

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### a. Background

Successive governments of Ghana like their counterparts in other developing countries have placed much faith in education as a major instrument for rapid social and economic development. With this faith, the education sector has formed the largest share of government recurrent expenditure. At various times the education sector was allocated as much as 40% of the national recurrent expenditure. Beginning with the *Accelerated Development Plan for Education* in 1951, access and participation increased at all levels rapidly until the economic decline of the late mid 1970s. The 1987 Educational reforms were initiated to revamp the educational system, which had suffered considerable deterioration, following the Economic Recovery Programme that was launched in 1983 to arrest the economic decline.

Since the reforms began there has been widespread dissatisfaction with many aspects of its implementation. These have led to calls for a review of the reforms<sup>1</sup> to deal with perceptions of poor academic outcomes at the basic level, poor physical infrastructure of many primary and JSS, widening gap in teaching and literacy levels between public schools and private schools, poor achievement levels at the SSS, limited access to quality SSS education, and funding issues in tertiary education. These criticisms have been articulated in spite of the substantial increases in government and donor funding of education.

Ghana's education sector in 2002 owes much to the 1987 educational reforms, which were essentially based on the Dzobo Report of 1973. This report led to the publication of the *New Structure and Content of Education* in 1974, which introduced the concept of the Junior Secondary School (JSS) and the Senior Secondary School (SSS). The Ghana Teaching Service, later to be called the Ghana Education Service (GES), was set up in 1974 to implement the reforms. The reforms, however, did not progress as was envisaged. By 1983 the GES had succeeded in establishing only 118 experimental Junior Secondary Schools nation-wide.

The 1987 educational reforms set out to:

- Expand and improve the quality of education at all levels;
- Make basic education free and compulsory;
- Reduce the length of pre-tertiary education from 17 years to 12 years for all children;
- Enhance the relevance of education to the social and economic needs of the country; improve supervision and management and to partially recover costs.

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<sup>1</sup> Pages 4 – 8 of the *Background Paper for the National Education Forum of 1999* discussed in some detail the contents of the review papers and documents. Examples are the *Kwapong Report of 1967*, the *Dzobo Report of 1973*, *Education Commission Reports on Basic, and on Secondary Education, 1987 and 1988*.

The implementation of the reforms was boosted by the 1992 Constitution, which mandated the government to make basic education free and compulsory. In 1996 the *Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE)* was launched. Educational practices and management saw many changes to achieve these objectives as government spending increased and considerable donor funding was attracted into the educational sector.

#### **b. Key Policy Changes**

- The educational reforms installed a 9-year basic education sub-sector of education consisting of a 6-year primary school and a 3-year Junior Secondary School. (JSS). A 3-year Senior Secondary School (SSS) was also instituted. Pre-tertiary education was reduced from 17 years to 12 years for all;
- The reforms phased out the Middle School. The General Certificate of Education (GCE) “O” and “A” levels were also phased out.
- Nine years of basic education ended with a terminal examination, the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), which all JSS 3 pupils were mandated to write. Admission into the SSS has come to depend on the BECE while admission into tertiary institutions depends on performance in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE).
- The secondary school curriculum was diversified into five programmes: (i) General Arts and Science (ii) Agriculture (iii) Business (iv) Technical and (v) Vocational Programme, each of which offered a student a choice of three elective subjects, in addition to four core subjects.
- Polytechnics were upgraded into tertiary institutions. Starting from six polytechnics--there are now 10 polytechnics, one in each regional capital.
- A tertiary sub sector of education emerged which is administered by the National Council for Tertiary Education. Two more public university institutions have been established, namely, the University for Development Studies (Tamale), and the University College of Education, Winneba.
- Expansion in access and participation resulted in increased government expenditure on education, resulting in calls by government for cost-sharing measures to reduce government burden. A new student loan scheme, administered by the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT), was instituted to provide financial assistance to students in tertiary institutions. Students’ opposition to the cost-sharing measures and yearly calls for increases in the levels of loans, coupled with government’s increasing indebtedness to SSNIT, and the widespread complaints about

the quality of education, led government to convene the National Education Forum in 1999. The most important aftermath of the forum is the establishment of the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GetFUND).

### **c. The Aims and Objectives of the ESR**

The Education Sector Review (ESR) is one more effort to analyse and assess the performance of the educational sector in order to assist Government and Development Partners begin working towards a sector wide approach. Its context is the 1987 educational reforms, which have significantly changed Ghana's educational structure and content. The objective of the ESR is to assess the performance of Ghana's education sector and its sub-components to obtain facts, figures, insights and analytical perspectives for the preparation of strategies for a sector wide approach to the delivery of educational services.

The ESR will inform the MOE and assist the education sector contribute to the:

- Implementation of a Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy;
- Progressive globalisation of the economy and the need for a skilled workforce to produce world class goods and services;
- Provision of information, analyses, and cost projection for the next MTEF;
- The implementation and possibly redirection of the FCUBE policy and programmes;
- Ensuring linkages between the different levels of education.

The ESR is organised into *five thematic areas*:

- Educational Outcomes, Linkages and Transitions
- Management
- Finance
- Community and School Relations
- General Education, Gender and the Disadvantaged

The Education Sector Review (ESR) was designed to assist Government identify the key priority areas and potential solutions to some of the most pressing problems within the education system to date. The review was also tasked to look at what exists and suggest improvements based on capacity and within the projected financial envelope, building on the strengths of the system.

### **d. Methodology**

The data and information contained in the ESR report are based on:

- A review of existing reports and research;
- Observations and the assessments by educational specialists, experts and programme managers;
- Thematic workshops with Ministry of Education, GES, Development Partners, NGOs, University Researchers;
- Presentations by key stakeholders before ESR Reference Group;

- Seminars and commissioned papers
- Situational Analysis prepared by ESR team members
- Visits to educational institutions, districts directorates and school community areas

**e. Indicators for Education in the GPRS**

The 27 indicators for education developed for the GPRS informed the ESR team throughout their work. Annex 2 lists the GPRS education indicators, which were modified slightly to make use of updated data from the budget and the 2000 population census data (Orivel, 2002). Data contained in the report is based on projections made using the 2000 census data and information available from the MOE Statistical Division.

The ESR was also informed by the global Education for All (EFA) planning process, which is currently underway to support educational targets and planning exercises in the sub region.

# **CHAPTER ONE: BASIC EDUCATION**

## **1.0 Introduction**

The provision of basic education for all is a key national development objective and central to the realisation of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS). Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) is also a constitutional requirement. In the context of the ERS, basic education also includes preschool and non-formal adult education.

This chapter presents the analyses and assessment of the outcomes of basic education with respect to access, participation, retention, transitional rates, relevance, and disparities due to gender, geographical location, and the quality of teaching and learning. It describes some of the main interventions by the Ministry of Education, the GES and Development Partners and the impact these have made to the policy objectives of the reforms and the FCUBE. It concludes with recommendations for a way forward.

### **Key Issues in Basic Education**

The specific terms of reference for the ESR lie in the context of the objectives of the FCUBE, namely, to improve quality of teaching and learning, management for efficiency, as well as access and participation;

A review of these same objectives are defined by the outputs of the five strategic objectives which the MOE has set for itself:

1. Increasing access and participation
2. Extending learning opportunities
3. Improving pupils achievement
4. Upgrading and extending technical and vocational education and training
5. Promoting good health in schools and communities

## **1.1. Early Childhood Education**

This section focuses on Early Childhood Education (ECE) since this is the MOE's key area of responsibility under the Draft policy for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)<sup>2</sup>. The concept of Early Childhood Care and Development is a broad concept that involves all aspects of the child's development from 0-8 years of age.

Early Childhood Education can be an equalising factor for children from poor communities gaining a better head start in relation to their urban counterparts.

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<sup>2</sup> A more detailed analysis is available in the "Situational Analysis of Early Childhood Education within the Education Sector in Ghana" which forms one of the ESR reports (Casely-Hayford, 2002)

Studies indicate that Early Childhood Education (ECE) can ensure that children from poor socio-economic backgrounds are able to compete and perform throughout their schooling life ensuring higher levels of productivity during working life. High rates of child malnutrition (20-25%), particularly in the northern regions, have had a severe impact on the learning outcomes of children in Ghana (Nantogma, 1990; Fentiman. A., 1996). ECE is proving to be one of the most effective approaches to removing the inequalities, which exist between children due to poverty and socio-cultural background.

## **Targets**

The Education for All (EFA) global framework states that pre-school education is a basic right of all children and should be incorporated into all Governmental programming, particularly in regions where there is a high incidence of poverty. The EFA framework for Sub-Saharan Africa states "ECD programmes should be expanded two fold by the year 2006 and should offer safe, secure and stimulating environments. Countries should work towards providing access to ECCD programmes for all children aged between 3-6 by the year 2015" (The Dakar Framework for Action, 2000).

The **Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy** also states that ECCD services will be provided to all children in Ghana and act as a key strategy for poverty reduction, particularly in relation to disadvantaged groups. The responsibility for pre-school education will be under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment (MMDE) will have responsibility for day care centres and crèches for children between 0 to 3 years of age.

The ECCD Draft Policy states the specific role of the MOE in relation to ECE is to: take a lead role in providing technical input in early intellectual stimulation and development issues in ECCD programmes, both centre based and non-centre based. These would include but not be limited to the development of curriculum setting and monitoring of educational standards. The Government of Ghana has also promised that all primary schools will have a kindergarten-attached in order to ensure that children have access to ECE. Innovative cost effective approaches will be required to ensure the increased provision for ECCD is available.

**Access:** There are several analyses on the access rates for early childhood education depending on how one defines ECE. The most recent data based on the 2000 census suggests that as many as **44%** of children between 3 and 5 (inclusive) are able to access some type of early education programmes, such as pre-school or kindergarten (Orivel, 2002). Data from the ECD unit is not comprehensive but suggests that there has been a steady increase in the number of ECE centres<sup>3</sup> around the country and a growing demand for ECE services. Evidence from the National Nursery Teachers' Training Centres

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<sup>3</sup> ECE centres will be used to include kindergartens and pre-schools for children between the ages of 4-6 years of age.

(NNTTC) also suggests that there is increasing demand for early childhood education training, particularly in the major urban centres.

Over 7,000 pre-schools will have to be created in order to provide access to all children at the pre-school level based on current figures of 4,739 kindergartens which exist, and the number of primary schools that currently exist (13,965)<sup>4</sup>. Studies suggest that since early childhood development centres are not available in most rural communities it is only through non-formal community based ECCD centres and approaches that children from these areas will be reached.

The public sector and the MOE run the vast majority of pre-schools except for urban areas of Greater Accra and Ashanti region where private schools take a larger share. According to the CWIQ survey the share of private pre-schools in the urban areas of Greater Accra was about 80%, Ashanti had 51% and Brong Ahafo had 42%. Less than 40% of kindergartens are operated by the private sector in other urban areas across the country.

### Key challenges

**Equity** --Access to ECE centres is mainly concentrated in urban areas and meets the needs of children from high socio-economic backgrounds (CWIQ, 1998).

**Table 1: Percentage of Children in Pre-school from rural and urban households**

	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>
3year olds	25%	35%
4 Year olds	46%	62%
5 year olds	60%	73%

(Based on CWIQ, 1997)

There is a significant variation based on a regional analysis. For instance 50% of children aged between 2 to 5 and almost 80% of children from 4 to 5 are attending pre-schools in Urban Accra while only 11% and 21% of children in the same age groups were attending pre-schools in the Northern areas of the country.

### Teacher Requirements

Approximately 11% of the KG teachers in the system are trained (representing 4,091 trained teachers). Projections suggest that another 32,498 trained teachers and 25,871 attendants will be required if increases in ECCD services are increased by the MOE.

The National Nursery Teachers' Training Centre (NNTTC) is the only Government certified training institute for pre-school teachers in Ghana. It has 5 outreach programmes and the national campus in Accra. Each year approx. 160 teachers pass out of the NNTTC at the central level and about 500 pass out from satellite programmes at the regional and district levels. Research suggests that

<sup>4</sup> Both Public and Private, 2000 MOE.

there is the need to rationalise the location and number of teachers already serving at KG level in all districts in the country.

## **Curriculum**

One of the greatest challenges for ensuring ECE is relevant to the Ghanaian context will be the ability of the sector to implement a multi-sectoral approach to programming at the school level. School feeding and health programmes will be essential to ensuring effective ECE programmes are implemented.

Unfortunately there is no national curriculum for kindergarten education developed and used in the public school system. There have been several attempts to introduce a curriculum through individual initiatives at the school level and through donor supported projects, which have been started and then discontinued due to the lack of national support in the form of a policy framework. Boakye (1999) suggests that most teachers are not aware of the need for psychosocial stimulation at the early learning stages of a child's life and place most emphasis on the cognitive development. Learning through play is not a regular part of the pre-school curriculum, instead teachers rely on the P1 syllabus due to lack of materials and training.<sup>5</sup>

## **Key Recommendations**

A reorientation of public educational services and GOG resources towards the poor would mean that ECCD service providers and programmes would give priority to the most needy and vulnerable groups. More work is needed to ensure that funds and resources are **targeted** to the underserved areas where quality pre-school education can be used as an equalising factor. These include introducing community operated pre-school programmes with some assistance from government through providing books and supporting teachers through non-profit providers such as community groups and religious bodies. Consideration should also be given to providing school feeding programmes, scholarships to needy children/families and/ or school improvement funds for underserved areas.

The ESR revealed that community involvement in ECE is critically needed to ensure a strong relationship between the parents and the ECE centres in each school. Community ownership and support for ECE services will also be necessary if expansion takes place in reaching rural deprived areas. A revitalisation of community owned and operated approaches to ECE are needed. Some of these options include non-formal community based ECCD centres and the usage of existing indigenous schools, such as Koranic schools.

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<sup>5</sup> Assessment by experts from Oslo University College and visits to kindergartens in the Eastern and Greater Accra region reveal that KG schoolteachers often rely on the P1 curriculum to train children at the Pre School and KG level. Reports by MOE officials and parents themselves suggest that some KGs are even examining children before admission (mainly private KGs).



There needs to be a tremendous increase in the capacity of staff at the national Early Childhood Development Unit (ECDU) in order to ensure that a regular programme of activities is implemented. Financing of ECCD centres should be targeted to the most deprived regions and districts of the country<sup>6</sup>.

### **The next steps**

- There is tremendous need for the ECD Unit to focus on completing a simple yet comprehensive curriculum for KG1 (4 year olds) and KG2 levels (5 year olds). This should be based on existing materials, which have been tested in Ghana or other parts of Africa.
- Local teachers should be recruited and trained as ECE teachers to meet the expansion demand of the system. Local communities should also ensure that pre-school attendants volunteer from the community on a rotational basis. This would ensure that parents actively participate in the ECE process and that the government could save on resources used for payment of KG attendants.

Teacher training in early childhood should be introduced as a regular course for all teachers at training colleges. If funds are available at least one TTC in each region should offer ECE training as a specialised stream. The draft policy suggests that ECCD units be attached to all training colleges.

### **Conclusion**

The MOE's Early Childhood Education programmes should focus on providing at least one year of pre-school education to children from poor and deprived rural areas particularly in the four most deprived regions in the country<sup>7</sup>. The Ministry of Education should therefore focus its resources on providing public pre-schools in primary schools in the most deprived areas of the country. This will require a systematic approach over the next ten years focussing on the most deprived areas first. This will allow the capacity of the national, regional and district ECCD officers to gradually increase.

The MOE should begin by ensuring all primary schools have at least one KG level for five-year-olds attached to their schools. Teachers should be deployed to ensure a 30 to 1 pupil teacher-ratio with one teacher and one assistant/attendant. This approach should be implemented in a systematic manner moving from one region of the country each year (i.e. starting with the regions with the highest incidence of poverty). Parents should be encouraged to support the establishment of these pre-schools through the provision of food at the beginning of the month or other in-kind contributions for children while attending pre-school.

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<sup>6</sup> An extensive mapping exercise was carried out to identify the most deprived rural districts in the country (See MOE, Implementation Co-ordination Unit, MOE, 2001)

<sup>7</sup> including Northern, Upper West, Upper East and Central.

## 1.2. Primary Education

### Access and Participation

Access and participation in primary education increased in absolute numbers since the reforms began in 1987. Physical access to primary schooling has grown significantly as shown by the increased number of public and private schools (See Table 2).

**Table 2: Growth in numbers of Primary Schools**

	1987/87	1992/93	1997/98	2000/2001
Public Schools	9424	11,270	11,236	11,750
Private Schools	145	740	1,090	2,215

Source: SRIMPR MOE

Gross Enrolment Ratios (GER) which measure the participation of the primary age group (6 – 11 years), though variable and not showing a consistent trend, indicate that Ghana is far away from achieving the hundred percent enrolment which has long been a national goal and now a constitutional requirement. The GERs in Table 3 are based on projections from the 1984 Population Census. The most accurate GER is that of 2000/2001 which is based on the actual 2000 Population Census.

**Table 3: Primary School Enrolments, 1986 to 2000**

Year	School-age Population	Primary school enrolment (Public & private)	Gross Enrolment Ratio	Proportion enrolled in private schools	Gender parity
1986	2,173,089	1,679,072	77.3	4.1	0.81
1990	2,453,146	1,945,422	79.3	7.3	0.82
1991	2,544,676	2,011,062	79.0	10.2	0.84
1992	2,638,831	2,047,293	77.6	9.7	0.85
1993	2,736,919	2,138,635	78.1	10.7	0.85
1994	2,838,678	2,154,676	75.9	10.9	0.87
1995	2,944,253	2,197,172	74.6	11.0	0.87
1996	3,048,161	2,333,347	76.5	13.1	0.88
1997	3,155,758	2,445,353	77.5	13.1	0.89
1998	3,267,002	2,562,229	78.4	13.1	0.90
1999	3,382,649	2,684,689	79.4	13.1	0.91
2000	3,154,152**	2,477,990	78.6**		

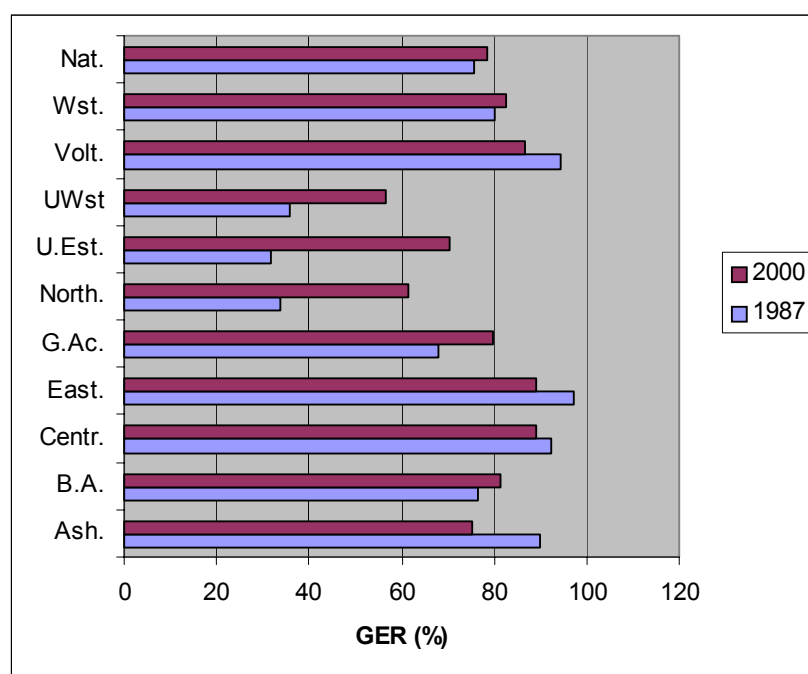
Source: SRIMPR Division MOE.

Data from the 2000/2001 MOE annual school census and population data from the 2000 national population census conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service indicates a slight decline in the GER. The GER in this ESR study for 2000 is based on actual data rather than population and enrolment projections. All other GERs are based on projections from the 1984 Population Census.

## Equity Issues at Primary level

Regional variation in school enrolment is well known. The worst performing regions are the three Northern regions, i.e., Northern, Upper East and Upper West. Figure 1 compares projected regional<sup>8</sup> trends in GER for 1987 and 2000/2001, which are based on the 2000 Population Census. Projections in 1987 place Eastern, Volta, Central and Ashanti regions above the national average GER. The 2000 figures, which are more reliable, place Eastern, Central, Volta Western and Greater Accra above the national GER. In both years the three Northern regions experienced the lowest GER. One can only hope that the large increases registered for those regions in 2000 are close to the reality on the ground (see figure 1 below)

**Figure 1: Regional Variation of Primary GER (%): 1987 and 2000**



Net enrolment rates estimated for 2000 differ widely from the GER. The differences between gross and net enrolments reflect over aged pupils attributable to delayed enrolment or repetition. Repetition rates are rather low suggesting that many school pupils are over-aged. Delayed enrolment is

<sup>8</sup> The abbreviations are explained as follows: Nat. (National), Wst (Western), Vol (Volta), Uwst (Upper West), U.Est ( Upper East), North (Northern), G. Ac. (Greater Accra), East. (Eastern), Centr (Central), B.A. (Brong Ahafo), Ash (Ashanti).

extensive in Ghanaian schools (Shiyan Chao and Omer Alper 1998, GLSS, 1995). In a discussion with teachers in a rural community near Accra, they observed that Ga children (the ethnic people of Accra) attend school at an early age, but then drop out as soon as they are old enough to earn a living. This is in sharp contrast to Ewe children (the dominant ethnic group of the Volta region) who enter school when they are old enough to pay their own fees, and stay on to complete JSS. These assertions call for further research.

The gender gap in school attendance is largely a rural problem, most prevalent in the three Northern regions. The cultural and religious practices experienced in some of these areas discourage formal schooling. Age-specific enrolment rates for boys of primary school age are on average 10 percent higher than those for girls (Chao and Alper, 1998). Chapter 5 will discuss gender-related issues in greater detail.

Gender parity at basic level is improving gradually but remains far worse at the secondary levels of education. Primary enrolment figures suggest that girls' enrolment rates are 46.9% while boys' enrolment remains at 53.10%. The main equity issues are the differences in transition and completion rates between girls and boys.

The gender gap improved slightly at the Primary level but remains wide and deep particularly when analysis takes into account the regional and rural disparities. For instance girls' enrolment in the Northern region starts at 44% in P1 and drops to 36% in P6 compared to the Greater Accra region where it remains more constant.

### ***Growth of Enrolment in Private Schools***

There has been a phenomenal growth of enrolment in private primary schools. These schools attract children from largely high-income families. These are the schools, which achieve the best CRT and BECE results. The pupils that attend the best SSS also obtain the best SSSCE. Shiyan Chao and Omer Alper (1998) found that private schools accounted for 11% of primary school enrolment and 1.5 percent of JSS students in 1992. Most of these schools are located in the urban areas with a few in rural areas; Statistics from the Ghana National Association of Private Schools (cited by Norman La Rocque, 2001) indicate that Greater Accra, and Ashanti enrol 38.6 percent and 29.6 percent, respectively, of total enrolment of private primary school intake. Accra and Kumasi have the highest number of children enrolled in private primary schools. Northern, Upper East, Upper West have the lowest percentage of private primary school enrolment at 0.2, 0.4, and 0.2 respectively.

### ***Repetition, Completion and Drop-out Rates in Primary School***

Primary Schools experience very low repetition rates ranging from 3 to 10 percent. Low repetition is not a measure of high internal efficiency as the very poor CRT scores of public schools show. A study by Boakye et al (1998)

estimated drop out rates of 29.5% for girls and 20.2 % for boys whereas EMIS data estimates national rates of 10% for boys and 12% for girls (ESSP, 2001). Boakye's study indicated that in two districts of the North, out of a cohort of 1000 girls as many as 740 dropped out in primary school. However, at an average transition rate of 95% it would appear the majority of pupils who reach Primary 6 continue to JSS (see table 4 below).

**Table 4: Completion and Transition Rates in Basic Education**

Year	Completion Rate for P6 (%)	Completion Rate for JSS 3 (%)	Completion Rate for Basic Education (%)	Transition (pass) from P6 to JSS1	Transition (pass) rate from JSS to SSS (%)
1991	70.0	82.8	50.5	96.8	35.3
1992	70.1	82.8	51.0	93.9	33.8
1993	72.1	82.6	54.3	95.0	34.8
1994	75.4	82.4	56.8	94.5	N/A

+Source: From MOE (1995) in Staff Report: Basic Education Sector Improvement Programme, 1996, cited in Joint Strategic Review of the ESSP (2001)

The main gender issues and inequalities at Basic level relate to **the high dropout** rates of girls at all levels and **poor transition** rates between Primary to JSS levels, which continue to characterise the education system. Drop out rates for girls are higher than boys at all levels of the education system including Primary and JSS levels. Girls' transition rates are lower than that of boys between P6 and JSS1 and between JSS3 and SSS1 (Sutherland-Addy, 2002) see annex 8.

### ***Out of school phenomena***

A significant proportion of children especially girls in Ghana remain out of school. The majority of these girls are found mainly in the Northern Regions of the country where the female participation rates are far lower than other regions. The problem of out of school children is a growing phenomenon in Ghana due to the high fertility rate, population growth rate and increasing costs of education (CWIQ 1998; GSS 2000). In 1999/00 academic year:

- Approximately **30%** of girls at Primary level compared to **19%** of boys at Primary level were not in school. (MOE in Sutherland Addy, 2002)
- Approximately **45%** of girls at JSS compared to **36%** of boys were not in JSS (based on 1997/98 GES Data)

Closing the access gap for girls and boys in these areas will require more innovative approaches to education particularly approaches, which are flexible to the deprived rural contexts and labour/livelihood requirements of the family (this is discussed in chapter 5)

### **Quality of Teaching and Learning in Primary Schools**

Quality of primary education in Ghana is assessed by two tests, namely the *Criterion-referenced testing* (CRT) (MOE, March 2002), which began in 1992, and the *Performance Monitoring Testing* (PMT), which started in 1999. The CRT monitors primary school achievement by testing the performance of a 5% sample of public and private school pupils in English and Mathematics.

Tests are conducted in five areas of English including:

- i. Listening Comprehension
- ii. Grammatical Structure
- iii. Vocabulary
- iv. Reading Comprehension
- v. Writing

Test are also conducted in Mathematics involving:

- i. Basic Number Concepts
- ii. Basic Operations
- iii. Story Problems
- iv. Geometry

The results of the tests have shown consistently that pupils in public schools are under-achieving in the key subject areas of English and Mathematics. Thus literacy levels in English and numeracy are very low among Primary 6 pupils. Table 5 also reveals that there have been improvements in the mean scores in the two subjects since 1999. In the years 1994, 1996 to 2000, when private schools were included in the sample their scores were much higher than those of the public schools.

**Table 5: Mean Scores in English And Mathematics 1992 – 2000**

Year	Public		Private		CRIQPEG Schools		ILP <sup>9</sup> Schools	
	English	Maths	English	Maths	English	Maths	English	Maths
1992	29.9	27.3						
1993	30.9	27.4						
1994	31.0	27.7	58.8	47.3				
1995	31.6	28.1						
1996	33.0	28.8	61.0	47.0	35.4	29.9		
1997	33.9	29.9	67.4	51.7	38.8	31.9		
1999	36.9	32.2	(59.2)	(46.6)	37.6	34.0	39.8	35.0
2000	36.9	32.3	70.4	56.9	38.6	34.0	39.7	33.9

**Source:** 2000 Report on the Administration of CRT , Ministry Of Education March 2002

<sup>9</sup> Improvement in Learning Partnerships (ILP)

The percentage of pupils scoring above the mastery level fixed at 60% for English and 55% in Mathematics have been consistently low (see Table 6 and Table 7).

**Table 6: Percentage of Pupils reaching Mastery Levels in English**

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1999	2000
Public	2	3	3.3	3.6	5.5	6.2	8.7	9.6
Private			51.4		56.5	68.7		77.9

**Table 7: Percentage of Pupils reaching Mastery Levels in Mathematics**

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1999	2000
Public	1.1	1.5	1.5	1.8	1.8	2.7	4	4.4
Private			31.7		31	40.4		53.7

### **Social and Economic Context of Schooling**

Access and participation in school are clearly related to the *social, cultural and economic context* in which schooling and teaching take place. Quality of teaching and learning as shown by the CRT are related to the school a child attends which is a direct consequence of his or her social, cultural and economic circumstances. The analyses above reveals that achieving literacy and numeracy skills for children who attend public schools is a huge task. Orivel (2002) clearly defines this problem:

*“...It remains true that pupils from private schools perform significantly better than pupils from public schools. But it is difficult to compare properly cognitive outcomes of pupils in both types of schools. Private schools enjoy a combination of factors positively correlated with high pupils’ performances, namely higher unit costs, better access to pedagogical materials, more educated and motivated parents, higher socio-economic background, more generally, a better socio-cultural environment. Most of these characteristics cannot be replicated in public schools.”*

The conditions, under which many public primary schools operate, particularly in rural Ghana, are not conducive to the intellectual and physical development of the child. Much more effort is needed to enhance the teaching and learning process in schools particularly in harsh rural contexts. Some measures have been taken to enhance teaching and learning in the schools including: accommodation for teachers, head teachers’ bungalows, provision of new school blocks, supply of books, community libraries, reinstatement of allowances for teacher trainees, etc. The increasing attraction of private schools, however, indicates that families that can afford and have access to private schools<sup>10</sup> enrol

<sup>10</sup> The following was a footnote in the Background Paper Prepared for the Ministry 1999 National Education Forum: “A Study conducted in 1973 by Drs. Addae-Mensah, J. S. Djangmah, and C. O. Agbenyega showed the majority of places in top secondary schools were going to products of the 6 or 7 year private preparatory schools. No recent study is known but it is suspected that most pupils in the top secondary schools come from schools, which have grown in number since then. Products of these schools tend to be in the best-subscribed courses in the universities, i.e., Medicine, Engineering, Pharmacy,

their children in private rather than public schools. Poverty, deprivation, illiteracy, and small amount of disposable income, geographical origin, are major determinants of school outcomes in Ghana as indeed they may be in many parts of the world.

Other test results recorded by the CRT that have key policy implications include:

- Boys significantly outperformed girls in Mathematics for the period, 1992 to 2000. The mean scores of Boys (7,918) was 33.1%, while that of girls was 31.4% (6,584); there was no significant difference between boys and girls performance in English.
- Pupils in Accra, the nation's capital, outperform pupils from all other regions both in English and Mathematics-- the difference in English is significant.

### ***Language, Testing and Performance Monitoring (i.e. CRT, PMT)***

Findings of the FCUBE Stocktaking Exercise (GES 2002) reported complaints of *“ pupils inability to read and understand simple instructions pertaining to the CRT as a most significant problem. In other words, there exists an endemic problem of lack of understanding of the English language among pupils examined.”*

This was the perception of all the 110 District Directors of Education who responded to a questionnaire. Another complaint was that rural children may not be used to reading and working from printed-paper.

The Performance Monitoring Test (PMT) and the School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM) are two exercises used to alert parents and teachers of the performance of their children. The PMT measures achievement levels of pupils in English and Mathematics in primary school. Unlike the CRT, the PMT tests children in all the classes of selected schools. The PMT has confirmed the poor achievement levels of pupils in English and Mathematics.

An important innovation that the GES also introduced is the SPAM, which brings officers, teachers, community leaders and parents together to discuss the results of pupils. This interaction is meant to send appropriate messages to both the GES officials at the district level and to the community leaders, teachers and parents as to what they can do to improve schools.

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*Administration, etc. The very keen competition that requires that successful applicants must have the best grades is adequate explanation for this assertion.”* Professor Addae-Mensah has presented new data (2002) to confirm that this is in fact the current situation.



### ***Further Comments on CRT and PMT***

The CRT and PMT raise important issues, which must engage the attention of the MOE and the GES. These assessment tests raise fundamental questions about quality of education and its availability to different sections/categories of Ghanaian children. Whether or not children perform well depends on their facility with language. Hence the issue of the mother tongue or English, as a medium of instruction, is an important policy issue for review. The ESR found that the CRT must be very well researched in order to ensure that it is an appropriate measure of teaching and learning outcomes, particularly since it is conducted in English, which is often not well understood by most of the pupils who live and attend school in rural communities.

Both the CRT and the PMT need firmer grounding in empirical research which would measure for example (i) language as a factor in students understanding of the tests as well as the rubric and (ii) the average English vocabulary pool for a rural child as opposed to an urban child<sup>11</sup>. Research from the Language Centre, University of Ghana indicates that children's scores improved considerably when tested in the Ghanaian language.

The ESR team recommends that a national test be administered by the MOE through the District Education offices at the P3 level and again at the P6 level for all children in the public education system. A cost effective approach to this testing could be ensured by using experts within the MOE and University sector to design, administer and monitor the test.

## **1.3 Junior Secondary School**

A major change which the 1987 reforms brought about was the wholesale introduction of the JSS into the educational system. Completion of JSS ends formal education for the majority of Ghanaian children. The curriculum of the JSS is therefore designed to enable pupils to acquire basic academic skills, (i.e. literacy and numeracy) as well as basic technical and vocational skills. The JSS must also provide a good education for the minority who enter the SSS and other forms of post-basic education. Currently about 35% of JSS graduates enter the SSS. An effective JSS education would complete the task of basic education by making all Ghanaians literate, numerate and providing them with some exposure to basic technical and vocational skills.

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<sup>11</sup> Mastery scores were set from a study on relevant syllabi, textbooks and consultations with P6 teachers (Quansah, 1997). Data collected in 1992 has become the baseline for comparing performance in subsequent years.

There is confusion in the minds of many Ghanaians about the proper place of the JSS<sup>12</sup>. Is the JSS an extension of primary education or the first phase of secondary education? This section will examine the key issues in education, which operate at the JSS level and affect the access and participation rates, as well as teaching and learning outcomes of basic education as a whole.

### ***Access and Participation in the JSS***

Junior Secondary Schools have increased in number and enrolment since the reforms began in 1987<sup>13</sup>. The number increased from 5260 in 1987/88 to 7010 in 2000/2001--- an increase of 33%. Private participation in the JSS has increased significantly in recent times. The growth in numbers of public and private Junior Secondary Schools nationally and regionally is shown in Annex 8.0. By 2000/2001 the number of private JSS has increased to 877 or 12.5% of the national total of JSS. Greater Accra has 301 private JSS and Ashanti has 205. These two regions have 57% of the private JSS. JSS enrolment grew by 40% from 1990/91 to 2000/2001 as shown in Table 8.

**Table 8: Growth in JSS Enrolment from 1990/91 to 2000/2001**

1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	2000/2001
569,343	605,760	644,976	676,182	690,558	713,878	738,057	804,419

Source: SRIMPR, MOE.

Regional variations in participation were more marked in 1987 than in 2000 (See Annex 9). Some significant changes have occurred. Regions which were above the national average GER in 1987 were Volta, Eastern, Ashanti and Central. In 2000, regions above the national average were Greater Accra, Central, Volta, Eastern and Ashanti. The three Northern regions are still below the national average but have shown significant improvements. Since gross enrolment ratio (GER) varies widely from the Net Enrolment Ratio as estimated from the 2000 Population Census, the ages of many JSS pupils lie outside the definitive ages 12 to 14 (see annex 11). Many JSS pupils must be older than 14.

The gender gap in JSS enrolment has decreased but persists (see annex 10). In 1992, for example, the GER for boys was 67.44% while that for girls was 48.9%. In 1999/2000 the equivalent ratios were 64.2% and 53.3% respectively. Social, cultural and economic reasons account for this persistent gender gap. Girls at the JSS level are particularly vulnerable to drop out particularly where poverty is high and priority is given to boys' education (i.e. Northern regions).

<sup>12</sup> The attempts by the MOE/GES to describe the JSS as Basic 7 – 9 added to the confusion. Whole conversion of middle schools into JSS imprinted in the minds of the public that the JSS is another name for the middle school. To many such persons the BECE is another name for the Common Entrance, because it replaced it as the selection mechanism into the secondary schools they are familiar with. The calibre of teachers has not changed sufficiently for the public to see the transformation from middle school to JSS.

<sup>13</sup> The reforms converted all Ghanaian Middle schools in to Junior Secondary Schools. The 5260 refers to these middle schools in addition to the addition to 118 experimental JSS.

### ***Quality of Teaching and Learning at the JSS***

The results of the CRT and the PMT indicate that the overwhelming majority of public primary school products who enter the JSS are neither literate nor numerate. With low repetition rates many pupils do not have the opportunity to correct their deficiencies in language usage at this level. The poor CRT scores in English and Mathematics, however, indicate a very weak academic foundation at the JSS level. This poor foundation limits educational options for children and severely handicaps learners from achieving higher levels in the system.

The Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) is the only measure of teaching and learning quality in the JSS system. A great deal of effort by the MOE and its development partners is concentrated on improving school infrastructure sometimes to the neglect of the teachers. Some support and innovative measures such as head teachers' and teachers' housing as well as Best Teachers' Awards are directed at providing incentives to the teacher. The textbook situation in schools has improved but still remains problematic due to lack of systematisation (i.e. timely and adequate distribution of books).

Outside observers who look at the BECE results<sup>14</sup> would not believe that candidates with such poor CRT scores in Primary 6 would obtain the normal distribution of grades shown by the BECE. The only explanation is that the BECE sets much lower standards of achievements than the CRT. The BECE uses a Stanine distribution, which turns out yearly the same proportion of candidates in each category or grade<sup>8</sup> of performance (see annex 13a).

The BECE grades do not allow year-by-year comparison of performance that the CRT provides (CEPA: 2001). It however allows the performance of individual schools, and individual pupils to be compared. For example, many schools in the rural areas may not have candidates obtaining Grade 1 in any subject.

Private schools outperform Public schools in both the BECE (see Annex 13b) and in the CRT. Since SSS admissions are based on BECE grades, the top SSS will admit most of their students from private JSS. As will be shown in the next section the best SSSCE grades come from the best endowed SSS.

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<sup>14</sup> The BECE has a 30% continuous assessment component. The West African Examinations Council concluded in a recent research study that teachers tend to award higher scores to their candidates in the school based assessment than the candidates in the external assessment in all the subject areas.

<sup>8</sup> Stanine grading system is 9-scale standardised grading system, which allocates a fixed proportion of candidates to each grade, Grade 1 (the best) to Grade 9 (the worst). It compares the performance of a candidate to members of his own group in a particular subject for a particular year. It assumes that all things being equal, aptitudes would not change from year to year. Thus the same population of pupils adjudged as substandard by CRT have among them many who could obtain 11 ones, 10 ones, 9 ones, etc. Reference: Kofi Mereku, 2000: The BECE Grading System Committee Report: Implications for Minimum Qualifications for Basic Education Certificate.

Boys outperform girls in the BECE. They do better than the girls in CRT Mathematics but perform equally in English. Greater Accra schools obtain the best BECE grades as well as the best CRT scores. Fewer girls enter SSS compared to their male counterparts (MOE, 2002). Refer to annex 12.

### ***The JSS Curriculum***

The principal objectives of the JSS curriculum are the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the introduction of basic technical and vocational skills. At the beginning of the reforms the acquisition of technical and vocational skills was over emphasised and the JSS workshop became the measure of success of the new curriculum. After 15 years of the reforms many Junior Secondary Schools still do not have workshops. Reports by the Ghana National Commission on children reveal that less than 25% of JSS schools have workshops. There are not enough teachers proficient in technical and vocational training to teach these skills. Meanwhile, many products of the JSS have poor literacy and numeracy skills further complicating the process of education at the Junior Secondary level.

Should pre-technical and pre-vocational skills be de-emphasised in the JSS to allow more time and resources to teach English and Mathematics? Some significant stakeholders think so. According to the *Draft TVET Policy Framework for Ghana, 2001* the pre-technical and pre-vocational skills “...detract from valuable study-time that should be devoted to basic requirements of literacy, numeracy and writing which are foundational for the acquisition of scientific and technological knowledge, understanding and sustainable improvements in TVET.”

Other stakeholders hold the view that practical skills were included in the JSS curriculum precisely to move Ghana's educational system away from a purely academic education. Since the majority of JSS graduates will not enter the SSS they need adequate opportunity to develop appropriate attitudes, orientation and aptitude for technical and vocational careers. De-emphasizing the technical and vocational content of the JSS is not likely to achieve the intended results of enhanced literacy and numeracy. Such an attempt would remove the main thrust of the 1987 reform, which introduced the vocationalisation of the JSS system. Greater focus on alternatives to the purely general arts/science stream at SSS is required as well as increasing the number and quality Second Cycle Institutions.

### ***Key Challenges in Basic Education***

#### ***Poor Quality of Public Schools***

The greatest challenge facing basic education in Ghana is the poor teaching and learning outcomes in public schools. This is a direct result of inadequate input of teaching and learning inputs, poor commitment by teachers, low contact hours in teaching, high teacher absentee rates and ineffective teaching, especially at the JSS. Children who hardly see a teacher, and who have no books, whose parents are poor and live in poor communities cannot be expected to learn to read and

write as readily as children in more supportive environments. These are the circumstances of the rural Ghanaian child and also the children who live in the depressed urban communities. These differences translate into the widening gap between rural schools and urban schools and between private schools and public schools. Much effort is being placed on the supply of books to schools but much remains to be done for books to be readily available to most children.

The deficiencies of the school are magnified where the family and the community are unable to provide the supportive environment for pupils and teachers. Thus where community participation and ownership is lacking --- teaching and learning cannot take place effectively. The social, cultural and economic context of schooling is crucial to pupil achievement. Poor families and poor communities will most often produce poor school outcomes.

Related to the challenges faced at the JSS level is the extremely poor quality of primary schooling. Key indicators of this quality are the products in the JSS who are often handicapped due to improper preparation, particularly in achieving basic reading and comprehension skills during P1-P3. Performance Monitoring Testing at the Primary level suggest that less than 25% of children at primary level can read. This places an overwhelming challenge on teachers at the JSS level to try to remedy the situation. Much more emphasis on quality of teaching and learning needs to be focused on the first three years of schooling (P1 to P3). Language policy, systematic and adequate book distribution and a significant thrust in preparing teachers to teach basic reading skills in these most critical years will have to be emphasized at training college and in-service training programmes.

### ***Poverty and Equity in Educational Opportunity***

The Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS) and other poverty studies (Ghana Human Development Report, 1997; Shiyan Chao & Omer Alper, 1998, Casely-Hayford, 2000) have shown that poor outcomes in access, participation and quality of teaching are largely poverty and contextually related. The social, cultural and economic circumstances in which teaching and learning takes place are intermeshed to divide Ghana into two educational populations: the rich and the poor.

Inequities within the education system further entrench child and family poverty. Data provided by Canagarajah and Xiao (2001) indicate that the **regional inequities** exist when considering the distribution of the governments' financial resources. The poorest three or four regions in the country (Upper East, Upper West, Northern and Central region) receive the lowest subsidy per school age child.

Research across Ghana suggests that poor educational quality is predominant in many rural areas. The poor educational quality acts as a deterrent for parents

wanting to invest in children's education. There is a significant loss of household investment to parents who educate their children since children who would have been trained in the traditional agricultural practices and help to supplement the family income are not available. Moreover "schooled children" are often found unwilling to farm for the family and not able to become independent members of the community after nine years of schooling (Casely-Hayford, 2002).

Poverty, lack of parental care and traditional socio—cultural practices, and beliefs regarding girls' roles in society prevent many from moving to higher levels of education; and cultural problems such as the practice of early marriage, child fostering and child rearing practices, contribute to the high drop out rates of girls in the North (Akyeampong, 2000; Boakye, 1997; Wolff and Odonkor, 1997)<sup>15</sup>.

Research conducted under the Girls Education Unit also suggests that the highest drop out rates occur in P4 and P5 in the Northern Regions and between P6 and JSS1 in the Southern regions of the country (Casely-Hayford and Wilson, 2001)<sup>16</sup>.

High direct and indirect costs of sending a child to school reduce enrolment. High fees and indirect costs deter parents from sending children to school. Examples are: textbook fees, sports fees, uniforms, food, transport, etc. Studies conducted by the MOE and UNICEF in 1992 and 1993 confirmed this. Interventions that reduce this situation often relate to improving the overall livelihood of parents and the quality of life of children. One important intervention particularly in northern Ghana is improving access to clean water that reduces girl's time spent collecting water and increases women's income generating potential. Studies indicate that the supply of water to deprived communities in the northern region frees girls to attend school. School feeding programmes, which include food provisions for the entire family, also encourage parents to send children to school since this improves the well being of the entire family.

Poor quality of schooling resulting from dilapidated structures, lack and absenteeism of teachers, often results in children who cannot read and write further deterring rural parents from sending more children. More discussion on the gender equity issues will be discussed in Chapter 5.

### ***Language Factor***

Language is a crucial factor in the acquisition of cognitive skills. The difference in the achievement levels of children in Accra in the CRT and BECE reflect a difference in the social, cultural and economic context in which schools operate. The English language is not accessible to most Ghanaian children, particularly those in rural Ghana. Children from rural Ghana are particularly handicapped if

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<sup>15</sup> The Akyeampong (2000) study in Brong Ahafo revealed that about 50% of girls drop out of school at the basic level due to early marriages.

<sup>16</sup> Casely-Hayford and Wilson (2001) *How the Poor Get Poorer: A study into the needs of female teachers in rural deprived areas of Ghana*. Ghana Education Service, Accra

they are tested in a language, which is not a functional language for most of them.

The ESR team consulted several experts to clarify the language issue. The consensus reached was that since literacy is the key to academic learning, much effort must go into teaching it at the early stages of formal education (P1-P3). The consensus worldwide is that the mother tongue is the best medium to teach literacy. Once literacy skills are acquired in the mother tongue they are easily transferred to the learning of English (LL2) or any other language. The average Ghanaian child in an urban setting enters school already speaking many other languages, including English. A rural Ghanaian child who is often not exposed nor immersed in contexts where English is spoken may not become literate in English, particularly if teachers are not properly prepared to teach how to read in either language group. If a child is not literate in English by Primary 6 or JSS 3 he/she cannot be expected to perform well in CRT, PMT and BECE, which assume a language facility that he or she does not have (Goody, E: 2002).

Much more research must be conducted into language acquisition and language facility of the majority of Ghanaian children for all these tests to be meaningful, otherwise competence in English would continue to be the major source of inequity in access to education in Ghana. The ASTEP project has carried out a significant amount of work in developing books to teach literacy, numeracy and environmental science in Twi, Ewe, Ga, Gonja and Dagbani. Ghanaian language still holds the key to assisting children become literate and ensuring creativity in basic education, especially in rural schools.

The language policy issue is probably the most important issue related to improving the quality of teaching and learning in the Ghanaian public school system. Studies reveal that lack of implementation of the local language policy over the last ten years has resulted in many teachers teaching English when they should have been teaching local language (Andoh-Kumi study). Despite the poor implementation of the language policy thus far, the ESR team holds the view that public schools operating in rural areas of the country should teach in the mother tongue language for the first three years of primary and then transfer to English. Critical to this approach will be the efficient dissemination of books in the local language and training of teachers in these areas.

How long does it take a Ghanaian child in an urban setting or a rural environment to learn a mother tongue, acquire literacy in English and acquire literacy and numeracy skills which are equivalent to those of an American, German, Japanese or Chinese child in Primary 6 and be ready to enter lower secondary or junior secondary school. Programming in northern and western Ghana suggests within one year a child can learn the basic skills of reading and writing through simple alternative education delivery systems and remedial programmes which are integrated in the formal system. These approaches are working in harsh rural contexts and are of very low cost to operate (Casely-Hayford, 2002).

The inequity in educational opportunity is what the two CRT curves and the two BECE curves illustrate (see annex 7 and annex 13b). MOE must commit more resources to educational programmes on the radio, television, and support school/community libraries to improve rural education. The promotion of a reading culture, particularly in rural areas, must be supported through the introduction of a comprehensive mass education programme using radio and television. This approach will increase the literacy rates of adults and children and is critical to achieving EFA and FCUBE.

### ***Decentralisation and Basic Education***

School and education are very much dependent on family and community resources which are complementary to the government resources which pay the teacher. The District Assemblies have opened up a major window of opportunity to increase the funding of non-salary expenditure. The District Assembly Common Fund, the District Education Endowment Fund, and many community based organisations and NGOs are supporting education. Full decentralisation of education, which would give the District Assemblies, communities and schools more autonomy to operate, is what is required to maximise the support of these bodies in order to improve education. The FCUBE provides the legal basis for each community to request for teachers from the Ghana Government. The GES must approve the payment of a teacher once the qualifications of the teacher, trained or untrained, are accepted.

### ***Major Interventions to Improve Access and Quality***

- The ESR has taken note of many programmes and projects, which the Ministry of Education, the GES, Development Partners and NGOs are implementing to help realise the objectives of the FCUBE and the EFA. This section outlines a few of the major programmes underway within the MOE. Much more work is needed as part of a sector-wide process to identify, coordinate and merge these ongoing initiatives in order to improve the climate for implementation at national and district levels.

<b>Programme Area</b>	<b>Details</b>
Improving Quality	<p>Whole School Development (WSD) is an intervention of the MOE/GES, supported by DFID, which has sought to motivate teachers at the district and school level to improve their professional competence through demand driven in-service training, and the provision of teaching and learning materials. The assistance of DFID through the Education Sector Support Programme (ESSP) enabled the appointment of District Support Teams who work closely with District Education Support Teams (DEST) with School Management Committees (SMC) and PTA's to achieve the objectives of WSD.</p> <p>QUIPS (Quality Improvement in Primary Schools): USAID funded programme began in 1997 and will run through to 2004. The objective of QUIPS is to improve the quality of basic education by developing, demonstrating and replicating processes required to improve schools. QUIPS are part of the WSD. To date it has provided support to 88 districts</p>



Programme Area	Details
	<p>and 354 schools. A mid-term review of QUIPS has demonstrated significant impact on pupils' learning/achievement, school management and greater community involvement in school decision-making.</p> <p>ASTEP programme is supported by the GTZ and focussed on the development of local language books for schools in five major Ghanaian language groups for classes P1 to P6. The Project has field tested and begun distribution of the books at the district level.</p>
Improving Access and Retention	<p>The Catholic Relief Service, World Food Programme and World Vision are all involved in school feeding programmes throughout the country. The WFP programme supplied a food package to families who send their girls to school. The World Vision programme provides pre-school feeding sometimes covering primary and JSS schools. Some of these programmes involve the establishment of SMCs and PTAs and the training of their membership in community empowering skills.</p> <p>District Level Scholarships have also been distributed in most districts for needy students, the FCUBE Stocktaking report identified 64 such scholarships which are permanent, and 15 which are adhoc; Most of the district scholarships are focussed on providing support to students at the SSS and tertiary levels. More work is needed to ensure that gender equity is ensured in the selection of scholarship holders.</p>
Improving Educational Environment	<p>Infrastructure facilities which had been constructed include head teachers' accommodation, 8741 accommodation units between 1993 to 1996 in the Primary School Development Project; 71.7% of units are in deprived areas; Classroom blocks totalling 4,553 were completed under the PREP Programme (1993 - 1996). Teacher's tables, teachers' chairs, pupils' mono desks and pupils' dual desks were supplied. DFID has embarked on an infrastructure programme in selected districts in northern Ghana.</p> <p>Several development Partners, District Assemblies and NGOs have also provided classrooms, pavilions, JSS workshops, teacher accommodation and KVIPS;</p>
Teacher Development and motivation	<p>JICA is involved in improving and supporting Science and Mathematics training in selected Teacher Training Colleges in Ghana. The programme works closely with Teacher Education Division and is one of the few programmes focussed at the training college level.</p> <p>ACTIONAID is involved in community mobilisation for school improvement. Action Aid has embarked on a programme, which selects and trains Rural Education Volunteers to support teaching and learning process in the schools. Some communities provide accommodation (sometimes free) for teachers and in certain cases supply teachers with foodstuffs. Another important contribution of communities to their schools is communal labour for various construction purposes and levies.</p>
Alternative and complementary systems of education	<p>The School for Life programmes and the Shepherd School (run by ACTIONAID Ghana) have demonstrated that hard to reach children in deprived rural communities can be enrolled in schools through flexible schooling arrangements. These programmes recruit local persons who are literate in the local language and also trained to teach. Classes are conducted in the mornings or afternoon so that learning does not conflict with income earning activities of pupils. Teaching is in the local language.</p>

Programme Area	Details
	Pupils are able to enrol in local schools after they complete the Shepard School programme.

Community efforts towards the improvement of the conditions for quality performance by their schools span many areas. Often, communities are called upon to provide communal labour for various construction activities. Communities are also periodically levied to provide facilities such as classrooms, libraries, water and toilets. Part of the District Assembly Common Fund is used to improve the physical conditions of schools or support needy children with scholarships. Citizens resident in towns and cities (including some outside the country) periodically support the schools financially or in kind. Old Student Associations similarly contribute in diverse ways towards equipping the school to enable it to achieve high standards of performance.

There are several other projects, which are operational in the Education Sector across the country. District visits by the ESR team revealed that there is growing overlap and pressure on districts to conform to the schedules of the MOE and Development Partner agendas/interventions. Several District Directors of Education complained of their inability to coordinate their district programmes and were stretched by demands by both MOE and Development Partners. It is clear from field reports and visits that a sector-wide approach is timely and very much needed to arrest the lack of coordination at the district and possibly community/school level.

## 1.4 Non Formal Education and Female literacy

The Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS 4) indicates that women constitute the majority of the non-literate population in Ghana at 62.3% (GSS, 2000). It also suggests that only one out of every three women between 15 to 34 years of age and one out of every 10 women between 45 to 51 years of age are literate.

The GLSS 4 reveals that, as many as 41% of Ghanaian women have never been to school the majority of whom are women living in rural areas. The GLSS also points out that only 21% of males have never been to school. This means that twice as many men to women have been to school and twice as many men to women have attained secondary or higher level qualifications. Table 9 summarises the findings:

**Table 9: Levels of Education by Gender**

	Males (%)	Females (%)	All (%)
<b>Never been to School</b>	21.1	41.0	31.8
<b>Less than MSLC/BECE</b>	24.6	25.6	25.1
<b>MSLC/BECE</b>	38.6	27.8	32.8
<b>Secondary Education or Higher</b>	15.8	5.7	10.4

(GSS, 2000)

Several studies suggest that women's literacy is directly linked to their status and position in society as well as the health and educational status of their children (NFED, 1996). Table 10 shows the key findings concerning female literacy based on the latest GLSS 4.

**Table 10: Gender Disaggregated Data for Illiteracy Rates**

	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>National</b>
Total National rates of illiteracy	62.6	35.8	50.2
Rural area illiteracy rates	74.2	44.9	60.8
Urban area illiteracy rates	42.1	20.5	32.2

(GSS, 2000)

The total female illiterate population in Ghana is at 62.6%. The vast majority of these women live in rural areas (74.2%). At least 40% are within the 15-34 age group and 25% are in the age group of 9-14 years of age (NFED, 1996). NFED suggests it is important to focus attention on this age group as they are the economically active group and their literacy rate will have a direct impact on the well being of their families and their communities (NFED Policy Document, p5).

The Non Formal Education Division (NFED) also has a clear set of gender goals, objectives, and strategies guiding their work in improving gender equity and equality within Ghana. The NFED gender policy document outlines the following key gender targets:

**Table 11: Gender Targets for Non Formal Education Division**

	<b>Main Policy Goals</b>
Goal1	➤ Ensure the reduction of the Adult female illiterate population by 60% of 2.4 million females by the year 2011. Currently adult female illiteracy rates are at 76%
Goal2	➤ 76% of those to be reached should be women since females make up 76% of the adult illiterate population

The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy does set some gender equity targets at basic education level and in strengthening the rights protection agencies for women and children. Unfortunately the document fails to include any mention of non-formal education for women, which is one of the key strategies for reducing poverty and arresting the intergenerational poverty cycle, particularly when targeted at out-of-school female youth (i.e. 15-20).

Global studies also suggest the need to integrate the formal and non-formal approaches to education particularly when tackling the problems of girls' education. When formal systems of education and poor parental support fail girls – non-formal educational approaches must be ready to continue the process. The ESR team found that non-formal education should be more closely linked to the ongoing work within the public school system, particularly at the basic level. The

strengthening of non-formal and formal approaches to education will help to create a critical mass of literates in rural areas further strengthening the reading culture in the community. An all out Government campaign to eradicate illiteracy is needed using mass media, radio and television, as the main vehicles for training. Rural newspapers should be supported in local languages to encourage the literacy environment in the rural areas.

## **1.5 Managing the Basic Education Sector**

### ***Early Childhood Education***

The Government's decision that Early Childhood Education be made part and parcel of Basic schools will further strengthen the thrust towards literacy. It also throws up a number of key challenges. Two fully furnished classrooms will have to be added to every classroom block of every school and it is known that there are still some schools which do not have structures that can properly be called school buildings. Other resources are also in short supply. Prominent among these are teachers teaching and learning materials. For the implementation of this decision alone, around 14,000 teachers would be required.

At present, the pre-school programme is managed by a national coordinator who is responsible for the development of a policy framework within the sector and for the nation-wide coordination of the ECCD programme. There is laxity among trained teachers operating at this level due to poor supervision of ECCD centres and unconcerned attitudes of headteachers where pre-school is part of the Primary/Basic Education set-up. Although each of the 110 DEOs has an ECD coordinator that officer also has responsibilities for SHEP and Girls' Education and in most cases, has no transport for monitoring and supervision.

A crash programme of training teachers for ECE programmes will need to be undertaken. The over-extended responsibilities of the district coordinators should be reviewed and resources mobilized (from Development Partners, Private Sector, Religious Bodies, government's own resources and communities) to provide the much-needed infrastructure and learning materials.

### ***Basic Education***

Despite the Government's stated objective expressed in the FCUBE and Education For ALL (EFA) this level faces problems of inadequacies of pertinent resources namely; trained teachers, teaching and learning materials and infrastructure. Currently, figures from GES indicate that there is an acute shortage of trained teachers in the education system.<sup>17</sup> The impact of this shortage is annually aggravated by the study leave policy of the agency (see chapter 7). Some schools do not have structures that can be called school buildings and children have to carry stools and tables every morning to sit on at

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<sup>17</sup> 33.3% of schools throughout the country do not have a full complement of teachers (MOE, 2002, fCUBE Evaluation)

school. Books and other learning materials are in very short supply, particularly in rural schools.

The management of schools is very weak. Headteachers are not appointed because of their competence as managers but because of the number of years they have spent teaching. Most of them have not been given any management training since assuming office. In addition, they are required to teach (in some cases full-time) as well as go through teachers' notes, attend to parents and other visitors and yet they are also required to supervise, train and guide their teachers. The disciplinary authority granted them is ineffective. Consequently, vices such as lateness, absenteeism, drunkenness etc. abound. Circuit Supervisors who are to give them external support with supervision and training are not performing their duties as well as expected due to a combination of factors including; camaraderie, laziness, overwork, incompetence and transportation problems.

Other major challenges at this level are the issues of quality and accountability, which come up when access is given preference over quality by the wholesale promotion of pupils from one class to the other. Teachers are inadvertently relieved of their accountability and their responsibility for the quality of educational outcomes by this practice.

There is a need to find ways and means of raising the output of Teacher Training Colleges, of ensuring that headteachers are detached as much as possible, that they are given some management training and that the inadequacies in the supply of resources are dealt with.

It does seem that the GES is not very clear regarding the level of the JSS. Clarity in that respect would facilitate the definition of the job specification i.e. the qualifications of the teachers that should teach at that level. To the ESR team it is clear that JSS should be regarded as the lower part of a second cycle institution. Consequently, teachers should be graduates or at least diploma holders.

### ***Non Formal Education***

The manner in which basic literacy and numeracy skills have been taught to adults in the past has been rather expensive and inefficient. The administrative structures have been cumbersome and some of the personnel, such as the zonal supervisors, have been of inadequate calibre (see Kukler, Appiah & Nti 1998, and TRINGO Management Consultancy Services 2000).

Making NFED a unit of the GES to operate through the GES administrative structures and using the services of National Service Personnel as facilitators aided and/or supervised by teachers in the evenings, the impact of the programme will be better felt at a rather minimal cost.

## 1.6 Public Finance

Basic education in Ghana is financed by four types of public sources, namely the MOE's budget, the District Assemblies common fund, the GET fund, and since 2002, the HIPC initiative. The status of the HIPC is not absolutely clear, because it can be considered as donor funding (forgiveness of part of the Ghanaian debt to foreign creditors), or as domestic funding (the fund is generated by domestic fiscal resources, and not actual transfers from donors. In the table below, HIPC has been included as part of donor funding). The most important source of public funding for basic education remains the Ministry of Education, which represents 87% of total public funding if HIPC is not included, and 81% if it is included.

The paradox of the Ghanaian situation is the following: the share of basic education within total public education expenditure is rather low by international standards (for instance, only 27% goes to primary education compared to 40% in comparable countries), but the share of primary within the GDP is rather above the average of comparable countries (1.5% instead of 1.2% in the group of Least Developed Countries). This is why some analysts argue that Ghana is not giving enough priority to primary education, while others claim the opposite. As a matter of fact, the paradox can be explained by the fact that Ghana is allocating a far larger share of the GDP to education in general, and to non-primary levels in particular. The fairest comparison is with the GDP itself, which indicates Ghana cannot be considered as a country, which is under-funding primary education. However, the achievement of the Education for All (EFA) objective will require a larger funding envelop. Such additional funding may be jointly met by a combination of a higher share of the domestic budget for primary education and through greater support from the donor community.

Per pupil public expenditure at the basic level is rather low by international standards. They represent 13% of the GDP per capita for pre-school, 14% for primary, and 29% for junior secondary education. Such moderate costs are the outcome of two phenomena: a rather modest salary scale for teachers (3.5 times the GDP per capita in primary education), and a low level of non-salary expenditure. This last point is raising a problem of quality, which should be addressed, and it is clear that a larger effort in favour of non-salary expenditure is desirable.

During the past ten years donor funding has represented about 8% of total education expenditure, of which slightly more than half (52%), has been dedicated to basic education. The trend shows that donor funding has increased during the middle of the nineties, but seems to decline at the turn of the century (although the HIPC initiative may reverse this last trend). The major problems raised by donor funding is that it is concentrated on few donors, and on the fact that the majority of donor money is taking the form of loans and not of grants (two thirds are loans and one third is grant).

A remarkable characteristic of the Ghanaian funding structure for basic education is an exceptionally high involvement of households. Households' contributions exist for public schools (some levies, school uniforms, transportation and feeding costs, school supplies, etc.). But the most important source of household's contribution is through fees paid in private schools. About 17% of primary pupils are enrolled in private schools at the national level, up to 40% in urban areas. Fees paid in private schools can be quite high. In chapter 9 of this report, it is shown that on average, fees in primary schools represent 3.5 times the expenditure per pupil allocated by the MOE. This high level of private fees is one of the reasons why private schools tend to be more efficient than public schools, and tend to attract so many motivated households, not only from the elite, but also from large segments of the middle class. The problem raised by this dual system is that public schools cannot afford to multiply their unit cost by 3.5. It would require an additional 3% of the GDP, while Ghana is already spending twice the average of comparable countries. It is hardly sustainable.

## Conclusions

Improving the access, retention and achievement of children under the poverty line requires three key strategies:

- Improving the quality of education at primary level (particularly P1 to P3) in rural deprived areas country-wide (increasing the books, substantially increasing the number of locally engaged pupil teachers, providing school libraries and teaching/learning materials, and in service training for teachers in reading methods).
- Increasing focus and support to girls education particularly at P4 to JSS level (i.e. remedial programmes/vacation clinics for girls, gender sensitive training in classroom practice for teachers, sponsorship and feeding programmes)
- Investing in flexible schooling and alternative delivery systems particularly in the northern sector

The ESR Team concludes that at Basic Education Level:

- The gender differential in education are complex since factors such as socio-cultural practices, belief systems, poverty and ignorance **often reproduce** the gender gap in education along with more structural factors such as school culture and teacher attitudes. Reducing the gender gap across the education system in Ghana will therefore require a paradigm shift based on changing the negative socio-cultural beliefs and practices, uplifting women's literacy and empowering them to feel better about who they are within the school and community.
- Closing the gender and equity gap at Primary and JSS levels will also require both attitudinal change and significant improvement in rural livelihoods in order for parents to increase their support to children

throughout the basic education system. For the MOE, it will require a tremendous focus of state resources **on providing major quality improvements at the primary school level particularly at P1 to P3 levels** with a focus on rural deprived public schools.

- **Solving the quality problems** in existing schools will have a direct impact on female literacy and retention in Ghana. It will also enhance access of poor rural children to the higher levels of education including JSS and SSS. A shift from goals from access and participation towards more emphasis on quality is now extremely needed not only to improve equity and girls' education but to enhance the outcomes of the entire education system (i.e. teacher education, vocational training etc);
- A multisectoral approach to education in deprived communities which sees education as one of the important interventions required to reduce poverty by interventions in improving health, water, sanitation, nutrition and creating opportunities for economic activity; It appears that the classroom alone cannot provide quality education. Some of the inputs into the private school child should be provided. Radio, television where available, public, community and school libraries must be mobilised to support the school;
- Automatic progression from P4 should be abolished to increase the chances of pupils who enter JSS 1 to be more literate and numerate than they are now. Regular testing at P3 and P6 Level should be systematically applied to all public schools.
- Strong measures to ensure teacher performance should be applied. Non-performing teachers should be warned and then released from the service if they are found to be committing actions that fall outside the code of conduct (i.e. absenteeism for extended period without reason). Communities should be given more authority to report cases, monitor and supervise teachers within their areas. The DEOC should be made functional to deal with disciplinary cases (see chapter 7 on management).
- Government should consider carefully the language policy and attempt to remedy the problems of implementing local language policy particularly in rural Ghana. MOE and Development Partners should improve the timely and regular development of school's books and ensure the proper distribution of books in adequate numbers on a timely basis.
- Training colleges should ensure that all teachers are conversant with the language policy and are able to teach reading and writing skills at the P1 to P3 level in both local language and English.
- Both the CRT and the PMT should be grounded in sustained research to ensure that testing is based on the reality of the school environment; CRT



test papers should be made available for schools and parents to enable them to become aware of what literacy and numeracy entail;

- All schools should run remedial streams where necessary, particularly in the reading and mathematics subjects. This is what is done in the private sector where parents pay for the so-called extra classes.
- Guidance and Counselling at the JSS level should be intensified to ensure that pupils receive career guidance and schools are encouraged to bring into the school environment persons who can be role models.
- Public schools should be allowed more autonomy under the District Assemblies to recruit staff and levy fees where necessary. The SMC should be more fully involved in the supervision and monitoring of teachers along with the heads. This would allow public schools to operate more like their private counterparts.
- There is the need for better coordination of Development Partner interventions at the district levels. QUIPS and WSD should merge as part of the sector wide approach, their intervention strategies should become unified for quality improvement to be sustained and managed efficiently at the national and district levels. The lessons that have been learnt in the WSD and the QUIPS programme should be distilled and should continue to be mainstreamed into the school system;

The main thrust of MOE policy should be focused on girls' education helping them attain higher levels of education. More work is needed to move the girls' education and gender equity debate from concerns on access and participation, to issues of educational quality, retention and opportunity in order for education for all to be achieved.<sup>18</sup>

- Rural Education Counselling Centres (REC's) should be set up along the same lines as the STME clinics open to all rural girls at the JSS level to provide remedial courses during vacation time for reading, math and science, along with counselling.<sup>19</sup>
- Scholarship funds for girls' education should be increased through the GET fund and Districts Education Oversight Committees tasked to ensure they're properly distributed for deprived area girls at the JSS, vocational or technical and SSS levels.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Massiah presents a model of gender relations, which moves gender issues from level 1 "conceptual or subjective visibility, to level 2--theoretical and statistical visibility (where the issues become information data) to level 3 where gender issues finally become socio-economically and politically. Visible as well as domestically visible. Gender issues in education in Ghana are somewhere between level 1 and level 2 in visibility.

<sup>19</sup> A full description of the REC approach can be found in Casely-Hayford and Wilson's report on the Needs of Female Teachers in Rural Deprived Areas of Ghana (2001)

<sup>20</sup> At least 400 scholarships for girls in each district should be allocated at the JSS level and approx. 100 at the SSS level.

- Provision and construction of all new schools (Primary to SSS) should include simple and technologically appropriate water and sanitation facilities.
- Teacher Education Division and all teacher-training colleges should ensure that gender issues and concerns are mainstreamed in education courses to create a gender sensitive teaching/learning environment for children at the basic school level.
- More funding is needed for girls' education programming. A special fund for NGO's and district assemblies should be allocated for girls' education programming. NGOs, CBOs and District Assemblies should be encouraged to promote girls' education through a decentralised fund to support projects to improve quality and retention in education.

Special needs education and child rights along with other issues will be further explored in Chapter 5 on cross cutting issues.