

# Ghana

## Effective Delivery of Public Services: Focus on Education

A DISCUSSION PAPER

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# Introduction

Ghana's progress in improving delivery of public services, including education, has been consistent with its achievements in consolidating democracy and respect for the rule of law since the restoration of civilian rule in 1992. The strong national focus on education, even during the periods of military rule, was maintained by the Kufuor administration, in office from 2001 to 2008, and enrolment rates at primary and secondary levels have increased at unprecedented rates. Yet Ghana remains behind in fulfilling the right to education, advanced in international treaties and its constitution, and may not achieve the Millennium Development Goal target of universal primary school completion by 2015.

This report examines some of the reasons for those shortfalls in the governance of the public education system in Ghana; the mundane support processes of statistics collection and utilisation, strategic planning and implementation, financial and resources management, human resources management and development and oversight of all these functions. Though two of the primary reasons for Ghana's failure to achieve the best education delivery result, remains the lack of consistent policy implementation and the lack of funds, especially to provide critical resources and train and reward the staff needed to supply quality teaching. There are indications that much can be done to improve management of education policies and deployment of the funds that do exist. Improving those systems will, in turn, increase the confidence of those who are in a position to support increased budget allocations to the sector.

This discussion document summarises the report's main findings and concludes with the key recommendations that follow.

# I: The legacy of education reforms and development

The accelerated delivery of education has been the dominant strategy running through Ghana's attempts at rapid development, even before independence when the Accelerated Development Plan for Education was adopted in 1951. Following the return to democracy in 1992, the civilian administration of former military ruler, President Rawlings, established the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy in 1995 and used a share of value added tax (VAT) proceeds to create the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) in 2000, still an important source of finance for investment expenditure in education. The government of President Kufuor (2001–2008) adopted the Ghana poverty reduction strategies I and II (2003–2005 and 2006–2009) that confirmed education as the main strategy to reduce poverty and enhance development. It then introduced a further raft of reform measures centred on the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2003–2015, including the introduction in 2005 of the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) and the capitation grant for schools (aimed at eliminating school fees at primary level), a 2007 education reform that created a new framework for FCUBE and a new Education Act adopted in 2008 that replaced the legal framework in place since the early 1960s. The 2009 State of the Nation address by newly inaugurated President Atta-Mills and the draft new ESP (2010–2020), constitute the most recent additions to the pursuit of the elusive education-for-development policy objective.

Yet substantive results have not been quite up to expectations. Both of the expected outcomes continue to elude the nation: effective education delivery and the long term objective of attaining middle-income country status.

The reforms have undoubtedly achieved unprecedented increases in gross enrolment rates (GER) and improvements in the gender parity index (GPI), especially at the pre-school and tertiary levels; as well as narrowing the equity-of-opportunity gap for access between deprived areas and the national average. Since the implementation of the ESP from 2003/04 to 2008/09, there have been dramatic increases in GER by 70.1%, 4.7%, 14.1%, 53.2%, 4.6% and 58.2% for pre-school, primary school, junior and senior high schools (JHS and SHS), teacher training college (TTC), and tertiary levels respectively, with the highest increases at the pre-school, SHS and tertiary levels. But those achievements notwithstanding, many stakeholders are concerned that universal primary completion, the objective of the international Education for All (EFA) initiative,

not to mention the 100% enrolment aimed at in the ESP, cannot be achieved by the 2015 deadline given current rates of access and persistent drop-out rates.

More questions than answers seem to persist. Why, for example, should many schools, especially in the rural areas, continue to be plagued by 0% examination passes, as recently as the 2008 Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE)? Why does the National Education Assessment (NEA) on basic level education still show, in 2007, that less than 25% of Ghana's youth reached the proficiency level for P6 English and 10% attained proficiency in P6 mathematics? How is it that a study of performance in the core subjects in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (SSSCE) and West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSSCE) between 2004 and 2008, showed that an average of 65.5% of all candidates had weak D–F scores in the four core subjects? Why do such wide discrepancies persist between deprived districts and national averages in GER, GPI, completion rates, trained teachers, pupil-teacher ratios and other indicators? Records of improved access, on average, do not automatically address the inequity of opportunities due to the economic and social circumstances of families and children domiciled in deprived districts, both urban and rural, or those with disabilities.

## II: National and international legal framework for education service delivery

Ghana has ratified most of the key international and African human rights treaties touching on the right to education. These include: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa; and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. However, Ghana has not ratified the 1960 UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education.

Ghana's record of reporting on its obligations to the treaty monitoring bodies is poor. What seems to be the main reason for the lack of consistent action and reporting on the international treaties is that the records are scant and scattered, and at the moment there is no agency that has been formally assigned responsibility for their coordination and ratification. In that regard it seems appropriate to mandate the Attorney General, the Ministry of Justice, or perhaps the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) to effect the coordination of reporting on, implementation and enforcement of these treaties and conventions. Government agencies also need to be instructed to propagate human rights as 'rights for all', not as optional rights selectively bestowed.

At the national level, the 1992 Constitution clearly establishes the rights of all to education, establishing that 'basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all' and forbids discrimination. However, judging from the persistence of the problems of equity of opportunities for access to good schools, of poor quality teaching and learning, and failures to achieve good passes in the BECE and the WASSCE, it looks as if the rights-based approach to education service delivery mandated by all those legal instruments is lost on both education policy-makers and implementers, as well as the consumers of those services. CHRAJ with the Ministry of Education (MOE) will need to mount public campaigns to highlight those rights to education and get stakeholders to act accordingly to seek improvements in education service delivery as their right.

The 2008 Education Act, which replaced the 1961 Act adopted soon after independence, establishes a new framework for education and aims to improve education service delivery. The overall education management structure at the centre remains intact. The Ministry of Education (formally the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, MOESS), is still the key policy-making and coordinating body, with 13 satellite agencies reporting to it, including the Ghana Education Service (GES) which is responsible for the implementation of approved national policies and programmes relating to pre-tertiary education. The Act gives a new focus to decentralised management of education services at the district level and strengthens the role of parents and District Assemblies in the implementation of the FCUBE policy. District Assemblies (the main local government structure, which are partly elected and partly appointed) are enabled to build and maintain schools, establish district directorates of education and appoint district education oversight committees. The Ministry of Education will concentrate on policy-making and enforcement of educational standards, development of books and other education materials and promote quality teacher training. When all these roles are implemented it is expected that all-round delivery of quality education will be enhanced.

The 2008 Education Act has to be applied in tandem with the Local Government Service Act 2003, to assign responsibility for implementing decisions of each District Assembly on education in the district to the head of a district education directorate, who supervises and controls schools and is answerable to the district chief executive through the district coordinating director. This new arrangement, by implication, bypasses the existing Ghana Education Service structures at the district level and means that there is an urgent need for the reconciliation of the legal mandates and functions specified in the GES Act 1995, the Education Act 2008, and the Local Government Service Act 2003.

# III: Information collection, publication and management

Reliable and up-to-date information is indispensable for the effective delivery of any service, private or public, for purposes of effective planning, accountability in the use of resources, and good governance in a democratic dispensation. Presentation of data should conform to international formats and standards in order to ensure a common understanding, comparability and transferability across borders. Ghana, like many other developing countries, continues to have problems with out-of-date and not very reliable data, as well as accessibility to such data. In 2006, for example, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned about the lack of a permanent system of data collection at the Education Management Information System (EMIS) within the Statistics, Research Information Management and Public Relations (SRIMPR) division of the MOE, to measure outcomes and meet the expectations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

There are three main sources of data for education-related policy decisions: reports on general socio-economic data from the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), education-specific data generated by MOE/EMIS and other agencies of the sector, and those from individual researchers, NGOs and other institutions.

Broad national data covering all sectors, including education, are generated by the Ghana Statistical Service which is tasked with 'the collection, compilation, analysis and publication of socio-economic data on Ghana'. The GSS units across the country carry out a number of surveys, such as the Population and Housing Census (PHC) and the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLS). The GSS publishes the Quarterly Digest of Statistics (QDS) from which education related data may be captured to complement or validate data published by the MOE. Even though QDS data and reports have been quite reliable, they tend to be dated. The QDS, like other delayed reports in the country, is constrained by resource and capacity problems, well beyond the control of management and the National Advisory Committee of Producers and Users of Statistics (NACPUS), tasked mainly to harmonise and improve the outputs of the GSS.

The constraints on MOE's data collection, analysis and publication have been considerably improved since it signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) in 2005. Part of the MOU with UIS was expected to address the issue of disaggregated data relevant to the Committee on the Rights of the Child's concerns. Evidence of the

data management capacity improvement of MOE/EMIS nation-wide includes the timely publication of the 'Basic Statistics and Planning Parameters Reports' on schools, information presented for the consultative sessions for the National Education Sector Annual Review (NESAR) and the preparation of Preliminary Education Sector Performance Reports (PESPRs). From the advances made so far, further refinements of EMIS's data management capabilities are expected and needed over the next few years, as skills acquired become consolidated and demand for more reliable data collection, analysis and publication continues to grow.

The EMIS unit within the MOE collects and publishes data from school inspection reports on all basic schools and up to the teacher training college level, for both public and private schools. The National Council on Tertiary Education (NCTE), the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NACVET), the Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) within the MOE, and others, provide data on their areas of jurisdiction. Yet the NCTE, for example, is unable to obtain response to requests for data from private tertiary institutions for its yearly reports, thus forcing it to publish only the Statistical Digest for Publicly Funded Universities, Institute of Professional Studies and Ghana Institute of Journalism, creating gaps in its data for relevant overall tertiary education policy action.

Another source of relevant data is the group of individual researchers, NGOs, universities and others whose reports address only specific aspects of education. Those sources may be used to complement or cross-check MOE data. Here too the reports tend to become dated and address selected issues not making them comprehensive enough in resolving broader sector problems.

The most important use of MOE-generated data is for internal analysis and policy decision making on the sector, such as planning inputs, budgeting, reports to government and donors, as well as for accessing funds, such as the GETFund. Other users of MOE data are the other government ministries, departments and agencies, researchers and development partners. Most of the data are available to the public on CD-ROM, hard copies, on the ministry website, or may be provided on request directly from EMIS. Generally, there have not been many public complaints on the quality and reliability of MOE/EMIS data published; most queries are discussed during the internal NESAR sessions for the sector.

## IV: Strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation

Ghana's Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2003–2015, and its update ESP 2010–2020, follow a long tradition of national and sector specific planning which dates back to the colonial days. The rationale for the ESP (2003) was to sustain the attempts to resolve earlier problems which had persisted in the delivery of education services, such as equity of access, quality of education delivered, development of science and technology and efficient management. After five years of implementation of the ESP the verdict on its impact and the earlier reforms was that in spite of the achievements recorded, more remained to be done, as targets set could not be achieved within its stipulated timeframe.

There is no doubt that the 2003 and 2010 ESPs have a clear statement of mission, which was to carry out 'the Government's vision of using quality education delivery and sports to accelerate the nation's socio-economic development'. They also have clear statement of objectives with indicated targets, as well as reasonably well structured and staffed organisation for plan implementation. There have been well designed procedures and processes, as well as a degree of transparency in plan implementation. The processes adopted by the Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation (PBME) Directorate of the MOE in managing the plans have conformed to laid-down consultation and review procedures of using the NESAR sessions, reviews like the PESPRs, and updates and consultation with most stakeholders, which are all done with the requisite degree of transparency and professionalism.

After six years of implementation and reviews it became obvious that in spite of the successes in increasing GER and other indicators, those rates of growth were not enough to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including reaching universal primary completion (UPC), attaining gender parity, and equalising opportunities for access for all, by 2015. The clear indications are that even more remains to be done than the achievements so far, especially in the areas of quality education delivery, following poor results in the 2007 National Education Assessment (NEA) for basic schools, the BECE and WASSCE, and the non-availability of adequate resources to meet the expansion in enrolments.

Many stakeholder reports thus insist there is considerable 'unfinished business' and key 'missing ingredients' that must be addressed by the new government to salvage education service delivery from the doldrums. The concerns expressed touch on all four objectives of the

2003 ESP, but mostly on equity of access and quality of education delivered. The new government's February 2009 State of the Nation address, however, seemed focused on the other two ESP objectives, of enhancing education management with the decentralised structures in the new Education Act 2008; and developing science and technology; as well as improving quality of learning by strengthening the 38 training colleges in the system. In addition, the new government has committed itself to return the duration of the SHS to three, rather than the four years to which it was increased in 2007. Events, including an inconclusive national forum on the change and the need to source funds to build dormitories and classrooms by September 2010 for the four-year SHS intake, suggest that this change of policy was introduced with insufficient consultation and has bypassed standard planning processes that have been established over recent years. The choice of duration for SHS should logically be the option that has a better chance of ensuring the all important quality outputs from our SHSs and, ultimately, our universities.

With a view to improving equity between schools, the Ghana Education Service began in 2005 to categorise senior high schools (SHS) into 'well-endowed' and 'less well-endowed', as the basis for measures to address unequal access to resources. But the system created problems leading to double and triple placements of students by the Computerised School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS). Since 2009, the GES has created six categories of schools, A, B, C, D, as well as T (technical), and P (private), and candidates are required to apply to up to six schools, but only one from category A and two from category B. This move is intended to ensure greater equality in chances of placement at a good school across the range of applicants. It remains to be seen whether this system will work as expected.

The new administration has also revised and updated the ESP to create a new ESP 2010–2020, aspects of which are already under implementation by the MOE. It is expected that the new ESP will be officially launched to enhance the ongoing efforts to achieve the elusive effectiveness in the delivery of education services in Ghana. As there is not a more systematic process in management than the strategic plan in setting implementable targets, Ghana will need to continue applying and refining the techniques involved, as well as finding sustainable means of resourcing these plans in order to achieve desired results in education delivery.

# V: Budgeting and expenditure management

The ambition to strive for continuous education improvements has entrenched both national and individual commitment to high investments in the sector. Consistently meeting international standards over the last six years, the nation has invested an average of 6% GDP, increasing to 9.1% and 10.1% in 2008 and 2009, and the highest percentage of the total discretionary budget goes to the education sector. Individual expenditures on education have also been increasing with the introduction of the fee-paying option in public universities and the proliferation of fee-paying private schools and universities. However, there is little discretion within the spending of the education budget. For example, 94.3% of the 2007 education budget went into salaries and related costs for education workers, leaving very little for investment elsewhere. Hence there is considerable underinvestment in education infrastructure and facilities that must be urgently resolved otherwise expectations of increased access and quality education by 2015 will prove elusive.

The Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation (PBME) directorate of the MOE prepares and monitors execution of the education budget. For the most part, the budgetary processes conform to international best practices for public expenditure management established by the World Bank, IMF and others, as well as the national prescriptions issued by the Ministry of Finance and the constitutional requirement to seek 'authorisation of expenditure'.

From 1996, Ghana instituted a Public Financial Management Reform Programme (PUFMARP). The 2005 review report of Ghana by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) criticised this process as 'as costly and yet unable to produce the desired results'. A study conducted by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in the same year found continuing problems of inaccurate data, lack of reconciliation between fiscal and banking data, weak internal audit systems and lack of coordination between different ministries, departments and agencies. Three critical laws were adopted by the Kufuor administration to address this situation: the Financial Administration Act (Act 654, 2003), the Internal Audit Agency Act (Act 658, 2003) and the Public Procurement Act (Act 663, 2003). Together they provide the framework for, and are intended to, enhance efficiency, accountability and transparency of the financial management system of the country. Many of the problems indicated persist, yet improvements

have been made, and systems to implement the new laws are still being perfected both in the education sector and nation-wide.

That is the reason why the introduction of the Public Expenditure Tracking System (PETS) in 2006 to mop up untracked expenditures was so important. But the effectiveness of PETS is constrained by its limited coverage of only 4.4% of public schools. In that regard, the MOE needs to not only expand PETS progressively country-wide as quickly as possible, but also ensure accelerated tracking of the burgeoning backlog of untracked expenditures to forestall any mis-handling and possible loss of scarce public funds.

One continuing concern is that numerous cases of education investments, especially from donor and other internal sources such as the GETFund, are not fully reflected in the district or national sector budgets. Any survey of the districts would point to so many funded projects which are not captured in the budget document or the ESP, thus becoming candidates for possible misapplication, wastage, confusion in coordination and poor control of expenditure. This reality strengthens repeated calls for composite budgeting, which should consolidate district budgeting into one comprehensive and disciplined document for purposes of effective local plan implementation, control and accountability.

In addition, contrary to expectations of effective expenditure monitoring and accountability for funds spent, there is considerable delay in reporting on budgeted expenditures, for which the PBME division of the MOE has responsibility. Given the disbursement of large amounts of money in education plan implementation and the time-bound schedules of the ESP, delayed expenditure reporting can hold back next actions, seriously distort plan schedules and force plan updates or new plans to be prepared.

Yet perhaps the most important issue remains that the MOE's annual budget, as part of the national budget, is subject to the same problems of resource constraints and inefficient utilisation of funds that affect the national budget. Whereas budgetary processes have often met technical requirements, the supply side of resource inputs has often experienced 'funding gaps'. When the requisite amounts of funds and stipulated times for their release for ESP programmes implementation are not met, they result in distortions in planned implementation schedules and inability to meet plan targets and budgets. Hence the need to review and update such plans, as has been done in the draft ESP 2010–2020, now under implementation.

An outstanding need, therefore, is for the government to seriously address the double problems of ineffective implementation of its education plans and resolve the perennial resource gaps.

## VI: Human resource management

Effective delivery of any public service, including education, depends primarily on the human resource base of the service. In this case: the teachers as frontline staff, policy-makers and all the other categories of support staff employed by MOE and its agencies for that purpose. Funds, equipment, facilities, buildings, etc. are all dependent on people to make them productive.

At African level, the Charter for the Public Service in Africa, adopted by African public service ministers in 2001, establishes rules on relations between the public service and its employees, both frontline, like teachers in the education sector, and other public servants who provide them with essential support. Within Ghana, the relevant national and sector-level legislation, regulations and guidelines for human resource management include: the 1992 Constitution, the Civil Service Law (1993), the Education Act (2008) and the GES Act (1995). In addition to these, there are administrative instructions, guidelines for appointments and promotions, and specific mandates and conditions of service for staff of all the agencies reporting to the MOE which regulate the acquisition, development and utilisation of the human resources of those agencies. These provisions notwithstanding, shortfalls in employee and management relations often present challenges for effective delivery of education services.

The education sector employs nearly 60% of employees on the public payroll in Ghana (or about 300 000 out of 470 000 total), while teachers, the frontline staff, form about two-thirds of the sector's employees. Among the challenges facing the sector is that the Special Conditions and Scheme of Service and Code of Conduct for Teachers, adopted in 2000 to separate such key staff for special treatment from other staff of the sector, have not been satisfactorily met over time.

The Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), the key union for teachers, the National Association for Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT), and the Teachers and Educational Workers Union (TEWU), the non-professional staff union, have persistently argued their case for better conditions, sometimes through disruptive 'industrial actions'. A strike by NAGRAT in 2007, which brought delivery of education to a halt across the nation, attracted the intervention of Parliament, religious bodies, and even the President, before partial resolution of the grievances expressed. These agitations have not significantly ameliorated their conditions to date, and policy-makers have to find ways of keeping their promises.

Meanwhile, there is a dire need for more teachers to meet recent increases in gross enrolment. With a national primary pupil-teacher ratio of 34:1 in 2007/08, there is need for an increase

of more than 20% of the present total of just under 200 000 teachers as of 2008. Attempts to fill the gap include utilisation of retired teachers as volunteers and incentive packages like housing, and bicycles for those who accept posting to remote areas. But policy-makers have been unable to respond to demands for increased number of trained teacher, due mainly to the already high expenditure of over 90% of the education budget on salaries. Funding limitations and shortfalls also delayed implementation of the 'single-spine' salary structure preferred by teachers, or to train and recruit outright the additional teachers required, even at current salary rates. There seem to be no easy or viable options to address these monumental problems.

Furthermore, there is need to reduce the tension between the three unions of the sector and management, as attempts to control the situation using existing mechanisms of staff relations, discipline and sanctions for misconduct are not adequate or appropriate for the issues on the table. The problems for policy consideration are not just better conditions and increased numbers and costs, but also how to stem the tide of trained teacher brain drain, which undermines the very attempts to reform education. Under these circumstances it is hard to achieve the aims of a full complement of teachers, improved pupil-teacher ratios, and guaranteed quality education, leading ultimately to reduced poverty and national development.

The non-teaching staff (such as the policy-makers, planners, financial management staff, human resource practitioners and the whole range of support service providers) are also indispensable to education service delivery. They deserve to be accorded the same human resource management services, such as improved conditions of service, effective recruitment, systematic staff training and development, maximum utilisation and retention, in order to harness their full potential for the sector.

Generally, there are other human resource management problems that should engage the attention of the MOE. One is that it looks as if beyond recruitment there are no consistent plans for systematic staff development and career planning. This is without prejudice to the fact that there is provision for study leave with pay for teachers and other staff with prescribed types, duration and number of courses to pursue to fulfil and individual's potential for professional development and progression. There are also no clear overall plans for staff utilisation in the sector that would enhance their career progression and maximum productivity. Also, there seems to be no systematic plan to retain core staff like teachers and support staff, in order to maximise utilisation of the wealth of knowledge and skills acquired on courses and on the job. On average, it is speculated that some teachers stay in the service for only three years after study leave with pay, and they either join the brain drain bandwagon or quit the teaching service. This is a serious case, if true, of lack of planning for staff retention and utilisation of the most important assets of the sector that must be resolved.

Lack of training for education administrators is seen by some commentators as a major missing ingredient in quality education. In particular, it takes trained and experienced head-teachers to create a conducive environment for effective learning in schools.

## VII: External oversight mechanisms

Responsibility for achieving the objectives of the education sector set for the MOE resides with its internal management. However, it is the responsibility of external oversight bodies and the wider public to hold public services, like education, accountable for the huge public funds and trust imposed upon them and the quality of services delivered in return. Of most relevance to the education sector are four broad types of external oversight bodies in Ghana, namely: other parts of the executive, constitutionally established bodies such as the Audit Service and CHRAJ, the legislature, and civil society organisations including the media.

The external-to-Ghana oversight function, or obligation to honour international treaties, resides in the UN and other international bodies, including the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS). The highest profile external review of Ghana's governance performance in recent years has been the review in 2005 by the APRM, which included commentary on Ghana's delivery of education services.

The highest law of the land, the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, reposes the overall oversight function in the executive to the President. The President's oversight functions are in turn delegated to the Central Management Agencies, like the Public Services Commission, the Office of the Head of Civil Service, the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) and the Ministry of Finance. Those four strategic management agencies have oversight supervisory mandates over the MOE, as well as other ministries, in the acquisition, development, utilisation and remuneration of all staff in the public services. The NDPC has oversight over planning, such as the ESP (2003), and the Ministry of Finance/Controller and Accountant General's Department, has budgeting and expenditure management oversight responsibilities that include oversight of the education service delivery plan.

The Audit Service, headed by the Auditor General, is responsible for auditing and reporting on the public accounts of all public offices in Ghana. The usefulness of the Auditor General's reports seems reduced because they are often dated, due in part to government agencies defaulting in their reporting to the Auditor General. The CHRAJ combines the usual functions of a national human rights institution and an ombudsman, and many complainants seem to prefer CHRAJ to the courts because of their effectiveness and faster resolution of their problems. CHRAJ's mandate includes education, although only 3% of cases covered in its reports for 2005 and 2007, related to that sector. The Serious Fraud Office was established by law in 1993 as a spe-

cialised agency to investigate and prosecute any alleged offences involving serious financial loss to the state. The SFO's reports outline some of the cases under investigation. Both the CHRAJ and SFO lack adequate resourcing, thus curtailing many of their activities including preparation of their annual reports. Indeed, it is unclear why these important oversight bodies are so chronically under-resourced. But whatever the reason, their predicament must be ameliorated to ensure greater effectiveness in achieving their mandates.

Perhaps the most important oversight body is Parliament and its relevant standing committees, the Public Accounts Committee and the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education. The Select Committee on Education has been somewhat active in monitoring the performance of the MOE, though it suffers from the same resource and expertise constraints as the other parliamentary committees. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Parliament works in tandem with the Auditor General on his yearly public audited accounts reports to Parliament, as required by the Constitution, to ensure strict control over public expenditure, including education. The PAC seems to observe due processes in the fulfilment of its mandate.

Not the least important of the group of oversight bodies are civil society organisations (CSOs), the media and ordinary citizens exercising their constitutional rights to free expression. Ghana has experienced a phenomenal growth in CSOs, press and FM stations, all presenting people with unprecedented avenues for self expression and opinions on every issue of public interest. The Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC), one of the key stakeholders dedicated to 'ensuring equitable and quality basic education for all', has been active in the NESAR processes steering implementation of the ESP and has no doubt contributed to recent achievements in education service delivery.

A major impediment to effective oversight of public services, including education, is the poor response to requests and release of official information to journalists, researchers, NGOs and even to fellow public servants and organisations. A comparative survey in 2006 found that public institutions in Ghana supplied adequate information in only 9% of requests made, making it the worst performing among 14 countries. A draft Right to Information Bill has finally been introduced to Parliament and should urgently be passed and implemented. With such a poor record, the need for a Right to Information Act becomes imperative.

The 2008 Education Act created new oversight bodies for the education sector, including the National Inspectorate Board, the National Teaching Council and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, all with centralised mandates for quality control of schools, teachers and the content of education. None were yet operational by mid-2010.

## VIII: Development assistance

Ghana remains dependent on a level of foreign assistance, despite efforts to reach the stage of self-sustaining growth. There is need for caution not to become a nation so chronically dependent on aid, as to kill the essential internal imperative to build the national capacity for self-reliance.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), and the Accra Agenda for Action on the Declaration, adopted in Ghana itself in 2008, provides a set of standards to evaluate the effectiveness of development assistance endorsed by both donor and recipient countries.

While there is no general assessment of how effectively development assistance received so far has been utilised by Ghana, there is enough evidence of the considerable relief the nation has enjoyed from assistance of various types in recent years, as well as debt forgiveness under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative. In 2008, the government expected to mobilise US\$ 2 billion in foreign loans and grants to push its poverty reduction programme; medium term economic framework (MTEF) allocations to government ministries, departments and agencies planned for 2006 to 2010 averaged 22% a year from foreign sources.

As the dominant sector in the nation's strategy for poverty reduction and development, the education sector has benefited from the range of donor support, both bilateral and multilateral. In 2007, 68.4% of the projected foreign assistance to the sector was in grants with 31.6% as loans. In that regard, it helps when specific assistance is targeted long-term to special projects, such as the World Bank/IMF Fast Track Initiative (FTI) set up under the EFA to achieve UPC in 2015. Although a target like UPC by 2015 may not be achieved, the assurance of continuing donor commitment to a new target date, such as 2020, can facilitate forward planning such as in the new ESP 2010–2020.

A persistent problem for policy-makers on both the local and donor sides relates to considerable donor support for district and local projects which do not feature in official budgets. There is evidence of such contributions to education across all regions. Apart from that practice creating problems for coordination and monitoring, it also creates problems for tracking such expenditures with the possible consequence of misuse of funds. The long delayed composite planning and budgeting at the district levels should resolve part of the problem. Additionally, the 'performance assessment frameworks' (PAFs) instituted under the multi-donor budget support (MDBS) arrangements to ensure a high degree of accountability in the disbursement of such

funds, could be applied in tandem with a broader based PETS (which for now has been instituted only on a pilot basis) to address the overall problems of education funds management.

Development assistance contributions made to the education sector are clearly not limited to direct disbursement of funds, but include indirect assistance to education-related think tanks and advocacy groups, including the members of the GNECC, as well as the teacher unions. Development assistance also goes beyond funds to include, perhaps more importantly, technical assistance which provides expert advice and skills inputs to programmes. Indeed, it can be argued that technical assistance builds more sustainable assistance than funds, because the knowledge and expertise acquired have wider multiplier potential for application and last for periods far beyond funds disbursement. A typical example is the extent to which the skills and capabilities of EMIS have benefited from the MOE/UIS MOU signed in 2005. With such evidence, policy-makers and the nation should, in future, be better off concentrating more on skills and knowledge acquisition from development partners, than on financial assistance which is transient and unsustainable.

The MOE can be said to have instituted effective ways of coordinating and monitoring, not only ESP implementation, but its dependent funds utilisation, including development assistance coordination as well. This is evidenced from the multiple-mechanisms approach adopted in the process. The sector-wide approach (SWAP) to plan implementation involves all key stakeholders, as do the NESAR processes using multiple coordination and review mechanisms which also ensure that, as much as possible, all areas of review and funds management are covered. But this should not be taken to mean that all is well. Effective ways of securing development assistance and managing it to maximum effect still present problems of coordination and the capacity to utilise funds effectively and on time to achieve set targets. An example of this was in 2005/06, when disbursement of funds supplied by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) for primary education delivery fell below the stipulated 40% level, and the condition was enforced by DFID that the minimum 40% level should be reached before further disbursements for 2006–2009 were released. This situation may be caused by a deficiency of skills and know-how or a simple case of delayed disbursement. Whatever the cause may be, policy-makers' attention should be drawn to it for effective resolution.

## IX: Conclusion

Ghana has sustained determined efforts since pre-independence, to promote education as a key strategy for poverty reduction and accelerated national development. Even though each past government has designed and implemented education reforms and pursued policies with those ultimate objectives in mind, prevailing results have not been up to expectations. This is because, according to some stakeholders, many of the reforms amount to mere ‘tinkering around the edges of the education system’ without reaching the core issues and problems. The records indicate that recent reforms of 2007, and the ESP, both 2003 and the planned 2010 update, introduced innovative strategies such as the capitation grant, and school feeding programme and recorded impressive gains in GER, GPI and other indicators. Even so UPC and other targets cannot be reached by 2015 and, the quality levels of those increases in access have raised questions of effectiveness of education delivery, buttressed by the very recent poor National Education Assessment (NEA) results and performances in the basic and secondary school certificate examinations (BECE and WASSCE).

The education system seems well-endowed with management structures, agencies and functional processes. Functional processes which include: information gathering, processing and reporting; strategic plan implementation, monitoring and evaluation systems; and financial and human resource management practices; all aimed at ensuring effective delivery of education services. Resource inputs from both domestic and foreign sources have been marshalled. But plan implementation has been beset with system failures and some funding shortfalls. External oversight institutions in the executive, Parliament and the CHRAJ have played their prescribed roles, but are often rendered inactive by inadequate resource availability. Even though the results of all the interventions in the sector have led to some quantum improvements in education delivery, problems of quality and adequacy of investments continue to be stressed by key stakeholders. Given prevailing poor BECE results and weak to failing scores in WASSCE core subjects, key stakeholders including the APRM, donors and others generally agree that the government/MOE should implement urgent measures to improve the quality of education delivery, as a first step. Full implementation of the FCUBE policy still lags and should be completed.

Those problems need to be resolved in order to realise the right to education for all, achieve the MDGs, universal primary completion and gender parity, equal opportunities for all and other targets which have constituted the basic objectives of all previous education sector reforms.

# X: Key recommendations

## International and national legal obligations

- Ghana should ratify the international UNESCO Conventions against Discrimination in Education and fulfil its obligations to report on all international treaties to which it is a party.
- Government should take steps to ensure rights-based access to quality education for all regardless of region, district or economic circumstances in order to close the persistent equity and basic human rights gap.
- There is a need to review the decentralised structures of education administration, to ensure the reconciliation of the legal mandates and functions specified in the GES Act (1995), the Education Act (2008), and the Local Government Service Act (2003).

## Information collection, publication and management

- The improvements in data collection, processing and publication occasioned by the MOE's MOU with the UNESCO Institute of Statistics since 2005, need to be further improved upon by regular training of staff, down to the district level, to ensure regular availability of reliable data for education decision-making.
- Sources of complementary data to MOE, such as the GSS and its Quarterly Digest of Statistics need to be adequately resourced to ensure the currency and reliability of their data to assist accurate reporting on education.

## Strategic planning

- The MOE should institutionalise the use of strategic planning of education as a strategic management tool to provide a systematic basis for delivering education services, based on the lessons learned from the implementation of the ESP, to ensure continuous improvements in education service delivery.
- The MOE should aim at making cheap hard copies of the ESP and other reports on education available in bookshops and other outlets, for purposes of making relevant education data and information available to district and local level persons, schools and researchers. The rationale is to make such information, which is not readily available,

available to everybody who needs to know of the status and direction in which this most important national (human) resource is being developed.

- The NESAR process and other stakeholders involved in education sector plan implementation should review activities which have proved successful so far and these should be strictly maintained to achieve even better results in education service delivery to meet the targets set in the ESP.
- The controversy over the NDC government's decision to reverse the creation of a four-year SHS programme suggests that planning processes cannot be short-circuited without risk. The government and political parties, in their manifestos, should ensure that their policy proposals are carefully thought through and debated before they are implemented.

## Budgeting and expenditure management

- The outstanding needs to reach the MDGs, including investment in human resources and infrastructure, point to a major need for greatly increased funds for investment in the education sector.
- The MOE should anticipate and secure ESP funds in advance, to forestall breaks and delays in the process of implementing the ESP which could prolong completion dates and increase costs.
- The MOE must actively pursue and complete the Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS), expand them country-wide, and institute other measures to mop up the delayed cases of financial reporting and to meet accountability and transparency requirements in public financial administration.
- The MOE and GES should train more of its staff in education delivery activities in skills of expenditure management and tracking in their areas of operation, including at decentralised levels, to build a culture of financial tracking and management to ensure that education funds are spent on those for whom they were intended.
- The MOE should have jurisdiction over the management of the capitation grant and school feeding and health programmes, as the current practice where bodies external to the sector such as the Scholarships Secretariat or MLGRDE do so, creates problems of coordination, ownership and control of resources for the MOE.

## Human resources management

- The need to refocus on schools' management as a critical ingredient for enhanced outputs, suggests that top school administrators and head-teachers should be specifically trained and developed to enable them acquire the skills to create the critical environment conducive for learning and achieving better examination results.
- Urgent measures should be instituted to significantly improve the conditions of service of teachers as the front line education service providers.
- The MOE should ensure that as the most important asset of the education sector, the human resources recruited, should be regularly trained and developed, especially the

teachers, as agreed to in the *Conditions of Service for Teachers*, to enable them to work to enhance the attainment of the ESP objectives.

- Significant investment needs to be devoted to an expansion of teacher training, to address the shortage in teacher supply for the needs of schools, especially in the more deprived districts.
- The MOE and all stakeholders should push for the passage of the long delayed whistleblower legislation to strengthen the hands of all staff in the education sector to play watch-dog roles in the anti-corruption campaign to minimise ethical infractions and the cost of education to the public.
- The MOE needs to strengthen human resources management practices in the sector to manage staff more effectively, especially in the areas of teachers' performance assessment and promotion on merit to ensure quality teaching and quality education for students. Teacher recruitment and deployment based on merit and professional capability, and teacher incentives including salaries and allowances to motivate them to work in all areas, including those deprived. All these are necessary to equalise opportunities for students in all regions and districts to acquire quality education.

## Oversight mechanisms

- The MOE should instruct and empower its managers at all levels of the education delivery system to listen to and cooperate with external oversight mechanisms to ensure timely resolution of problems impeding satisfactory education service delivery in order to maintain effectiveness and the confidence of its stakeholders.
- In practice, external oversight mechanisms like the Auditor General, the Parliamentary Committees, SFO, CHRAJ, etc., have not made much impact mainly because they are under-resourced. To be effective, all these external mechanisms need to be adequately resourced.
- There is need for the reports of the Audit Service and SFO to be kept up to date, so that the public, Parliament and civil society can be reassured that action is being taken against misuse of public funds and corruption in education and other sectors.
- Recommendations of oversight bodies like the Auditor General, the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament on funds management should be more rigorously implemented.
- With the passage of the Education Act (Act 778, 2008) which now empowers district-level stakeholders to play an active role in schools management, District Education Oversight Committees, School Management Committees (SMCs), parent teacher associations (PTAs), local NGOs and the District Assemblies should be empowered to play their role in the effective delivery of education services in their communities.
- The newly created education quality oversight bodies in the Education Act (2008), like the National Inspectorate Board (NIB), the NTC and the NCCA, should be adequately resourced to ensure fulfilment of their mandates to the sector and to Ghanaians.

- The government should ensure passage and speedy implementation of the Right to Information Act.

## Development assistance

- The MOE should continue to rely on relevant development partners' expert advice and qualitative inputs alongside those of Ghanaian experts, for the purposes of ensuring that Ghana's policies on education contain the right mix of ideas necessary to maintain the international marketability and competitiveness of its education outputs.
- The MOE should ensure that all the resource inputs to the education sector, including donor inputs, are documented, accounted for, reported and/or captured in the budget and the public expenditure tracking system (PETS), consistent with public expenditure management (PEM) practices elsewhere, to provide a more reliable database on the country's total resource envelope on education and for effective education planning purposes.