sides were very vocal and many fruitful discussions ensued, with action steps created for the three main issues discussed.

### 4.1 Teacher Training Colleges

The issue of quota's and incentive allowances in teacher training colleges was highlighted as a major point of discussion in the round table as civil society had an issue with the fact that quota's restricted the number of students who could enroll in teacher training colleges each year. The discussion began with the Chair stating the necessity of quota's for enrollment due to the allowance incentive and that there are no funds for expansion, thus quotas remain at their current levels. This lead to civil society requesting for the Committee to explain exactly how training colleges are funded and the rationale behind allowances, if this is the reason why quotas exist on the number of trainees admitted. It was impression from civil society that the training colleges are funded by donors who maintain the quota level due to their funding commitment. The rebuttal from government was that as far as they are concerned, there are no donors that are solely responsible for this activity, but rather that donors contribute to the overall education budget, which after main expenditures, only 8 – 10% remains for other responsibilities, such as training college allowances. It is this funding restraint that dictates the quota level as the government only has so much of the budget to allocate to allowances, and thus spots in the training colleges, each year. This point turned the discussion to the question "Why not do away with allowances which would then provide a quota-free environment?" The Committee wasted no time in answering that to do away with the allowance would leave teacher training colleges with no way to offer incentives to new students. The whole rationale behind allowances is that when students emerge from Senior Secondary School (SSS), they have any range of training colleges they could enter and the allowance is a way to ensure students enroll in teacher training. In an attempt a few years back to reduce the allowance, students went on strike to show their discontent with this decision, which indicates the importance this incentive plays in attracting even the small number of teachers that now enter the training colleges.

The crux of the argument came with the opposing view of the Coalition in regards to the existence of quotas solely because of the availability of allowances. The opinion of civil society was that it should not be up to the government to limit the number of students who are admitted to the training college each year simply because of allowance quotas. It was suggested by the moderator that in doing this, government is making decisions for masses of people without consulting them. His suggestion was why not allow for extra students to be admitted to the training colleges over and above the amount allotted for quotas with the understanding from these students that they will not be receiving an allowance and will be required to pay a moderate fee. It was the moderator's feeling that there are many qualified

students who are not admitted to training colleges each year who have the funds to pay for training. If this is the case, why not give them the opportunity? It would be a win-win situation as the government would not lose any money, only gain more qualified teachers for the strengthening of the education system. This comment met resistance from the Committee as it was their opinion that no one would enter the training college on that basis because the rewards and remuneration for teachers is far too small for people to give up an allowance and have to pay fees on top of that.

At this point the argument was becoming much more heated as both sides felt they were making realistic and substantial points. Ultimately, no concrete solution was officially concluded on this issue as it was clear that there were forces at play beyond the scope of either civil society or the government. The ever burdening question of funding continues to prevent a solid action step, however it was strongly recommended by civil society that the government look into piloting the initiative of additional fee-paying student enrollment if only to boost the number of qualified teachers produced each year by a marginal amount. While no official commitment was given on this issue by the Committee, if the issue were researched and the findings well documented and presented, there may be room for change.

#### **4.2 Delays in the Disbursement of the Capitation Grant**

The discussion turned to the issue of delay's in the disbursement of the Capitation Grant as it related to the performance of teachers when Hon. Akumb asked the Coalition to clarify the effects of this delay that teachers had indicated in the research and why these affected performance. Mr. Asare explained that from the perspective of teachers, the Capitation Grant has had a multidimensional effect on their teaching. While it has provided additional access to teaching and learning materials (TLMs) and other needed school materials (ie. Sports equipment), there has also been a negative influence from increased enrollment numbers with a lack of infrastructural and teaching support needed to accommodate the additional students. On top of this, the delay in the release of the Capitation Grant puts a further monetary strain on teachers who are already facing high pupil-teacher ratios and a lack of necessary materials. Hence, the research team found it pertinent to ask how teachers were dealing with the effects as well as the documented delay of funds, which are valid and important questions that indicate quality of teaching.

The issue of constraints on teachers resonated with the Committee members as it was clear this was not new information, however it was beyond their scope to offer plausible solutions to the myriad of effects and instead chose to focus on explaining the reasons behind the delay of the Capitation Grant. It was the opinion of the Committee that delays occur with the release of the Capitation Grant because disbursement of funds depends on the Ministry of Finance knowing exact number of students each school year for the various forms and districts. As these numbers can't be determined until the beginning of the school term due to last minute enrollment, an immediate delay in data collection occurs, which is followed by the time it takes to compile this information. While the Coalition maintained that they understood the process behind the releasing of funds, they stated their concern over the persistence of such inefficiencies in the system. It was the Coalition's intention to make the Committee realize that as the Capitation Grant program is going into its third year of operation, the issue of fund delays needs to be put to rest in order to ensure a smoothly operating education system. In rebuttal to this criticism of the Capitation Grant, the Committee asked the Coalition to state clearly what recommendations they were making to authorities in order to understand what was being asked of them. The Coalition's response was that they wish government could streamline the level of bureaucracy involved in the process of releasing the grant so that delays can be reduced. Their suggestion for doing this was to include the Capitation Grant monies into the pool of education funds that are already being decentralized to the districts.

The response from the Committee to this suggestion was positive as they confirmed the intentions behind government decentralization is to ensure all monies for sectors like education are distributed directly to the District Assemblies (DAs). It was added by the Chair that in the coming months, decentralization of education will be going one step further as all DAs will be responsible for hiring and paying the salaries of their teachers, which buoy's the idea of financial decentralization as the management of the Capitation Grant will be solely the responsibility of the DAs. Aside from the Coalition's suggestion at deepening decentralization, the solution presented from the Committee was that the Capitation Grant should be released to schools before the start of term using last years enrollment numbers as a projection basis. In order to make the grant fully decentralized, this was recognized as a needed procedure.

### 4.3 Training of CETAs Under the National Youth Employment Program

Although this issue comprised of a small component of the presented research, the group touched down on the necessity of Community Education Teaching Assistant's (CETAs) receiving training prior to beginning in the classroom because of its strong quality implications for basic education. While the Committee first addressed this issue by justifying the employment of CETAs as a required act to fulfill the manpower needed for teachers in the classroom, the Coalition interceded to state that their primary concern in this issue was that of quality. They agreed on the fact that bodies are needed in the classroom, but this is no excuse not to train the CETAs to ensure they are providing quality education to the children. This led to the Committee defending the process of recruitment for the Youth Employment Program (YEP), which the Committee stated the government and GES are not responsible for, but rather it is up to the district level assembly to create a panel for which recruitment is based. The Coalition's response was that regardless of how persons are recruited to the position, they still require a mandatory training to ensure quality teaching. The Chair took this opportunity to point out that all CETAs are given an orientation before they are sent out in the field, which the Coalition refuted by saying that an orientation is not a training. Even a two to three week course would be better than nothing and could prepare these youth for better teaching practices. It was pointed out by one of the Committee members that this was an initiative that districts wanted to pursue but that it was constrained by funds. He suggested that districts be encouraged to do so when funds permit, however the Coalition had an issue with this approach as it was their feeling that unless it was policy to provide all CETAs with training, many districts would not do so even if they had the necessary funds. The crucial point to the argument of civil society was that this training is a necessary step in the quest for quality education as the youth employment program can provide the needed manpower in basic education, but it also needs to be supported by qualified individuals.

With the Coalition pushing for a policy to come into play regarding this issue, the Committee stressed that policy initiatives are being hindered by a lack of funding. They emphasized the need to ensure a sustainable source of funding for this initiative before it can become a policy, concluding that perhaps it can be considered as a policy when future funds are ensured. The Coalition was not satisfied by this response, however the Committee explained how they have their hands tied in that they are not policy makers but rather legislatures and the training CETAs receive are bound by what policy makers determine. In order to avoid argument and regression on the topic, Mr. Asare acknowledged the extent of the problem and the many issues at play and suggested a form for action. He stated that both civil society and government should take an active role in soliciting external donors who would be interested in funding a three week training for new CETAs, while at the same time, policy makers should be pushing the agenda of mandatory training for CETAs through parliament because if the government adopts this as a policy, it will make it much easier for civil society and government to solicit funds. It was decided that both civil society and the government have a role to play in seeing this issue reach a national consensus to aid quality education.

### **5.0 ACTION STEPS**

The action points concluded from the round table discussion were based on the three main topics discussed and are as follows:

1. Civil society needs to conduct research on the issue of admitting additional students to teacher training colleges without the support of allowances in order to determine if this is a viable option for government to increase the number of trained teachers certified each year.
2. Government needs to streamline the bureaucratic process involved in the releasing of the Capitation Grant in order to avoid delays in the release of funds and ensure proper decentralization of the education sector.
3. Civil society and government need to work together to solicit for external donor funding to support the training of CETAs, which can be made more extensive if it is made a government policy that all CETAs must receive basic teacher training before being admitted into the classroom.
4. Both parties need to engage the ministry to make the training of CETAs a policy.
5. In order to make CETA training work, the training should be decentralized through district resource centers. Government needs to be pushed to resource these centers so the DAs will be responsible for trainings in line with national policies.

6. Incentives provided to teachers need to be more relevant to youth and shorter term contracts as the majority of teachers are young and tend to stay in the field for shorter durations with the absence of relevant incentives (ie. Paid for accommodation, travel allowance, distance education, etc.)
7. Partnership between the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education and Civil Society is needed to engage policy makers on the aforementioned initiatives.

## **6.0 ROLE ASSIGNMENTS**

Based on the concluded action steps, it can be seen that both civil society, in the form of GNECC, and government, in the body of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education, have a role to play to ensure that these initiatives are met by action and results. On the part of GNECC, they need to continue to do research into selected areas, such as teacher training colleges and the capitation grant, in order to provide a factual basis to arguments and continue to pressure the government to act on these findings. The Committee needs to take the ideas and action steps concluded at this meeting and bring them to wider Parliamentary meetings in order to gain the attention of policy makers and determine the feasibility of the action steps. In fulfilling their roles, both civil society and the government need to work together to recognize each other's efforts to support these initiatives, the issue of training CETAs being a key action step requiring collaboration.

## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

After the open discussion concluded with the above action steps, the meeting was wrapped up with a word of thanks to the researchers for helping to develop Ghana's education system from the Chair of the Select Committee on behalf of the committee. Mr. Asare formally concluded the meeting by thanking all the members for their time and participation in a fruitful deliberation period. He reiterated that it is the Coalition's goal to provide information to citizens and policy makers and hopes that this partnership will continue to grow in the coming years.