



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

## **The Main Study: Research under the Tackling Education Needs Inclusively (TENI) Project**



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Individual and Focus Group Interviews were undertaken during the field research on the basis that the contributors would remain anonymous, therefore each of the field sites (schools and their communities) have been renamed in order to protect their identities.

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## List of Acronyms

AfC	Associates for Change
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CS	Circuit Supervisor
DA	District Assembly
DTST	District Teacher Support Team
EFA	Education for All
EMD	East Mamprusi District
EQUALL	Education Quality for All
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGI	Focus Group Interview
GES	Ghana Education Service
INSET	In-service Training
IP	Implementing Partner
JHS	Junior High School
JICA	Japan International Corporation Agency
LCD	Linked Community Development
LOI	Language of Instruction
NALAP	National Accelerated Literacy Programme
NEA	National Education Assessment
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NR	Northern Region
NYEP	National Youth Employment Programme
PAGE	Partnership for Accountable Governance in Education
PMT	Performance Monitoring Test
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
QUIPS	Quality Improvement of Primary Education (Project)
RC	Roman Catholic
SEA	School Education Assessment
SEN	Special Education Needs
SfL	School for Life
SMC	School Management Committee
SPR	School Performance Review
TENI	Tackling Education Needs Inclusively
TLM	Teaching Learning Material
TND	Talensi Nabdam District
UE	Upper East
USD	United States Dollar
UTTDBe	Untrained Teacher Diploma in Basic Education
UW	Upper West
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WMD	West Mamprusi District

# PART 1: The Outcomes and Context of Learning in Ghana

## Chapter 1: The Background, and Methodology

### 1.1 Introduction and Background to the TENI Research

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

One of Ghana’s greatest developmental challenges over the last 20 years has been the attempt by state and non state actors to improve the quality of public education particularly at the primary and Junior high school levels. The Government of Ghana spends a large proportion of its GDP (10-12%) and annual national budget (35%) on the education sector yet consistently research suggests that the education outcomes and learning outcomes among children in Ghana continue to be among the worst in the world; with less than 25% of Ghana’s Primary class 6 children able to read and attain basic literacy skills after six years of public schooling (MOE, 2012; Casely-Hayford, 2011). Despite significant donor contributions to the sector (over 3 billion USD as of 2010), the quality of basic education for the vast majority of Ghana’s rural poor remains sub standard and in many cases a loss to family welfare when comparing the opportunity costs for families experiencing extreme poverty in the northern regions of Ghana (Korboe et al., 2010; Casely-Hayford, 2000).

The quality of education has a direct impact on the education system’s ability to be a driver of change and a route out of poverty for the masses of rural poor who experience social exclusion and economic deprivation. The large body of research on Ghana’s education sector points to one important ingredient which does not appear to be happening in the vast majority of Ghanaian basic schools: enough quality teaching and effective learning. The VSO Ghana through its work under the “Tackling Education Needs Inclusively’ (TENI) has made significant strides in supporting a longitudinal research project with its partners which opens up the debate on why children are not learning in Ghanaian classrooms across the three northern regions of Ghana. The research was designed to provide policy makers and NGO advocacy groups at national, regional and district level with sufficient evidence to act on findings and ensure that qualitative change and learning outcomes are improved within the education sector<sup>2</sup>.

The initial TENI research project was designed as an ongoing process of supporting partner interventions among the Ghana Education Service (GES) and civil society in order to strengthen inclusive education, improve learning processes and address key learning questions arising from the implementation of the TENI project. During the TENI Research Launch workshop in January 2012, VSO and Associates for Change facilitated a process with all the TENI partners which led to the finalization of the TENI research questions. The TENI Research Project (Phase 1) collaboration started in full force in September, 2012 and has involved a six month period of literature review, intensive field research across three regions of Ghana (one month) with 24 researchers visiting over 54 schools,

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<sup>2</sup> Over the last three years the School Performance Review (SPR) process which is an integral part of the TENI project has gathered some of the most rigorous and comprehensive data sets to analyse the quality of education linked to child performance and inclusive education.

interviewing over 250 teachers, observing 86 classrooms and interviewing over 500 parents and children in exploring the question of education quality, learning effectiveness and efficiency.

The following are the key learning questions that guided the research design:

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

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

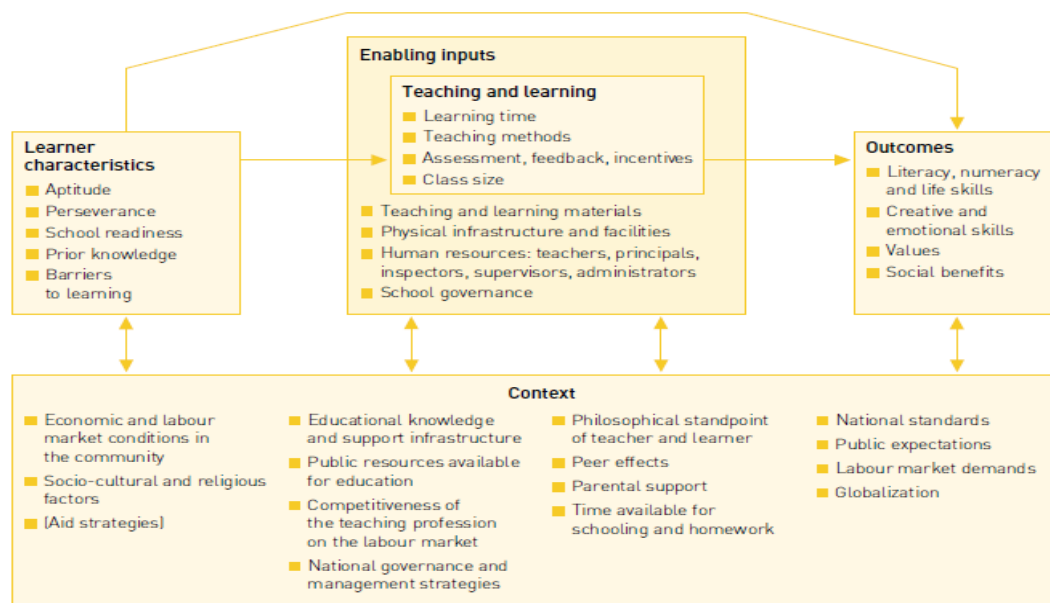
Sub-research questions include;

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

The Heneveld Quality of Education Framework (2001) along with consultations with the TENI Implementing Partners (IPs) and GES revealed that there should be four spheres of inquiry for the research: the child/home setting, community setting, the school and the classroom setting, and the district/policy level in order to fully analyze the inhibitors and promoters to quality education. The team also interviewed the regional and district level stakeholders concerning the issues surrounding the quality of education. From a conceptual perspective, the definitions of what is “quality education” was also discussed during the consultations with key government and non state actors working across Ghana. The following definition was highlighted by the TENI partners: that the quality of education relates to the learning outcomes of the education system and what the education system ultimately produces; quality education also relates to the inputs, teaching learning processes inside the school and the short term outcomes from this process.

Heneveld’s framework for assessing quality education and inclusivity along with the EFA Framework for Education Quality was used to help define the dimensions of quality education and provide a clear picture of the interrelations between the various education inputs and outcomes required for the improvement of quality basic education in Ghana. The EFA framework for understanding education quality is presented below:

**Figure 1.1: EFA Framework on Quality**



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005

**Teaching and Learning** is situated at the centre of this conceptual framework for Quality Education: key factors which promoted learning are the enabling characteristics such as learning time, learner characteristics, teaching methods and assessment/feedback. A review of the literature shows that aspects of teachers' methods, commitment, attitudes, and behaviour (an example of which is time-on-task) have a direct impact not just on pupil attainment but also on retention, completion and transition. The EFA framework also presents the links between learner characteristics, and learning outcomes. For the desired learning outcomes (quality) to be achieved learner characteristics must be effectively combined with the right enabling inputs in a favourable context. Quality education is therefore the result of a combination of complex factors. Where there is no enabling context, enabling inputs and positive learner characteristics quality outcomes suffers.

The AfC/TENI research team used both the EFA and the Heneveld's framework<sup>3</sup> as the core conceptual frameworks which guided the development of the design, field guide and spheres of investigation amongst children, teachers, and head teachers and in relation to classroom observation. A gender and inclusive education lens was used to also evaluate the impact of teacher pupil relations within the classroom setting in order to assess learning efficiency and effectiveness.

### 1.1.1 The Goal of Achieving Quality

The goal of achieving universal primary education (UPE) has been an international goal since 1948 when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was affirmed. It posits that elementary education was to be made free and compulsory for all children in all nations. This objective was restated in international treaties and in United Nations conference declarations on many occasions. Although some of the international treaties specified the need to provide education on human rights, reproductive

<sup>3</sup> Henevelds' Framework has shaped the thinking of the World Bank and other development partners on Education Quality.

health, sports and gender awareness, they were generally silent about educational quality. This remained true as recently as 2000, when the United Nations Millennium Declaration's commitment to achieve UPE by 2015 was directly and simply set out without explicit reference to quality. Thus, by placing emphasis upon assuring access for all, these instruments played down the important role of quality in achieving universal participation in education. However, over the last 10 years most nations particularly those in the developing world have become keenly aware that a focus on access is not enough and schooling outcomes are directly a product of how well pupils are taught and how effectively they learn particularly related to the basics of reading and numeracy. These can have a crucial impact on how long they stay in school, how regularly they attend and how far they reach in the schooling experience.

Parental decisions to send their children to one school or the other is also influenced by the quality of teaching and learning provided and upon whether at the end, school is worth the time and cost for their children and for themselves. Therefore, the issue of quality is as crucial as access and participation (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005). As one chief stated in the Upper East "if GES teachers are placing their own students in private schools in the urban towns, then what does this say about our public primary schools in the villages they serve?"

In 1990, the World Declaration on Education for All identified quality as a **prerequisite** for achieving the fundamental goal of equity. The Declaration argued that expanding access alone would be insufficient for education to contribute fully to the development of the individual and society. As such, it placed a premium on improving the quality of children's education as spelt out in EFA's sixth goal. UNESCO and UNICEF, (2011) threw more light on the issue of poor quality education in Sub Saharan Africa.

*"In some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, up to 40% of young people who have attended primary school for five years have neither the essential basic skills to avoid lapsing into illiteracy, nor the minimal qualifications to secure a job. These are alarming indications of the overall low level of education quality in many parts of Africa" (UNICEF and UNESCO, 2011).*

**The Ghana government's first attempt at improving quality** can be traced back to 1961 when the lack of textbooks in schools was identified as one of the major barriers in the delivery of quality education in the country. Since textbooks and instructional materials have a direct impact on what is taught in schools and how it is taught, the government of Ghana in 1961 introduced the first free textbook scheme, in an attempt to supply every school pupil with basic textbooks as its commitment to improving education quality (Brown, 1975).

Other efforts at improving all facets of education included the 1987 Education Reform and the free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) programme. Since the launching of fCUBE, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS) and the Ghana Education Service (GES) have made concerted efforts to improve access, quality and outcomes along with focussing on improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of management of education at all levels. Some of these attempts at improving efficiency and effectiveness included the Basic Education Sector Improvement Plan (BESIP), the Education Sector Support Programme (ESSP) supported by the Department for International Development (DFID) of UK, and the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy I and II (GPRS I & II). Other more recent attempts include the: New Education Bill, Capitation Grant system, free textbook and uniform programmes and Ghana School Feeding programme. All these attempts at achieving universal basic education with improved quality, and reduced cost to the parent have also

emphasised the need to improve learning outcomes and management efficiency of the education sector. The largest government attempt to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills was the 2010 launch of the National Accelerated Literacy Programme (NALAP) which was a nationwide effort to train teachers at the early grade level to adopt more participatory and phonic based approaches to teaching reading and writing (KG to P3) using mother tongue and 2<sup>nd</sup> language bilingual approaches.

Although these efforts have yielded some gains in improving access to basic education, the evidence in Ghana is that primary level literacy and numeracy capabilities among children have not improved. The vast majority of Ghanaian children (approx. 75%) of Primary 6 children are unable to read after 6 years of schooling. The 2005 and 2007 reports on the National Education Assessment (NEA) and School Education Assessment (SEA), administered to 3% of P3 and of P6 pupils nationwide in July 2005 and 2007, indicates that only 16.4% of the P3 pupils reached proficiency level in English and 18.6% in Mathematics in 2005 as against 15% for P3 English and 26.1% for P6 mathematics in 2007<sup>4</sup>. In 2005 only 23.6% of the P6 pupils reached the proficiency level in English and 9.8% in Mathematics as compared to 26.1% for English and 10.8% for mathematics in 2007. Figure 1.0 shows the overall NEA distribution of mean scores; minimum competency and proficiency levels for 2005 and 2007 (see section 2.1).

As evidence in the dismal performance, most pupils by P6 can be considered as illiterate and are unable to read in their mother tongue (L1) or in English (L2). As part of recent efforts to resolve the problem of poor performance and make pupils literate and numerate in L1 and L2, Ghana's Education Strategic Plan 2003-2015 stated as a key objective the need to make pupils functionally literate and numerate by the end of the P3 class. In effect, the strategic plan envisaged that by the end of the third year pupils will have achieved fluency in reading in their mother tongue (L1) and in English (L2). Unfortunately the performance monitoring reports for the ESP have also indicated that the quality of education over the last 10 years has not improved and has failed to improve a minimum standard of quality across primary schools in Ghana (ESP Performance report, 2010).

The evidence from the National Education Assessment (2007, 2010) results indicates that only about 15% of Ghana's youth are functionally literate and numerate. This is undermining the quality of secondary and tertiary education and threatens Ghana's core goal for reaching middle income status, which is one of the pillars of Ghana's development strategy. The Ministry of Education, Science Sports (MOESS) has taken steps to address this critical issue through the appointment of a Task Force to lead a National Literacy Acceleration Program (NALAP). NALAP is aimed at achieving literacy and numeracy by putting in place a comprehensive national strategy to support the use of Ghanaian language in Kindergarten through P3 as a foundation for English literacy.

In recent times the poor performance of public schools in basic education certificate examination (BECE) in the country has raised public concerns among parents, parliamentarians and other key stakeholders across the country. Almost every year, the West African Examination Council (WAEC) reports that some basic schools score zero% in BECE particularly schools in the rural deprived districts of the country<sup>5</sup>. This kind of poor performance over the years moved Annan, (2005) to express his displeasure about supervision in public schools in the following words:

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<sup>4</sup> Proficiency levels mean that the child has been able to answer 55% of the test questions.

<sup>5</sup> Pass rates mean that the children have to score between aggregate 6 – 30. Schools scoring zero mean that none of the children who sat for the exam were able to score within this aggregate range. This often means that the children were unable to read and understand the examination questions.

*It is not enough to invest resources in education and expect that all will be well soon. There is the need for strict supervision, right from the teachers themselves to the President of the Republic. Headmasters and teachers, District Education Directors and headmasters, in that order, up to the Minister of Education and the President, must sign performance contracts with their teachers (Annan, 2005:23).*

Additionally, this abysmal performance in Ghana is undermining admissions into the SHS and is often reflected in the curriculum at the secondary and tertiary levels of education which have to help students remediate their weaknesses caused by poor quality education at the lower levels. The most devastating impact of poor quality education is manifested among the Colleges of Education which train teachers and place significant emphasis on subject level content and far less emphasis on training teachers in the methodologies they will use in the classroom. The reproduction of poor literacy and numeracy rates should be considered for the next area of TENI research in Ghana.

### 1.1.2 Characteristics of Quality Education

Quality education is a complex process, involving a range of interacting demand and supply-side factors. It is difficult to attribute quality to one or two specific factors; rather it should be seen as a process with a wealth of overlapping determinants, often in flux. However, it is important to retain an awareness of the complexities of quality, and the range of interlocking determinants. The interlocking factors include: health; disability; HIV/AIDS; households; migration; child labour; educational costs; geographical differences and divisions; gender and access; supply of schools; teachers; non state providers; and schooling practices (Akyeampong et al, 2007). EFA Global Monitoring report (2005) provides a list of the complex factors affecting quality education. These include:

- Health: Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities;
- Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities;
- Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace;
- Processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities; and
- Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.

Several child readiness factors including school health and nutrition has a growing body of evidence concerning the impact it has on children's learning efficiency and effectiveness in SSA. Research over the last ten years in SSA indicates that children's health influences their **functioning** in school. Similarly, the health of school teachers is an important factor in teacher attendance and the quality of **interactions** that take place in classrooms. Pridmore (2007) in a study of children's health problems in Ghana, identified several health problems that have potential implications on schooling. The Ghana National Commission on Children (GNCC: 2000) found that 16% of school-age children surveyed suffered from recurring health problems. Of those indicating health problems 22% cited headaches, 28% suffered from malaria/fever, 19% suffered from stomach disorders and 31% other ailments.

Fentiman, Hall and Bundy (2001) found that 70% of all primary school-age children in the Eastern Region of Ghana were anaemic. Sarris and Shams (1991) studied malnutrition among school age children in Ghana and found that about 36 percent of children surveyed were malnourished. Most weighed below the 80 percent Harvard weight-for-age standard. The GNCC survey (2000) also reported that only about a third (29%) of children ate meals with protein (Akyeampong et al., 2007).

There are several **obstacles to the delivery of quality basic education** in Ghana. Lack of teachers willing to work in rural areas, poverty and hunger keep children out of school and hamper their ability to learn (World Bank, 2010; UNICEF, 2010). Oduro (2007) outlines a number of problems relating to the attainment of quality education in Ghana which include:

1. Misuse of instructional hours-Schools do not follow the official time tables for teaching as indicated on the walls of their classrooms, and fewer subjects are taught each day in both private and public schools ....
2. The lack of textbooks in public schools as compared to private schools
3. The poor preparation for teaching – general absence of lesson plans for teaching and lesson plans are written as a matter of duty and not as teaching aids
4. Use of inappropriate instructional language: emphasis on use of English though pupil proficiency is very poor
5. Poor mode of lesson delivery: question and answer with pupils being unable to answer most questions –more teacher talk than pupil participation.
6. The lack of good quality indicators at the national level – BECE not a good assessment tool
7. Lack of quality indicators at school level to guide teacher assessment

**Other challenges to quality education delivery include:**

Oduro and Fertig, (2010) in discussing school level initiatives to improve education quality for disadvantaged learners in Ghana and Tanzania noted the following as inhibitors to quality education:

- Lack of child readiness.
- Poorly motivated teachers
- Lack of community support to schools
- Teenage pregnancy
- Repeated absenteeism (teachers and pupils)

The study found that Ghanaian children, they argued, were not prepared for learning on a daily basis since most children arrived at school hungry. The study suggests that parents were absentee parents who did not stay with their children. Three quarters of the children did not stay with their parents and some of these children live by themselves. Children across the study sites did not have basic schooling needs especially adequate stationery. Teenage pregnancy was also widespread among girls and repeated teacher and pupil absenteeism interrupted teaching and learning. Head teachers were unable to raise support from the school community as most communities were poverty stricken and lacked the capacity to support their schools. On the subject of low motivated teachers, Oduro and Fertig, (2010), noted the lack of in-service training programmes to upgrade teacher skills and competencies.

### **1.1.3 Inclusivity and Quality Education**

The concept of developing inclusive schools as the most effective means for achieving quality education for all is underpinned by the notion of social justice, empowerment and democratic participation in regular school. Regular school inclusion is expected to be free from child abuse,

forceful and oppressive pedagogy (Gibson 1986, Giroux 1997, Hook 1994 as cited in Agbenyega 2006). An educationally inclusive school is a one in which the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well being of every student matters whether they are students with or without disabilities (Lupton and Jones 2002, p.1as cited in Agbenyega 2006). Agbenyega, (2006) argues that an effective inclusive school should demonstrate sound inclusive practices such as collaborative leadership styles and good practice as well as identify resources to support progressive inclusion. Other key indicators of inclusive schooling include ensuring that:

- the school's Mission Statement is well articulated towards promoting inclusion and raising attainment
- all the school's community members are fully aware of and actively support the principle of inclusion
- all staff are actively using sound strategies to provide better support and greater access to all students and teaching
- learning is routinely monitored by teachers, head teachers and senior managers to ensure they are in tune with the school's Mission
- schools demonstrate a culture in which admission policies do not discriminate on the grounds of racial, ethnic, religious or disability status
- schools have a clear policy on bullying and punishment
- child protection policies are in place to provide safe environment for all students
- schools recognize and value the achievements of all students who experience barriers to learning
- schools offer students the opportunity to play a full and active part in their own learning

Sayed, Akyeampong & Ampiah, (2000) argued that the successes attained are masked by long-term challenges in access, retention and quality education for all, particularly for students with disabilities due to the lack of professional development activities for teachers, ineffective monitoring systems and limited resources provided to schools. Other barriers to access and quality identified by the Government of Ghana include: architectural barriers, inaccessible curriculum and limited pre-/post-training in special education courses for regular classroom teachers for students with disabilities (GES, 2004). The GES concedes it faces challenges in providing access and quality education within the government's policy of inclusion in education:

*“Challenges to ensuring social and educational inclusion include public prejudiced perception of persons with special needs, architectural barriers, inadequate assessment facilities, inaccessible curriculum, curriculum inflexibility and pre-/post-training in special education needs for regular teachers” (GES, 2004, p. 15).*

The TENI Baseline Research Study (IoE, 2011) provides a rich analysis of the different factors which inhibit or promote inclusive education and to what extent these were present in the schools sampled for that report. The findings from the report suggest that children's aspirations are not being met across several the majority of Ghanaian primary schools in northern Ghana and that there is a general disparity between the education experiences of boys and girls. The baseline study also suggests that the needs for inclusion are not being met because of a lack of synergy between the different actors who have a responsibility (e.g. District Education Offices) or a stake in improving quality education. The current quality of education study builds on these findings as well as adding additional dimensions to some

findings to provide an even more comprehensive assessment of factors that inhibit inclusion and quality.

As outlined in the baseline study teachers responded positively to the idea of inclusion and suggested a range of positive strategies towards promoting the concept. However, with respect to children with more than moderate learning difficulties, teachers felt ill-equipped both in terms of skills and material resources.

In terms of gender, evidence from the baseline study suggests that teachers are sensitized to the need to ensure that boys and girls are treated equally in the classroom. In most cases classrooms observers noted positive strategies were being adopted to ensure that both sexes could participate. However, there is also much evidence that reflects that there are still many factors remaining that inhibit girls' access to education. More particularly, the baseline study identified factors around levels of teacher training, school infrastructure and socio economic, cultural and family background as influencing girls' access to education.

#### **1.1.4 Teachers' attitudes and concerns toward inclusive education**

According to Agbenyega, (2005) the practice of inclusive education and the quality of educational materials and instruction students receive is influenced by beliefs about disability, ethnicity, attitude and teachers' concerns. There are many regular education teachers who feel unprepared and fearful to work with learners with disabilities in regular classes. These group display frustration, anger and a negative attitude toward inclusive education because they believe it could lead to lower academic standards. Apart from that access to resources and specialist support influences teacher confidence and attitudes toward inclusive education (Bennett, DeLuca, & Bruns, 1997; Wolery, Anthony, Snyder, Werts, & Katzenmeyer, 1997 as cited in Agbenyega 2005). However, he argues that when teachers gain the extensive professional knowledge needed to implement inclusive programmes they might change their attitudes towards inclusive education for SEN children.

Teachers' negative attitude towards inclusive education in regular schools is not in isolation. Agbenyega, (2005); Avoke, (2002) and Oliver-Commey, (2001) all confirm that the most critical barrier to free universal education for students, particularly those with disabilities is negative attitude and prejudice. Some Ghanaians, they allege still attribute the causes of disabilities to curses from the gods. Nepveux, Mwinibalono & Kuomkugri, (2004) report that the women's wing of the advocacy group: Ghana Society for the Physically Disabled (GSPD) claims that the situation of disabled persons in villages in the Northern Region of Ghana is to say the least dreadful:

*"Newly born disabled children are considered as non-human. Often they are regarded as fairies, spirits, or snakes etc. Such children the GSPD claim will either be killed or hidden away from society. They cited the example of a man who had hidden his disabled daughter in the room for 27 years. At her discovery she was very sick and she died. The report also claims that parents of disabled children will only consult sorcerers or witch doctors but never consult a medical doctor"* (Nepveux, D., Mwinibalono, M & Kuomkugri, J., (2004, p. 1 as cited in Agbenyega 2005 p. 45).

Agbenyega (2005), Avoke (2002), GES (2004) have all noted that negative attitude, and persistent low regard for students with disabilities poses a serious threat to social and educational inclusion in Ghana.

The challenge revolves around how to remove these barriers to expand social and educational inclusion. Inclusive schooling offers new hope for school success and social integration for persons with and without disabilities (Bennett, DeLuca, & Bruns, 1997; Cowne, 2003; Gable & Hendrickson, 1997).

On the contrary, Kuyini, (2010) reported that teachers had a relatively positive attitude towards including students with special education needs (SEN) in regular classrooms. However, they were concerned about their limited knowledge of inclusive practices. Teachers, he argued were unable to provide individual support to students with disabilities in the generally overcrowded regular classrooms to enable them to achieve meaningful educational outcomes. In a commentary of problems facing inclusive education in Ghana, Kuyini, (2010) lists the major factors as: structural inequalities and marginalised resource allocation; teacher attitudes and skills; and a gap between policy initiation and implementation.

However, it has also been found that schools find it difficult to meet the needs of children who are differently able simply because there are too few professionals who have been trained to assess special needs and plan to meet them. Available evidence also suggests that teachers “were reluctant to have children with disabilities in class (especially those with behaviour problems), because of large class-sizes.” Other challenges Kuyini noted include the huge numbers of untrained teachers; superficial skills in relation to inclusive practices and high rate of teacher turn-over. While these were extremely difficult issues to overcome, there is also the piece meal approach to establishing inclusive schools. This unplanned approach, he argues, does not augur well for achieving the vision of inclusion in line with the EFA and MDGs goals and targets.

While the Ministry of Education’s Strategic Plan 2003-2015 envisages the development of a model for Inclusive Education within the framework of Education for All (EFA), the allocation and provision of resource to special needs schools is reflected in the structural inequalities and marginalisation of persons with disabilities.

### **1.1.5 How we measure quality**

Until recently, much discussion of educational quality centred on system inputs, such as infrastructure and pupil-teacher ratios, and on curricular content. In recent years, however, more attention has been paid to educational processes — how teachers and administrators use inputs to structure meaningful learning experiences for students. Their work represents a key factor in ensuring quality school processes. Quality education provision has become an issue in relation to children’s regular attendance, retention and staying to complete. A frequently cited reason for poor attendance, retention and drop out in schools is that they find it *uninteresting* and *irrelevant*.

Esia-Donkor (2008) cites teacher performance as the major reason rural children give for dropping out of school. This means that if access to education in rural schools is to be improved it is necessary to address teacher quality and the quality of teacher inputs in rural schools. This perhaps explains why Mensah (1995) indicated that the quality of education depends on the availability of qualified teachers and their preparedness to offer quality teaching. The 2004 EMIS report shows that rural schools have weak indicators of quality. For example, rural schools had the least number of qualified teachers, the highest pupil-teacher-ratios and the lowest gender parity rates.

Teacher quality, attrition rates and unwillingness to accept postings to rural areas have all been linked to access and quality issues. Davis and Ampiah (2008) expressed the view that this situation affects teaching and learning in basic schools and the government of Ghana was using in-service training to improve the quality of teaching and learning at the basic education level. GOG, (2002) reported that about 5 percent of primary schools in Ghana have only one or no teacher at all. Acute teacher shortage has been identified as endemic in the Ghanaian basic education system (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2006; World Bank, 2004). Kraft et al, (1995) emphasised on the need for teacher support and supervision in rural areas because of the dramatic differences between opportunities of rural children as compared to those in urban settings. These differences were found in most aspects of schooling including infrastructure and furniture, sanitary facilities for boys and girls, and stationery/textbooks. Other inequities in the quality of educational provision between urban and rural schools in Ghana are management, quality teacher supply and motivation. Dunne and Leach, (2005) report on the low levels of professionalism in rural schools (especially low performing ones), with teachers having high rates of lateness, absenteeism and sometimes refusing to teach classes even when they are in school. Casely-Hayford and Wilson (2001) also explored the reasons for the low numbers of female teachers in the rural deprived areas of Ghana and the impact this had on girls' retention and achievement rates. Seidu and Adzahlie-Mensah (2010) observed that teacher attitudes and actions affect attendance and completion and argued that if a child is ready to learn and teachers are not ready to direct and support learning, the child may lose interest. Therefore, what teachers and school heads do, determines the climate created for teaching and learning and pupil's responses to schooling.

#### 1.1.6 Promoters and Inhibitors of Quality

The TENI/AfC research team also drew on the literature on effective schooling which provides an in-depth understanding on the dimensions of teaching and learning which must be present to ensure high quality education particularly in poorly resourced schools often with learners who are considered "poor" themselves. As an enabling input to high quality education, teaching methods are fundamental, but research shows that applying a particular methodology is not enough. Abadzi's (2006) seminal work on "Effective Learning for the Poor" suggests that "staff working in the education sector hear the names of various methods: active learning, child-centred learning, [which] often emphasize students' engagement, pleasure, or discovery over "traditional" methods." Her research into teachers' methods shows that where they are applied on the basis of "dubious guidance and scant evidence" they prove to be counter-productive (Abadzi 2006). Similarly the EFA Global Monitoring Report (2002) indicated that progress in education is often hindered by "*unreflectively applying a number of technical inputs that are assumed to influence the quality of education.*" Effective learning is achieved when "*the time spent on activities that help students retain, integrate, and use information to make decisions is maximized* (Abadzi 2006)".

Probably the most documented barrier or inhibitor to education quality in Ghana is the issue of ***teacher absenteeism and low time on task*** by primary school teachers in Ghana (Casely-Hayford, 2011). Learning time is characterized as a central enabling input and much of the research in schools in Ghana centres around issues of teachers' time-on-task. "High teacher absenteeism is one of the key inefficiencies in the education sector. . . The average teacher absentee rate [in Ghana], was 27 percent" (World Bank, 2010) just 48% of which is due to ill-health (Al-Hassan 2009). The World Bank Efficiency and Effectiveness of Ghana's Education Sector (2010) provides the most conclusive evidence that the average number of days missed by Ghanaian teachers in a year is 43, compared to 11.6 and 13.4 in Tunisia and Morocco respectively, placing Ghana at the bottom ranking in respect to

having one of the most inefficient school systems in the world. However, the problems of time-on-task cannot just be limited to teacher absenteeism. Researchers in Ghana have also found that even when teachers are present in school, instructional time is being misused and that there is a direct correlation between the misuse of learning time and pupils becoming disenchanted, pupil absenteeism and pupil dropout (Alhassan & Adzahlie-Mensah 2010; Kraft 2000). CREATE researcher's surveyed pupils' responses to the question:

*“What do you think the school should do to make school more interesting so you always want to come to school? Pupils' responses to the question indicated that they were concerned about teachers' attitudes to work. Teacher practices that they did not like included: teachers' punctuality; teacher absence from the classes; Teachers not teaching while in class; Teachers not giving adequate exercises; Teachers' poor commitment to teaching; Teachers' chats on the school veranda during instructional hours”.* (Alhassan & Adzahlie-Mensah, 2010)

Abadzi (2006) describes various contributing factors to teacher absenteeism, many of which centre around poor school management and infrastructure. Alhassan & Adzahlie-Mensah (2010) argue that both absenteeism and low time-on-task can be attributed to poor management systems which result in teachers' indiscipline. The World Bank Study (2010) on Equity and Efficiency in Ghana's Basic Education System found that the main reasons for teacher absenteeism were due to: distance education, attendance at funerals, workshops, collection of salaries and banking and visits to the District Education Offices.

There is substantive evidence in Ghana and across sub Saharan Africa to suggest that the **community participation** in education increases school quality. The QUIPS final evaluation (2004) on USAID's model school programme in Ghana provides the strongest research in relation to community participation in education and its impact on schools quality. More recent evidence by AfC on a range of programmes suggest that SMC's and PTA's in Ghana are growing in their range and ability to hold school managers accountable for higher performance within the teaching force. AfC's evaluation (2009) of the LCD programme in northern Ghana indicates that many school management structures drawn from the community such as PTAs and SMCs are not fully cognisant of their responsibilities and therefore do not feel empowered to act on the issues of quality of education. The Inclusive Education research study conducted by AfC (2011) on TENI schools described situations where PTAs were actively monitoring teacher attendance which improved as a direct result of this vigilance (Casely-Hayford et al, 2011). Further investigations into the impact of complementary education systems such as ACE Wing Schools or Schools for Life, a more “community owned model of education” indicated that teacher attendance and the overall quality of education was increased due to heightened community involvement in schooling.

Other inhibitors to quality education are tied to **pupil readiness** or ability to access the learning environment. Policies such as fCUBE, Ghana school feeding programme, and school capitation grants have resulted in an exponential increase in access and enrolment rates over the last 10 years in Ghana (MOE, 2012). However, this increase in enrolment has led to increased class sizes and placed greater pressure on the need for school infrastructure, and increased human resources (i.e. trained teachers). Research suggests that this pressure is felt more acutely in the rural northern regions where it is more difficult to attract, deploy and retain trained teachers (Casely-Hayford, 2011; UNICEF, 2011; World Bank, 2010). The World Bank (2010) and Akyeampong et al (2007) find that Ghanaian basic education pupils are more likely to experience barriers to learning in the rural areas of the northern

regions compared to other areas of Ghana. In particular children with special needs, girls, children living in extreme poverty, and children whose parents are not themselves educated will all experience poorer quality education. The socio-economic and cultural factors underpinning the barriers to learning for these groups have been well documented in recent studies on Out of School Children by UNICEF/AfC 2011 and several studies for the MOE (ISODEC, GNECC 2010, GNECC 2011).

There is also growing evidence of gender based abuse in Ghanaian basic schools particularly in relation to verbal, physical and sexual abuse of children. Corporal punishment in schools is widespread and having a negative impact on learning outcomes. (Casely-Hayford, 2011) However, where schools implement more inclusive practices, for example: teaching in mother-tongue in early years so that pupils are able to access the curriculum; promoting a more nurturing attitude on the part of teachers which includes not relying on harsh or punitive methods for classroom control or sanctions, pupil absenteeism was reduced and attainment levels improved. (Casely-Hayford et al, 2011; AfC, 2011)

Most progressive nations have seen the harmful effects of corporal punishment on children and their education outcomes and have abolished it. In Ghana, legislation on corporal punishment is not adequate to explicitly prohibit all forms of corporal punishment. While the Children's Act prohibits the use of mental and physical torture or other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment against children, it allows for a degree of "reasonable" and "justifiable" punishment<sup>6</sup>. Thus the use of corporal punishment is both subtle and overt across the vast majority of public schools. The Ghana Education Service (GES) which has oversight responsibility for policy in schools still maintains caning as the main form of corporal punishment in schools in spite of recognition of the harmful effects of the practice. The GES has however put in place mechanisms to ensure strict supervision in a prescribed measure on corporal punishment in schools in the *Head Teacher's Handbook* (GES, 1994: 260-261). In this book, the GES Code of Discipline for second cycle schools provides for corporal punishment in very rare cases but on the condition that a head teacher of the school is the only person to give authorisation or the one to administer the punishment (parents also have to be informed). It outlines certain offences that justify corporal punishment after an initial strong warning. The list of offences includes fighting, quarrelling, stealing, squandering of school fees, using drugs, drinking alcohol, smoking, flouting authority, assaulting colleagues, and assaulting staff, among others.

The code stipulates that the acceptable rule for using the cane in educational institutions is that caning should be administered by the head of the school in his or her office; the act should not exceed four strokes at the basic education level; the stroke should be recorded in the logbook and put under lock and key; and at the secondary level, the strokes should not exceed six. There were varying responses to the issue of addressing indiscipline in schools in the three northern regions. In many of the schools observed both the head teachers and class teachers told the team of researchers that no corporal punishment was administered. One reason that made the school authorities unwilling to admit the use of corporal punishment is their failure to comply with the prescribed manner outlined in the GES policy. However, in other schools, teachers stated that caning was a necessary part of maintaining discipline and decried the policy as a means of undermining their authority. Evidence from observations, interviews with pupils, parents and community members indicated that the practice of caning was widespread.

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<sup>6</sup> Kyei-Gyamfi, S. (2011), Children in dangerous circumstances: exploitation and abuse - Corporal punishment in Ghana pages 75 – 96 In Robert Kwame Ame; DeBrenna LaFa Agbényiga; Nana A Apt edited Children's rights in Ghana: reality or rhetoric? Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books

The **key pillars of the research** (Annex 1F) were therefore to investigate the question of learning effectiveness in Ghanaian primary schools and Junior high schools by investigating the classroom interactions, school and classroom supplies, the views of children, the views of parents and the actual situation on the ground in terms of head teacher leadership and management at the school level and the district support to teaching and learning across the schools. The context of learning also played a significant role in the design and analysis in order to capture the socio cultural patterns influencing both teaching and learning in the classroom and inclusivity of children.

## 1.2 Research Design and Sampling Criteria

The design focuses on qualitative analysis of key promoters and inhibitors of quality and inclusive education. The study sampled six districts in the three northern regions, two per region. In each region, one TENI project district and a non-TENI control district were sampled. In each district the most recent PMT and SEA results for English were used to identify and rank high and low achieving schools. School selection took into account rural and urban dichotomy. It also considered well resourced and deprived schools. One third of the schools were urban and two-thirds rural (i.e. 3 urban and 6 rural per district).

A cluster selection approach that ensured a cluster of two primary schools and one JHS was used. Other sampling considerations were that all schools should have full complement of classes (i.e. P1 through to P6; JHS 1 to JHS). The schools should be within at most 2 hours drive of the district capital or the nearest place where field workers would stay during the research. The six districts had the following sample as a basis for the selection:

**Table 1.1: Key Sampling Framework**

	TENI Districts		Non – TENI Districts	
	Rural Schools	Urban Schools	Rural Schools	Urban Schools
High Performing Primary Schools	6	3	6	3
Low Performing Primary Schools	6	3	6	3
Junior High Schools	6	3	6	3

- In order to identify high and low achieving schools the PMT and SEA results for English were used. Schools were ranked across the district according to the average school score at upper primary level for English using PMT or SEA results for the most recent year available.
- Rural and urban schools at Basic level were included in the sample in the district, well-resourced compared to more deprived schools; one third of the schools were urban and the rest in a rural setting;
- A cluster approach to school selection which ensured that each school was in a cluster of at least 3 schools (2 Primary and 1 JHS), 1 Primary being high achieving in comparison with others in the District and/or cluster and the other lower and the JHS to be within a short distance of either one or both of the Primary Schools and therefore receiving children from them was used.
- All schools should have a full complement of classes (i.e. P1 through to P6; JHS 1 to JHS 3)

The design of the Quality and Inclusive research study used the PMT results which were part of the School performance review process in TENI in order to select high and low performing schools in each of the TENI and Non TENI districts for the study. The PMT results were more easily accessible to the research team and were used as a means of sampling the schools and providing key indicators of the differences in learning outcomes in order to explore the inhibitors and promoters of quality education. Another key criterion of school selection was the location of the school and the level of resourcing (e.g. urban vs. rural, well-resourced compared to deprived area schools, mission and non mission/District Assembly schools).

The schools that were selected (Annex 1H) also enabled the research team to investigate a variety of school management types (mission and non mission), and community and teacher characteristics which represent a cross section of schools in each of the districts (e.g. trained and untrained teachers, community volunteer teachers etc). The main contextual factors provided a varied sample to explore and compare across the different categories and sub-categories of the research questions. The main sub-categories/themes for the research included an investigation of: Child Readiness, Teaching/Learning Processes, School/Teacher Inputs, Community Support/Demand for Quality and the Outcomes to Quality.

### 1.2.1 PMT Sampling Results

In order to ensure that the sites selected for this research were a representative sample in relation to the district and region, assessment data was used to determine how the schools perform in relation to one another. In the case of those schools selected in the TENI supported districts this data took the form of PMT results. These performance monitoring tests were supported by the NGOs who work as TENI implementing partners. They were conducted between 2010 and 2012. The results referred to below are from the English tests that were given to P6 children in each of the districts.

For each of the 3 districts the average performance across the whole district is reported in the first table and chart. Following that is more detailed information about the schools that were initially selected for the research. The results below are recorded from four Primary schools in each of the urban centres across the 3 districts and 8 Primary schools in the rural areas. In each cluster of four schools two relatively high and two low performing schools are identified. The relative performance is gauged against other schools in the district. However, in order to ensure that enough schools could be chosen in the urban centres the comparison is made between the schools in the immediate area, this means that some schools that have been categorized as “low” performing have a better profile than some rural schools that have been categorized as “high” performing. (See Annex 2F for more details on the PMT data for each cluster of schools). See tables below for an example of how the sampling was conducted in each of the cluster of schools across the Talensi Nabdam district in the Upper East Region.

**Table 1.2: PMT Scores for Urban Cluster in Talensi Nabdam District, Upper East**

P6 English PMT							Relative School Performance
CLUSTER ONE (URBAN):	RANGE OF SCORES ACHIEVED						
	0	1 to 25	26 to 50	51 to 75	76 to 100		
KULENGA PS	0%	11%	51%	33%	4%	45	
KPATUYA PS	0%	62%	29%	8%	2%	52	
ALL SAINTS PS	Results for this school were not available for						High

	this year.						
KARANGO PS	0%	75%	13%	13%	0%	16	Low

**Table 1.3: PMT Scores for Rural cluster (1st) Talensi Nabdam District, Upper East**

P6 English PMT							Relative School Performance
CLUSTER TWO (RURAL):	RANGE OF SCORES ACHIEVED					No of Pupils	
	0	1 to 25	26 to 50	51 to 75	76 to 100		
NAMONSA- PS	0%	20%	50%	26%	4%	114	High
CHUCHULIGA PS	0%	71%	24%	4%	1%	119	Low
KACHOGA PS	0%	90%	10%	0%	0%	124	High
ST MATTHEW PS	0%	54%	29%	17%	0%	35	Low

### 1.2.2 TENI and NON TENI Districts

The Tackling Educational Needs Inclusively (TENI) project has been running in the three northern regions of Ghana since 2008. The overarching aim of the programme is to improve quality education particularly for the marginalized, those with special needs and children who may face challenges in accessing education through various socio-economic and cultural factors, a factor which particularly affects girls. In order to reach this aim VSO staff, national and international volunteers work together with 3 local NGOs based in the northern regions and Ghana Education Service to plan and implement various interventions. These include:

- Supporting GES with the development and implementation of School based inset and cluster based inset (SBI and CBI), training of teachers and headmasters;
- Formation of school community groups who oversee implementation of Community Action Plans (CAPs) along with the development of CAPs;
- Supporting GES in organizing and carrying out regular Performance Monitoring Tests (PMTs) in Primary schools and conducting community level school Performance Appraisal Meetings (SPAMs) and the development of School Improvement Plans in each community in the target districts’
- Informing stakeholders of key issues and promoting advocacy issues at education conferences which involves district and circuit level SPAMs and improvement plans by all key education stakeholders;
- Supporting in the formation of Gender Clubs – Girls’ Camps, Science, Technology and Information Camps, training for club mentors, refresher training of mentors, Gender Club cluster sharing;
- Finding, training and installing female role models in schools to promote girls’ confidence and empowerment
- Training of C/S in leadership, communication, advocacy, budget tracking; the training of key DEO staff, in planning, time management, budget tracking
- District wide dialogue with chiefs to harmonize by-laws across the district to curb the socio-cultural inhibitors to education and raising awareness on the importance of girls’ education;
- Step Change Programme for all of the Implementing Partners, how to build capacity, both organisationally and personally particularly with the District Education Oversight Committees etc.

This list gives some insight into the kinds of activities that implementing partners are carrying forward and the areas of the education system in which these activities take place. That is to say: district level management, school community members and leaders, and at the school level, headteachers, teachers and pupils are all involve in the implementation of the TENI project strategies.

### 1.2.3 Field work

The **field work** (Annexes 1B and 1C) took place across the three northern regions of Ghana – two districts in each of the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions. In each district: 9 schools were selected, 3 in an urban setting (2 primary schools and a JHS) and 6 in a rural setting (4 primary and 2 JHSs). The criteria on which these schools were selected ensured that they were broadly representative of each district as a whole. Information was gathered at the school level in various ways. A data collection instrument was used to collate the quantitative data in terms of school inputs, infrastructure and other material aspects. Alongside this field workers recorded their impressions of what was actually happening in the school on the days of research visits. These impressions draw the picture of the school as a whole and its workings. Classroom observation and follow up interviews were conducted with the class teacher and selected pupils in order to elicit further information about the classrooms in which the lesson observations took place. When comparing the various aspects of these descriptions with information gathered at the district level, clear correlations can be made which confirm that the schools that were chosen for the research sample are representative of the situation in schools in the district as a whole.

### 1.2.4 The Study Design

The study design employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative approach employed classroom observations, in-depth interviews and focused group discussions and single face to face interviews with a variety of direct and indirect stakeholders (Annex 1G). A classroom observation instrument was used to collect data on classroom interaction and learning processes. The quantitative data employed a school based checklist. A variety of analytical techniques including inferential, descriptive and narrative were used in analyzing data collected. We believe that the issue under investigation is very sensitive and complex and therefore one approach alone cannot adequately supply all the answers that we were seeking. We acknowledge that investigating an issue such as education quality and inclusiveness in schools involves value judgments, particularly regarding the validity and reliability of data due to moral and ‘politically correct’ issues that may combine to create social desirability effects (Howard-Rose and Winne, 1993; Bong, 1996). We believe for example, that the qualitative approach of conducting consensual focus group interviews with school children, teachers, parents, SMC/PTAs and chief and elders would provide us with more reliable and valid data on the quality of education in the three northern regions. The above design would not only allow us to collect in-depth data from the interviews but would also allow us to make inferences beyond the sample to the population from the summated self report questionnaires.

The study had sixteen different target populations who have been classified into five main groups. The first involved District Education Office Personnel: District Director of Education, Assistant Directors of Education, Circuit Supervisors, Girl Child Officer and Special Education Officers. The second population consisted of head teachers, teachers, and pupils. The third target population involved parents, opinion leaders, and chiefs and elders, while the fourth group involved SMC/PTAs. The fifth group was the District Assembly personnel (District chief Executive and District Coordinating Director).

## **The Research Instruments**

The design of the TENI Quality and Inclusive research project employed a variety of data collection instruments that provided rich, in-depth qualitative as well as quantitative data. The instruments included (see Field Guide Volume 3 a separate annex):

### District level interviews

- District Director of Education interview
- District Education office check list
- Focal Group Discussion with District Circuit Supervisors and Assistant Directors of Supervision
- District Assembly District Chief Executive and District Coordinating Director interview
- District Education Director, Assistant Directors and Circuit Supervisors interview
- Community /Parents Scorecard
- Interview with the Girls' Education Officer and special Education Needs Officer

### Community Based interviews

- Focal Group interview with SMC/PTAs and parents
- Opinion leaders, chiefs and elders focal group interview
- Community Score Card exercise with women's groups and SMC's

### School based interviews and observations

- Head teacher In-depth interview
- School Based Checklist
- School based observation
- Classroom checklist , observation and follow up interview with class teacher
- Pupil exercise book observation and recording sheet

Focal Group Interview schedule with pupils (bboys and ggirls separately from the class observed at the upper primary level)

- Interview with selection of Class Teachers

The findings from the inception phase revealed that gathering secondary data (such as the NEA, SEA and PMT's) for each of the districts under consideration was extremely challenging because of poor storage and ownership of the data, inconsistencies in the availability of different data sets and non existence of some data such as the SEA at district level. Across the three TENI districts similar data has been collected in the form of Teacher Observations, Performance Monitoring Tests and more detailed information about schools and communities in the form of a school survey questionnaire. The timing and frequency of the collection of these SPR data sets varies to some degree and in each case data has not been collected annually. Despite the slight differences in timing (e.g. some collecting in 2011 and 2012), this remains the most comprehensive and relevant data set for usage by the team in understanding the levels, degrees and dimensions of quality and performance across the TENI districts and schools. The School Performance Review process was found to be exceptionally well analysed and prepared for usage by the TENI research team particularly in the Upper East and Northern Regions.

Surprisingly, there was inconsistent GES data found in relation to pupil assessment data and school based assessment data (SEA) across all the TENI and non TENI districts. Very few of the TENI or non

TENI districts were able to provide any of the results of their SEA data sets in a consistent and well organised format for usage in site selection. The Government of Ghana and USAID has made large financial investments in conducting the School Education Assessment (SEA) and National Education Assessment (NEA) process in order to empower districts with information that they can use to track changes in quality and performance at the school level. However, EMIS officers from the 2 districts that were asked to provide SEA results faced several challenges in retrieving the data. The only available records were held in hard copy and were not labelled adequately. Further investigations were therefore necessary to properly contextualize the data. Even more surprising was that the National Assessment Unit responsible for the NEA/SEA could only provide a few of the district level data sets and had not kept the school based information for each district in order to support monitoring or research processes.

Unfortunately the NEA and SEA data set at national level was not available and in some cases, such as the Northern Region, this was not submitted on a school basis which made it difficult for the team to use this on a comparative basis to the PMT data collected during the SPR process<sup>7</sup>. EMIS data in the form of district summaries were available for all 6 districts as were the Annual District Performance Reports (ADPRs) which provides enrolment data for the last five years from the 2011/12 academic year. The ADPR's are the most consistent data source the team identified for analyzing trends in access and some quality indicators across all six research districts.

### **1.2.5 Child Readiness**

From the available data, it was possible to make some judgments about questions of internal efficiency and its impact on access (internal school efficiency properly falls under the pillar: "Outcomes to Quality"). On a school-by-school basis the numbers of children repeating a year, transiting to JHS and dropping out can be calculated. This can in turn be compared with the trends in transition on a district-wide basis.

### **1.2.6 Teaching Learning Processes**

All three TENI districts at least one school based exercise to observe teaching instructional practice in all district schools as part of the SPR process was carried out. The indicators used to assess teaching and learning were the same in West Mamprusi (Northern) and Talensi Nabdam (Upper East) but slightly different in the case of Jirapa District (Upper West). In each case these indicators were broken down in to sub-categories which were graded. The data was therefore largely quantitative and could be used to make comparisons between schools in the district and within the districts themselves. No similar data was available from the non-TENI districts since the SPR process has not been carried out in these districts although the UNICEF school mapping data and the District Education Performance reports provided some comparative information on basic quality indicators. More detailed information about the methods used by teachers was not included in the SPR teacher observation instrument but whether teachers use questioning to promote inclusion and if this questioning is gender balanced is included in the sub-criteria for the SPR observation.

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<sup>7</sup> Lawra provided information on recent Performance Monitoring Tests administered in the district and Jirapa conducted a rigorous mapping exercise to locate children with Special Needs. Bongo and East Mamprusi provided some SEA data, the tests for which were carried out in the 2009/10 academic year.

General statements about teachers' attitudes, behaviour and supervision are available in the Annual District Performance Reports but there is *little qualitative and quantitative data* on these aspects of the teaching process. The SPR School Survey data collected as part of the SPR process is the TENI districts includes information on maximization of timetable time and information about school systems for teacher appraisal. The TENI research explored the issues of language of instruction, teacher time on task, instructional methods and teacher creativity in the classroom.

### **1.2.7 School/Teacher Inputs**

A major research pillar for the TENI quality of education research is the area of teacher supply, school conditions, and school inputs at district and school levels. The literature review in Ghana does suggest that one of the main inhibitors to quality education in northern Ghana is the diminishing number and supply of “trained GES teachers willing to serve across the three northern regions. Studies by the World Bank (2011) suggest that less than 40% of the teaching force in northern Ghana is trained and this has been declining over the last 15 years. EMIS data was available and used by the research team for all districts on the numbers and types of schools available, conditions of school buildings in terms of whether temporary classrooms are being used and the numbers of classrooms in need of minor or major repair. Information about infrastructure including numbers of urinals and toilets, availability of water, electricity, and vehicular access is also available but there is no detailed information about whether the sanitary facilities are gender friendly or if the school is accessible to pupils and teachers with physical disabilities (unless comprehensive School Mapping is available in the district). The SPR Survey data includes more detailed information about the condition of the school facilities and inputs to the school. Numbers of core subject textbooks is also captured in the EMIS data.

The numbers of teachers disaggregated by gender, school level, and whether they are trained or untrained was obtained at district level through the EMIS officers, more detailed information was provided by the District Education Offices (e.g. District Detailed profiles of teachers). The TENI research team was provided with this district detailed profile data from some of the districts. This enabled the team to analyse the staffing situation on a school-by-school basis with information about teacher type and level of qualification provided in this district profile.

### **1.2.8 Community Support and Demand for Quality Education**

One of the key areas of inquiry in the quality of education study were the issues related to community demand for quality, their knowledge, definition and assessment of quality and performance of their children, and the action they have taken to improve quality and address the barriers to quality (e.g. teacher absenteeism, poor learning outcomes of children, lack of school supplies etc). The TENI research team obtained information about community support for the non-TENI districts and TENI districts through different data sources. For instance the Annual District Performance Reports (ADPRs) which report on the percentage of schools with functioning SMC/PTAs was available across the TENI and non TENI districts. Levels of community support according to set criteria were assessed as part of the school survey document that informs the SPR process in TENI districts. As with the SPR teaching observation tool used, each indicator was graded and so it was possible to make a quantitative analysis on a school by school basis of community support/demand for quality education and the functionality of the PTA/SMC. Conclusions as to whether the activity of SMCs and/or PTAs has an effect on teaching and learning in general, and teacher behaviour in particular were drawn from data sampled during the TENI research /fieldwork.

### **1.2.9 Outcomes to Quality**

The analysis of internal efficiency of the school system: meaning the rates of transition, drop out and repetition was analysed using the EMIS district based data. The available PMT, SEA and NEA results was used to assess student and school performance across the research sites. As far as possible, the PMT and SEA results used during the TENI research project focused on the analysis of the English tests administered in the Upper Primary classes (P4 to P6). However, the years in which they were administered differs, so while these performance results gave some information about the relative performance of each of the schools, it was not be possible to use them to correlate between performance and other indicators thought to have impact on pupils' attainment.

Where there is similar quantitative data available across all 6 districts this was used to illustrate their relative situation in terms of the indicators for the research question. TENI districts are able to provide much more detailed information about factors promoting and inhibiting quality education through the combination of the SPR survey, teacher observation linked to the school based PMT results. This data was available to the research team before the field work was conducted in order for the research team to get a holistic view of the quality of education issues confronting the school before the in-depth field work is conducted. These have become the key exploratory areas for the field teams to investigate using mixed method approaches during the three weeks of field work across the 54 schools and during the day and a half in each school.

## Chapter 2.0 Learning outcomes in Ghanaian Basic Schools at National Level

Delivery of quality education is a major challenge in Ghana's education sector. National Education Assessment Results spanning a period of 5 years (2005 – 2011) indicate that proficiency pass rates for Ghanaian children in English and Math at upper primary level (P6) are less than 35% and 16% respectively (see Table 2.1 below)<sup>8</sup>. This suggests that only 35% of children are able to read at proficiency level (scoring 55% after six or sometimes 8 years of primary and KG education). There has been very little change in these scores over the last 10 years in Ghana despite significant investment in the education sector by the state and donors. Given that the cost of primary education is over 240 USD per pupil per year, the question of performance of Ghanaian children and the outcomes to education in relation to state investment becomes a significant challenge which needs further exploration.

**Table 2.1: Overall Distribution of Students Reaching Minimum and Proficiency Levels All Years of NEA Administration**

Year	Primary 3				Primary 6			
	English		Maths		English		Maths	
	Min. Comp.	Profi.	Min. Comp.	Profi.	Min. Comp.	Profi.	Min. Comp.	Profi.
2005	50.6	16.4	47.2	18.6	63.9	23.6	47.2	9.8
2007	50.2	15	42.6	14.6	69.7	26.1	46.2	10.8
2009	57.6	20	61.2	25.2	76.9	35.6	61.9	13.8
2011	66.3	24.2	52.6	18.2	78.9	35.3	56.9	16.1

Source: MOE, CRDD NEA Findings Report Ghana, Jan. 2012

The National Education Assessments are carried out in a sample of schools that are deemed to be representative of the districts in which they are sited. The results from the tests can therefore be used to gauge the general levels of numeracy and literacy across the country. There is a dearth of assessment data on most schools in most districts across the country, which means that even though the problems of levels of literacy have been identified, there are few mechanisms for using this information for diagnosis of the specific causes and for remedial action to be taken.

The 2011 NEA results indicate that the worst performing regions with regard to proficiency level in P3 Maths were: Upper East with 13%, Northern with 11%, Volta with 10% and Upper West 9%. For English the worst scores were in the: Volta Region 13%, Upper East 13%, Northern 19% and Upper West 11%. At P6 level Maths the worst NEA scores were recorded in the three northern regions: Upper East 9%, Northern 4% and Upper West 8%. Similarly, the worst NEA proficiency scores were recorded for P6 English were across the three northern regions: with Upper East having only 20% of its

<sup>8</sup> Pupils are defined to have achieved:

minimum competency if they answer at least 35% of the test items correctly

proficiency if they answer at least 55% correctly. (Source: National Education Assessment (NEA):2011 Findings Report Ghana MoE, January 2012)

pupils being able to read at proficiency level after six years of primary schooling, Northern only 17%, and the Upper West 16%. (see Table 2.2 below).

**Table 2.2: Pupil Proficiency Pass Rates for NEA in Maths and English by Region in Ghana (2011)**

REGION	P3		P6	
	ENG (%)	MATHS (%)	ENG (%)	MATHS (%)
GREATER ACCRA	54	40	74	38
ASHANTI	30	22	43	20
WESTERN	22	17	32	16
EASTERN	20	16	34	14
CENTRAL	21	16	28	11
BRONG AHAFO	18	13	26	10
VOLTA	13	10	27	12
UPPER EAST	13	13	20	9
NORTHERN	19	11	17	43
UPPER WEST	11	9	16	8

SOURCE: MOE National Education Assessment Report (2011)

The National Education Assessment report (2011) also indicates that the worst performing schools in relation to Maths and English proficiency and competency levels were found in the **rural areas** of Ghana. Rural schools had 9% of P3 pupils reaching proficiency level in Maths as compared to 29% of children from the urban schools. At the P6 level, the proficiency rates were 6% of children reaching proficiency from rural schools as compared to 21% of children reaching proficiency from urban schools across Ghana. In English the rate for rural P3 pupils was 11% against 29% from the urban schools. Rural schools scored only 17% of their P6 pupils reaching a level of proficiency in English compared to 46% in urban schools. (see Table 2.3 below).

**Table 2.3: Pupil Proficiency Levels for NEA in Maths and English by School Location (2011)**

SCHOOL TYPE	P3		P6	
	ENG	MATHS	ENG	MATHS
URBAN	29	29	46	21
RURAL	11	9	17	6

SOURCE: MOE National Education Assessment Report (2011)

Performance Monitoring Test (PMT) results of 2011 from TENI/VSO districts also indicate that less than 20% of pupils in P3 and P4/6 passed the English test and less than 30% for Maths. The worst performing district out of the three TENI districts in the north where the TENI Research was conducted and the PMT (2011) was available is West Mamprusi (Northern Region). Comparing the Talensi Nabdam District 2008 PMT (Upper East) with the current 2011 PMT results it clearly indicates a significant decline in pupil achievement between 2008 and 2010 in both English and Maths despite

major involvement of non state providers to education provision to the district. The three northern regions also recorded a BECE pass rate<sup>9</sup> of less than 50% (see section below for details and Annex 2A).

The NEA and PMT data analyses reveal that the three northern regions are consistently scoring far below the national averages and are experiencing the most challenging problems in providing quality teaching and learning to the population particularly at the basic level and in the rural areas. The teaching and learning outcomes indicated above are likely to be directly related to the poor educational processes and supplies particularly in relation to inadequate textbook availability, in-equitable quality of teacher supply and distribution, ineffective school supervision/monitoring and inefficient school management and governance systems. The findings from the 2011 NEA tests reflect those from the performance monitoring tests in the three districts in the research sample (see section on PMT results below section 2.2).

## **2.1 Learning Assessment Data across the Six Study Districts**

The learning outcome assessment data offers an opportunity to determine effectiveness of policy initiatives and district level interventions which have been focused on quality improvements. Unfortunately the learning outcome data across a wide range of data sources reveals a crisis in the education system in relation to the high level of investment (close to 6%-10% of GDP annually over the last five years) and the outcomes to learning among primary children in Ghana.<sup>10</sup> Data gathered from the districts indicates that NEA, SEA, Terminal Examination, BECE results are used for the performance assessment of pupils. In addition, TENI districts used PMT.

The trend that is emerging based on the PMT data and NEA data is that although pupil performance at lower primary school level is very poor, the situation gets even worse at the upper primary level (P6). The average pass rates for P3 pupils in English and Maths are less than 20% and 30% respectively. P6 pass rates for English and Math were less than 13% and 14% respectively. Unfortunately Non-TENI districts do not always have PMT organized for primary school pupils, making it difficult to do any meaningful comparison between TENI and Non-TENI districts.

However BECE results over the five years (2008 – 2012) in TENI districts records an annual growth rate in pupil performance in Jirapa and West Mamprusi of 1.7% and 13.1% respectively. Talensi-Nabdam records a negative growth rate of 2.5%; with the Non-TENI districts of East Mamprusi and Bongo recording an annual growth rate of 3.9% and 1% respectively, but Lawra suffered a negative performance growth of 9.6%.

It is a desirable expectation of all education stakeholders to experience a progressive improvement in pupil achievement levels when teaching and learning outcomes are assessed. As the District Chief Execution of Jirapa District stated “Quality of education is not the best. 52% pass rate at 2012 BECE is not enough looking at the investment made in education”. West Mamprusi District’s rate of improvement is significant but generally the performance levels of other districts have not been remarkable.

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<sup>9</sup> Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) is a national terminal examination for all Junior high school students in preparation for placement and potential transit to senior cycle institutions across all Junior High School across subject areas.

<sup>10</sup> Ghana is one of the leading countries in terms of the proportion of GDP and total government spending that is invested in education (25% of GOG spending was on Education in 2011/12 which constitutes approx. 6% of GDP). This has been the trend over the last 5-10 years with some years recording as high as 11% of GDP.

Tables 2.4 and 2.5 provide a pattern of pupil performance in PMT (2010/2011) and BECE (2008-2012). Talensi-Nabdam district organized PMT for two years (2010 and 2011). In 2010 the pass rate for P3 in English was 18% and dropped to 14.6% in 2011. Maths recorded a pass rate of 20.9% in 2010 and 28.2% in 2011. In Jirapa District the pass rates for English and Maths were 27% and 58%. The pass rate for science was 20%. In West Mamprusi pass rates for English and Maths for 2011 were 17.2% and 23.4% respectively at P3 level. The pass rates at P6 level in West Mamprusi were much worse with only 4% of pupils passing English and only 7.3% of children passing Maths. The trend appears to worsen across all the districts with fewer children passing Maths and English as they move up the education ladder.

**Table 2.4: PMT and BECE Results and Average Growth Rates for TENI Districts (2008-2012)**

PROJECT	DISTRICT	YR	PMT (P3)			PMT (P6/4)			BECE PASS RATE
			ENG. PASS RATE	MATHS PASS RATE	SC PASS RATE	ENG. PASS RATE	MATHS PASS RATE	SC PASS RATE	
TENI	TALENSI NABDAM	2008	-	-	-	-	-	-	53.7
		2009	-	-	-	-	-	-	44.21
		2010	18	20.9	-	9.5	16.1	-	27.49
		2011	14.6	28.2	-	13.4	14.4	-	38.68
		2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	48.5
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	-18.9	34.9	-	41.1	-10.6	-	-2.5
	JIRAPA	2008	-	-	-	-	-	-	49
		2009	-	-	-	-	-	-	49.94
		2010	27	58	20	11	3	0	52.42
		2011	-	-	-	-	-	-	49.3
		2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	52.5
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.7
	WEST MAMPRUSI	2008	-	-	-	-	-	-	26.2
		2009	-	-	-	-	-	-	42.4
		2010	-	-	-	-	-	-	57.45
		2011	17.2	23.4	-	4	7.3	-	59.6
		2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	42.8
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	0	0	-	0	0	-	13.1

**SOURCES:**

1. BECE RESULTS: DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE Data
2. PMT RESULTS FOR TALENSI: (LINK COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/VSO)

3. PMT RESULTS FOR WEST MAMPRUSI: (ISODEC/VSO)
4. PMT RESULTS FOR JIRAPA: (PRONET/VSO)

All the districts performed poorly in all subjects with an exception of Jirapa District which had the highest pass rate in Maths. Jirapa District had the highest English pass rate based on PMT data followed by West Mamprusi and Talensi Nabdam Districts. The highest rate for Maths was recorded in Jirapa, followed by Talensi-Nabdam and West Mamprusi. Similarly 2010/11 P6/4 pupil performance in all subjects was poor. In English the highest pass rate was 13.4% in Talensi-Nabdam. The lowest pass rate was 4% recorded in West Mamprusi. The highest pass rate for Maths was 14.4% recorded in Talensi-Nabdam. The lowest rate pass rate for Maths was 3% in Jirapa.

**Table 2.5: BECE Results and Average Growth Rates for Non-TENI Districts (2008-2012)**

PROJECT DISTRICT YR			PMT (P3)			PMT (P6/4)			BECE PASS RATE
			ENG. PASS RATE	MATHS PASS RATE	SC PASS RATE	ENG. PASS RATE	MATHS PASS RATE	SC PASS RATE	
NON-TENI	BONGO	2008	-	-	-	-	-	-	35.9
		2009	-	-	-	-	-	-	30.1
		2010	-	-	-	-	-	-	27.8
		2011	-	-	-	-	-	-	49.5
		2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	37.3
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	LAWRA	2008	-	-	-	-	-	-	75.3
		2009	-	-	-	-	-	-	40.1
		2010	-	-	-	-	-	-	46.3
		2011	-	-	-	-	-	-	49.1
		2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	50.3
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-9.6
	EAST MAMPRUSI	2008	-	-	-	-	-	-	38
		2009	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
		2010	-	-	-	-	-	-	41
		2011	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA
		2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.9

SOURCE: BECE RESULTS: DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE

NOTE: PMT WAS ONLY CONDUCTED IN LAWRA DISTRICT BUT RESULTS WERE NOT DISAGGREGATED BY SUBJECT SO CANNOT BE USED FOR COMPARISON PURPOSES

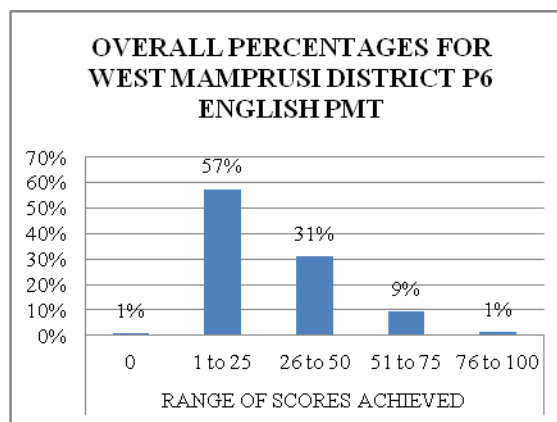
## 2.2 Performance Monitoring Tests across the three TENI northern districts

The key finding from the PMT analysis of the results across the three districts is that the levels of literacy among primary aged pupils are very low. The PMT tests themselves included questions that assessed the students understanding of grammar, reading comprehension, spelling and writing composition. A brief glance at the charts that show the overall percentages for all six study districts shows that in each district the majority of students attained 50% or less on PMT scores with only a minority of schools scoring 51% or more. There is also a significant disparity between the high performing mission schools and high performing District Assembly run (DA) primary schools with few DA schools reporting students having scored in the 4<sup>th</sup> quartile (76 -100%). The following section presents the data using PMT data at a district level and then presents the school clusters of data which were used to identify high and low performing schools across each cluster selected in the district. Annex 2F and 2G contains the PMT data sets across all the other regions including the districts in the Upper East, and Upper West. The data below presents the findings from the northern regional analysis using the PMT data at district and school levels.

### 2.2.1 Northern Region: West Mamprusi District

**Table 2.6 & Figure 2.1: Average P6 English PMT Scores for West Mamprusi District, Northern Region**

OVERALL PERCENTAGES FOR WEST MAMPRUSI DISTRICT P6 ENGLISH PMT					
RANGE OF SCORES ACHIEVED					
0	1 to 25	26 to 50	51 to 75	76 to 100	Number tested
1%	57%	31%	9%	1%	2824



As indicated above, the general profile of the results from this assessment test is that the majority of students scored 50% or less for P6 English, with over half of students achieving a score in the first range of scores (1-25%). The following tables show the range of scores achieved by pupils at the school level across the three sampled clusters; these results are compared against one another to classify the different schools as high or low according to their relative performance. This data was used to finalise the site selection based on “high and low” performance of schools.

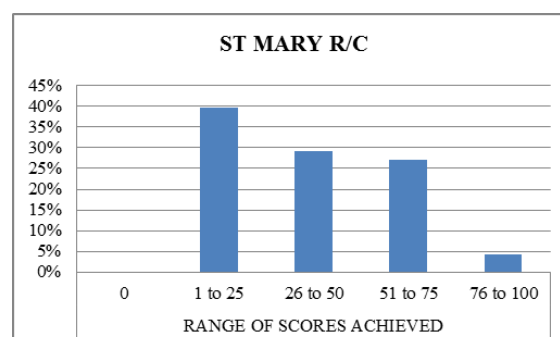
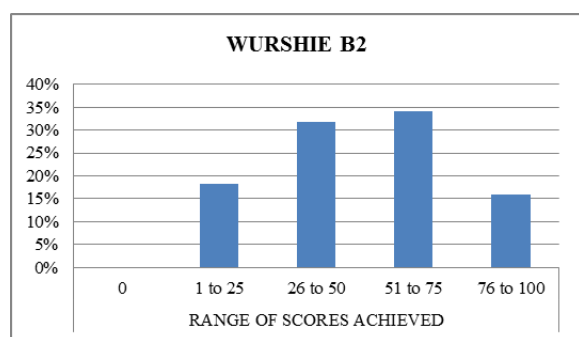
**Table 2.7: Average P6 English PMT Scores and Classification of Relative School Performance for West Mamprusi District Urban Cluster of Schools**

P6 English PMT							Relative school performance
CLUSTER THREE (URBAN Sample)	RANGE OF SCORES ACHIEVED					No of Pupils	
	0	1 to 25	26 to 50	51 to 75	76 to 100		

<b>schools):</b>							
WURSHIEB2	0%	18%	32%	34%	16%	44	High
NGBARIBE ISLAM E/A	0%	68%	32%	0%	0%	28	Low
ST BAMVUM R/C	0%	40%	29%	27%	4%	48	High
TAUHIDA E/A	0%	72%	20%	4%	4%	25	Low

**High Performing Schools** selected for the study included mainly schools in the urban centres and the mission schools in order to provide some comparisons. The Catholic mission schools were the largest proportion of high performing schools (according to PMT data) across the three northern regions. The team strived to ensure that a selection of DA and mission schools was used for the research study. The St Bamvum Catholic School and the Wurshie District Assembly School in the district capital of West Mamprusi District, Northern Region were both considered for the final selection in the urban cluster of schools for the study.

**Figures 2.2 and 2.3 (below) show Average P6 English PMT Scores for West Mamprusi District High Performing Urban schools**



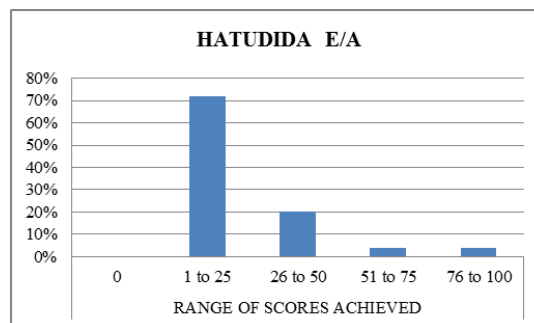
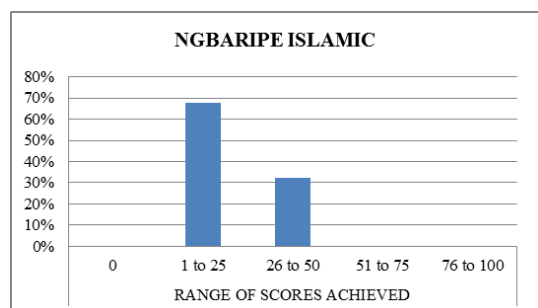
## Low Performing Schools

When comparing school performance across the rural/urban divide, there is a clear difference between the high and low performing schools in the urban zone and those in the rural. The profiles of high performing urban schools have much higher percentages of pupils scoring 51% or above whereas the rural schools tend to have a higher percentages in the second quartile (26% to 50%). Manga Primary School in the West Mamprusi District, Northern Region appears to be an exception to this trend but on closer inspection there are only 10 students' results reported so there is a possible distortion because of the smaller sample size. The overall trend is that pupils were scoring towards the lower end of the scale (less than 25% of the answers of the PMT) and only 2 sets of results (WurshieB2 and Manga Primary Schools) present something close to a normal distribution curve.

## The West Mamprusi District Rural Cluster of Schools

One urban and two rural clusters were selected in each of the districts for study. Apart from the location, schools with religious affiliation were also selected for study which included English Arabic, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian or other mission schools. The PMT data also revealed that English Arabic schools were scoring lower than most urban schools (e.g. Ngbaripe Islam English Arabic and Tauhida English Arabic (E/A) which were considered Low Performing Schools in the rural cluster.

**Figures 2.4 & 2.5: Average P6 English PMT Scores for West Mamprusi District Low Performing Urban schools**

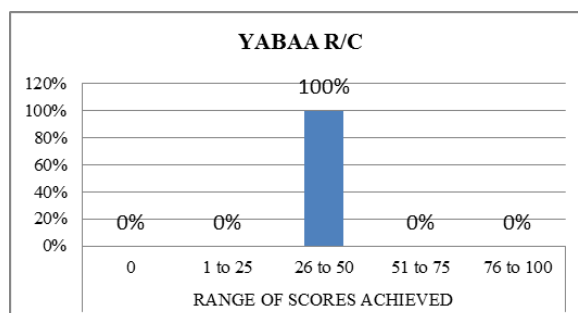
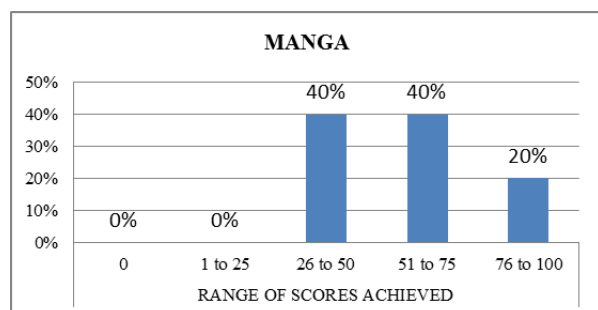


**Table 2.8: Average P6 English PMT Scores and Classification of Relative School Performance for West Mamprusi District (1<sup>st</sup>) Rural Cluster of Schools**

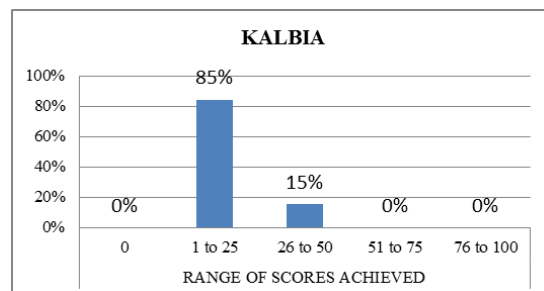
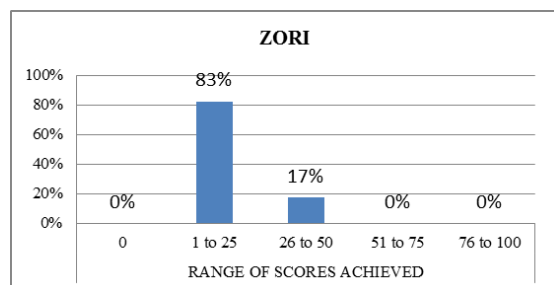
P6 English PMT							Relative School Performance
CLUSTER ONE (RURAL):	RANGE OF SCORES ACHIEVED					No of Pupils	
	0	1 to 25	26 to 50	51 to 75	76 to 100		
MANGA	0%	0%	40%	40%	20%	10	High
ZORI	0%	83%	17%	0%	0%	23	Low
YAMA R/C	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	26	High
BULBIA	0%	85%	15%	0%	0%	13	Low

The schools categorized as “high” in this cluster both presented results that fall into the second range (26% - 50%) and above. The results for the P6 pupils of Manga School also fall into the two highest ranges (51 – 75 and 76 – 100). The general profile for this school is close to a normal distribution where there are students performing above and below the mean. It should be noted, however, that there are just 10 students in this sample so each 10% represents just 1 student. The Yama Roman Catholic Primary results reveal, that none fall in the first range, no student achieved a mark of 51 or higher. This is contrasted by the two schools that have been categorized as “low” performing where the majority of students score marks between 1-25% in the first range.

**Figures 2.6 & 2.7: Average P6 English PMT Scores for the First Cluster of West Mamprusi District High Performing Rural Schools**



**Figures 2.8 & 2.9 Graphs showing Average P6 English PMT Scores for the First cluster of West Mamprusi District Low Performing Rural Schools**



### West Mamprusi 2<sup>nd</sup> Rural Cluster

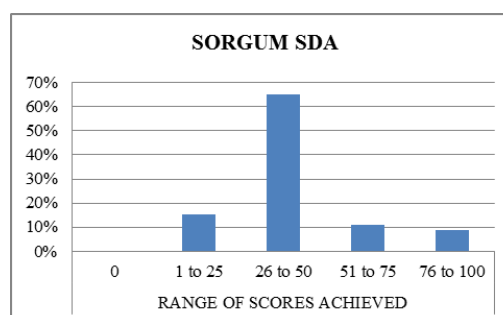
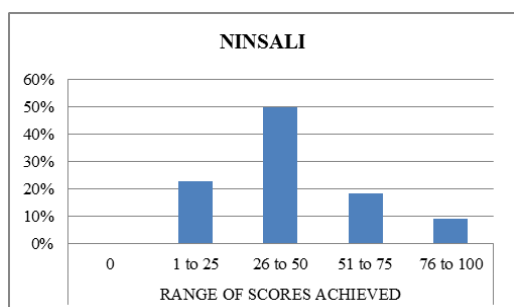
A second cluster of rural schools was also selected in order to improve the representativeness of the sample for the district as a whole given that there is a higher number of rural schools than urban across the district. Both schools categorized as “High” performing in this cluster (Zangum and Ninsali primary) present results that have some distribution in the two highest ranges (51 – 75 and 76 – 100). But once again the majority of students are scoring results of 50 or below and, unlike the two high performing schools in the other rural cluster, some students are scoring 25 or below. In the two “Low” performing schools the majority of students are scoring 50 or below. The overall profile of all four schools taken together, however is that the majority of students are achieving results that indicate poor levels of literacy; those percentages falling into the higher ranges represent approximately 15 students.

**Table 2.9 Average P6 English PMT Scores and Classification of Relative School Performance for West Mamprusi District (2<sup>nd</sup>) Rural Cluster of schools**

P6 English PMT							Relative School Performance
CLUSTER TWO (RURAL):	RANGE OF SCORES ACHIEVED					No of Pupils	
	0	1 to 25	26 to 50	51 to 75	76 to 100		
NINSALI	0%	23%	50%	18%	9%	22	High
BORMANGA	0%	92%	8%	0%	0%	12	Low
ZANGUM SDA	0%	15%	65%	11%	9%	46	High
ZANGU-VUGU	0%	93%	5%	0%	2%	44	Low

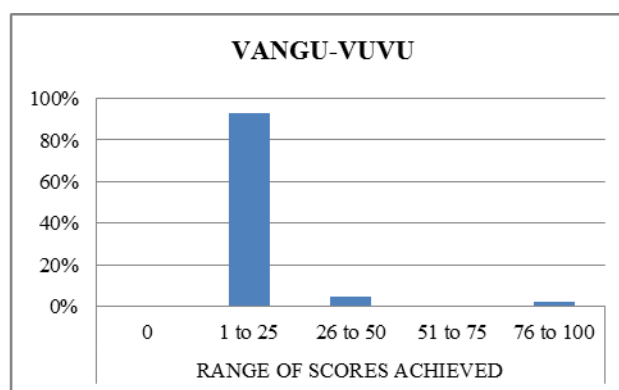
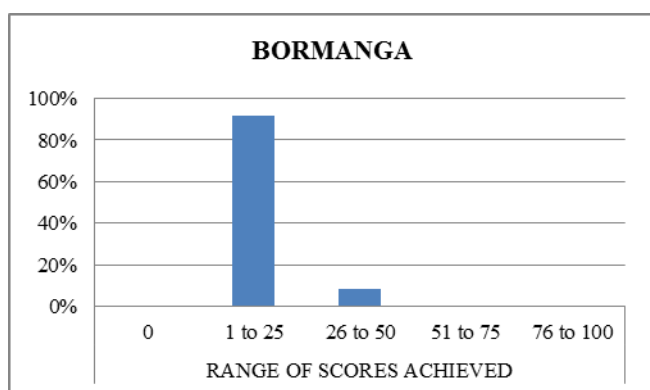
The research team selected one of these schools as a High Performing School in the rural cluster and matched this with a low performing school in the same cluster.

**Figures 2.10 & 2.11: Average P6 English PMT Scores for the second cluster of West Mamprusi District High Performing Rural schools**



Low Performing Schools in West Mamprusi, one of which was selected for the rural cluster.

**Figures 2.12 & 2.13: showing Average P6 English PMT Scores for the Second Cluster of West Mamprusi District Low Performing Rural Schools**

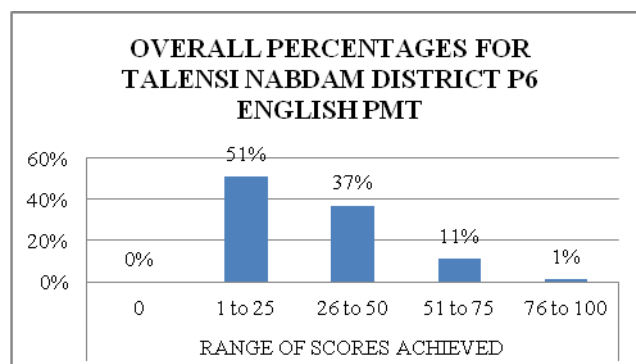


The profile of the scores in the other two districts Talensi Nabdam, Upper East and Jirapa District in the Upper West regions follows the same pattern as West Mamprusi district in the Northern Region with the majority of rural schools scoring between 1-25% within the first range. The table below reveals that the vast majority of children in the Talensi Nabdam District were also scoring between 1-25% on their PMT tests. The high performing schools tended to be Mission run schools (e.g. Catholic Missions) and located in urban centres of the district.

## 2.2.2 Upper East Region: Talensi Nabdam District

**Table 2.10 & Figure 2.14: Average P6 English PMT Scores for Talensi Nabdam District, Upper East Region**

OVERALL PERCENTAGES FOR TALENSI NABDAM DISTRICT P6 ENGLISH PMT					
RANGE OF SCORES ACHIEVED					
0	1 to 25	26 to 50	51 to 75	76 to 100	Number tested
0%	51%	37%	11%	1%	2161



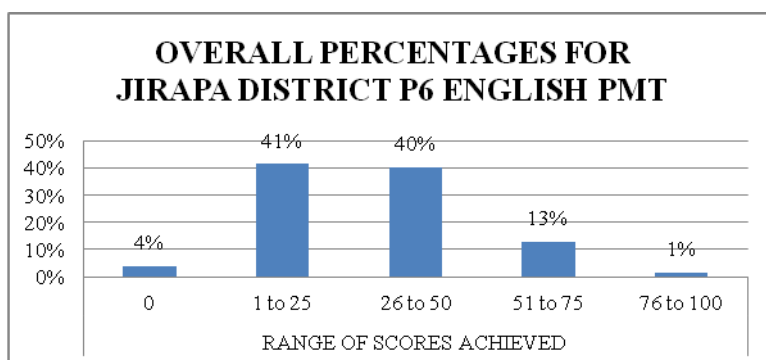
The results in the **Upper East Region** illustrate a slight disparity in the performance of pupils in these tests across the rural/urban divide. Once again the higher performing schools when compared to those classified as low performing have higher percentages of students scoring in the second range (26% - 50%). The low performing schools tend to have much higher percentages of students scoring in the first range (1 – 25%). Again, there is little evidence of students’ performance presenting a normal distribution with the possible exception of one school (Kulenga Primary) which, although the results are weighted to the first and second ranges, there was a reasonably high percentage scoring in the third and fourth ranges (See Annex 2F for detailed PMT data on each region, district and school).

The profile for the overall performance in the **Jirapa district in the Upper West Region** is different from those of the other districts in as much as the graph does not peak so strongly in the first range (1 – 25%), and in fact there is only a 1% difference between the first ranges. Although as with the scores of the other districts and regions, the majority of students are still scoring less than 51%. The data from the Upper West suggests that the pupils were performing relatively better than the other two districts/regions with a larger proportion of children scoring between 26-40%.

### 2.2.3 Upper West Region: Jirapa District

**Table 2.11 & Figure 2.15: Average P6 English PMT Scores for Jirapa District, Upper West Region**

OVERALL PERCENTAGES FOR JIRAPA DISTRICT P6 ENGLISH PMT					
RANGE OF SCORES ACHIEVED					
0	1 to 25	26 to 50	51 to 75	76 to 100	Number tested
4%	41%	40%	13%	1%	3363



The slightly higher results in this district may also be explained by the higher number of Roman Catholic Schools in the district and the fact that there were only RC schools in the urban centres. The rural/urban divide between the schools sampled in the Jirapa District, Upper West is further heightened by the fact that all the schools in the urban area are Roman Catholic (RC) mission schools. One notable exception is Kpaguri community. The results from this school present something close to a normal distribution with very few children scoring in the first and fourth ranges and most grouped around 26 – 75% range of marks. The highest achieving school in this district is St Bamvum’s (RC) which reports the majority of its scores in the 51% - 100% range.

It is not possible to make comparisons between the profiles of schools or districts in the TENI and non-TENI districts as the assessment data made available from the non-TENI districts was very different in nature to that presented by the TENI districts.<sup>11</sup> As stated above, the performance monitoring tests from which this data arises were supported by the NGOs who work as implementing partners of the TENI project. As such, the NGOs provided external people to mark the tests and recorded the results

<sup>11</sup> The non TENI districts had not kept their PMT results and National Education Assessment results and were obviously not tracking pupil performance compared to the other districts.

for each student and each school. What may also be significant was that the PMT's were stored by the NGO's and retrievable whereas other assessment data at district level was not retrievable in most of the non-TENI districts. The only non-TENI district which could provide results of a PMT test was Lawra district in the Upper East. The District Education offices information was in the form of average scores for each school for all the tests given. East Mamprusi in the Northern Region and Bongo District in the Upper East Region provided information on a school by school basis using the SEA tests administered in 2009. These results were aggregated by question rather than student, so it is was not possible to provide a picture of how individual pupils performed in these districts. This data was also very hard to retrieve from the district offices and was not being used to track the performance of schools.

#### **2.2.4 Challenges with PMT Assessments**

The greatest challenge that is raised by an examination of the school performances across the six study districts is that the vast majority of schools are performing very poorly with low levels of literacy attainment for most students. But the general conclusions that can be drawn from these results is that after 6 years in primary school and possibly 2 years spent in Kindergarten the majority of students are not able to read or write to an age or grade related level. This conclusion is further supported by the results from NEA tests reported at the national level in 2009 and 2011.

Other aspects of the Quality of Education and Inclusivity research in northern Ghana explored the teaching methods, classroom climate and demeanour of the teacher, language of instruction, availability of TLMs and several other factors related to the level of instructional practice in the classrooms; the next sections explore these dimensions in great detail in order to unravel the factors inhibiting and promoting quality and learning effectiveness in Ghanaian Primary schools in the north.

## Chapter 3: The Enabling Environment for Teaching and Learning at the District Level

### 3.1 Perception of Quality Education

The Quality of Education research study revealed that the perception of quality education varies across individual districts however have some common features. Most of the District Directors of Education across the six study districts perceived quality education within the context of the availability of educational inputs, teachers, supplies and the ability of their management teams/circuit supervisors to efficiently and effectively supervise the teaching force. Interviews with District Directors of Education reveal that they viewed quality education through the adequate availability of TLMs, availability of professional teachers, punctuality and regularity of the teaching force, teacher school attendance, effective use of instructional time and quality in-service training as the main factors to ensure quality education. The Directors also recognised that tracking the teaching and learning outcomes with respect to pupil achievement in Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) was vital and that there was growing public scrutiny of these results. The often poor BECE results particularly in the rural districts of the three northern regions were becoming a major concern to the government, media and parents in the communities. A growing emphasis across all the districts was being placed on Junior High school teachers to achieve results at the JHS3 levels of education. Unfortunately the poor learning outcomes among children throughout their lower primary and upper primary education make this task extremely challenging in a two term period (i.e. last year of JHS3). Interviews with JHS3 teachers revealed that even where children were repeated in JHS, the basic skills and aptitudes of learners which should have been laid at primary level cannot be attained given the curriculum and culture of teaching at JHS<sup>12</sup>. The BECE results were used as indicators to assess the level of quality education in all the districts by parents, district education administrators and district assemblies.

The majority of the District Education Directors interviewed recognised that they had a significant challenge in relation to achieving quality education in the districts under their supervision, in particular in relation to low standard of professionalism and high absenteeism rates among teachers. The District Education Circuit Supervisors and line managers were less able to fully disclose their opinion of the situation and often attempted to defend the high absenteeism rates and poor teacher time on task. These same officers would rarely disclose the lack of supervision and monitoring among the circuit supervisors but interviews with head teacher and children confirmed that this was the case. After repeated interviews with some Circuit supervisors and district education staff they began to disclose lapses in their own performance in monitoring and supervision blaming it on inadequate fuelling and non payment of vehicle maintenance allowances.

The District Director of Education for West Mamprusi remarked that “*quality of education is not about teachers with high certificates but it is about commitment. We make sure we provide qualified teachers, textbooks/syllabuses and INSET*”. The District Director of Education for Jirapa also viewed quality education within the context of educational processes and outcomes. He placed emphasis on school supervision, effective use of instructional time and application of child-centred teaching methods as

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<sup>12</sup> Most teachers interviewed at JHS were teaching to the examination and being trained on how to teach to the BECE examination. The inability of a child to read and decode words and sentences at the JHS level means that the child would be unlikely to understand the exam (BECE) and most of the curriculum at the JHS level being taught.

determinants of quality education delivery. The circuit supervisors interviewed viewed quality education as an effective classroom in which learning was taking place.

Most of the District Directors placed emphasis on tracking quality through the BECE results even though classroom processes, teacher supervision and monitoring were considered as very essential. The District Education Director of Bongo district said that quality of education is measured by its outcome. He mentions BECE results “as a key indicator of the degree to which effective learning is taking place in schools”. However, he acknowledges that educational delivery processes such as teacher performance, monitoring and supervision, examination of lesson notes preparation and delivery, organization of INSETs, examination and SPAMs were essential. The Bongo District Chief Executive also remarked that the BECE results were a good indicator of quality education; the challenges was that BECE results were a very performance indicator since results were only available to families and schools after children had completed at least 9 years of schooling (P1 to JHS3). Most of the Directors of Education and District Chief Executives interviewed stated that they felt the quality of education was quite poor in their respective districts.

### 3.2 School Inputs: exercise books and text books<sup>13</sup>

The Quality of Education and Inclusivity Research Team collected a range of primary school data from all the District Education offices particularly related to the teacher supply (by gender, training and type), text book supply and school governance issues across each district. West and East Mamprusi districts were not able to produce basic data on teacher supply or distribution. The District assessment instrument which was used to track the number of supplies provided to a district over the last five years revealed that the textbook and exercise book supplies have not kept pace with school enrolment growth rates. Primary School enrolment growth rates for the districts were between 1.2% and 16.9% whilst the JHS level records between 1.3% and 33.7%. Within the period under review (2010-2012) the districts did not have textbook supplies with an exception of Jirapa which had a few Science and Ghanaian Language books. (see tables 3.1 and 3.2 below for details).

None of the districts received a regular supply of **textbooks** in English, Maths, Science and Ghanaian Language for the last three years (2010 – 2012), with the exception of Jirapa (Upper West) who received science and Ghanaian Language text books in 2010. The supply of exercise books also did not keep pace with the total enrolment and number of subjects being studied in the schools. Across all the districts studied, **exercise books** per pupil showed a decline at primary and JHS levels between 2010 and 2012 despite the government policy of supplying free exercise books particularly to deprived areas of Ghana such as the north. Data analysis indicates that even though all districts have problems with exercise book supply, the situation was slightly worse in the non-TENI districts (Bongo, Lawra and East Mamprusi). These non-TENI districts have higher negative growth rates in exercise book supplies of 54.7% and 25.2% compared to TENI project districts with negative growth rates in exercise book supply of 27.2% and 14.1%.

The non-availability of textbooks and inadequate supply of exercise books was seen as a major challenge to all schools across the three regions based on interviews with the Head teachers and

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<sup>13</sup> The data in this section was based on a district Education office textbook data checklist which was completed by researchers along with the EMIS, Logistics officer, DEO book depot manager and other relevant officers at the District Education office during an interview and by referring to relevant log books which recorded numbers of text books and exercise books.

teachers and parental focal group discussions. Another key challenge was that none of the 54 schools in the study sample across the three regions, had received the revised syllabuses which remained on CD ROMS in most of the District Education Offices. Schools in the research sites continued to rely on the old syllabus (developed before 2009) in order to teach their children with a variety of old and new textbooks to work from.

### **3.2.1 Regional disaggregation in relation to text books and exercise books**

The district level data collection revealed that the textbook, syllabus and exercise book supply situation across all the six (6) districts was not facilitating the teaching and learning processes in Ghana's northern Basic schools. All the districts studied experienced inadequate/non availability of these essential inputs which had a negative impact on effective teaching and learning processes in the classrooms. School based observation of head teacher and school store rooms also revealed that very few head teachers and teachers were making effective use of the textbooks, teaching learning materials which they did have at their disposal at the school level. One clear example of this was in relation to the NALAP<sup>14</sup> materials whereby less than 50% of head teachers knew of the NALAP programme and less than two classrooms were observed out of the 86 to be using the NALAP materials and approach. The analysis indicates that the exercise book supply situation is better in TENI districts than in non-TENI districts even though all districts encountered challenges of inadequate supplies. Primary school pupils studied seven (7) subjects and JHS eight (8). The study found that most pupils at the primary level used one exercise book for all subjects.

Non-availability of the relevant textbooks and the inadequate number of exercise books has been a challenge to all schools in all districts. This trend presented parents with an additional burden of having to buy recommended textbooks for their children. Unfortunately, as the textbooks are not for sale, it was very difficult to obtain them from the open market, particularly in the three northern regions. Teachers in urban and rural areas copied the text from the teacher's copy of the text book on to the blackboard. Teachers spent vital instructional time (10-15 minutes) to copy passages on the board to enable children read and work exercises. (Please refer to the time on task section of the report for more details: chapter 4). A key inhibiting factor related to the lack of text books was that the quality learning was constrained since pupils did not have textbooks to take home to read or do assignments with in the evening or no weekends (Abadzi, 2006).

Another major finding from the data collected during field work in northern Ghana was that the schools relied on "old" syllabus to teach their pupils and were not working with the GES revised syllabus of 2010. The DEOs reported that the revised syllabus was received on compact disc and they did not have funding for printing these out for all the schools in their district so accordingly the schools were reliant on the old syllabuses

### **Regional Analysis**

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<sup>14</sup> The National Accelerated Literacy Programme was a programme set up to support early grade reading using both mother tongue and English among KG to P3 pupils. The programme was launched in 2010 and supplied all primary schools across the country with significant set of primers and teacher syllabuses for teaching reading and writing and numeracy. The implementation study conducted suggested that at least 60-70% of Ghanaian schools across the country had been supplied with these materials as of (June 2010).

According to District Education Office data from the Upper East, between 2010 and 2012 Talensi Nabdam and Bongo in **Upper East** did not receive any textbooks. These two districts however had a total of 166,652 exercise books delivered in 2010 for primary level. This figure reduced to 40,661 in 2011 but shot up to 78,468 in 2012; recording an overall negative annual growth rate of -31.4% for the three year period. The total primary school enrolment also increased from 38,999 in 2010 to 40,560 in 2011 and 42,207 in 2012 registering an annual growth rate of 4.03%. Enrolment analysis against the exercise book supply reveals that the exercise book to pupil ratio was 4.3 to 1 child in 2010, which reduced to 1.0 exercise book per child in 2011 and 1.9 exercise books per child in 2012. This trend indicates a negative growth of 33.5% in supply of exercise books. See Annex 2B.

In Jirapa and Lawra districts of the **Upper West** the textbook and exercise book supply situation was not much different from the Upper East. In 2010, a total number of 2376 science textbooks were supplied. In 2011 a total of 2560 English textbooks and 2104 Maths were supplied. These supplies were found to be inadequate, considering enrolment growth pattern in the two districts. In 2010, the primary school enrolment of 34,480 increased to 34,945 in 2011 and 35,417 in 2012 with an annual growth rate of 1.35%. However, the number of exercise books supplied kept reducing from 80,193 in 2010 to 34,558 in 2011 and to 59,665 in 2012 registering a negative growth rate of 13.7%. Considering the enrolment against exercise book supply, the exercise book per pupil ratio also declined from 2.3 per pupil in 2010 to 0.9 per pupil in 2011 and to 1.7 per pupil in 2012 representing a negative growth rate to 14%.

In the Northern Region, only West Mamprusi District Education Office had an exercise book supply of 101,720. No textbooks were supplied within the period under review (2010-2012). East Mamprusi District Education Office could not provide any data for analysis and there was no evidence that records were being kept relating to text book supply.

At the **JHS level**, no textbooks were supplied for the years under review (2010-2012) across all the three regions. In the Upper East, the pattern of exercise book supply is similar to that observed at the primary level. The total number of exercise books supplied in 2010 was 209,864 which declined to 3080 in 2011 and increased to 115,578 in 2012 registering a negative annual growth rate of 25.8%. Meanwhile, enrolment grew at the rate of 5.6% within this period: in 2010 enrolment of 12,661 increased to 13,357 in 2011 and to 14,111 in 2012. As a result of enrolment increases, the exercise book per pupil ratio which was 16.6% in 2010 reduced to 0.2% in 2011 and 8.2% in 2012 with a negative growth rate of 29.7% at the JHS level.

In the **Upper West** only 7301 Ghanaian Language textbooks were supplied to JHS in 2010. No exercise books were supplied in 2010, however 5750 were supplied in 2011, rising marginally to 67,303 in 2012: an annual growth rate of 2.4%. Similarly, the region experienced growth in enrolment from 10,072 in 2010 to 11,882 in 2011 rising up to 14,142 in 2012. Consequently, exercise book per pupil ratio increased from 0.5% to 4.8% with a growth rate of 2.1%.

Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below illustrate the text book and exercise book situation in the districts at the primary and JHS levels. An analysis of the data collected from the districts indicates that between 2010 and 2012 no English, Maths, Science and Ghanaian Language textbooks were supplied to primary schools in the TENI districts with the exception of Jirapa, which received 2376 science textbooks in 2010. The pupil core text book ratio for the period 2010 to 2012 varied from 1:12 to 1:15 confirming the paucity of textbook availability. Interviews with Head teachers across the sampled schools indicate

that their schools did not have adequate supply of textbooks. Subjects affected most were English, Science and Maths. St Bamvum's Primary school head teacher is reported to have said, "There is no single English textbooks and texts for reading lesson have to be photocopied" (Jirapa Head teacher). Head teachers from the sampled schools all complained of the inadequate supply of textbooks. Some of them claimed that they last received English, Maths and Ghanaian Language Textbooks in either 2005 or 2007, and as a consequence had a high pupil/textbook ratio.

It is expected that the existing stock levels of textbooks will be replenished as a result to loss and life-span depreciation through improper handling and damage as well as long period to use. It is the policy of the Ministry of Education to replace all textbooks after 5 year duration but it was observed that their poor texture does not support their durability within the utilization period.

**Table 3.1 Supply of Textbooks/Exercise Books at Primary Level by Subject, and District (2010 To 2012)**

PROJECT	DISTRICT	YR	Prim ENR	ENG	MATHS	SC.	GH. LAN.	EX BKS	Ex. book/ Pupil
TENI	TALENSI NABDAM	2010	18313	0	0	0	0	63,284	3.5
		2011	19524	0	0	0	0	33,019	1.7
		2012	20815	0	0	0	0	57,299	2.8
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	6.6	0	0	0	0	-4.8	-10.6
	JIRAPA	2010	16664	0	0	2376	0	80,193	4.8
		2011	16870	0	0	0	0	33,448	1.9
		2012	17079	0	0	0	0	59,667	3.5
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	1.2	0	0	0	0	-14.1	-14.6
	WEST MAMPRUSI	2010	23,520	0	0	0	0	101,720	4.3
		2011	26,368	0	0	0	0	0	0
		2012	30,169	0	0	0	0	0	0
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	13.3	0	0	0	0	0	0
NON-TENI	BONGO	2010	20,686	0	0	0	0	103,368	5
		2011	21,036	0	0	0	0	7,642	0.4
		2012	21,392	0	0	0	0	21,169	0.9
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	16.9	0	0	0	0	-54.7	-57.6
	LAWRA	2010	17,816	0	0	0	0	0	0
		2011	18,075	2560	2,104	0	0	1,110	1
		2012	18,338	0	0	0	0	0	0
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	0
	EAST MAMPRUSI	2010	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	-
		2011	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	-
		2012	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	-
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

SOURCE: District Education Office Checklist data

**Table 3.2: Supply of Textbooks/Exercise Books at JHS Level by Subject and District from 2010 to 2012.**

PROJECT	DISTRICT	YR	ENR	ENG	MATHS	SC.	GH. LAN.	EX BKS	Exb/P
TENI	TALENSI NABDAM	2010	5991	0	0	0	0	58,640	9.8
		2011	6070	0	0	0	0	0	0
		2012	6150	0	0	0	0	31,040	5
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	1.3	0	0	0	0	-27.2	-28.6
	JIRAPA	2010	3363	0	0	0	7,301	0	0
		2011	4495	0	0	0	0	0	0
		2012	6008	0	0	0	0	67,303	11.2
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	33.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
	WEST MAMPRUSI	2010	7,131	0	0	0	0	0	0
		2011	8,331	0	0	0	0	0	0
		2012	9,733	0	0	0	0	0	0
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	16.8	0	0	0	0	0	0
NON TENI	BONGO	2010	6,670	0	0	0	0	151,224	23
		2011	7,287	0	0	0	0	3,030	0.4
		2012	7,961	0	0	0	0	84,538	10
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	9.2	0	0	0	0	-25.2	-34.1
	LAWRA	2010	6,709	0	0	0	0	0	0
		2011	7,387	0	0	0	0	5,750	0.8
		2012	8,134	0	0	0	0	0	0
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	10.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	EAST MAMPRUSI	2010	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	-
		2011	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	-
		2012	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	-
		ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

SOURCE: District Education Office Checklist data

Another significant input by the Government of Ghana to ensure quality learning was taking place was the provision of **capitation grants** for each basic education school based on enrolment numbers. The average capitation grant was calculated on 4.5 Ghana cedis per child per term which was sent to each school on the approval of a school improvement plan being developed by the School Management Committee and the Head teacher. Across the six districts studied, most of the Head teachers

complained that the capitation grant was not released on a timely basis and some schools had not received their capitation grants over the last two terms. These grants were to be used for the SPIP which would often contain provisions for purchasing teaching and learning material along with support for in-service training and other basic provisions at the school (e.g. toilet paper and washing soap for children). Evidence from the field work along with other studies on the Capitation Grant (PETS, 2010)<sup>15</sup> suggests that it was not being effectively used for basic needs of the school nor managed effectively at the school level. Several children reported in focal group interviews of not being able to have access to basic toilet paper/tissue to clean them and having to revert to their own exercise books/stones to clean themselves after going to the toilet.

### **3.3 Trained Teacher Supply, Distribution and Quality**

Teacher supply and deployment have been cited in many studies as being critical for quality education delivery; yet the challenge of empty classes without teachers particularly trained teachers continues to pose a major challenge to most Sub Saharan African countries including Ghana. The presence of a teacher in a classroom often gives assurance to education stakeholders particularly parents and district officials, that teaching and learning is taking place. Teacher quality has also been a subject of discussion that has eluded the three northern regions. Studies by Thompson and Casely-Hayford, (2006) and more recently World Bank, (2010) suggest that there has been a sharp decline in the number of trained teacher particularly in the three northern regions and other deprived areas of the country.

Data available from the quality of education study across the study districts indicate that over 60% of teachers engaged in basic schools (primary and JHS) were trained<sup>16</sup>. TENI project districts, Talensi Nabdram (UE) and Jirapa (UW) had approximately 62% and 66.8% of their teachers trained. Non-TENI districts, Bongo (UE) and Lawra (UW) had 61.8% and 58.4% trained teachers across their districts respectively (Annex 3A). The majority of the trained teachers, particularly female trained teachers, were posted to district capital urban schools with a lower proportion being available to the rural deprived area schools. Interviews with District Directors of Education suggest that this was mainly due to the refusal of trained teachers to accept postings to these areas. The KG level had the least number of trained teachers with the majority of their teachers being untrained and community volunteer teachers.

In all the districts, the distribution of trained teachers favoured the primary level whose rates fall between 55.2% and 50.9%. The JHS follows with trained teacher rates between 34.8% and 42.1%. The KG had the least proportion of trained teachers across the north with between 2.7% and 11.3% across the six study districts (Annex 3B). These trends indicate the challenges in posting trained teachers at KG in order to build a solid foundation for children to have an interest in life-long learning.

In all the 54 sampled schools, a higher proportion of female teachers were found in the urban schools (65.8%) compared to those deployed to rural areas (34.2%). Similarly, the average percentage of trained female teachers in the urban areas was far higher at 74.2% compared to 25.8% in rural community schools (based on data from sampled schools). These trends have been recorded in research studies in Ghana over the last twenty years when the GOG's female teacher study was

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<sup>15</sup> Performance Expenditure Tracking Study (World Bank, 2010).

<sup>16</sup> Two of the districts: East and west Mamprusi District Education Offices were not able to provide data to the research team.

conducted in Ghana's most deprived regions of the country (Casely-Hayford with Wilson, 2001) and was found to have a negative impact on the implementation of girls' education policies and achievement rates across the country; since female teachers are needed to serve as role models for the pupils and ensure that gender sensitive approaches are adopted in rural schools particularly when attempting to achieve higher transition and retention rates among girls.

### 3.3.1 Regional Analysis of teacher quality

Data collected from the district education offices on teacher supply (e.g. the District Human resource listings for 2011/2012) suggest that schools in the Upper East and Upper West have 60% of their teachers trained while about 40% are untrained. The Upper East (Bongo and Talensi-Nabdam) has 1,877 teachers, out of which 1,162 (61.9%) are trained. The Upper West (Jirapa and Lawra) has 1,256 teachers, out of which 776 (61.8%) are trained. No data was provided for the two districts in the Northern Region. At the KG level in Upper East 83 (46.9%) of 177 teachers were trained. At the primary level, there were 626 (56.5%) trained teachers out of 1,108 teachers. At JHS the total number of trained teachers was 453 out of 592 teachers. Data collected from the Upper West District Education offices found that there was 50 (21.8%) trained teachers out of 229 teachers at the KG level. Primary schools have 424 (71.4%) trained teachers out of a teaching force of 594. At the JHS level there were 302 (69.7%) trained teachers out of 433 teachers. (See tables 3.3 and 3.4 below for details).

The Upper East has a comparatively higher proportion of trained teachers at the KG and JHS levels. Upper West has a higher proportion of its trained teachers at the primary and JHS levels. The Upper East and West place high premium on education at the KG and JHS levels. There are comparatively low proportions of female teachers in the schools in all the regions. The Upper East had 625 (33.3%) female teachers out of 1,877 teachers which include untrained and trained teachers. Out of 1,162 trained teachers across the region only 346 (29.8%) were female. Upper West had 1,256 teachers with 561 (46.7%) being female. Out of the total of 776 trained teachers, 319 (41.1%) were female.

### 3.3.2 Gender disaggregated data on teacher quality

The District Education Office data also suggests that the proportion of female trained teachers was low and much more concentrated at the KG level. In the **Upper East** for instance, the KG level had more female teachers (146 out of a total of 177) than males amounting to 82.5% however of these only 69 were trained female teachers (38.9%). of the entire teaching force at the KG level. At the primary level out of 1,108 teachers, 357 (32.2%) were female. 184 (16.6%) of the total number of teachers were trained female teachers. The JHS level had 592 teachers out of which 122 (20.6%) were female. The number of female trained teachers was 93 (15.7%) of the teaching force at this level.

In the **Upper West**, the KG had more female teachers (206 (90%) of 229 teachers are female). The total number of female trained teachers was 46 (20.1%) of the number of teachers at this level. At the primary level out of 594 teachers, 271 (45.6%) were female and 210 (35.4%) were female trained teachers. The JHS level had 433 trained female teachers.

Analysis of data implies that there were more female teachers at the KG level and their number or proportion reduced progressively at the higher levels of education for both the trained and untrained. Table 3.3 shows the distribution of teachers by gender and the number trained in all the six (6) districts.

**Table 3.3: Distribution of Trained Teachers by Gender and District**

PROJECT	DISTRICT	Total Teacher Population			Trained Teacher Population			
		M	F	T	M	F	T	%
TENI	TALENSI	598	321	919	377	193	570	62
	JIRAPA	291	212	503	194	142	336	66.8
	WEST MAMPRUSI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NON-TENI	BONGO	654	304	958	439	153	592	61.8
	LAWRA	404	349	753	263	177	440	58.4
	E. MAMPRUSI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GRAND TOTAL		1947	1186	3133	1273	665	1938	61.9

SOURCE: District Education Office HRD Data for the study 2011/12

Table 3.4 below presents the distribution of teachers at KG, primary and JHS levels and the number trained at each level across all the six (6) districts<sup>17</sup>. The data reveals that there was a very high proportion of untrained KG teachers across all six districts studied (often over 60%). This has serious implications for early grade learning and ensuring a quality learning environment at the first stages of a child's schooling experience.<sup>18</sup> Relatively low proportions of trained teachers were also available at the primary level compared to JHS (see Bongo District, UE). In all the six districts the proportion of trained teachers allocated to each level was as follows: 32.8% at KG, 61.7% at primary and 73.7% at JHS (see table 3.4).

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<sup>18</sup> GES expects that the KG level should have experienced trained teachers to help the new entrants into the education system to lay a solid foundation for a life-long learning.

**Table 3.4: Distribution of Trained and Untrained Teachers at KG, Primary and JHS Levels by Gender and District**

PROJ CT	REG/DIS	KG							PRIMARY							JHS						
		UNTRAINED TEACHERS			TRAINED TEACHERS				UNTRAINED TRS			TRAINED TEACHERS				UNTRAINED TEACHERS.			TRAINED TEACHERS.			
		M	F	T	M	F	T	%	M	F	T	M	F	T	%	M	F	T	M	F	T	%
<b>TENI</b>	TALENSI (UE)	17	98	115	6	41	47	40.8	323	155	478	188	102	290	60.7	258	68	326	183	50	233	71.5
	JIRAPA (UW)	13	64	77	4	34	38	49.4	134	103	237	102	79	181	76.4	144	45	189	88	29	117	61.9
	WEST MAMPRU SI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>NON- TENI</b>	BONGO	14	48	62	8	28	36	58.1	428	202	630	254	82	336	53.3	212	54	266	177	43	220	82.7
	LAWRA	10	142	152	0	12	12	7.9	189	168	357	112	131	243	68	205	39	244	151	34	185	75.8
	EAST MAMPRU SI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>54</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>1074</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>1702</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>1050</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>819</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>1025</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>73.7</b>

**SOURCE: District Education Office HRD Data for the study 2011/12**

### 3.3.3 Trained Teacher Distribution

Quality teacher distribution in line with the district strategic plan facilitates achievement of set targets. Fair teacher distribution eliminates concentration of teachers in one sub sector as against the others. As professional trained teachers were found to be “scarce” in the rural areas often living beyond 5 kms from the school, there is the need for equity in teacher quality distribution to enable all pupils benefit from quality teaching. Equitable distribution along the levels will ensure efficient utilization of human resource. Upper East registered a total of 1,162 trained teachers out of which 83 (7.1%) were in KG. The primary level had 626 (53.9%) and the JHS had 453 (38.9%). In the Upper West, there were 776 trained teachers out of which 50 (6.4%) were in KG, 424 (54.6%) primary and 302 (38.9%) JHS. The two regions had a similar distribution pattern giving primary education a high premium (see Annex 3B). There was limited evidence to suggest that any of the six districts were making efforts to ensure that their trained teaching force was placed at the lower primary levels (P1 to P3) in order to ensure that the children were able to have a trained teacher at this most important level.

Figure 3a below illustrates Trained Teacher Distribution by levels across all six (6) districts. The total number of trained teachers was 1,938 out of which 133 (6.9%) were assigned to KG. TENI districts had a total of 906 trained teachers and 85 (9.4%) of them were in KG. Non-TENI districts had a total of 1,032 trained teachers with 48(4.7%) in KG. The figure below does suggest that approximately 50% of the GES trained teachers across the 6 study districts were being placed at the primary level. Interviews with head teachers suggest that most of the time it was the HTs decision as to where a trained teacher would be placed and that often this was more a factor of teacher preference than educational quality that determined the placement.

**Figure 3a: Trained Teacher Population and Distribution by Level and Project**

PROJECT	DISTRICT	TOTAL TRND TRS		KG					PRY				JHS			
		M	F	T	M	F	T	%	M	F	T	%	M	F	T	%
TENI	TALENSI	377	193	570	6	41	47	8.2	188	102	290	50.9	183	50	233	40.9
	JIRAPA	194	142	336	4	34	38	11.3	102	79	181	53.9	88	29	117	34.8
	WEST MAMPRUSI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>38.6</b>
NON-TENI	BONGO	439	153	592	8	28	36	6.1	254	82	336	56.7	177	43	220	37.2
	LAWRA	263	177	440	0	12	12	2.7	112	131	243	55.2	151	34	185	42.1
	EAST MAMPRUSI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>1032</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>56.1</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>39.2</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>1273</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>1938</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>1050</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>39</b>

SOURCE: District Education Office HRD Data for the study 2011/12

At the primary level 1,050(54.9%) of 1,938 trained teachers were deployed. Of 906 trained teachers in TENI districts 471(51.9%) were deployed to primary schools.

### 3.4 Untrained Teacher Supply, Distribution and Quality

The data collected from the District Directorates of Education across the six districts revealed that there was a significant shortfall in the supply of trained teachers. This shortfall and level of vacancy was particularly felt in rural community schools. SMCs and Head teachers interviewed suggest that there were an increasing number

of community volunteer teachers (particularly in the rural areas) being employed by the communities themselves to fill these vacancies and ensure that there was a “teacher at the school”. The high rates of trained teacher absenteeism and the long distances being travelled by most trained teachers to schools were two of the key factors motivating parents to engage (untrained) teachers from their own communities.

Evidence from the Northern Region suggests that often there would be one trained teacher and two Government employed volunteer teachers (e.g. NYEP, GES pupil teachers and NSS) in a rural school but due to the high level of teacher absenteeism the community would still employ their own community volunteer teachers in order to ensure that at least one of the teachers showed up to post on any given day (see section 3.8 on teacher absenteeism rates for more details). Another factor which was also proving to be a challenge was that several of these community based teachers were paid a very low stipend, or paid in exchange for labour on their own farms and sometimes agreed to act as community volunteer teachers in the hope that they would be “taken on” by the GES as a pupil teacher. Interviews with head teachers and volunteer teachers across the 6 districts also suggest that it was becoming more and more difficult to become a pupil teacher and be placed on the GES pay roll without “knowing someone”.

### **3.4.1 GES pupil teachers and other types of untrained teachers**

As a consequence of there being less than 60% of trained teachers in the areas under study, the engagement of untrained teachers was necessary. District Education data from the Upper East and Upper West gave a total **GES paid pupil teacher population** of 675. The composition was KG 64, primary 414 and JHS 197. The Northern Region could not provide data on its pupil teacher population. The Upper East alone had (581) 86% of the total GES paid pupil teachers and the Upper west had (94) 14% (see table below).

With regard to National Service Volunteers (NSS) the findings show a total of 13 teachers across the sampled schools in the Upper West and Upper East. NSS volunteer teachers were approximately 46% in the Upper East as compared to 54% for the Upper West Region. Similarly, the National youth employment programme teachers (NYEP) data shows a total of 259 NYEP teachers. The Upper East had 39.4% of these NYEP teachers compared to 60.6% in the Upper West. Community volunteer data shows a total of 249 community volunteer teachers in the study districts. The Upper East had 10.4% while the Upper West had 89.6% (see table below).

The Upper East had more GES paid untrained pupil teachers than the Upper West where there were more NSS, community volunteers and NYEP untrained teachers. Of the 64 KG teachers 92% were in the Upper East while the Upper West had 8%. Of the 414 untrained teachers at the primary 93% were found in the Upper East and 7% in the Upper West. Of the 197 untrained teachers at the JHS level, 70 % were in the Upper East and 30% in the Upper West.

For the different untrained teacher categories **National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP)** totalled 53 at KG, out of which 64% were found in the Upper East and 36% were in the Upper West. At the primary NYEP teachers numbered 169 out of which the Upper East had 40% and Upper West 60% but at the JHS the total NYEP personnel stood at 37 and all of them were located in the Upper West. Of the 13 NSS teachers the distribution was one for KG, 4 for primary and JHS 8. Table 3.5 shows the distribution pattern of untrained teachers across the six study districts.

**Table 3.5: Number and Distribution of Types of Untrained Teachers by District and Level**

PROJ	DIST	TOTAL UNTRAINED TRS				KG								PRY								JHS							
		PUP TOT AL	NYEP TOTAL	NSS TOTAL	VOL. TOT AL	PU P	%	NYE P	%	NSS	%	VOL.	%	PU P	%	NY EP	%	NS S	%	VO L.	%	PU P	%	NY EP	%	NS S	%	VO L.	%
TENI	Talensi	273	70	6	0	33	12.1	34	48.6	1	16.7	0	0	148	54.2	36	51.4	4	66.6	0	0	92	33.7	0	0	1	16.7	0	0
	Jirapa	67	66	7	27	5	7.5	19	28.8	0	0	15	55.6	19	28.4	36	54.5	0	0	1	3.7	43	64.1	11	16.7	7	100	11	7
	W. Mamprusi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	340	136	13	27	38	11.2	53	38.9	1	7.7	15	55.6	167	49.1	72	55	4	30.8	1	3.7	135	39.7	11	8.1	8	61.5	11	40.7
	%	50.4	52.5	100	10.8	59.4	-	100	-	100	-	9.7	-	40.3	-	42.6	-	10.0	-	1.5	-	68.5	-	29.7	-	10.0	-	39.3	-
NON-TENI	Bongo	308	32	0	26	26	8.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	236	76.6	32	100	0	0	26	100	46	14.9	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Lawra	27	91	0	196	0	0	0	0	0	0	140	71.4	11	40.7	65	71.4	0	0	39	9	16	59.3	26	28.6	0	0	17	8.7
	E. Mamprusi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	335	123	0	222	26	7.8	0	0	0	0	140	63.1	247	73.7	97	78.9	0	0	65	29.3	62	18.5	26	21.1	0	0	17	7.7
	%	49.6	47.5	0	89.2	40.6	-	0	0	0	-	90.3	-	59.7	-	57.4	-	0	-	98.5	-	31.5	70.3	-	-	0	-	60.7	-
GRAND TOTAL		675	259	13	249	64	9.5	53	20.5	1	7.7	155	62.2	414	61.3	169	65.3	4	23.1	66	26.5	197	29.2	37	14.3	8	61.5	28	11.2

**SOURCE: District Education Office HRD Data for the study 2011/12**

### 3.5 Teacher Deployment across rural and urban areas of the districts (Based on sampled schools)

One of the key findings from the study was that there was inefficient and ineffective teacher deployment to the underserved areas of the north resulting in severe issues of unequal access to quality education for the rural poor across the three northern regions. The study found that there were significant challenges in the deployment of trained teachers which was creating a large quality gap between rural and urban schools; the vast majority of trained teachers were being posted to urban schools often in the district capital which resulted in some of these schools having twice the requisite trained teaching force. The majority of male teachers were deployed to rural schools; female teachers remained in urban centres. The study also found that most trained teachers were unwilling to accept postings to rural and hard-to-reach communities for various reasons including lack of social amenities, accommodation and poor access for their own children to attend “quality schools” (Casely-Hayford, and Wilson, 2001). This observation is substantiated by the fact that the majority of trained teachers posted to rural areas stay either in the district capital or in the nearest urban settlement. Consequently, these areas were restricted to untrained teachers who “*lack the necessary skills to deliver the right method of teaching in class*” (Head teacher, Lanwana Primary, Bongo District). The following section is based on data from the 54 sampled schools across the six study districts.

The urban schools had more female trained teachers. From a total of 153 female teachers, 93(60.8%) were trained. Urban Upper East schools had 25(26.9%), Upper West 27(29%) and Northern Region 15(61.1%). In comparison, rural schools’ share in Upper East was 5(5.4%), Upper West 12(12.9%) and Northern Region 9(9.7%). In all the regions untrained teachers were mostly found in rural schools. The total number of GES paid pupil teachers for all the three regions was 92. Upper East’s share was 13(14.1%), Upper West 10(10.9%) and Northern Region 8(8.7%). However, rural areas’ shares were: Upper East 38 (41.3%), Upper West 12(13%) and Northern Region 11(12%). See table 3.6 below.

With regard to NYEP teachers the total for all three regions was 26. Urban schools in Upper East had none, but, Upper West urban schools had 4(15.4%) and Northern region 6(27.1%). In contrast, rural schools in Upper East had 4(15.4%), Upper West 5(19.2%) and Northern Region 7(26.9%). Urban schools were found to have more community volunteer teachers than rural schools. The total number of community volunteers deployed across the three regions was 24. Urban schools in Upper East had 5(20.8%), Upper West 2(29.2%) and Northern region 3(12.5%). In the rural areas Upper East had 7(29.2%), Upper West 1(4.2%) and Northern Region had 1(4.2%). The NSS personnel were deployed more in rural communities than in urban schools. The total number of NSS personnel deployed was 59. The share of urban schools in Upper East is 3(5.1%), Upper West 11(18.6%) and Northern Region 6(10.2%). On the contrary the share of rural schools in Upper East is 4(6.8%), Upper West 15 (25.4%) and Northern Region 20(33.9%). See table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6 shows the pattern of teacher deployment in fifty four (54) schools covering the six (6) districts studied. The data reveals that out of 463 teachers engaged in these schools, 195 (42.1%) were located in urban centres and 268 (57.9%) in rural areas. Of the 463 teachers 256 (55.3%) were trained while 207 (44.7%) were untrained. 119 (46.5%) of the trained teachers were in urban centres and 137 (53.5%) in rural schools. The proportion of trained teachers in rural schools was higher than that in urban schools. However, the proportion of female trained teachers in urban schools was higher than in rural schools. Out of a total of 93 female trained teachers, 67 (72%) were in urban schools with 26 (28%) in rural communities. This trend might suggest the unwillingness of female trained teachers to accept posting to rural schools. Similarly, the data reveals that rural schools had a higher concentration of **untrained teachers**. Out of a total number of 92 pupil teachers, 61 (66.3%) were found in rural schools with 31 (33.7%) in urban schools. NYEP has a total of 26 personnel out of which 16 (61.5%) were in rural communities and 10 (38.5%) in urban schools. Out of 59 NSS teachers, 39

(66.1%) were in rural schools as against 20 (33.9%) in urban schools. However, all the schools had a total of 24 Community Volunteer teachers and 9 (37.5%) were in rural areas while 15 (62.5%) were found in urban schools. The trend suggests that rural schools rely more on pupil teachers, NYEP personnel and Community Volunteers to fill vacancies. For more details of Trained Teacher distribution and teacher deployment refer to Annexes 3C, 3D and 3E.

**Table 3.6: Teacher Deployment by District, Quality, Sex, Community Type across the Sampled Schools**

DISTRICT	COMMUNITY TYPE	Total Teacher Pop in the Sampled Schools			No. Of Trained Teachers (TRND)			Pupil Teacher			NYEP			Community Volunteer Teachers			National Service Scheme Personnel		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
<b>TALENSI</b>	URBAN	17	18	35	11	16	27	3	1	4	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	0	2
<b>BONGO</b>	URBAN	13	14	31	9	9	18	5	4	9	0	0	0	2	1	3	1	0	1
<b>JIRAPA</b>	URBAN	23	21	44	7	17	24	4	2	6	3	0	3	2	2	4	7	0	7
<b>LAWRA</b>	URBAN	11	18	29	7	10	17	1	3	4	0	1	1	1	2	3	2	2	4
<b>WEST MAMPRUSI</b>	URBAN	9	12	21	3	10	13	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	2	5
<b>EAST MAMPRUSI</b>	URBAN	21	14	35	15	5	20	4	3	7	0	5	5	2	0	2	0	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>98</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>31.6</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>42.1</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>46.5</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>48.1</b>	<b>33.7</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>66.7</b>	<b>38.5</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>66.7</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>41.7</b>	<b>33.9</b>
<b>TALENSI</b>	RURAL	53	13	66	20	4	24	21	4	25	2	0	2	3	2	5	3	1	4
<b>BONGO</b>	RURAL	38	6	44	26	1	27	9	4	13	2	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
<b>JIRAPA</b>	RURAL	30	8	38	19	2	21	5	1	6	1	2	3	0	1	1	5	2	7
<b>LAWRA</b>	RURAL	23	15	38	12	10	22	3	3	6	2	0	2	0	0	0	6	2	8
<b>WEST MAMPRUSI</b>	RURAL	34	2	36	16	0	16	4	0	4	3	1	4	0	0	0	11	1	12
<b>EAST MAMPRUSI</b>	RURAL	34	12	46	18	9	27	5	2	7	3	0	3	1	0	1	7	1	8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>212</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>68.4</b>	<b>36.6</b>	<b>57.9</b>	<b>68.1</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>53.5</b>	<b>72.3</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>66.3</b>	<b>76.5</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>61.5</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>68.1</b>	<b>58.3</b>	<b>66.1</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>310</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>59</b>

**SOURCE:** School based data from Head teacher interview across all 6 research districts: **QUALITY OF EDUC RESEARCH PROJECT, 2012**

### **3.6 Teacher Supervision, Monitoring and Support**

Supervision and monitoring is vital in the process of delivering quality education. There were Circuit Supervisors (CS) appointed in all the 6 sampled districts that were tasked to supervise and monitor teacher performance. Interviews with teachers and head teachers suggest that in a large proportion of the schools sampled, CS's did not monitor on a regular basis and the quality of their interventions during monitoring visits was limited to observing lesson notes and reviewing school registers. There were very limited signs that CS's were mentoring or improving the methodological practices of teachers in any of the 6 sampled districts. According to the Circuit Supervisors interviewed, the efficiency and frequency of their school visits was constrained by lack of office accommodation within the circuits, inadequate supply of fuel and non payment of vehicle maintenance allowances. They claim that the support provided by the Government through budget releases (administration) over the last three years (2010 – 2012)<sup>19</sup> was not sufficient to ensure regular monitoring visits. Circuit Supervisors also reported that the few visits that were made were due to Donor and NGO support such as DFID, TENI, Link Community Development, PAGE, and CAMFED assisting with the fuelling of motorbikes for school visits. These NGO's often provided support in both TENI and Non-TENI districts.

Across the six districts visited there was a large pull of qualified trained teachers (often between 5-10<sup>20</sup>) who were being underutilised at the district offices while the rural schools lacked trained teachers to function. Findings suggest that there was loss of confidence among head teachers and communities in relation to the effectiveness of circuit supervisors and the district education offices to address this problem.

Head teachers also complained that CS's do not give them the necessary support in terms of maintaining discipline within the teaching force. They explained that some CS accepted tokens and gifts such as phone credit top ups from teachers in order not to report them at the District office; these practices have undermined the head teacher authority and ability to discipline the teachers under their management. Collusion and close social relations among the teaching force had created an environment of indiscipline of which was maintained by favours that guaranteed the non reporting of non-performing and habitually absent teachers by the CS to the district education offices.

#### **3.6.1 District analysis**

All the six (6) Directorates of Education officers and directors interviewed considered teacher management to be an essential component of the delivery of quality education. Interviews with the head teachers and teachers suggest that there was very little monitoring and support by the circuit supervisors across the districts; when there was monitoring this was mainly in the form of

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<sup>19</sup> TENI districts were able to use funds from other VSO and other NGO's to assist them fuel their motorbikes (eg TENI and PAGE projects). Non-TENI sometimes received support from external sources.

<sup>20</sup> This number refers to the circuit supervisors in most of the districts. This number would increase to close to 20 if we include all the other district education officers who are responsible for various activities including the subject support teachers (for KG, Math etc), girl child officers etc.

rapid appraisal of lesson notes, and information on in-service training events often spending less than one hour at any one school. None of the head teachers reported having had a comprehensive supervision exercise over the last year<sup>21</sup>. GES policy, however states that comprehensive school inspections should be undertaken at least once every five years.

Most of the CS's were not stationed in the circuit centres but operating out of the District Education Office in the district capital. Distancing Circuit/Supervisors from their schools had not facilitated regular and frequent school visits in the sample schools. Data supplied by the Directorates indicate that each of the six (6) districts have varying numbers of circuits. Talensi Nabdam has 10 circuits, Bongo 10, Jirapa 8, Lawra 10, West Mamprusi 12 and East Mamprusi 7. None of the districts had an office located for ease of school accessibility and frequent school visits. They all operated from their various Directorates where the Circuit Supervisors share one office. Data collected from the six (6) Directorates indicates that Circuit Supervisor offices are not available in the circuits from where Circuit Supervisors can operate. In an interview with circuit supervisors one of them said "we do not have well equipped offices located in our circuits where we are expected to work" (Talensi Nabdam).

In all six districts the problems encountered by the CS appeared to be much the same. The circuit supervisor's efficiency and frequency of school visits are constrained by lack of office accommodation within circuits, inadequate supply of fuel and non-payment of vehicle maintenance allowances. Frequency of school visits was often determined by the quantity of fuel supplied by development partners. In an interview with a Director of Education, he conceded "the provision of inadequate financial resources to support the circuit supervisors to do extensive school supervision has been our major challenge. As a result of this supervision is not as effective as expected" (DED, Bongo District).

### **3.6.2 Monitoring of Circuit Supervisors**

The District Directors of Education from all six districts reported that they have adopted various methods to ensure circuit supervisors visit their schools and ensure that CS reports are verifiable. Sometimes the Director him/herself would visit the schools to ensure that circuit Supervisors are monitored. In the Upper East, the Conference of District Directors of Education has an innovative system to ensure best practices are replicated in all districts. A team of Directors excluding the target Director randomly select a district and visit schools without prior notice. This is followed by a peer review of findings. Yet the evidence from some of the school heads, teachers and community members suggest that there is very little support from the district education offices, and circuit supervisors are not trusted by the community due to their relationships with the teachers and lack of action taken when community members complain of high rates of absenteeism etc.

### **3.6.3 In-Service and Training Support**

Findings from the 54 research sites suggest that there was very little in-service training available to teachers at the district and cluster based levels despite the introduction of capitation grants over the last four years. There was some evidence that the in-service training programmes which

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<sup>21</sup> A comprehensive in service training often is a three day training event.

were available were funded through capitation grants at the cluster level through the JICA INSET approach which was being implemented in some of the districts visited. Most of the six sampled districts have a functional District Teacher Support Team (DTST) which provides some support to teachers. INSETS are organised based on problems identified in the schools. Funding of INSETS was a challenge across all the districts. External support is provided to TENI districts by TENI/VSO, World Vision, UNICEF, PAGE, QUIPS and LETS. The non-TENI districts were sometimes supported by PAGE and CAMFED (see section below on external support to districts).

Interviews with the untrained community volunteer teachers suggest that there was very little in-service training available to them at the district level. Training programmes organised by the district did not include the community based volunteer teachers; only trained and pupil teachers were invited. In all the Districts Education Directorates, pupil teachers were being encouraged to undertake the “Untrained Teacher Training Diploma in Basic Education” (UTTDDBE) to become professional teachers, although Head teachers were of the view that even though the distance learning courses expose teachers to the basic teaching methods, time spent on the courses often conflicts with their focus in the classroom, the preparation for lessons, and results in the loss of instructional time in the classroom.

The district education office interviews suggest that the DEO’s periodically support teachers with teaching aids to enhance their lesson delivery. INSETs are also organized for Head teachers on school management. District Education Office also organizes INSET on lesson notes preparation and delivery particularly for untrained teachers at the beginning of each academic year. However, external support provided by TENI, World Vision, UNICEF, PAGE, QUIPS and LETs READ were all supporting in-service training across the three regions. The Head teachers report that several NGO’s had supported their schools in various forms to enhance their outputs. Workshops have been organized by TENI to enhance pedagogical skills of teachers. PAGE had also organized workshops for effective school management which exposed teachers to classroom monitoring and checking of exercise books and other classroom conditions. TENI and World Vision had provided funding and organised INSET for Head teachers, teachers and curriculum leaders in schools.

In assessing these interventions in TENI districts, the Head teachers, Circuit Supervisors and Frontline Assistant Directors in FGD claim that TENI and PAGE were successful and effective in supporting their work across the district. They claimed that PAGE has supported Teacher supervision and monitoring with motorbikes and fuel and organization of SPAM in the circuits. TENI is also supporting officers with fuel and provides support for PMT where results are used for SPAM/SPR. The non-TENI districts officers also report that they sometimes receive assistance from PAGE, Right to Play and CAMFED.

In all the District Directorates, pupil teachers are supported to undertake UTTDDBE course to become professional teachers. Findings from the research also suggest that the untrained teachers (not including the GES Pupil) continue not to be fully included in INSET programmes being organized by the District Education offices and that this is a particular impediment to improving quality for the community volunteer, NYEP and NSS volunteer teachers. A few head teachers said that they organize some school based insets for the untrained teachers but this

would often require a highly motivated and committed head teacher (e.g. Manga/Northern). Head teachers are of the view that much as the course exposes teachers to the rudiments of teaching methods, time spent on the course conflicts with their instructional time.

Besides the ongoing in-service training, the directors encourage untrained teachers to take advantage of the UTTDBE in-service programme. The majority of teachers in all 54 sampled school reported that the distance education programmes had advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand it helps teachers to upgrade their knowledge and skills and on the other hand it interfered with their ability to prepare for lessons in their schools and increased the loss of instructional time.

### **3.7 Teacher Attitude, Discipline and Commitment**

Field work revealed that various methods were used by the districts to ensure teacher discipline. These included counselling teachers, addressing queries from CS's, PTA's and other key stakeholders along with salary blockages. Interviews with head teachers suggest that the teacher disciplinary systems had broken down due to two key factors: district education offices have rarely blocked teachers' salaries since 2009 when the central government began withholding teacher salaries which were recommended to be blocked by District Education Offices for recalcitrant teachers. They claimed that the method of salary blockage was no longer effective and therefore rarely used<sup>22</sup>. The second main factor which was identified by District Education officers themselves was the fact that a culture of ineffectiveness or "poor work ethic" had crept into the teaching force. Head teachers and district education officers described an endemic problem when teachers are seen to be too effective and efficient. They are bullied and ostracized by the majority of non performing teachers who ask the more committed and effective teachers "Are you doing your father's work?" According to some head teachers interviews and CS's, these committed, highly performing teachers are known to the vast majority of teachers in the force and therefore avoid close interaction with the rest of the teaching force at workshops etc.

#### **3.7.1 Teacher Motivation**

Delivery of quality education can be enhanced when teachers are adequately motivated. Data collected for the Directorates reveal that various incentive packages have been created to motivate and support teachers to deliver quality teaching including best teacher awards and study leave. All the districts have teacher training sponsorship programme. Untrained teachers serving in mostly rural areas and considered "hard working" by Directors and Head teachers are provided with the opportunity to pursue distance education to acquire professional teacher's certificate (UTTDBE). Others with the requisite qualification for admission to Colleges of Education are also sponsored by the District Assemblies. In all TENI and Non-TENI districts, training of untrained teachers through distance education and District Assembly sponsorship

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<sup>22</sup> Controller and Accountant General's application of District Directors request for blocking part of teacher's salary (i.e. When District Direct request for a deduction of a day's salary to be deducted the Controller and Accountant General's deducts the whole months salary. As a result District Directors discontinued the practice since 2009. Now salary embargo is used only against teachers who are absent for 60% or more of the school opening times. According to most head teachers it is rarely used.

programme is being earnestly pursued. In all the schools visited untrained teachers eager to have professional certificates in teaching are pursuing distance education courses.

The Ghana Education Service (GES) has a policy of Best Teacher Award Scheme to recognize hardworking teachers. All the districts are implementing it with an exception of Talensi-Nabdam where the District Chief Executive conceded “*The scheme provides opportunity for hardworking teachers to be rewarded but there is no fund to motivate and retain teachers*”. None of the districts under study had a policy to motivate teachers who operate in rural and hard-to-reach areas. However in some communities across the six (6) districts, Head teachers identified community violence, harassment, verbal and physical assault as the price teachers have to pay for their services to the communities. These can demotivate teachers to deliver quality education in their schools.

### 3.7.2 Teacher Absenteeism Rates

The findings from the Quality of Education and Inclusivity study and particularly from the head teacher and children’s focal group interviews reveals that teacher absenteeism was widespread across all six districts in the north and occurred in over 80% of the sampled schools. Findings suggest that rural schools were more affected than urban schools although in some districts both types of schools were being affected. In forty-five schools (83.3%) out of the 54 the head teachers reported that teachers either missed classes once a week or once a month. In 52 schools (96.3%) the heads reported that teachers miss school twice a week and in 40 schools (74.1%) the heads reported that teachers missed school more than five times in a month. The trend shows that after once in a week teacher absenteeism rises to its peak of twice a week and then decreases to once a month and more than five times in a month. This has serious implications for instructional hours. If teacher-pupil contact hours are reduced through teacher absenteeism learning will certainly be minimal or non-existent. Interviews with the teachers and heads suggest that one of the main reasons for teacher absenteeism was the loss of instruction time and days lost due to distance education programmes. These programmes required that the teachers leave on a Friday and often return on Monday (thereby missing the two days of classes).

**Table 3.7: Teacher Attendance (Number of Times Teachers Miss School on Average)**

Number of Teachers	Once a week	Twice a week	Once a month	More than five times a month
None	18	11	18	31
One teacher	5	13	5	5
Two teachers	6	15	6	2
Three teachers	4	8	4	1
Four teachers	4	3	4	0
Five teachers	4	1	4	0
Six teachers	1	1	1	0
Seven teachers	2	0	2	0
Eight teachers	1	0	1	1
Nine teachers	0	0	0	0
Ten /more teachers	0	0	0	0
Total	45	52	45	40

(Source: Head teacher interview, Quality of Education field research, 2012)

During Head teacher interviews across the 6 study districts eleven prominent reasons were adduced for the high levels of absenteeism among teachers, namely:

1. Teacher sickness
2. Attending to family issues (bereavement, funerals, sickness, outdooing, weddings etc)
3. Salary issues (delay and collection by teachers)
4. Distance education programmes which often required that they attend classes in another town
5. Problems of transportation reaching the school; often due to the fact that they live quite a far distance from the school
6. Attending meetings/seminars/workshops
7. Lack of accommodation within community/commuting long distances
8. Engaged in extra economic activities such as trading or farming
9. Weak school management
10. Teacher drunkenness
11. Rainfall and other harsh weather conditions

The first five reasons were common to all six districts while attending meetings/seminars/workshops, lack of decent accommodation within community which leads to teachers commuting long distances to school and engaging in extra economic activity were reasons for teacher absenteeism common to only four districts. Weak school management, teacher drunkenness and rainfall were mentioned by teachers in only in one district. Table 3.8 below reveals the reasons for teacher absenteeism according to head teachers and teachers interviewed across the six districts.

**Table 3.8: Reasons for Teacher absenteeism by Districts**

Upper East		Northern		Upper West	
Bongo	Talensi-Nabdam	East Mamprusi	West Mamprusi	Jirapa	Lawra
1. Teacher sickness	1. Teacher sickness	1. Teacher sickness	1. Teacher sickness	1. Teacher sickness	1. Teachers sickness
2. Attending to family / social issues,	2. Attending to family/ social issues	2. Attending to family/ social issues	2. Attending to family/ social issues	2. Attending to family issues	2. Attending to family / social issues
3. Salary issues (delay and collection)	3. Salary issues (delay and collection)	3. Salary issues (delay and collection)	3. Salary issues (delay and collection)	3. Salary issues (delay and collection)	3. Salary issues (delay and collection)
4. Distance Education	4. Distance Education	4. Distance Education	4. Distance Education	4. Distance Education	4. Distance Education
5. Problems of transportation	5. Problems of transportation	5. Problems of transportation	5. Problems of transportation	5. Problems of transportation	5. Problems of transportation
6. Attending workshops and meetings	6. Attending workshops and meetings	6. Engaged in extra economic activity	6. Engaged in extra economic activity	6. Attending workshops and meetings	6. Attending workshops and meetings
	7. Lack of decent accommodation within community/ commuting long distances	7. Weak school management	7. Lack of decent accommodation within community/ commuting long distances	7. Engaged in extra economic activity	7. Engaged in extra economic activity
		8. Lack of decent accommodation within community/ commuting long distances	8. Teacher Drunkenness	8. Lack of decent accommodation within community/ commuting long distances	
			9. Rainfall		

(Source: Head teacher interview, Quality of Education field research, 2012)

### 3.7.3 Teacher Discipline

The critical factors in quality educational delivery are the commitment and attitude of teachers to their work. All the District Directorates of Education claimed that they placed a high emphasis on efficient and effective utilization of instructional time of teachers. These same districts were not taking action to reverse the erosion of their education management systems caused by the habitual lateness of teachers and absenteeism. One Director in an interview remarked: *“Poor attitude of teachers to their work in classroom is a serious challenge in the district. Teachers report to work late and leave early. Besides, the Head teachers lack the will-power to reprimand them”* (District Director Study District). Some of the Directors have instituted various measures to deal with it. Circular letters have been issued to all schools preventing teachers from visiting District Education Offices during school hours. The common methods found in all districts are teacher monthly salary blockage. In Jirapa the Director reports that he has established a Teacher monitoring team to check on regular teacher school attendance, punctuality and absenteeism.

At the school level, findings suggest that some Head teachers either reprimand or give advice to the teachers or use Guidance and Counselling officers in the schools to talk to recalcitrant teachers. There were only a few cases of head teachers who would follow up with written queries. Some heads would record the offence and the name of the teacher in the school’s Log Book. Other Head teachers referred to the code of conduct of teachers by GES and GNAT. Some head teachers reported that when all the procedures fail, they report the teacher’s conduct to the circuit supervisor to have the teacher transferred from the school. This implies transferring poor teacher performance to another school. Once the Director gets the report of the offence, the common form of punishment was to apply a one month salary blockage to reform the teacher (although this has not been in use for the last four years since 2009). The salary blockage was no longer being used in the districts studied because the central government had changed the system and salaries were no longer being simply “blocked” but the salary amount was actually taken away for the period that the district education office advised it to be “freezed”.

## 3.8 Accountability and Management Structures

Data collected from the 6 Education Directorates and 54 research schools indicate that the districts had a range of accountability structures<sup>23</sup> in place but these were limited in functionality. Several head teachers and SMC’s explained that the district education office was not acting on complaints about teachers who had absented themselves for long periods of time, or were habitually late due to the distance from their homes to the school. Despite larger numbers of district education staff and the presence of high level structures for educational oversight being put in place (e.g. DEOC), the main message from PTA’s and SMC’s was that the district education offices and officers were not acting on their complaints and most had **given up on** complaining about their teachers. Evidence from the field work also suggest that in some schools particularly in the West and East Mamprusi districts, teachers were used to absenting themselves on a rotational basis so that only one out of 4-5 teachers would be at the school at any one time.

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<sup>23</sup> The institutions are the District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC), School Management Committee (SMC) and Parents Teacher Association (PTA). They are to ensure that all stakeholders are accountable with respect to quality delivery of education to achieve desirable outcomes.

Some Directors of Education in TENI districts reported that their SMC/PTAs showed a keen interest in education as exhibited in SPAMS and school performance. They organize school visits to monitor teacher and pupil performance. In Jirapa, the Director reported that there the SMC District Executives were functional and the members oversaw the operations of all the SMC/PTAs in the district. This mechanism for strengthening SMC's presence at district level was an interesting approach to increasing parental voice from the grassroots. The data revealed that TENI districts were operating the School Performance Review (SPR) in which the performance results of children were used to inform parents of their children's progress. School data collected and PMT results are used for school performance appraisal meetings where education stakeholders voiced out their concern regarding the accountability of teachers. In Non-TENI districts, the SPAM was not operational.

The communities and SMCs were asked how they know that their children were learning in school. The SPAM process was helping the parents and children assess the levels of learning going on in the school. The process was also assisting parents obtain a clear indication of what degree their children were able to read and write based on the consultation over PMT results, coaching on examining exercise books. Despite the important role that the SPAM and PMT processes were playing across the TENI districts, the study found that in all the TENI and Non TENI districts, the SMC/PTAs were not able to fully address the problems of teacher absenteeism and felt helpless in resolving issues affecting the poor performances of teachers when district education offices did not attempt to assist them. This was due to the lack of DEO mechanisms to ensure that channels of complaint were visible and that there was a higher oversight to the education system than even the District Education Offices.

### **3.8.1 Assessing Learning Outcomes at district level**

Learning outcome assessments being offered across the six districts visited took a variety of forms (e.g. PMT, NEA, SEA, EGRA). Very few district education offices demonstrated an interest in tracking learning outcome data, nor did they properly store their data acquired through the wide variety of assessments that were administered over the last five years. Data gathered from the districts indicates that the district planning officers had implemented several different performance assessments at the district levels including the NEA, SEA, Terminal Examinations and BECE. Only the BECE results appeared to be used over a longitudinal period to track progress at the district level, the other testing approaches were not kept by district officers and often data was not available for analysis to be made on the effectiveness of learning at the district. Despite large scale support for the NEA and SEA results, only two out of the six districts could produce the data from the last few tests. Poor storage of data and lack of interest in the data being collected by district education personnel resulted in learning assessment data being lost over a three year period and only the most recent data from the last one year was available for the research teams in some districts. TENI districts also used performance monitoring tests (PMT) as a means of tracking learning outcomes.

## **3.9 Key Challenges and Inhibitors in promoting learning efficiency and effectiveness**

The most common challenge observed by upper primary school children, head teachers and district education officers was the abuse of distance learning programmes and the impact this

was having on absenteeism and ineffectiveness of teachers in the classroom. Interviews with teachers who were participating in the distance education programme suggest that teachers travelled at least 3-6 days per month in order to hold their “face to face” meetings with mentors or attend classes for the distance education programmes. Head teachers across the six districts complained of teachers’ inability to prepare lesson notes and their continual absence from the classroom on Fridays and Mondays when they had to travel for distance education classes.

Major challenges being encountered in delivery of education are similar in all the six districts. These included: inadequate supply of exercise books and lack of textbooks/syllabuses, problems of teacher recruitment and retention, and the high prevalence of untrained teachers and in some cases the poor implementation of inclusive education policy. The Directors complained that most of them lack the basic knowledge and skills related to teaching techniques to impact on learning efforts of pupils. The rural communities have a much higher proportion of untrained teachers. The urban areas have a higher proportion of female teachers particularly trained ones. Teacher absenteeism and lateness to school was the key challenge with teachers in some districts travelling on average one hour by motorbike to reach their schools. All the six districts showed an interest in the inclusive education policy but its implementation required much more awareness and training. The basic needs of girls and heavy domestic chores and negative socio cultural practices forced a number of them out of school. Those who remain find difficulty in coping with the demands of learning. There was evidence that some interventions by NGO’s were making a difference in some schools through scholarship programmes and girls clubs yet these were still not able to fully tackle the systemic problems of socio-cultural practices denying girls the full cycle of basic education.

### **3.9.1 Inhibitors and Challenges to Quality:**

The research found that the district have a problem of teacher recruitment, deployment and retention. All the districts have a prevalence of untrained teachers mostly found in the rural communities estimated to be over 40% of the total teaching force. The Directors complain that most of them lack the rudiments of teaching techniques to make impact on learning efforts of pupils. The urban schools seemed to attract trained teachers because of accommodation problems in rural communities. It is also observed that there are a higher proportion of female trained teachers in the urban schools indicating their unwillingness to work in rural and hard-to-reach communities. The percentage of female teachers in urban centres is estimated to be over 70% of the total female trained teachers. This will have a negative impact on Girl-Child Education programmes particularly in rural areas where they could serve as role models for the rural girls.

Directors are of the opinion that poor teacher commitment has been a constraint in achieving quality educational standards. Many of the teachers are engaged in extra economic activities to supplement their incomes. Consequently school attendance was poor among teachers who were often found reporting to work late and leave early. Instructional time needed by pupils is drastically reduced. Besides, weak leadership in the schools to deal with the situation has exacerbated the problem as lateness and early departure from school by teachers has become the norm. Teacher absenteeism and lateness is a major constraint in the schools across all the districts.

**Poor teacher commitment** culminating in poor performance in examinations is a serious concern to all Directors of Education and District Assemblies. Percentage of pupils reaching proficiency level in English and Maths in P3 and P6 in NEA is less than 20% in the three northern regions. Similarly, pass rates in the same subjects and class for PMT in TENI districts on the average is less than 30% in P3 and 10% in P6. Within the past five (5) years, the BECE results also have not shown any significant improvement. All the Directors wish to have good teaching and learning outcomes of their pupils. Consequently, there is the need for periodic assessment of pupil performance particularly at the foundation stages.

All the six districts show interest in inclusive education policy but its implementation needs much to be desired. Irresponsible parenting has been a major constraint in the promotion of girls' education. Basic needs of girls and heavy domestic chores bestowed on them by tradition have forced a number of them out of school. Those who remain in school find difficulty to cope with learning and household choose. The districts seem helpless in dealing with such situation in spite of interventions by Donors and NGO's such as CAMFED. Similarly, education of children with SENs appears to be low-key as teachers across the six districts have not had any training in handling learning efforts of pupils with SENs. Mobility of district peripatetic officers to identify pupils with SENs is also constrained for lack of funds. Communities still place economic and social values on children who are physically disadvantaged, a situation which will take a long time to rectify. Acceptability and integration of children with SENs is being done at the school level with limitations. Most of the schools do not have facilities which are user friendly to pupils with SENs.

### **3.9.2 Promoting factors which support the quality of Education**

The key promoters of quality education across the three northern regions will require a much stronger management and accountability system being set up and externally overseen. The district education oversight committee and the district assemblies are to oversee the proper functions of the management systems set up within the District Education Officers but these were weak or not functioning in the six districts studied. The severe levels of indiscipline found within the trained and untrained teaching force suggest that very strong head teacher leadership is required to promote and ensure quality education but this has not been able to be achieved through numerous workshops, inset, and disciplinary action.

The poor commitment on the part of teachers and head teachers and circuit supervisors and some administrative line officers reveals a very poor management practices which result in an ineffective learning environment for children. Strategies to ensure that accountability and discipline is upheld within the teaching force and at school level will be the main way to ensure that any investment (however small) in education is well utilised.

## **Chapter 4: The Context and Conditions for Learning at the School and Community Level**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings related to the teaching learning environment in the three northern regions of Ghana. The chapter looks at the issues of school characteristics and head teacher leadership, school inputs and supplies in terms of timeliness and adequacy in the sampled schools; the chapter also reviews the level of external donor and NGO supported interventions to support teaching and learning, sustainability of the inputs, head teachers' leadership, donor support and district education office support and supervision. The analysis is based mainly on cross-tabulation of responses from the head teacher interview, in-depth interviews with teachers and heads and school based observations across all 54 schools in the six research districts in Northern Ghana. The head teacher interview data is supplemented with views from FGD with District Education Offices, the four front line Directors and Circuit Supervisors (CS). Wherever appropriate, information from FGD with teachers, PTA/SMC, pupils and chief and elders are used to compare the emerging patterns and trends. The analysis provides an understanding of the sample related to the district education context, community type (urban/rural), school type (DA/Roman Catholic/English Arabic), performance ranking (High or Low) and project and non-project (TENI / Non-TENI) schools.

### **4.1 School characteristics and the context of learning<sup>24</sup>**

The evidence from the school observations across the 54 schools points to head teachers and teachers demonstrating a lack of commitment to their roles. This is particularly illustrated by the fact that as field workers arrived at the beginning of the school day they discovered that the full complement of teachers rarely arrived at the school by 8:00am. In some schools, the teachers would arrive during the course of the morning but it was noted that in many cases at the time when lessons were scheduled to begin, there would be a number of classes full of children with no teacher. In some schools, the pupils were waiting patiently for their teachers in the classroom cleaning the room while in other schools they might be outside the class playing in the school compound until they could see the first teacher; a situation in some schools which persisted for the entire day. Furthermore, in many schools it was noted that even if lessons were being delivered, it was likely that teaching would not recommence the teaching of lessons after either the first break (around 10:00 am), or the second break (around noon). In total the teachers were found to spend about 2 to 2.5 hours teaching during an average morning or conducting one lesson for one set of children before rotating to another class. The following (Figure 4.1 and 4.2) are school observation descriptions from a sample of schools visited across two of the three regions (Upper East and Northern Regions).<sup>25</sup> These rural schools reflect the reality of several schools visited by the research teams over the four weeks of field work.

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<sup>24</sup> Schools of different types were sampled for this research, ie those in a rural or urban setting, those that are situated in a district supported by the TENI project and those in a similar district but without TENI support, faith based and District Assembly schools, and so on. The rationale behind this was to investigate to what extent these differences made an impact on the quality of teaching and learning if at all.

<sup>25</sup> 28 school observations were collected and have been compiled in a separate annex.

**Figure 4.1: Description Taken from School Observation Field Instrument for a Primary School in East Mamprusi, Northern Region**

**Region: Northern**  
**District: East Mamprusi (Rural)**  
**School: Primary School**

The children got to school around 7:30 and there was no teacher to teach them. All the classes and the main football park were invaded by pupils playing, jumping; banging doors and a few pupils remained silently seated. It was some few minutes to 8:00am when a volunteer teacher arrived at the school. He said he was not feeling well because he had an accident and was just coming around to see how the children and few teachers were doing. The head teacher arrived shortly afterwards. He told the team he was to take the primary six for an English lesson.

The head teacher picked up his chalk and went straight to the class. All other classes that had no teachers in them remained noisy and neither the volunteer teacher nor the head teacher did anything to control the noise. Apart from the English class that was observed by the research team, no class was taught and meanwhile all the children were rolling on the ground, playing 'Ampe', football, sleeping and some went back home because there was no teaching going on.

This situation was however not strange and no child seemed worried about this. They all played and accepted it as normal as they never reacted. The head teacher in his interview told us, that *"if you are a parent and your child comes to school and plays and go back home and there is no other school around better than this what can you do about it"*.

(Source: Field notes and school based observation, Northern region)

**Figure 4.2: Description Taken from School Observation Field Instrument for a Primary School in East Mamprusi, Northern Region**

**Region: Upper East**  
**District: Bongo (Rural)**  
**School: D/A PRIMARY**

At 8:10 am all the pupils were outside their classrooms. Some girls were seen playing football on the playground. Only the assistant head teacher was present who was on the playground watching the girls play football. Apart from that deputy head teacher, all the other teachers including the head teacher were absent.

There was a very chaotic situation as pupils could be seen moving about. Some were at the borehole and others were at the common market. Some pupils also stood by to watch the girls play football for the selection of good players for a friendly match with another school. The head teacher later came in at 8:25 am. The pupils were chased into the classrooms by 8:30 am. Pupils defecated and urinated around indiscriminately because they were not using the urinals or the toilet facilities in the school.

There is a bell which is rung for only break time. Pupils did not re-enter classrooms after the 1<sup>st</sup> break (10:00) but were later forced into their classes by the prefects who were holding canes to beat the pupils. At second break (12:15) pupils were outside again and learning was not going on because teachers had gathered under a tree whilst some of the pupils served them food to eat. This food was prepared by the girls (pupils) during the first break. Head teacher also sat under a tree to write on a table. There was a fight between two girls in P6 and others were reading on the board. The two girls were later made to

kneel down in the sun by prefects. After 12:00 pm there was no learning going on because teachers only sat under the tree while the pupils played outside. School was closed at 1:30pm.

On the second day at the school the pupils were marching into their classes at 7:50am. It appeared that only 1 female teacher who stayed in the school was around supervising a training session on the football field. For the whole day no teacher entered a classroom to teach. The pupils were allowed to play outside all day. Most of the teachers came after 9:00am. The head teacher sat alone under tree writing on a table while one other teacher sat by him to chat.

(Source: TENI Research field notes and school based observations in Upper East and Northern Regions)

#### **4.1.1 Analysis of key promoters and inhibitors of quality**

The research team early on in the field work observed that the lack of head teacher leadership and management at the school had a highly visible impact on the ability of the school to function and promote an effective learning environment particularly in rural schools. Although the study was focused on exploring the degrees of learning within the classroom, the research also took into account the effectiveness of overall school management as a key realm of inquiry. The school based observations and detailed school descriptions revealed a high degree of contrast in management practices when compared to the level of school management in Mission or religious Unit schools (particularly the Catholic schools) and that of the District Assembly (D/A) schools. There was strong evidence from different areas of the research that teacher commitment and teacher discipline was dependent on how the school was led and managed. In the description of the Catholic school above reference is made to strict supervision by the Church. Non faith schools such as the D/A and E/A schools do not enjoy this second level of supervision.

The key promoter or inhibitor to quality is whether the Head teacher has a clear vision for school management which is in turn strengthened by either community or Church support. An example of which is Gungolgu JHS in rural Bongo where observers noted that:

*“The research team arrived at the school at 8:30am. It was observed that all students were seated in the classrooms being taught by their subject teachers. A few of the teachers who had no lessons were found in the staff common room preparing for their periods.*

*The head teacher arrived later at about 8:53am. No students were found loitering about on the school compound. They were scarcely found on the school compound even when they were on break. They looked disciplined and studious. The school rigidly followed the time table and the teachers changed lessons as and when periods ended.*

*There was order in the school even when the head teacher was late. The head had a firm control over the management of the school. He had won the trust, respect and confidence of the teachers. This was because he had been able to establish a management system which works even in his absence. The teachers were very active in their responsibilities.”*

This view is further supported by what parents said in the FGD with SMC/PTA:

*“Parents revealed that two years ago, the performance of the school was poor. As a result there was a conflict between the community and the teachers were not devoting*

*much of their time to teach the pupils consequently the BECE results of the school were very poor. The school was 20th on the District School Performance league table. The community agitation led to the mass transfer of teachers from the school. New teachers were posted to the school including the Head teacher. Last Year 2011/2012 the BECE results of the School showed tremendous improvement. The School was 6th on the District School Performance League Table. The students also confirmed to their parents that the teachers were teaching them well and organising extra classes on Saturday for the BECE candidates. The teachers also provide one-hour tuition for all the students every day.*

Rural schools were further disadvantaged by their lack of proximity to the district capital since most trained teachers preferred to live in the district capitals and CS supervision was often more limited the more remote a rural area school was located. In these contexts the Head teacher management and leadership capabilities to ensure that strong management/disciplinary procedures were put in place becomes essential.

#### **4.1.2 Starting the morning: School based observations**

The key finding from the evidence from the school based observations across the 54 sampled schools points to head teachers and teachers demonstrating a lack of commitment to their roles. The GES recommended timetable is rarely adopted particularly in the rural schools visited with wide variations in terms of starting times, however in all cases the number of instructional hours should remain the same. Evidence from school observations indicates that very few schools had a full complement of teachers in class for this number of instructional hours. The more remote area schools with weak head teacher management had difficulty keeping to any type of structured timetable due to the high rates of teacher absenteeism. For instance in West and East Mamprusi district teachers in the rural zones would begin teaching at 10:00 and often end at 12:00. Rarely was there a full complement of teachers in the rural based schools on any particular day. The following Figure 4.3 is a model timetable recommended to schools by GES:

**Figure 4.3: Recommended Timetable for Public Basic Schools**

School Level	Start of first morning lesson	First Break	Start of second Session	Second Break	Final Session
Primary	8:00 am	10:00 am	10:30 am	12:30 pm	1:00 – 1:30 pm
Junior High	8:00 am	10:20 am	10:50 am	1:10 pm	1:20 – 2:30 pm

(Source: GES)

Teachers arriving late at school was a particular problem in the schools that were situated in rural communities. This was mainly due to the fact that most teachers do not live in the community where the school is located but more often live either in the district capital or in the nearest urban or semi-urban settlement (often beyond a 5km radius)<sup>26</sup>. Teachers in the urban schools were more likely to arrive at school near the time of the beginning of lessons but, as indicated above, it was unusual to find a school where all the teachers would be delivering lessons for the entire school day and the picture in many schools was of teachers gathered under shade trees chatting often with the head teacher. Teachers who have turned up and signed the register are ostensibly

<sup>26</sup> GES policy is that teachers do not live beyond a 5km radius of the school.

at school and on task but in some cases teachers will come to school sign in, seek permission from the Head Teacher and then absent themselves for the day. On some occasions the teams found that the teachers had been signed into the register but were not at post as is illustrated by this quote from a teacher in one primary School (ID 546) Rural West Mamprusi District: *"I was not coming to teach I was only coming to ask for permission and go to Wurshie (District Capital) for my salary."* This behaviour is compounded by the attitude expressed by one head teacher that: *"If you report before you go it is not absenteeism."* (Source HT Interview, Primary School, Rural Bongo, ID 344)

## **4.2 School infrastructure and facilities**

Researchers collected school based data in a variety of ways. The school/head teacher checklist instrument was designed to collect information about the physical aspects of schools – buildings, facilities (including libraries, computer labs, sanitary, water, electricity, etc) and whether these were adapted to the different needs of children either on the basis of gender or special educational needs.

With respect to the physical and service infrastructure aspects of the schools that are described below, there appears to be very few differences between the different regions, districts or across the rural/urban divide. Urban schools were found to be better resourced in terms of access to water and slightly better off in terms of access to electricity, but from the evidence of this sample, the difference is not significant. What the evidence does point to however, is that school infrastructure and the physical environment in which teaching and learning is supposed to take place posed a challenge to improving quality and inclusion in northern Ghana.

The main finding from the school based checklist data and in relation to the physical facilities available at the sampled schools suggests that the majority of schools were not adapted for children with Special Educational Needs. A number of schools had access ramps to the classrooms but these were in the minority (18 out of the 54 schools surveyed). Furthermore, most schools had no educational materials adapted for use with differently able pupils (6 out of 54). Some of those that did receive these specialized TLMs were as a result of NGO interventions or donations.

The provision of sanitary facilities (toilets and urinals) was generally adequate across the 53 schools sampled. Thirty three (33) of the 54 schools have usable separate toilet facilities for boys and girls. Where there are no separate facilities this poses a problem particularly for young women during menstruation. Most of the schools sampled had access to potable water (29 from 54). Of those that did not have access, most were located in the rural areas of the districts (17 out of 24). Again, this poses a challenge, particularly for young women and girls in the school, as it is traditionally their role to ensure that there is adequate water in the school for daily use.

In many schools visited the fact that the school is reported as having sanitary facilities such as urinals or toilets available did not tell the full story. In some cases the buildings are in very poor repair but there were many schools where field workers noted that children would be urinating and defecating "in the bush" or "free range" and even in some cases on the school compound itself. As described in the following example from Wuntenga D/A Primary (568) Rural Bongo:

*Pupils defecated and urinated around indiscriminately because they were not using the urinals or the toilet facilities in the school.*

As can be seen from the table below, other school facilities such as electricity, solar lighting, and library or computer laboratory are only present in a few schools. The lack of such facilities has an impact on quality learning in the school, especially with respect to teaching and learning ICT – a subject which has recently been added to those that students are expected to be examined in at the end of Junior High School. A greater challenge on the day to day quality of learning in schools though, is the condition of classrooms. Many schools could be described as having adequate classroom facilities. However there were a significant proportion of classrooms (over one quarter of those surveyed) that were very poorly lit and ventilated. This was often due to “honey comb” style of windows being used instead of wooden windows which could open up and allow more light and air. Even though many classes had adequate windows and doors to allow for lighting and ventilation, evidence from school and classroom descriptions illustrate that by the middle of the day sitting in the classroom is a very uncomfortable proposition.

The following table is a summary of some of the school based checklist data collected:

**Table 4.1: Summary Findings from School Based Checklist Showing Facilities in Schools**

			Number of schools with:												
Region	Districts	Type of Community	library facilities	playground facilities	electricity	solar lighting	water facilities	water storage facilities	Urinals for boys	urinals for girls	toilets for boys	toilets for girls	an access ramp	inclusive education learning materials	Number of schools surveyed
NORTHERN	WEST MAMPRUSI	URBAN	1	2	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	3
		RURAL	0	4	1	0	3	4	5	5	4	4	3	1	5
	EAST MAMPRUSI	URBAN	2	3	1	0	2	3	2	2	2	2	1	3	3
		RURAL	1	6	1	0	1	4	2	2	2	2	3	1	6
TOTALS			4	15	3	0	7	12	11	11	9	9	7	5	17
UPPER EAST	TALENSI-NABDAM	URBAN	1	3	1	0	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	0	3
		RURAL	1	5	1	2	4	3	4	4	3	3	0	1	6
	BONGO	URBAN	1	1	3	0	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	1	3
		RURAL	2	5	3	1	4	2	3	3	3	3	2	0	6
TOTALS			5	14	8	3	12	9	11	11	11	11	5	2	18
UPPER WEST	JIRAPA	URBAN	1	2	3	0	2	3	3	3	3	3	1	0	3
		RURAL	0	3	2	0	3	2	5	5	5	5	2	1	6
	LAWRA	URBAN	0	2	0	0	2	1	3	3	2	2	0	0	3
		RURAL	2	5	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	6
TOTALS			3	12	5	0	10	9	14	14	13	13	6	2	18

(Source: School Checklist across all sampled schools, 2012)

A much greater number of classes had less than adequate furniture – about two-thirds of classrooms visited did not have enough seating for the pupils on the role, in some cases this furniture was in a poor state of repair, or was too small for the students. Field observation revealed that it was not uncommon to find large numbers of children squatting or laying on dusty classroom floors during lessons. Classrooms are generally of a good size but high enrolment in some schools meant that many pupils are sitting 3 or 4 to a dual desk in a crowded room.

#### **4.2.1 Northern Region**

Findings from the Northern Region reveal that poor infrastructure still remains a great challenge for ensuring quality teaching and learning in schools. Overcrowding is a common reason for teachers' inability to effectively monitor and ensure that pupils were on task in class. For example at Kupiel DA JHS, researchers reported that:

*“On the whole, the school environment is conducive for learning but for the congestion of classrooms. Over 120 pupils in class and inadequate furniture are a significant drawback and hindrance to delivery of quality education (Researcher Field notes, 2012).”*

The majority of classrooms were overcrowded. Classrooms got very hot in the afternoon. Only a few schools had enough and appropriate furniture for children. In most of the classrooms furniture was woefully inadequate thus compelling some to pupils to squat on the floors during lesson delivery. Pupils were seen lying on the floor to write during lessons.

In the Northern Region among 17 schools the research teams visited, only 23% had library facilities but majority of these were without books and adequate furniture. The situation was the same for other supporting facilities; only 17% of schools visited had electricity. With reference to access to potable water in the schools visited, 7 out of 17 schools had ready access, 3 of the schools' only on site source of water was rain harvest which is only available during the wet season; Rural East Mamprusi is the poorest served in this respect where 4 of the schools reported having no water source. A little more than half the schools visited had separate toilet facilities for boys and girls and 6 schools had no urinals. There was no evidence of appropriate sanitary facilities for Special needs children in any of the surveyed schools across the two districts.

There were more schools with appropriate access arrangements for children with disabilities as 41% of classrooms had access ramps for physically impaired children in the Northern Region. Five schools were able to demonstrate the presence of programmes and materials supporting SEN learning in schools. The common ones identified included NALAP which provided TLMs, and CAMFED which supported in the provision of TLMs and sanitary facilities for girls.

#### **4.2.2 Upper East Region**

Apart from a couple of the schools in rural parts of the Upper East observers reported that classrooms were generally not overcrowded and that they had adequate light and ventilation. However, in nearly two-thirds of the classrooms visited, the number of desks was inadequate for the number of children enrolled. Another finding was that most schools were in a poor state of repair and observers witnessed in some classrooms:

*“The children were sitting on the floor. The space was enough. There was a large pothole in the middle of the classroom”* (source: classroom checklist Rural Talensi-Nabdam)

In the Upper East Region among 18 schools visited in Bongo and Talensi Nabdam districts, 27% schools had library facilities; 44.4% had electricity and 16% had solar serving as their main source of lighting for children to learn at night. Again in both districts, one school had a computer laboratory although 3 schools had computers or laptops – 2 of these were Junior High Schools.

Schools’ access to drinking water sources across both districts in the Upper East Region posed a serious threat to quality education as children spent productive hours accessing water from home or the nearest stream or well. The research revealed that only 16.7% of schools in the Upper East Region had access to pipe borne water. 61% had access to a borehole and 50% had rain harvest facilities in the school – in total 12 of the 18 schools in the sample had access to water on or near the school site all year round.

Regarding sanitary facilities in the region, 61% of schools had access to toilets and urinals. All of these had separate toilets and urinals for boys and girls. Hand washing facilities across the 18 schools visited in the region revealed that only 27.8% had hand washing facilities. Researchers felt that these hand washing facilities were not completely adequate as several children were seen washing in a single bowl of water which poses a health risk.

Two head teachers responded that they had received educational materials for inclusive education, one school received uniforms and books and the other just books but there was no evidence in the research about these books or who provided them. Just 27.8% of these schools had access ramps.

#### **4.2.3 Upper West Region**

The evidence from the schools surveyed in the Upper West paints a similar picture to that found in the other two northern regions--- conditions in a number of the classrooms were not entirely conducive to creating an ideal learning environment. About a third of the schools surveyed in the 2 target districts of the Upper West had overcrowded classrooms to the extent where observers noted that it would be difficult for the teacher to move amongst the pupils. About two thirds of classrooms had an inadequate number of chairs and desks for the number of pupils in the class and it is also noted that some furniture was in poor repair and/or set out in the classroom in a haphazard way. Furthermore, about a quarter of the classrooms visited had poor lighting and ventilation. As one researcher noted about a school:

*“The school building is an old building with a compound. The classrooms are inadequate. They are very congested. The windows are not appropriate for the classes. At about 12:00pm most of the pupils were perspiring and feeling very uncomfortable.”*  
(source: school checklist, Urban Lawra)

With regard to other facilities found in the sampled schools across the Upper West Region, only 16% had access to library facilities most of which had no books and furniture. There were no

recorded cases of technical skills workshops or any technical equipment. 5.6% of the schools have a computer laboratory but without computers.

In terms of ready access to potable water, 22.2% of schools had access to pipe borne water, 33.3% had boreholes and 5.6% had wells and rain harvest facilities in the school. Eight (8) of the 18 schools surveyed did not have ready, year-round access to water. Water storage and hand washing facilities were found in 50% and 38.9% of sampled schools respectively across the region. Ironically in some of the schools the hand washing facility was used by the teachers alone.

Of the schools that were sampled across the region sanitation was better compared to other facilities. 77.8% of schools had toilets and urinals. However, only 55.9% and 22.2% of surveyed schools had separate urinals and toilets respectively. This situation is particularly pertinent with regard to the needs of young women who are menstruating. As one group of young women stated when asked the question “what prevents you from coming to school?”

*“There is no suitable changing room so they go home if they want to change their pads.”*  
(source: FGD Girls Rural Jirapa)

Evidence from the school checklist observation notes indicates that those schools which had access ramps tended to be those that were built more recently. Clearly the need to adapt buildings to the physically challenged pupils and teachers was beginning to be appreciated by those responsible for building schools. However, only about one third of the schools surveyed had access ramps. Just two of the schools in the sample reported had any kind of inclusive education learning materials. One was a set of materials for carrying out eyesight screening tests and the other had a set of reading glasses.

#### **4.2.4 The main challenges and inhibitors to quality education**

The main challenges in terms of inclusion are that many of the schools are simply not built with children with physical challenges in mind. Aside from the actual buildings – few of the schools had access ramps (one third of the sampled schools) to the classroom – the schools had rough terrain which created a problem for mobility.

Where the school is sited in relation to the community also created a challenge for special needs children. Children walking to school from home often had to walk long distances over terrain which was not easy to negotiate. There were other even more significant barriers to children with special needs attending school, but when mobility is impaired the factor of ease of access imposes another barrier. As one parent with a physically challenged child stated when asked if it was a priority to send his child to school:

*“Always . . . but wheel chair is spoilt and parent cannot bear the burden of carrying her to school always.”* (source: Parental/Community Scorecard, Rural Talensi-Nabdam)

The lack of water and gender friendly sanitary facilities posed another challenge particularly for young women and girls attending school. In most schools in the north the supply of water is the responsibility of the pupils (usually the girls); they are often tasked with fetching water from the nearest water source. In some cases pupils were found travelling up to 2km from the school in

order to fetch water. This is usually done before the school day begins but can also impinge on instructional hours. Interviews with pupils (and again, especially girls) reported that they have to carry out household work before they arrive at school, and the fetching of water is an additional inhibitor to their readiness to learn. As already stated above, the evidence from focal group discussions with girls indicates that they find it difficult to stay in school during menstruation. There are several reasons for this including: having no access to appropriate sanitary pads, having no where private to change sanitary pads, menstrual cramps and fear of being “mocked” by other students. In order to meet this challenge, FGD with girls indicated that in some districts CAMFED had provided sanitary towels for girls, but girls also indicated that that they needed appropriate disposal and hand washing facilities.

Most classrooms were thought by observers to be reasonably well lit, but those that are not created a challenge for children with visual impairments. Ventilation in classrooms was also thought to be adequate in most cases but in many cases the classrooms were roofed with zinc sheets, which meant that by the middle of the day many classrooms were uncomfortably hot.

The photographs below depict a typical classroom with hot, tired children sitting on a cracked and pitted floor because there is not enough furniture, very little light getting through the honeycomb windows making it even more difficult to see a chalkboard that is more grey than black, and a teacher lying across the desk asleep with her child holding on to her skirt. (A plausible reason for most schools ending classroom business after the first or second break).



### 4.3 The Classroom Context

Analysis of the classroom context serves to provide a background for the possible difference in trends that were observed between the different types of school or teacher (between rural and urban schools, Roman Catholic and District Assembly schools, high and low performing schools, trained and untrained teachers). For instance, an analysis of the data from the observers' scrutiny of exercise books indicates that there is a clear difference between the number and frequency of exercises given by teachers in urban schools than that of teachers in rural schools. Drawing on the summary analyses of each of these school types, it is clear that in most districts class sizes are relatively higher in rural schools than in urban schools. A factor which, when taken into account with teacher interviews, contributes to teachers' reluctance to give more exercises to children on a frequent or regular basis.

The key findings from the context of classroom teaching are that certain trends can be identified when comparing the different contexts of the schools from which the lesson observation data is drawn. Across all three regions which were visited as part of the research the types of teachers observed in the urban schools is different to those in the rural areas. In most cases there were a higher proportion of trained teachers in the urban schools and there tends to also be a higher proportion of female teachers. More male teachers were found in rural schools with a higher proportion of untrained teachers including community service volunteers, National Service personnel, NYEP teachers and pupil teachers. The following table shows the proportions of the teachers who were observed as part of this study who were trained teachers, female teachers, the average pupil teacher ratio and the proportions of teachers who had access to a syllabus.

**Table 4.2: Summary of Distribution of Trained and Female Teachers from Sample of Observed Teachers**

	Urban WMD	Rural WMD	Urban EMD	Rural EMD	Urban Bongo	Rural Bongo	Urban TND	Rural TND	Urban Jirapa	Rural Jirapa	Urban Lawra	Rural Lawra
<b>Average Pupil Teacher Ratio</b>	37	45	37	52	26	52	38	44	44	39	51	30
<b>% Trained Teachers</b>	100	25	20	44	80	40	60	40	100	60	100	78
<b>% with syllabus</b>	0	38	29	56	57	55	33	62	67	36	67	70
<b>% Female Teachers</b>	80	12.5	60	22	60	22	40	0	80	12.5	80	37.5

(Source: Classroom Observation Note, TENI Field Research)

Class sizes in the rural schools tended to be much higher and resources such as textbooks and syllabuses were in shorter supply; the inputs for the rural schools (in particular for those classes that were visited by the research teams) were poorer than those for the urban schools. However, these comparisons should also recognize that class sizes across all of the classrooms were generally high (with over 40-45 pupils per class) and very few classrooms can boast a full complement of textbooks.

Another trend which runs across all districts except Talensi Nabdam is that there is a higher percentage of absent pupils from the rural classrooms. Evidence from interviews with teachers, indicate that pupils absent themselves on market days, Galamsey (illegal work – including mining and delivering goods across the national border), following livestock, general farming duties and, for the girls in particular caring for younger siblings if parents are working.

#### **4.3.1 West and East Mamprusi Districts, Northern Region**

The two districts visited by the research team in the Northern Region were West Mamprusi and East Mamprusi. In both districts the target schools were in the urban and rural areas – 2 primary schools and one JHS in the urban area and 4 primary schools and 2 JHSs in the rural area. The research team visited one upper primary (P4 – P6) and one lower (P1 – P3) classroom in each school in order to observe teachers delivering either an English or Ghanaian language lesson. All the schools classroom observations were carried out in two classrooms except for 2 schools in rural West Mamprusi (ID 30 & 37) where only one lesson could be observed. In most of rural East Mamprusi (ID 151) two lessons were observed except for one school where only one lesson was observed. This was because when researchers arrived at the schools there was only one teacher present in each school. It was therefore impossible to observe a second lesson because no other lessons were being taught that day.

In **West Mamprusi**, the teachers observed in the urban schools were **all** trained, whereas only 25% of the teachers in the rural schools were trained. Of the untrained teachers in the rural schools 2 were community volunteer teachers, 2 were NYEP teachers, and there was one GES paid pupil teacher. The relative PTR between the 2 groups of schools (rural and urban) is lower in the urban schools (by 45 to 37 respectively). However this figure is slightly more optimistic in the urban schools because of the presence of an assistant teacher in one of the urban classrooms (ID 69). However the range of class sizes in the urban schools was much narrower between 33 and 64 children in a class. The largest classes observed were found in 2 of the JHS Schools where 64 pupils were found in urban school (ID 78) and a total of 137 students in the rural JHS classroom (ID 47). The other classes in the rural classrooms ranged from 19 to 73 pupils per class, with most classes reporting an enrolment of between 20 and 30 pupils per class.

There is a much higher proportion of female teachers in the urban classrooms observed in West Mamprusi district (4 out of 5 are female) and only one female teacher in the rural area. Researchers also found that 4 of the urban classrooms had textbooks available for pupils to use (albeit at a high pupil textbook ratio) whereas there were only 2 classes with textbooks in the rural schools.

The following table gives a more detailed view of the situation in classrooms visited in **Rural West Mamprusi** which is broadly representative of the situation in the Northern Region (similar tables are available for all of the five districts in Annex 4A).

**Table 4.3: Summary Information of Classroom Context for Rural West Mamprusi Sample Schools**

NORTHERN REGION - RURAL WEST MAMPRUSI SCHOOLS																		
No.	Type of School	School Performance	Gender of Teacher	Type of teacher	No. of years teaching	No of boys in register	No of girls in register	No of SEN Boys in register	No of SEN Girls in register	Boys Present	Girls Present	SEN Boys Present	SEN Girls Present	Any pupils with disability	No of Eng txt bks	No of Gh txt bks	Does Teacher have Syllabus?	Assistant teacher?
3	DA	High	Male	NYEP P4	2	23	4	0	0	22	4	0	0	NO	0	0	YES	NO
4	DA	High	Male	Community volunteer teacher P5	1	11	8	0	0	11	8	0	0	NO	0	0	NO	NO
14	DA	Low	Male	Pupil teacher P1	8	36	37	0	0	21	29	0	0	NO	0	0	NO	NO
15	DA	Low	Male	Pupil teacher P6	5	14	11	0	0	13	10	1	0	YES	4	0	NO	NO
25	DA		Male	Trained F2	2	17	7	0	0	14	5	0	0	NO	0	0	NO	NO
30	DA	High	Male	Community volunteer teacher P6	1	16	13	0	0	8	9	0	0	NO	15	0	YES	NO
37	DA	High	Female	NYEP P2	1	20	7	0	0	12	4	0	0	NO	0	0	NO	NO
47	DA		Male	Trained F2	5	87	50	0	0	53	39	0	0	NO	0	0	YES	NO
	SUMMARY	PERCENTAGE OF TRAINED TEACHERS	25%	AVERAGE PTR	45	PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS WITH SYLLABUS	38%	AVERAGE PERCENTAGE PUPILS PRESENT	73%									

(Source: Classroom Observation Instrument, TENI Research 2012)

What this evidence points to is the fact that the majority of classes in the rural areas are being taught by untrained teachers – both trained teachers in this sample were working in Junior High Schools. But what is particularly pertinent in the Northern Region (as compared to the situation particularly in the Upper East) is the number of these untrained teachers who are Community Volunteers. From a sample of 8 classes, one quarter of the teachers were volunteers. The presence of community volunteer teachers who have been recruited from the community points to the problem of recruiting and retaining other types of teachers from outside the community particularly trained teachers. Evidence from interviews with teachers in the West Mamprusi District rural classrooms shows that, in general teachers felt poorly equipped to enter the classroom to teach, due to lack of proper inputs such as textbooks, TLMs and syllabuses but also due to their limited professional development either in terms of In-Service Training or mentoring by school heads. As one teacher stated:

*“I have difficulty with lesson delivery because I am not a trained teacher. I am okay with the language of instruction. Actually the children are so many I cannot control and manage”. (Source: interview with untrained teacher, Rural West Mamprusi).*

Teachers’ views on the subject of inputs are supported by the evidence which reveals that there were just 2 classrooms where textbooks were found, the first classroom had 4 textbooks shared between 23 children and the second classroom had 15 textbooks shared between the 17 pupils who were present at the school out of the possible class enrolment of 29. Only 2 teachers were

able to produce a syllabus that they used to plan their lessons but as is described elsewhere, the syllabus most recently developed for distribution to schools was not being used because schools could not get a copy.

**Table 4.4: Summary Information of Classroom Context for Urban West Mamprusi Sample Schools**

NORTHERN REGION – URBAN WEST MAMPRUSI SCHOOLS																					
No.	School	Community	Type of School	School Performance	Gender of Teacher	Type of teacher	No. of years teaching	No of boys in register	No of girls in register	No of SEN Boys in register	No of SEN Girls in register	Boys Present	Girls Present	SEN Boys Present	SEN Girls Present	Any pupils with disability	No of Eng txt bks	No of Gh txt bks	Does Teacher have Syllabus?	Assistant teacher?	
57	WALE WALE B2 PRIMARY SCHOOL	Walewale	DA	High	Female	Trained P2	2	24	24	0	0	24	18	0	0	NO	0	0	NO	NO	
58	WALE WALE B2 PRIMARY SCHOOL	Walewale	DA	High	Female	Trained P6	1	27	20	1	1	24	14	1	1	YES	7	0	NO	NO	
67	NGBARIPE ISLAM PRIMARY SCHOOL	Kukuazugu	EA	Low	Female	Trained P3	10	13	18	0	0	10	15	0	0	NO	1	0	NO	NO	
69	NGBARIPE ISLAM PRIMARY SCHOOL	Kukuazugu	EA	Low	Female	Trained P6	7	19	14	1	1	16	11	1	1	YES	10	25	NO	YES	
78	MANGA B JHS	Walewale	DA		Male	Trained F1	6	33	31	0	0	25	21	0	0	NO	16	0	NO	NO	
	SUMMARY	PERCENTAGE OF TRAINED TEACHERS		100%		AVERAGE PTR		37		PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS WITH SYLLABUS		0%			AVERAGE PERCENTAGE PUPILS PRESENT				80%		

(Source: Classroom Observation Instrument, TENI Research 2012)

As is the case in most of the districts which were visited as part of the field research for this study, there is a much higher proportion of trained teachers in the urban schools than in the rural. All of the teachers observed in urban West Mamprusi District were trained, whereas only a quarter of the teachers observed in the rural schools were trained. The average class size is also higher in the rural classrooms than in the urban and there is a lower proportion of pupils absent in the urban classrooms observed than in the rural. What this means for the delivery of quality learning is that there are several more factors present in rural schools than in the urban. While having a trained teacher in a classroom is not necessarily a guarantee of quality teaching, the large class sizes and uneven pupil attendance experienced in the rural classrooms puts additional pressure on a teacher who may not even have been given a basic orientation in to classroom management let alone teaching methods or strategies.

### 4.3.2 East Mamprusi, Northern Region:

Teacher profiles across the classrooms observed in the urban schools in East Mamprusi, suggest that 20% were trained teachers. 44% of the teachers observed in the rural schools were trained. Of the untrained teachers in the urban schools, one was a community volunteer teacher, one was

an NSS teacher, and there were 2 GES pupil teachers. In the rural schools there was a community volunteer teacher, a NYEP teacher and 3 pupil teachers observed. The relative PTR between the 2 groups of schools (rural and urban) is lower in the urban schools (by 52 to 37 respectively). However this figure is slightly more optimistic in the urban schools because of the presence of two assistant teachers in two of the urban classrooms (ID 91 & 98). However the range of class sizes in both the urban and rural schools is fairly similar: between 39 and 64 in the urban classrooms and 37 and 86 in the rural classrooms. Although most of the classes have an enrolment of less than 62 in the rural classrooms and, as was the case in West Mamprusi, by far the largest enrolment was in the JHS is rural East Mamprusi at 86 pupils.

The findings from East Mamprusi District also suggest that there was a slightly higher proportion of female teachers in the urban classrooms observed (3 out of 5 are female) and only 2 female teachers in the rural area. Researchers also found that 4 of the urban classrooms had textbooks available for pupils to use (albeit at a high pupil textbook ratio) whereas there were 4 classes with textbooks in the rural schools (see Annex 4A for details of East Mamprusi District).

#### **4.3.3 Talensi-Nabdam District in the Upper East Region**

Five classes were observed in urban Talensi-Nabdam and 10 in the rural part of the district. As described above, the target schools in each part of the district were: one JHS and 2 Primary Schools in the urban part and 2 JHSs and 4 Primary Schools in the rural part. 60% of the teachers observed in the urban schools were trained; the remaining 2 were a pupil teacher and an NSS teacher. There were fewer trained teachers observed in the rural schools at 40%, the other 6 teachers were 5 pupil teachers and an NYEP teacher. All the teachers observed in the rural schools were male and only 2 female teachers were observed in the urban schools.

As was noted in the Northern Region the relative average PTR between the two groups of schools (rural and urban) is less in the urban classes than in the rural (38 to 44). However, unlike those classes in the Northern Region, 3 of the classes in rural Talensi-Nabdam have classroom assistants. There was one class in the urban group where there was an assistant teacher. One of the classes in rural Talensi-Nabdam (ID 203) had an extremely high enrolment at 138, on further investigation it transpires that the class should in fact be taught in 2 streams and the “assistant teacher” is in fact the teacher who should be teaching the second stream. However, the school does not have the classroom space to divide this class. The teachers therefore share the teaching – that is to say they teach half the timetable each. The same was the case in another P6 class (ID 172) although the enrolment was much lower.

There is only one classroom in all those visited in Talensi-Nabdam where the number of textbooks nearly matched the number of pupils (ID236). In all other cases, across all the classes observed in Talensi-Nabdam District– both in the urban and the rural areas – there were only a very small number of textbooks available for students and in 3 classrooms in the district, there were no textbooks available. The Upper East had a particularly large problem with text book supply possibly due to its refusal to embrace the NALAP programme which would have provided primary schools with adequate books for the KG to P3 levels.

#### **4.3.4 Bongo District, Upper East Region:**

As in Talensi-Nabdam, five classes were observed in urban Bongo and 10 in the rural part of the district. 80% of the teachers observed in the urban schools were trained; the remaining one was a pupil teacher. There were fewer trained teachers observed in the rural schools at 40%, the other 6 teachers were 4 pupil teachers, a NYEP teacher and another teacher who is described by the researcher as falling under the category of “other” (possibly a volunteer). All but 2 of the teachers observed in the rural schools were male and 3 female teachers were observed in the urban schools.

As was noted in Talensi-Nabdam, the relative average PTR between the two groups of schools in Bongo (rural and urban) is less in the urban classes than in the rural (26 to 52). Unlike Talensi-Nabdam, however only 1 of the rural Bongo classes had a classroom assistant while 2 of the schools in urban Bongo have classroom assistants. The actual class sizes in urban Bongo are generally smaller and range from 28 to 41 as opposed to those in rural Bongo which range from 29 to 82 with 8 of the 10 classes reporting an enrolment of 56 or over. Most classrooms visited (10 of the 15) had either 1 or no textbooks (in the case where there is one textbook it was used solely by the class teacher).

#### **4.3.5 Jirapa District, Upper West Region:**

Five classes were observed in urban Jirapa and 10 in the rural part of the district. Where the target schools in Jirapa differ from those of the other regions is the number of faith (RC) schools which were used as part of the research. All 3 schools (one JHS and 2 Primary Schools) in urban Jirapa are RC as are 3 of the schools in rural Jirapa (again one JHS and 2 Primary Schools).

100% of the teachers observed in the urban schools were trained. There were fewer trained teachers observed in the rural schools at 60%, the other 4 teachers were 2 pupil teachers and 2 community volunteer teachers. All but one of the teachers observed in the rural schools were male and the converse is true in the urban classrooms where 4 of the teachers were female with only one male teacher (JHS ID 392).

The classes observed in the Jirapa differ from those in the districts of the Northern and Upper East Regions due to the relatively lower average Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR). The PTR in the Upper East across rural and urban classrooms observed was less in the rural classes than in the urban (39 to 44). The actual enrolment of each of the classes was generally higher in urban Jirapa District than in the rural classes. All of the primary classes had enrolment levels of either 53 or 56 and the JHS classes observed had 43 pupils; whereas 6 out of the 10 rural classes observed had 42 or fewer pupils enrolled and the primary class with the highest enrolment of 73 (ID408) had an assistant teacher. The higher enrolment in the RC urban classes is indicative of the popularity and perceived quality of Roman Catholic schools.

#### **4.3.6 Lawra District, Upper West:**

Five classes were observed in urban Lawra and 9 in the rural part of the district. One of the target primary schools in Lawra was a faith school (RC) (ID 456 & 457). 100% of the teachers observed in the urban schools were trained. There were fewer trained teachers observed in the rural schools at 78%, the other 2 teachers were a pupil teacher and a community volunteer

teacher. This figure is higher than all of the other rural districts and even one of the urban districts. Three out of the nine teachers observed in the rural classes were female and in the urban classrooms 4 of the teachers were female with only one male teacher (JHS ID 467).

The classes observed in the Lawra district are similar to those in Jirapa as the relative average PTR between the two groups of schools (rural and urban) is less in the rural classes than in the urban (30 to 51). The actual enrolment of each of the classes is also generally higher in urban Lawra than in the rural classes. The range of enrolment figures in the urban classes is between 55 and 63 pupils with four classes having 62 or more pupils; whereas 6 classes out of the 10 rural classes observed had 26 or fewer pupils enrolled.

The importance of this analysis of the context of the classrooms that were visited during this research is the extent to which the trends described above reflect the general trends across the districts and regions as a whole. The fact that in the main there is a strong correlation between the trends identified in classrooms targeted by the research and the situation that exists across all the other schools in the 6 districts of the 3 regions indicates that the findings of these observations have a stronger validity in terms of whether they are representative of the situation as a whole.

#### 4.4 Head teacher views of text book and exercise supply

What is evident from Table 4.5 below is that the head teacher responses for Lawra district are similarly to that of Jirapa. All head teachers reported the inadequacy of the supply of teaching and learning materials regardless of community (rural or urban) or school type. Observation in several of the head teacher store rooms suggest that teaching learning materials which were provided by GES were not kept well nor used effectively. This general picture in the Upper West region is similar to the situation in the Northern and Upper East Regions

**Table 4.5: Head Teachers' Responses on Supply of School Inputs in Urban and Rural Schools in Lawra District, Upper West**

Lawra Rural	Lawra Urban	
DA	DA	RC
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. TLM supply is inadequate and had been a long time since some were supplied (<b>Dery JHS DA</b>).</li> <li>2. Textbooks, cupboards and some instructional instruments for the teaching of mathematics are either inadequate or unavailable (<b>Tuutinli primary, DA, high</b>)</li> <li>3. The TLM supply to the school is not adequate. The last supply to the school was in 2007 according to records (<b>Balangtaa JHS, DA</b>).</li> <li>4. The supply of teaching and learning materials is not adequate, for instance the head teacher talked of Primary 6 having only one maths textbook. In the upper primary, the pupil book ratio is one textbook per four to five pupils. (<b>Yelibuori, DA, low</b>)</li> <li>5. There are no enough teaching and learning materials such as syllabus, textbooks and teaching aides. The pupil to textbook ratio for all subjects except mathematics is one book per three pupils (<b>Tuokuo, DA low</b>).</li> <li>6. There are no supplies of adequate TLMs and it even takes a long time for the school to receive the next supply. The demand of the books are very high making</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inadequate TLM. Insufficient textbooks especially English. Inadequate syllabus and maths textbooks. School received had only received exercise books, registers since 2009/2010 (<b>Dery primary DA, low</b>).</li> <li>2. TLMs are inadequate for all the classes. Inadequate supply of syllabus (<b>Dery JHS, DA</b>).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teaching and learning materials were inadequate since mathematics books were supplied over ten years ago (<b>St Gabriels primary RC, high</b>).</li> </ol>

Lawra Rural	Lawra Urban	
DA	DA	RC
the pupils pair the books in class ( <b>Kakpagyili JHS</b> )		

(Source: Head teacher interviews across sampled districts)

Focal Group Discussions with four DEO frontline Assistant Directors and Circuit Supervisors in the Jirapa District Education Office, Upper West also corroborated the head teacher views concerning the inadequate and untimely supply of core textbooks and syllabuses. In Jirapa district the logistics officer confirmed that from 2004 to 2012 supply of syllabuses and textbooks had not been consistent. However, all the rural head teachers reported, regardless of whether they were DA or RC, that not only was there an inadequacy but also the absence of teaching learning materials in the schools. The inadequacy of TLMs was apparent in both the high and low performing schools.

In Jirapa, the District Director estimated the average core textbook ratio for the primary schools to be 1:15, but noted that urban and RC schools, which had supplements from the Catholic Mission, were better served with text books. Data from the head teacher interviews corroborate the inadequate and untimely supply of core textbooks across all the six study districts where most head teachers in the majority of sampled schools reported that the core textbook ratio ranged from one book to the whole class to the ratio of 1: 4 pupils.

#### 4.4.1 Timeliness of syllabus and text book supply

The general consensus across all the head teachers interviewed in the study was that basic school inputs such as syllabuses and textbooks were not only inadequate but erratic in supply. The majority of responses from the head teachers show that the last time most schools received supplies of basic inputs was over five years ago<sup>27</sup>. Head teachers' varying views from the Upper East on the adequacy of text book supply are as follows:

*“Very bad. No more than 3 to 5 textbooks per subject. No lesson notes books and registers since the beginning of the year” (Bongo district, UE, Head teacher, Gungolgu Primary, rural, DA, high performing and non- TENI school).*

*“Poor - woefully inadequate. There are no textbooks” (Bongo district, Head teacher, Bulika primary, rural, DA, low and non project school).*

*Head teacher, Adakudugu primary (urban, RC, high, and non-project school: “Lack of adequate provision of textbooks. Reasons given include: DEO has not supplied all the needed textbooks. Poor quality covers of the textbooks reduce the life span of books. Lack of cupboards in classrooms to keep books under lock and key...” (Bongo District).*

*“Inadequate. This is because the last supply of text books was in 2008 and now they are old even though they are in use. The pages of these books are torn so reading becomes difficult” (Head teacher, Lanwana Primary, Bongo District, urban, low, DA, non-project school).*

<sup>27</sup> GES policy is to supply subject text books every five years to the schools.

*Head teacher, Chuchuliga Primary, DA, rural, low, Project school: “Inadequate supply of textbooks and TLMs. Textbooks has not been received this academic year. Syllabuses are yet to be supplied”. (Talensi-Nabdam, Upper East district)*

*Head teacher, Kpatuya primary, urban, low, DA school: ‘The school has not been supplied with text books. The syllabus has changed but textbooks that reflect the changes in the syllabus have not been supplied. Another example is that the school has 38 social studies textbooks for form 3 but there are 112 students. The books had to be rotated so that each week 38 students at a time could use the books. There is no science or Basic Design practical equipment’ (Talensi-Nabdam district).*

The table 4.6 shows Bongo district, Upper East head teacher responses to the question: **What is the teaching and learning material situation in your school with regard to the supply and demand?**

**Table 4.6: Bongo District, Upper East, Head Teacher Responses to The Adequacy and Supply of School Inputs**

District	Bongo District: Rural Schools	Bongo District: Urban Schools
<b>Bongo Q32</b> <b>What the teaching and learning material situation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Haven't received textbooks and syllabus. Only free exercise books (93 books) have been received. Each pupil got 5 each.</li> <li>2. Inadequate because books/materials have not been supplied since HT assumed position.</li> <li>3. Poor - woefully inadequate. There are no textbooks. The capitation grant has not been released.</li> <li>4. The head teacher reported that the school does not have adequate numbers of textbooks to cover all the students. For English textbooks the Textbook/pupil ratio is: JHS1 1:4; JHS2 no English textbooks; JHS3 1:2</li> <li>5. The supply of textbooks, chalk and other TLMs are not adequate. Report has already been made to the DEO but nothing has been done about it.</li> <li>6. Very bad. No more than 3 to 5 textbooks per subject per class. No lesson notes books and registers since the beginning of the year. Head had to buy these with his own money.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inadequate. This is because the last supply of text books was in 2008 and now they are old even though they are in use. The pages of these books are torn so reading becomes difficult.</li> <li>2. Lack of adequate provision of textbooks. Reasons given include: DEO has not supplied all the needed textbooks. Poor quality covers of the textbooks reduce life span of books. Lack of cupboards in classrooms to keep books under lock and key.</li> <li>3. They are woefully inadequate. Teachers have to sometimes borrow syllabus and make photocopies from other colleagues. Textbooks in the school are old and students pair to use them.</li> </ol>

The key finding from Bongo district is that the teaching learning material situation in the schools is inadequate and has likely prevented effective learning from taking place. The result shows there is no distinction between rural and urban schools. Although head teachers complained about inadequacy across almost all the regions and districts in the north, observations at the school levels confirmed that many of the heads were under utilising existing materials particularly in relation to recent Chicago school materials and NALAP materials which were often seen untouched in the Head teachers' offices. Very little evidence was gleaned from classroom observations with teachers that these materials were being used.

Another key finding from the observation and interview data suggests that the books supplied by the GES/MOE were unable to endure over the five year period and text books should be supplied on a two to three year basis given the harsh conditions of most classrooms (e.g. weather conditions, dryness, and lack of storage facilities in most schools).

#### **4.4.2 SEN learning materials**

The supply and distribution of SEN materials was virtually non-existent in all 54 schools sampled across the three northern regions. Head teachers and teachers lamented the lack of SEN learning and teaching materials in the schools. The only visible SEN related support mechanism is the presence of access ramps for SEN children in some schools (approx 18 out of 54 schools). Even in FGD with children they express the view that severe SEN children cannot learn in their schools: ‘SEN children cannot learn here because their books are not here and our school is not their school’ (Upper West and Northern).

#### **4.4.3 Timeliness of the syllabus and text book distribution**

The general picture in all six districts as shown in tables 9 to 14 is the same: School input supplies were inadequate in terms of assisting teachers ensure a 1:1 book pupil ratio particularly in the core subject areas. The annual periodic text book supplies and coverage across the sampled schools ranged from 10% to 20%. Table 7 shows the number of schools per district reporting receipt of mathematics syllabus as per year supplied. The Ministry of Education has a policy of supplying school inputs every five years. The last time the Ministry supplied large scale textbook inputs was in **2004** therefore one would expect new supplies in 2009. However, the general picture shows an erratic supply and receipt of all the core subject syllabuses (mathematics and English).

The overall findings from the classroom observation across the 86 classrooms suggest that very few teachers were using the syllabus in order to teach their subject areas. Most classroom teachers observed taught directly from the text book provided to the school; where teachers did manage to borrow a syllabus, this syllabus was likely from either 2004 or 2008. Interviews with teachers suggest that very few had access to the latest syllabus which was released in 2010 by the MOE and sent out to all the districts on CD ROM. The head teacher checklist data suggest that the schools have been mainly functioning on syllabi which was provided in 2004 or 2008 which means that the text books which have been supplied more recently do not conform to the syllabus which the teachers are using to guide their classroom instruction. See Annex 3J for the number of schools per district which reported receipt of their Maths syllabus from 2004 to 2012.

For the non-TENI project district schools a majority (48%) of schools acknowledged receipt of mathematics syllabus before 2004. In 2008, 22% acknowledged the receipt of the mathematic syllabus. For the TENI project schools and districts the majority of schools (52%) received supplies of their mathematics syllabus before 2004. Less than 10% of the schools (9%) reported receipt of their mathematics syllabus in 2007. The overall picture shows that only 50% of all schools in both project and non TENI districts and schools took delivery of mathematics syllabus before 2004 and only 11% received the supplies in 2007 and 2009. As compared to the supply of English syllabus the situation is not different (see table below on English syllabus).

Table 4.7 shows the number of schools per district reporting receipt of English syllabus as per year supplied.

**Table 4.7: Number of Schools per District Reporting Receipt of English Syllabus as Per Year Delivered**

PROJECT TYPE	Year delivered ⇒	Before 2004	2004	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Non- TENI	Bongo	5	1	2	0	1	0			0	9
	East Mamprusi	8	0	0	0	0	1			0	9
	Lawra	1	0	0	2	4	1			1	9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>14 (52%)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5(19%)</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>27</b>
TENI	Jirapa	6		0	2		1	0	0	0	9
	Talensi-Nabdam	4		2	2		0	0	1	0	9
	West Mamprusi	2		0	1		4	1	0	1	9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12(44%)</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>5(19%)</b>		<b>5(19%)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>27</b>
		<b>26(48%)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7(13%)</b>	<b>5(9%)</b>	<b>7(13%)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>54</b>

(Source based on Research Sample of School Head teacher Data)

The general picture shows an inconsistent supply and receipt of English syllabuses. For the non-project schools a majority of 52% acknowledge receipt of English syllabus before 2004. After 2004 the next highest receipt was acknowledged in 2008 and this was less than 20% of the schools. For the TENI project schools and districts the majority of 44% received supplies of the English syllabus before 2004. Less than 20% of the schools (19%) reported receipt of the English syllabus in 2007 and 2009. The overall picture shows that only 48% of all schools in both project and non project districts received the English syllabus before 2004 and only 13% received the supplies in 2007 and 2009.

Annex 4L shows the number of schools per district reporting receipt of Ghanaian Language syllabus as per year supplied. As with the English and mathematics delivery the general picture for Ghanaian language is better though it is also erratic. For the non-project schools a majority of 59% schools acknowledge receipt of Ghanaian Language syllabus before 2004. In 2007, 11% of the schools were supplied and in 2009 and 19% acknowledged receipt of the Ghanaian Language syllabus. For the TENI project districts and schools the majority of 63% received supplies of Ghanaian Language syllabus before 2004 and in 2002 and 2009 school acknowledging delivery numbered 15%. The overall picture shows that only 61% of all schools in both project and non

project districts and schools had taken delivery of the Ghanaian Language syllabus before 2004 and only 13% and 11% had respectively received supplies in 2007 and 2009. The irregular supply is not different for all three subjects of English, mathematics and Ghanaian Language.

The details of the text book supplies to the school are provided in Annex 4L for English, Maths and Ghanaian Language. Table 4.8 shows the number of schools per district reporting receipt of English textbooks as per year delivered.

**Table 4.8: Number of Schools per District Reporting Receipt of English Textbooks as Per Year Delivered**

PROJECT TYPE	Year delivered ⇒	Before 2005	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Non- TENI	Bongo	4	1	1		2	1		0	0	9
	East Mamprusi	7	0	0		0	1		1	0	9
	Lawra	0	0	0		3	5		0	1	9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11(41%)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>5(19%)</b>	<b>7(26%)</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>27</b>
TENI	Jirapa	6	0		0	1	1	0		1	9
	Talensi-Nabdam	3	3		2	1	0	0		0	9
	West Mamprusi	3	0		1	0	3	1		1	9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12(44%)</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4(15%)</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>27</b>
Grand	Total	<b>23(43%)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11(20%)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>54</b>

The overall finding shows most schools (43%) receiving supplies of English textbooks before 2005. The next major delivery was in 2009 where only 20% of the schools were covered. In 2009 the non project districts had 26% of schools covered as against 15% of the project schools. The project districts had slightly more schools taking delivery of English textbooks as against the non project schools.

Annex 4L shows the number of schools per district reporting receipt of mathematics textbooks as per year supplied. The general picture shows an unpredictable supply and receipt of mathematics textbooks. Interestingly in both the project and non project schools 44% had taken delivery of mathematics textbooks before 2002. The overall picture is the same as in the project and non-project schools with a majority of 44% of schools agreeing that they had received supplies of mathematics textbooks. In 2009 when a major supply was expected, only 22% of the schools acknowledged receipt of the mathematics textbooks.

Annex 4L shows the number of schools per district reporting receipt of GL textbooks as per year delivered. The overall finding reveals that most schools (67%) received supplies of GL textbooks before 2004. The results depict the lack of supplies of Ghanaian Language textbooks after 2004. Seventy percent of non project districts schools claim not to have received any Ghanaian

Language textbook after 2004. The supply for Lawra district seem to suggest that the distribution before 2004 did not cover all the schools in the district as only one school had supplies before 2004. After 2004 supplies to the district were inconsistent and covered only about 10% of the schools in 2008 and 2009. In the project schools most schools (63%) received their supplies before 2004.

Head teachers' views on sustainability and durability of school inputs shows that generally the supply of text books was not sustained over the years and there are gaps in the school supply system. The supply is incoherent and unpredictable. Before 2004, for most input about 40% of the head teacher reported receipt of school inputs, whether syllabi or textbooks. In subsequent years, up to 2013 there was not a single year where over 10% took delivery of any supplies. The head teachers noted that they could not sustain teacher and pupils' demand since the supply of textbooks each year was not adequate. Demand could not be sustained for two main reasons. The first is the shortfalls in supply and the second is the poor quality binding for both the syllabi and textbooks. Besides these two main reasons the head teachers also explained that as a result of the textbook ratio, many children in the classroom have to use the same book leading to the books deterioration within two to three years. They argued that with one child one book, pupils could be held accountable for books they were supplied. In that way the life span of the textbook was longer, but with an average of 5 pupils sharing one book, it was difficult to hold any individual accountable and the books lifespan was reduced. Similarly, the teacher syllabi ratio was very poor and their lifespan was also limited due to the usage by several teachers

#### **4.5 Quality of Education interventions and support by Government, Donors across the study Districts**

Over the last 25 years Ghana has launched several programmes to improve the quality of education particularly at the primary level of education. A historic study mapping all these interventions (Casely-Hayford, 2008) suggested that Ghana has received several opportunities to improve the quality of the primary education and instructional practices of teachers in the delivery of basic education. USAID, DfID and UNICEF have led on interventions which have supported improvements in the Education sector through multimillion USD supported programmes. Some of these nationwide programmes supported through donor assistance include:

- SIF: the World Bank Support for improving Programme
- QUIPS: Quality Improvement Programme in Primary Schools
- EQUALL: The Education Quality for All programme
- Support to Teaching Learning Materials Project (TLMP):
- NALAP: The National Accelerated Literacy Programme

Most recently the Ghana Government in 2010 took the best practices of several of these programmes to launch its own programme to reform early grade reading at the KG to P3 level through the support of USAID and based on the experience of improving quality education in Primary education (EQUALL). The National Accelerated Literacy Programme (NALAP) was a nationwide effort to assist teachers to improve on their instructional practices and for schools to modify their approach to teaching basic literacy skills through a bilingual education approach at

lower primary. The programme was designed by some of the most internationally renowned experts along with Ghanaian experts to improve the teaching of literacy at lower primary. Building on the ASTEP programme and EQUALL Break through to Literacy (BTL) approaches to improving literacy instructional practice in Ghanaian Classrooms, the government was able to develop the NALAP programme<sup>28</sup>. Unfortunately the findings from this current study suggest there was very little “take up” of the programme by the teaching force and districts in three northern regions of the country.

NALAP was developed to ensure quality bilingual literacy instruction to all primary school learners; the Ministry of Education (MOE) in collaboration with USAID rapidly developed bilingual literacy curriculum materials in 11 Ghanaian languages for kindergarten through grade three (EQUALL, 2009). A concentrated and multi-level training programme was designed to support the introduction of NALAP. The NALAP training programme was coupled with a public advocacy campaign designed to increase and sustain public awareness and support for NALAP and for GL literacy instruction in general (Seidu 2010). The public advocacy campaign was launched in November 2009 at an event where high level representatives of the MOE and GES endorsed the programme and urged all education stakeholders; parents, teachers and teacher associations, assembly men and women, politicians and other stakeholders to contribute to its success. The hope was that NALAP would provide a realistic solution to the problem of local language literacy development in Ghana. Unfortunately, the programme was not firmly embedded in the school cycle of literacy before the main donor USAID programme funding came to an end.

The overall finding from this study is that two thirds of schools in the Upper West and Northern regions were aware of the NALAP programme compared to only one school in the Upper East. Very few classroom teachers were aware of the NALAP programme despite the evidence presented from the head teacher interviews. Classroom observation evidence suggests that less than 5% of the classroom observed were using any aspect of the NALAP programme (e.g. teacher guides or teaching learning materials). Only one or two classrooms were using the NALAP books but they were unable to carry out the approach systematically (guided by the teachers guide). Interviews across the schools particularly with the head teacher suggest that heads were not able to sustain the NALAP methods and were not confident in using the methodology since they had been trained over two years ago (in 2010). The findings from QuE study suggest that the training and material resources which went into the country’s support for a large scale quality improvement (NALAP) were lost due to the lack of supervision, support and “handholding” to fully embed and allow the programme to take root in the school system. This was also partly a result of the transfer of trained teachers and the lack of strong head teacher leadership to ensure that the programme was ongoing and implemented at school level.

Table 4.9 below shows the rural/urban distribution of the number of schools aware of the NALAP programme by project and non project district schools. The overall results shows that 29 (53.7%) of head teachers were still not aware of the programme four years after it has been introduced in all schools. This lack of the awareness of the programme in itself is a testimony of

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<sup>28</sup> NALAP is a comprehensive, national strategy to support the use of Ghanaian Language from Kindergarten through grade three (P3) as a foundation for English literacy which the MOE launched in 2010.

the level of impact it had in schools. Of the 46.3% of head teacher who were aware of the NALAP programme less than 20% of them were actively using the NALAP materials. The Ghanaian language NALAP materials were available in most of the sampled schools, yet in some schools where the materials were available the head teachers were not aware that the materials were locked up in the trunk boxes in which they were delivered.

**Table 4.9: Cross Tabulation of Awareness of NALAP by District, Community and Project Types**

Districts	# of school not aware of NALAP		# of school aware of NALAP		Total	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Bongo	6	2	0	1	6	3
East Mamprusi	4	1	2	2	6	3
Lawra	2	1	4	2	6	3
Jirapa	2	1	4	2	6	3
Talensi-Nabdam	6	3	0	0	6	3
West Mamprusi	0	1	6	2	6	3
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>20 (55.6%)</b>	<b>9 (50%)</b>	<b>16 (44.4%)</b>	<b>9 (50%)</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>18</b>
	<b>29 (53.7%)</b>		<b>25 (46.3%)</b>		<b>54</b>	

(Based on Head teacher interviews and checklist across all sampled schools)

The challenges of the NALAP programme and its implementation across the country reflect a typical example of why literacy programmes which attempt to improve the quality of education rarely take root at school and district levels. The NALAP implementation study suggests that the programme would require long term support from central government in order to be fully embraced by head teachers and district education offices particularly after the donor financing was completed. Unfortunately, the year after the donor completed financing the programme, the Ministry of Education did not push for budgetary provision to sustain the programme which meant limited training and monitoring could be conducted (AESP Report, 2011/12).

#### **4.5.1 Donor/NGO project support to quality education across the sampled schools**

Knowledge of head teachers regarding the donor/NGO programmes operating in their schools revealed varied understanding of the programmes; there were also varied levels of involvement by external agencies operating in the districts yet all the six districts had donor and NGO interventions in the Education sector. Some districts had more Donor/NGO project support than others. Although all regions and districts have Donor/NGO project support, the Upper East had the largest number of head teachers aware of NGO programmes operating in their districts. Table 4.10 below reveals that there was more Donor/NGO project support across the sampled schools in Bongo (10) compared to the other five districts. Bongo head teachers were aware of several programmes operating in their schools which were closely followed by Talensi-Nabdam (8) and Jirapa (6) District in the Upper West. Lawra head teachers were aware of at least three donor/NGO's operating programmes in the Education sector and East Mamprusi has two NGO/Donor funded programmes. Jirapa in the Upper West and West Mamprusi in the Northern Region each have six. Interestingly, the only district without knowledge of NALAP is Talensi-Nabdam.

**Table 4.10: Head teacher Awareness concerning Donor /NGO project support across the Study Districts**

Bongo, Upper East	Talensi-Nabdam (TENI)	East Mamprusi	West Mamprusi (TENI)	Lawra	Jirapa (TENI)
Afrikids	Afrikids	NALAP	CAMFED		TENI
CAMFED	World Vision	PAGE	NORREP	NALAP	Chicago Books
EQUALL	Link Community Development		MIDA	TCAI	Let's Read
HIV ALERT	TENI		TENI		
ISODEC	Chicago Books		NALAP		NALAP
German Friends	UNICEF Child Friendly		PAGE		UNICEF Child Friendly
Leadership for Learning					
PAGE				PAGE	PAGE
NALAP	NALAP				
GRAIL		GRAIL	GRAIL		GRAIL
EQUALL/US AID	EQUALL	EQUALL			

(Based on Head teacher Interviews and analysis)

The major factor that accounted for the limited difference in learning outcomes and quality between TENI and Non TENI districts was the presence of other Donor/NGO projects that provided similar provisions and in-service training (see table 4.11 for more details on Donor/NGO operating in both TENI and NON TENI districts and activities engaged in by donor/NGO projects in the six districts). The majority of districts were receiving teaching learning materials and in service training support by the NGO providers.

**Table 4.11: How These Programmes Contributed to Improving Quality Education at School Level Based on Head Teacher Interviews**

Region	NGO/ Intervention	Activities as reported by Headteachers
NORTHERN	CAMFED	Provided some textbooks Provided some uniforms, bags and exercise books for girls. General support to enable girls' retention and completion
	MiDA	Provide classroom blocks, toilets and urinals.
	NALAP	Provides textbooks for the lower primary. Organises INSET for lower primary teachers.
	School for Life	Students in the school pass through School for Life before being enrolled in the school.

Region	NGO/ Intervention	Activities as reported by Headteachers
	TENI	Gender clubs set up and mentoring Provide training for teachers Support community clubs for gender Train PTA/SMC. Provide training for teachers.
UPPER EAST	AFRIKIDS	Provide sandals to pupils Organise clubs for pupils and provide these clubs with books.
	CAMFED	Community sensitization Support for mother/parent groups. Provide schools with computers and wiring School Safety Net fund for Boys and Girls in Lower Primary Safer Net Fund for Girls in JHS.
	ARCDEP	Provide reproductive health education Form clubs in schools.
	EQUALL.	Provide "take home ration".
	German Friends (Donors)	Provide materials and support to school.
	ISODEC	Food ration programme
	PAGE	Organizes workshops and seminars for SMC/PTA community members, chiefs to sensitize them on their roles in delivery of quality education. Provides education to executive members of PTA on how to prepare Action Plan for the school.
	TENI	Support with our SPAM. Facilitate organisation of INSET for Headteachers and Curriculum Leaders. in English, Science and Maths and how to handle pupils particularly girls and pupils with SEN in Lower Primary LINK Community build urinals for school Supply mathematics and science text books
UPPER WEST	World Vision	Provide polytanks, uniforms, basins, cupboards, and other school materials Support construction of school garden. Link girls with pen pals Recruit community volunteer teachers Organise training for teachers.
	NALAP	Provide learning materials on literacy to encourage the use of the L1 to aid understanding of concepts at the lower primary. Train teachers
	PAGE	Organise workshops to train teachers in classroom monitoring in checking exercise books and other activities that go on in the school. Organise INSETS for Head Teachers on school administration and management. Train SMC in school management Organise teacher/community durbars.
	TCAI	Provide school with TLMs. Organise INSETS on child centred teaching methods.

Region	NGO/ Intervention	Activities as reported by Headteachers
	TENI	Support organisation of examinations for pupils Workshops for Head Teachers Involve communities in school development and discuss education quality issues with PTA. Provide guidance to SMC/PTA support to school. Organise follow up meetings and regular visits. Support women's groups in the community with soft loans to improve upon their businesses.

(Based on Head teacher interviews across the 6 study districts – expanded version in Annex 4B)

## 4.6 Head teacher leadership and Management

Head teacher leadership is an important ingredient for promoting quality teaching and learning in school. The head teacher as a leader has the essential role of ensuring that effective and efficient teaching and learning are taking place in the school. Head teacher leadership therefore involves practices s/he undertakes that encourages educational achievement. As learning achievement is the major focus of the school, head teacher leadership are actions that the head teacher takes, or delegates to others to promote growth in student learning. The head teacher's leadership should therefore make learning quality the top priority of the school.

Following on from this definition of head teacher leadership the question to ask is whether head teachers' practices in the sample schools reflect this concern. School based observations across the 54 schools suggest that there were less than six head teachers who demonstrated a knowledge, interest and capacity to put in place systems, approaches and incentives to ensuring their schools reached the level of a basic "learning environment" in which teachers were using instructional time effectively and demonstrating child centred approaches to teaching. School based observation data was focused on the level in which head teachers were able to manage their schools in the early hours of the morning and set a pattern of discipline within the teaching force to ensure that they were in their classrooms at the designated time and that the materials they needed were properly in place to commence classes; this meant that the heads often had to facilitate this process by ensuring strong disciplinary practices were in place, by setting an example for other teachers and facilitating a model of teaching for teachers who were going against the school's code of conduct.

Observations of the school climate in terms of head teacher conduct, teacher attitudes and head teacher's responses to teacher and student behaviour does not support a high learning environment across the vast majority of schools visited. Most head teachers looked on unconcerned when teachers were absent, wasted or misused instructional time, or were unprepared for the classroom. Of the 54 schools sampled there were only two instances where the head teachers had put in place a school level mechanism to check the wastage and misuse of instructional time. In St. Kambali JHS, Jirapa, Upper West, the head teacher had designed a checklist to monitor teachers' use of instructional time, with columns for the class prefect and subject teacher to countersign. The system was used to monitor teachers on arrival in class, time teacher spent teaching, time teachers left class, assignments given and evidence of marking. The other school was Adakudugu JHS, Bongo, where the head teacher had a mechanism for pupils

(the class prefect) to report teacher presence in class and effectiveness in teaching. Both schools were Catholic Unit Junior High Schools.

Head teachers' leadership in most of the remaining sampled schools is best described as collaborators in the scheme to misuse instructional time. The majority of the head teachers neither queried nor even checked their teachers' use of instructional time nor appeared concerned about the high level of absenteeism and lateness of the teaching force. In Dery DA primary, Lawra the research team observed that while the team was around studying the school, one of the teachers rode his motor bike in and out of the school and did not stay in the school or taught a lesson during the presence of the researchers. We also observed that this teacher had entered the wrong time in the teacher attendance register. Although he arrived at nearly 9.00 AM (8.50AM) he signed "7.00am" in the teacher attendance register. We also observed that his P5 class pupils had not been attended to the whole day while we were there. During the focal group interview with pupils in another classroom in the same school, pupils revealed that they had not been taught by any teacher in the school for the last four days. The pupils also explained that their class teacher was attending a funeral but their teacher was often absent. Neither did the head confront the teacher nor attend to this class even though there were extra two teachers in the school. The head neither moved out of her class nor checked the presence of teachers in their classes during the researchers' visit.

Several other examples across schools in the Northern Region particularly indicate that head teachers were often not at post to ensure high leadership qualities to the rest of the teaching force. The lateness of head teachers themselves and the lack of consistency in their attendance rates at school undermined their ability to take on the role of disciplinary when dealing with other teachers in their schools.

In most of the 54 schools observed, head teacher's leadership role was reduced to vetting teachers' lesson notes, recording incidences of the school in the logbook, liaising with the DEO and SMC and performing other administrative functions (i.e. capitation grant facilitation). No head teachers were seen by the research team conducting any form of lesson observation of other teachers, ensuring teachers were on task and only a few head teachers interviewed made the claim that they were conducting classroom observation of other teachers as part of their supervision role. There was very little evidence from teacher interviews or observation at the D/A schools that head teachers were actively observing other teachers in their schools. Some of the head teachers during interviews could not remember the subject lesson timetable and were obviously not following nor ensuring that this daily timetable for lessons was adhered to by the teaching force. The focus of head teacher leadership in the majority of D/A schools was not ensuring or promoting the goal of "effective learning".

#### **4.6.1 School management**

Effective collaboration between education authorities and the school community greatly improved pupil retention, teacher attitude to work, and teacher attendance, regularity and punctuality. It also improves pupil learning outcomes and teacher/ pupil use of instructional time, school/community relations and increased access to schooling. In Ghana PTAs and SMCs are the key school level structures charged with supporting school authorities in school

management at the school level. Daako, (2000) found that functional PTAs/SMCs greatly improved access and quality education in Ghanaian schools.

Although head teacher views on functionality of SMCs in the current study suggest that most SMCs are not functional it contradicts researchers' observation and interviews with PTA/SMCs themselves. At very short notice, PTAs and SMCs responded to invitations for FGD with team of researchers in all 54 school communities regardless of community or school type. The study found that most PTA/SMCs were not assertive in demanding quality education for their children. The study also found that the few who were assertive did not receive cooperation from teachers, head teachers, education authorities and the District Assembly. In FGD with SMCs, Chiefs and elders at Dery primary, Lawra it came to light that the PTAs attempt at calling the SMC to order with regard to the use of capitation grants for their school did not receive support at the DEO and the District Assembly. In several schools parents' complaints of teacher harassment and abuse of girls were ignored by the district education authorities. In many of the communities visited, the PTA/SMC and parents had given up on trying to solve their problems with teachers, head teachers and district circuit supervisors and did not know where to take their problems with relating to high teacher absenteeism rates and recalcitrant head teachers.

With respect to PTA/SMC collaboration with head teachers and staff in the management of schools the study found evidence to suggest that collaboration was very high in spite of head teacher opinions that there was limited cooperation. FGD with teachers, parents, PTA/SMCs and chief and elders were all unanimous in claiming that parents cooperated with school staff to promote discipline, pupil access, attendance, retention, and attitude to learning. PTA/SMC also supported schools with infrastructure, teacher accommodation, payment of community volunteer teacher stipends, pupils basic school needs etc. Some SMCs helped educate their parents on how to monitor pupil achievement and on the parents' roles and responsibilities towards their children in school. Some district education officers report that they had educated PTAs and SMCs on their roles and responsibilities towards the school and CS's had chaired SPAM meetings to discuss learning achievement scores using PMTs and their challenges.

#### **4.6.2 Head teacher support to Teachers**

Head teacher support in terms of professional development of the teacher is essential for quality education delivery. Even where schools are staffed with professional teachers it is still necessary to organise refresher workshops to update the knowledge and skills of the teachers. Therefore in school communities with almost 40% of the teachers being untrained, it become imperative that these untrained teachers are given guidance to orient them into the profession and to lessen challenges they are likely to face in the classroom. The head teacher was often charged with this responsibility of providing professional development support for all groups of teachers: whether trained or untrained. The Ghana Education Service has made provision to ensure that continuous professional development of teachers is not overlooked by making sure that the capitation grants can be utilised to include support for school and cluster based INSETs. Head teacher interviews suggest that the majority of the 54 schools organise SBI and CBI for teachers in their schools. However, the majority of teachers in FGD with teachers discredited the head teacher claims. In all three regions head teachers also claimed that they provided teachers teaching and learning materials to prepare learning materials and write their lesson notes, yet many teachers who had not written their lesson notes complained of lack of teaching resources.

The general findings based on the head teacher interviews from the majority of schools was there was very limited organisation of school based in-service for teachers and head teachers were not facilitating the systematic usage of teaching learning materials for lesson preparation. Virtually all schools regardless of the school or community type (rural or urban) made these allegations. Most head teachers in both rural and urban schools alleged that they observe teachers teach and organise post observation discussions. In rural non TENI schools other head teacher support activities include:

- i. Organizing orientation seminar for newly posted teachers.
- ii. Weekly review and discussion of teachers' lesson notes
- iii. Provide welfare services to motivate teachers to work hard

There were only slight variations across the three regions of the country. Two interesting observations in the Northern Region generally are that head teachers encouraged their teachers to access Distance Education courses and that head teachers were also involved in encouraging teachers' use of child labour.

Similarly, what was observed in the TENI districts with regards to head teacher support for teachers was not different from that observed in the Non- TENI districts. Table 16 shows different types of support head teachers give to teachers in Non-TENI districts and table 4.12 shows that for TENI districts.

**Table 4.12: Head Teacher Support to Teachers in TENI Districts**

District	Rural	Urban
Talensi Nabdram	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organisation of school based INSET.</li> <li>2. Weekly review and discussion of teachers' lesson notes</li> <li>3. Support teachers who have problems in lesson delivery.</li> <li>4. Observe teachers teach in Class.</li> <li>5. Provide teachers materials for lesson preparation (Trs.' note books and pens).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organise INSET for teachers on preparation of lesson notes, teaching methods particularly science and maths</li> </ol>
West Mamprusi	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organise School / cluster -based INSET to improve writing of lesson plans and schemes of work</li> <li>2. Weekly review and discussion of teachers' lesson notes</li> <li>3. Provide teachers materials for lesson preparation and delivery (Trs.' note books, manila boards and pens).</li> <li>4. Organise monthly meetings to solve their problems.</li> <li>5. Observe teachers teach and organise post observation discussion</li> <li>6. Help commuting teachers with transportation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organise cluster/School-based INSET to improve writing of lesson plans and schemes of work</li> <li>2. Provide teachers materials for lesson preparation and delivery (Trs.' note books, manila boards and pens).</li> <li>3. Provide access to Distance Education for teachers.</li> <li>4. Source for external support from past students and NGOs</li> </ol>
Jirapa	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organise School-based INSET to improve writing of lesson plans and schemes of work</li> <li>2. Provide teachers materials for lesson preparation and delivery (Trs.' note books, manila boards and pens).</li> <li>3. Provide welfare services to motivate teachers to work hard.</li> <li>4. Observe teachers teach and organise post observation discussion.</li> <li>5. Encourage teachers to work hard.</li> <li>6. Sourcing for textbooks from other sister schools for teachers to use</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organise School-based INSET to improve writing of lesson plans and schemes of work</li> <li>2. Observe teachers teach and organise post observation discussion</li> <li>3. Discuss challenges observed in lesson notes preparation and delivery.</li> <li>4. Motivate teachers during staff meetings.</li> <li>5. Supply teachers TLMs.</li> </ol>

(Based on Head teacher interviews across the 6 study districts)

Based on a comparison between tables 4.12 and 4.13 there was no clear difference in relation to TENI and Non-TENI districts head teacher's claims on the type of support they provided their teachers. Similarly, there was no difference in terms of the school, community type.

**Table 4.13: Head Teacher Support to Teachers in Non-Teni Districts**

<b>District</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>
<b>Bongo</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organise School-based INSET to improve writing of lesson plans and schemes of work.</li> <li>2. Organise orientation seminar for newly posted teachers.</li> <li>3. Weekly review and discussion of teachers' lesson notes</li> <li>4. HT advises teachers.</li> <li>5. Supply of teaching/learning resources such as chalk etc.</li> <li>6. Demonstrate effective lesson delivery for teachers with difficulties.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organise School-based INSET to improve writing of lesson plans and schemes of work.</li> <li>2. Observe teachers teach and organise post observation discussion</li> <li>3. Teach some classes and mark their exercises when teachers are absent.</li> <li>4. Shares lessons from workshops with teachers</li> <li>5. Provide materials for teachers to prepare TLMs</li> <li>6. Invite resource persons from GES to help with SBI.</li> </ol>
<b>Lawra</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organise School-based INSET to improve writing of lesson plans and schemes of work</li> <li>2. Weekly review and discussion of teachers' lesson notes</li> <li>3. Observe teachers teach and organise post observation discussion.</li> <li>4. Provide welfare services to motivate teachers to work hard.</li> <li>5. Provide teachers materials for lesson preparation and delivery (Trs.' note books, manila boards and pens).</li> <li>6. Support and encourage teachers to attend non-school based workshop</li> <li>7. Contract external examining bodies to conduct examination for pupils in the school</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organise School-based INSET to improve writing of lesson plans and schemes of work</li> <li>2. Provide teachers materials for lesson preparation and delivery (Trs.' note books, manila boards and pens).</li> <li>3. Oriented newly trained teachers posted to the school.</li> <li>4. Observe teachers teach and organise post observation discussion</li> <li>5. Provide welfare services to motivate teachers to work hard</li> <li>6. Commended and encourage good teacher performance</li> </ol>
<b>East Mamprusi</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organise School-based INSET to improve writing of lesson plans and schemes of work</li> <li>2. Provide welfare services to motivate teachers (parents levy to motivate teachers).</li> <li>3. Encourage teacher use of child labour ("pupils help teachers on their farms).</li> <li>4. Observe teachers teach and organise post observation discussion</li> <li>5. Encourage SMC/PTA support for teachers (community school farm).</li> <li>6. Community supply of three volunteer teachers.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organise School-based INSET to improve writing of lesson plans and schemes of work</li> <li>2. Provide teachers materials for lesson preparation and delivery (Trs.' note books, manila boards and pens).</li> <li>3. Observe teachers teach and organise post observation discussion</li> <li>4. Provide materials for teachers to prepare TLMs</li> </ol>

## 4.7 Teacher Time on Task

Central to quality education delivery and the issue of head teacher leadership/management is the issue of time on task. Teacher contact hours were crucial in determining the level of learning outcomes. Evidence from classroom observation reports, follow up interviews with teachers and observers' observations reveal that teacher time on task was poor across the 54 sample schools with only a few exceptions in schools within the six districts with strong head teacher leadership; the average contact hours of teachers per classroom per day ranged from about 2 hour to 2.5 hours per teacher<sup>29</sup>. Instructional time was lost in the sampled schools mainly through: teacher absenteeism, lateness, unpreparedness to teach, and poor pedagogy. While some teachers spent very little time on lessons (well below the prescribed time limit) others used more time than allocated on the time table for one lesson thereby missing out instructional time for other lessons. While eight subjects are expected to be taught daily on the school time table in most schools teachers taught only one, two or at most three lessons a day... this was confirmed during the

<sup>29</sup> World Bank Study (2010) suggests that average time on task in Ghana is approx. 2.5.

exercise book scrutiny. The lack of multi grade teaching mixed with high teacher absenteeism rates meant that several children would not receive more than one or two hours of instructional practice per day. The only variations were in catholic mission schools which were situated in urban centres or in a few cases where the head teachers were strong leaders.

#### **4.7.1 Loss of instructional time**

The debate on loss of instructional time in Ghanaian schools has been a long standing one. Many researchers have observed the problem of loss of instructional time in Ghanaian schools (See Seidu and Adzahlie-Mensah, 2010; Pryor & Ampiah, (2003); Casely-Hayford, 2000; Fobih, et al. 1999; Akyeampong, et al. 1999 and Quansah, 1997). Concerned about misuse of instructional time the President's Committee on Education Review (2002) considered the management of break/play time as critical to management of instructional time. Similarly, this study, concerned about instructional time, incorporated questions on the subject in the questionnaires used for data collection. The field researchers were also directed to keenly study the school situation with regard to instructional time management and usage. Reports from observers' observations, interview with head teachers, FGDs with parents, pupils, PTA/SMCs and Chief/elders and community members in the schools revealed that instructional time was woefully misused in all 54 schools regardless of community or school type.

The study found that the main factor contributing to the misuse of instructional time by teachers was the poor attitude to work by teachers across the majority of sampled schools. In the majority of schools most teachers' attendance was highly irregular and sometimes systems of absenteeism were entrenched and manipulated by the teaching force themselves. For instance, in some schools a system of rotation for teachers to absent themselves was in place in which some teachers knew they were off on Monday and Friday while others were off on Tuesday and Thursday. Teachers used several excuses to absent themselves from school (sickness, attending to family issues such as bereavement etc; attending distance education programmes, meetings/seminars/workshops and commuting long distances). Community members became used to the fact that if a teacher resided in a district capital over 5 kms from their community, they could expect that the teacher would not be regularly at their school more than three out of five days per week.

The Research team also found that teacher records of attendance were no reflection of the reality of attendance at a school. Teachers in the Northern Region, apart from arriving late and recording times depicting that they were punctual, sometimes phoned in to their colleagues to sign the time book to avoid their names coming under the head teacher's red underlining mark indicating lateness. Weak school management also contributed to the aggravation of the challenge of misuse of instructional time. Head teachers besides being themselves often late to school, shielded teachers who absented themselves without permission. There were no queries or sanctions from head teachers to teachers for not being in class and head teachers were themselves perpetrators of the misuse of instructional hours. For example, in the Upper West Region the team of researchers was shocked when they arrived at Kpaguri DA primary to find pupils by themselves learning in class without a single teacher in school. Later the head teacher explained that he had gone to the district education office to collect supplies and the other teachers had left for distance education classes. Interestingly, the reasons the absentee teachers

themselves gave contradicted the head teacher, yet there were no records in the school log book to show the whereabouts of either the head or the teachers.

The team observed a large number of students during instructional hours heading out of the school and community. A chat with the students revealed that the head teacher had closed down the JHS1 and 2 classes in order for the students to assist him harvest groundnuts on his farm (peanuts). The assistant head teacher whom we met at the school first tried to protect the head teacher by claiming that the students were going to the school farm but when we confronted the assistant head with the bare facts he then started to reason out that he and the other teachers only had the information about the head teacher's directive from the students that morning. At an FGD with chiefs and elders while the community members were overexcited and willing to expose teacher's misuse of instructional time the chief himself was pleading with them not to expose the teachers. It later turned out that the head teacher who had sent the students to his farm was the chief's son. In other words, head teachers, teachers and community members are all aware of the challenge of misuse of instructional time, yet very few head teachers appeared ready to make changes to the situation.

Evidence does suggest that the vast majority of SMC's and communities wanted to see a substantial change in relation to teacher absenteeism but they were no longer aware of where to send their complaints and seek action since the DEO had not been effective in addressing their problems with teachers. Another management challenge at school level is head teachers' awareness of teachers not teaching the prescribed number of lessons for a day and also giving pupils inadequate numbers of exercises, yet they were unable to address the problem. For example, at Dery primary in the Upper West we observed a class that had not been attended to for four days. Interview with the pupils revealed that the head teacher did not facilitate other teachers to help teach the class and had not checked on the students to see what they were doing in four days.

FDG with PTA/SMC and interview with head teachers revealed that in several communities where SMC's had complained about their teachers not using instruction hours effectively or habitually absenting themselves from schools they were told by the heads and DEO officers that their only trained teachers would be transferred and they might not receive another "trained teacher" for a very long time. Community members were themselves scared of these threats since some communities had experienced this and their schools were almost shut down so they learned to be quiet. The following section reviews the data from the three northern regions of the country on loss of instructional time.

#### **4.7.2 Loss of instructional time in the Upper West Region**

Tables 21, 22, 23 24 and 25 show evidence of loss of instructional time in the Upper West Region. Based on the evidence from observers' notes on the 29 lessons observed in the Upper West Region, 22 of the teachers were judged to have used instructional time well. Of those 23 there were 2 teachers who took short phone calls, another spent a short time sharpening pencils, another left the classroom briefly and another carried on the lesson past the time at which the timetable indicated the lesson should have finished. In the remaining 6 lessons the teachers were on task but there was some other factor identified. These factors included: marking the register,

copying the reading passage on to the chalkboard for a reading lesson and waiting for the pupils to finish copying notes from the previous lesson so that the teacher could clean the chalkboard and begin the lesson. One teacher was late to class. One lesson was rushed and therefore did not use the full span of timetabled time for the lesson and another extended the lesson over several periods and the break time. Table 4.14 shows the summary break down of use of instructional hours in the Upper West Region disaggregated according to school context, teacher type, and lesson. However, there is no indication that there is any significant difference in instructional time behaviour between across the contexts.

**Table 4.14: Summary of Evidence of Use of Instructional Time in Upper West Region**

		Marking register	Time copying text	Too long	Good timing	Late to class	Good short time sharpening pencils	Good went over time	Good short phone	Waited for pupils to finish copying notes	Good but left class	Too short	Good short phone call & talk to ht	Totals
Jirapa	Urban	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Jirapa	Rural	0	0	0	7	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	10
Lawra	Urban	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	5
Lawra	Rural	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	9
Totals		1	1	1	18	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	29
Jirapa	High	1	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Jirapa	Low	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
Lawra	High	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
Lawra	Low	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	6
Totals		1	1	1	13	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	23
Jirapa	RC	1	1	1	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Jirapa	DA	0	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
Lawra	RC	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Lawra	DA	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	12
Totals		1	1	1	18	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	29
Jirapa	Trained	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	11
Jirapa	Pupil teacher	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Jirapa	CVT	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Lawra	Trained	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	12
Lawra	Pupil teacher	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Lawra	CVT	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Totals		1	1	1	18	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	29
UPPER WEST	English Reading	0	1	1	4	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	9
UPPER WEST	Dagaare Reading	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
UPPER WEST	Ghanaian Language Reading	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Totals		0	1	1	7	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	12
UPPER WEST	LOWER PRIMARY	1	0	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	10

		Marking register	Time copying text	Too long	Good timing	Late to class	Good short time sharpening pencils	Good went over time	Good short phone call	Waited for pupils to finish copying notes	Good but left class	Too short	Good short phone call & talk to ht	Totals
UPPER WEST	UPPER PRIMARY & JHS	0	1	1	13	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	19
Totals		1	1	1	18	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	29

(Source: Classroom Observation Instrument, TENI Field Research)

As has been indicated in other sections, the evidence from classroom observations alone does not give a true picture of the teachers' behaviour. With respect to teachers and how much time they spend actually teaching, evidence from focal group interviews with pupils shows that some teachers are spending more time out of the classroom than was observed in the classroom teaching during the research. Also, evidence from the school observation notes shows that although the teachers being observed were in class and teaching, others had not turned up to school at all, were sitting outside the classroom, or were sitting in the classroom but with no interaction with pupils.

What follows are some excerpts from interviews with pupils which show that pupils' experience in the classrooms does not always reflect what observers saw. Table 22 and 23 respectively show evidence of loss of instructional hours in urban/ rural Jirapa district and its impact on children.

381, St Kambali RC Primary School, Low, Female Trained teacher - 26, P1: *Children do not enjoy a lesson in the classroom when teacher leaves the classroom often. Sometimes teacher does not talk to the children. Sometimes when other children make noise teacher does not stop them (FGD with pupils).*

392, St Kambali JHS, RC, Male Trained teacher - 12, JHS 2: Pupils don't enjoy learning because: Slow presentation of lesson by some teachers and some teachers moving in and out of the classroom to receive phone calls during lessons.

526, Dery D/A JHS, Female Trained teacher - 5, JHS 1: In addition, they mentioned they always felt sad when they come to school and no teacher shows up.

443, Duori JHS, DA, Male Trained teacher - 7, JHS 2: Pupils do not enjoy learning when: He feels lazy to teach us. He canes us. He sometimes leaves the class.

**Table 4.15: Evidence of Use of Instruction Time from Classroom Observations in Urban Jirapa**

No	School	School type	School performance	Gender of teacher	No of years teaching	Type of Teacher	Class observed	Subject Observed	13. Comments
370	St Bamvum Primary School	RC	High	Female	11	Trained	P3	Mathematics	When researchers entered the class, the teacher was marking the attendance register and so took about 10 minutes to start the lesson. Teacher teaches for 35 minutes and within that time she impacted knowledge and after exhausting her instructional time with no interference she gave pupils an exercise to work on
371	St Bamvum Primary School	RC	High	Female	7	Trained	P5	English Reading	Teacher had to use 10-15 minutes copying passage on the chalkboard. This was as a result of no textbooks available to be distributed to pupils. Also teacher upon realising that too much time was spent on writing, she quickly treated the lesson in a hurriedly manner.
380	St Kambali Primary School	RC	Low	Female	7	Trained	P6	English Reading	The lesson started from 9:15am and travelled to 11:00am. Meanwhile it was supposed to be taught from 8:15am to 9:15am. The lesson covered a timeframe for three subjects: Maths, Integrated Science and English Comprehension. The lesson also covered pupils' recreation. The timeframe allotted here is inadequate to describe the different activities. The teacher used nearly 2 hours, so there was ample time for each activity. More than 1 hour was use of repetition mainly translation of passage content.
381	St Kambali Primary School	RC	Low	Female	26	Trained	P1	English Verbs	Teacher was in the class at the right time for the commencement of the lesson. She carefully followed the lesson plan and completed all activities within the 35 minutes set for the lesson.
392	St Kambali JHS	RC		Male	12	Trained	JHS 2	English	The teacher utilised the exact time stipulated for the lesson. He began and ended the lesson without going out of the class.

(Source: classroom observation notes, TENI field research)

The evidence gathered in the field with regard to how teachers use lesson time and how this impacts on the quality of learning included lesson observations. Based on an analysis of the summary of evidence (table 4.14) and by making comparison of the description from the field research instruments (tables 4.15 and 4.16), the conclusion is that on the whole teachers are using instructional time judiciously; this was true for teachers in both urban and rural classrooms in

both RC and DA schools. It should be noted at this point that evidence from other focal group discussions (including pupils, parents and interviews with head teachers) strongly suggests that what is described here was not the norm and that what would have been observed but for the researchers' presence in the class in many cases would have been a far less constructive use of lesson time. There was just one instance of this in the P6 English class in an urban RC school classroom, where the teacher used a great deal of time copying the reading text for the lesson on the chalkboard. Another teacher in the other RC urban school used 2 hours to teach a one hour lesson.

**Table 4.16: Evidence of Use of Instruction Time from Classroom Observations in Rural Jirapa**

No	School	School type	School performance	Gender of teacher	No of years teaching	Type of Teacher	Class observed	Subject Observed	13. Comments
398	Sognaayili Primary School	RC	High	Male	23	Trained	P2	English prepositions	Teacher exhausted the whole period allotted to him on the time table even though he took a while before entering the classroom.
399	Sognaayili Primary School	RC	High	Male	2	Pupil teacher	P4	English Nouns	At the time of observation, the teacher effectively engaged the children as each minute of the lesson was used on teaching and learning.
408	Kuvarpuo Primary School	RC	Low	Female	1	CVT	P3	Dagaare Reading	Teacher was in the class throughout the lesson
409	Kuvarpuo Primary School	RC	Low	Male	1	Pupil teacher	P5	English Nouns	Greater proportion of the time was on task. Teacher gave examples and asked children to provide answers. He also provided rules governing the exercise. Generally, the lesson was satisfactory.
416	Kuvarpuo JHS	RC		Male	1	CVT	JHS 3	English Writing	Teacher used about 40 minutes of time on task and did not go out of class but at some point in time he goes off track and even says " As for me I am not a trained teacher so do not expect me to know the answer to every question you ask me" consecutively.
423	Kpaguri Primary School	DA	High	Male	18	Trained	P4	English Reading	The teacher taught the lesson within 35 minutes allotted to him on the time table but took less time to introduce the lesson. However most of the 35 minutes instructional time was wasted fumbling with words by teacher himself.
424	Kpaguri Primary School	DA	High	Male	2	Trained	P5	English Writing	Teacher was at post on time and started lesson ending within 35 minutes with objectives achieved.
433	Safaliba Primary School	DA	Low	Male	2	Trained	P2	English Nouns	Teacher exhausted all his time on task and giving exercise to the pupils to work on. The teacher only stepped out for about a minute to sharpen pencils for

No	School	School type	School performance	Gender of teacher	No of years teaching	Type of Teacher	Class observed	Subject Observed	13. Comments
									pupils.
434	Safaliba Primary School	DA	Low	Male	6	Trained	P6	English Reading	Teacher only used 0-3 minutes to walk from the primary block to the JHS block where the primary 6 pupils were housed to carry out the lesson. Teacher used the time effectively from the start of the lesson to the end but translating the topic in the local language for the pupils understanding attracted some more minutes outside the required time. This made the lesson to enter into a different lesson period. Generally, he was up to the task and used time well.
443	Safaliba JHS	DA		Male	7	Trained	JHS 2	English clauses	Teacher utilised time on task effectively since he stayed in the classroom throughout the lesson teaching, explaining and giving examples to students.

(source: classroom observation notes, TENI field research)

Evidence from Annexes 4I and 4J suggest that by comparing the urban areas of Lawra with the rural areas the schools where there was high school performance in the PMT also had teachers which were using instructional time effectively.

### 4.7.3 Loss of instructional time in the Upper East Region

The issue of loss of instructional time needs to be looked at from several perspectives. The number of timetabled lessons that are actually taught during the school year and how teachers use instructional time when not being observed is not recorded as part of this research. However, the school observations notes do show that while research teams were in schools not all classes had teachers for every lesson and there is evidence to show that in many schools, the school teaching day finished by either first or second break. The evidence for this section is taken from the class observations which took place in classrooms that actually had a teacher present in the school. What is more the research factor has to be taken into account inasmuch as evidence from other interviews indicates that the behaviour of teachers observed by researchers is not necessarily the norm but influenced by the presence of the researchers themselves. As is recorded in other sections, a significant number of the lessons were repeated (it is assumed for the benefit of researchers) which raises the question of how that instructional time would have been used had the research team not been present that day.

What was generally found from observations in the Upper East was that teachers were on task for the whole lesson. Some lessons took significantly longer than what was indicated for that

lesson on the timetable, which again raises the question of whether what was being observed was the norm. If these lessons usually take this long, then one wonders how teachers are able to effectively cover the curriculum for all the subjects. Other elements of time usage are the amount of time teachers spend writing on the chalk board and the amount of time that students sit doing nothing while the teacher is sitting at his/her desk marking their exercise books. In schools where there are inadequate supplies of textbooks and TLMs, the former becomes a necessity and is particularly seen in reading comprehension lessons. The latter appears to be an acceptable use of classroom time although I would argue that if teachers are simply marking exercises right or wrong without any other kind of written feedback the amount that students can learn about their own learning would be minimal (the data/evidence for Talensi Nabdam and Bongo are found in Annexes 4I and 4J).

#### **4.7.4 Loss of instructional time in the in the Northern Region**

Tables 4.17 and 4.18 respectively show the use of instructional hours in West and East Mamprusi districts in the Northern Region. In urban West Mamprusi there was a clear case of misuse of instructional time. One teacher spent less time as was expected of the lesson. In another school the observer commented that:

“Teacher knew all the expected methodologies to use for children to understand, but she was unable to use them. She was tensed with the presence of the team and seemed angry for coming to school that particular day”

and in a third school the observer commented as follows:

“Teacher did not obey the time table. He was 40 minutes late for the lesson and spent 4 minutes before beginning the lesson. He was insufficiently prepared for the lesson and had nothing to teach and spent 30 minutes to teach what was supposed to be a 70 minutes lesson. He wasted the lesson period on his private business as he came to school late. He did not go out of the class and switched off his mobile phone when he had a call.”

Only two out of the five teachers utilized the time appropriately. In contrast teacher use of time in rural Mamprusi was encouraging. Six out of the eight rural teachers made effective use of the time. There were only two teachers who misused instructional hours. In one class the teacher was late by ten minutes and in the other he was described as wasting too much time in preparation before the commencement of the lesson.

**Table 4.17: Evidence of Use of Instructional Time in West Mamprusi**

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Rural West Mamprusi</b>	<b>School Name</b>	<b>Urban West Mamprusi</b>
Manga primary school. P4	The teacher took the register and started by explaining the objective of the lesson. He then taught without stopping, except for 1 minute when a community member visiting the school called him outside. He carried on till the end.	WurshieB2 primary school P2	Teacher was punctual and engaged most of the children in class.

School Name	Rural West Mamprusi	School Name	Urban West Mamprusi
Manga primary school. P5	The teacher was very punctual and time conscious. He had no interactions outside the classroom and so spent no time out of class or attending to unnecessary calls.	WurshieB2 primary school P6	Throughout the lesson, the teacher spent less time than was expected of a lesson. Someone came to call him and he spent less than a minute telling the person to wait till the lesson was over.
Zori primary school. P1	The teacher made effective use of his period. He did not do any other activity outside the classroom. He did not spend unnecessary time on issues; he was consistent from beginning to end of lesson.	Ngbaripe Islam primary school P3	Teacher was able to control the class effectively and only a few pupils disturbed along the lesson which she brought them to order. The teacher ignored her phone when it rang and returned the call when she gave children exercise and they were busily writing.
Zori primary school.	The teacher spent 1 hour 15 minutes in class teaching. He gave an assignment but did not mark them. The teacher changed his normal way of teaching due to the presence of the team.	Ngbaripe Islam primary school P3	
Zori JHS. 2	Teacher got to the class at 10:40 am instead of 10:30. He took about two minutes to decide to start the lesson. He then used 35 minutes allocated for the lesson to teach, he was able to give exercise and mark them before the end of the class.	Ngbaripe Islam primary school 6	Teacher knew all the expected methodologies to use for children to understand, but she was unable to use them. She was tensed with the presence of the team and seemed angry for coming to school that particular day.
Ninsali primary school. P6	Teacher did well by teaching the subject children loved so much and participated a lot at it. If he had been a trained teacher, he could have had different ways of using his strategies and other methodologies. Generally volunteer teachers appear to be doing well in teaching that brings results. So therefore, GES should give them training or take them as permanent staff.	Wurshie B JHS 1	Teacher did not obey the time table. He was 40 minutes late for the lesson and spent 4 minutes before beginning the lesson. He was insufficiently prepared for the lesson and had nothing to teach and spent 30 minutes to teach what was supposed to be a 70 minutes lesson. He wasted the lesson period on his private business as he came to school late. He did not go out of the class and switched off his mobile phone when he had a call.
Bormanga Primary School. P2	Teacher spent the whole time (30 minutes) reading and asking pupils questions. The teacher failed to write key words on the board.		.
Kupiel JHS 2	On the whole, teacher delivered the lesson for a period of one hour without a break or exiting from the classroom. However, too much time was spent preparing before commencement of the lesson.		

(Source: classroom observation instruments, TENI field research)

In urban East Mamprusi the use of time was similar to that of urban West Mamprusi. As in the case of West Mamprusi only two teachers effectively utilized the time to the benefit of the pupils. In one school the observer described the teacher's use of time in the following words:

*“The teacher spent the majority of time on task, her phone went once, and she went outside to take the call but was back to the lesson in under a minute”.*

In the other school when the teacher was informed that the team would want to observe her teach a lesson, she did not hesitate:

*“The teacher after being informed that she was to be observed she quickly went in and started the lesson. She is punctual and time conscious. She did not go out of the class. She did not also play about during the lesson”.*

The loss of instructional hours in rural East Mamprusi was less than that of rural West Mamprusi. Two thirds of the teachers effectively used the lesson time, while 33% of the teachers misused instructional time. Of those misusing instructional hours, one teacher when summoned by the head left the class without any excuse or apologies to the pupils. Another teacher was described as just not being prepared:

*“The teacher was just not prepared to teach so he was pretending to be teaching when he saw the researchers around”*

Another teacher observation was described in the following terms:

*“The teacher used part of the lesson time (5 minutes) to mark class register. He did not go out of the class when the lesson started but due to poor organization, he did not come in early to start the lesson. He asked for students to call in the next teacher when he noticed that his lesson period was over”.*

Generally teachers based in the rural schools made better use of instructional time compared to those in urban schools in the Northern Region. The proportion of classrooms in each of the two districts where poor time-management was witnessed was roughly similar – that is 5 out of 13 classrooms in West Mamprusi and 6 out of 14 classrooms in East Mamprusi.

**Table 4.18: Evidence of Use of Instructional Time in East Mamprusi**

School	Rural EMD	School	Rural EMD
	Overall Comment		Overall Comment
Zangu D/A Primary School	The teacher was just not prepared to teach so he was pretending to be teaching when he saw the researchers around.	Gomlana Presby. Primary School	The teacher spent the majority of time on task, her phone went once, and she went outside to take the call but was back to the lesson in under a minute. After she gave out the assignment and pupils were working on it, she took the class register. After taking the register, she walked around the class, helping pupils until some had finished the assignment, and then she spent time marking assignments.
Zangu D/A Primary School	The teacher used 45 minutes to teach children and gave exercise because we were to interview her. She went out of topic time task and no confidence in handling the children	Gomlana Presby. Primary School	The teacher after being informed that she was to be observed quickly went in and started the lesson. She is punctual and time conscious. She did not go out of the class. She did not also play about during the lesson.

School	Rural EMD Overall Comment	School	Rural EMD Overall Comment
Nintendo Primary School	All the time was used in the class. However, it was the same passage that the pupils read in the whole lesson.	Zonzongeli D/A Primary School	The teacher knows her lessons teaching but she was harsh and could control the children. She used the cane so much on the children that they didn't fear her any more. Most of the class interacted very well but the teacher thought the cane was the solution to stopping the children from making noise.
Nintendo Primary School	The teacher got to the class at the right time and did not use any time outside the lesson on any other issues. He used the period given to teach and assessed the students.	Zonzongeli D/A Primary School	The teacher spent the whole lesson teaching chalk and talk method.
Bamahu D/A JHS	The teacher did not waste much time before entering the lesson. He also engaged learners through questions. He did not group students. He did not also move out of the class in the course of the lesson delivery period.	Zonzongeli JHS	Generally because teacher was new in the school, he did not have confidence. Moreover he had a background in technical skills and so did not know much about English. The teacher was almost in the same age group with the students. He was a NSS personnel posted just this year.
Bunkuma Primary School	Teacher was able to engage pupils throughout the time he was in class.		
Bunkuma Primary School	While the teacher was teaching, his head teacher called him to the office for more than ten minutes. When he was going out to attend to his head, he didn't inform the students. He just walked out for some time and back.		
Wuyela Primary School	The teacher used the time he had effectively. He did not concentrate on other issues besides the main lesson.		
Wuyela JHS	The teacher used part of the lesson time (5 minutes) to mark class register. He did not go out of the class when the lesson started but due to poor organization, he did not come in early to start the lesson. He asked for students to call in the next teacher when he noticed that his lesson period was over.		

(Source: classroom observation instrument, TENI field research)

## 4.8 The Key Inhibitors to Quality education and Inclusion

The key inhibitors to quality education in the high performing schools appeared to mainly be related to the lack of text books and instructional materials. The key inhibitors to quality education in the low performing schools across the six districts was related to very poor head teacher management and lack of punitive measures for recalcitrant teachers which were absent on a regular basis. Poor performing schools were mainly in the rural zone and found to be managed by the District Assembly. Higher performing schools in the districts visited were often Catholic mission schools managed by the Church and had a head teacher who reported to both a

Catholic mission unit as well as a structure to oversee the school management. Another key finding is that without more effective head teacher leadership, supervision and school management, teacher instructional time will not be effectively used.

Head teacher leadership was found to be one of the **key promoters** of quality education. The study however found that in many schools Head teacher leadership across the six districts was not focused on promoting learning. At best it can be described as leadership that collaborated in the scheme to misuse of instructional time. The majority of the head teachers neither queried nor even checked their teachers' use of instructional time. In most schools head teacher's leadership role was reduced to vetting teachers' lesson notes, recording important incidents in the school in the logbook and performing other administrative functions.

The study found that the role and functions of Circuit Supervisors were limited by the lack of logistics and funds and loss in confidence by teachers to support their operations. Project districts' SMCs better supported their schools than non project districts perhaps because of the education the project district SMCs received. Project CS received fuel and in some cases CSs were even supplied with motor bikes to facilitate their monitoring and supervision. Evidence from the interviews conducted across the six districts suggested catholic schools were better managed due to the church structures and stronger oversight for school management.

On knowledge of head teachers and teachers concerning the Ministry of Education's literacy programme/ NALAP programme, the finding shows that the majority of head teachers (53.7%) were not aware of the intervention as against 46.3% that were aware of NALAP. The hope that NALAP will provide a realistic solution to the problem of local language literacy has still not been achieved four years after its nationwide introduction and acceptance. The majority of head teachers interviewed in the study were still unaware of the NALAP. Of the 46.3% of head teacher who were aware of the NALAP programme, less than 20% were actively using the NALAP materials. The impact of NALAP in the three northern regions was minimal with only three classrooms demonstrating usage of any NALAP materials.

The findings from the study suggest that large scale investments in education improvement programmes cannot be effectively implemented within the poorly managed school context presented above. The most recent programme NALAP appears not to have made any impact despite the large scale investment by donors and the GES/MOE.

With regard to School management, the study found head teacher perceptions of SMCs contradicting the evidence on the ground. Head teachers alleged that most SMCs were not functional. PTA/SMC collaboration with head teachers in the management of schools was very high in spite of head teachers' opinion that there was no cooperation. However, the study also found that SMC's were not being supported to play their role in school management. Several of the PTA's/SMC's spoke of how when they visited the schools the head teachers were not communicative and forthcoming about the issues which needed to be addressed. In very dysfunctional schools, parents who visited had to be extremely audacious given the problems of teacher absenteeism and indiscipline. Many PTA/SMCs were not assertive in demanding quality education for their children as the few who were assertive did not receive cooperation from teachers, head teachers, education authorities and the District Assembly.

According to classroom observations, there were only two or three classrooms in each district where teaching and learning materials were used. The research team however found out that many schools had a collection of teaching and learning materials which were stored in head teacher's office and were not being used. A few classrooms had teachers' guides and a few textbooks for pupils. However, in majority of the classrooms there were no textbooks at all being used.

Other evidence indicates that negative experiences of children in classrooms in northern Ghana such as harsh punishment, bullying, teacher absenteeism, etc caused pupils to absent themselves. However, in the interview with a group of children following a lesson where the teacher enjoyed a particularly positive relationship with his pupils, they indicated that positive classroom experiences influenced their attendance. This is what was said in response to "What do you like." And "When do you enjoy learning?":

*"The teacher they have in P6 is new and he teaches very well and they like to come to school. Before him, they were absenting themselves a lot. . . . They really like when they do demonstrations at the blackboard and they are correct. If they really enjoy the lesson they don't even want to go to break. But if they are not enjoying the lesson they will make an excuse to leave, like asking to go and urinate. With this teacher, they enjoy the lessons so that they don't want to go on break. One boy stated that if he is enjoying the lesson he participates too loudly and the teacher has to ask him to be a little bit quiet. The teacher has set up programme where the children come early (7am) and read silently for an hour and he helps them to recap the previous day's lessons. They really like this. [As they were talking about what they liked about this teacher's lessons, they seemed very enthusiastic and seemed to "open up" more quickly in comparison with other boys' groups that have been interviewed (Field notes from the Upper East, Rural School in Bongo)]"*

The results from the Quality of Education study show that the supplies of teaching learning materials were inadequate across all three regions. Textbooks and syllabuses for various subjects were in very short supply in the 54 schools visited particularly in the Upper East region where the last text books were supplied in 2004. Syllabuses were not supplied since 2009 and most of the schools did not have a hard copy of the syllabus since the central government had sent the new syllabus on a CD Rom which had still not been printed for the schools. There was some variation between rural and urban schools with urban schools as well as faith based schools having a slight advantage over rural District Assembly schools with respect to GES text book and teacher supplies.

Findings from the research also suggest that the supply and distribution of Special Education Needs materials was non-existent in all 54 sampled schools. The only visible SEN related input is the presence of access ramps for SEN children in only three schools. During FGD's with children, they expressed the view that children with severe learning difficulties could not learn in their schools because of the lack of SEN materials. With regard to the timeliness of the supply of school textbooks and syllabi, there was inconsistent and erratic supply of text books between 2000 and 2012. The bulk of supplies were received before 2004. Between 2004 and 2012 the yearly supply of text books and teaching materials barely covered 10% of the schools in any of the six districts visited.

On the subject of sustainability and durability of textbook supply, the study findings reveal that in most cases school inputs were not sustained over the years because of the incoherent and unpredictable supply pattern (particularly from the district office out to the school levels). There was also the challenge of input supplies being far apart in time space. Textbook materials supplied were not durable because of the poor quality binding as well as the large number of children handling the textbooks. Similarly, because of the inadequate supply of teacher syllabuses, teachers resort to sharing and rotating the few syllabuses available leading to accelerated wear and tear.

## **Summary Conclusion**

This chapter discusses factors promoting and inhibiting systemic change in educational quality and inclusion at Basic Education level with emphasis on girls and children with Special Education Needs in the three northern regions of Ghana. It focused on factors promoting and inhibiting teaching and learning in the school environment in terms of school characteristics, head teacher leadership, school inputs and supplies adequacy, and timely supply. It also reviewed how external donor and NGO interventions promoted or inhibited teaching and learning and the sustainability of the donor support inputs. Finally, it discusses the role of the district education Directorate and the District Assembly in promoting and inhibiting quality education delivery.

With reference to school characteristics the study found that many head teachers and teachers lacked commitment to their roles as promoters of quality education and rather served as inhibitors to quality education delivery. They were irregular in attendance and left children unattended. They acted unprofessionally by misusing instructional hours and spent about 2 to 2.5 hours teaching on a daily basis. Their lesson notes were in arrears and most did not even prepare the lesson notes before going in to teach. The number and frequency of written assignments given by teachers does not reflect the importance these are given as an assessment tool; many teachers did not begin giving pupils assignments until some weeks after the start of term and there were few cases these were comprehensively checked. The study also found many examples of unacceptable head teacher leadership; in some cases head teachers were found to be incapable of promoting an effective learning environment, particularly in the rural schools. However, head teachers of faith-based schools, chiefly Catholic schools were found to be better able to manage their schools than head teachers of DA schools. Some faith-based head teachers had a clear management vision for school which was in turn strengthened by SMC/PTA and Church while the same could not be said for the majority of DA head teachers. Rural schools with weak head teacher management rarely followed any type of structured timetable due to high rates of teacher absenteeism and lateness.

With regard to physical infrastructure the evidence suggests that the majority of schools were not adapted for children with Special Educational Needs. Only 18 out of the 53 schools surveyed had access ramps to the classrooms. In addition, only 6 out of 53 schools had educational materials adapted for use with different learner needs. The study also found that teachers with specialized skills for teaching SEN were non-existent in the schools sampled. For the physically

challenged the school location remains a serious challenge as schools are located quite a distance away from the community over terrain which is not easy to negotiate on a wheelchair.

With respect to school sanitary facilities, though the study found adequate separate toilets and urinals for boys and girls, it was observed that the majority of schools that did not have access to these facilities were located in the rural areas of the districts. In terms of other school facilities such as electricity, library and computer laboratory the study hardly found any. The few available were concentrated in urban areas. ICT facilities were particularly rare. The lack of such facilities certainly serves as an inhibitor to promoting quality learning in the schools. Though classroom facilities seem adequate their conditions were not conducive to learning so good. Over a quarter of the sampled classrooms were very poorly lit and ventilated. In all three regions the evidence suggests that classrooms were not entirely conducive to creating a child friendly learning environment.

In the classroom context a higher proportion of trained teachers were found in urban schools and there tends to be a higher proportion of female teachers than rural schools. More male teachers were found in rural schools with a higher proportion of untrained teachers including community service volunteers, National Service personnel, NYEP teachers and GES paid pupil teachers. There was also a clear difference between the number and frequency of exercises given by teachers in urban schools and that of teachers in rural schools. Similarly, in most districts class sizes were relatively higher in rural schools than in urban schools. As a result rural teachers were found reluctant to give more exercises to children on a frequent or regular basis because of the large class sizes. In all regions and schools the study found supply of teaching and learning materials inadequate regardless of rural/urban or school type distinctions. Storage of teaching and learning materials in the schools was found to be poor. Most head teachers did not properly keep materials provided by the GES.

## PART II: The Classroom Teaching and Learning Processes

Classroom observations were carried out in every one of the 54 schools visited by the research teams across the 6 districts and 3 regions. On average two lessons per school were observed: 12 lessons in 6 primary schools in each district and 3 lessons in 3 Junior High Schools for a total of 15 lessons per district. In each district 2 of the Primary schools and a Junior High School were in an urban setting and the other 4 primary schools and 2 Junior High Schools were in rural community clusters of schools visited. There were some differences between the schools in the urban and rural settings. On the whole there were a higher percentage of trained teachers observed in the urban compared to the rural schools.

Class sizes observed were comparatively lower in the urban schools than in the rural (with the notable exceptions of some schools in the Upper West and Northern Region). In the observed classes, pupil attendance was higher in the urban schools than in the rural and pupil teacher ratio was lower due to the number of additional or assistant teachers posted to urban schools. However, despite these differences, there were also a number of similarities. A striking example of which was the way in which reading lessons were conducted by nearly all the teachers observed. The table below is a summary of the classrooms that were observed as part of this study disaggregated by District, Community Type, and School Type (District Assembly or Faith-based Unit school).

**Table II.1: Summary of Lessons Observed by District, Community and School Type and Class Level**

Number of Lessons Observed by District, Community Type, School Type and School Level						
District	Community Type	School Type	Lower Primary P1 - P3	Upper Primary P4 - P6	JHS 1 - JHS 3	TOTAL
West Mamprusi	Rural	DA	2	4	2	8
West Mamprusi	Urban	DA	1	1	1	3
West Mamprusi	Urban	EA	1	1	0	2
East Mamprusi	Rural	DA	3	3	1	7
East Mamprusi	Rural	EA	0	1	1	2
East Mamprusi	Urban	DA	1	1	1	3
East Mamprusi	Urban	PRES	1	1	0	2
Talensi-Nabdam	Rural	DA	4	4	2	10
Talensi-Nabdam	Urban	DA	2	2	1	5
Bongo	Rural	DA	4	4	2	10
Bongo	Urban	DA	1	1	0	2
Bongo	Urban	RC	1	1	1	3
Jirapa	Rural	DA	1	3	1	5
Jirapa	Rural	RC	2	2	1	5
Jirapa	Urban	RC	2	2	1	5
Lawra	Rural	DA	3	4	2	9
Lawra	Urban	DA	1	1	1	3

Number of Lessons Observed by District, Community Type, School Type and School Level						
District	Community Type	School Type	Lower Primary P1 - P3	Upper Primary P4 - P6	JHS 1 - JHS 3	TOTAL
Lawra	Urban	RC	1	1	0	2
Totals			31	37	18	86

(Source: classroom observation instrument, TENI field research)

The original remit for the classroom observations was that in each of the Primary Schools two classes are observed, one in the Upper Primary (P4 to P6) and the other in Lower Primary (P1 to P3). One classroom is observed in each of the Junior High Schools visited. The number of classrooms that should be observed in each district should therefore total 15 – 10 classrooms in rural schools and 5 in the urban. As can be seen from the above table, only 8 classes were observed in rural West Mamprusi, 9 in rural East Mamprusi and 9 in rural Lawra. This is because at the time of the research teams' visits to these schools there was only one teacher actually present in each school. It should be re-emphasised here that schools were not made aware in advance of the date and time of the research teams visit so that the “normal” working practices of the schools could be noted.

There are four types of school represented in the survey: DA (District Assembly), RC (Roman Catholic), PRES (Presbyterian), and EA (English and Arabic schools which are managed by the Islamic Unit). The proportion of these different schools is broadly representative of the types of school in each of these districts and community types. Although it should also be noted that all the schools visited in Urban Jirapa are RC schools. This concentration is due to the logistical criteria that needed to be accounted for when selecting sites for the schools. In this particular case there were no schools within easy distance of the high performing school selected in this district capital, it was therefore necessary to choose another RC school whose performance profile was marginally lower.

Further scrutiny of the types of classes observed shows that in most cases one lower primary class and an upper primary class were visited in each school. Again, in some districts there was a greater number of upper than lower Primary classes observed, this is because at the time of the field research, these were the only classes available. The main focus of the research was on observing the language and literacy period in the school. An in-depth interview with the teacher teaching the lesson and a quick check at the exercise books was also involved in the classroom assessment; children's focal group discussion and head teacher and teacher focal group discussions was also part of the larger field work.

Eighty six classroom lessons were observed across the 3 regions of which 70 were literacy and language lessons. The team was asked (where possible) to observe the teaching of literacy lessons across the 54 schools. There were a few Ghanaian language lessons but the majority were English lessons. Twenty nine of the teachers were delivering a lesson based on some aspect of grammar and 28 lessons were reading or reading comprehension lessons while 13 language lessons did not specify the key aspect being taught.

## **Chapter 5.0 Teaching Learning Processes Inside the classroom**

Instructional management otherwise referred to as classroom management and pedagogy is critical to improving the quality of education and ensuring retention of children in school. Several studies have revealed that poor classroom teaching and learning strategies in Ghanaian schools have negatively influenced learning outcomes, pupil retention and enrolment in schools (Akyeampong, et al., 2007). Alhassan et al. (2010) found that many pupils thought their classes were uninteresting and boring as teachers did not prepare before delivering their lessons.

Findings on instructional management in the three northern regions corroborate CREATE, (2007) and Alhassan et al. (2010) that teachers hardly ever use child-centred and child friendly teaching methods; class discussions, role play, demonstration, group work, brainstorming, stimulation, experiential or hands on deck approaches. In FGD with pupils it came to light that instructional management strategies greatly influenced pupils' dropping out of school. The study also found that teachers were unable to handle large class sizes, multi-grade classes and disadvantage groups of children, including SEN children. This finding substantiates Alhassan et al., 2010 observation that teachers were unable to handle disadvantaged groups of children, including children with disabilities, over-aged children and children from very poor households. The findings from head teachers interviews and FGD with teachers in this study showed teachers were aware of their inadequacies in SEN pedagogy and multi-grade teaching approaches. Teachers also reported on their inadequacies in child centred and child friendly strategies (see the next chapter on learning for more details).

When reviewing the evidence from the classroom observations across the 54 schools, it is also important to put these in the context of the schools that were visited. School based observations suggest that in some schools the teachers were not all in their classrooms actively teaching children and that the research teams were often the stimulus for teachers to enter and teach what might be the only lesson taking place in the whole school during that day. As was the case in several primary schools there was only one lesson observed because there was only one teacher present in the school on the day of the visit in a school which would often have 6 classrooms with children waiting to be taught.

Based solely on the findings from classroom observations it is clear that in many cases there was little or no learning going on in the 86 classrooms observed; that in many cases learning was based on drilling, rote learning, memorization with little or no recourse to higher order thinking skills or learning activities. Findings from the study suggest that the "basic skills" for literacy (referred to in Goal 6 of the EFA document source: UNICEF) were not being taught in the majority of primary schools visited. This was often due to the lack of understanding by the children due to the language of instruction, the demeanour of the teacher and their approach to the children (harsh) and finally the basic ability of teachers to use simple methods of teaching children to decode, sound out and break through to reading.

### **5.1 The Context of Classroom Teaching**

The key findings from the context of classroom teaching are related to the context and school setting (rural vs. urban), the management structures (mission vs. district assembly) and the professionalization of the teaching force in place (presence and number of trained teachers).

Across all three regions which were visited as part of the research the types of teachers observed in the urban schools is different to that of those in the rural areas. In most cases there were a higher proportion of trained teachers in the urban schools and there tended to be a higher proportion of female teachers. Teachers working in the rural schools were often male and there were a much higher proportion of untrained teachers including community service volunteers (paid by communities), National Service personnel, NYEP teachers and pupil teachers.

Findings emerging from the TENI Research reveal that there were far more trained teachers in urban schools than in rural schools across all three regions. In most cases, urban classrooms were overstaffed while rural schools were woefully understaffed with very few trained teachers present; most urban schools visited had more than one teacher and the second teacher who acted as an assistant teacher often became a regular teacher and taught some of the lessons. The vast majority of trained teachers in the Upper West and Northern Regions were not living in the communities visited but in the nearby towns and district capitals. Having more than one teacher per class was not improving the quality of education as a focal group of teachers explains *“this does not solve the problem as teachers take advantage of the fact that they are many and therefore they can shuffle attendance among themselves.”* (FGD with 15 trained teachers from Urban JHS1-3, Northern region). In some districts (West Mamprusi) teachers were travelling over 1 to 2 hours from their homes in order to attend school. Interviews with teachers and head teachers suggest that when teachers were not living in the community they would be habitually late and absent at least one or two days per week.

The main research findings was that children attending schools in rural areas faced many more disadvantages and barriers to quality education than their urban counterparts. The large number of trained teachers in urban schools was one factor and the presence of closer monitoring by District Education Offices made some urban schools more functional in relation to teacher discipline. When this is taken in the light of the fact that class sizes in the rural schools tend to be much higher and more poorly resourced (e.g. textbooks and syllabuses are also in shorter supply). Interviews with district education directors and district education officers suggest that the trends found in the study schools reflected the challenges being faced across the district and region as a whole.

## **5.2 Lesson Delivery and Preparation of the teacher**

### **Promoters and Inhibitors of Quality Education**

Evidence from research undertaken in Ghana reveals that Ghanaian teachers spend an average of two and a half hours in the classroom each day. As GES policy is that the contact time of a teacher should be between five and a half and six and a half hours each day, this is a fairly damaging indictment of the attitude and commitment of teachers. The findings described above with reference to teachers' subject knowledge illustrate the fact that many teachers are not spending time prior to delivering lessons in planning them. Several teachers in the study sample were not prepared for their classroom lessons and very few were fulfilling their classroom obligation of spending time outside of teaching hours making preparations. This lack of preparation created a major challenge to learning.

A well prepared lesson should take in to account previous lessons, the age and ability of pupils, their ability to access the language of instruction, and should include a clear description of the learning objective and the expectation of what pupils will know or be able to do by the end of the lesson. Classroom observations across the majority of schools revealed that there was little or no preparation (particularly by untrained teachers), there was also evidence that teachers were not confident to talk about the subject matter; had difficulties translating what they did know either by simplifying for the pupils, or translating into their mother tongue; or made errors in content. Because of the emphasis on subject knowledge in training colleges, trained teachers were seen as being able to “get away with” not preparing their lessons and can “wing it” to a greater degree than those teachers who are untrained. Conversely, the lessons delivered by those teachers who had spent time on preparation beforehand, had no content errors and students were able to participate fully because ideas were presented or explained at a level they were able to understand.

Across all three regions the evidence from classroom observation reports indicates that the majority of teachers had not prepared for their lessons by writing up their lesson notes. The teachers who had prepared, constituted about 30% of the sample of teachers observed. What is notable is the distribution according to district. Not one of the teachers from West Mamprusi District had prepared lesson notes. There were just 5 teachers in East Mamprusi who could produce a lesson plan and 4 of these were in rural schools. Nine teachers in the Upper East Region had planned their lesson, 6 of whom were in Talensi Nabdam and the other 3 in Bongo District. The distribution in the Upper West was similar where 9 teachers used lesson notes, 2 in Jirapa and 7 in Lawra.

In Jirapa, Bongo and Talensi Nabdam there are proportionately higher numbers of teachers preparing lesson notes in the urban schools than in the rural schools. The majority of teachers preparing lesson notes were also from mission urban schools. In the other 3 districts that were visited there does not appear to be any significant difference in the types of teachers who were preparing lesson notes. There were a very small number of teachers in rural Jirapa (UW) (1 out of 10) able to present lesson notes (at the time of classroom observation). There is a marked difference between Jirapa and Lawra and West and East Mamprusi. Bongo (UE) and Talensi Nabdam (UE) present a fairly similar profile of teachers being able to present lesson notes – that is to say the proportion of teachers across the districts.

When comparing high and low performing schools across the districts there was not much difference observed in relation to teacher preparation. Approximately 70% of the teachers observed were unable to produce lesson notes for classroom observers to see; these teachers were often teaching straight from the textbook or had no lesson plan to work from. The impact of this lack of preparation on the quality of teaching in the classrooms observed varies. In a number of cases teachers were delivering a repeated lesson and in others the teachers were relying on past experience and were therefore able to “wing it” – which resulted in a fairly coherent lesson without a written plan. Classroom observation revealed that teachers who were repeating the lesson, gave the explanation that several pupils had been absent when the lesson had been delivered or that not enough pupils had understood the lesson. Although there was also strong evidence that there was a research factor at play as in some instances teachers began one lesson

just prior to observers entering the classroom and then changed this when they saw they were to be observed.

Talensi Nabdam had a higher number of teachers preparing lesson notes than all the Non-TENI districts except Lawra. Of the other TENI districts, there was a small number (just two) of teachers who had prepared notes, and West Mamprusi was the worst district in terms of the lack of lesson note preparation since none of the teachers prepared lesson notes. School based observation in West Mamprusi District revealed that the large number of teachers' effect coverage in terms of supervision and the teachers are taking advantage of that. The non-preparation of lesson notes did not depend on the level of training since both trained and untrained teachers were found not having lesson notes.

The level of training of teachers does not make a difference as to whether they are prepare notes or not as there are as many trained teachers preparing notes as not. This is also the case with untrained teachers. However, trained teachers appeared to be able to deliver a lesson that followed on from the previous lesson and was fairly coherent in and of itself without lesson notes. The significant difference between DA and Mission schools does not lie in the number of teachers with notes but rather in the quality of the lesson notes and subsequent delivery of the lesson. In at least 2 cases observers noted teachers in Catholic Schools whose lesson notes were comprehensive and who also delivered good lessons with teaching and learning materials prepared for the lesson to further facilitate learning.

### **5.2.1 Northern Region**

Evidence from classroom observations in the Northern Region reveals that very little preparation is done before teachers went into the classroom to teach. Most teacher interviews suggest that they did not understand the need to prepare before their lesson irrespective of whether they are trained or untrained or from high/low performing schools. Whether a teacher is trained or untrained did not have much influence on his/her lesson preparation. Although trained teachers were able to more easily deliver classroom lessons that appear to be planned without having first prepared lesson notes. There appears to be more preparation by teachers in the East Mamprusi district as evident in the classroom observations.

Among all eight (8) classrooms observed in six rural schools in the West Mamprusi district, none had prepared for the lesson. None of the teachers had lesson notes prepared for the lesson. The few teachers who appeared to be somewhat prepared even without lesson notes were delivering a repeated lesson. Researchers' observed that the lack of preparedness on the part of teachers translates into a poor relationship between teacher and pupil. Classroom observers noted that the unprepared teacher was not focused on the learning needs of the pupils but having to focus more on the context of what they would be delivering. For example in Kupiel JHS 2, Rural WMD,

“The lesson delivery was done but in a manner which presupposed pupils had prior knowledge of the subject matter. On the whole, it appeared not much preparation was done before the lesson. (Classroom observations, Northern Region)” In the FGD with pupils after the lesson they stated: *“The teacher speaks too fast and we are afraid to slow*

*him down. He gets angry when we ask questions. When he does not demonstrate and we lose interest, he beats us and makes us to fetch water and weed”.*

Again, in the 5 classrooms visited in urban West Mamprusi, none of teachers had prepared lesson notes for the lesson. Observers noted that the difference in this district was that, although some teachers were not prepared they were able to deliver a fairly coherent lesson. These teachers appeared confident and had control over what was being delivered. Furthermore, FGDs with pupils revealed that they were happy with their teachers and they understood what teachers had taught. *“The way our teacher presents the lesson to us is so interesting. He uses the local language that is at our level of understanding and he is able to explain to us whenever we fail to understand”* (Wurshie B primary school, Urban WMD).

Evidence from classroom observation notes gives some indication of the kinds of reasons teachers are not preparing lesson notes and their attitude to this activity. For example in Bormanga Primary School, Rural WMD,

*“Teacher did not plan the lesson. She said there is nothing to plan and teach P2 pupils. Teacher only read out a passages and asked pupils questions.”*

This view reinforces many of the findings of this research around teachers’ perceptions of how to teach different subjects such as reading at the lower primary level (e.g. read a passage and repeat).

Findings from the field work also suggest that the teachers’ involvement in distance education programmes (e.g. UTDTBE) had a direct impact on the degree to which they could prepare lesson notes for the classroom teaching practice. For example in JHS 2, Wurshie B JHS, Urban WMD,

*“Teacher did not prepare for the lesson as his lesson notes were not up to date. According to him, he left for distance education programme at Tamale over the weekend so was unable to prepare for the lesson himself (Field workers observations based on classroom observation, West Mamprusi Urban JHS School)”. Evidence from FGD with pupils from his class revealed that “our teacher is able to explain the words for us to understand. There exist a good communication between us and the teacher. The teacher however only calls on pupils who can read but does not give opportunity to slow learners in class (Focal Group discussion with the JHS pupils from the same class, WMD)”.*

In the East Mamprusi District, among 9 rural classrooms visited, 5 teachers had lesson notes prepared for their lessons. These teachers had used the syllabus and textbooks and their lesson notes were up to date and were in line with the appropriate lessons for the period the team visited the classrooms. Field researchers reported that the other four lessons, teachers did not have lesson notes prepared. One teacher who did not have her lesson notes was able to teach using the NALAP approach and she was able to deliver her lesson quite well. However, during the course of the lesson she skipped between sections of the NALAP teachers’ guide and ended up giving pupils an assignment not based on what she had taught.

In urban East Mamprusi, only one teacher out of five classroom teachers observed had prepared for the lesson. The rest of the teachers had neither lesson notebooks nor lesson plans in the classroom. They taught directly from the textbooks with no prior preparation. Teaching directly from the text book was the main approach observed across most of the schools in the Northern Region.

### **5.2.2 Upper East Region**

The evidence from the lesson observation reports made across the sampled schools in the Upper East reveals that out of the 30 lessons observed only 10 teachers were able to show researchers their lesson notes. Of the 6 lessons observed in, only 1 teacher had lesson notes. The school in question was one of the urban schools visited and was a girls' Roman Catholic School. On the whole there were a proportionately higher number of teachers with plans in the urban schools (4 lessons out of 10, or 40%), than in the rural schools (6 lessons out of 20, or 30%). In addition 6 of the 30 lessons were repeats. Teachers gave various reasons for presenting repeated lessons but the example described in the P4 lesson in Akugri Primary School gives some indication that perhaps teachers were repeating lessons for the benefit of observers. In the Akugri Primary School example, the teacher had been given no notice that he would be observed and when the researchers turned up in his classroom he appears to have changed his mind about which lesson he would present for that period. As noted from the evidence from the classes observed in the Northern Region, trained teachers delivered relatively coherent lessons despite the absence of lesson notes. Reading lessons come straight from the text book without any apparent focus on the specific aspects of teaching reading such as decoding and phonic approaches to helping children read or addressing the differential needs of the learners.

Of the 5 lessons observed in the two Primary schools and one Junior High School in urban Talensi Nabdam, 2 teachers had lesson notes; both were trained teachers. One teacher who did not have lesson notes, a National Service teacher teaching JHS1 in Kpatuya JHS, said in the post lesson interview that he did not write lesson notes for reading comprehension lessons. As with the example cited from the Northern Region, this illustrates the perception by teachers that the process of teaching reading requires no preparation, that the needs of pupils in terms of the skills they need to acquire are not the focus.

In the case of those teachers who had prepared their lesson notes, observers noted that the lessons followed on from previous lessons and that the steps within the lesson followed a logical progression. What is more in both of these cases lesson plans were based on the syllabus for the subject even though in one case the teacher had not been provided with a syllabus and had to borrow one from a colleague in order to plan lessons.

In four primary schools and 2 Junior High Schools 10 lessons were observed in rural Talensi Nabdam. Four of the teachers were able to provide lesson notes – a pupil teacher, teaching P6 (Namonsa Primary School) and three trained teachers, two of whom were in P6 (Chuchuliga Primary School and Ayimpoka Primary School) and the other P5 (Zuaringo Primary School). Three teachers who did not have lesson notes were working from the textbook – one of these was a trained teacher in JHS2 (Ayimpoka JHS), the other 3 were untrained. One of the teachers – a Pupil teacher in P2 (Zuaringo Primary School) - who had neither lesson notes nor a textbook was

found to be teaching a repeated lesson. In one case the teacher - a NYEP teacher (Ayimpoka Primary School) - was unable to provide lesson notes because he was in fact the assistant teacher and was covering the class for the main teacher (the Assistant Head), who was also unable to provide his lesson notes and claimed that he was unable to teach the class because of other responsibilities (although observers were could not verify that this was the case).

Five lessons were observed in the urban area of Bongo, 2 each in 2 Primary schools and 1 in a Junior High School. Only one of the teachers was able to provide lesson notes, a trained teacher at a Roman Catholic School, Adakudugu Girls' JHS. One of the teachers, a Pupil teacher teaching P6 at Adakudugu Primary School, without lesson notes maintained that he had not been able to keep them up to date due to family circumstances and the fact that the school had not provided him with a note book so he had to use an old notebook of a colleague. He did appear to have a clear plan in mind when teaching the lesson. The other teachers who had no lesson notes were all trained teachers with several years' experience, and observers noted that each lesson appeared well organised and followed logical steps.

In **rural Bongo** a total of 10 lessons were observed in 4 primary school and 2 Junior High Schools. Two teachers were able to present lesson notes, both were pupil teachers (P5 Wuntenga Primary School and P4 Akugri Primary School) and both delivered a repeated lesson. Two JHS 1 teachers (Wuntenga JHS and Gungolgu JHS) said their lesson notes were not available so it was not possible for observers to check if any had been prepared. Three teachers (P2 Wuntenga Primary School, P3 Gungolgu Primary School and P3 Bulika Primary School) did not have lesson notes but were working from a textbook. From the lesson observation notes it is clear that observers felt that those lessons for which plans were seen followed a logical progression as each part of the lesson was linked to the next.

### **5.2.3 Upper West Region**

The extent to which teachers were prepared to teach the lessons in the Upper West is similar to the picture in both the Northern and Upper East Regions. Of the 29 lessons observed across the 2 districts 9 teachers had pre prepared lesson notes from which they taught the lesson observed. A further 5 teachers were not able to produce lesson notes, although they claimed they had been prepared but were not in school. Of the remaining 15 lessons observed, 6 teachers relied solely on the textbook, and another teacher used a teachers' guide. Eight teachers taught the lesson without any observable written preparation.

The reliance on using a pupils' textbook as the basis for the lesson has a generally negative impact on learning, teachers were not thinking about the differential needs of pupils before entering the class and often relied on rote methods of delivery such as getting children to write down the passages from the text book and then repeat some of the words. In the cited example from Kuvarpuo RC Primary School in rural Jirapa the teacher is a Community Volunteer Teacher and from the observation notes it is implied that volunteer teachers are not required to plan lessons:

"There was no lesson preparation and planning since the volunteer teachers had no lesson notes. The teacher just took the reading book and took the children through a passage."

Across the Upper West Region, there was little difference in the proportion of teachers who had made any preparation when comparing rural and urban settings apart from rural Jirapa where only one of the 10 teachers observed had prepared lesson notes. There were no differences between mission and non mission schools across the four districts. However the P1 teacher at an RC school in urban Jirapa, St Kambali Primary School, had not only prepared notes but was also using learning aids: *“The teacher prepared lesson notes using syllabus and there was adequate usage of teaching and learning aids. Objectives were also well set.” It was rare to find a teacher making use of teaching learning materials which were pre prepared for the lesson.*

There was also very little difference in the lack of lesson preparation in relation to high and low performing schools. The evidence from the 10 classrooms observed in 2 Junior High Schools and 4 Primary Schools in rural Jirapa indicates that half of the teachers had nothing to work from in the classroom and only one teacher had lesson notes. Furthermore observers noted that 2 of the lessons had been taught previously. Whereas in urban Jirapa, urban Lawra, and rural Lawra the proportion of teachers with notes was about 40%.

Of all 29 teachers observed 6 were untrained (2 Pupil Teachers and 2 Community Volunteer teachers in Jirapa and 1 Pupil Teacher and 1 Community Volunteer Teacher in Lawra). Of these the only teacher who could show evidence of lesson preparation was the Community Volunteer teacher in Lawra. Eleven of the teachers observed in Jirapa were trained teachers of whom only 3 had lesson notes. The proportion of trained teachers with notes in Lawra is marginally higher with 5 of the 12 teachers able to show evidence of planning.

As has already been noted, evidence from observers’ notes indicate that trained teachers compared to untrained teachers without lesson notes deliver lessons that show some kind of progression from previous lessons. For instance the P2 teacher at Safaliba Primary School, *“appeared prepared for the class even though he did not have a lesson notes or textbook. He started off well by using his own improvisation to deliver.”* This apparent ability of trained teachers to confidently improvise a lesson, or as in other examples, to deliver a lesson without preparation was a trend across all three regions. However, it does raise the question as to what extent teachers are reflecting on the specific needs of the class and how much this lack of preparation limits their ability to think creatively about how they will adopt learning objectives to the learners they are teaching before they deliver a lesson. This is particularly important when considering the teaching of the NALAP programme or other literacy instructional programmes which were used by the Ghana education system.

#### **5.2.4 Promoters and inhibitors of Quality**

Preparation of lesson notes by teachers is one of the key issues education managers track in their supervision of schools. However, given the number of teachers who were unable to produce up to date notes, it would appear that it has little or no effect on teachers’ commitment to this activity.

In terms of teachers’ attitude to writing lesson notes, some teachers had the opinion that there is too much emphasis by GES officers on lesson note preparation:

*“GES, according to teachers, is only interested in lesson notes of teachers and number of subjects taught but does not place emphasis on children's understanding.” (Source: FGD Teachers, Primary School, Urban Bongo).*

This criticism points to a fact that several head teachers voiced throughout the research: that very little time was spent during circuit supervision visits actually assessing the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms; most supervision visits focuses on reviewing teacher lesson notes and not observing teacher inside the classroom carrying out instructional methods and approaches to enhance learning.

Other teachers did not produce lesson notes but were able to regurgitate lessons taught in previous years or improvise off-the-cuff as it were because they are trained and experienced teachers. The key challenge or inhibitor to quality teaching and learning this poses is around inclusion. If teachers are delivering lessons without having first reflected on previous lessons taught and the specific needs of their children, then it is questionable the extent to which they will be able to meet these children's needs. It also implies that teachers do not take into account individual difference between the different groups of children who pass through their hands. Lack of preparation would also restrict the creativity of the teacher in preparing for different methods and approaches to his/her instructional practice. This was visible in the constant “chalk and talk” approach to teaching. Almost no teachers in the 53 schools were using innovative methods and approaches such as small group methods, drama or activity based learning centres.

In an examination as to why teachers were not able to produce lesson notes, field reports revealed that there were two main reasons provided by teachers; the teachers' time commitments to other activities outside the school, personal difficulties (such as attending to social issues) and time required to fulfil distance education programmes obligations and exercises. The second main constraint was that teachers needed the provision of lesson note books to write their notes; this seems unreasonable given that most schools have been receiving capitation grants which would easily cover the cost of these books; the lack of these lesson note book was one of the main reasons given by teachers for not being able to provide plans. Many teachers did not have an up-to-date copy of the syllabus which should form the basis of lesson plans. Finally, untrained teachers – community volunteer teachers in particular – felt ill-equipped to plan lessons because they had received no formal training or guidance.

The lack of preparation for lessons also becomes evident in relation to the high absenteeism of teacher across the six districts. School based observation revealed in some districts that due to the high rate of absenteeism among teachers, the preparation of lessons became almost impossible or irrelevant for the few teachers who were regularly attending schools and having to teach on behalf of other teachers who may or may not show up to the classroom. For instance, it was clear from the instability caused by high rates of teacher absenteeism in several schools in the north that very few teachers were preparing any lesson notes since they knew they would be teaching across several subjects and several classes in a given day in order to “cover for other absentee teachers”.

In order to address these challenges there is a need for head teacher management structures to be strengthened so that in the first instance both the plans and the execution of these plans are being

properly assessed and supported at the school level. And that inputs such as schemes of work or curricula, teachers' guides and lesson note books should be purchased through capitation or provided by the district on a timely basis.

### **5.3 Introduction and Ending with Learning objectives of the children**

The lack of preparation of the observed teachers was reflected in the way lessons were delivered. Teachers and therefore pupils were observed to be going in to a lesson without a clear idea of the lesson objectives. Generally, teachers were unable to either relate objectives with pupils' previous knowledge or bring a logical conclusion of their lessons. In general what observers saw was that teachers were writing a subject and topic title on the chalkboard at the beginning of a lesson but in many cases this did not adequately describe the actual learning outcome at the end of the lesson. Few teachers observed across the 86 classrooms actually discussed with pupils what they would be learning at the beginning of the lesson and even fewer reviewed whether pupils had learnt anything at the end of the lesson. This lack of concretising the lesson objective was evident from focal group discussions with children held immediately after the lesson observation. Children reported not fully understanding what the lesson was about and why they were being taught the lesson.

The evidence from the classroom observation reports was that those lessons dealing with subjects other than language (English or Ghanaian); and of the language lessons being taught, those that were dealing with some aspect of grammar or speaking and listening, teachers were more likely to begin with some kind of objective. However, reading lessons usually began with the teacher stating the topic of the reading passage with no reference to the reading skills that would be practiced or learned.

The findings from classroom observations in relation to whether teachers were sharing objectives at the beginning of lessons fall broadly in line with what was found in relation to teachers preparing for lessons by writing lesson notes. The relationship between the two activities is clear; if a teacher plans the lesson, the format of the notes requires that they consider what it is the pupils will learn. There were therefore a similar number of teachers who shared objectives as were able to present lesson notes.

The extent to which the objective is shared in a meaningful way with the children varies across the 86 classrooms observed and tends to depend on the subject taught. There is a general trend across most of the classrooms where maths or science was taught that teachers have a specific topic or aspect that they expect the children to learn and this is discussed at the outset. The same is true in most cases where teachers are delivering a grammar or speaking and listening lesson. Again teachers have usually planned to deliver a specific aspect, for example auxiliary verbs or giving and receiving instructions. Teachers delivering reading lessons tend not to share an objective. Rather they are writing the topic of the reading text on the chalkboard and perhaps discussing with the pupils what it is they know or understand about the topic as a precursor to reading the text. There was no instance where a teacher actually outlined an objective for a reading lesson to focus on a particular reading skill whether a decoding skill or a comprehension skill. Instead there seemed to be an implicit expectation on the parts of both teacher and pupils that they would be learning to "pronounce" the words they were reading, learn their meanings

and, in some cases, that they would know what the story or text was about. Teachers who gave comprehension questions were not seen to be explicitly discussing with the pupils what skills or strategies they would need to use in order to answer these questions from the text in front of them either at the beginning of the lesson as a learning objective or at the point at which questions were asked.

The plenary aspect of the lesson is an important part of a child-centred methodology. It is the time when learners are given the opportunity to reflect on what they were expecting to learn and the extent to which they have actually learned or understood. This tends not to be a part of the teaching and learning process in the classrooms observed where the expectation seems to be that pupils will spend time after the lesson memorizing the content of the lesson. Because of this, the way that lessons observed ended tended to follow a similar pattern across most of the 86 lessons observed – again depending on the subject under discussion. But in the main very few teachers explicitly referred back to the objective and discussed with pupils the extent to which they had understood it. In the case of grammar lessons teachers would ask the children to demonstrate their capacity to use the target language either by identifying, for example, the type of verb in a written sentence or by using the target language orally. In almost all other lessons pupils were either asked questions orally or were given a (usually) short exercise to do.

### **5.3.1 Northern Region**

The correlation between teachers preparing lesson notes or plans and sharing lesson objectives is strong in those classes observed in the Northern Region. There were very few teachers observed in the classrooms of West Mamprusi who were able to show evidence of lesson planning and this was reflected in the number of teachers who discussed with pupils what they would learn. The teachers observed in East Mamprusi performed better and from the evidence of lesson observation notes it appears that those who had planned their lessons also made some attempt to discuss an objective with pupils.

Evidence from observation notes for classes observed in rural West Mamprusi also indicate that because teachers did not share objectives, neither were they preparing the pupils for what they would learn by eliciting whether they had relevant previous knowledge (commonly referred to in research evidence as RPK). For example the P4 teacher at Manga Primary School (Rural WMD) is described thus:

*“The teacher did not tell pupils the objectives of the lesson. There was no linkage to students’ previous knowledge. The topic taught appeared to be repeated.”*

Other teachers are described as simply writing the title of the subject and/or topic on the chalkboard and then beginning a lesson described as “chalk and talk”.

Six out of the 8 teachers observed in rural West Mamprusi were untrained whereas most teachers observed in the urban schools were trained teachers. Observers noted from two trained teachers in the urban schools, that although they did not share objectives they delivered what appeared to

be coherent lessons where there was evidence of learning. The following example from Nuri – Islam primary 3 illustrates this:

*“Teacher though did not state lesson objectives but took time to explain all signs in the book. She made children demonstrate what she was explaining to them. She had full control of the class and allowed the children to talk. She moved around the class as she involved every child in the lesson by using the single text book for the class to enable every child to see and understand what she was demonstrating. Children demonstrated a sign of learning.”*

This was confirmed by class children in a Focal Group Discussion:

*“the teacher taught us very well. She allows us to write and we understand what she was teaching. She gives us the opportunity to read by ourselves”.*

However, the other two trained teachers observed in these rural schools were described as being unprepared and their lessons and general demeanour reflected this.

The correlation between preparing lesson notes and stating the objectives of the lesson did not follow in East Mamprusi where there were only two teachers who stated the objectives of the lesson at the beginning. They did not link these objectives with the previous knowledge of the pupils and the lessons did not go according to the stated objectives.

For example at Bunkuma Primary School in rural East Mamprusi the P3

*“Teacher had objectives written up at the beginning of the lesson. This did not have any correlation with previous lesson as he did try to relate the current lesson with the previous. Some objectives stated at the beginning of the lesson were met”*

However evidence from the interview with pupils after the lesson indicated that they felt the teachers’ explanations was adequate to their needs:

*“Teacher takes his time to explain to us. We are allowed to ask question whenever we don't understand.”*

At Zonzongeli JHS in urban West Mamprusi district the form 2 teacher:

*“Though he wrote objectives but did not really go according to its objectives. He was beating about the bush as there was so much confusion in his delivery”*

### **5.3.2 Upper East Region**

In every case in the three schools (2 Primary Schools and 1 Junior High School) in urban Talensi Nabdam the teachers introduced the lesson by writing some kind of lesson title on the chalk board. However, the degree to which this constituted an actual learning objective or whether this was discussed with children in terms of what they were expected to learn or be able to do, varied.

Three out of the five teachers (P3 & P6 Kulenga Primary School and P1 Kpatuya Primary School) discussed what the pupils would be learning during that lesson with them. In all three cases the teachers were trained and 2 of those teachers were in a school categorized as a high performing school (Kulenga Primary School). The two remaining lessons were both delivered by untrained teachers – a P5 pupil teacher (Kpatuya PS) and a JHS2 National Service teacher (Kpatuya JHS). Both lessons where the objective was not discussed were reading comprehension lessons whereas the other 3 lessons were either speaking-and-listening or grammar lessons. In all four of the Primary School lessons observed the lesson ended in the teacher giving an exercise for the children to complete. These were collected and marked. In the JHS class the lesson ended quite abruptly because the teacher was called to teach his next class.

Ten lessons were observed in 6 schools (4 Primary and 2 JHS) in rural Talensi Nabdam. In only one of those lessons is there evidence from the classroom observation notes that the teacher discussed with the pupils what they would be learning during that lesson. The teacher was a P6 pupil teacher (Namonsa Primary School) and the lesson was a speaking-and-listening lesson about instructions and directions.

In none of the classes observed in rural Talensi Nabdam did the teacher make an explicit reference to the objective at the end of the lesson. Instead, as was described for the urban schools for this district, the teachers either gave the pupils an exercise to do at the end of the lesson or the discussions were closed because it was time for the lesson to end.

Five lessons were observed in three schools (2 primary schools and 1 Junior High School) in urban Bongo. Of those, evidence from lesson observation notes indicates that only 2 teachers actually discussed with pupils what they would be learning. Both were trained teachers, both were teaching an aspect of grammar. The P3 teacher is in what has been categorized as a relatively low performing school (Lanwana Primary School). The Junior High School teacher is in a girls' Roman Catholic School (Adakudugu JHS).

Once again there was no explicit return to the objective, whether stated or not, at the close of the lesson. Although evidence from observation notes shows some teachers checked that children understood how to do the exercise. In Adakudugu Primary School, for example the P6 teacher gave the children a written exercise to do and then checked this to see if the questions had been answered correctly. In the P1 class at Adakudugu Primary School, lesson on describing people the teacher called pupils to the front of the class throughout the lesson to verbally form sentences using the key vocabulary, this, according to the observers “consolidated their learning after the lesson”.

Ten lessons were observed in rural Bongo in 6 schools (4 Primary School and 2 Junior High). Evidence from the lesson observation field reports indicates that of these 10 lessons, 5 teachers discussed the learning objective with pupils in a way that would clarify their understanding of what they would be learning. Two teachers were from the same school (Wuntenga Primary School) which has been categorized as a relatively high performing school; both were Pupil Teachers, a P2 teacher delivering a maths lesson and a P5 teacher teaching science. Another teacher was teaching letter writing in a JHS2 class (Wuntenga JHS) and is a trained teacher in his first year of teaching. In Gungolgu A Primary School (also categorized as a high performing

school), the P6 teacher (a trained teacher in his first year of teaching) discussed the objective of the maths lesson with pupils. The final teacher – an untrained (possibly volunteer) teacher in JHS 1 of Gungolgu JHS - delivered a grammar lesson on auxiliary verbs.

Of all the teachers observed the only teacher who is reported to have finished the lesson by returning to the original objective was the JHS1 teacher (an untrained, possibly volunteer teacher, in his first year of teaching) at Gungolgu Junior High School who delivered a lesson on auxiliary verbs. According to evidence from the classroom observation notes, the class were asked at the end of the lesson to give examples of primary and modal auxiliary verbs and most children were able give accurate examples.

Three out of five teachers had introduced the objective in urban Talensi Nabdam. No teacher reviewed the objective at the end. This compares with 1 teacher out of 10 in the rural schools introducing the objective and again none returning to it. There were fewer teachers introducing the objective in urban Bongo than in urban Talensi Nabdam, with just 2 out of 5. However, 2 out of 5 also checked the learning of students during the course of the lesson. Both of these teachers were from the Roman Catholic school (Adakudugu Junior High School) and both lessons were Grammar lessons. There were a proportionately similar number introducing the objective in rural Bongo as in urban Bongo, with 5 out of 10 teachers. Three of these teachers were delivering maths lessons, 1 a writing lesson and the last a grammar lesson. Just one teacher reviewed the objective at the end of the lesson in rural Bongo.

### **5.3.3 Upper West Region**

The extent to which teachers are prepared with lesson notes or some idea of what they will teach is reflected in the number of teachers who share the learning objective with pupils at the beginning of the lesson. The evidence from the 29 lesson observations in the 2 districts of the Upper West Region revealed that the same number of teachers who stated the objective with a similar distribution across those schools found in either urban or rural locations. What observers also noted was that those teachers who clearly state the learning objectives for the lesson are also making clear links between the current lesson and previous lessons. These teachers were observed to discuss with pupils what they had previously learned and were then demonstrating that the current objective built on this previous knowledge.

When comparing rural and urban districts across the region (UW), about half of the teachers in both contexts did not present the objectives of the lesson before or during the lesson. While the distribution of lessons that had no presentation of their learning objective was even between the 2 districts and between the rural and urban areas of each district, what is noticeable is the fact that of the 12 reading lessons observed, only 2 were started with teachers discussing the learning objective. Both of these lessons were in schools in the rural part of Lawra: A trained P5 teacher with 5 years experience at Balangtaa D/A Primary School:

*“The lesson was on pupils’ previous knowledge of road accidents. The lesson systematically followed the objectives by beginning with the key words after introducing lesson topic”.*

A trained P6 teacher in his first year of teaching at Tuokuo D/A Primary School:

*“Teacher started the lesson by following the order of the objectives. The presentation started smoothly with clear linkage between previous knowledge and present lesson. Teacher was confident in subject matter”*

However, as can be seen from the evidence from the classroom observation notes made by researchers, in both cases it is the subject of the reading text that is discussed in preparation for pupils’ comprehension of the text and not the actual reading skills that the pupils will be learning or practising in order to access either this or future texts.

The trends described for the lessons observed in the Upper West Region are mirrored in the Upper East where it was also noted that it was generally English lessons with a focus on grammar or speaking and listening where the teachers discussed what would be learned or practised at the outset of the lesson. The classroom observers rarely found teachers discussing the objectives of the reading lesson and helping learners understand the aspects to reading. This meant that very few children understood what skills are needed to be able to read and may be part of the reason why children believe that reading is about “pronouncing and repeating the words they listen to”.

In the majority of cases teachers observed in the 2 districts of the Upper West Region did not end the lesson with a review of what was supposed to have been learnt during the course of the session. The number of lessons where the objective was shared at the end of the lesson is proportionately the same in both rural and urban schools and across the 2 districts. Significantly, in both districts it is only trained teachers who are using this strategy.

#### **5.4 Subject matter/knowledge and content accuracy of the Teacher**

Classroom observations across the 86 classrooms in the north revealed that teachers laid a strong emphasis on fact based learning. Students are required to be able to recall definitions, algorithms and other facts. Questions posed by teachers observed across all the types of schools did not usually require students to synthesise, analyse or apply the knowledge they were learning. Some comprehension and understanding was required but most often pupils were being asked to memorize the information. Because of this, it is all the more important that Ghanaian teacher’s learn to own subject knowledge and the accuracy of the content they are “delivering”.

Evidence from research into the content and structure of teacher training indicates that little of the training is based on helping teachers explore and use and model different teaching and learning approaches and strategies. The emphasis on subject knowledge at training college level is reflected in the structure of the teacher training which often undermines their self confidence:

*“The first year foundation academic study is intended to build upon and consolidate the academic knowledge background of student teachers. It is argued that most trainees possess weak subject background knowledge which undermines their confidence and ability to teach effectively.” (MUSTER, DFID, 2003)*

*“A concern expressed many times by Ghanaian teacher educators is that there is insufficient training time for developing pedagogic knowledge and the skills of teaching.” (MUSTER, DFID, 2003)*

This is reflected in the findings from the classroom observations where most teachers were observed to have good subject knowledge and made very few errors in content. But there was little in the way of adaptive or child-centred methodologies used in the classrooms observed. Instead, many teachers appeared to be delivering lessons according to a prescribed format or straight from the pages of a pupil textbook with little or no reference to the specific needs of learners. Those teachers who demonstrated any weaknesses in the area of subject knowledge or general content accuracy tended to be untrained teachers. but there were only few cases where observers found trained teachers in this category.

#### **5.4.1 Northern Region**

The researchers found that teachers’ knowledge of subject matter across the West Mamprusi, Northern region was strong and in most instances, the trained or untrained teachers had a “good or fair knowledge” of the subject matter they were teaching. For instance observers noted at Manga Primary School in Rural West Mamprusi District: *“The teacher even though untrained and a volunteer teacher had understanding of what he taught. He had much control over the subject area even though he was not ready to teach English that morning. He did well in constructing sentences, explanation and involved the pupil throughout the lesson. (Classroom observation notes, Manga Primary School)”*

The challenge for three of the teachers in the West Mamprusi District was their inability to properly translate this knowledge to the pupils by using relevant teaching methodologies and strategies. For example:

*“The teacher had a fair understanding of the subject but little preparation to teach the topic was observed. He taught a topic that was prepared against 21st October, about 2 weeks earlier. Even though he might have had knowledge on the subject matter, he did not involve many of the students in class. Teacher could not explain correctly some key words that were used and could not also translate them in the local language for pupil's understanding”. (Source: Classroom observation, Wurshie B JHS, urban WMD)*

The research team encountered two teachers – one of whom was a trained teacher – who did not fully understand what they were teaching. Across the 6 classrooms observed in urban West Mamprusi (Northern Region), only one teacher felt that the lesson went well. The remaining five teachers confirmed that though they managed to pull through the lessons, there was room for improvement. They attributed this mainly to non preparedness and lack of TLMs. One teacher claimed she could not present her lesson well due to the presence of the team (Annex 5A).

In the East Mamprusi district (Northern Region), four of the teachers appeared not very well versed in the subject matter they taught. All four were untrained teachers. The lack of subject knowledge in the following example is compounded by the inability on the part of the teacher to demonstrate adequate classroom management strategies:

*“Teacher knowledge and understanding was poor. He could not express himself very well for the pupils to understand. Class was so noisy and teacher was shouting at the top of his voice.” (Source: classroom observation note P3 class, Zaratinga Primary School, Rural EMD)*

There were 12 trained teachers observed across the 2 districts of the Northern Region, of whom just one was judged to have poor subject knowledge, while the remaining five teachers were deemed to have a fair grasp of the subject matter of their lessons. The other 5 teachers who were felt to have poor subject knowledge were all untrained.

The schools visited in the Northern Region fall into 3 categories: District Assembly (DA), English and Arabic (EA) and Presbyterian (PRES). According to evidence from the classroom observation notes, none of the teachers who were deemed to have less than good subject knowledge were in an EA or PRES school.

#### **5.4.2 Upper East Region**

From the evidence gathered in the classrooms of urban Talensi Nabdam there are 3 teachers (of the 5 observed) who appear to have strong subject knowledge (although one of these teachers felt that he needed to improve on his English Grammar – source: post lesson interview). All three teachers are trained. The remaining 2 were a Pupil Teacher and a NSS teacher. In the case of the P5 Pupil Teacher at Kpatuya Primary School, it was difficult for observers to assess whether he had adequate subject knowledge because he made no attempt to give explanations of any of the vocabulary that the pupils were meeting in their comprehension text. The whole lesson was based on the teacher reading the text and the pupils repeating what was read.

Most teachers observed in the rural schools of Talensi Nabdam were reported to have at least adequate subject knowledge. The instances where this was not the case were generally untrained teachers. Errors in content were also noted by field workers as were some teachers’ inability to adapt subject knowledge or content adequately for pupils to understand. For example the P1 Pupil Teacher in Namonsa Primary School demonstrated that:

*“his understanding of the key words that he was focussing on for the lesson was adequate but the language he was using to give instructions to the children was beyond the scope of their understanding – this in many respects had to do with the fact that he was delivering an English lesson solely in English with little or no Ll. (Classroom observation notes, Talensi Nabdam District”*

These issues reflect the fact that teachers do not always plan their lessons carefully: teachers are not researching the subject thoroughly beforehand and ensuring that any examples or models closely reflect the learning outcome; some lessons are lifted from the textbook without any prior preparation. The current lesson is not linked to previous lessons or the age and ability of the pupils so that objectives and the level of language used to deliver them are achievable and accessible.

Observers noted about the P5 Pupil Teacher in Zuaringo Primary School, that there was some confusion in the way he modelled sentences to show the change in verbs as the subject changed. It was unclear, however, whether these errors in content indicated a gap in his subject knowledge or whether it was simply that he had not planned the lesson carefully enough to ensure that this confusion would not arise. The P2 trained teacher in the same school is reported to have had a good knowledge of the topic. However, the objective of the lesson was to guide pupils to be able to provide the missing letters for words or missing words for sentences (all examples of which were copied from a textbook): it was not clear to researchers what the teacher was expecting the children to learn from this. What is more, the lesson was a repeat of one delivered earlier in the term. Evidence drawn from the classroom observation notes for rural Talensi Nabdam indicates that 7 (out of the 10 observed) teachers have secure subject knowledge. 5 of these are trained teachers, one is a Pupil Teacher and the last is a NYEP teacher

Evidence from the classroom observations in **urban Bongo** indicates that 4 (out of the 5 teachers observed) had good subject knowledge. Four of them are trained teachers and 3 are from the Catholic Schools in this sample group (Adakudugu Primary School and Adakudugu Girls' JHS). The fifth teacher is a trained teacher teaching P6 at Lanwana Primary School, who made a number of content errors while discussing the comprehension text which was about HIV and AIDs.

Observers judged that 5 teachers (out of 10 observed) in classrooms in **rural Bongo** had strong subject knowledge. Three were trained teachers, one other was a pupil teacher (but observers felt that the subject being taught didn't really pose a challenge), the last one was a JHS teacher at Gungolgu JHS and is categorized in the lesson observation note as "other", so is untrained and possibly a volunteer from the community. He was thought by observers to have a "perfect" knowledge and understanding of the topic of auxiliary verbs.

Just one of the teachers who was thought to have less than adequate subject knowledge and who made some content errors was a trained teacher and the remainder were all untrained teachers.

Because teachers are not preparing lessons thoroughly beforehand, some teachers were unable to adequately adapt/translate the subject matter for their pupils. Classroom observations revealed that teachers: are either not able to take a slightly complex concept and simplify it for the understanding of pupils, or they are attempting to translate concepts in English in to the L1 of learners. As in the following example, the P3 NYEP teacher at Bulika Primary School, who had a strong subject matter content but made content errors. He made spelling mistakes (len for lean), did not appear confident and did not explain the meanings of some adjectives correctly in L1. In addition he had no lesson notes and was working from the textbook.

#### **5.4.3 Upper West Region**

Across the 29 lessons observed in Jirapa and Lawra there were only 2 teachers that demonstrated weak subject knowledge. Both teachers were teachers in rural Jirapa. The teacher who demonstrated what observers deemed as fair subject knowledge was a trained teacher and the only teacher with poor subject knowledge was a Community Volunteer Teacher at Kuvarpuo RC JHS who was teaching an English writing lesson: *"Knowledge of teacher is very limited because he appears not skilled enough for the classroom. Topic and subject matter is not even*

*elaborated to the benefit of students. Teacher made quite a number of errors and was confused himself.”*

As can be seen from the field report, this teacher appears to be completely unprepared for teaching, to the extent where he is making errors in content and delivers a lesson that appears to observers to be confused. However, evidence from the FGD with the pupils in this class lesson paints a slightly different picture:

*“Students (Girls) mentioned that the lesson was boring but they understand the teacher. Hence teacher was new and so student did not have much to say about him. Students remarked the teacher tried to do his best in making them understand what he was teaching”.*

*“(Boys) We now know how to write an article. We don’t like how the lesson was delivered. The teacher took a lot of time explaining other things.”*

From the students’ perspective, although they did not like the way the lesson was delivered, they felt that they had understood what was being taught and that they had achieved the necessary skills. What is significant about this group of students, however, is the fact that they are in form 3 of JHS and therefore skilled enough to glean some level of learning from a poorly executed lesson. A trained P4 teacher who was observed and deemed to have “fair subject knowledge” also had difficulties adapting the subject matter to the learner needs in their classroom:

*“The teacher had a fair understanding of what he was teaching. His level of explanation was not clear to the pupils. Not even one asked him a question since he could not even express himself well to the understanding of the pupils.” (Source: Classroom observation note, Kpaguri Primary School, rural Jirapa).* When asked about the lesson afterwards, pupils responded that they “liked all about the lesson” (source: FGD Pupils).

And, finally, the following example is of a trained JHS1 teacher in rural Lawra (UW) whose command of the language of instruction, according to the evidence from the observers’ report, is such that explanations are not always clear: *“The teacher understands and is well informed on what he is teaching. He gives several examples by working them out and explaining in detail for pupils benefit. However, the weakness is his proficiency in English speaking since pronunciations are sometimes unclear.” (Source: observation note, Balangtaa D/A JHS, Rural Lawra).* However, in the interview with pupils after the lesson, they felt that they had understood the lesson because when the teacher asked questions they were able to answer them correctly. The following table presents the findings from the Upper West in relation to the subject matter knowledge of the teachers.

In terms of whether teachers demonstrate adequate subject knowledge when delivering their lessons, there appears not to be any significant difference between the different regions, between each of the districts in the regions or even across the rural/urban divide. There were significant differences in the ability of how trained and untrained teachers were able to demonstrate adequate subject knowledge and the ability to adapt concepts or knowledge to the level of understanding of the pupils. There were also a higher proportion of trained teachers in the urban areas delivering lessons with objectives being clearly articulated to students based on the fact

that there were also a higher proportion of trained teachers observed in the urban schools than in the rural. The table below presents a summary of some of the evidence across the schools in the Upper West districts.

**Table 5.1: Summary of Evidence of Teachers' Subject Knowledge from Classroom Observations in Upper West Region**

		Good Subject Knowledge	Poor Subject Knowledge	Fair Subject Knowledge	Adaptability To Learner Needs	Errors In Content	Totals
Jirapa	Urban	5	0	0	0	0	5
Jirapa	Rural	8	1	1	2	1	10
Lawra	Urban	5	0	0	0	0	5
Lawra	Rural	9	0	0	0	1	9
Totals		27	1	1	2	2	29
		Good Subject Knowledge	Poor Subject Knowledge	Fair Subject Knowledge	Adaptability To Learner Needs	Errors In Content	Totals
Jirapa	High	5	0	1	2	0	6
Jirapa	Low	6	0	0	0	0	6
Lawra	High	5	0	0	0	0	5
Lawra	Low	6	0	0	0	0	6
Totals		22	0	1	2	0	23
		Good Subject Knowledge	Poor Subject Knowledge	Fair Subject Knowledge	Adaptability To Learner Needs	Errors In Content	Totals
Jirapa	RC	9	1	0	1	1	10
Jirapa	DA	4	0	1	1	0	5
Lawra	RC	2	0	0	0	0	2
Lawra	DA	12	0	0	0	1	12
Totals		27	1	1	2	2	29
		Good Subject Knowledge	Poor Subject Knowledge	Fair Subject Knowledge	Adaptability To Learner Needs	Errors In Content	Totals
Jirapa	Trained	10	0	1	2	0	11
Jirapa	Pupil teacher	2	0	0	0	0	2
Jirapa	CVT	1	1	0	0	1	2
Lawra	Trained	12	0	0	0	1	12
Lawra	Pupil teacher	1	0	0	0	0	1
Lawra	CVT	1	0	0	0	0	1
Totals		27	1	1	2	2	29
		Good Subject Knowledge	Poor Subject Knowledge	Fair Subject Knowledge	Adaptability To Learner Needs	Errors In Content	Totals
Upper West	English Reading	8	0	1	0	0	9
Upper West	Dagaare Reading	2	0	0	0	0	2
Upper West	Ghanaian Language Reading	1	0	0	0	0	1
Totals		11	0	1	0	0	12
		Good Subject Knowledge	Poor Subject Knowledge	Fair Subject Knowledge	Adaptability To Learner Needs	Errors In Content	Totals
Upper West	LOWER PRIMARY	10	0	0	1	0	10
Upper West	UPPER PRIMARY & JHS	17	1	1	1	2	19
Totals		27	1	1	2	2	29

(Source: classroom observation instrument, TENI field research)

## 5.5 The Language of Instruction

Children going to school in Ghana or indeed in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa face the challenge of having to access most of their basic education through the medium of a foreign language. Research shows that young children acquire a second language more efficiently between the ages of 3 and 8 but successful acquisition of a second language **requires proficiency in the mother tongue**. It is therefore important that children's language skills and vocabulary are firmly embedded in their mother tongue before they are required to study a second language, especially if the second language has complex and irregular grammatical structures and spelling rules different from that of their mother tongue. Moreover, there needs to be a reasonable level of proficiency in the second language before a child is able to use it effectively for learning (Abadzi, 2006). A child who cannot properly understand the language of instruction is at a distinct disadvantage.

The language of instruction was another aspect of the quality of education study on inhibitors and promoters which was explored in relation to teacher lesson delivery and was primarily based on data collected from the classroom observation instrument and focal group discussion with pupils following the observation. The extent to which pupils are able to understand/access the language of instruction had a significant impact on the quality of learning across all three regions of the country. In classrooms observed where the pupils could not understand their classroom teacher, very little learning was experienced by pupils in these classrooms<sup>30</sup>. In some cases, particularly at the upper grade level, teachers were delivering lessons wholly in English and observers noted that in many cases, in the Upper East, the majority of pupils were unable to understand the teachers. The language of instruction in the Northern and the Upper West Regions was mainly in the Local language (LO1) with English being used as the language of instruction in only a few schools such as the urban mission schools in these regions.

Evidence from the research indicates that pupils at the JHS class level more frequently understood English than their primary level counterparts. The Upper East Region was found to be repeating students by not allowing pupils with low levels of English and Maths achievement to transit from P6 to JHS contrary to GES policy; this repetition policy in the Upper East enabled most JHS pupils to speak and understand English at a higher level compared to pupils in the other two regions where the practice of repeating children at the upper primary level was not common. Generally, the research team observed a high usage of L1 in rural schools compared to urban schools in all three regions. They also found a higher usage of L1 in the Upper West and Northern Regions of the country.

Furthermore in some classes the level of English required in the lesson or text was beyond the English fluency of the students. These lessons were ostensibly comprehension lessons but usually the only comprehension that students were exposed to was the meanings of individual words. Often these meanings were given by the teacher and it was then up to the student to memorise these definitions. In some cases the meanings were translated into the pupils' mother tongue but the result was the same – the word and its translation will need to be memorised.

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<sup>30</sup> All classroom observations were triangulated with Focal Group Discussions with a cross section of children (male separate from female groups) in order to ascertain the degree of understanding achieved from the lesson which was taught.

Findings from the study suggest that when the English text is translated into the local language, the children brighten up and are more able to answer the comprehension questions earlier asked in English. Many teachers translate the English text they are using for the lesson into the local language in order for children to understand. As a result of this the lesson therefore stops being a reading lesson and becomes a listening comprehension lesson.

Probably the most important finding from the study was that in the vast majority of classrooms observed teachers were using approaches such as recitation and repetition to teach children how to read. Focal group interviews with children also reveal that most Ghanaian children at primary level understood the process of reading to mean recitation and the “pronunciation of words”. In many of classrooms observed across the three northern regions there was little evidence that basic literacy decoding skills and phonetic and syllabic approaches to reading were being taught in either language. This had significant impact on the teachers’ ability to teach reading skills and also on the learners’ ability to learn to read and understand text being used in the classroom.

The tables below summarise the evidence from the classroom observations across the 3 regions, and provides the opportunity for a closer examination of the way language is used and understood (or not) in the classroom and whether there is a particular trend in terms of differences in school context, teacher type, or subject. The lessons are classified according to whether the teacher taught solely in the local language (All L1) or wholly in English (All L2). In some cases teachers were using either a Ghanaian language or English for most of the lesson with some switching to the other language, these instances are classified as Most L1 and Most L2. Where teachers used both languages for a proportionately similar time, they have been classified as a mixture. For each classification there is an indication of whether pupils understood. The evidence for this judgement is drawn mostly from classroom observation notes particularly relating to levels of participation and further validated by evidence from focal group interviews with children from that same classroom. However, it should also be noted that whether the pupils understood the language of instruction is not an indicator that they learned anything. The language of instruction is only one element that dictates whether quality learning takes place, teachers’ methodology, and other determining factors also need to be in place. These other elements will be looked at in the coming section.

The evidence from this table supports the assertion that L1 is used more frequently in rural classrooms than in urban. Of the 86 lessons taught in the rural schools visited and observed across the three regions, 22 of the teachers were observed to either deliver their lessons wholly in L1 or they switched between the first and second languages.

**Table 5.2: Breakdown of Numbers of Lessons and Type of LoI Across all 86 Observed Classrooms by Community Type**

	ALL L1	UNDER STAND	ALL L2	UNDER STAND	MOST L1	UNDER STAND	MOST L2	UNDER STAND	MIXTURE	UNDER STAND	Total Lessons
Urban	2	2	11	7	2	2	10	8	5	4	30
Rural	4	4	21	11	3	3	13	6	15	15	56
Totals	6	6	32	18	5	5	23	14	20	19	86

(Source: classroom observation instrument, TENI field research)

Less than a third of the lessons delivered in the urban schools used the L1 or switched between the first and second languages. These figures are somewhat skewed by the research factor which is uncovered when scrutinizing follow up interviews with teachers and pupils. A number of teachers and pupils interviewed after a lesson that was either wholly or mostly delivered in English asserted that “normally” the teacher would use or switch to the local language more frequently than they were observed. What is also clear from this summary table is the extent to which children in the rural schools are able to understand L2. Of the lessons taught wholly or mostly in L2 in the urban schools about three-quarters were understood according to FGI’s with pupils. However, of the lessons taught wholly in the L2 in the rural schools the proportion of lessons which were understood by pupils was less than half demonstrating a much weaker knowledge of English and ability to comprehend the lesson when taught in English.

It should be noted here that only the Primary Schools were categorized as high or low performing. Junior High Schools were selected for the research on the basis of their proximity to the sample Primary Schools and or were often receiving pupils from the primary levels. Two thirds of the lessons delivered in schools categorized as high performing were either wholly or mostly in English of which about three quarters of the lessons were accessible to the majority of students in the classes (based on FGD’s with pupils). This finding is in contrast to the low performing schools where just over half of the teachers used English but in only few of these lessons was there evidence that the majority of pupils were able to understand what was being learnt. The following table serves to illustrate any differences between schools classified as high and low performing.

**Table 5.3: Breakdown of numbers of Lessons and Type of LoI Across all 86 Observed Classrooms by School Performance**

	ALL L1	UNDER STAND	ALL L2	UNDER STAND	MOST L1	UNDER STAND	MOST L2	UNDER STAND	MIXTURE	UNDER STAND	Total Lessons
High	3	3	10	7	2	2	11	6	8	8	34
Low	3	3	8	3	3	3	9	5	11	10	34
Totals	6	6	18	10	5	5	20	11	19	18	68

(Source: classroom observation note, TENI field research)

The table below illustrates the differences between Faith based and DA schools. The number of EA and Presbyterian schools observed is too low to draw any conclusions. In terms of the lessons delivered in RC schools, it is clear that lessons were taught using mainly English. Of these observers only indicated 2 lessons (equivalent to 20%) where the majority of pupils were not able to access the learning. On the other hand there were 43 lessons taught in DA schools mainly or wholly in English and a little under half of these were not understood. This evidence suggests that when teachers only use English or mainly use English as the language of instruction fewer pupils are able to understand and are less likely to learn.

**Table 5.4: Breakdown of numbers of Lessons and Type of LoI Across all 86 Observed Classrooms by School Type (Faith Based or DA)**

	ALL L1	UNDER STAND	ALL L2	UNDER STAND	MOST L1	UNDER STAND	MOST L2	UNDER STAND	MIXTURE	UNDER STAND	Total Lessons
RC	1	1	4	2	1	1	6	6	3	3	15

DA	4	4	26	15	3	3	17	8	15	15	65
EA	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	4
PRES	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Totals	6	6	32	18	5	5	23	14	20	19	86

(Source: classroom observation note, TENI field research)

When comparing teacher types it becomes clear that there is not a great difference between the language of instruction being used by trained and untrained teachers. Particularly in terms of lessons delivered wholly in English. Findings do suggest that a much lower proportion of lessons being delivered mostly in English by Pupil Teachers were understood by the students. But apart from this there is little or no difference across the different types of teachers. See table below:

**Table 5.5: Breakdown of numbers of Lessons and Type of LoI Across all 86 Observed Classrooms by Type of Teacher**

	ALL L1	UNDER STAND	ALL L2	UNDER STAND	MOST L1	UNDER STAND	MOST L2	UNDER STAND	MIXTURE	UNDER STAND	Total Lessons
Trained	2	2	20	11	3	3	14	11	11	10	50
Pupil teacher	1	1	7	4	1	1	8	2	4	4	21
NYEP	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	3	5
NSS	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
CVT	2	2	2	1	0	0	1	1	2	2	7
Other	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	6	6	32	18	5	5	23	14	20	19	86

(Source: classroom observation note, TENI field research)

How teachers are teaching reading is examined in greater detail elsewhere in this report. Evidence from the table below suggests that one of the main inhibitors of children acquiring reading skills is that they are unable to understand the language. Where teachers were using solely English in the sample classrooms, only one third of the lessons were understood. In every other lesson the teacher was switching between languages.

**Table 5.6: Breakdown of numbers of Lessons and Type of LoI Across all 86 Observed Classrooms by Type of Lesson (focus on Literacy)**

	ALL L1	UNDER STAND	ALL L2	UNDER STAND	MOST L1	UNDER STAND	MOST L2	UNDER STAND	MIXTURE	UNDER STAND	Total Lessons
English - Reading Comprehension	1	1	9	3	0	0	5	4	5	4	20
Ghanaian Language Reading	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
Dagaare Reading	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Totals	5	5	9	3	0	0	5	4	6	5	25

(Source: classroom observation note, TENI field research)

The following table illustrates the comparison of language of instruction use between upper primary and JHS and lower primary. Lower primary classes include P1 to P3; upper Primary is P4 to P6.

**Table 5.7: Breakdown of numbers of Lessons and Type of LoI Across all 86 Observed Classrooms by Class Level**

	ALL L1	UNDER STAND	ALL L2	UNDER STAND	MOST L1	UNDER STAND	MOST L2	UNDER STAND	MIXTURE	UNDER STAND	Total Lessons
LOWER PRIMARY	4	4	2	0	5	5	10	4	10	10	31
UPPER PRIMARY & JHS	2	2	30	18	0	0	13	10	10	9	55
Totals	6	6	32	18	5	5	23	14	20	19	86

(Source: classroom observation note, TENI field research)

Again the evidence from this table suggests that most teachers in the lower primary classes are using L1. What is also clear from the table is that where teachers are using more English the pupils are not able to access the lesson. L1 is used to a much lesser degree higher up the primary school and in JHS. However, what these figures tell us is that in a little under half the classes where English was either wholly or mostly used, students were unable to understand what the teacher was teaching.

### 5.5.1 Northern Region

The language of instruction for lower, upper primary and JHS was mainly English across all classrooms observed in the West Mamprusi district. Most teachers observed during classroom observations attempted translating and explaining some key words in the local language for children to understand. Not all who attempted were able to properly translate to pupils in local language. Evidence from FGDs with pupils indicates that they feel the use of local language to translate certain words, ideas and concepts is helpful in enabling them to understand what is being taught. Conversely, those students interviewed who were taught solely in English felt that:

*“Most of the teachers speak English in the class but most of us do not understand very well. Sometimes they speak the local language but it is rare” (Zori JHS, FGD F2 Pupils)*

Fourteen classrooms were observed in the West Mamprusi district out of which 5 were in lower primary classes, 7 upper primary, and 2 Junior High. There was an expectation on the part of researchers that they would observe NALAP approaches being used in the lower primary classes. Surprisingly, there was only one teacher using the NALAP materials and approach during classroom observations. In the P1 class at Zori Primary School children were found using alphabet cards and were engaged in practicing how to read and write in local language.

*“Teacher deliberately mixed up cards and calls on children to identify the appropriate card and try to spell it out and pronounce the word in local language and then in English.” (Source: classroom observation note)*

Teachers who entirely used the English language throughout the lesson, experienced little participation and involvement of pupils in the lesson. For instance in Wurshie B JHS, most of the students could not read or speak fluently in English. Even though the teacher's English was simple, only a few students were able to understand and participate in the lesson. In the case of Wurshie B Primary school (Urban WMD), more than half the children in class seemed to understand the teacher. This was because the teacher combined English and Da and she was able to demonstrate and explain to pupils. The pupils participated fully and were able to respond to questions. FGD with pupils after the classroom observation confirmed that pupils were excited about the fact that their teachers used both English and Mamprulie: *“Our Teacher teaches in both English and Mamprulie. This helps us to understand better”* (FGD with pupils, P2 Wurshie B primary school)

At Nuri-Islam primary school though the: *“Teacher used both English and Ghanaian language. She kept shouting and harshly correcting children whenever they made mistakes and hence children were timid and were afraid to respond and participate in class. The children were compelled by the teacher to speak English because of the presence of the research team. This restricted their participation in class. Teacher herself had difficulties translating some words from English to Mamprusi as she explained the meaning of the key words from the passage she read”*. (Urban, WMD).

Evidence from classroom observations in East Mamprusi district describes a high level of L1 usage in rural schools compared to urban schools. Four teachers used mixed language approach with majority of the lesson conducted in local language. Two teachers used entirely the local language throughout the lesson. While in urban East Mamprusi, 2 teachers used a mixed language approach and remaining 3 used only English language. They did not appear to consider whether the pupils understood and made no attempt to translate to pupils. This led to very poor participation and understanding. This suggest that most lessons observed were staged for the observers and did not represent real every day normal classroom interaction

Other evidence from research in East Mamprusi classrooms and interviews with pupils points out other challenges to learning. In the first instance it is the extent to which the teacher is able to communicate fluently either in the language of instruction or the mother tongue of the pupils. One example comes from Wuyela JHS in rural East Mamprusi where:

*“The teacher grew up in Togo (Francophone country) and only schooled in Ghana in the latter part of his adolescence. He taught in English language throughout the lesson. He spoke English solely. There are some of the students who did not participate because they at least needed a translation into the local language which the teacher cannot speak. He was not fluent in English either and made few grammatical errors as he taught in the class. He was able to use the English language to speak to the hearing and understanding of most of the students.”*

The JHS curriculum requires that pupils learn Da in order to sit the Ghanaian Language BECE. For many children in the Northern Region this is not their mother tongue and they may not necessarily be fluent English speakers, so teachers will switch between Da and the L1. In the

following example which is taken from the lesson observation report of a Ghanaian Language lesson at Bamahu JHS (Rural EMD) the teacher is switching between 3 languages:

*“The teacher taught in three languages, Da, Mamprulie and English. He taught the lesson in Da. He did the explaining in either Mamprulie or in English. He used simple language for the students to follow and contribute. Students also tried to speak Da during the lesson even though they speak Mamprulie at home. (Classroom observation in Northern region)”*

Another potential challenge is when teachers and learners are working in different languages. As evidence from the following FGD with pupils from Nintendo Primary School in rural East Mamprusi indicates “Some of us speak Bimoba, Bissa and Mamprulie.”

### **5.5.2 Upper East Region**

There appears to be a clear distinction between how the language of instruction is experienced between the two districts and as a result differences in the extent to which pupils are able to understand what is said by the teacher and thereby increase the likelihood of learning. L1 is more frequently used in Lower Primary classes than upper and while this is the case in both Talensi Nabdam and Bongo, the number of lower primary teachers in Talensi Nabdam using L1 is fewer than in Bongo. What is clear from the evidence from the classroom observations is that children at Junior High School level are more likely to be able to understand lessons delivered in English. In 5 out of the 6 JHS lessons the observers conclude in their notes that most children understood. The lesson in Ayimpoka JHS (a school in rural Talensi Nabdam) was a reading comprehension lesson and few opportunities were given to students to participate so it was difficult for observers to assess their level of understanding. However from the evidence of the Focal Group discussion with pupils, the form 2 students said: “We like it because we are not speaking vernacular. We do not enjoy learning “When they are speaking vernacular”.

Five lessons were observed in urban Talensi Nabdam in three schools (2 primary and 1 Junior High). According to evidence from the classroom observation field reports only 1 teacher used L1 in her lesson (P1 lesson in Kpatuya Primary School, trained teacher). In the other lower primary class observed (P3 lesson in Kulenga Primary School, trained teacher) there is evidence that most of the children were not able to understand English.

*“Language of instruction was mainly English and it appears that only a few students/pupils understood the language since 5 pupils were constantly raising their hands and the others the teacher called to participate had to be given more examples after which they still could not get the answers right.” (Source: classroom observation note)*

In the 2 upper primary classes and the JHS class observed only English was used. In the Kulenga Primary School P6 class the evidence shows that pupils were able to respond but not with total accuracy. However in the Kpatuya Primary School P5 class the evidence suggests that there was little or no understanding.

*“English only - Key words were written on the chalkboard and read out loud and the children repeated them several times. No explanation about the meaning of the words was given. Later in the FGD, the boys were not able to say what was the meaning of those words, so that shows that the children did not understand the words they were reading from the blackboard. (Source: classroom observation note)”*

The English lesson in Kpatuya JHS form 2 class appears to have been understood by most of the children.

In contrast to the situation found in Bongo, rural schools in Talensi Nabdam appeared to be using L1 to a much lesser degree. There were four instances where L1 was used for classroom management, to explain instructions, and to elucidate concepts not understood in English, but for the most part English was used except for a P1 class (Ayimpoka Primary School). What researchers also observed was that many children were not able to access the language of instruction but because in some cases school policy prohibited the use of L1 in upper primary classes and in JHS, the teacher had little choice but to continue using L2. One of the teachers interviewed, a trained P3 teacher at Chuchuliga Primary School, said that when he was at teachers’ college he was told that local language should be used to teach from L1 to L3, but the officers told them to teach in English (source: post lesson interview). He went on to say he uses both languages so that children will understand. There was evidence of teachers simplifying the English used – that is to say using only a small variety of words or phrases and ensuring, through questioning, that pupils understood what was being taught. However, it is clear from the evidence that in the majority of cases, pupils were not learning because they simply did not understand what was being said to them or what they were expected to read particularly those children in lower primary classes. As is illustrated by the following example from the P1 class at Namonsa Primary School:

*“The lesson was mainly conducted in English with just one instruction given in Ghanaian when the teacher emphasised that he wanted the pupils to give only 3 examples of objects. He had previously given the same instruction in English on 2 occasions but the students weren't complying, after hearing it in the local language all the children complied with the instruction which gave us the impression that most were NOT accessing the language of instruction (English).”*

In terms of the language, or mixture of languages used for instruction, English was the sole language in upper primary and JHS classes and a mixture of L1 and L2 in lower primary. The difference lay in the extent to which pupils were accessing their teacher’s language. As is illustrated by this excerpt from the classroom observation note from the P6 class in Lanwana Primary School:

*“The lesson was conducted solely in English. It was, however, difficult to gauge to what extent the children were able to access the language of instruction or indeed the text itself as very few questions were asked about what different words meant or what the children understood from the text. After the lesson when we interviewed a sample of 10 children (5 boys and 5 girls), it seemed that most of them were not confident to answer questions in English and needed to have questions translated in order to be able to respond. Also*

*during this interview and the interview with the teacher it became clear that usually the teacher uses a mixture of English and the local language in order to make explanations clear.”*

There is a clear distinction between those schools designated as high and low performing schools. The students’ level of fluency in English (in JHS and Upper Primary) was far higher in the high performing Primary School (Adakudugu RC Primary School) and its attached JHS (Adakudugu Girls RC JHS) and there was clear evidence in the same school that teachers in the lower primary were using a combination of L1 and L2

In the rural schools of Bongo, the main language of instruction is English (L2). However, the extent to which teachers use the local language (L1) varies in the first instance according to the age of the children. The evidence shows that teachers are using L2 more in the JHS classes and the Upper Primary (P4, P5 & P6) and that L1 is used to a greater extent in the Lower Primary classes (P1, P2 & P3). In every case except for one JHS class observed (Gungolgu JHS1), teachers used L1 at some stage during the lesson. Again the extent to which this was used varied, but was not, according to the evidence, related to the pupils’ understanding. In one case (Wuntenga Primary School, P2), the teacher was using L2 throughout the lesson, but used L1 for class management. This clearly indicated that he had more confidence in the children being able to access and act on instructions in their mother tongue than in English.

*“The language of instruction was all English, so all explanations of ideas/concepts were in English. However, teacher used Frafra [L1] to manage behaviour of children. (Source: classroom observation note)*

There were only 3 lessons observed in rural Bongo schools where the observers were confident that the majority of pupils were accessing the language of instruction. A JHS1 class in which the lesson was delivered wholly in English (Gungolgu JHS), a Lower Primary Class (P1 Akugri Primary School) in which the lesson was delivered almost wholly in L1, and an Upper Primary Class (P4 Akugri Primary School) in which the lesson was taught in English but explanations and examples were provided in L1. In every case observers were confident that the teachers’ competence in both L1 and L2 was adequate, although there were some minor discrepancies in terms of pronunciation and grammatical knowledge.

*“The lesson was taught mainly in English, completed with explanations in Gurune. The children seemed to understand little English. The teacher spoke good Gurune, . . . but his English pronunciation was pretty poor. At the FGD the boys seemed to have understood better what was explained in Gurune. (Source: classroom observation note, P4 Akugri Primary School).*

Pupils’ attitudes varied in relation to which language was used for teaching in the classroom. However, there was clear evidence in the Upper East that students (and their parents) invested a great deal of value in being able to speak, be taught and understand English:

*“We enjoy learning when everyone is speaking English, when the teacher is teaching, when they are understanding well and when all the pupils are quiet. They also don't like*

*it when teachers use the local language. They want everything in English so that they can improve.” (Source: FGD with P6 girls Namonsa Primary School, rural Talensi-Nabdam)*

Other groups also said that they liked the fact that they were “forced” to speak English, a clear reference to the fact that in some schools there is a stringently enforced policy of speaking only English. The status being attached to speaking and learning in English reflects other research in Ghana during RECOUP where pupils in the Northern Region were found to equate education with being able to “speak and read in English.” However, at least two groups of pupils disclosed that they are punished for speaking their mother tongue in the school and the P5 boys at Kpatuya Primary School in Urban Talensi Nabdam stated that:

*“They don't like being caned when they don't know how to answer or resolve exercises or for speaking in the local language.” (Source: FGD with pupils)*

### **5.5.3 Upper West Region**

Across **Jirapa district** 15 lessons were observed, 5 were in urban schools and 10 in rural. None of the lessons observed in the urban schools were solely in English or L1. Three teachers delivered their lessons in English with some explanations in mother tongue; these lessons were all in upper primary or JHS. One lower primary teacher used mostly L1 and the last; a P1 teacher used a mixture. Observers noted that pupils were able to access the language(s) in every case. This was not reflected in the rural schools where 3 teachers taught solely in English, a P1 teacher, a P4 teacher and a JHS teacher. In each case observers found that the majority pupils in the classes were not able to understand due mainly to the low participation of students in the class and the focal group discussion with students after the class. Of the other lower primary lessons, one teacher used only L1 and the other used mostly L1. The rest of teachers used a combination of L1 and L2 that observers felt was understood.

In **Lawra** there were more lessons delivered solely in English, two in the urban schools and 5 in the rural. All but one lesson were in upper primary or JHS classes. The P4 lesson in Yelibuori D/A Primary School (rural Lawra):

*“ was fully conducted in English and no local language was spoken. From observation children were very poor readers and apparently did not understand what they were reading because afterwards when teacher asked comprehension questions they could not answer. It would have been appropriate if the teacher explained passage in Dagaare.” (Source: classroom observation note)*

All other lessons were delivered in either L1 or a mixture of English and the local language and observers judged that the majority of pupils were able to understand.

Overall, researchers noted that pupils understood the language(s) of instruction in the majority of cases (21 lessons out of 29 observed). With respect to the other 8 lessons, the pupils either did not understand or there was insufficient evidence for observers to determine the extent to which students were able to understand the language of instruction (either English or local language)

because interactions between pupils and teacher were so few. In terms of the location of schools, there is a fairly even distribution between those schools in rural and those in urban areas of those lessons where students were considered to be able to understand the language of instruction. What the evidence does show however is a difference between pupils' understanding of the language used in lower primary and those in upper primary and JHS. More pupils were able to understand the language of instruction at the lower primary level compared to the upper primary and JHS. It was at the upper primary and JHS where the use of English predominates. In 15 out of the 19 lessons observed in P4 to P6 and JHS1 to JHS3 English is either solely or mostly used.

An example can be found in a lesson observed in rural Jirapa from the P4 class in Kpaguri DA Primary School: *"Although few of the pupils understood the teacher in English he used L2 as the language of instruction throughout the lesson."*

## 5.6 Comparisons

With respect to the language of instruction the determining factor as to whether the language of instruction promotes or inhibits the quality education in a classroom is mainly based on the fluency of learners in that language and the ability of the teacher to teach them this language. Various teachers across the 6 districts under study were delivering lessons solely in English but with varying degrees of success. Success depended mainly on the age and experience of learners. JHS students are more likely to have a better fluency in English; especially in those schools where transition from P6 to JHS 1 is dependent on students' ability to demonstrate a desired level of proficiency in Maths and English. Children in Upper Primary classes are also more likely to be able to access a lesson delivered in English. The evidence also indicates that students in the urban centres, especially in high performing faith based schools, had a higher level of English fluency given that they were able to participate in lessons where English was solely or mainly used. Researchers noted that interviews with these pupils were conducted in English whereas other interviews in most of the rural schools had to be translated to the children's mother tongue.

The choice that teachers make in deciding on the language they used was not always determined by the level of understanding of their pupils. Some teachers reported that they delivered lessons wholly or mostly in English based on the policy of the school even though students were unable to participate. Most lessons observed in urban schools revealed that pupils were able to understand English as a medium of instruction; lessons in which students did not understand the language of instruction were in the rural parts of each district.

School policies related to language use differ across the 3 regions. Teachers and pupils in the Upper East indicated that the use of mother tongue or "vernacular" was prohibited in some schools especially at Upper Primary and JHS levels, urban and catholic. No such policies were reported from the Upper West. While in the Northern Region, although there was evidence of only one teacher using the NALAP materials, schools were meant to provide children with a bilingual instructional approach using predominantly mother tongue in the lower primary from KG to P3. Unfortunately this policy was not being adhered to in any of the schools primarily due to the lack of awareness of head teachers and teachers regarding the Ghana Government's NALAP programme and language policy. One teacher in the Upper East felt confused by the

English only rule as it had been his understanding while at teacher training college that there was a general policy of using mother tongue (L1) as the medium of instruction for the first 3 years of primary level education. The findings from the study reveal large scale confusion across the three northern regions regarding the language of instruction which was best suited to primary schools... this had large scale implications for early grade reading.

Fluency in English is generally regarded as a marker of quality learning. As such it has been raised to a status that creates resistance on the part of parents, teachers and pupils to strengthen pupils' use of their mother tongue.

## **5.7 Promoters and Inhibitors of Quality Education**

The greatest challenge to quality learning in northern Ghanaian primary schools is whether the teacher is delivering classroom lessons in a language that is accessible by students and whether literacy skills are being developed alongside this process of cross subject learning at early grade levels. The research suggests that Ghanaian teachers are using a variety of approaches to the language of instruction at the primary level and have not embraced the Government language policy for teaching L1 where possible as the main language of instruction but are often using a mixture of languages which poses problems for learners especially with respect to learning to read.

The teaching of reading in Ghanaian primary schools is at the heart of the challenge with respect to the language of instruction. If children at the lower primary level were being taught how to decode, phonetically sound out words along with several other reading strategies particularly in the mother tongue and then in English... these children's access and ability to understand the language of instruction would be enhanced and learning efficiency/effectiveness would be achieved. Unfortunately there was no evidence that enough classrooms in northern Ghana had embraced or were using this approach which is the basis of the Government's NALAP programme; NALAP was designed to address the early grade challenge in reading and literacy skills as it promotes these key methods of teaching how to read (using a phonetic and syllabic bilingual approaches to literacy) across the lower primary. Ghana has had several attempts by donor to ensure that children learn to read particularly at lower primary level. This research suggests that teachers and their heads appear unable and unconscious to this most critical step.

Without a clear path to literacy particularly at the lower primary level, children's ability to understand the L2 language will remain a great challenge for Ghanaian primary children (this is discussed in more depth in the next section on methodology). Most teachers who were observed teaching language skills were using the rote/memorisation strategy of teaching reading whereby an English text is read for the students to repeat several times and then translate this text into mother tongue. Although many pupils said they "*liked this method*"; this method has significant barriers to helping children learn to develop decoding and comprehension skills in either the mother tongue or English text. Research suggests that children who learn to memorise and repeat vocabulary without learning the attack strategies, contextual attack, basic decoding skills which will likely limit their ability to read forcing them to guess at the text which is placed in front of them. Research further indicates that children should have a good core vocabulary in

the target language before reading can be taught successfully (Abadzi, 2006) and yet teachers were using English texts with children whose fluency was minimal.

The major challenge to children's acquisition of English, however, is the fact that they are immersed in a learning environment that requires high levels of fluency which they are not then overtly taught. For most children in the northern regions of Ghana – particularly those in the rural areas – their learning experiences for the first 7 years of their lives are negotiated in their mother tongue. On entering the public school system, they are required to begin the process of renegotiating all the cognitive and logical structures they have built in their mother tongue into English. In the lower primary classrooms, learning to read using a variety of strategies is essential to helping children understand the language of instruction; there was little evidence from classroom observations that this process of learning to read was being embraced and a focus of the classroom teacher. Rather, children were guided to repeat, recite and learn by rote.

In order to meet these challenges, a significant change in the way in which pupils are taught needs to take place in Ghanaian Classrooms. There is strong evidence from research that

*The number of years of instruction in the first language is the most important predictor of reading performance in a second language. It is not important what the first language is, but rather how much cognitive and academic development the student has experienced in it. The higher the students' achievement in the primary language, the faster they will progress in the second language. (Abadzi, 2006)*

A more effective model of language acquisition and literacy particularly in the mother tongue is therefore essential for children, beginning in the first few years of primary school with children receiving instruction solely in their mother tongue at KG and P1 with graduation to the second language in English (by P2 and P3). This is the bilingual approach which NALAP promotes and has developed with scripted lessons for teachers from KG to P3. This would mean that by the time the child reaches upper primary they would have established a firm base of cognitive and academic development, a good level of fluency in the L2 and be able to tackle the challenge of completing their basic education in another language.

The English lessons observed as part of this research could be divided into different categories. The reading lesson, as described above, tended to follow the pattern of read, repeat, read, recite and learn by rote the meanings of key vocabulary either in L1 or L2. However, another category of lesson observed was the grammar lesson (see annex 5D for a detailed description of a typical reading and grammar lesson). There were a number of grammar lessons that, because of the methodology used, could be described as exemplifying good teaching practice. This is because the teacher clearly outlined the objective and focused on a particular aspect or key target language. The students were given the opportunity to discuss what they understood and provide examples of the target language and verbalise their adaptation of how it could be used with the different examples. The emphasis on speaking and listening in these lessons is a good model for how to improve the core language skills and vocabulary of learners of English. This building of vocabulary is an important prerequisite to reading especially as written English contains complex and irregular grammar and spelling rules.

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

The key findings from this area of inquiry was based on exploring the methodologies, strategies and instructional approaches teachers were using in teaching language and literacy across the 86 classrooms observed; the research team also explored how teachers were creating an inclusive classroom environment by helping to include all pupils in the learning process (by gender and special needs). The degree of inclusivity in classroom methods and instructional practice is further discussed in Chapter 6.

Key findings suggest that instructional practice, across the three northern regions revealed that teachers hardly ever used child-centred and child friendly teaching methods; class discussions, role play, peer to peer teaching, demonstration, group work, brainstorming, simulation, experiential or hands on deck approaches. The Quality of Education study in northern Ghana also found that teachers were unable to handle large class sizes, multi-grade classes and disadvantaged groups of children, particularly SEN children. On the subject of head teacher support the consensus was that head teachers supported their teachers through the organization of school based in-service and the provision of teaching learning materials for lesson preparation yet school observations and teacher interviews suggested that school based inset was not regularly practiced. Most classrooms did not have any teaching learning materials in easy access of the teachers with the majority of TLMs being kept in the head teacher office with limited signs of utilization.

Key findings suggest that there were certain strategies and methods which are not promoting learning across all 86 classrooms observed; these methods and strategies often involved the simple approachability/demeanour of the teacher and the openness of the teacher in creating a non threatening learning environment among students. Of particular concern was the way in which children were taught to answer questions, echo and memorise answers and the way reading was taught which often did not involve any decoding skills in teaching reading across all subject areas.

### **The Teaching of Reading**

In the majority of cases lessons observed across the 86 classrooms where literacy lessons were being taught, teachers were either teaching English reading or reading in the mother tongue, teaching an aspect of grammar, or how to structure a piece of writing. In a small number of classrooms a mathematics or science lesson was being delivered but the focus of this research was to observe the teaching of literacy and reading. Around 30 reading lessons were observed and the majority of these reading instructional lessons followed a similar pattern.

*A reading lesson would be based on a passage usually taken from the pupils' textbook. At some point in the lesson the teacher would identify certain key words from this passage and these would be shared with the students. The key words were usually those that had been highlighted in the textbook or on the blackboard. In some cases the teacher would discuss with pupils before the reading began what they understood about the topic on which the text was based. This was not typical however. The actual reading*

*would usually take the form of the teacher reading the text aloud for the students to hear and then reading it again and again so that pupils would read the same passage usually as a whole class in chorus. Some teachers varied this pattern by getting smaller groups to read after him/her and others might use students to do some of the reading aloud. But in virtually every reading lesson this pattern of reading and repeating was used for the majority of the classes' instructional time (based on classroom observations in the Upper East, Upper West and Northern Regions).*

The focus of the teacher was often in helping students learn to pronounce the English or Ghanaian Language word “correctly” during their echo reading events and these would be corrected by the teacher. In just **one lesson** out of the 86 observed was a teacher observed actually discussing with pupils reading strategies they could use to evaluate why a word was pronounced in a certain way or to identify any particular phonetic sound/pattern that occurred in the word so that they could recognise this sound or pattern in other words. Very little instruction was also based on using teaching learning materials such as flashcards, small books or allowing children to read from their text books on their own. Generally if, individual children were given time to read, they were chosen to do so because they were “good readers” and could therefore model the reading for the rest of the class. There were only two classrooms where teachers were seen in helping children sound out words using flashcards, in small groups or individually. The main finding from classroom observations across the three northern regions of Ghana indicated that the “basic skill” of reading was simply not being taught. Findings also suggest that the teachers across the six districts in the north were neither aware nor utilising basic reading strategies (context, whole word, decoding, rhyming etc) needed to teach reading skills to pupils at the lower and upper primary levels.

Very few lessons observed also had teachers using the **sounds of the letters** instead of the alphabet to help children sound out words and simple two and three letter phonemes in order to decode. Of the 30 lessons that were observed in the Upper East region (25 of which were English lessons) and the 29 lessons observed in the Upper West (12 of which were reading lessons) there was only one reading lesson observed where the teacher was actually teaching letter sounds. Students were “drilled” (teachers use this word themselves when they talk about “teaching reading”) to memorise each word, its pronunciation and, in only a few cases –were the meaning of words discussed. This means that each new word learnt has to be learned in isolation. It isn’t learned within the context of a language or linked to the skills needed to go on and decode other new words. Observation at the lower and upper primary level suggests that children had learnt to memorise large sections of their textbooks but could not read a simple word taken out of the context of their textbook.

Classroom observations across the three regions revealed that when it came to overall comprehension of the text, this was usually first explained by the teacher in English and later in the mother tongue. Comprehension questions that follow this explanation were often answered on the basis of the students’ ability to comprehend what the teacher said. There was often no evidence in the lesson observation notes that the teachers had asked a question and guided the student to use any kind of reading skill to find the meaning of the sentence or text. The questions that were usually asked were relatively closed and low order, so that the questions themselves formed a tag for the answer. Furthermore, the closed low order questions that were

asked by the teacher were in some cases responded to with a chorused response by all the children in the class.

The evidence from the classroom observations on reading methods and strategies suggest that comprehension skills such as: inference, synthesis, judgemental or application were not being taught as part of daily routine in the 54 schools across the north. This limited the pupils' ability to read texts in other subjects and be able to synthesise and/or express opinions concerning the information from those texts since they only learned to memorise the meaning. Evidence of this emphasis on memorization of facts can be found in the lesson observation notes of integrated science lessons where the teacher was asking students for definitions of scientific terms, or examples related to the subject. This was observed in an Integrated Science lesson in the Upper East where pupils were asked to define temperature and to give examples of different kinds of thermometer. The observer commenting on that lesson felt that the pupils' responses had been learned by rote.

Other corroborated evidence of the pupils' lack of comprehension skill can be found in the results of the Performance Monitoring Tests administered by TENI partners in the West Mamprusi (2011). In the West Mamprusi District, out of a total of 2,816 P6 candidates who took the PMT in 2011 (Reading comprehension Section) the average mark scored was 5.7 out of 15. Twenty eight percent (28%) of these P6 candidates scored zero on the reading comprehension section of the PMT, and 48% of pupils scored 5 marks or less.

### **5.8.1 Types and usage of teaching methods/strategies being used in the classrooms**

A key prerequisite to quality learning is the quality of the learning environment. The physical environment of many of the 86 classrooms visited across the three northern regions was not conducive to quality teaching and learning. Not all classrooms had a full complement of furniture so pupils could be found sitting 3 or 4 at a desk designed for 2 students, or perched on small plastic stools or, at worst, squatting or lying on the floor. Even those classrooms fully equipped with enough dual desks to sit everyone pupils faced a disadvantage if teachers were going to organise them to conduct any activity in small groups or where they weren't required to be sitting in rows facing the chalkboard. The structure of the lessons then follows the structure of the class itself. The teacher is at the front of the class, chalk in hand, and the students sit (or squat) facing him in linear rows. Student interactions are mainly directed through the teacher with only the alternative possibility of speaking to a neighbour on the same desk. Within this context, the study found evidence of a variety of teacher practices ranging from those that positively enhanced learning to those that were inhibiting it.

There is a general conception that there are certain teaching methods or strategies that should be avoided if quality learning is to take place. One prime example is the lecture or "chalk and talk" method. However, research shows that this method can be effective if used for only short periods (Abadzi 2006). Unfortunately, teachers facing the challenge of large class populations, limited resources in the form of visual aids, textbooks or other devices for promoting student interaction often only use this method. The fact that many teachers resort to the lecture or "chalk and talk" style is understandable. The EFA Report of 2009 acknowledged this in their assessment of quality education but emphasised that quality learning would be enhanced if the

teachers ensured that they invited the participation of students with the use of questioning. Again, it has been established that giving students the opportunity to practice target language verbally, answer questions, and generally discuss ideas and concepts to be learned, can be effective if organised thoughtfully (Abadzi, 2006). It follows then, that teachers who ensure that students are able to interact in a meaningful way will be more successful in achieving learning outcomes. The use of questioning is therefore a powerful tool in the learning process.

At the positive end of the spectrum some teachers across the 86 classrooms were observed to engage students by getting them to model target language, to ask and answer questions, or to role play. In these instances researchers noted that pupils were “excited” or “happy” and participated positively and that there were some indications that learning was going on. At the other end of the spectrum is the teacher at the front of the class, book or pointer in hand, and his/her is the only voice heard. Subsumed within these descriptions is the issue of questioning. Evidence from the classroom observations reveals that most teachers were using closed ended, factual recall questions, or in the case of reading lessons, simple comprehension questions. There were very few instances where teachers were stimulating higher order thinking in pupils by framing questions that required consultation, judgement, adaptation, synthesis, or inference.

### **5.8.2 Regional Findings**

#### **Northern Region**

The use of appropriate teaching methods and strategies in the classroom matters for several reasons including promoting more interesting and effective learning environment often leading to higher pupil learning outcomes. This will be dependent on a teacher’s ability to analyze different student learning needs, analyse the subject matter and match this with a methodology which is best suited to the learners and be able to use a variety of teaching strategies to address the varied learning needs and learning styles of the pupils. There was no evidence from the research that this kind of analysis was taking place particularly given the limited number of teachers who were preparing for the classroom, the limited usage of varied methods in the classroom and lack of understanding by the teachers of their role in helping learners understand the objectives to the lessons; the research suggests that the vast majority of teachers were not applying methods on the basis of diverse learner needs and learner styles. Rather, the teachers’ limited usage of different methodologies appeared to be based on the fact that very few teachers had prepared for the classroom session, replication of their own classroom experience and the culture of teaching which was being used throughout the school setting.

A measure of the extent to which a particular method or strategy is in some way appropriate is the level of student teacher interaction in the class. Findings from the Quality of Education research suggest that some teachers are unable to adopt or adapt appropriate teaching methods /strategies which ensure a strong participatory approach to teaching and were simply lecturing from the front of the class. According to evidence from observations carried out in 27 classrooms across the Northern Region the majority of teachers are employing a strategy which observers referred to as “chalk and talk” but in some cases involved more than just lecturing to pupils but also involved the usage of questioning or inviting pupils to provide examples. However 7 out of

the 27 teachers in the Northern Region were simply delivering a lecture. (See Annex 5B for Summary of Evidence)

The following are excerpts from classroom observation notes from some classrooms in the Northern Region which illustrate the range of strategies that teachers used. Please note that Manga was considered a high performing school and scored very high marks in relation to teaching and learning strategies used by teachers across the 54 schools studied.

**Table 5.8: Evidence of Lesson Delivery Methods from Classroom Observation Notes for Northern Region**

Name and Context of School	Description of Lesson Delivery from Classroom Observation Note
Manga Primary School, P4, NYEP teacher, rural, West Mamprusi District (WMD)	Chalk and talk. Questions and answers, often asking more than one pupil for the same answer. Inviting pupils to write on the board. Interactive and participatory questions and answers. At the beginning of the lesson, the objective of the lesson was stated, and there was a conclusion at the end of the lesson to show that the children had learned. Pupils' interest was maintained throughout the lesson.
Manga Primary School, P5, Community Volunteer Teacher, rural WMD	The teacher managed to involve about 95% of the pupils. The lesson was very participatory and interactive. He posed questions to both sexes as he taught along. Most of them had their hands frequently up to respond to questions or contribute to what other students explained
Zori JHS, F2, Trained Teacher, rural WMD	Chalk and talk: Teacher only wrote on the board, turned his back and ask as he writes, he talks shortly in what has been written and proceeds. Only one child was asking questions and when he said they should write, the same girl asked if he really meant they should write. Then he said "I just want to see you write and circle the modal verbs
Wurshie B JHS, F1, Trained teacher, urban WMD	Teacher took children through reading and involved a few of them in reading. He did not use any TLMs example allowing pupils to identify objects by their names as RPK to the lesson. He did not engage children very much from the beginning to the end of the lesson by asking them to read, identifying key words, answering questions, group reading etc. It was later discovered that most of the pupils in the class could not read or speak English. Participation by students was generally low with little interaction between teacher and pupils
Zaratinga Primary P3, NYEP, rural East Mamprusi District (EMD)	The strategies used in the classroom were questioning. Teacher only ask particular pupils questions. The questions were not evenly distributed. Pupils were not encouraged to ask questions.
Nintendo Primary, P3, Pupil Teacher, EMD	The teacher used only reading. She did not explain key words to the pupils. Pupils were asked to read one after the other.
Bamahu JHS F 3, Trained Teacher, rural EMD	The teacher used the interactive approach. He started the lesson by asking students questions to remind them of what they learnt in the last lesson. Students were deeply involved in the interaction as almost every student has his/her hand read to contribute. The teacher at a certain point varied his language and speed when

Name and Context of School	Description of Lesson Delivery from Classroom Observation Note
	he realized that others attention was not in the class
Bunkuma Primary, P3, Community Volunteer Teacher, rural EMD	Teacher used a lot of questioning. He was able to keep the children's interest throughout the lesson except a few seated behind and chatting. Also there was some level of destruction and noise from P4 pupils who share the same class block
Zonzongeli Primary P2, Pupil Teacher, urban EMD	Teaching was mainly talk and chalk and talk. He talked throughout the lesson. In the middle of the lesson, the teacher started marking the attendance register. He started calling student's name for them to respond whilst an exercise was going on. He spent 9 minutes marking the register

Source: Classroom observation instrument, Northern Region Further examples can be found in Annex II.

## Upper East Region

Generally teachers rely on some form of “chalk and talk” methodology, although the extent to which they deliver what is ostensibly a lecture varies from class to class. There does not appear to be any particular correlation between whether the teacher is using strategies other than lecturing and (for example) the type of teacher, the age of children, type of subject, and location of school. The extent to which teachers use questioning as a teaching strategy also varies, but what is clear from the research is that much of the questioning used takes the form of closed or low-order questions that require either a yes/no or simple factual response, thereby encouraging memorization of facts, rather than comprehension, synthesis, adaptation, or other higher order learning strategies. In many examples questions are asked and a whole class chorused response is elicited and in the worse cases of this the teacher is simply asking “Do you understand?” and the whole class is chorusing, “Yes Sir/Madam”. Of particular concern are the strategies teachers are using for teaching reading – evidence shows that many teachers simply read the text for the children to repeat and focus on how the words are being pronounced rather than discussing meaning. There is no evidence of teachers guiding pupils towards developing comprehension skills such as using context to work out meanings of new vocabulary. In only one instance is there evidence that a lower primary teacher is teaching phonological awareness.

Evidence from the observation notes made in **urban Talensi Nabdam** schools shows that 4 out of the 5 lessons were described as interactive. The other lesson was a reading comprehension lesson delivered by a Pupil Teacher. The following section provides a few examples of how teachers were teaching.

*In the P3 English class in Kulenga Primary School, the trained teacher used cards with words written on them to exemplify the key vocabulary and encouraged students to use these to make appropriate sentences. Observers also noted that the teacher called upon students who did not volunteer answers/examples. In the P6 class of Kulenga Primary School, on adjectives the teacher (Trained) used lots of questions but they were mainly closed, recall questions and for these, because the lesson was a repeat, the students were referring to their notes so that they could answer.*

*The P5 reading lesson in Kpatuya Primary School was an example of a teacher (Pupil teacher) modelling the reading of a text so that pupils could read in chorus after him but with no explanation of key vocabulary and only one or two questions asked as to whether the students comprehended the text. The P1 (Trained teacher) lesson on verbs in Kpatuya Primary School was more interactive as the children were required to act out the verbs they were learning about and were given pictorial representations of verbs to talk about. Questioning focussed on information recall and each time an answer was given the whole class had to echo the answer in chorus.*

*The Form 2 lesson at Kpatuya JHS focussed on reading comprehension. The teacher (NSS) used a variety of methods to deliver this lesson including: role play, discussion, question/answer, and group work. The comprehension text was a play and some students were asked to each take a role. However, because they took the books to the front of the class, this then meant the rest of the students who were sharing the book didn't have access and were unable to answer questions about the text. Other activities including the usage of dictionaries to check the meanings of words, and answering written comprehension questions were carried out in groups. However, each group was led by a captain – a “brilliant” student – who was giving the rest of the group the answers.*

Out of the 10 lessons observed in **rural Talensi Nabdam**, 7 were interactive: a speaking and listening lesson and a grammar lesson delivered by 2 Pupil Teachers, a reading comprehension lesson and a grammar lesson both delivered by trained teachers and a lesson on verbs by a NYEP teacher. In addition there was a trained teacher who gave a lesson on phonics. Both the reading comprehension lesson and the phonics lesson relied on the teacher reading and the pupils echo reading for at least some of the lesson even though there were also some more participatory activities described in those lessons.

*The P6 lesson delivered by a Pupil teacher in Namonsa Primary School was based on giving instructions for most of the lesson with pupils being expected to follow the instructions. In the P1 class in Namonsa Primary School however, after an initial period of asking children to identify some common items from the classroom, the teacher (a Pupil teacher) used the strategy of reading and getting the children to repeat in chorus what he had read. There was a clear emphasis on rote learning in terms of the reading but the pupils were able to accurately identify objects and their pictures. The written exercise given at the end of the lesson was a closed activity using the sentences the children had already written in their books.*

*The teacher (trained) in the P3 class in Chuchuliga Primary School used a limited number of methods. His aim was to teach the children an appreciation of letter sounds of individual letters and 2-letter phonemes. He encouraged the children to identify each letter and then read the sounds of the single and 2-letter phonemes for the children to repeat. The P6 lesson Chuchuliga Primary School (Pupil teacher) required more interaction as the pupils were expected to answer questions about the meanings of words and then use these to make sentences to describe friends, family and objects.*

*The Form 1 teacher (Pupil teacher) in Namonsa JHS, used various methods to get the pupils to recognise prepositions and decide which could best be used to accurately complete given sentences. However observers noted that he mainly used closed questions which the whole class would answer and that he relied on intensity of class response to assess the level of understanding. As a result of which researchers felt that those pupils who did not understand would not be detected.*

*A P2 English lesson at Zuaringo Primary School (Pupil teacher) only required that children fill the gaps in sentences and words. The desired learning from this lesson was not clear to observers. All activities seemed to be mechanical rather than useful. What is more it was a repeated lesson. In Zuaringo Primary School the P5 English lesson was more coherent. The teacher (trained) used a lot of questioning: definition of terms and providing examples of sentences. After students provided these answers, the teacher asked other students if they agreed with the answer – he did this for both correct and incorrect responses so students had to carefully assess the answers.*

*The reading comprehension lesson in the P6 class in Ayimpoka Primary School followed a familiar pattern. The teacher (or other individual) reads, class echoes his reading in chorus. However, this teacher (trained) did spend some time questioning the pupils as to their understanding of the key words in the text and their comprehension of the text as a whole. The teachers' explanations were in L1 and L2. The P1 class teacher (NYEP) in Ayimpoka Primary used a multi-sensory approach to teaching verbs. He used pictures from the text book to introduce the key words/phrases, said each word/phrase aloud for the class to repeat, wrote the key vocabulary on the chalkboard and questioned the children as to their understanding and then asked the pupils to act out each activity.*

*The reading comprehension lesson in Form 2 of Ayimpoka JHS followed the pattern of the teacher (trained) reading and the class repeating in chorus. He presented the class with all the key words and asked if they knew the meanings, when they were only able to provide 2, he then told them the other 10 – there was no recourse to finding the words in the text and using context or any other strategy to try and work out the meaning. The pupils were then required to answer the comprehension questions as a written exercise.*

From the evidence taken from the classroom observations in urban Bongo, 4 out of the 5 teachers observed used more participatory methods. All four were grammar activities and the fifth was a reading comprehension lesson. Adakudugu' primary schools was considered one of the highest performing schools compared to schools across all the other districts. It was Roman Catholic and head teacher leadership was strong.

*Both the P1 teacher (trained) and the P6 teacher (Pupil teacher) at Adakudugu RC Primary School appeared to be using creative strategies. The P6 lesson on adjectives included the use of visual aids to exemplify descriptive terms. Because the P1 lesson was based on the topic "myself", the teacher used the children themselves as examples as well as consolidating their understanding of the vocabulary with pictures from the text book.*

*In contrast to this, the P6 teacher (trained) at Lanwana Primary School delivered the majority of the lesson as a lecture. The reading of the text was done chorus style using the read and repeat pattern. The teacher himself read the text and then invited students to do so – he pointed out, though during the post lesson interview, that he only ever used the “good” readers to read individually so that they could show the rest of the class how it was done. He asked only a few questions and these all involved simple recall of facts, the comprehension questions were given as a written exercise – but as the teacher was repeating the lesson from yesterday the vast majority of the students already had the answers in their books.*

*The JHS form 3 lesson at Adakudugu Girls' RC JHS on Question and Answer Tags was solely based on question and answer with some explanations and notes on the board from the teacher (trained). However, the questions themselves were of a high order and there was an expectation that the students would recall, comprehend and adapt. This was also one of the few classes observed where the students asked questions both to check their understanding and adapt the model that had been used.*

In the schools visited in rural Bongo six out of the 10 lessons observed were delivered to a large degree as lectures. In the remaining 4 lessons a more participatory methodology was used. These lessons were a science lesson delivered by a Pupil Teacher; 2 maths lessons delivered by trained teachers and a speaking a listening lesson also delivered by a Pupil Teacher.

## **Upper West Region**

Evidence from classroom observation notes of the 29 lessons observed in the Upper West indicates that in many cases teachers were using “chalk and talk” methodology. However, this classification needs to be further differentiated as other evidence from lesson delivery descriptions indicates that the methods and strategies teachers use is dependent on the subject being taught. In the first instance, it is clear that in reading lessons, teachers are generally using the strategy of reading the text aloud themselves, after which the children recite the same text as a chorus. The number of times the text is read either by the teacher, or in some cases, a pupil or pupils varies from class to class but in almost every reading lesson there is some element of this “read and repeat” strategy. The following section provides some examples of this strategy:

*He read and pronounced words loudly for pupils to hear. He emphasised on the pronunciation of the key words or strange words as he read through the passage. Teacher stopped and asked pupils to pronounce key words correctly on the chalkboard. However teacher grouped pupils into two to share textbooks because of inadequacy. Teacher asked pupils to look into the passage and bring out words they felt were strange to them. Teacher wrote these strange words on the board. He then asked the pupils to look through the passage silently while he reads. He asked pupils to critically look at words they identified as strange and get their right pronunciations. Periodically he stopped and asked pupils where they have got to. Teacher stimulated pupils interest as he asked questions on strange words which were brought out by pupils themselves by spelling for teacher. Teacher role played or used real life situations to demonstrate*

*passage for pupils to get what he was talking about and pupils trying various answers to get it correctly. Teacher distributed questions evenly to those pupils who are not even talking and encouraged them to speak out. (Classroom observation, Safaliba Primary School, Trained teacher, P6, rural Jirapa)*

*Teacher read the passage several times. In fact the teacher did more reading than the pupils. Teacher was not stationary when reading. Teacher also made pupils to read after her in chorus. The teacher asked children to look at pictures in the textbook. Wrote key words on the chalkboard. Drilled children in pronunciation of words. Followed it with word identification through the use of word cards. Pupils were asked to match words of word cards to words on the blackboard. Pupils who got words correctly were clapped for by their colleagues. Pupils who could not answer well had their colleagues being asked to help them and the children made to repeat after their colleagues. Teacher showed word cards and called children to read them. This was followed by explanations of the meanings of the words with illustrations and examples. After the explanation of meanings, the teacher gave a model reading of the passage with pupils listening and following in their books. This was followed by pupils reading aloud individually to class with rest of the children following. Teacher also went round the class to ensure that children were following. Teacher called children by name and sometimes ask children to mention their names. (St Kambali RC Primary School, P6, Trained teacher, urban Jirapa)*

There were 12 reading lessons observed across the 2 districts in the Upper West. Of these 9 teachers used the read and repeat method of teaching literacy. The descriptions above are not typical inasmuch as in the first description the students have an opportunity to read the text in silence, to identify words that are “strange” and to discuss these words with the teacher. In the second description the teacher uses word cards so that pupils have the opportunity to match these to the words written on the board. Also she encourages pupils to read as individuals. However, what is typical in both instances is the strong emphasis on “right pronunciations”. As described in the second example the teacher “Drilled children in pronunciation of words”. How to read each word is therefore memorised by frequent repetition. What is also significant is the emphasis placed on pupils having an understanding of the overall meaning of the text. In the first example the teacher uses the strategy of role playing or referring to real life situations in order to lead students to an understanding of what the passage is about.

The use of these strategies meant that students are able to pronounce the words, that they are given an idea of the meanings of the words (which will have to be memorized) and that any comprehension questions about the text are not based on their own reading and understanding of the story but on their ability to have listened to the teacher’s explanation of the story and comprehended this verbal account. In some cases these verbal accounts are given in the pupils’ mother tongue in order to assist them understand the story.

What is also typical about this lesson is a complete absence of any overt teaching of reading skills. The pronunciation of each word is learned individually, with no reference to any of the phonemes within that word that might aid the reader to decode other word. Comprehension of

the story is reliant on pupils having memorized the meanings of words or of being able to understand the teacher's retelling of the passage.

The other 3 lessons in the Upper West include elements that are atypical descriptions of these follow:

*Generally teacher did talk and chalk. Teacher was very fast in reading the passage thereby leaving the pupil behind. Teacher did not boost the pupils' interest in the topic and hence they were silent in the class. Teacher underlined the key words and taught their pronunciations and meanings respectively. Pupils were invited to read the passage on the board before their colleagues. (St Bamvum RC Primary School, P5, Trained teacher, urban Jirapa)*

*Teacher asked pupils to identify the pictures on the page. Teacher treated key words with pupils using flash cards with the word. Teacher read the passage to the hearing of the pupils in the classroom. Teacher uses questioning and answer method. (Balangtaa D/A Primary School, P3, Trained rural Lawra)*

*The teacher started the lesson by asking pupils to tell her the kinds of animals and to differentiate between those that are with us at home and those in the wild life. She also asked the pupils to tell her the reasons why animals move around. Some of the pupils gave reasons why animals move around and she also added a couple of reasons. All the above interaction served as the introduction to the topic they were going to learn, which is the way of life of animals. The teacher then made the pupils open their English textbooks and tell her what they see under that topic. The pupils were made to read silently by the teacher.*

*The teacher made the class interactive and participatory by asking the pupils to tell her the type of animals they know. She made the pupils read silently to themselves. She kept on asking the pupils questions and if no one raises his or her hands she then points at someone. (Dery D/A JHS, Trained teacher, F1, urban Lawra)*

In the first description (St Josephs) there is no mention of the pupils having to repeat the teachers' model of reading in chorus, instead they are invited to come to the board to "read the passage . . . before their colleagues". There is also no mention of this in the second example (Balangtaa) where the teacher uses pictures to contextualize the text being read but the overall emphasis appears to be on a few key words. Again, in the last example (Dery) the teacher is not using read and repeat and is also preparing the students for comprehension of the text by discussing the main elements beforehand. Students are encouraged to read individually and understand but there is no suggestion that students are able to improve reading skills.

In reading lessons as well as lessons where other subjects are being delivered there is a great deal of evidence that teachers are using a question and answer approach. In lessons observed across the three regions, it was clear that many teachers when using this strategy were mainly using low order questions for which there is one "right answer". In much the same way as students are required to memorize the pronunciation and meanings of individual words, this questioning

approach means that students are required to memorize facts and as a result are not encouraged to develop higher order thinking or learning strategies.

The use of questioning to guide pupils during the lesson is used in the majority of lessons observed in the Upper West – 3 out of 5 lessons in both Urban Lawra and Urban Jirapa and 7 out of 10 lessons in rural Jirapa and 6 out of the 9 lessons observed in rural Lawra. On the basis of this evidence both districts in the Upper West have similar proportions of lessons where teachers used questioning as the teaching method. However, as described above, these questions are closed and usually require students to recall information rather than think. In some cases teachers' questions are directed at the whole class and a chorused answer is given in response. This is exemplified in the following example.

*Teacher used chalk and talk combined with questions and answer as well as translation. He accepted chorus answers more than individual pupil answers. (Kuvarpuo RC Primary School, Pupil teacher, P5)*

There is also evidence that some teachers are using questioning more effectively. The following description is also an example of a teacher using questioning to encourage children to provide different examples of nouns having first provided a model for them. However, examples of this kind are very few.

*The teacher involved the pupils in the lesson. He made the pupils respond and gave examples to the questions. He mainly used chalk and talk but with a lot of improvisation. He stimulated the pupils' interest and increased their level of understanding in the lesson. Both boys and girls in the class were actively involved in the activities. The teacher on one occasion aided a girl to pronounce the word 'sheep' because she could only pronounce it as 'seep'. (Safaliba Primary School, Trained, P2)*

Three of the lessons in Jirapa (one a school in an urban setting and the other 2, rural) were delivered solely as lectures and observers note that in these cases there is little or no interaction between teacher and student.

The following summary of evidence from Jirapa and Lawra in the Upper West reveals that outcomes of the classroom based observations in these two districts; the table outlines the main teaching methodologies observed by researchers and the reading strategies across the two districts. In the Northern Region the evidence suggests that lessons are more frequently teacher centred in the rural schools; this was the case across both districts. Those lessons observed in faith based schools (in this case Presbyterian and English & Arabic) were more child-centred. In a similar vein in the Upper East there were a lower proportion of teachers using participatory methods in the rural schools than in the urban. There was however, more evidence of participatory methodologies being used in the rural TENI classrooms of Talensi-Nabdam than in Non-TENI Bongo. In the Upper West the extent to which teachers were using interactive or participatory methods is fairly consistent across all the classrooms regardless of context; however evidence points to the fact that it is teachers in Upper Primary or JHS who are relying on delivering lessons simply as a lecture.

**Table 5.9: Summary of Evidence of Types of Teaching Methodology from Classroom Observations in the Upper West**

District	Context Factor	Teaching Methodology			TOTALS	Reading Strategy		
		Q & A	Lecture	Various		Read & Repeat	Silent Reading	Read & Listen
Jirapa	Urban	3	1	1	5	1	0	0
Jirapa	Rural	7	2	1	10	4	0	0
Lawra	Urban	3	0	2	5	1	1	0
Lawra	Rural	6	0	3	9	4	0	1
Totals		19	3	8	29	10	1	1
District	Context Factor	Teaching Methodology			TOTALS	Reading Strategy		
		Q & A	Lecture	Various		Read & Repeat	Silent Reading	Read & Listen
Jirapa	High	4	2	0	6	2	0	0
Jirapa	Low	4	0	2	6	3	0	0
Lawra	High	2	0	3	5	2	0	1
Lawra	Low	5	0	1	6	3	0	0
Totals		15	2	6	23	10	1	1
District	Context Factor	Teaching Methodology			TOTALS	Reading Strategy		
		Q & A	Lecture	Various		Read & Repeat	Silent Reading	Read & Listen
Jirapa	RC	6	2	2	10	3	0	0
Jirapa	DA	4	1	0	5	2	0	0
Lawra	RC	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
Lawra	DA	9	0	3	12	6	1	1
Totals		19	3	7	29	11	1	1
District	Context Factor	Teaching Methodology			TOTALS	Reading Strategy		
		Q & A	Lecture	Various		Read & Repeat	Silent Reading	Read & Listen
Jirapa	Trained	8	2	1	11	4	0	0
Jirapa	Pupil teacher	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Jirapa	CVT	0	1	1	2	1	0	0
Lawra	Trained	8	0	4	12	5	1	1
Lawra	Pupil teacher	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Lawra	CVT	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Totals		19	3	7	29	11	1	1
District	Context Factor	Teaching Methodology			TOTALS	Reading Strategy		
		Q & A	Lecture	Various		Read & Repeat	Silent Reading	Read & Listen
Upper West	English Reading	5	2	2	9	6	1	1
Upper West	Dagaare Reading	1	0	1	2	2	0	0
Upper West	Ghanaian Language Reading	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Totals		7	2	3	12	9	1	1
District	Context Factor	Teaching Methodology			TOTALS	Reading Strategy		
		Q & A	Lecture	Various		Read & Repeat	Silent Reading	Read & Listen
Upper West	LOWER PRIMARY	7	0	3	10	4	0	1
Upper West	UPPER PRIMARY & JHS	12	3	4	19	7	1	0

Totals	19	3	7	29	11	1	1
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### 5.8.3 Inhibitors and Promoters of Quality related to teaching methods

One of the key findings that emerge from the analysis of classroom observation data suggests that many of the lesson methods, strategies and approaches across all three regions follow a similar pattern. There is a typical reading lesson, a typical grammar lesson, and a typical approach to maths. There was very little evidence of teachers innovating or adapting their teaching instructional style or approach to suit the needs of a particular group of children by gender, special need or learner cognitive level in the sample of classrooms studied. Evidence from the MUSTER research in Ghana (2003) suggests that this stems from the way in which teachers are trained. That's because teachers arrive at training college with poor subject knowledge, the greatest emphasis is on buttressing the teacher trainees subject mastery while pedagogy takes a back seat. This background to the "trained teacher" reproduces in the classroom with very little evidence of creative teaching strategies being modelled or use at training college level (Casely-Hayford, 2010).

Low learning effectiveness and efficiency at the basic level will produce Ghanaian teacher trainees who need to improve their own basic literacy and numeracy skills even at tertiary level education at the cost of spending time developing their skills and competencies as reflective, confident and innovative. Until the quality of primary schooling is improved, the competencies of the teaching force in Ghana will remain elusive. Moreover many teachers observed and interviewed in the six districts across the north show a preference for teaching the brightest children in their classrooms. Evidence from classroom observations describes teachers interacting with the "brilliant" students for the majority of the lessons time on task at the expense of supporting the "slow learners", "weak achievers" who are often the vast majority of children in the classroom. Descriptions of FGD with teachers and interviews with teachers also illustrate the fact that many who are currently in basic schools aspire to work in second cycle or tertiary education because the students are more able to "cope up" with the curriculum. Teachers interviewed at the primary level found it frustrating and difficult to teach children that were young in which their "brains were not mature".

*"Where do you see yourself in 5 years?" .... "My aim is to complete my Post Diploma and move to teach in SHS." .... "Why?" ... "It's difficult to teach at Primary level because their brains are not matured. At SHS you can teach and they will understand."*  
(Source: post lesson interview, Upper East, Rural Bongo, Gungolgu JHS, F1)

Increased pupil teacher interaction or pupil participation is not just dependent on the skills of the teacher but also their demeanour, their love for teaching and their desire to connect with the learners. Although there are many descriptions of teachers' exhibiting a positive demeanour there is also a significant number of teachers who were harsh, insulting, or simply disinterested in their work as a teacher. Examples of best practice and high learning classrooms are those where the teachers had a positive relationship with students and a supportive learning environment often created by a disciplined head teacher.

Other examples of high learning classrooms are found where teachers are facilitating student participation by using a lot of questions and asking more than one student the same question requiring individual responses rather than a class-wide chorused response. However, there were very few classrooms where teachers were using higher order or open ended questions, this weakness placed even more emphasis on rote learning of facts or prescribed responses (like definitions or pronunciations of certain words).

The main challenge in moving teachers from a one method approach is the fact that most experiences of teachers from their childhood through to training college are “teacher centred experiences”. Although some NGO’s have used in-service training (VSO/TENI) and even pre service training models (Ibis Ghana, World Vision) to assist teachers in the three northern regions “break out of the chalk and talk approach” little impact has been seen across the 54 schools which were in the sample with the exception of the Talensi Nabdam district (a TENI district) where more participatory approaches were being used across the sample of schools. The majority of classrooms observed revealed that learning interactions were transmitted through the teacher with little or no emphasis on students reflecting on what was being learned, interacting with texts or other learning materials or interacting with one another. Groups formed for “group work” (in the few instances where they were used) tended to be organised on the basis of mixed ability – with “brilliant” students mixed with less able or “slow learners”. On closer scrutiny of the observation data, the dynamic in these groups does not promote quality learning. Questions that groups are asked to handle are closed ended resulting in most cases the “brilliant” student providing the answers for the others in the group. Please see annex 5D for the description of a typical reading and grammar lesson.

## **5.9 Types and usage of teaching and learning materials in the classroom**

Evidence from the research reveals that for many northern Ghanaian teachers the chalkboard is the only way in which they can provide a visual aid to support pupils’ learning. Descriptions of lessons indicate that the board is used to record the date, lesson title, objective, key concepts and ideas, illustrations, notes, questions for exercises and reading texts. This situation is far from ideal given that many chalkboards are not visible due to their greying with age and that some classrooms (especially those with honeycomb windows) are quite poorly lit. Evidence from other research instruments (head teacher checklist and district checklist) shows that schools haven’t received textbooks for many years; inevitably this stock has suffered some shrinkage and damage, so for the majority of classrooms there are not enough textbooks for each student to have their own. Manufactured teaching and learning materials like posters or other visual aids were also rarely seen and the onus appears to be on teachers to use their own initiative and any available materials to make their own. Again, there were some teachers who had prepared such materials but they were in the minority. In addition some lessons where such materials were being used were repeated, which suggests that teachers were delivering the one lesson for which they have such materials for the benefit of observers.

### 5.9.1 Regional Findings

The paucity of textbooks and both readymade and homemade TLMs is a general trend across all the classrooms observed as part of this research, and there is no evidence of any significant differences that might be attributed to the context or type of school or teacher type (trained or untrained). The findings suggest that “high” learning schools which were performing relatively better across a number of learning indicators developed by the team included indicators such as: instructional methods, teacher demeanour and engagement with pupils, pupil feedback and participation, gender sensitivity etc; findings suggest that “high learning” classrooms were using TLM’s more effectively compared to low learning classrooms.

#### Northern Region

The use of appropriate teaching and learning materials is a pre requisite for effective teaching and learning in schools. Generally, there was very limited usage of teaching and learning materials according to classroom observations, probably due to their absence or small numbers. The research team however found out that there were several other schools that had teaching and learning materials stored in head teachers’ offices and are not being used. A clear case in point is Zori Primary and JHS in rural West Mamprusi District. Some schools had their TLMs stored away but these were being allowed to rot or be destroyed by rats. A few teachers were able to improvise TLMs by using objects in their immediate environments but no single teacher was innovative enough to create TLMs for their lessons. Teachers will usually complain of lack of funds to enable them improvise TLMs in the absence of GES recommended ones.

Findings from the TENI research suggest that, there was no single school/classroom that had a full complement of teaching and learning materials to support effective learning. A few classrooms had teachers’ guides and a few textbooks for pupils. However in the majority of the classrooms there were no textbooks at all. The table below is a summary of the TLM situation in some of the observed classrooms across the Northern Region (the complete table is available in Annex 5C).

**Table 5.10: Summary of Evidence of How Classrooms Use Teaching and Learning Materials in Rural West Mamprusi**

School	Class	Type of School	School Performance	Gender of Teacher	Type of teacher	Chalkboard	Teacher’s Textbook	Pupils’ Textbooks (pupil: textbook ratio)	Other
MANGA PRIMARY SCHOOL	P4: English	RURAL WEST MAMPRUSI DA	High	Male	NYEP	Used for lesson notes			Some TLMs for pupils
MANGA PRIMARY SCHOOL	P5: English – Grammar	RURAL WEST MAMPRUSI DA	High	Male	CVT				
ZORI PRIMARY SCHOOL	P1: English – Reading	RURAL WEST MAMPRU	Low	Male	Pupil teacher				Alphabet cards

School	Class	Type of School	School Performance	Gender of Teacher	Type of teacher	Chalkboard	Teacher's Textbook	Pupils' Textbooks (pupil: textbook ratio)	Other
		SI DA							
ZORI PRIMARY SCHOOL	P6: English – grammar	RURAL WEST MAMPRU SI DA	Low	Male	Pupil teacher				
ZORI JHS	JHS 2: English – Grammar	RURAL WEST MAMPRU SI DA		Male	Trained				
NINSALI PRIMARY SCHOOL	P6: English - Reading Comprehension	RURAL WEST MAMPRU SI DA	High	Male	CVT				Unspecified
BORMAN GA PRIMARY SCHOOL	P2: English - Reading Comprehension	RURAL WEST MAMPRU SI DA	High	Female	NYEP		Used to deliver the lesson		
KUPIEL JHS	JHS 2: Science	RURAL WEST MAMPRU SI DA		Male	Trained				
WALE WALE B2 PRIMARY SCHOOL	P2: English – Grammar	URBAN WEST MAMPRU SI DA	High	Female	Trained				Classroom objects
WALE WALE B2 PRIMARY SCHOOL	P6: English - Reading Comprehension	URBAN WEST MAMPRU SI DA	High	Female	Trained		Used to deliver the lesson		
NGBARIP E ISLAM PRIMARY SCHOOL	P3: English	URBAN WEST MAMPRU SI EA	Low	Female	Trained		Used to deliver the lesson		
NGBARIP E ISLAM PRIMARY SCHOOL	P6: English - Reading Comprehension	URBAN WEST MAMPRU SI EA	Low	Female	Trained		Used to deliver the lesson	3:1	

(Source: classroom observation note, TENI field research)

## Upper East Region

As can be seen from the table (see Annex 5E), in the majority of cases teachers in the Upper East were not using TLMs other than the chalkboard or textbooks. Of the 30 lessons observed across the 2 districts only 11 lessons included some kind of aid to learning other than a textbook or the chalkboard. However, in 4 of those cases it was the pupils themselves who were used, either to demonstrate an activity or action (usually when the topic was based on verbs) or as a visual aid to be described. In only 2 cases were teachers using TLMs that they had created specifically for the lesson (although in one of these cases the lesson was a repeated lesson). With respect to the JHS lesson in urban Bongo, the teacher brought her lesson forward by a week for the benefit of the observers because she had initially planned to do a test on the day of the visit – it was in her plan to use TLMs though. In another 2 cases the teachers used purchased TLMs (a cm rule and

dictionaries), but it was only in the case of the dictionaries that the students were given the opportunity of using these. In the other 5 cases the teachers used objects that could be found either in or near to the classroom.

Of the 15 lessons observed in Talensi Nabdam only 5 classes were using pupils' textbooks (3 of these in the urban schools). There were only 2 classes in Bongo where anyone other than the teacher had a textbook. In the case of the rural school, there were only 2 other textbooks besides the teachers' copy and it is not clear how these were being used. It was the urban school that had enough textbooks for each pupil.

Twenty-one out of the 30 teachers observed had a copy of the textbook; of which, 3 teachers used pictures from the textbook to support children's learning. In every other case the textbook was used as the basis for the lesson and teachers were using either the comprehension text or the description of the stages of the lesson or examples or exercise to underpin the activities carried out in the lesson. Chalkboards were used in every case except one (a speaking and listening lesson). In general they were used to record the key words, concepts, definitions, etc. In some cases teachers used the board to draw some kind of visual aid. In only 2 cases were students using the chalkboard.

### **Upper West Region**

Of the 29 lessons observed in the 2 districts of the Upper West Region, observers noted that 9 teachers were using teaching and learning materials other than the chalk board or textbooks – 3 of these classes are in RC schools in urban Jirapa, two other examples are in rural Jirapa, an RC school and DA school. The remaining 4 are all in DA schools in Lawra – 1 urban and 3 rural (Annex 5C). In most cases the chalkboard is used for writing the text of the reading passage for a reading comprehension lesson, for noting examples, or for illustrations. Of the 12 reading lessons observed, 9 classrooms have textbooks available for pupils but in each case these have to be shared and observers also noted that the books were not in a very good condition:

The main teaching and learning materials used in the lesson were English textbooks. Pupils used the textbook in groups of three and four per book. The books looked old with most of the pages torn off. (Balangtaa D/A Primary School, rural Lawra, Trained teacher, P5)

In the 9 classes where other kinds of TLMs are used, they are generally wall charts or word cards, which are used to illustrate or exemplify key words or ideas. In none of the lessons observed were pupils actually using these materials as the basis for an activity. The use of TLMs underpins the conclusions drawn about the teaching strategies and methodologies used by teachers, that is to say, that most teachers are using a broadly teacher-centred approach to teaching where the students are reliant on either listening to and repeating texts that are read to them, listening to and responding to questions, the key points from which are recorded on the chalkboard, or being directed to look at pictures or words and identify these, again having been guided to do so by the teacher. In just a few cases teachers are providing the opportunity for pupils to "role play".

*She wrote examples of action words on black board and also acted them out for children to follow after explaining their meaning. The methodology used was learner centred approach as the children were placed at the centre of the teaching and learning through role playing and demonstrations. Guided discovery was also used as teacher sometimes acted and asked children to identify the associated action words. (St Kambali RC Primary School, Trained teacher, P1, urban Jirapa)*

### **5.9.2 Promoters and inhibitors to Quality Learning**

The most pressing challenge identified in the study in relation to TLM's is the fact that pupils are very rarely given the opportunity to use a textbook and not given the opportunity to bring the text book home. Teachers were rarely seen bringing text books from the head teacher's office in the morning to set up their classrooms and prepare for the classes. By mid morning when the researchers were conducting the HT checklist it was clear that the teachers were not using textbooks which were available at the school level. This means that children were not exposed to text in the teaching of reading and that the "parrot or oral usage of text being recited to pupils with the main approach to teaching reading. Learning to read or practising their reading skills was oral and not often based on printed text. There were also cases where teachers asked students to share either a book with one or more other pupils, or they had to read from the chalkboard.

The fact that basic schools are not receiving material inputs like textbooks and other teaching aids on a regular basis is a key inhibiting factor to quality education. This inhibitor to quality can be attributed to the way in which basic schools are funded from central Government. While nearly 50% of the total education budget is spent on basic schools (source: ESPR, MoE 2012), over 90% of the budget is used to pay education staff salaries which leaves often less than 10% of the budget for all other inputs. Recommendations made by the World Bank indicate that at least 33% of the monies used to fund basic education in developing countries should be spent on items other than salaries (Abadzi, 2006). This is clearly not the case in Ghana.

Another disturbing finding from the research is the limited extent to which teachers were using the materials supplied for the NALAP project. Schools in both the Upper West and Northern Regions received teaching guides and pupil resources in order that teachers could implement the NALAP programme from 2010 to date using the mother tongue literacy approach. In addition, teachers received training in their use yet there was just one classroom across all schools observed across these two regions where a teacher was observed delivering a Ghanaian Language lesson using these resources<sup>31</sup>.

## **5.10 Conclusions**

Quality classroom learning is influenced by a number of interacting and interlocking factors. In many studies teacher effective use of instructional time in conjunction with child friendly methods are two key factors promoting quality classroom learning. Other factors promoting quality education include teacher competence and creative child centred methodologies

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<sup>31</sup> The NALAP programme was not fully embraced by the Upper East due to the restricted number of local languages it uses and the absence of the Grunie language, as one of the GES official languages which the programme uses as a medium of instruction.

embracing effective feedback strategies, effective assessment procedures that track down pupils' performances and the use of effective remedial strategies to ensure that learning takes place in the classroom. Equally important is the issue of school management and head teacher leadership.. Continuous teacher professional development and effective and efficient monitoring and supervision of teachers' work have all been cited as contributing to effective and efficient quality classroom learning. Yet other factors contributing to classroom learning are teacher supply and retention, positive teacher attitudes, teacher regularity and punctuality, availability of teaching and learning materials and community support and participation in school administration and management. The question this study is attempting to answer is which of these promoters and inhibitors of quality education are present in the different classrooms, schools and districts under scrutiny and whether any conclusions can be drawn from the context of the different research sites. That is to say comparisons between the regions, the different districts within the region, the rural/urban divide or the type of school – DA or Mission Schools.

On the subject of teacher competencies and teaching methodologies there was evidence of TENI project providing in-service training in continuous professional development to teachers in the three districts. Both trained and untrained teachers in the three TENI districts received varying school and cluster based in-service training in the three core subject areas of English language teaching, mathematics and science (see tables 4.12 and 4.13 for head teacher support activities). The issue of loss of instructional time needs to be looked at from several perspectives. First is the number of timetabled lessons that were actually taught during the visit. The second perspective is how teachers use instructional time when not being directly observed during the study period. The third angle is observing the number of classes having no teachers for every lesson. The final angle is the length of the school day during the visit.

What was generally found from classroom observations was that teachers were on task for the whole lesson. Some lessons took significantly longer than what was indicated for that lesson on the timetable. This raises the question of whether what was being observed was the norm. If these lessons usually took that long, then it is questionable how teachers are able to effectively cover the curriculum for all the subjects. Other elements of time usage are the amount of time teachers spend writing on the chalk board and the amount of time that students sit doing nothing while the teacher is sitting at his/her desk marking their exercise books. In schools where there are inadequate supplies of textbooks and TLMs, writing on the chalkboard becomes a necessity and so this was often seen in reading comprehension lessons. . On the subject of misuse of instructional hours it was observed that regardless of school or community type or project or non-project nearly all schools misused instruction hours and were not efficient at the usage of instruction practice time.

With regard to management of instruction in class the study found that in the three northern regions teachers were rarely seen using child-centred and child friendly teaching methods; class discussions, role play, demonstration, group work, brainstorming, stimulation, experiential or hands on deck approaches. Teachers were also unable to relate objectives with pupils' previous knowledge or bring a logical conclusion of their lessons. This has implications for professional teacher development. The curriculum for Colleges of Education should be reviewed with the intent to place more emphasis on teaching methodologies that are child centred and child friendly that relates lesson objectives to conclusions.

The study found that many teachers are not spending time prior to delivering lessons in planning them. Most teachers even when present in school were not self motivated to enter and actively teach children unless there is some external stimulus such as the presence of visitors to the school, culminating in, on the average, teachers only teaching one or two lesson a day. With regard to language of instruction the study found that at the primary level (particularly lower primary) the sole use of English as medium of instruction inhibited quality education delivery, particularly in the rural schools. Each school in the sample was using their own approach to the language of instruction depending on the location, teacher background and policy of the school head. The policy of either English or Ghanaian language, whichever is appropriate is not being upheld in most primary schools visited. The findings also suggest that where schools were teaching particularly lower primary using the mother tongue and then English children were learning and enjoying learning more. Teachers should be encouraged to use code switching (bilingual medium of instruction) where the L1 can be used to facilitate comprehension of content.

## Chapter 6: Teacher Attitude towards Difference, Gender and Learner Needs

The ability of teachers to adapt their approaches to the differential learning capabilities, and needs of children is the main focus of this chapter; it is also closely related to many aspects of what was found in relation to teacher methodologies, and the teaching of reading and other subjects. Classroom observations across the three regions suggest that children who have some level of fluency in the English language and are able to memorize the words and their meanings will be able to achieve in Ghanaian primary schools and were seen as “capable learners” in the classroom often receiving the main focus of attention by the teachers observed. These children were also often selected to model reading for other children and answer most questions in class. The findings also suggest that not enough attention is being placed on teaching to the larger body of children who may not have a full grasp of the English language or language of instruction but could with individualised attention participate more fully in class. Evidence from the classroom observations, interviews with teachers and FGDs with girls and boys shows that generally sensitivity to different learner needs and teachers’ ability to cater for different needs was very poor across the 86 classrooms observed. This weakness was often related to lack of awareness of how to teach to different learner needs and also the disconnection in the relationship between teachers and pupils. There were however some teachers who had some sensitivity to learner needs but overall the vast majority of teachers interviewed did not feel comfortable, nor capable of identifying and “dealing” with children’s differential needs. There was also very little evidence of individualised attention being given to children. The following is an example which illustrates poor sensitivity on the part of the teacher towards children with different learning needs:

*A P1 class (Diare Primary School) had 3 children present who had been diagnosed as having special needs. However, there appeared to be no differentiation made during the course of the lesson. Observers noted that several of the children were copying text from the board from right to left – a practice that the teacher was completely unaware of. It is also questionable to what extent any of the children actually learnt anything as there seemed little evidence that they were able to understand the language of instruction. The teacher persisted in using English all the way through the lesson and on the one occasion he resorted to L1 (to clarify an instruction), there was an immediate response from pupils. He admitted during the interview that if he had used L1 more in the lesson, the pupils would have understood him. On the question of children with special needs, he said there were none, but if pupils were struggling, he gives them special attention after class.*

The issue of sensitivity towards different learner needs in the schools visited across the three northern regions was underpinned by a general lack of skill, ability and confidence by teachers to “handle” children with special educational needs. In most cases when teachers were asked about their strategies for ensuring that all children were included in the learning process in their classrooms, they made reference to those pupils who had hearing or visual impairments, or a group that are classified as “slow learners”. The generally agreed strategy to ensure the inclusion of children with sight/hearing impairments was to ensure that they were seated close enough to

the chalkboard in order to increase visibility or close enough to the teacher in order to hear better. Teachers also refer to the strategy of speaking loudly and clearly and drawing/writing on the blackboard boldly. Where the Upper West differs from the Upper East is the extent to which teachers talk about using pastoral care as a strategy to support children who are differently able. In particular, they speak about ensuring that children with special needs receive more care, compassion and sensitivity.

In terms of children with specific or severe learning difficulties, teachers in the Upper West describe a variety of strategies including the use of TLMs, additional support or the usage of isolating special needs children since they often “disturb other children”. But while some teachers were clearly able to describe certain strategies, there was little evidence in classrooms that these were actually being used. When teachers were questioned about using these strategies many also indicated that sometimes it was difficult to find the time to give individual attention to pupils. Teachers in focal group discussions across the 54 schools complained of simply not being aware of strategies for handling special needs children and most confessed that they had not been trained to handle SEN children. Often teachers ill equipped to manage SEN children tended to refer to “slow learners” as “absent minded” and pupils who require “too much time and effort to cope with classroom learning.” FGD with teachers revealed that most teachers lacked the knowledge and skills to handle SEN children. Others were not aware of the presence of SEN children in their classes. This group of teachers would usually ignore or abandon SEN children in their classes and concentrate on other pupils without learning difficulties.

Across all 6 districts there was evidence of teachers able to respond in some way to the needs of children with visual or hearing impairments but this was limited to adjusting their position in class. There were several classes with children with specific learning difficulties but where this was the case the teacher’s strategy was generally one of exclusion. The only evidence of inclusive strategies is found in the teachers’ ability to ensure high participation among the “mainstream” children in classes.

## **6.1 Approach and attitude of the teacher towards different learner needs**

An assessment of teachers’ approaches and attitude to different learner needs falls into two broad categories – how teachers cater for children with disabilities or specific learning difficulties and secondly, whether teachers are differentiating learning activities for children who are learning at different rates compared to their peers. The first of these categories is governed by the extent to which children with Special Educational Needs are actually in school. Evidence from the registers of those teachers observed across the three regions indicates that there are very few children who have been identified as having a special need. In the Northern Region there were just 4 children marked as having a special need in urban West Mamprusi District. In the Upper East, three children in urban Talensi Nabdam and 10 in the rural schools were registered as having some form of disability. In Bongo (UE) there were 3 children in the urban schools and 5 in the rural. In the Upper West there was just one child in one of the urban schools and one in a rural school in Jirapa and 3 in urban Lawra schools and 2 in the rural. This amounts to a total of 32 children identified as having special needs across the 86 classrooms observed as part of this study. Evidence from other parts of the research (particularly focal group discussions with community members and parents) suggests that the reasons for the low number of SEN children includes difficulties with transporting children to the school, concerns about children’s safety

and security while in school, a lack of confidence in the school's ability to cater for children's needs and safety, and finally, scepticism that children with special needs can be educated.

The children who were identified as having a special need either had some form of physical disability, which includes visual or hearing impairments or some kind of disability affecting their limbs; or they had some kind of specific learning difficulty. Field notes records interviews with people regarding these children reported them as being referred to as “mentally sick”, “morons” or “not mentally sound”. Interviews with teachers about the strategies they use to cater for the needs of these children generally focus on placing children with visual or hearing impairments at the front of the classroom near to the chalk board, ensuring that writing on the chalkboard is bold and speaking loudly. These claims were confirmed by researchers conducting lesson observations and also by children in the focal group discussions. Evidence from the research indicates that children with disabilities affecting limbs were generally able to cope, but all such children were mobile and could be described as having a relatively minor disability. There is no evidence to show that teachers had strategies for catering for the needs of children with specific learning difficulties. In general, the classroom observation notes report that this category of pupils were either isolated or ignored. Most teachers admitted that they lacked the expertise to “handle” such children.

Another much larger category of learners (often more than 50% of the class) was identified by teachers as “slow learners”. Teachers sometimes claimed to be providing additional support for these children. This was not confirmed from other sources although evidence from some classroom observations indicated that a few teachers were adjusting the pace of lessons and distribution of questions to accommodate for these children's needs. Another strategy used by teachers was to pair or group “weak achievers” with “brilliant” students.

## **6.2 Regional Findings**

### **6.2.1 Northern Region**

Teachers' ability to identify and prepare appropriately towards different learner needs is instrumental to improving their learning outcomes. It is important for teachers to be aware that not all children are the same and hence may require different approaches to learning. The teacher's role is also to be able to identify these needs and be able to respond to them as effectively as possible. The TENI research revealed that teachers' inability to identify the different learner needs and respond to them appropriately is an inhibitor to quality education. Across the 27 lessons observed in the Northern Region limited attention was paid to slow learners and SEN children across all classrooms observed. In many classrooms, more focus was placed on the few children who demonstrated some level of knowledge in what the teacher is teaching.

Of the five lessons observed in urban West Mamprusi two teachers demonstrated some sensitivity to learner needs by trying to include all pupils in the lesson and by putting those children with some kind of visual or hearing impairment at the front of the class:

*She was so involving and made the class child centred. She was patient enough with all children even those who were really difficult to handle. (Urban West Mamprusi, Ngbaripe Islam Primary School, Trained teacher, P3)*

*The teacher made all students to speak during the lesson. Students who have learning problems were positioned in front. (Urban West Mamprusi, Wurshie B2 Primary School, Trained teacher, P6)*

Whereas in other lessons, there was a clear lack of concern as to whether pupils are engaging with the learning:

*Teacher was so fast with the lesson that she did not detect how the children were reacting. She concentrated more on those who could answer her questions. She kept rushing and saying, "if we go through all we won't finish now" (I wonder why she was in such a haste) she spoke to children as if they were adults. (Urban West Mamprusi, Ngbaripe Islam Primary School, Trained teacher, P6)*

Evidence from lesson observation field notes shows that of the eight lessons observed in rural West Mamprusi, five teachers demonstrated some strategies for including all learners in the lesson.

*The teacher was calm on his approach in the classroom and was also inclusive. He engaged both boys and girls equally during the lesson and posed questions for all to answer. He had good attitude which encouraged and motivated children to learn. (Rural West Mamprusi, Manga Primary School, CVT, P5)*

*The children related to the teacher as an uncle/brother. The children called the teacher "mbe Shani" meaning brother shani in Mamprulie. Teacher was encouraging the children and involved both boys and girls. (Rural West Mamprusi, Zori Primary School, Pupil Teacher, P1)*

*Teacher wrote exercises on the board. Teacher faced the children anytime he engaged them. He also made sure he explains further for pupils to understand what he taught. Participation was satisfactory. (Rural West Mamprusi, Ninsali Primary School, CVT, P6)*

The evidence from the lesson observations in 14 classrooms across **East Mamprusi District** paints a different picture. There were only 2 teachers who demonstrate inclusive strategies in the urban schools, with no evidence of inclusive practices in the majority of the classrooms but clear evidence that struggling pupils were not given support. Most of the teachers in the 9 classrooms in the rural schools were observed to have less sensitivity. Just 2 teachers appeared to be making the effort to include all the pupils. Whereas behaviours noted in the other 7 classrooms were a strong focus on the “brightest” children; simply ignoring children with some kind of special need or insulting the pupils who were unable to perform.

*She just chose some few girls to answer her questions and they couldn't, so the teacher asked them to sit down then later called some few boys too. The teacher really messed up herself in the class and before her students. There is no evidence of teacher being sensitive to diverse learner needs, hearing impaired, visual impaired, gender, children with learning difficulties. (Rural East Mamprusi, Zangu D/A Primary School, Trained teacher, P6)*

*There was one girl in the class who is a moron<sup>32</sup>. The teacher ignored her. She confessed after the class that it is difficult to pay attention to her. That it is a waste of time to attend to her. It was only pupils who could read who were called by the teacher to read. (Rural East Mamprusi, Nintendo Primary School, Pupil teacher, P3)*

*On the part of gender, the teacher was bias towards the girls. Anytime he calls a girl to come to the blackboard to work the fraction and she is not able to get the answer he would tell the 'what is the use coming to the board if you don't know it'. Then the boys in the class laughed at the girl and made fun of them. So therefore, the girls if even they know would not like to raise their hands to answer any questions from the teacher making them timid to open up to anybody. Teacher never praised a student. (Rural East Mamprusi, Bunkuma Primary School, Pupil teacher, P5 & P6, Mathematics)*

*The teacher was gender sensitive. He in a number of times called on girls to also contribute when the boys had talked for a long time. The teacher has a good attitude. The vocal nature of the class could convince an observer to think that the teacher neglects the girls. The girls and the teacher after the class confessed that the girls in the class are feeling shy. Some of the students were fast learners and others (especially the girls) are slow learners (Rural East Mamprusi, Wuyela JHS, Trained teacher, F2)*

*The approach the teacher used in delivering the lesson was very good. He spoke in Da and explained in Mamprulie and English. He made it simple for those who cannot pronounce very well the Da words. The teacher had a good attitude in the class. There is no SEN students in the class. It is the teacher himself who is a Special Need person. He has problems in walking but has no problems in talking. All the same, he taught whiles standing throughout the lesson period. He encouraged everyone to participate by throwing questions to the students. (Rural East Mamprusi, Bamahu D/A JHS, Trained teacher, F3)*

The following table presents the main evidence found in the East and West Mamprusi districts related to SEN. It appears that teachers in the TENI district (West Mamprusi) were more responsive and able to adjust their teaching methods to include the majority of children in class compared to the non TENI districts. This is likely the result of a large amount of training across the district to develop capabilities in teachers to respond to different learning needs through TENI and possibly other child centred training by UNICEF and CAMFED.

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<sup>32</sup> On further investigation, it became apparent that this description is used to refer to children born with Downs Syndrome.

**Table 6.1: Summary of Evidence of Inclusive Strategies Among Teachers in Observed in the Northern Region, With Comparisons Across Community Type, School Performance, School Type, and Teacher Type**

		No SEN	Includes All Pupils	Inconclusive Evidence	No Assistance For Struggling Children	Put SEN At Front Of Class	Poor Participation	Checks Children Are Following	No Strategies	Ignored SLD Child	Insulting	Girls See Themselves As Slow Learners	Totals
West Mamprusi	Urban	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	5
West Mamprusi	Rural	1	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
East Mamprusi	Urban	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
East Mamprusi	Rural	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	9
Totals		1	9	4	3	1	3	1	2	1	1	1	27
West Mamprusi	High	1	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
West Mamprusi	Low	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
East Mamprusi	High	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	6
East Mamprusi	Low	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	5
Totals		1	7	2	3	1	2	1	2	1	1	0	21
West Mamprusi	EA	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
West Mamprusi	DA	1	5	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	11
East Mamprusi	PRES	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
East Mamprusi	EA	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
East Mamprusi	DA	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	10
Totals		1	9	4	3	1	3	1	2	1	1	1	27
West Mamprusi	Trained	0	2	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	7
West Mamprusi	Pupil teacher	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
West Mamprusi	CVT	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
East Mamprusi	Trained	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	5
East Mamprusi	Pupil teacher	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	5
East Mamprusi	CVT	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Totals		1	9	4	3	1	3	1	2	1	1	1	27

(Source: classroom observation notes, TENI field research)

The evidence above also suggests that a lower proportion of trained teachers demonstrate inclusive strategies compared to untrained teachers across both districts.

### 6.2.2 Upper East Region

Evidence from interviews with various members of the school community (i.e. Head Teacher, teachers, Parents, PTA and SMC members) indicates that, in general, schools feel ill-equipped to “handle” children with special educational needs. Teachers did not feel they had the relevant training, the physical infrastructure of the school was not always appropriate, and class size was often cited as a factor because teachers felt they cannot give individual attention when there are sometimes over 100 children in the class. Interviews with parents revealed that they face difficulties in terms of preparation of the child for school and transportation to the school, and other pupils react negatively to some kinds of disabilities, behaviours, etc.

When interviewed about children with special needs, most respondents made reference to children with some kind of physical disability including: visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech impediment, amputated or disfigured limbs, etc; as a result of which, when asked what provision is made for children with SEN, most respondents suggest that these pupils should be seated in an appropriate part of the classroom so that they can see the chalkboard more clearly and hear the teacher. In some cases teachers have suggested in order to cater for children with hearing impairments the teacher should use a loud voice. Because children with moderate to severe learning difficulties<sup>33</sup> are very rarely enrolled in mainstream schools, it is almost impossible to gauge whether schools are able to cater for this group of children. However, schools do have children with the physical disabilities referred to above enrolled.

Occasionally when teachers were questioned about inclusive practices, they referred to a group of children they categorize as “slow learners”. In the light of evidence from interviews with various members of the school community, it is clear that many children are absenting themselves from school on a regular basis. What is more, because there is a strong reliance on pupils reviewing and, it could be argued, memorizing what has been taught during the day, if the student doesn’t have the means or opportunity to spend time doing this, they will experience difficulties when it comes to building on this on subsequent days.

There is also the question of the language of instruction. Findings from the interviews with teachers revealed that those children who were thought to be “brilliant” were able to speak and understand English (the language of instruction) better than their peers. Analysis of the data from the field work suggests that if a child was considered not brilliant or “slow” it is because they are simply not accessing the learning because their fluency in English is not adequate and that as a result of that, repeated absence from school, and an inability or lack of opportunity to memorize, they become categorized as “slow learners”. The conclusion that can be drawn from these findings is that quality inclusive practice is that which not just caters for children experiencing physical or learning difficulties, but also serves to address the needs of a greater proportion of children who need support in learning. The findings suggest that very few teachers would ensure that children had the requisite understanding of ideas and concepts being taught; these teachers did not always check that children understood ideas and concepts in their mother

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<sup>33</sup> By these terms I am referring to, for example, children born with Down’s Syndrome, children whose learning behaviour is symptomatic of dyslexia or dyspraxia, children who could be diagnosed as having some form of autism, in fact children who are living with any kind of physical, emotional or intellectual challenge which means they are not able to learn at the same pace or in the same way as their peers and could be assessed as achieving at a level which is several years below their age

tongue before translating these into English; as well as making sure that pupils understood what was being taught. The school and community would need to ensure that students have the time, energy and facilities to study at the end of the school day and that the causes of absenteeism are identified and resolved.

The following is a description of what was observed in classrooms in terms of whether teachers were aiming to deliver lessons in such a way as to cater to all the children in the classroom or restrict their focus to only a few:

Evidence of the extent to which teachers are sensitive to the needs of different learners is taken from the 5 classroom observations carried out in schools in urban Talensi Nabdam (UE), the interviews that were carried out with teachers after their lesson was observed and the focal group discussions with upper primary pupils taken from the same class. From evidence in the descriptions and summaries below there are indicators that 2 out of these 5 teachers were sensitive to different learner needs.

*Similarly in the P5 English class in Kpatuya Primary School observers noted that no attention was given to “slow learners” or to those who were not accessing the language of instruction. In the interview, the teacher said that there was a child with a disabled hand who has problems understanding sometimes so he checks that he has understood and that he also attends to other children with learning difficulties individually. However, in the P1 English class in Kpatuya Primary School the teacher was more sensitive to those who were experiencing difficulties and used L1 clarify explanations. This was confirmed as the strategy to be used in the teacher interview.*

*In the form 2 English class in Kpatuya JHS, the teacher used the strategy of putting pupils in to mixed ability groups. The idea was that each group had a “brilliant” student as group captain and that those pupils with learning difficulties were distributed among the groups. However, the strategy was not necessarily successful in improving the learning of those pupils as they spent the majority of the lesson passively listening to the answers provided by the captains and when it came to doing the book work, it was the captains who were using the dictionaries and any answers were being copied from the captains’ books.*

*In Kulenga Primary School, a P3 English lesson, observers noted that a female pupil with what was characterized by the teacher as a “mental disability” was given no attention during the lesson. In the interview, the teacher claimed that this child gets special attention after class. In the P6 English class in Kulenga Primary school there were no children with special needs but the teacher simply admonished any child who was unable to correctly answer questions and requested another pupil to respond instead. He claimed in the interview that he gave “weak achievers” differentiated activities.*

Evidence for the extent to which teachers are sensitive to the needs of different learners is taken from the 10 classroom observations carried out in schools in rural **Talensi Nabdam**, the interviews that were carried out with teachers after their lesson was observed and the focal group discussions with upper primary pupils taken from the same class. From evidence in the

descriptions and summaries below there are indicators that 4 out of these 10 teachers were sensitive to different learner needs.

In Namonsa Primary School the English class in P1 there were no children present who had been diagnosed as having special needs. The teacher persisted in using English all the way through the lesson and on the one occasion he resorted to L1 (to clarify an instruction), there was an immediate response from pupils. He admitted during the interview that if he had used L1 more in the lesson, the pupils would have understood him. On the question of children with special needs, he said there were none, but if pupils were struggling, he gives them special attention after class. The P6 English lesson in Namonsa Primary School was more successful because, even though the teacher used solely English, the level of vocabulary was accessible to the pupils and they were given numerous opportunities to practise the target language. When interviewed, the teacher said there were 2 children with special needs, one with a hearing impairment and the other with a visual impairment. He seats them at the front of the class.

*In Chuchuliga Primary School the P3 teacher appeared to be identifying children who were not understanding during the course of the lesson and attempting to rectify this through questioning and further explanation. He confirmed that this is a strategy he routinely adopts during the interview and also said “He does extra exercises, easier for the average children who understand slower. He asks them to stay several minutes in the break to work more.” Unfortunately the P6 teacher in Chuchuliga Primary School did not demonstrate such sympathy. In fact at one point in the lesson observers described how two pupils who were unable to describe one another using the target language were labelled as failures by the teacher and “went back to their seats crestfallen”.*

*The form 1 English class in Namonsa JHS was also poor with respect to including learners experiencing difficulties. The pace of the lesson was fast, observers noted that it appeared only the “brighter” children were being asked for responses and the responses to whole class questions were given in chorus, so there were few opportunities for actually identifying any pupil who did not understand.*

*At Zuaringo Primary School the P2 teacher appears only to have concentrated on those children who were sitting in the front 2 rows. Although he claimed in the interview that he ensures total inclusion by asking “questions to the entire class and calls from every corner (randomly) to answer the questions.” In the P5 class of Zuaringo Primary School, however, the teacher made a clear effort to involve every child in the class through the use of questioning. However, his delivery of the lesson was very quiet and when speaking... he rarely varied the tone of his voice which meant that for any pupils having difficulty understanding English, there were no additional cues to aid them. He confirmed in the interview that he usually uses questioning to include all children. He also added that “Some of the children don’t cope up in class but we are still trying to see how it is with the children and then we will find ways to help them.”*

*Although there were no children with special needs in the P6 class in Ayimpoka Primary School, the teacher did identify those children who routinely struggle (designated as “slow learners”) and appeared to make an attempt to support them. In particular, he*

*made a point of clarifying some vocabulary by explaining in the L1. In the post lesson interview the teacher stated that: “The class does not have children with SENs but has a few slow learners to whom attention is paid and facilitation made to bring them at a par with their colleagues.” In the P1 class of Ayimpoka Primary School, 3 children have been diagnosed as having some hearing impairment but there was no evidence during the lesson that any specific strategy was used to facilitate their access to the learning. Although the teacher said in the interview that he brings them to the front of the class.*

*Once again, in the form 2 English lesson in Ayimpoka JHS, the teacher did not appear to be sensitive to different levels of understanding. It was a reading lesson and the pupils were corrected in their pronunciation of the text but otherwise most pupils did not have the opportunity to actually interact with the text as questions were answered by a handful of the more able students. The teacher claimed that he gives pupils who are struggling extra attention after class and he also confirmed that the focus is on pronunciation rather than comprehension.*

Evidence for the extent to which teachers are sensitive to the needs of different learners is taken from the 5 classroom observations carried out in schools in urban Bongo, the interviews that were carried out with teachers after their lesson was observed and the focal group discussions with upper primary pupils taken from the same class. From evidence in the descriptions and summaries below there are indicators that 4 out of these 5 teachers were sensitive to different learner needs.

*An English lesson was observed in the P6 class of Adakudugu RC Primary School. Observers noted that there were no children with special needs but the teacher was sensitive to the needs of the pupils. Evidence of this was drawn from the fact that the majority of pupils appeared to have clearly understood what was being taught and that, when interviewed later, the pupils remarked that they can ask the teacher whenever they don’t understand something and she will take the time to explain. Similarly, in the P1 class at Adakudugu RC Primary School, there were no children with special needs and the teacher involved the pupils as much as possible, facilitating their learning by using L1 where it seemed appropriate. The teacher claimed during the post lesson interview that if pupils were experiencing difficulties she would give them individual help.*

*The P6 teacher in Lanwana Primary School stated that there were 2 children in the class whom he had identified as have special needs. However, he did not appear to use any kind of strategy to differentiate his learning for their needs. Rather, he seemed to focus mainly on the “brighter” children in the class. He confirmed this in the post-lesson interview by saying that he chooses the good readers to read aloud. He also claimed that he gives pupils who are struggling special attention by giving them less work. In the P3 English lesson in Lanwana Primary School, observers noted that there was no discernable difference in the way the teacher interacted with each of the pupils. However, it was also noted that many of the children were encouraged to actively participate in the lesson by acting out the different verbs. In the post lesson interview she said that she also uses pictures, charts, word cards and other TLMs to encourage full participation.*

*In the form 3 English class (Adakudugu Girls' RC JHS) one girl was identified by the teacher as having some form of learning difficulty. The teacher had noticed that this pupil had some difficulties when copying text from the board, that she was transposing letters or words and that she occasionally had difficulty grasping concepts. The teacher stated that she had adopted the strategy of seating the girl nearer the chalk board in case it was a sight problem but she also said that because she had no training in the diagnosis of special needs, she felt ill-equipped to come up with any other strategy. However, during the lesson, observers noted that this pupil was given additional support, and was particularly praised for in the first instance volunteering to give an example and, in the second, giving an accurate answer. What is more the teacher's general strategy during the lesson was to revisit concepts taught previously when necessary.*

Evidence for the extent to which teachers are sensitive to the needs of different learners is taken from the 10 classroom observations carried out in schools in **rural Bongo** and the interviews that were carried out with teachers after their lesson was observed. From evidence in the descriptions and summaries below there are indicators that 6 out of these 10 teachers were sensitive to different learner needs. This could be compared to TENI district such as rural Talensi Nabdum where they had 4 out of 10 teachers who were gender sensitive towards their children (more examples are available in the Annex 6A).

*In Gungolgu A Primary School the P6 teacher (delivering a maths lesson) appears to have been more sympathetic to the different needs of learners. Although there were no children who exhibited a specific learning difficulty, those children who were unable to answer were supported with additional explanations and guidance. When asked in the post-lesson interview how he facilitated inclusion, he confirmed that giving additional explanations and guidance to pupils who are struggling is one of his strategies. When he was asked about children with special needs in the post-lesson interview, he stated that there was a boy in the class who is "brilliant but cannot speak well" so he only asks him questions that require a yes/no answer so he will not be embarrassed by speaking which illustrates a certain level of sensitivity but no apparent strategy to support the pupil to address his difficulties.*

*Similarly in the P3 class in Gungolgu A Primary School (another maths lesson), the pace of the lesson was such that those pupils designated as "slow learners" by observers were able to follow and understand. In the post lesson interview the teacher stated that the strategies used to ensure inclusion are: "Even distributions of questions to all pupils in the class; controlling the pace of the lesson to enable the slow learners to follow and calling pupils by their names to answer questions to ensure mass participation".*

*Conversely the P3 English lesson in Bulika Primary School was poor. There were apparently no children with special needs in the class but equally there was very little learning because for most of the lesson the children were merely required to listen and repeat. The teacher claimed in the interview that pupils are put in mixed ability groups so that the "brilliant ones" can assist low achievers. The P4 English lesson in Bulika Primary School was slightly better inasmuch as the teacher did try to elucidate when*

*pupils were unable to answer but otherwise demonstrated no sensitivity to learner needs. In the interview he talked about occasionally giving pupils easy examples in maths.*

*In Gungolgu JHS the form one teacher did try and use a variety of examples and explanations to clarify the concepts being taught and observers noted that most pupils appear to have understood the objective and were able to provide accurate examples. In the post lesson interview the teacher described these strategies as a means to promote inclusion: "I involved all children in lesson, both slow and fast learners. My questioning technique involved both sexes."*

### **6.2.3 Upper West Region**

The issue of sensitivity towards different learner needs in the schools visited across the Upper West is underpinned by a general lack on the teachers' parts of the requisite skills to "handle" children with special educational needs. In most cases when teachers were asked about their strategies for ensuring that all children are included in the learning process in their classrooms, they made reference to those pupils who have hearing or visual impairments, or a group that are classified as "slow learners". The generally agreed strategy to ensure the inclusion of children with sight/hearing impairments is to ensure that they are seated close enough to the chalkboard in order to be able to see it clearly or close enough to the teacher to hear better. Teachers also refer to the strategy of speaking loudly and clearly and drawing/writing on the chalkboard boldly. This is illustrated in the following excerpt from an interview with a teacher in Lawra.

*Those who have sight problems have been positioned well. Questions are thrown randomly and both sexes are encouraged to answer questions. Some children are always worried due to parents' financial constraint to perform their duties. Some children are generally arrogant, but they are encouraged to learn. Teacher in approaching children from poor homes sometimes encourages them to meet other relatives who can be of help to them. (St Bamvum RC Primary School, Trained teacher, P5, urban Jirapa)*

In terms of the issue of "slow learners", teachers across the Upper West made various claims about the strategies they employ to ensure children are all included. The general trend of these strategies tends towards giving the pupils additional time to complete tasks, giving them extra attention before or after class or grouping them with "brilliant" or "intelligent" students who can then support them during lessons. Teachers in the Upper West also spoke about using pastoral care as a strategy to support children who are differently able. In particular, they speak about ensuring that "other pupils" are caring:

*She said she sits with the children with disability and slow learners after the normal session and takes them through the lesson again. She makes the child to write in the air or in the sand before writing on the book. The teacher also encourages the rest of the children to support and also play with the SEN children. (Tuokuo D/A Primary School, Trained teacher, P1, Rural Lawra)*

In terms of children with specific or severe learning difficulties, teachers in the Upper West describe a variety of strategies including the use of TLMs, additional support or, as in the first case cited below, isolation:

*Teacher said she ensures that all pupils in the class respond to at least one question. She also encourages them to do better if they answer questions wrongly. She uses compliments such as praises and claps for those who answer questions in class. There is a child who is mentally sick and made to sit outside in the course of lesson because he disturbs other pupils in class. Because of the isolation, he is now calm and doesn't misbehave as before. (St Gabriels Primary School, Trained teacher, P5, urban Lawra)*

*I sometimes give them more time and attention. For example last year I had one student who was mentally ill so I used to take him through a topic in advance so that when I'm treating the topic, he can pick up. I had an advice from an officer in GES who was into inclusive education. (Dery D/A Primary School, Trained teacher, P6, urban Lawra)*

In terms of what was actually observed in the Upper West classrooms, some of the strategies espoused by the teachers were being used. In most cases, the teacher was seen supporting children who were having difficulties and trying to ensure that children who appear not be participating were included in the discussion or activity. In rural Lawra there were 4 classrooms where there was evidence of teachers using “brilliant” students to assist those who were less able.

In two of the classes in rural Jirapa observers reported that there were children who appeared to have some kind of learning difficulty. However, in both cases the teachers did not demonstrate any particular strategies for ensuring that these children were included in the learning.

*The teacher positioned a girl who was visually impaired in front of the class for her to be able to see what is written on the chalkboard. Both boys and girls were also called during the lesson to participate, for example both girls and boys were asked to read the story paragraph by paragraph. Also during the observation, there was a child who was not mentally sound, but the teacher tried to tell him to look inside the book when they were reading although he did not mind him and later left the class. (Kuvarpuo RC Primary School, CVT, P3, rural Jirapa)*

Some teachers were clearly able to describe certain strategies but there was little evidence in classrooms that these were actually being used. However, in terms of more general inclusion strategies – that the majority of children are able to participate in lessons, teachers in the Upper West were observed aiding pupils with difficulties, feeding back to individual children, including non-participating children, carrying out activities where all pupils can participate, moving around the classroom to support individual children, facing children when talking, encouraging pupils to rethink answers, using praise and using illustrations or visual cues.

In urban Jirapa 4 out of the 5 teachers were thought to be demonstrating one or other of these positive strategies for inclusion as can be seen from the evidence in the table below taken from the classroom observation notes for urban Jirapa. (Evidence for rural Jirapa and Lawra district is

in the Annex 6A). The proportion of teachers was similar in the classes in rural Jirapa with 8 out of 10 teachers using these strategies. In the urban Lawra classrooms, the situation was similar to Jirapa in that 4 out of 5 teachers are making a positive effort to include the pupils. Of the 9 teachers observed in rural Lawra, only one showed evidence of the aforementioned strategies although evidence from observation notes indicates that 3 teachers in these rural schools were ensuring there was gender balance in their distribution of questions.

**Table 6.2: Evidence from Classroom Observation Notes of Teacher Attitude and Sensitivity to Different Learner Needs in Urban Jirapa**

No	School	School type	School performance	Gender of teacher	No of years teaching	Type of Teacher	Class observed	Subject Observed	7. Teacher attitude
370	St Bamvum Primary School	RC	High	Female	11	Trained	P3	Mathematics	Teacher pays more attention to pupils who are finding it difficult to work exercise given by going to their desk to explain further and guide them into doing the right thing. She poses questions to the whole class and sometimes even picks pupils at random to answer questions.
371	St Bamvum Primary School	RC	High	Female	7	Trained	P5	English Reading	Teacher does not motivate pupils after they have read the passage. As pupil reads teacher makes comments like "did you see any they there"? Teacher does not punish pupils who laugh at their colleagues who make mistakes. Generally teacher was not friendly and created tension for pupils as they did not want to make mistakes.
380	St Kambali Primary School	RC	Low	Female	7	Trained	P6	English Reading	Teacher provided feedback to individual children. Teacher was firm and lively. Teacher varied questions to help pupils understand. Teacher did not stand at one place but moved around the class. Faced pupils during the word drill but the model reading was done with the teacher moving from one end of the class to the other. The teacher was cheerful during lesson presentation and most pupils were eager to answer questions.
381	St Kambali Primary School	RC	Low	Female	26	Trained	P1	English Verbs	Attention was also given to SEN children by position and inclusion. Teacher was not bias in terms of handling boys and girls in class. All the children were given equal chances to participate in discussions and answering of questions. SEN children were given equal attention as teacher involved them in role play. SEN children were also made to sit in front.
392	St Kambali JHS	RC		Male	12	Trained	JHS 2	English	The teacher was gender sensitive. Both girls and boys were called to make contributions on the subject matter and also answer questions. The teacher faced the class throughout the lesson. No SEN child was in class so teacher had no approaches to address such needs. However, all pupils who were not making

No	School	School type	School performance	Gender of teacher	No of years teaching	Type of Teacher	Class observed	Subject Observed	7. Teacher attitude
									contributions were called to do so.

(Source: classroom observation notes, TENI field research)

In order to gain further insight into teachers' attitude and sensitivity to learner needs, teachers were asked how they made their classrooms inclusive during the post lesson interview. The following table includes responses to this question from teachers observed in urban Jirapa. The range of responses given by teachers is fairly typical of responses gained from teacher across all 6 districts. That is to say a general lack of confidence to deal with pupils who have needs beyond the mainstream of children who could be categorized either as "bright" or slow learners as is exemplified by the teacher who had a pupil whose first or other languages are not within her remit. As has been stated already, other responses include positioning children in class, using TLMs, giving extra attention to struggling children or putting them in pairs or groups with "brilliant" students. Where responses from teachers in Jirapa depart from those of teachers in the other districts is that they describe using pastoral care strategies.

**Table 6.3: Evidence from Post Lesson Observation Interviews of Teacher Attitude and Sensitivity to Different Learner Needs in Urban Jirapa**

No	School	School type	School performance	Gender of teacher	No of years teaching	Type of Teacher	Class observed	Subject Observed	Responses to the Question: How do you make the classroom inclusive?
370	St Bamvum Primary School	RC	High	Female	11	Trained	P3	Mathematics	A student from Togo does not understand either Dagaare or English so with her there is nothing I can do because she understands only Ewe. Also there is one boy in my class called Vincent who limps in my class and so with him and the slow learners I just bond with them and attend to them individually.
371	St Bamvum Primary School	RC	High	Female	7	Trained	P5	English Reading	Those who have sight problems have been positioned well. Questions are thrown randomly and both sexes are encouraged to answer questions. Some children are always worried due to parents' financial constraint to perform their duties. Some children are generally arrogant, but they are encouraged to learn. Teacher in approaching children from poor homes sometimes encourages them to meet other relatives who can be of help to them.
380	St Kambali Primary School	RC	Low	Female	7	Trained	P6	English Reading	Use TLM to explain to SEN children. Ask pupils to explain in Dagaare L1 to SEN child. Teacher ought to use lots of pictures and word cards to help children but did not have. The main support

No	School	School type	School performance	Gender of teacher	No of years teaching	Type of Teacher	Class observed	Subject Observed	Responses to the Question: How do you make the classroom inclusive?
									was to ask pupils to translate into Dagaare. There is a retarded child in my class and teacher only use TLMs to teach such children.
38 1	St Kambali Primary School	RC	Low	Female	26	Trained	P1	English Verbs	I use a lot of TLMs so children can see and know what they really mean, so that they can participate. SEN children were also included in the demonstration.
39 2	St Kambali JHS	RC		Male	12	Trained	JH S 2	English	By telling them stories and asking them questions. By distributing the questions fairly and not considering one particular gender. There are pupils who cannot read and write well, and these pupils are put into groups with the good ones to assist them.

(Source: post lesson interviews with observed teachers, TENI field research)

### 6.3 Comparisons

Across all 86 classrooms in the three regions observers felt that approximately half the teachers demonstrated some sensitivity to learner needs. This sensitivity was generally characterized by teachers giving some support to what is termed as “slow learners” – that is to say those pupils who were not able to easily access the lesson at the same pace as those pupils who are described as “brilliant” students. Strategies are generally described as varying the pace of the lesson and directing questions at students who are not volunteering answers. The extent to which teachers are demonstrating this sensitivity does not appear to vary much according to the different contexts of the schools. There is a marginally higher incidence of sensitivity towards learners in West Mamprusi District than in the East Mamprusi District; more teachers in Bongo District demonstrated sensitivity than in Talensi Nabdam and more in Jirapa than in Lawra. In terms of the approaches that teachers claimed to use (during post lesson observation interviews), these were similar in almost every case, the only departure from this was in Jirapa where teachers referred to pastoral care as a strategy to ameliorate the difficulties around security that some children experience. This approach is confirmed by evidence from FGIs with pupils:

*They are shown love, as they move with us as friends. There are certain aspects in the learning process which they cannot do due to their situation. (Urban Jirapa, St Kambali RC JHS,F2)*

*Children do go closer to mentally ill children. Other SEN children who behave well have friends in the classroom. Teacher gives special attention to SEN children. [It makes it difficult for SEN children to learn when there is:] maltreatment by other children. Parent not cooperating with teachers on the best need of SEN children. When teacher fail to control some SEN children (mentally problem). (Rural Jirapa, Kuvarpuo Primary RC School, P3)*

*Teacher gives individual attention to such pupil. Their special needs hamper their understanding of lesson. (Rural Jirapa, Kuvarpuo RC Primary School, P5)*

*Children interact with SEN child in class to make her feel loved. Some also stay away from SEN child because she will not communicate with them. Teacher tries to engage SEN child but there is no improvement. Friends sometimes mock at SEN child in the school. [It makes it difficult for SEN children to learn:] When teacher does not involve SEN Child in discussions. (Rural Jirapa, Kpaguri Primary School, P5)*

*For them, SEN children were normal pupils in class with them. When pupils or their mates mocked at them in school they are unable to learn. (Rural Jirapa, Safaliba Primary School, P2)*

*They make friends with them, he is always happy. The teacher also includes him in the lesson and asks him questions. [It makes it difficult for SEN children to learn:] When they are psychologically troubled in terms of certain activities asked to do which is related to their condition. (Rural Jirapa, Safaliba Primary School, P6)*

## **6.4 Challenges and Best Practice**

The most pressing challenge in terms of inclusion of children with special educational needs (particularly those children with moderate to severe learning difficulties) is that schools feel ill-equipped to “handle” such children at the school level in terms of inputs and at the classroom level because teachers are not confident and do not feel they have the expertise. A regrettable element of this is the attitude that there is little point in even trying to teach children who have more than moderate learning difficulties:

*There was one girl in the class who is a moron<sup>34</sup>. The teacher ignored her. She confessed after the class that it is difficult to pay attention to her. That it is a waste of time to attend to her. It was only pupils who could read who were called by the teacher to read. (Rural East Mamprusi, Primary School, Pupil teacher, P3)*

Furthermore, evidence from interviews with parents and other community members indicates that many parents of children with special needs feel that they should not be enrolled in mainstream schools; the perception is that they can only have their needs met at a special school. There is also a perception that mainstream schools are not a safe environment for children with special needs. That children with special needs face hazards on their journey to and from school, and while in school differently able children are “mocked” and bullied. Those schools who demonstrated an awareness of the need for pastoral care have clearly recognized this issue and, given the attitude of some of the pupils interviewed who say that they want to “show them love”, appear to be trying to introduce strategies to ameliorate the problem.

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<sup>34</sup> On further investigation, it became apparent that this description is used to refer to children born with Downs Syndrome.

With regard to that category of children termed as “slow learners”, the challenges are clear. Although there was evidence in many classrooms that teachers were using strategies like directing questions to children who were not volunteering answers, adapting the pace of the lesson and giving additional explanations and other support to pupils who were clearly struggling; there was also a great deal of evidence that teachers focus on those pupils who are more able. This was particularly the case at the JHS level, where most “teacher centred” strategies were witnessed. The promotion strategy practised in some districts is also a challenge to inclusion. Children in P6 who have been promoted sit tests in JHS1 to assess their attainment in Maths and English, if they “fail” these, they are sent back to P6.

The underlying problem is the methods and strategies teachers use. The widespread use of the read and repeat method to teach reading, the emphasis on rote learning, and the use of translation between L2 and L1 cater to a small group of children who are able to learn in this way. Those pupils who can’t are labelled as “slow learners” or even as having a “mental problem” and are ultimately excluded from the learning process:

*Some of them have a mental problem – they cannot recite (that is to say listen and repeat sentences read from the board), they need special training to do this properly. (Post lesson interview with P2 Pupil Teacher, Wuntenga Primary School, rural Bongo)*

## **6.5 Teacher Gender Sensitivity in the Classroom**

The classroom based instrument asked observers to report on how the teacher interacts with boys and girls (prompts asked whether there was any preference for boys and girls in relation to encouragement, attention or questioning etc.) The vast majority of teachers were observed to distribute questions evenly between girls and boys. In most of the instances where they weren’t observers felt it was because they were focussing on the more able students who would be able to answer or read better than their colleagues; for example, the teacher who felt that girls were less able to understand concepts in science.

Generally gender roles are more clearly demarcated with respect to the chores that children are expected to do both at home and school. This is explored in more detail elsewhere in this report. However there are some notable exceptions to this trend, the following is an example of this where boys and girls share the chores in getting the school ready at the beginning of the day:

*Teachers encourage both genders to participate actively by calling any of them to contribute to lesson. (b) Boys in school sweep, weed and fetch water just like the girls.(c) At home boys and girls have different roles. BOYS: Take animal to graze. Fetch water for animals. GIRLS Fetch water for house activities example cooking, washing of bowls taking care of younger ones and being sent on errands by parents to either other family members or friends. (Source FGI with P5 Girls: Upper East, Rural Talensi-Nabdam, Zuaringo Primary School)*

In stark contrast to this is the extent to which some teachers are using pupils to carry out work in their own homes or farms. This was particularly prevalent in the schools observed in the Northern Region.

### 6.5.1 Regional Findings

#### Northern Region

Classroom observations across selected schools in the West Mamprusi district revealed that teachers did not show any particular preference or bias towards a particular sex in the class. In most cases, teachers tended to pay attention to pupils who appear to be “intelligent” in class irrespective of their sex. Teachers freely involved both boys and girls without purposely concentrating any particular sex. This was evident in all but one of the classrooms where observations were carried out. At Wurshie B primary School, “there was more interaction between the teacher and the girls than the boys. It was apparent that the majority of the girls were good and seated in front and readily responded to every question posed by the teacher”. The following are excerpts from some of the classes in West Mamprusi where observers noted that the teachers demonstrated a balanced treatment of boys and girls.

*“He had good interactions with boys and girls. He involved each sex to give examples and underlined some key words. Due to his good interaction with boys and girls, they were ready to learn”. Teacher freely involved both boys and girls in the class. Questions were evenly distributed among children. (Manga Primary school)*

*“The teacher distributes his questions fairly among boys and girls. Questions were given to those who could answer them. Teacher did not see boys as special or the girls. He was encouraging everyone to learn what he wrote on the board. He did not have a problem of discrimination”. (Zori primary school)*

*“He interacts with pupils of both sexes in a friendly and professional manner. Randomly, questions were posed to all pupils without preference to any sex. He encouraged pupils to make attempts to respond to questions without fear” Kupiel JHS)*

*In a few instances (Nuri-Islam primary) it was not clearly demonstrated which sex teacher paid attention to as she randomly selected both boys and girls. Teacher involved almost every child in the class both boys and girls”*

*“He had a fair interaction with girls and boys as his few questions were directed towards only a few boys and girls who could respond to them. He did seem to be interested in talking to only one sex. He did not engage everybody in the class throughout the lesson. More girls than boys were good in class and participated. Those who could read and speak constantly kept their hands up to respond to questions”. (Wurshie B JHS)*

The situation in **East Mamprusi** was not representative since there was just one teacher (in a rural school) who appeared to favour the boys in the class. He was a Pupil Teacher at Bunkuma Primary School, in a rural school teaching P5 & P6, Mathematics. “He interacted with boys more than girls and was quick to condemn the girls.” However there were a further 4 teachers (2 in urban schools and 2 in rural schools) who observers felt demonstrated poor interaction with pupils by rarely asking the full class to participate and condemning those who gave incorrect answers.

*Teacher treated both boys and girls equally but his interaction with the class was very poor. (Zonzongeli D/A Primary School, urban, Pupil teacher, P5, English – Grammar)*

*The teacher condemns students who are not able to answer his questions correctly by certain words like "as for you, you are zooku, you do not know anything go back to your seat". (Zonzongeli DA JHS, Urban, NSS teacher, F2, English)*

*In fact teacher's interaction with the whole class was just not good at all. The class was noisy all over, and teacher was just shouting at the top of his voice. (Zangu D/A Primary School, rural, NYEP, P3, English)*

*The teacher's interaction with children was so poor. She was not ready to teach but because she was called to, she was compelled to do something to represent something. (Zangu D/A Primary School, rural, Trained, P6, English – Writing)*

The following table presents that classroom observation data using a scoring system which rated the classrooms which were using a gender balanced approach to teaching pupils.

**Table 6.4: Summary of Evidence from Classroom Observation Showing Numbers of Teachers and Levels of Gender Balance**

		BALANCE	MALE PREFERENCE	FEMALE PREFERENCE	POOR INTERACTION	TOTALS
West Mamprusi	Urban	4	0	1	0	5
West Mamprusi	Rural	8	0	0	0	8
East Mamprusi	Urban	5	0	0	2	5
East Mamprusi	Rural	8	1	0	2	9

(Source: classroom observation, TENI field research)

**Table 6.5: Description of Teachers' Gender Sensitivity from Classroom Observations for Rural East Mamprusi, Northern Region**

Q1 District	Q2 School	School type	Community Type	School performance	Q5 Gender of teacher	Q6 No of years teaching	Q23 Type of Teacher	Q7 Class observed	Q8 Subject Observed	8. Gender Sensitivity
East Mamprusi	Gomlana Presby Prim.	PRES	Urban	High	Female	1	CVT	P2	Ghanaian Language Reading	No discernable difference in how teacher interacts with boys and girls.
East Mamprusi	Gomlana Presby Prim.	PRES	Urban	High	Female	1	Trained	P5	English - Reading Comprehension	The teacher had interaction with both boys and girls. The girls were feeling shy to talk and so the boys took the advantage to interact more with the teacher during the lesson. The teacher in an attempt to involve the girls called on them to respond to questions and also read. Some could not do that and were shying away from the teacher.
East Mamprusi	Zonzongeli D/A Prim.	DA	Urban	Low	Female		Pupil teacher	P2	English - Alphabet	The teacher has time for both boys and girls.
East Mamprusi	Zonzongeli D/A Prim.	DA	Urban	Low	Male	6	Pupil teacher	P5	English - Grammar	Teacher treated both boys and girls equally but his interaction with the class was very poor.
East Mamprusi	Zonzongeli JHS	DA	Urban		Male	1	NSS	JHS 2	English	The teacher condemns students who are not able to answer his questions correctly by certain words like "as for you, you are zooku, you do not know anything go back to your seat".
East Mamprusi	Zangu D/A Prim.	DA	Rural	High	Male	2	NYEP	P3	English	In fact teacher's interaction with the whole class was just not good at all. The class was noisy all over, and teacher was just shouting at the top of his voice.
East Mamprusi	Zangu D/A Prim.	DA	Rural	High	Female	4	Trained	P6	English - Writing	The teacher's interaction with children was so poor. She was not ready to teach but because she was called to, she was compelled to do something to represent something.
East Mamprusi	Nintendo Prim.	DA	Rural	Low	Female		Pupil teacher	P3	English - Reading Comprehension	The teacher interacted with both boys and girls. She called both sexes who could read to stand up and read.
East Mamprusi	Nintendo Prim.	DA	Rural	Low	Male	1	Trained	P6	English - Reading Comprehension	The teacher made both boys and girls to talk at a point, the girls even spoke more than the boys in the class.
East Mamprusi	Bamahu D/A JHS	DA	Rural		Male	8	Trained	JHS3	Ghanaian Language Reading	The teacher has a fair interaction with both sexes. The topic is related to females' behaviour under pregnancies thus attracted the girls' attention and so they talked and asked a lot of questions. The use of the local language gave the students the opportunity to interact very well with the teacher and among themselves. He has equal treatment for boys and girls in the class.
East Mamprusi	Bunkuma Prim.	DA	Rural	Low	Male	4	CVT	P3	English - Grammar	Teacher calls on both boys and girls to answer questions. He is able to identify children whose attention is not in class and brings them on board.
East Mamprusi	Bunkuma Prim.	DA	Rural	Low	Male	1	Pupil teacher	P5 & P6	Mathematics	He interacted with boys more than girls and quick to condemn the girls.

**Table 6.5: Description of Teachers' Gender Sensitivity from Classroom Observations for Rural East Mamprusi, Northern Region**

Q1 District	Q2 School	School type	Community Type	School performance	Q5 Gender of teacher	Q6 No of years teaching	Q23 Type of Teacher	Q7 Class observed	Q8 Subject Observed	8. Gender Sensitivity
East Mamprusi	Wuyela Prim.	EA	Rural	Low	Male	6	Pupil teacher	P6	English - Grammar	The teacher interacted with both girls and boys in an equal manner.
East Mamprusi	Wuyela JHS	EA	Rural		Male	1	Trained	JHS 2	English - Grammar	The teacher had a good interaction with boys and girls. The boys contributed a lot during the lesson. The girls appeared shy to talk but the teacher called them individually by name to contribute in the class. This took away some girls shyness and they also started contributing during the lesson without being prompted. He encouraged both sexes to contribute in class.

(Source: classroom observation, TENI field research)

## Upper East Region

In general, teachers across the sampled schools in the upper east were demonstrating some level of gender sensitivity in terms of their equal treatment of boys and girls in being asked questions and participation in discussions in the classroom. Most observers noted that teachers were distributing questions fairly between the sexes and appeared not to favour one over the other. These observations were reinforced during the focal group interviews with pupils, who also felt that they were treated equally by their teachers. Where this was not the case, teachers preference appeared to be motivated by the perception that those pupils (regardless of gender) receiving the preferential treatment were more “able” or “bright”.

Evidence from other research instruments shows that this is not the case when it comes to the roles that children play, particularly the work that they are required to carry out both in the home and at the start of the school day when the compound and classrooms are cleaned. This in some respects is mirrored in the small non-learning tasks that pupils are asked to do, for example fetching equipment or books from other parts of the school or distributing/collecting books. Girls were often expected to fetch the water for the school and sweep inside the bathrooms.

In all but one of the classes in the **urban Talensi Nabdram** clusters of schools teachers were observed giving no particular preference to either sex. The one classroom where this was not the case was the F2 English class in Kpatuya JHS where the teacher (a NSS teacher) showed a clear preference for a group of more able girls. Each of these girls were “group captains” – that is to say they were each in a different group of mixed ability students and it was their responsibility to lead this group and support those students who were thought to be less able. However, the dynamics of the class and of the groups led to these female “captains” answering most of the questions posed to the class and were in fact doing all the activities given by the teacher on behalf of the group and then simply asking the other student to copying the answers. The learning activities and the general pace of the lesson were aimed at the more able girls in the group.

There were several lessons from those observed in **rural Talensi Nabdram** where observers noted some kind of disparity in the treatment of boys and girls. Sometimes the preferential treatment depended on where the child was seated in the classroom with the majority of children being asked to answer if they were in the first two rows of the classroom. In all other cases of classes observed in Talensi the sexes were treated equally.

*In the P6 English lesson in Chuchuliga Primary School the teacher (a Pupil Teacher) distributed questions evenly between the sexes but it was the boys who were called upon to demonstrate activities for the rest of the class. In another form one class in Namonsa JHS, there was a clear preference shown for calling on boys to answer questions by the teacher (a Pupil Teacher). The form class in Ayimpoka JHS was dominated by 2 or 3 boys who were called upon to read the text aloud and who also answered the majority of questions – this was possibly because these pupils were thought by the teacher (trained) to be more able. Finally, the P2 English lesson in Zuaringo Primary School, where the observer noted that a greater number of boys than girls were participating in the class*

*discussion. However, it was also noted that there were only 9 girls in the class as compared to 30 male pupils. The observer also noted that the teacher (a Pupil Teacher) also concentrated his attention on those pupils seated in the front two rows, more or less ignoring the others.*

Evidence from the field notes indicates that there was equality in the attention that teachers were giving boys and girls in every classroom in **urban Bongo** except one which was a girls' school. In one case, however, the observer noted of the teacher (trained) in the P6 class in Lanwana Primary School that he appeared to be focussing on those children who were more able.

In the classrooms observed in **rural Bongo** teacher interactions were fairly balanced in all but two schools. In a form 1 English class in Wuntenga the teacher (trained) clearly favoured boys, first of all when calling pupils to answer questions, secondly, the fact that he was warmest in his praises for the good efforts of the male students and finally, in the way he used humour. He appeared to give a disproportionate number of admonishments for off-task behaviour to girls. During the FGDs with pupils, while the girls felt that the teacher distributed questions fairly, the boys felt that the teacher asks the boys more questions than the girls and were of the opinion that this was because "the girls are not serious". A P4 teacher (trained) in Bulika Primary School was also observed to favour boys when it came to calling on pupils to answer questions.

## **Upper West Region**

In lessons observed in both the Upper East and the Upper West evidence shows that teachers are usually making sure that there is a balance in the amount and kind of attention they are giving to boys and girls. Only in 3 lessons, 2 in urban Lawra and one in rural Jirapa, of the 29 observed was there evidence of a strong male or female preference by the teachers. Therefore, generally there was little difference between TENI and non TENI districts in terms of gender sensitivity among teachers observed across the classrooms in the Upper West (Annex 6B).

*There is little interaction with teacher and students. Only few students answer questions which are mostly boys. (Kuvarpuo RC JHS, CVT, F3, English Writing)*

*The interactions were mainly through verbal question and answers. Teacher selected more girls than boys to answer or read text. (Dery D/A Primary School, Trained teacher, P3, Ghanaian Language Reading)*

*Although the teacher is a female she interacted more with the boys and only interacted with the girls on a few instances. This was as a result of the boys answering more of the questions. (Dery D/A JHS, Trained teacher, F1, English Reading)*

In the latter example, there is evidence to suggest that the male preference is due to the fact that they are more confident in offering to answer the teacher's questions, so the imbalance is due to the fact that the teacher is not making a concerted effort to include or support those pupils who are not confident or who may be struggling to understand.

In two other classes in the Upper West observers noted that on the whole the teachers were demonstrating a balanced treatment of boys and girls but that there were some elements of preference towards either boys or girls. In the first classroom observation, analysis suggests that some girls are given more attention since they need additional support in order to understand what is being taught.

*Teacher calls on both genders to answer both on the board or verbally. However when teacher was attending to individuals, she was more focussed towards the females in explaining further to them. I cannot tell if it is because the boys were more on track as compared to the girls that was why the teacher was observed to be guiding the girls more than the boys. (Classroom observation notes: St Bamvum RC Primary School, Trained teacher, P3, Mathematics)*

*Teacher interacted with both boys and girls equally. He asked questions, paused, looked around to choose a pupil to answer. The choice of pupils to answer questions was evenly distributed between boys and girls. However, when very complex questions are asked, girls also raise their hands but teacher gives preference to the boys. (Classroom observation: Kakpagyili D/A JHS, CVT, F2, Integrated Science)*

In the second classroom observation, however, it appears that the teacher does not have confidence in the girls' ability to answer more complex scientific questions. This assumption is supported by the teacher's own view: "Some are slow learners (especially most girls have problems in understanding science)." (Source: post lesson interview with teacher Kakpagyili D/A JHS). Table 6.6 below summarises the evidence from Jirapa and Lawra District related to gender analysis of the classroom observations.

**Table 6.6: Description of Teachers' Gender Sensitivity from Classroom Observations for Upper West Region**

		Balance	Male Preference	Female Preference	Some Evidence Of Female Preference	Some Evidence Of Male Preference	Totals
Jirapa	Urban	5	0	0	1	0	5
Jirapa	Rural	9	1	0	0	0	10
Lawra	Urban	3	1	1	0	0	5
Lawra	Rural	9	0	0	0	1	9
<b>Totals</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>29</b>
Jirapa	High	6	0	0	1	0	6
Jirapa	Low	6	0	0	0	0	6
Lawra	High	5	0	0	0	0	5
Lawra	Low	5	0	1	0	0	6
<b>Totals</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>23</b>
Jirapa	RC	9	1	0	1	0	10
Jirapa	DA	5	0	0	0	0	5
Lawra	RC	2	0	0	0	0	2
Lawra	DA	10	1	1	0	1	12
<b>Totals</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>29</b>
Jirapa	Trained	11	0	0	1	0	11
Jirapa	Pupil	2	0	0	0	0	2

		Balance	Male Preference	Female Preference	Some Evidence Of Female Preference	Some Evidence Of Male Preference	Totals
	teacher						
Jirapa	CVT	1	1	0	0	0	2
Lawra	Trained	10	1	1	0	0	12
Lawra	Pupil teacher	1	0	0	0	0	1
Lawra	CVT	1	0	0	0	1	1
Totals		26	2	1	1	1	29
Upper West	English Reading	8	1	0	0	0	9
Upper West	Dagaare Reading	2	0	0	0	0	2
Upper West	Ghanaian Language Reading	0	0	1	0	0	1
Totals		10	1	1	0	0	12
Upper West	LOWER PRIMARY	9	0	1	1	0	10
Upper West	UPPER PRIMARY & JHS	17	2	0	0	1	19
Totals		26	2	1	1	1	29

(Source: classroom observations, TENI field research)

Across the 86 classrooms observed in the three Regions the majority of teachers showed evidence of gender balance in their interactions with pupils. The classrooms where this was not the situation was not found in any particular context. There is no evidence of a trend that can be correlated with rural schools, as opposed to urban; to faith based schools against DA schools; or between the different districts. There is evidence to suggest, however, that where teachers do display an imbalance in their interactions with male and female pupils, it is because they are focusing on the more able students. Some teachers also had the perception that girls were less able to understand more complex concepts compared to boys particularly in science.

## 6.6 Conclusions:

Evidence from the Quality of Education Research and suggests that the majority of teachers understood the need for boys and girls to be treated with equity in the classroom. This finding is confirmed by the responses from pupils interviewed. The challenge lies in the fact that in some cases where pupils were not treated equally it was because teachers were focusing on the more “able” students or those who were able to respond to questions easily. The challenge is therefore to ensure that teachers recognize the need to treat children with differential learning abilities with care and not try to identify and single out the “able” children from the perceived “unable” children but to respect and ensure an inclusive environment for all is attained: is challenge is discussed in section 6.1 of this report. More work is also needed to ensure that teachers are sensitized to the need to build confidence among girls particularly related to the maths and science subject areas; teachers also have to learn more equitable strategies which promote learning and confidence building among mixed ability groupings.

The study found teachers simply not being aware of strategies for handling special needs children because they had not been trained to handle SEN children. Generally teachers felt ill equipped to handle children with moderate to severe learning difficulties because of lack of inputs on SEN at the classroom level. As we recommended in chapter five teacher education curriculums should include the basic methodologies for teaching and managing children with disabilities, over-aged children and multi-grade teaching methods. Many parents of children with special needs felt that they should not be enrolled in mainstream schools; the perception is that they can only have their needs met at a special school. Community sensitization should be intensified to educate parents on the need to send children with disabilities to school. Generally gender roles are more clearly demarcated with respect to the chores that children are expected to do both at home and school. Community sensitization on reducing the girl child chores should also be intensified.

## Chapter 7: The Classroom Learning Climate, Feedback Practices and Participation of Learners

### 7.1 Teacher Demeanour, Attitude and Behaviour

The extent to which teachers are able to engage with pupils, build their confidence as learners and address their needs is in part determined by their approach and attitude in the classroom; the classroom instrument collected data on how the teacher was actually behaving towards the pupils. This dimension of quality is particularly pertinent in the context of the classrooms where the usage of verbal and physical abuse was often widespread. A well documented factor in teaching and learning in Ghanaian classrooms is the usage of the cane not just for punishing children but also for punishing children whose performance is not up to the teacher's expectations (Alhassan et al, 2008). The use (and often misuse) of physical punishment has a devastating effect on pupils' readiness to learn, their confidence to inquire and their ability to stay in school.

The evidence collected across the 86 classrooms in northern Ghana along with focal group interviews with teachers and pupils following classroom observation reveals that children feel safe and comfortable in classes which are free from abusive language and physical action by the teacher or other pupils; children spoke of how they are more likely to interact freely both with each other and the teacher in non threatening learning environments and a learning interaction dialogue is more like to take place. However, those teachers who are harsh and overly punitive evoked fear in their pupils and this deterred them from fully participating in the class lessons and sometimes led to drop out. Therefore a teacher whose demeanour is positive: friendly, approachable, enthusiastic confident is more likely to facilitate pupils' participation and create a "high learning" classroom. Pupils particularly enjoy being in class with teachers who use humour, are friendly, demonstrate compassion and are easily approachable. As indicated by the evidence from the following interview with a group of pupils at Ayimpoka JHS (Rural Talensi Nabdam): *"according to the boys [they enjoy learning], when the teachers are combining jokes with the lesson. They do not like it however, if the teacher does not tell jokes or even smile."*

The classroom observations in the **Northern region** revealed a range of teacher demeanours and attitudes towards work by teachers observed. The evidence suggests that the differences in teacher behaviour were not based on whether the schools are in West or East Mamprusi or in the rural or urban sections of these districts. There were 27 teachers observed in the Northern Region, seven of which were pupil teachers; of these **7 pupil teachers**, 6 were thought to be demonstrating a neutral or negative demeanour. Whereas of the 12 trained teachers observed, 9 demonstrated a more positive demeanour. Of the 3 trained teachers whose demeanour was felt to be more negative, one was clearly unfriendly while the other two were neutral or reluctant. All four community volunteer teachers were found to be positive in their approach.

Amongst the comments made by observers were those about 2 teachers who they felt were reluctant. In one case this was a trained teacher and in the other a NYEP teacher. Both had been called to teach a lesson because of the presence of the researchers and neither had been planning to do so that day.

The following table is a summary of the evidence from classrooms observed in Northern Region and shows the different demeanours of the teachers by school setting, school performance category, and teacher type.

**Table 7.1: Summary of Evidence from Classroom Observation of Observed Teachers' Demeanour by School Setting, Performance and Teacher Type in the Northern Region**

		QUIET	APPROACHABLE	ENTHUSIASTIC	FRIENDLY	HUMOUR	ENGAGING	CONFIDENT	HARSH	UNFRIENDLY	NEUTRAL	PASSIVE	RELUCTANT	WORRIED	TOTALS
West Mamprusi	Urban	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
West Mamprusi	Rural	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	8
East Mamprusi	Urban	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	5
East Mamprusi	Rural	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	1	2	1	9
Totals		1	1	1	1	1	7	2	2	3	3	1	2	1	27
West Mamprusi	High	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
West Mamprusi	Low	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
East Mamprusi	High	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4
East Mamprusi	Low	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	7
Totals		1	1	1	1	1	5	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	21
	Trained	0	0	0	1	0	6	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	12
	Pupil teacher	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	7
	NSS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	CVT	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	NYEP	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
Totals		1	1	1	2	1	7	2	2	3	3	1	2	1	27

(Source: classroom observation, TENI field research)

Across all the lessons observed in the **Upper East**, there are only a handful of teachers who are described as having a negative attitude /demeanour or of being intimidating or harsh with pupils. In each case where the teacher had a harsh or intimidating manner, they were either a newly trained teacher or a NYEP volunteer teacher. There is no significant difference between the two districts or indeed across the rural/urban divide.

All the teachers observed in **urban Talensi Nabdam** are described as having a positive demeanour. However, one of these, a trained teacher, although confident in delivery, sometimes shouted at the children. All teachers but 2 in **rural Talensi Nabdam** were described as confident, enthusiastic, friendly, calm, smiling, using humour or being warm. One of these was a P6 teacher at Namonsa Primary School who appeared confident but sometimes used threatening language when children were misbehaving. In FGD with pupils at the same school

the girls said: “that if they do not know something the teacher will always explain; he is always nice.”

The second case was with a P6 teacher at Chuchuliga Primary School who was described as having an intimidating manner. The evidence from the FGD with pupils indicates that pupils felt quite positive about the lesson. What is more, when they were asked to describe disciplinary practices of the teacher, they made no mention of caning:

*“The girls said they liked the aspect where their teacher asked them to describe their friend because it was full of fun. On the part of disciplinary measures to correct them, they are always punished by being asked to pick stones and number of buckets depending on the offence.”*

All but one of the teachers in **urban Bongo** was observed to have a positive or friendly attitude and behaviour in the classroom towards the pupils. A P6 trained teacher in his first year of teaching at Lanwana Primary School appeared to be very tense and nervous during the classroom observation. The lesson he delivered was a repeat of the one he had taught the previous day. His interactions with the students were usually delivered as harsh rebukes to answers given by pupils. In the FGD with pupils from the class they stated that “they do not enjoy learning”:

*“When the children are making noise, when the teacher is not serious for learning, when the teacher sleeps in class, when the chalkboard is not properly black so it s difficult to read the board clearly. When the master doesn't come (does the master not come often?) Only when he is sick or when he has problems. When you try to give an answer and you are wrong he canes; pupils who don't answer are free so it's best not to answer questions.”*

In 4 of the classes observed in **rural Bongo** observers describe the teachers as friendly, cheerful and pleasant. Although, it should be noted that one teacher (a P3 NYEP at Bulika Primary School) who is described as cheerful, smiling and as having fun with the children had a class prefect patrolling the classroom hitting children who were talking with a cane. Five teachers are described as confident and one of these was also using humour. This teacher, a trained teacher in his first year of teaching at Wuntenga JHS, according to the FGD with pupils had a somewhat changeable demeanour. When asked when they enjoyed learning, the girls stated that:

*“We enjoy learning when: He doesn't beat us; [when] he doesn't get angry quickly; [when] they understand what he teaches them; he smiles or behaves like a Pasto or lets us describe him. We do what the teacher wants.”*

Evidence from the classroom observation notes indicates that in those classes where teachers are described as having a particularly positive demeanour, the pupils felt confident to participate or appeared to be enjoying the lesson.

Observers in the 29 lessons observed in the **Upper West** used various ways to describe teachers' demeanour and openness with the children. The teachers' demeanours were broadly categorized as positive, neutral or negative. In the positive category are: cheerful, approachable, friendly,

engaging, and confident. Of the **29** lessons observed, 18 teachers were judged to demonstrate one of these examples of positive attitudes and values. Two teachers were described as neutral while for a further 5 teachers there was no evidence in the classroom observation note about how the teachers comported themselves. Only a few teachers (4) demonstrated behaviours that could be categorized as negative: not friendly, aggressive or shy. Of these 4 teachers, there was one teacher who observers noted had taken alcohol.

The question of teacher demeanour and the impact this has on the learning that takes place in classrooms can affect the level in which pupils participate in activities in the classroom; the teachers attitude and demeanour can also be affected the way that teachers interact with students in class. Focal Group interviews with pupils, revealed that pupils stress that they enjoy learning best when teachers are using humour and when they are praising them. The following excerpts from focal group interviews with children demonstrate this issue. The responses recorded below are to questions about when pupils enjoy learning, when they do not enjoy learning and what they like about the school. It is clear from these responses that when teachers appear angry the pupils are uncomfortable in the learning environment. However, in the final example the pupils describe their teacher as looking excited while teaching is going on and this is something that they like about the school.

- *P6 pupils at St Kambali RC Primary School said that they do not enjoy learning: “If the teacher makes us afraid”.*
- *P3 pupils at Dery D/A Primary School don't enjoy learning: “When teacher is angry while delivering lesson. The lesson does not become lovely. Children are sad and participate in lesson in fear of the teacher. “*
- *What the, P6, children like about the Tuokuo D/A Primary School, is that: “The teacher is always lovely.”*
- *But they do not enjoy learning: “When the children do not understand the lesson, teacher becomes angry.”*
- *At Kuvarpuo RC Primary School, What the children like about the school is: “When teacher looks excited while teaching.”*

The table below provides an example of the summary evidence from the classroom observations related to teacher attitude, behaviour and demeanour in the classroom for Jirapa and Lawra districts in the Upper West. The findings from the summary evidence related to the teachers' demeanour in the observed classes reveals that there is not any particular trend that differentiates teachers in the different regions, districts, or across the urban/rural divide. What is apparent is that teachers who feel less confident in the classroom tend towards a more negative demeanour. With respect to this most of the teachers described as having a less than positive demeanour tend to be untrained teachers or trained teachers who are in their first year of teaching.

**Table 7.2: Summary of Evidence from Classroom Observation of Observed Teachers' Demeanour by School Setting, Performance and Teacher Type in the Upper West Region**

		Neutral	Not Friendly	Cheerful	Approachable	Friendly	No Evidence	Engaging	Shy	Alcohol	Confident	Totals
Jirapa	Urban	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
Jirapa	Rural	0	0	0	0	5	2	1	1	1	0	10
Lawra	Urban	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	5
Lawra	Rural	1	0	0	0	3	1	2	1	0	1	9
Totals		2	1	1	1	10	5	4	2	1	2	29
		Neutral	Not Friendly	Cheerful	Approachable	Friendly	No Evidence	Engaging	Shy	Alcohol	Confident	Totals
Jirapa	High	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	6
Jirapa	Low	0	0	1	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	6
Lawra	High	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	5
Lawra	Low	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	6
Totals		2	1	1	1	7	3	4	1	1	2	23
		Neutral	Not Friendly	Cheerful	Approachable	Friendly	No Evidence	Engaging	Shy	Alcohol	Confident	Totals
Jirapa	RC	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	10
Jirapa	DA	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	0	5
Lawra	RC	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Lawra	DA	1	0	0	0	3	3	2	1	0	2	12
Totals		2	1	1	1	10	5	4	2	1	2	29
		Neutral	Not Friendly	Cheerful	Approachable	Friendly	No Evidence	Engaging	Shy	Alcohol	Confident	Totals
Jirapa	Trained	1	1	1	1	5	1	0	0	1	0	11
Jirapa	Pupil teacher	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Jirapa	CVT	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Lawra	Trained	1	0	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	2	12
Lawra	Pupil teacher	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Lawra	CVT	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Totals		2	1	1	1	10	5	4	2	1	2	29
		Neutral	Not Friendly	Cheerful	Approachable	Friendly	No Evidence	Engaging	Shy	Alcohol	Confident	Totals
UPPER WEST	English Reading	1	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	1	1	9
UPPER	Dagaare	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2

		Neutral	Not Friendly	Cheerful	Approachable	Friendly	No Evidence	Engaging	Shy	Alcohol	Confident	Totals
WEST	Reading											
UPPER WEST	Ghanaian Language Reading	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Totals		1	1	1		2	2	2	1	1	1	12

(Source: classroom observation, TENI field research)

Evidence from focal group discussions with children indicates that during the classroom observations there may have been a research factor in which teachers were less likely to demonstrate their normal disciplinary practices. For instance, very little verbal or physical abuse was witnessed by observers across the 53 schools and the majority of teachers were positive in their interactions with students. However, when interviewed, most students disclosed that corporal punishment was regularly being used by teachers and in some cases it was used to punish children for under-achieving rather than for a breach of school rules.

However, there were a number of teachers who were observed to be unfriendly and harsh with their students rarely giving positive feedback. With respect to these instances it appears that these teachers were either untrained or inexperienced and did not come across in their presentation as being particularly confident. The statements from children make it quite clear that if they do not feel safe in the classroom or if they feel intimidated in some way they will not participate. This has a strong impact on the learning in the classroom. The challenge therefore, to ensure that teachers are trained in classroom management strategies, so that they have alternative means of disciplining students. The second is to ensure that teachers feel confident with what they are teaching. Support and mentoring by head teachers need to be used to build teachers confidence particularly among the NYEP, NSS and other untrained teaching category.

## 7.2 Teacher disciplinary practices within schools

### Teacher disciplinary practices

How teachers respond to pupil indiscipline constitutes a significant feature of daily classroom experiences that affects access, retention and completion of children at primary level (Keane, 2001). Disciplinary practices can affect the amount of learning that takes place in the classroom just as poor supervision affects teacher commitment to work and the quality of the service delivered, so does an inappropriate disciplinary practice in class affect meaningful learning or quality classroom learning.

An analysis of the findings from the classroom observations therefore shows that many teachers were aware of strategies for managing behaviour in class but only a few teachers were using these strategies constructively during class lessons. Fiscian, (2006) and UNICEF (2011) suggests high levels of verbal and physical abuse of children in Ghanaian schools. Studies across Ghana also suggest that the practice of corporal punishment is the main vehicle for disciplining children in primary and JHS. This ranges from extremes of placing children on their knees outside in the

sun for hours, asking children to weed and cut grass in the school compound, fetching water and other hard labour tasks. Children are also disciplined through constant verbal insults which relate to the child's abilities and capabilities and learning processes directly.

The findings with respect to classroom disciplinary practices teachers used with students irrespective of school type and locality ranged from: caning, kneeling down, standing for long periods and insults or use of abusive words. Other classroom disciplinary management practices were asking pupils to keep quiet, threats of caning, shouting pupils down and changing seating places of some children who disturb in class. The dominant classroom disciplinary measure is caning across all 54 schools visited. Some head teachers tried to deny that caning was the dominant disciplinary measure in class, but follow up discussions with teachers, focus group discussions with teachers and focus group discussions with pupils confirmed the use of the cane as main disciplinary approach in the classroom. Of the 18 schools visited in the Upper East during the research, there were only 2 focal group discussions where pupils did not mention caning as a punishment. Similarly, in the Upper West, out of 18 schools visited there were 3 focal group discussions where pupils did not mention caning as a punishment. However, in the Northern Region out of 18 there were 6 focal group discussions where pupils said they were not caned.

The issue of disciplinary practices as observed in classrooms across the three northern region of Ghana appear to have been influenced by the presence of the research team. There were only a few cases reported of disciplinary action being taken in the presence of the research team. The teachers who used some form of disciplinary action did so with caution. Classroom observers reported that there was very little poor behaviour exhibited by students and as a result of which, examples of disciplinary practice were either not always observed or there were only a few reports during the course of lessons. Nonetheless there were a few cases where teachers (or in one case the class leader – a pupil) used some form of physical punishment and in others, teachers' verbal reprimands were quite harsh or threatening. In contrast, evidence gathered from focal group interviews with teachers and head teachers and other FGDs – particularly those with the pupils – indicates that in most cases teachers were still using physical and verbal chastisement/punishments toward the pupils in their classrooms as a form of classroom management.

FGDs with children's suggest that teachers using corporal punishment, especially the cane, were widespread across most of the sampled schools and points to the level of physical and emotional abuse going on in schools in the north. Interviews with head teachers and FGDs with teachers suggest that caning was still the main method of disciplining pupil misbehaviour or non performance by pupils in relation to teacher expectation. Some children even felt that "*caning had to be done in order that they would be corrected*". Several focal group interviews with students revealed that they see caning as a good approach to disciplining a class and accept it as an acceptable way to correct their behaviour. Pupils mentioned in several instances (12 groups of girls) that caning was the main reason that they absented themselves from school. Pupils also reported that some of their friends had stopped schooling because of the cane. Pupils also confirmed that the practice of caning with learning had affected their ability to concentration in class. "*When teachers beat you, you don't understand what they teach; it affects our ability to pay attention, and have self confidence*" (FGD with girls, Dery DA primary, Upper West).

Observers also noted that children were found to withdraw their participation in learning from class due to caning, insults, condemnation and humiliation by teachers. Comments such as “*you are good for nothing... you are not useful etc*” had negative effects on pupils and eventually made children withdraw emotionally, and physically from participating in classroom discussions. For instance “a girl raised up her hand to answer a maths question, she failed to get it right; the teacher angrily retorts: “*you got up to only bring the wrong answer, go back to your seat*”. The boys laugh and mimic the girl’s answer but the teacher fails to stop the boys and the girl remained withdrawn for the rest of the lesson (FGD girls Bunkuma P5, Rural East Mamprusi, Northern Region).

Pupils for instance in the Upper West, Upper East and Northern Regions explained during FGDs that those teachers do not only cane them, but at other times the teachers asked them to kneel down in front of the class or insult them for either talking in class or for not being able to answer teachers’ questions correctly. A malicious, unfair and unacceptable punishment in class does not promote quality learning. Outside the classroom teachers disciplinary practices included asking students to weed portions of the school compound, sweeping, picking stones, cleaning sanitary facilities, fetching water for teachers and pupils, and digging refuse pits. Interestingly, disciplinary practices outside the classroom sometimes emanate directly from offences committed in the classroom. The second example, from the Upper East Region is a clear case of the offence originating from the class but the punishment was carried out after class, namely break time. Although some head teachers denied the use of the cane and others tried to evade it by arguing that they apply the GES/GNAT code of discipline, the use of the cane was observed in some classrooms. Other headteachers explicitly stated that they caned the students. For example:

1. Head teacher: “*Sometimes too the cane is used for punishing wrong doing on the part of pupils*” (Sognaayili RC Primary, rural, Jirapa, High, Upper West Region).
2. Head teacher: “*Cane students. Ask them to pick stones during break times or after closing. Weed the compound. Dig holes for collecting refuse in. Counsel students*” (Wuntenga Primary, rural, High, DA, Bongo district, Upper East Region).
3. Head teacher: “*We have punishment book for pupils. Indiscipline amongst pupils is left in the hands of class teachers*” (Gomlana primary, PRES, urban, High, East Mamprusi, Northern).

### **7.2.1 Disciplinary measures used in classrooms in the Northern Region**

Classroom observers and head teacher interview responses show fewer uses of the cane in both East and West Mamprusi districts. The study found that few indiscipline acts were exhibited during lessons and teacher disciplinary measures avoided the use of the cane in the presence of the observers in classroom lessons. Table 7.3 shows head teacher views on how they addressed issues of indiscipline. The head teacher interview data reveals (with 54 heads) that most head teachers either avoided the question or pretended that their teachers did not use the cane. The few head teachers who were frank admitted the use of the cane explained as follows:

*“With the children, we don't have any option but to cane them. Other times we punish them to carry water to the teachers’ home or ask them to help the teacher on his farm.”*  
*With the teachers, head teacher told the team that he was an acting Head teacher and so*

*he did not have the authority to punish any teacher in the school". (The Head teacher, Kupiel JHS, DA, Rural, West Mamprusi.)*

*"Sometime children are caned for misbehaving in the school. They also clean urinary or washroom as punishment. They also punish children to weed a portion of the compound or make them stand on their feet for some time". (The head teacher, Wuyela Primary, EA, rural, Low, East Mamprusi).*

The forms of punishment did not differ either from rural to urban schools or with school types.

Although classroom observers and head teachers' interviews suggest that there may have been less use of the cane being used in the Northern Region the FGDs with teachers and pupils showed the intensive use of the cane regardless of the school or community type in the Northern Region. In focal group interviews across schools in the Northern Region children vividly described various types of corporal punishment meted out to them. In West Mamprusi District there was no single school where the pupils did not claim that their teachers did not use the cane. Similarly, in East Mamprusi the picture was not different except that there was one school where the pupils alleged the teacher did not use the cane.

*P6 Teacher: "if you don't use the cane, then children will not do what you want them to do. When you ask them to do something and they refuse to do, then you can use the cane on them. They fear caning" (FGD with Teachers, Zangu DA primary, rural, High during follow up interview with teacher, East Mamprusi, Northern Region).*

*P2 "Teacher cane us when we don't do his/her exercises, when we sit on the playground, when we make noise in class, and when others sleep on the desk. "Sometimes the teacher will give us work/exercise and be sitting down till the period is over, and then he leaves". (FGD with pupils, ID 107, Zonzongeli JHS, DA, Urban, East Mamprusi. Northern Region)*

*P4 "Teacher is patient and very calm. He does not shout on us. We like it when he calls us to answer questions. He will cane you if you misbehave in class. He will cane you if you lie; he is teaching us that a lie is not good. Teacher disciplines bad behaviour by caning you for others to emulate. Pulling your ears. Kneeling down. Weeding round the school compound. Running round the school block". (FDG with pupils Manga Primary school Rural, High, West Mamprusi).*

The evidence from the Zori DA Primary School in the urban region of West Mamprusi District of the Northern Region clearly shows that teachers should be trained to care for their pupils, motivate them to perform, identify their weaknesses, capitalise on their strengths and instil confidence in them. The response from the pupils in Zori P6 indicates that they have been inculcated with the belief that caning is a necessary part of the disciplinary process and that this form of correction is quite acceptable: "when the teacher canes us we enjoy the lesson because caning in class is good". This suggests that caning is such an integral part of the disciplinary process that it has been normalized in the eyes of the pupils.

## 7.2.2 Disciplinary measures used in classrooms in the Upper West Region

Generally, the varying disciplinary measures used in the Upper West Region irrespective of locality or school type were caning, weeding, sweeping, picking stones, cleaning sanitary facilities, fetching water for teachers and pupils, digging refuse pit, kneeling down and making pupils to stand for long periods. Table 7.3 shows disciplinary strategies teachers in the Upper West use.

**Table 7.3: Summary of Upper West Head teachers' opinion on disciplinary strategies employed in their schools**

	Rural	Urban
<b>Jirapa District</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GES/GNAT code of discipline is applied</li> <li>2. Pick pebbles</li> <li>3. Weeding</li> <li>4. Use guidance and counselling officer.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apply GNAT code of discipline for teachers and pupils</li> <li>2. Weeding</li> </ol>
	For teachers: warning, query & report to CS/Director	
<b>Lawra District</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Canning</li> <li>2. Washing washroom and urinal</li> <li>3. Sweeping school compound</li> <li>4. PTA/SMC &amp; CS invited for serious offences</li> <li>5. Pick pebbles</li> <li>6. Weeding</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Corporal punishment</li> <li>2. Sweeping the school compound</li> <li>3. Weeding</li> <li>4. PTA/SMC &amp; CS invited for serious offences</li> </ol>
	For teachers: warning, query, advise & report to CS/Director	For teachers: warning, query, advise & report to CS/Director

(Source: Head teacher's interview, TENI field research)

Other methods stated included involving parents, SMC/PTA and CS for serious offences and the use of guidance and counselling officers. Head teachers in Jirapa in an attempt to avoid mentioning the use of the cane argued that they simply applied GNAT/GES code of discipline for teachers and pupils. However, anyone familiar with the GNAT/GES code of discipline for teachers and pupils will readily see the use of the cane is to be used by the head teacher or an authorised teacher only in very special circumstances. Head teachers seem to be unaware of other alternative disciplinary approaches besides those listed which has implications for teacher education.

With respect to disciplinary measures taken against teachers the few heads who dared raise the issue simply stated that they informed the CS or reported teachers in serious cases directly to the District Director. Generally most heads simply looked at the issue from the perspective of the pupil. Teacher strategies for addressing issues of indiscipline in the Upper West Region were similar to that of teachers in the Northern Region. Interviews with head teachers and classroom observers' comments suggest the very little use of the cane. However, as was the case with the Northern Region FGD with teachers and pupils unearthed the fact that caning was widespread. Table 7.4 shows disciplinary strategies teachers employed as revealed in FGD with pupils.

**Table 7.4: Disciplinary strategies teachers employ in Upper West Region as revealed in FGD with pupils**

	Rural	Urban
Upper West (Lawra District)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “They said going to school very early in the morning and teachers punish them for going to school late”</li> <li>2. “Punishment in the house is less than school, however at home parents interfere with private studies of their wards”</li> <li>3. “When they are not able to do their assignment, they refuse to come to school because the teacher will punish them”</li> <li>4. “Some teachers do not like some of us so the little thing, they punish you and that makes you sometimes feel like not attending school”</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “Teacher punishes pupils by ordering them to collect sticks or stocks to fence the school garden and in class pupils were made to kneel down for misconduct”</li> <li>2. “Teachers discipline pupils by asking pupils to read and bring stalks to school as well as bringing of hoes to weed school compound”</li> <li>3. “Some children have also dropped out of school due to several punishments by teachers and prefects, poor performance in school or their own disinterest”</li> <li>4. “Some students also drop out because of punishment”</li> <li>5. “Canning of pupils in school”</li> <li>6. “When teachers punish excessively. We use the classroom as place to change our clothes. Yes we have separate urinals and toilet facilities”</li> <li>7. “When we are late and we are afraid to be punished”</li> </ol>
Upper West (Jirapa District)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “Caning, asking them to run”</li> <li>2. “Discipline takes the form of caning, weeding, collection of stones for construction”</li> <li>3. “You are asked to leave the class. Sometimes you are made to bring stones”</li> <li>4. “Teacher canes to discipline children. Collecting stones”</li> <li>5. “Discipline is by caning /warning”</li> <li>6. “However, they did not like the fact that their permanent teacher canes them”</li> <li>7. “Knocking your head, sometimes he sends you to work on his garden, caning. He sometimes sacks you from his class, digging a pit</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “Teachers should stop punishing pupils for not cutting their finger nails and hair” (UNIQ#386 St. Kambali Primary School RC Low Girls P6)</li> </ol>

(Source: Focal Group interviews with pupils from classrooms observed: TENI research 2013 - INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#7, Q#8.)

On disciplinary measures, students in Sognaayili RC Primary in rural Jirapa District of the Upper West Region were so passive that they could not give any answers despite employing all probing techniques, but later gestured that they were enduring severe caning.

*“The teacher makes us run; the teacher canes us when we answer questions wrongly; the teacher canes us; when he is angry with us when we doze or sleep the teacher canes us. We do not feel happy often” (Researcher field notes from FGI with a mixed group of P2 pupils... INST#9 Q#7 rural Jirapa Sognaayili Primary School RC, High).*

### 7.2.3 Disciplinary practices within schools in the Upper East Region

Disciplinary strategies teachers used in the Upper East did not differ from those used by teachers in the Upper West and Northern Regions, namely caning, picking stones, weeding, digging refuse pit, cleaning washroom and urinal facilities, involving parents and fetching water. Other strategies employed in the Upper East which slightly differed from the other two regions were constructing fences around plants to protect them against animals and keeping pupils in class during break (see table 3 and table 4 for the responses of head teachers to disciplinary strategies employed in the schools). Head teacher interview responses suggest that the cane was not used in urban Bongo. However, FGDs with pupils counters the assertion that teachers in urban Bongo do not use the cane as a disciplinary measure. In urban areas of Bongo District, pupils gave vivid descriptions of the forms of punishments used and the evidence suggests that it is not only endemic but often had no limits in relation to severity and gender of the pupils.

In both Bongo and Talensi districts FGD with pupils revealed the widespread usage of the cane, knocks to the head, and menial tasks in the school compound as the principal types of punishment used by heads and teachers in their schools. Other disciplinary methods were picking stones (10-15 buckets) and kneeling down for up to two hours. In summary, teachers in the three northern regions practiced physical and verbal discipline measures which were often harsh and sometimes abusive through the use of the cane and other forms of physical and verbal punishment.

### **7.3 Learner encouragement, motivational strategies and feedback with learners**

Classroom learner encouragement, teacher feedback and usage of appropriate correction strategies are keys for building learner self confidence and promoting quality learning environments. Classroom observations and follow up interviews with teachers, field work reveals that very few teachers were aware of pupil/classroom encouragement strategies and teacher behaviours that promote learning apart from using praises, and having the class clap for pupils who gave the right answer. The finding shows that the main teacher pupil interaction revolved around the usage of asking pupils questions requiring yes/no responses and questions requiring recall of simple factual information to encourage pupil participation during lessons.

However, the dominant motivation strategy of teachers observed across the 86 classrooms was for pupils to clap for colleagues who gave correct answers. Besides calling on individual pupils, teachers sometimes used choral response approaches to encourage weaker students to participate. Pupils themselves in FGDs stated that they liked getting clapped by their “colleagues” but the emphasis for the pupils is clearly on whether or not they are getting the “right answer” or giving some kind of correct response and the teacher telling them they are right with a “well done” or inviting the rest of the class to clap is affirmation for the pupil that they have achieved success. The wrong answer is just wrong and the right answer will either be provided by the teacher or by another pupil. There were very few teachers who were observed (only 2 in all 86 lessons observed in the three regions) who were actually discussing why a particular answer was right or wrong. Teachers did not discuss with pupils how they could work out the solution to arrive at the right answer if they were not providing the correct answer. A similar situation was observed in the reading lessons.

In more or less all of the lessons observed in the 6 districts of the three northern regions teachers were giving some kind of praise when students were able to give correct responses to questions or carry out an activity successfully. The verbal praises took the form of verbal feedback: “Good”, “Well done”, etc. Observers on some occasions noted that the approach/demeanour of the teacher was a significant factor when describing strategies used in the classroom for learner encouragement and this had a direct relationship upon their pupils’ willingness to contribute to class discussions and activities. Those teachers who were described as cheerful, warm, friendly, etc elicited much more positive responses from children than those who were harsh or bad tempered in the classroom. In about half of the classrooms across the three regions teachers demonstrated a positive, or warm and friendly demeanour.

A further reflection on learner encouragement is the extent to which the teacher is sensitive to different learners’ needs and is being balanced with respect to their treatment of boys and girls. Clearly, if students feel included in the learning process and their responses are being solicited then this goes some way to add value to their experiences in the classroom. And of course when these responses are praised or, if they have given the wrong response, it is not criticised or ridiculed, then children will feel motivated to participate in the lesson.

In terms of feedback strategies, there were only a few classrooms observed across the three northern regions when observers described teachers constructively commenting on the level of success learners were achieving. For example, if a pupil gave an incorrect answer the teacher questioned that pupil and others about what it was that made that answer incorrect. In most cases teachers would ask another student for the “right” answer or would simply supply it themselves therefore missing out on the opportunity to lead the pupil to think critically about what they were doing and reinforcing the idea that most questions have a correct answer that to be memorized.

### **7.3.1 Learner encouragement/teacher motivational strategies and feedback strategies among learners in the Upper East**

In terms of feedback strategies, there were only a few occasions when observers described teachers constructively commenting on the level of success learners were achieving. In order to illustrate what is meant by this it is necessary to describe a situation where a teacher was doing this. The lesson was an English grammar lesson for form 3 students at a JHS in urban Bongo. The entire lesson was discussion based and the teacher’s strategy was to bring the girls (it was a girls’ only school) to an understanding of the learning objective through class discussion. When the teacher asked a question or when one of the pupils gave an example whether it was right or wrong the teacher would ask other pupils to add their ideas so that for each phase of the lesson, she was enabling the students to synthesise ideas, concepts, etc from their shared responses. However, when a pupil gave an incorrect answer the teacher questioned that pupil and others about what it was that made that answer incorrect. For each part of the lesson there was a clear feedback loop and it was only when the teacher and pupils were satisfied that they understood that the next part of the lesson was begun.

In almost all of the lessons observed in the 2 districts of the Upper East Region teachers were giving some kind of praise when students were able to give correct responses to questions or carry out an activity successfully. These praises took the form of verbal feedback: “Good”,

“Well done”, etc or the teacher would ask the class to clap for that person. In terms of feedback strategies, there were only a few occasions when observers described teachers constructively commenting on the level of success learners were achieving. In many other lessons teachers would ask another student for the “right” answer or would simply supply it themselves.

In **urban Bongo** verbal praise and/or clapping were used to encourage students. In one case, a P6 English lesson (287 Lanwana Primary School, DA, Low, Male, Trained teacher) this was very minimal however; as most of the lesson was delivered as a lecture and most of the interactions the teacher had with students were in the form of a sharp rebuke. In contrast to this, another teacher (274 Adakudugu RC Primary School, High, P1, Female Trained teacher) promised to give the children gifts if they gave the correct answer.

The usage of other more positive feedback was rare. A P3 teacher (288 Lanwana Primary School, Low, Female Trained) simply responded to wrong answers by saying no and smiling as an invitation to try again. However, the JHS lesson (297, Adakudugu RC Girls’ JHS, JHS3, Female Trained teacher) was an excellent example of learner feedback. The teacher either asked other pupils if they could offer alternatives to the wrong answer a pupil gave or she would give them some idea about how they could correct their answer.

Feedback strategies and learner encouragement in **rural Bongo** did not differ from those of urban Bongo. In all but one class teachers used verbal praise and clapping to reward successful responses. Although in this case, a P3 maths lesson (334, Gungolgu ‘A’ Primary School, High, Male Trained teacher, 5), the students were still participating in the lesson even though there was no praise or clapping. There was very little praise given to students in another maths lesson, this time P2 (303 Wuntenga Primary School, High, Male Pupil teacher), as the teacher relied mainly on lecturing to deliver the lesson. Again there were very few cases where the teachers were giving any kind of feedback to students. In a P4 English lesson (346 Bulika Primary School, Low, Male Trained teacher) and a P4 Science lesson (314 Akugri Primary School, Low, Male Pupil teacher), the teachers questioned other pupils if the answer given was wrong and in a JHS form 1 English lesson (356 Gungolgu JHS, JHS1, Male Volunteer Teacher), the teacher simply corrected the students. In the other JHS form 1 (327 Wuntenga JHS, JHS1, Male Trained teacher) English class the teacher made a point of ensuring that students didn’t ridicule wrong answers. The least constructive form of feedback observed was in a P2 maths class (303, Wuntenga Primary School, High, Male Pupil teacher), where the teacher punctuated his lecture with the question: “Do you understand?” and received a chorused “Yes Sir” each time.

Similarly, in urban Talensi-Nabdam, in all the lessons observed observers reported that teachers were using positive strategies to encourage pupils’ participation, as was the case in urban and rural Bongo, namely praises from the teacher and the class clapping hands. When describing the feedback the teachers were giving the responses were more mixed showing a wider range of potential responses/feedback from teachers in urban Talensi Nabdam. In a P3 English class (171, Kulenga Primary School, High, Female Trained teacher) the children were encouraged to help each other when they were writing examples on the chalkboard. In the next lesson, P6 English (172, Kulenga Primary School, High, Male Trained teacher), when the pupil provided a wrong answer the teacher said this was a good try and moved to other pupils to provide the correct one. No feedback is described in either the P5 English lesson (184, Kpatuya Primary

School, Low, Male Pupil teacher) or the JHS lesson (197 Kpatuya JHS2, Male NSS teacher). But in the P1 lesson (185, Kpatuya Primary School, Low, Female Trained teacher) the teacher is described as going around and correcting the mistakes pupils were making when completing their written exercise.

The situation in rural Talensi-Nabdam was no different. In almost every case teachers used verbal praise and/or clapping. The exception to this was the P1 English lesson (250 Ayimpoka Primary School, Low, Male NYEP Teacher) where the teacher had most of the class involved in the various activities. However, observers noted that he was positive and friendly and the students were keen to participate. In terms of feedback, in most classes this was not observed. However, one teacher in P2 (236 Zuaringo Primary School, High, Male Pupil teacher) is described as politely shaking his head to show disapproval of wrong answers. Conversely, a second teacher (P6 this time) (216, Chuchuliga Primary School, Low, Male Pupil teacher) made no attempt to assist pupils who were experiencing difficulties. Another teacher, who was taking an English lesson in P5 (237 Zuaringo Primary School, High, Male Trained teacher) was much more constructive and would either ask other pupils if they could offer alternatives to the wrong answer of a pupil or he would give them some idea about how they could correct their answer.

### **7.3.2 Learner encouragement/teacher motivational strategies and feedback strategies in Upper West Region**

As in the case of the two regions discussed already, teachers in the Upper West region did not differ in their strategies to encourage learners or feedback strategies. Annex 6D shows observers' comments on learner encouragement/teacher motivation strategies and feedback in Jirapa District. In almost all classes observed teachers verbally encouraged pupils with the remarks: "very good, excellent, good, keep it up, well done".

An interesting observation by researchers is in Jirapa district teachers also create humour to encourage participation. In St Kambali JHS, RC, Urban, English *"the teacher mostly encouraged the students with praises such as 'Good, Excellent, Brilliant etc. he wears a smiling face during the lesson delivery. He mentions the full names of the students and sometimes uses them as examples. He also shares jokes related to the subject matter and that encourages the students to be attentive in class"* (classroom observation, observer comment).

In contrast, in another school the observer reported as follows: *"Teacher is not friendly and uses commanding language on the pupils. However she occasionally used "thank you" to pupils who were able to read what was on the chalkboard (St Bamvum RC Primary School, High, urban).*

With respect to feedback strategies in the region a good example is the feedback strategy employed in the feeder primary school to the JHS School described above: *"In terms of feedback strategies, teacher asks questions at each stage of the lesson to determine whether children have understood. She also gave an end of lesson exercise to evaluate the understanding of each child in the whole lesson"* (St Kambali RC Primary, low, urban). While all teachers in urban Jirapa used applause to encourage learners and also used questions as feedback strategies, in rural Jirapa some teachers encouraged learners through verbal praises and in one English lesson the teacher even thanked the pupils for answering his questions:

*“The teacher made the class to clap for anyone who answered a question correctly and at some instance he even said thank you to the children when they got it right. He also corrected some of the pupil who gave wrong answers” (Sognaayili, Primary, RC, Low, rural).*

In another school the observer comment read:

*“Teacher only tells student they are correct when they get an answer right. The teacher appeared to be the shy, reserved type whom students did not fear. He was boring and dull and so some of the pupils were absent minded (Kuvarpuo RC JHS 3, RC, Rural, Jirapa).*

Table 7.5 below shows observer comments on learner encouragement/teacher motivational strategies and feedback strategies in Lawra district. The evidence shows no distinction between urban and rural teachers. As in all other district teachers mostly used praises and claps to encourage pupils. On feedback the most popular approach was question and answer.

**Table 7.5: Learner encouragement/teacher motivational strategies and feedback strategies in Lawra district, Upper West.**

School Name	Rural	School Name	Urban
Balangtaa D/A Primary School P3	Teacher used verbal praises to encourage children to participation the lesson.	St Gabriels RC Primary, P2	Teacher appeared very friendly. She uses praises for good performance and made the class to clap for pupils who did well in answering questions.
Balangtaa D/A Primary School, P5	Teacher motivated pupils during the lesson by praises. She also made other pupils to clap for those who did well. She was warm and friendly and so pupils did not appear to fear teacher and this encouraged adequate classroom participation.	St Gabriels RC Primary, P5	She made the pupils clap for those who answer questions correctly. She also used praises and words such as Good, very good to encourage pupils.
Tuokuo D/A Primary School P1	Learners were not afraid of class teacher as they freely answered questions that were asked. Teacher lets the rest of the children to clap their hands to motivate those that provided correct answers to questions posed.	466 Dery DA Primary, P3	Teacher uses praises such as good, well done, and clapping for children who answer questions correctly.
Tuokuo D/A Primary School, P6	Teacher uses praises to motivate pupils. He was neither friendly nor stern. He positively corrected pupils who could not pronounce certain words in the reading exercise. Learners did not appear to fear teacher. As a result of the motivation strategies participation level was high among all pupils.	467 Dery DA Primary, P6	Teacher involved most of the children in the class. Teacher encouraged children using verbal praises.
Balangtaa D/A JHS 1	A clap offering is given to motivate good students and sometimes words of encouragement.	526, Dery DA JHS	The only motivation the teacher used was to make the pupil clap for colleagues who answer questions right.
Tuutinli D/A	Teacher did not show any motivation		

School Name	Rural	School Name	Urban
Primary School P4	to pupils. However, children felt very happy in class.		
Yelibuori D/A Primary School P3	Teacher motivates the pupils by involving them actively in the lesson delivery. He makes the class clap for those who respond correctly to questions. He also uses praises such as 'Very good, good'.		
Yelibuori D/A Primary School P4	Teacher motivates by asking for a clap offering for good students and sometimes praises. Fairly or poor performing pupils are asked to buck up.		
Kakpagyili DA JHS School, JHS2	In terms of motivation, teacher interacted adequately with learners and encouraged them to participate. The friendly nature of the teacher did not make pupils to fear him.		

(Source: classroom observation, TENI field research)

### 7.3.3 Learner encouragement/teacher motivational strategies and feedback strategies in Northern Region

As in the case of the Upper East Region teachers in the Northern Region used praises and claps to motivate and encourage learners to participate in their lessons. Of the 27 teachers observed 23 used praises and claps to motivate pupils. These praises took the form of verbal feedback: “Good”, “Well done”, etc. or the teacher would ask the class to clap for that person. In terms of feedback strategies, there were only a few occasions when observers described teachers constructively commenting on the level of success learners were achieving. In many other lessons teachers would ask another student for the “right” answer or would simply supply it themselves. For example, in one case, a P4 English lesson (Manga Primary School, High, Male) in rural WMD the observer noted:

*“He praised children for answering correctly; he called on other pupils to help when a child was struggling with the answer. In some cases when the child gets the answer wrong, teacher explained how and why the answer was wrong with assistance from the class. He did not criticize any pupil when they got a question wrong, but rather explained to the class why it was wrong and what the right answer was. Often he did not praise children individually, but did this after a series of responses from a number of children. Teacher was not particularly friendly or jokey but this is just the teacher's character. All the pupils appeared to like the teacher”*

In another school, the observer alleged that the students were highly motivated and the teacher used a lot of questions to encourage participation:

*“The students are highly motivated throughout the lesson period. He engaged everyone by throwing to them questions. He made them to stand up when answering a question and*

*says well done to those who did that correctly. He encouraged students to learn by calling on both those who were ready to learn and those who weren't.*"(Bamahu D/A JHS)

Similarly, in urban West Mamprusi district teachers praised and encouraged pupils to participate in the lessons. Usually, they made positive remarks to encourage the pupils and sometimes linked these remarks to pupils' future careers. For example, in Ngbaripe Islam Primary School (EA, urban, Low), the observer commented:

*"She made the children to clap hands for well performing once. She told the children they could be good instructors or sign language instructors in future if they wanted to work in schools of children with some special needs. She encourages those who do not know answers to questions to try their best next time".*

Teacher motivation and feedback strategies in East Mamprusi were no different from that of West Mamprusi. In most lessons observed, observers reported that teachers encouraged learners through praises and claps in the form of feedback. In contrast in urban East Mamprusi the observer reported that in Zonzongeli Primary (P5, DA, Low), the teacher was passive and neither encouraged nor insulted pupils:

*"The teacher was passive. He neither encouraged nor insults the pupils. Class was boring for most of the students"*

Another interesting observation is the report that the teacher encouraged pupils by giving them money... "The teacher engaged the students who could answer his questions correctly in giving money as motivation" (Zonzongeli JHS, DA, urban).

## **7.4 Level of student participation in the classroom**

Classroom based instruments asked observers to report on the level of pupil participation: number of students answering questions, whether they engaged in the activity purposefully and the type questions being answered (high and low order questions). Pupil's participation in the lessons was often determined by whether they understood the language of instruction, felt comfortable and confident to try answering a question, and whether the strategies used by the teacher invited participation. Teacher centred lessons usually had very few students participation and participation often took the form of chorus answers, echoing by pupils and yes and no responses to teacher questions. Higher order questions required critical thinking and application by the students which was often missing from the classrooms observed. Teacher strategies that particularly invite participation can be broadly described as being child-centred.

In many classes observed across the three northern regions, the teacher at both the upper primary and lower primary levels was observed delivering a lecture to the students, punctuated with an occasional question which is usually given a chorused response. Some lessons gave the appearance of being child-centred, for example in some of the reading lessons, the teachers were reading and the students were simply repeating, parrot-fashion. All the students were involved, but the extent to which they were actually learning is questionable (based on the classroom

observation and focal group discussions with learners). In the majority of reading lessons observed the dominant pupil participation strategy teachers used was this parrot fashion response. However, in the lower classes activity based lessons which required pupil responses through action to demonstrate learning, pupil participation was higher, but there were few such lessons observed across the 86 classrooms. If the parrot-fashion student participation is accepted, then the overall finding relating to pupil participation was high. Generally, student participation was low across the 86 classroom observed particularly in relation to student participation in the form of experiential learning.<sup>35</sup> In all six districts the majority of rural and urban schools, the dominant form of student participation was through choral repeated response (e.g. the parrot style involvement). In the majority of lessons students' participation did not take the form of students demonstrating effective learning by physical or verbal responses to information received from teacher or textbook.

#### **7.4.1 Level of student participation in the classroom**

Generally, pupil participation shows the extent to which students took part in the lesson delivered. In a number of classes the teacher is observed delivering a lecture to the students, punctuated with an occasional question which in some cases is given a chorused response. Some lessons gave the appearance of being child-centred or participatory, for example in some of the reading lessons, the teacher is reading and the students are simply repeating, parrot-fashion. All the students are involved, but the extent to which they are actually learning is questionable. In the majority of lessons observed the dominant pupil participation strategy teachers used was this parrot fashion response. However, in the lower classes activity based lessons requiring pupil responses in action to demonstrate learning, pupil participation was high, but there were few such lessons. Generally, student participation was low if we are concerned with student participation in the form of experiential learning where students' participation is used to develop critical thinking, analysis and synthesis of information and the application of knowledge to real life situations. In all six districts the majority of rural and urban schools, the dominant form of student participation was the chorused parrot – fashion involvement. In the majority of lessons students' participation did not take the form of students demonstrating effective learning by physical or verbal responses to information received from teacher or textbook.

#### **7.4.2 Level of student participation in the classroom in Upper East Region**

In most cases observers in rural Talensi reported that the level of student participation was high.<sup>36</sup> Students were observed demonstrating their use of the target language either physically or orally. However, in two lessons the participation level was low. The first was a JHS2 English reading comprehension lesson (261, Ayimpoka JHS, JHS2, DA, Male Trained teacher - 2, Talensi Nabdam) where the teacher used the echo reading strategy in an attempt to refine students' pronunciation but when it came to asking questions about their comprehension of the text only a few students were able to answer questions and the rest of the class was allowed to

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<sup>35</sup> Experiential learning is where students' participation is used to develop critical thinking, analysis and synthesis of information and the application knowledge to real life situations

<sup>36</sup> Annex 6E.1 shows classroom observers' comments on students' participation in the Upper East Region.

remain passive. Another example was a P2 English lesson (Zuaringo Primary School, DA, High, Male Pupil teacher - 4) where the students at the front of the class were actively involved in the learning activities but those at the back of the room were ignored. In contrast, schools in urban Talensi did not show evidence of high level of participation. There were however two schools where observers felt students' participation were encouraging, the first was facilitated by a teacher who made a point of calling upon those students who weren't offering answers during class discussions and the second had the pupils demonstrating the target language. As for the other 3 cases, one was a reading lesson in which the students spent most of their time echo reading the text but when it came to answering comprehension questions, there were only a few who were able to do so. In the JHS lesson, the teacher had organised the students into groups so that each had a "brilliant" student who was there ostensibly to facilitate the learning of the other students in the group. This, however, proved not to be the case as the brilliant students were the only ones able to answer questions and when the class were given an activity to do; these same students were doing the activity and then giving the answers to the rest of the group. In the final example, observers discovered that the teacher was repeating a lesson he had delivered the day before, so students were able to participate if they had the notes that had been taken during this lesson

In half of the lessons observed in rural Bongo there was a high degree of student participation. However, in one of these observers felt that fewer pupils would have been engaged but for the fact the lesson was repeated. In the 4 cases where more pupils were offering answers or engaged with the activity, 2 of them were English lessons where the children were expected to model the target language. In the other 2 cases lots of questioning was used some of which was aimed at individual children. In the other half of the lessons observed, the teacher spent most of the time delivering a lecture and in one case the only question asked was "Do you understand?" which was met with a chorused response of "Yes Sir".

Similarly, in urban Bongo the lessons observed had a high level of participation as the children were either asked to physically perform activities or answer a lot of questions. In those two instances where the level was low, one was a reading lesson, where all the children were required to echo the teachers reading of the text and very few were able to answer the comprehension questions and the other was a class where there were fewer questions and activities and the emphasis was placed on children carrying out individual book work.

Annex 6E.2 shows classroom observers' comments on students' participation in the Upper West Region. In most cases observers in urban Jirapa reported that the level of student participation was high. At St Kambali JHS 2 the observer reported that "The students were generally active during lesson. They were ready and willing to participate in the class session. Even those who were called at random to answer questions in class were mostly able to answer them". Students were observed demonstrating their use of the target language either physically or orally. At the St. Kambali primary the observer noted, "Pupils adequately participated in the lesson. Boys and girls as well as SEN children had opportunities to be included in role playing and answering of questions.

### 7.4.3 Level of student participation in the classroom in Upper West Region

Similarly, in rural Jirapa pupil participation was good. In six of the ten classroom observed, observers commented that the participation was very high. For example in Kpaguri Primary P5 class the observer reported: “Class participation was excellent. All children participated by reading chalk board text with teacher. Teacher divided chalk board into portions labelled 'Boy and Girl' where pupils were called to come and demonstrate the act of paragraphing according to their gender. By the end of the exercise, 5 boys and 5 girls had been to the board”. In another school, Safalibaprimary P5, the observer noted “The participation of the pupils was very good and almost all of them participated in the lesson. Most pupils raised their hands to answer questions.” In contrast there were two schools where the participation was very limited In Kuvarpuo Primary, the observer report alleged that “Some children participated while others remained passive except when they gave chorus answers. Most children rather participated through the chorus responses. Occasionally, children were individually selected or called out to answer teacher questions” and in Sognaayili P2 class the participation was low: “Pupils’ participation during the lesson was very poor. Most of the pupils looked passive and confused in class as the lesson was being delivered. A few pupils raise their hands when a question was been asked”.

Table 7.6 includes evidence from the classroom observation notes which describe levels of learner participation in Lawra District.

**Table 7.6: Level of student participation in the classroom in Lawra District**

School Name	Rural	School Name	Urban
Balangtaa D/A Primary School P3	Teacher directed questions to both whole class and individuals both boys and girls to answer. Teacher asked pupils to identify flashcards with key words in front of the class.	St Gabriels RC Primary, P2	Teacher used choral response method to ensure all pupils participated in reading sentences from the chalk board by whole class. Teacher also directed questions to the whole class but called on individuals to answer.
Balangtaa D/A Primary School, P5	The teacher directed questions to the whole class gave pupils some time to think before calling on them one after the other to answer questions. <sup>21</sup>	St Gabriels RC Primary, P5	The students’ participation was very high. More than half of the pupils are ready and willing to respond to questions. Most of them raise their hands to answer questions.
Tuokuo D/A Primary School P1	Less than half of the class was not paying attention to the lesson. Most of the pupils especially at the back were playing while two others were quarrelling but teacher overlooks it all.	466 Dery DA Primary, P3	The verbal responses from pupils were good. Most pupils raised up their hands to answer teachers’ questions. Most children called upon to read did well but it was not clear whether children had memorized the content of the story and were verbally

School Name	Rural	School Name	Urban
			reproducing it.
Tuokuo D/A Primary School, P6	Teacher interacted with pupils by using evaluation questions at different stages of the lesson. Learners were encouraged to share ideas as other pupils shared their reading skills with friends in group.	467 Dery DA Primary, P6	Teacher asked questions to the whole class and sometimes individuals would wait a while for the responses.
Balangtaa D/A JHS 1	Participation is very high and encouraging as learners contribute and interact with the teacher exceedingly. <sup>24</sup>	526, Dery DA JHS	Pupils' participation in the classroom was average. They were not participating totally and they were not also inactive. They did not ask questions, only the teacher asked the class questions.
Tuutinli D/A Primary School P4	Children seem to have memorized the story. Hence was not looking into book but merely reciting what they had memorized.		
Yelibuori D/A Primary School P3	There is quite a high level of pupils' participation in the lesson. Pupils are quick to answer questions and more than half of the class raise their hands to answer questions. <sup>26</sup>		

(Source: classroom observation, TENI field research)

As compared to urban Jirapa learner participation in urban Lawra was low. While participation was good in all urban schools in Jirapa that in urban Lawra did not show the same high level of participation. In two of the Lawra urban schools the observers noted that the participation was low and mostly chorus. However, in one urban Lawra school the level of participation was said to be high and in another it was good and in a third it was described as average. This evidence suggests that pupil participation and teacher encouragement strategies were better in Jirapa schools than in the Lawra schools in urban Upper West. In rural Lawra schools participation was very low. Participation was reported to be high in two out of nine rural schools observed. As compared to rural Jirapa the conclusion is that Jirapa rural schools have better student participation and teacher encouragement than Lawra schools.

Table 7.7 shows level of student participation in the classroom in West Mamprusi District. Generally, the level of student participation in West Mamprusi was high. In 4 out of 5 urban classrooms the observers reported high pupil participation. Similarly in 6 out of 8 classrooms in rural West Mamprusi the participation was high. The participation in West Mamprusi is comparable to that of Jirapa. In three of the urban schools the observer recorded 90% or more student participation. For example, in Zori Primary the observer reported that there was about 95% participation in the lesson: "About 95% of the children in the class spoke and tried

answering questions in the class” In Wurshie the evidence is “About 90% of the pupils in class participated and were actively engaged throughout the lesson. Only a few children were not actively involved. Teacher was able to bring them on board along the lesson.” In contrast, in one urban school the observer noted that student participation was hampered by teacher selective choice of students to participate. In another school, Wurshie B JHS, the observer recorded that students were scarcely involved: “Students were scarcely involved in the lesson and for that matter only 10 out of 64 pupils spoke in the class throughout the period. Student participation was very low. There was poor interaction between teacher and pupils. Most of the pupils could not read or speak English.” The table below outlines some of the responses from a selected number of classrooms in the West Mamprusi District.

#### 7.4.4 Level of student participation in the classroom in Northern Region

In rural West Mamprusi student participation was as strong as that of rural Jirapa. Observers reported that students were keen to answer questions and volunteered to go to the board to write answers to teachers’ questions. For example in Manga primary P4, the recorded evidence says *“The students were keen to answer questions and to come to the board to write. At different times all students wanted to answer questions. Pupils were attentive; there was no sleeping or misbehaviour in the classroom. There was not much talking in the class. In the conclusion, when being asked what they had learned, pupils raised hands and wanted to answer”*. In Manga primary 5 observation report, the record says: “There was very high level of student participation in the lesson. Almost all pupils raised their hands to respond to questions anytime the teacher posed questions to them, he identified those who were not frequently raising up their hands and asked them questions directly.”

**Table 7.7: Levels of student participation in observed classrooms in West Mamprusi District**

School Name	Rural West Mamprusi	School Name	Urban West Mamprusi
Manga primary school. P4	The students were keen to answer questions and to come to the board to write. At different times all students wanted to answer questions. Pupils were attentive; there was no sleeping or misbehaviour in the classroom. There was not much talking in the class. In the conclusion, when being asked what they had learned, pupils raised hands and wanted to answer.	WurshieB2 primary school P2	About 90% of the pupils in class participated and were actively engaged throughout the lesson. Only a few children were not actively involved. Teacher was able to bring them on board along the lesson.
Manga primary school. P5	There was very high level of student participation in the lesson. Almost all pupils raised their hands to respond to questions anytime teacher posed questions to them. He identified who were not frequently raising up their hands and asked them questions	WurshieB2 primary school P6	All students participated actively during the lesson. Even those who don't talk in class were made to contribute by the teacher.

School Name	Rural West Mamprusi	School Name	Urban West Mamprusi
	directly.		
Zori primary school. P1	Children mentioned alphabets after the teacher. They were always ready to answer questions and some were able to ask teacher questions for clarifications.	Ngbaripe Islam primary school P3	About 95% of the children in the class spoke and tried answering questions in the class.
Ninsali primary school. P6	Every child was anxious to answer questions in class especially the topic citizen education. They loved when the teacher said "respect the elderly" and when he spoke about environmental cleanliness.	Wurshie B JHS 1	Students were scarcely involved in the lesson and for that matter only 10 out of 64 pupils spoke in the class throughout the period. Student participation was very low. There was poor interaction between teacher and pupils. Most of the pupils could not read or speak English.
Bormanga primary school. P2	Pupils' participation was very very poor. They did not understand the lesson and most students were passive and kept quiet.		
Kupiel JHS 2	Pupils' participation was not active and interactive. However, there were few instances teacher paused to ask questions.		

(Source: classroom observation, TENI field research)

In both urban and rural East Mamprusi student participation was poor. Most teachers were described as passive and did not have any motivation strategies for pupil participation other than claps and few praises. In one case the teacher was described as engaging only students he knew could answer his questions. The situation in East Mamprusi can be compared with the case in Lawra. Exceptions to the poor participation were observed in one urban and two rural schools. In Wuyela JHS the observer commented that:

*"The teacher has a good motivation strategy for the students to learn. He involved all the students to speak in class and this did take away the shyness that some students (girls) had at the beginning of the class. The teacher also said good to all those who contributed or responded correctly to questions in the class. The teacher also encouraged the students who could not talk or contribute in class. All the same he never made them clap for any correct response".*

**Table 7.8: Levels of student participation in observed classrooms in East Mamprusi District**

School Name	Rural East Mamprusi	School Name	Urban East Mamprusi
Zangu D/A	The few questions the teacher asked the	Gomlana	Teacher is warm and friendly, moves

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Rural East Mamprusi</b>	<b>School Name</b>	<b>Urban East Mamprusi</b>
Primary school	pupils for a correct answer, he told the children to clap for the person.	Presby. primary school.	around the classroom, and engages with all pupils. Uses praise and asks the class to clap correct answers.
Zangu D/A Primary school	There was no motivation, encouragement but the feedback from the children was poor.	Gomlana Presby. primary school	The teacher motivated the pupils to learn. She did that by calling students to respond to questions and any time they do so correctly are clapped for. The clapping motivated students to participate in the reading and respond to questions. The teacher on one occasion allowed a pupil to keep reading even when she was committing several mistakes. This motivated her to read.
Nintendo primary school	The teacher was passive. She did not interact well with the pupils. Though she did not use harsh words on the pupils. She also did not give any negative feedback.	Zonzongeli D/A Primary school	The only encouragement given to the children is to applause or praise the children who did well. <sup>3</sup>
Nintendo Primary school	The teacher made the students to clap hand for those who gave correct answers. He also told some few others what they said was very good. "That is very good". This is the kind of answer I want.	Zonzongeli D/A primary school	The teacher was passive. He neither encouraged nor insults the pupils. Class was boring for most of the students.
Wuyela Primary school	Hand claps. He only made students to clap hands to anyone who gave an answer to his question. No other strategy of motivation was used. The teacher himself was not smiling and looked so worried or unhappy till the end of the class.		

(Source: classroom observation, TENI field research)

## **Chapter 8: Teacher and Student Assessments of their Levels of learning**

Several studies have revealed that poor classroom pedagogy serves as a key barrier to quality classroom learning. Associates for Change, (2011) observed that many teachers do not use child-centred and participatory methods to ensure that classroom instructions actively engage learners. Similarly, Alhassan and Adzahlie-Mensah, (2010) found that a higher proportion of rural children than urban children drop out because they perceived schooling to be unnecessary or uninteresting. CREATE (2007; 2010) found that many pupils found the classroom “uninteresting” because lesson delivery was not actively engaging them. There is very limited evidence that participatory methods which promote learning in classrooms are actively being used in the three northern regions. The dominant strategy in both project and non-project schools is the chalk and talk approaches. Many teachers merely use the lecture method and punctuated by translation often into L1, L2 or another local language familiar to the children. The translation into other languages is partly as a result of the dominant use of English as the medium of instruction for which the pupils’ comprehension is limited.

The first part of this chapter looks at the teachers’ assessment methods of student learning levels in their classrooms. The second part of the chapter relates to the level of learning and assessment based on a review of children’s classroom exercise books and the quality of the exercise they were given. This is followed by the researchers’ observations in the classrooms visited across a host of factors which promote or deter learning triangulated with focal group interviews and assessments of children’s perspective on their own learning from the experience of the same class lesson observed.

### **8.1 Teacher assessment practices of child learning**

Classroom observation observers’ reports, follow up interviews with teachers and FGD with teachers and pupils revealed that teachers used both formative and summative assessment strategies in the classrooms observed across both urban and rural classrooms. The dominant assessment approach found in the 86 classrooms observed was verbal; formative questions to check pupils’ understanding was carried out in about half of the classrooms whereby teachers set written exercises for the children to complete at the end of the lesson. The extent to which the assessment activities were useful in terms of informing the teacher about the levels of learning among children varied depending on rigour and adaptation of methods used by teachers to assess students. For instance some assessment activities appeared very participatory but were limited due to one or two people answering all the questions. In general higher order skills were not being assessed. The ‘*do you understand?*’ assessment question and its chorus response of ‘yes/no’ were clearly not helpful in informing the teachers about the level of learning taking place. Similarly, the use of simple factual recall questions (low order) are also limited in informing the teacher the extent of learning that has taken place.

Assessment when it was seen to be carried out tended to be in the form of oral questioning and/or a written exercise at the end of the lesson. Because questions tended to be closed, low order questions, what is being assessed is the pupils’ ability to recall facts or in the case of

reading lessons, recall of pronunciations and meanings of words. Written exercises were not always given and in some cases when they were, the efficacy of these assessment activities was questionable. The worst case scenarios were described as being those when a set of examples was written on the board during the course of the lesson and the written exercise exactly replicated these examples with perhaps a few words missing (closed activity), the resulting “exercise” was then just a copying activity.

There was less evidence that formative assessments were being used in which students are made to demonstrate, act out or role play in a response to a question, there is better clarity of the extent to which students have learnt or digested information received. With limited usage of child centred lessons being used in the classrooms observed across the sample sites in which a high degree of pupil participation was observed, there was less chance for the teacher to judge the extent to which the majority of pupils grasp the lesson being taught. Similarly, where teachers use higher order questions (judgment, analysis and synthesis questions) requiring the breaking down or the piecing together of pieces of information to arrive at the right answer, student responses can demonstrate clearly whether the information was assimilated or not. Furthermore, if a teacher uses judgment or application questions student response will clearly demonstrate whether students internalized the information received from the teacher or textbook.

Although many teachers claimed that these written exercises were the core of their assessment strategy, evidence from the scrutiny of a sample of exercise books from each of the classes observed indicates that in the majority of cases teachers were not setting exercises on a regular basis. Also in many cases the first exercise the pupils had completed was set some time after the schools opened at the beginning of the academic year. Teachers interviewed on the subject of setting exercises or whether they gave additional attention to children with special needs, responded by stating that they did *“but that it was difficult to do it regularly or sometimes at all because of the number of pupils they have in their classes”*. The low number of exercises set (and the fact that in the majority of cases not all exercises were marked or corrected by teachers) had an impact on the extent to which parents could evaluate their wards’ performance. In FGDs with pupils, parents, teachers and interviews with teachers and head teachers, it was repeatedly said that parents were able to monitor pupils’ learning by looking at exercise books and (because many of the parents interviewed are unable to read English) they merely counted the number of ticks. Parents and children were unable to also see any signs of progress when the exercises which would evaluate the progress the children were making at school. Given that very few of the schools released report cards to the parents on a regular basis these exercises and assessment tools became even more important.

Overall there were very few teachers if any that were seen to assess children’s knowledge, aptitudes and skills on an individual needs basis. There were no small groups being used apart from grouping the brightest children together and that they were used as models for the other children. Teachers did not take the time to assess individual children and therefore could not tell their level of literacy related to word identification, decoding and other literacy skills.

### 8.1.1 Teacher assessment practices in Northern Region

Table 8.1 shows observers' comments on some of the teacher assessment practices in East Mamprusi District schools (the full responses are in Annex 8B). In urban East Mamprusi the dominant teacher assessment strategies were formative verbal questions and summative written questions at the end of lesson delivery. Usually the teachers posed the question and allowed some time for pupils to think of the answer before calling on individuals or the whole class to provide the answer. Where students do not volunteer to answer the question teachers usually nominated a student. In 4 out of 5 urban schools observed the teachers routinely used formative verbal question and answer technique to assess students learning. In contrast, in one urban school; Zonzongeli Primary the observers noted that the teacher could not assess the students: "The teacher could not assess the students because he did not know the subject and the children had to direct him on what to do".

**Table 8.1: Descriptions of Teacher Assessment in from Classroom Observations East Mamprusi District**

School Name	Rural East Mamprusi	School Name	Urban East Mamprusi
Zangu D/A Primary school	Teacher assessed pupil's level of learning by asking a few of the pupils' questions (oral). He also assigned some exercises. The teacher was rushing as he was angry.	Gomlana Presby. primary school.	Teacher used question and answer to assess learning. Also wrote questions on the board, pupils' answers also written on board.
Zangu D/A Primary school	By asking the students questions. Giving students exercises. Testing students' ability. Assigning home working. Supervising students' exercises through going by rows to see what they are doing.	Gomlana Presby. primary school	The teacher assessed the students verbally by asking them questions. Students were made to identify paragraphs where their responses were found. It was clear that most of those who responded were those who could read and write. The teacher also engaged them on a written exercise at the end of the lesson.
Nintendo primary school	The teacher gave dictation exercise after the lesson. About half of the pupils in the class did not do the exercise. Some did not have pencils or exercise books to write. The teacher did not ensure that all pupils did the exercise.	Zonzongeli D/A Primary school	The teacher gives exercises in class, marks them and gives the students homework at the end of the lesson.
Nintendo Primary school	The teacher assessed the students during and after the class. He asked questions orally when the lesson was on going and also gave the students exercise to do. Besides	Zonzongeli D/A primary school	The teacher gave a short assignment but did not mark it in class. The only way of assessing students' level of understanding was asking of questions. However these questions were answered by the good ones

School Name	Rural East Mamprusi	School Name	Urban East Mamprusi
	that, he made the students to explain the meaning of some words and gave examples or demonstrations to support it.		in class which is both boys and girls.

(Source: classroom observation, TENI field research)

The pattern of teacher assessment in rural East Mamprusi was similar to that observed in urban East Mamprusi. Apart from the verbal formative and written summative questions in rural East Mamprusi some teachers also gave home work as extra assignment for assessing students' learning.

Annex 8C presents teacher assessment strategies for West Mamprusi District. While rural West Mamprusi uses virtually the same strategies as in rural East Mamprusi the pattern for urban West Mamprusi is slightly different. Apart from the usual question and answer technique, teachers in urban Mamprusi employed the strategy of asking students to judge answers provided by their colleagues. For example, in WurshieB2 Primary the P2 teacher is described as using the following technique:

*“The teacher was assessing the students’ level of learning through questions and answers. If a pupil was not putting up their hands for a few the teacher would ask the pupils to answer the question. They all answered. If a pupil got the answer wrong, he would ask the class if the pupil was right or wrong, before getting another pupil to come up with an answer. At the end of the lesson, he asked pupils what was the objective of the lesson and what they had learned”.*

Similarly, in Wurshie B2, primary the P6 teacher employed the following assessment technique:

*“Teacher assessed pupils’ level of learning by asking them to re-explore what was either said by him or other students. He identified the slow learners and emphasized on them to repeat what was defined and asked them whether they could remember. Afterwards, they had high level of learning. He posed verbal questions to them and also assigned them after the lesson.”*

In yet another urban West Mamprusi district school (Ngbaripe Islam primary school P3) the teacher called students to the board to demonstrate their understanding. In summary, urban West Mamprusi teachers used a wider variety of strategies to assess student understanding than rural West Mamprusi teachers who mostly relied on verbal questions and answer assessment processes. See Annex 8C for full data set on teacher assessment processes in West Mamprusi District.

### 8.1.2 Teacher assessment practices in Upper East Region

Classroom observations revealed that in all 5 lessons observed in **urban Bongo**, there was evidence of teachers assessing the children. In three cases the teachers set a written exercise, two of which the teacher had checked. In the remaining lessons, pupils were encouraged to demonstrate their understanding by modelling the target language orally. Annex 6E, shows observers' comments on teacher assessment practices in urban Bongo schools.

In **rural Bongo** (Annex 6F) all but 4 cases teachers gave the class a written exercise to complete. However in some of these cases it was questionable as to whether these could be used by the teacher to judge the level of learning. In one instance the teacher set the questions and then went through them with the class, writing the answers on the board before they had all completed the exercise. The rest of the lesson was spent by those children simply copying both question and answer into their books. Another exercise was simply a repeat of the examples that were given on another part of the chalk board but with some information missing. In contrast, one teacher went round the class checking the students' work and offering guidance for those who were having difficulties. Of the 4 cases where no written exercise was given, 1 teacher did no assessment of any kind, and 3 teachers assessed students orally.

In **urban Talensi** (see Annex 6G) 4 out of the 5 teachers observed gave written exercises for the children to complete. Two of these teachers went round while the exercise was being completed to check pupils' work and assist those having difficulties. In the JHS lesson it appeared that the pupils who were leading the groups were carrying out the activity and then sharing their work with the other members of their groups. In this case it is likely that it was only their learning that was being assessed. In all 5 cases teachers were using questioning to check students' understanding or ability to demonstrate examples of the target language.

### 8.1.3 Teacher assessment practices in the Upper West Region

Evidence from classroom observation notes shows that in 27 of the 29 lessons observed in the Upper West teachers were using oral questions to assess pupils. That the oral questioning strategy was intended to be an assessment activity was confirmed by responses recorded from post-lesson interviews with teachers. During these interviews teachers pointed out that they used oral exercises as a form of assessment. In these interviews teachers also claimed that they used written exercises as a form of assessment, yet in half the classrooms observed evidence from the classroom observation notes showed that no form of written exercises took place. 13 teachers who used oral questioning also set a written exercise for pupils to complete at the end of the lesson and one other teacher who used no oral questioning used a written exercise as the only form of assessment. In one class the only assessment carried out by the teacher was to check student pronunciation: *The teacher assessed the pupils by making them repeat after him. He also called individual pupils to read what was written on the board.* (398, Sognaayili RC Primary School, High, Male, 23, Trained teacher, P2, English prepositions)

There is no indication in the classroom observation reports as to the extent to which the teachers whose strategy to assess using oral questions were able to ensure that they had checked pupil progress on an individual level or that every pupil was assessed. Evidence from classroom

observation notes shows that in at least one case this questioning takes the form of the teacher asking if students understand and receiving a chorused response: *Questions were directed at the whole class and teacher ask students if they understand what he was teaching of which some answered affirmatively* (416, Kuvarpuo RC JHS, Male, 1, CVT, JHS 3, English Writing). It is therefore questionable to what extent this strategy is effective in enabling the teacher to assess pupils' level of success.

In 14 classes observed in the upper west there did not appear to be any particular trend in terms of the type of school (RC/DA etc), location of school or subject taught in relation to the assessments which were being used; the type of teacher (trained or untrained) did seem to have some influence on whether assessments were being set or not in the classroom; (see tables below based on observations in the UW and interviews with teachers).

**Table 8.2: Classroom Observation Summary of Evidence of Teacher Assessment in Upper West Region by Community Type**

EVIDENCE FROM OBSERVATION								
		ORAL QUESTIONS	WRITTEN EXERCISE & ORAL QUESTIONS	ORAL QUESTIONS & SUMMARISING LEARNING	CHECK PRONUNCIATI ON	DEMONSTRATI ON & ORAL QUESTIONS	WRITTEN EXERCISE	TOTALS
Jirapa	Urban	3	1	1	0	0	0	5
Jirapa	Rural	3	6	0	1	0	0	10
Lawra	Urban	2	1	0	0	1	1	5
Lawra	Rural	4	5	0	0	0	0	9
Totals		12	13	1	1	1	1	29

(Source: classroom observation, TENI field research)

Teachers claim that once they have given a written exercise, (26 out of the 29 teachers interviewed claimed that they routinely give written exercises in order to assess levels of learning) they used it to assess levels of learning, marked it and did corrections. However, evidence from the exercise book checklist data reveals that teachers hardly mark pupils' exercises. As in the following example, where the exercise is simply a repeat of what is already written on the board in the form of examples:

*The lesson was mainly questioning and answering till the end when an exercise was given. The exercises contained examples used in class which were still on the board. So the exercises seem to be one of mere copying of what had been previously used as examples. The exercises were not challenging enough for the pupils. Therefore most pupils scored all five exercises correct. (409, Kuvarpuo RC Primary School, Low, Male Pupil teacher, -1, P5, English Nouns)*

The table below outlines the different strategies used by teachers according to their type. The majority of responses fall into the category of asking questions and setting a written exercise.

What it also shows is that half of the trained teachers do not set a written exercise but rely on oral feedback from students to assess their learning.

**Table 8.3: Classroom Observation Summary of Evidence of Teacher Assessment in Upper West Region by Teacher Type**

EVIDENCE FROM OBSERVATION								
		ORAL QUESTIONS	WRITTEN EXERCISE & ORAL QUESTIONS	ORAL QUESTIONS & SUMMARISING LEARNING	CHECK PRONUNCIATION	DEMONSTRATION & ORAL QUESTIONS	WRITTEN EXERCISE	TOTALS
Jirapa	Trained	4	5	1	1	0	0	11
Jirapa	Pupil teacher	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Jirapa	CVT	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Lawra	Trained	4	6	0	0	1	1	12
Lawra	Pupil teacher	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Lawra	CVT	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Totals		12	13	1	1	1	1	29

**Table 8.4: Summary of Evidence of Teacher Assessment Based on Teachers' Responses to the Question about how they Assess Learning In Upper West Region by Community Type, School Performance, School, Teacher and Lesson Types**

TEACHER Follow up Interview											
		Oral questions	Written exercise & oral questions	Demonstration & oral questions	Checking written exercise	Written exercise & oral questions & summarising learning	Written exercise & reading or dictation	Written exercise & evaluates participation	Written exercise, demonstration & oral questions	Written exercise	Totals
Jirapa	Urban	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	5
Jirapa	Rural	0	6	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	10
Lawra	Urban	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
Lawra	Rural	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	8
Totals		1	15	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	28
Jirapa	High Perform.	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	6
Jirapa	Low	0	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	6
Lawra	High	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
Lawra	Low	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	6
Totals		1	12	1	2		1	1	2	1	22
Jirapa	RC	1	4	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	10

TEACHER Follow up Interview											
		Oral questions	Written exercise & oral questions	Demonstration & oral questions	Checking written exercise	Written exercise & oral questions & summarising learning	Written exercise & reading or dictation	Written exercise & evaluates participation	Written exercise, demonstration & oral questions	Written exercise	Totals
Jirapa	DA	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	5
Lawra	RC	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Lawra	DA	0	6	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	11
Totals		1	15	1	2	1	1	2	2	3	28
Jirapa	Trained	1	4	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	11
Jirapa	Pupil teacher	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Jirapa	CVT	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Lawra	Trained	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	11
Lawra	Pupil teacher	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Lawra	CVT	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Totals		1	15	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	28
UPPER WEST	English Reading	0	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	8
UPPER WEST	Dagaare Reading	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
UPPER WEST	Ghanaian Language Reading	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Totals		0	5	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	11

(Source: follow up interview with teacher, TENI field research)

Across the 29 classrooms across the Upper West and 30 classrooms in Upper East there was no individual attention given to the children apart from asking them questions in the full group. There were no classroom observations which showed that children were ever taken aside on an individual basis to assess their learning and no small groups to assess children's aptitudes and skills. Table 11 gives the summary evidence of the classroom observation while table 12 summarises the follow up interview with teachers. These tables demonstrate that teachers often claimed to be using both formative and summative assessments yet during observations these were not validated. The most visible evidence of weak levels of assessment among children was through scrutiny of their exercise books which showed very little assessment was being carried out. See appendices 4D – 4K for district by district and urban rural summaries of FGD with teachers and pupils in the Upper West Region.

## 8.2 Frequency of Classroom Exercises and Assignments

As part of the classroom observation research, observers collected a selection of exercise books from the classes which were under observation. This selection was usually from a sample of about 10 pupils – with at least 5 exercise books from girls and boys separately. The exercise

book scrutiny was focused on examining the exercise books of the classroom lessons which had been observed which were usually English lessons<sup>37</sup>. The information taken from the pupil exercise books was the date of the first exercise, the date of the last exercise, the number of exercises completed and the number of exercises which had been checked by the teacher.

The figures in the tables below and Annexes (4C) represent the averages of the sample of books from each school. The number of days is calculated as the number of week days between the first and last dates recorded in the exercise books. The numbers of exercises and checked exercises given below are also averages taken from the sample. The ratio of days to exercises is calculated by dividing the average number of days children were attending school by the average number of exercises and gives an indication of the frequency with which exercises were completed in that particular class. For example in the first school in the first table below (ID 57), the exercises would have been set at a frequency of one exercise every 3 weekdays.

Schools in the targeted research areas commenced on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and the field work for this research took place between 29<sup>th</sup> October 2012 and 17<sup>th</sup> November 2012 and was concurrent in each region. In each region the TENI district was the first to be visited. Therefore, in the TENI districts schools had been open for a total of between 40 to 48 week days and the Non-TENI district schools would have been open for between 49 to 54 week days. There are slight variations between schools in terms of the number of days open (a) depending on the date of the researchers' visits and (b) some faith schools (particularly RC schools) have additional days closed for religious holidays. However, for the purposes of this analysis the range of 40 to 48 days in the first districts (TENI) and 49 to 54 for days in the second districts (non-TENI) is used.

The number of days the schools have been open is significant because it indicates the amount of time between schools opening and the first exercises being set. In the first example in the table below there appears to have been a discrepancy in the data collection because the number of days exceeds the number that the school could have been open by between 1 to 9 days. However, in the second example (ID 58) the school could have been open for between 15 to 23 days (3 to 4 school weeks) before the first exercise was completed.

### **8.2.1 Northern Region**

The Review of exercise books by researchers revealed that on average exercises started being placed in the child's books in Mamprusi district approximately 27 days (rural schools) and 30 days before researchers arrived at the school<sup>38</sup>. When the other samples are reviewed, the evidence indicates that all the other teachers began setting exercises between 2 to 4 weeks into the school term (except for the JHS ID 25 which has an average of 8 days from the first until the last exercise, however during those 8 days the pupils completed an exercise every day and had it checked), most exercises have been checked and except for two schools in the rural group (IDs 3 and 47), teachers are setting exercises every 2 or 3 days.

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<sup>37</sup> This figure is not consistent across all the observed classrooms as there were not always these numbers of books available.

<sup>38</sup> However, these averages are not completely reliable because the first school in each group has an average number of days that exceed the possible number of days the school could have been open. Furthermore 2 sets of books have the number of exercises recorded but these were not dated in the pupils' books.

Three teachers in **East Mamprusi** appear to have left a reasonably short time between term beginning and setting their first exercise: Schools (IDs 115, 127 and 143). However, in every other classroom it was at least 5 weeks between term starting and the first exercise being set. In the first classroom listed in the urban section (ID 90), the children had completed only one exercise and that appears to have been on the day of the researchers' visit, which suggests that but for the research team's visit the pupils would not have done any exercises within the range of 40-48 weekdays.

The range of frequencies at which exercises are set is much greater in East Mamprusi than in West Mamprusi with all but one teacher setting exercises every 3 days or more. The overall frequency is lower in urban East Mamprusi but the span of days over which exercises are set is on average much less.

### 8.2.2 Upper East Region

Evidence from the table below indicates that the output of pupils in the "high" performing school in urban **Talensi-Nabdam District**, (UE) is significantly better than the low performing school where it appears there has been just a week between the term beginning and exercises being set and exercises being given every 1 or 2 days after that.

**Table 8.5: Average Number of Exercises Completed and Checked by Pupils in Sample Schools in Urban Talensi-Nabdam District, Upper East**

POSSIBLE RANGE OF DAYS OPEN: 40 TO 48 DAYS												
ID	Region	District	School	School type	Community Type	School Perf	TENI / NON - TENI	Classes	Average Number of days	Average Number of exercises	Average Number of Checked exercises	Ratio of Days to Exercise
171	UPPER EAST	TALENSI - NABDAM	KULENGA PRIMARY SCHOOL	DA	URBAN	High	TENI	P3	33	20	17	2
172	UPPER EAST	TALENSI - NABDAM	KULENGA PRIMARY SCHOOL	DA	URBAN	High	TENI	P6	30	20	17	1
184	UPPER EAST	TALENSI - NABDAM	KPATUYA PRIMARY SCHOOL	DA	URBAN	Low	TENI	P5	25	9	4	3
185	UPPER EAST	TALENSI - NABDAM	KPATUYA PRIMARY SCHOOL	DA	URBAN	Low	TENI	P1	4	5	5	1
197	UPPER EAST	TALENSI - NABDAM	KPATUYA JHS	DA	URBAN	Low	TENI	JHS 2	1	1	1	1
(Source: classroom observation, TENI field research)									MEAN	19	11	9
									ST DEV	15	9	8

Evidence from the table 8.6 below shows that there is not much distinction between high and low performing schools in the rural schools as the evidence gives a rather mixed picture. However,

on average the span of time over which teachers in the rural schools are giving exercises is greater than in the urban schools. But the overall frequency is still quite low (with only one exercise being set every week). Similar to schools in East Mamprusi, there is only one teacher who is setting exercises more frequently than once every 3 days. Most teachers are leaving an average of 5 to 7 days between exercises.

**Table 8.6: Average Number of Exercises Completed and Checked by Pupils in Sample Schools in Rural Talensi-Nabdam District, Upper East**

POSSIBLE RANGE OF DAYS OPEN: 40 TO 48 DAYS												
ID	Region	District	School	School type	Community Type	School Perf	TENI / NON-TENI	Classes	Average Number of days	Average Number of exercises	Average Number of Checked exercises	Ratio of Days to Exercises
203	UPPER EAST	TALENSI - NABDAM	NAMONSA PRIMARY SCHOOL	DA	RURAL	High	TENI	P6	29	10	10	3
215	UPPER EAST	TALENSI - NABDAM	CHUCHULIGA PRIMARY SCHOOL	DA	RURAL	Low	TENI	P3	16	8	6	2
216	UPPER EAST	TALENSI - NABDAM	CHUCHULIGA PRIMARY SCHOOL	DA	RURAL	Low	TENI	P6	16	3	3	5
229	UPPER EAST	TALENSI - NABDAM	NAMONSA JHS	DA	RURAL		TENI	JHS 1	36	6	6	6
236	UPPER EAST	TALENSI - NABDAM	ZUARINGO PRIMARY SCHOOL	DA	RURAL	High	TENI	P2	29	9	8	3
237	UPPER EAST	TALENSI - NABDAM	ZUARINGO PRIMARY SCHOOL	DA	RURAL	High	TENI	P5	Books not dated	8	6	not dated
249	UPPER EAST	TALENSI - NABDAM	AYIMPOKA PRIMARY SCHOOL	DA	RURAL	Low	TENI	P6	32	5	3	7
261	UPPER EAST	TALENSI - NABDAM	AYIMPOKA JHS	DA	RURAL		TENI	JHS 2	32	6	3	6
(Source: classroom observation, TENI field research)									MEAN	27	7	6
									ST DEV	8	2	3

The overall performance in terms of numbers of exercises set by teachers is better in **Bongo** than in Talensi-Nabdam. The differential between the urban and rural schools is quite low in terms of the span of days over which exercises are set, but exercises are being set significantly more frequently in the urban classrooms than in the rural. There is not much difference between the high and low performing schools in urban Bongo. However, those classified as “high” performing schools in rural Bongo began setting exercises quite early in the academic year. As with the previous districts the frequency at which exercises are set is much lower in the rural

schools than in the urban. This suggests that the high performing schools have a longer period in which time on task is being executed and that teachers may be more serious about starting the school term and “settling into their duties” early.

### 8.2.3 Upper West Region

Overall in **Jirapa** evidence indicates that there was a 2 to 4 week interval in classrooms observed between term starting and teachers setting their first exercises. Again there is a significantly better output in the urban schools than in the rural schools (the overall average in the urban schools is reduced by the fact that the JHS teacher observed (ID 392) had only set 5 exercises over 8 working days – hence the higher standard deviation across the 3 indicators: number of days, number of exercises, number of checked exercises).

The evidence from the **Lawra District**, indicates that the teachers in the RC school in urban Lawra (IDs 456 & 457) both began setting exercises within a week or two of the beginning of term and thereafter are setting exercises every 2 or 3 days. The teachers in the “low” performing DA school demonstrate a significantly lower output. The overall time span over which exercises are being set is wider in classrooms observed in Lawra as a whole than in any other district. And apart from the teacher in the P4 class in rural Lawra (ID 507) who set only 1 or 2 exercises, most teachers are leaving only 2 or 3 days between giving pupils in their class an exercise.

### 8.2.4 Implications for learning

From the evidence of the exercise book scrutiny analysed there are certain trends that emerge. The findings from this research event suggest that very few exercises are being set for children across the six districts and this is much worse for rural children compared to urban children. Teachers are not able to consistently give exercises to children on a daily basis and often wait between 3-5 days before exercises are set within a period. Teachers are also not consistently checking every exercise that is completed by students. This assessment section of the report calls into question the extent to which teachers were using exercises as an assessment tool. It also confirms the claim that teacher assessments are mostly oral whether evaluative or summative. Moreover not having completed exercises marked, checked or corrected will not serve to encourage or motivate pupils. In fact, in one FGI with pupils they remarked that they did not enjoy learning when:

*“The teacher is on the phone too much. The teacher gives exercises but does not mark. The teacher sets exams, but does not return papers. The teacher is caning if we are unable to answer questions. We are quiet and do not participate.” (Source: FGD with pupils: 137, NORTHERN, EAST MAMPRUSI, BAMAHA D/A JHS, DA, RURAL, Low, NON-TENI, GIRLS, f3)*

Furthermore evidence from discussions with teachers, parents, pupils, head teachers and members of SMC and PTA groups indicates that one of the few ways in which parents feel they can monitor the performance of their wards is by looking at their exercise books to see how well they are completing exercises and – given that several parents of the children in the target schools are unable to read English – the teachers’ marks are their only indicator of success. As

the following response to the question: “How well do you think your children are learning in school?”

*“Based on the exercise books or home works inspected. Because parents are illiterates they use the symbol 'O' or 'X' to identify bad performance and '√' to show good performance.” (Source: Interview with Parents at Kulenga Primary School, Urban Talensi Nabdam)*

## **Northern Region**

Parents in the West Mamprusi District also commented on how the School Performance Appraisal meetings had been pivotal in teaching them to raise questions about their children’s progress. Another trend that can be identified from the evidence of the exercise book observations is the difference between the number and frequency of exercises given in rural and urban schools. During interviews with members of the district education directorate in East Mamprusi they stated that: *“Large class sizes pose a threat to quality education.” And that “Head teachers allow less exercises to be given when the class sizes are very large.”*

Evidence from interviews with teachers indicates that they share the view that large pupil enrolments effect how often they set exercises. For example the teachers interviewed in the FGD at Wurshie B JHS (Urban West Mamprusi) said: “large class sizes mean we cannot give so many class exercises/assignments.” Yet in so many cases the teachers who complained of large class sizes where managing classroom with approximately 35-40. At Nintendo Primary School (Rural East Mamprusi) the teachers discussed using a different strategy to deal with the challenge of high enrolment:

*“We give group work instead of exercises to be able to assess them in a small number because the numbers are normally large in the classes.”*

As can be seen from the description of classes that were visited, in almost every district the average pupil teacher ratio is higher in the rural schools than in the urban. This trend is reversed in urban Jirapa and urban Lawra where, on closer scrutiny, the evidence reveals that this average class size is increased because of the very high enrolment in the RC schools.

The fact remains that in most schools the number of exercises given by teachers was **extremely inadequate**. The average number of exercises being set for key subject areas in a given week ranged from 1-3 depending on whether the school was in an urban or rural setting. Key factors which appeared to be restricting teachers from setting more exercises related to their high teacher absenteeism, lack of lesson preparation, participation in distance education programmes, poor teacher attitude towards work and in some cases large class sizes. Across all 6 districts the relative number of marked exercises as a percentage of exercises given was very poor. The low number of written exercises substantiates the general poor performance of pupils, particularly in the rural schools.

A further challenge described by teachers is the fact that, as teachers from Namonsa Primary School (Rural Talensi Nabdam) pointed out, “Students do not have exercise books.” This

challenge is particularly relevant in those schools where levels of poverty among families prevented parents from being able to provide exercise books for their wards. Most of the exercise books scrutinized by researchers suggest that more than one subject was being used per exercise book and that children particularly in the Northern Region often only had a few exercise books for the 6-8 subject areas.

This difficulty has been recognized by the Government of Ghana and there is provision for the Ministry of Education to centrally purchase and distribute free exercise books to districts for District Directors to distribute to schools. However, these exercise books are not always available to the schools at the beginning of the school term due to delays in the release of funds from the Ministry of Finance; in fact, researchers witnessed the delivery of exercise books to schools in rural Talensi Nabdam during the field work – 9 weeks after the beginning of the school term (early November, 2013). Several interviews with teachers and head teachers also suggest that the numbers of free exercise books does not always meet the need of having one book for each subject. Given the fact that schools can purchase exercise books with their capitation grants particularly for “needy children”, the excuse that the child does not have an exercise book should be overcome by innovative head teachers.

### 8.3 Levels of learning<sup>39</sup>

Central to the question of how schools are performing and providing quality education is the extent to which children in the classroom are actually **learning**. This is particularly important in a context where several assessment procedures have been changed over the last ten years and tracking progress of schools, teachers and pupils becomes quite complex. Across the primary schools visited formal standardized assessment procedures did not exist as is the case in the study area.<sup>40</sup> Observers’ reports suggest that they were generally able to judge if learning was taking place particularly where teachers engaged students in activities that required them to demonstrate their understanding of the lesson being taught. This demonstration of understanding took varied forms including pupils demonstrating or acting out the target language, role playing the piece of information, expressing opinion on the issue, providing examples of sentences using the target language or answering questions correctly. Classroom observation notes revealed that in some of the lessons that were delivered solely in English, pupils were not able to participate in the lessons. Generally, the level of learning is dependent on language of instruction. Where the local language was used the level of learning was high, but where the sole use of the English language was adopted the level of learning was low. To avoid English language serving as barriers to effective learning the majority of teachers resorted to a translation method. The effectiveness of instructional practice and levels of learning assessed by observers was also checked during focal group interviews with the pupils themselves.

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<sup>39</sup> We are working on this section with a different approach to the data set in order to identify the characteristics of high and low performing classrooms based on the characteristics identified in the classroom observation and school based observations along with focal group interviews with children and teachers.

<sup>40</sup> PMT’s were not standardised tests although they were carried out across three of the TENI districts and one Non TENI district (Lawra). NEA is only used in a sample of schools and is being carried out every two years. SEA has not been consistently and regularly carried out since 2009.

When describing classrooms where there are high and low degrees of learning taking place, observers describe various contributory factors. The extent to which the pupils are encouraged to participate or interact is one determining factor. This interaction is facilitated by the methods or strategies of a teacher as well as the teacher's demeanour. As discussed elsewhere, strategies that encourage participation are those which overtly elicit pupil responses either to questions or to actually take part in some kind of activity: reading aloud, modelling examples of target language, role play or answering questions. The teacher who is delivering a lecture does not elicit any responses. The attitude or demeanour of the teacher can determine whether pupils feel comfortable to contribute to activities. Again, this is discussed elsewhere, but teachers who demonstrated a threatening or unfriendly demeanour were less likely to inspire confidence in pupils that their contributions will be valued. Another barrier or promoter of interaction in the classroom is the language of instruction. Where pupils are unable to access the language of instruction, there can be little interaction. In the five classrooms where observers assessed that there were low levels of learning interactions between teacher and pupils it is because one or more of the above factors was not present.

### 8.3.1 Levels of learning in Upper East Region

Table 8.7 shows observer comments on levels of learning in urban Bongo where there was clear evidence of pupil learning in 4 of the 5 lessons observed. In each case pupils were required to model the target language orally or to answer questions.

The one lesson where there was low levels of learning was a reading lesson (Lanwana DA School, DA, Low, P6, Male Trained teacher - 1) where most students were not able to even attempt answering the comprehension questions, the lesson was delivered solely in English (even though in the FGD with pupils after the lesson, they said that the teacher usually used a mixture of L1 and L2), and many students were unable to understand.

**Table 8.7: Classroom Observation comments on levels of learning in urban Bongo**

Type of Lesson	School	Class	Schl Type	Schl Perf	Tchr Sex	Tchr Type	Tchr Exp	Classroom Observation and Focal Group Discussion (FGD) with pupils
P6 English Verbs (273)	Adakudugu Primary School	P6	RC	High	Male	Pupil teacher	5	learning: <b>FGD with pupils</b> confirmed they understood and enjoy his teaching
P1 English Describing (274)	Adakudugu Primary School	P1	RC	High	Female	Trained	7	learning: pupils had to model target language orally
P6 English Reading Comprehension (287)	Lanwana Primary School	P6	DA	Low	Male	Trained	1	Learning: repeated lesson (stated reason that there had been a lot of students absent the previous day. Also lesson was solely in English –  <b>FGD with pupils</b> shows that their level of English comprehension was poor and that teacher usually uses a mixture of L1 and L2 – a reading lesson but teacher using

Type of Lesson	School	Class	Schl Type	Schl Perf	Tchr Sex	Tchr Type	Tchr Exp	Classroom Observation and Focal Group Discussion (FGD) with pupils
								echo reading or if pupils read individually he only chose the better readers “to show the others how it was done”.
P3 English Grammar Verbs (288)	Lanwana Primary School	P3	DA	Low	Female	Trained	6	Learning: pupils had to model target language orally exercise set and marked
JHS3 English Grammar (297)	Adakudugu Girls’ JHS	JHS3	RC		Female	Trained	5	Learning: the teacher used questioning throughout the lesson to gauge understanding. If the students showed they were confused (even if it was something that had been previously taught) the teacher went over it until it was understood and they could go to the next phase of the lesson.

(Source: classroom observation and FGD with pupils, TENI field research)

In most cases it was questionable as to whether the teachers’ appraisal could be used to judge the level of learning. In one instance, the teacher set the questions and then went through them with the class, writing the answers on the board before they had all completed the exercise. The rest of the lesson was spent by those children simply copying both questions and answers into their books. Another exercise was simply a repeat of the examples that were given on another part of the chalk board but with some information missing. However, there was one teacher who went round the class checking the students’ work and offering guidance for those who had difficulties.

Table 8.8 shows observer comments on level of learning in **rural Bongo**. In contrast with urban schools, 6 out of the 10 lessons observed in rural Bongo had no evidence of “high” learning classroom environment. In one of these cases it was felt that the objective of the lesson was not challenging, they were just practising something they already knew. In all the other lessons the methodology of teachers was not child-centred or participatory, they were generally lecturing and there were few opportunities for students to probe and/ or ask questions to either check or improve their own understanding.

**Table 8.8: Classroom Observation comments on levels of learning in Rural Bongo**

Type of Lesson	School	Class	Schl Type	Schl Perf	Tchr Sex	Tchr Type	Tchr Exp	Classroom Observation and Focal Group Discussion (FGD) with pupils
P2 Maths Fractions (303)	WUNTENGA PRIMARY SCHOOL	P2	DA	High	Male	Pupil teacher	2	No evidence of learning; written exercise was a repeat of examples already drawn on the board but with the numbers missing.
P5 Science energy	WUNTENGA PRIMARY	P5	DA	High	Female	Pupil	2	– repeated lesson – teacher said because pupils didn’t understand it

Type of Lesson	School	Class	Schl Type	Schl Perf	Tchr Sex	Tchr Type	Tchr Exp	Classroom Observation and Focal Group Discussion (FGD) with pupils
(304	SCHOOL					teacher		the first time. Assessment: teachers used oral questions during lesson and gave children a written exercise at the end.  FGD: Understand lesson. Liked the way the teacher taught. When a student did not understand the teacher repeats it.
P4 Science temperature (314	AKUGRI PRIMARY SCHOOL	P4	DA	Low	Male	Pupil teacher	3	Repeated lesson. Teacher wrote exercise on board and went through the questions with the class before they had all finished. So many students just copied the questions and the answers from the board. Observers doubted whether learning had taken place only memorization. No evidence of learning.  FGD: They liked the lesson because it taught the different types of thermometers and what they are used for. They also learnt that human temperature is normal when it is 37 Celsius. They didn't like the lesson because they have no text books to see a thermometer.
P1 English greetings (315	AKUGRI PRIMARY SCHOOL	P1	DA	Low	Female	Pupil teacher	4	lesson on basic greetings: observers felt there was little new learning going on because the objective was not challenging. Assessment: oral
JHS1 English writing (327	WUNTENGA JHS	JHS1	DA		Male	Trained	1	Learning: no evidence. Students were told – lecture style – the format of an informal letter  FGD: The boys understand English, only occasionally they have to be asked in Gurune. The boys liked the lesson content and the teaching and they understood what they were taught (writing

Type of Lesson	School	Class	Schl Type	Schl Perf	Tchr Sex	Tchr Type	Tchr Exp	Classroom Observation and Focal Group Discussion (FGD) with pupils
								letters)
P6 Maths Place value (333)	GUNGOLGU 'A' PRIMARY SCHOOL	P6	DA	High	Male	Trained	1	gave students time to do them and then went round to check. Used questioning during lesson.  FGD: It was fine, we liked the way our teacher explained for us to understand. We were able to answer the exercises he gave us, and we did the exercises with our teacher on the chalkboard so that those who did not understand to understand.
P3 Maths Measure (334)	GUNGOLGU 'A' PRIMARY SCHOOL	P3	DA	High	Male	Trained	5	Learning: No evidence of learning from oral questions
P3 English Adjectives (345)	BULIKA PRIMARY SCHOOL	P3	DA	Low	Male	NYEP	1	Learning: no evidence (used L1 and L2 but pupil participation was low and teacher used lecture)
P4 English Grammar verbs (346)	BULIKA PRIMARY SCHOOL	P4	DA	Low	Male	Trained	1	No evidence of learning  FGD: Pupils studied verbs and were able to tell what the teacher said in class after defining what a verb was. Pupils were able to describe what the researcher was doing example, writing, talking. Teacher asked pupils if they understood and when they didn't understand any part he explained it again. He didn't cane pupils. He taught people (pupils) and they were happy so pupils wanted teacher to continue and not stop lesson.
JHS1 English Grammar	GUNGOLGU JHS	JHS1	DA		Male	Other	1	Learning: most children gave correct responses

Type of Lesson	School	Class	Schl Type	Schl Perf	Tchr Sex	Tchr Type	Tchr Exp	Classroom Observation and Focal Group Discussion (FGD) with pupils
Verbs (356)								

(Source: classroom observation and FGD with pupils, TENI field research)

Focal group interview with children supported in most cases what observers had found in the classrooms in terms of the low and high levels of learning taking place.

### 8.3.2 Levels of learning among children in the Upper West Region

Observers' notes from the 29 classes observed in the Upper West indicate that there were a total of 5 classes where there was limited evidence of learning. All 5 classes were in rural parts of the region (3 in Jirapa district and 2 in Lawra). These lessons were delivered by 2 trained and 3 untrained teachers. In a further 2 classes, observers felt that the level of learning was very low and that there was only some learning in 8 other classes. In the remaining 14 of the 29 classes (50%) researchers felt that there was enough evidence from the level and kind of pupil participation to indicate that there were adequate if not high levels of learning.

The following examples illustrate a school where learning was thought to be "high" and a lesson where there was no evidence of learning "low". In the first description taken from observers notes of a school in urban Jirapa, showed evidence that the teacher's language was appropriate for pupils, that he was using questioning and that around a third of the pupils were raising their hands to answer these questions. The observer also noted that even though it was an afternoon lesson and the pupils were hungry the teacher's encouragement was such that they were still able to participate.

*392, St Kambali RC JHS, Male Trained teacher – 12, JHS 2, English: He also speaks to the level of understanding of the children and the students demonstrated their understanding of the lesson through the numerous questions that were asked. Out of the 42 pupils in class about 13 of them on the average raise their hands to answer a question when asked by teacher.*

*The main strength during the lesson delivery was the active participation of the pupils in the lesson delivery. Though it was past noon and the pupils looked hungry and tired, the teacher was able to get their attention and participation in the process.*

In the second example from a school in rural Jirapa, the observer described the fact that the teacher uses English (L2) despite only a few children being able to understand. The teacher asked questions but pupils appeared not to be confident to answer them. What is more the teacher's demeanour was felt to be unconfident and dull, without humour – the observer also noted that the teacher's breath smelled of alcohol.

*Reading: Although few of the pupils understood the teacher in English he used L2 as the language of instruction throughout the lesson. 423, Kpaguri DA Primary School, High, Male Trained teacher -18, P4, English*

*The pupils did not make any contribution in the class except instances where the teacher asked that they answer questions in which case they did but not confidently. The lesson observed was very dull the teacher did not use any sense of humorous activities. Teacher was not confident in what he was teaching the pupils and seemed to go off track himself. The teacher was very timid but a follow up interview with him later revealed the smell of alcohol in his breath. Apparently teacher was suspected to be a drunk as his physical attitude was evident.*

Focal group interviews with pupils from the classes that were observed were conducted after the lesson. During the interview they were encouraged to discuss to what extent they felt they had learned something during the observed lesson. Of these, 15 focal groups were able offer an opinion. Eight groups agreed that they had understood the lesson and responses from a further 3 showed there was at least some understanding of the lesson which had taken place. Four groups indicated that they were happy with the lesson because they were able to answer the teachers' questions correctly. Table 8.9 (in annexes 8D) shows evidence of learning from the observers' perspective using the classroom observation instruction and then the perspective on learning from the focal group interviews with children; Table 8.9 shows the classroom observation summary of evidence of teacher assessment in Jirapa district.

**Table 8.9: Summary Evidence from Classroom Observations and FGDs with Pupils to Illustrate Levels of Learning in Upper West Region**

		Evidence From Classroom Observations					Totals	Evidence From Pupil Group Interviews		
		No Evidence Of Learning	Low Learning	Some Learning	Learning	High Learning		Correct Answers	Understood	Some Understanding
Jirapa	Urban	0	1	0	4	0	5	0	3	0
Jirapa	Rural	3	1	2	3	1	10	2	3	0
Lawra	Urban	0	0	2	3	0	5	1	2	0
Lawra	Rural	2	0	4	2	1	9	1	0	3
Totals		5	2	8	8	2	29	4	8	3
Jirapa	High	1	2	1	1	1	6	1	1	0
Jirapa	Low	1	0	1	4	0	6	0	3	0
Lawra	High	1	0	2	2	0	5	1	1	2
Lawra	Low	1	0	2	2	1	6	0	1	0
Totals		4	2	6	9	2	23	2	6	2
Jirapa	RC	2	2	2	4	0	10	1	4	0
Jirapa	DA	1	0	0	3	1	5	1	2	0
Lawra	RC	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	1	0
Lawra	DA	2	0	6	3	1	12	1	1	3
Totals		5	2	8	12	2	29	4	8	3
Jirapa	Trained	1	2	0	7	1	11	1	5	0

		Evidence From Classroom Observations					Totals	Evidence From Pupil Group Interviews		
		No Evidence Of Learning	Low Learning	Some Learning	Learning	High Learning		Correct Answers	Understood	Some Understanding
Jirapa	Pupil teacher	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	0
Jirapa	CVT	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
Lawra	Trained	1	0	6	4	1	12	2	2	1
Lawra	Pupil teacher	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Lawra	CVT	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
Totals		5	2	8	9	2	29	4	8	3
	English Reading	2	1	3	2	1	9	0	0	0
	Dagaare Reading	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
	Ghanaian Language Reading	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Totals		4	1	3	3	1	12	0	0	0

(Source: classroom observation and FGD with pupils, TENI field research) (See appendices 2A -2 G for district and community type evidence of learning in the Upper West region).

### 8.3.3 Levels of learning in Northern Region

In West Mamprusi the classroom observation reports show very few schools where some amount of learning was said to have taken place. In rural Mamprusi in 5 out of 8 schools observers noted that there was little or some amount of learning. There was only one school where the amount of learning was described as high. In contrast in urban West Mamprusi in one school learning was said not to have taken place while in two observers were not sure whether learning had taken place or not and another two very little learning was said to have taken place. Generally, the level of learning in both urban and rural West Mamprusi was low as is illustrated by the evidence in the following table.

**Table 8.10: Classroom Observation Levels of learning in West Mamprusi District**

School	Rural WMD	School	Rural WMD
	Overall Assessment		Overall Assessment
Manga Primary School	The teacher was assessing the students' level of learning through questions and answers. If a pupil was not putting up their hands for a few questions then the teacher would ask the pupils to answer the question. They all answered. If a pupil got the answer wrong, he would ask the class if the pupil was right or wrong, before getting another pupil to come up with an	Wale Wale B2 Primary School	She did by asking pupils to identify prepositions in sentences she had written on the board. At the end of the lesson, the children were able to identify some of the prepositions but not all. Minimum learning took place

School	Rural WMD	School	Rural WMD
	<b>Overall Assessment</b>		<b>Overall Assessment</b>
	answer. At the end of the lesson, he asked pupils what was the objective of the lesson and what they had learned. Some learning		
Manga Primary School	Teacher assessed pupils' level of learning by asking them to re-explore what was either said by him or other students. He identified the slow learners and emphasised on them to repeat what was defined and asked them whether they could remember. Afterwards, they had high level of learning. He posed verbal questions to them and also assigned them after the lesson. High level learning	Wale Wale B2 Primary School	Teacher assessed the pupils' level of understanding by giving assignment in the form of dictation. She also made some of the pupils read in class to determine their level of understanding in class. Little learning
Zori Primary School	He asked children questions and he also gave them exercises after the lesson. Not sure of learning	Ngbaripe Islam Primary School	Teacher gave questions to the children during and after the lesson. She gave the children home work. Not sure learning took place
Zori Primary School	Students were called to come to the board to demonstrate and allow their colleagues to judge. Some learning	Ngbaripe Islam Primary School	
Zori JHS	The teacher asked questions at the process of tackling and students gave answers. At the end of the lesson, students were given an exercise and later on sent it for marking some learning	Ngbaripe Islam Primary School	Teacher forcefully made children to attempt answering questions. "I will call those of you hiding" she said. Teacher was not interactive or child centred. It was obvious that she was faking a friendly face but did not take her time to see if children understood or not. Not sure of learning
Ninsali Primary School	Teacher gives homework and class exercises and marks them. He also assesses children by asking them verbal questions during the lesson. Also by giving children test to see the number who are able to do well and those who fail. The reasoning capacity of children in class will also determine the knowledge level. Little or no learning	Manga BJHS	Teacher tried to assess pupils' level of understanding by posing some few questions to the class. Only five students had the chance to attempt answering verbally. Teacher was 40 minutes late to class and so he could not assess them very well even after the class. He attempted to assign them when they rang the bell for break and so pupils were in a hurry to go out. No learning.
Bormanga Primary School	Teacher did not give any class work. The only assessment of pupils' level of learning was verbal questioning and answers. Some learning		
Kupiel JHS	Questions were posed by the teacher to assess their understanding. Also an assignment was given in order to assess their level of knowledge. some learning		

Table 8.11 presents the evidence of learning based on the language of instruction and the focus group discussions with pupils. The evidence from the classroom observation was triangulated with the medium of instruction and FGD with pupils and the result was not different. In Zori Community school the FGD confirmed that because teachers mostly taught in English the level of learning was low. Similarly the all English lessons had limited amounts of learning as compared to the sole use of Ghanaian language or a combination of English and the local language.

**Table 8.11: Evidence of learning from Medium of instruction and FGD with children in West Mamprusi District**

<b>School/Village</b>	<b>Classroom: Medium of instruction</b>	<b>FGD with Children</b>
Zori Community/School (Rural WMD)	The teacher started with only English and that made the class inactive. The students were not participating because they could not follow the lesson. After sometime, the teacher introduced Ghanaian language. At this point the class became active and students were contributing.	“Sometimes teacher teach in English which is difficult for us to understand” P6 “Most of the teachers speak English in the class but most of us do not understand very well. Sometimes they speak the local language but it is rare” JHS 2
Manga Primary School (Rural WMD)	The lesson was conducted in English; pupils appear to have a good understanding of English. The teacher then used Mampruli to explain what had been said in English and asked the pupils to show comprehension again in Mampruli. Teacher swapped back and forth between English and Mampruli. Majority of the lesson and explanation was in Mampruli. P4	“The teacher teach in English and then explains himself in Mampruli for us to understand” p4
Wurshie B primary school (Urban, WMD)	The language of instruction was mainly English; she however tried to explain some key words in the local language for children to understand. Generally more than half of children in class seemed to understand the English and were able to follow the teacher throughout the lesson. (p2)	Teacher teaches in both English and Mamprulie. This helps us to understand better” P2
Nuri-Islam primary sch (Urban WMD)	The lesson was conducted in Ghanaian language and on a few occasions the teacher used English to explain to children. Teacher was very practical in the classroom.	We understand clearly what the teacher meant through the use of the local language” P3

(Source: classroom observation and FGD with pupils, TENI field research)

Annex 8D shows evidence of levels of learning from classroom observation overall assessment of learning and table 8.11 shows the evidence of learning from both the language of instruction and focus group discussions with students from East Mamprusi District.

The evidence in East Mamprusi mirrors that in West Mamprusi. Generally, there were few schools with “high” levels of learning. FGD confirms that the language of instruction was a key factor in determining pupils’ level of understanding and the amount of learning that takes place. In the East Mamprusi district, research team observed a high level of L1 usage in rural schools

compared to urban schools. Four classrooms used a mixed language approach with the majority of the lesson conducted in local language. 2 classrooms used entirely the local language throughout the lesson. While in urban East Mamprusi, 2 classrooms used a mixed language approach (mother tongue and English) and remaining 3 teachers used the English language. These teachers continued to teach without considering whether the pupils understood what they were teaching and hence did not see the need to translate to pupils. This led to very poor participation and understanding. Pupils in focal groups complained that they had not understood the lessons in these classrooms (see Annex 8D for the East Mamprusi levels of learning evidence).

**Table 8.12: Evidence of learning from Medium of instruction and FGD with children in East Mamprusi District**

School/Village	Classroom Observation	FGD with Children
Nintendo Primary school (Rural EMD) P3	The pupils recited the passage in English over and over. The teacher did not explain any words to the pupils. The teacher called pupils to come and read. The instructions were in Mampruli from time to time though most of the pupils did not understand.	Yes, because most of us do not understand English, the teacher teaches in our language to make us understand.
Nintendo Primary school (Rural EMD) P6	At most times, the teacher used English in the class and used the local language occasionally to explain meaning of some expressions. The children also spoke English back to the teacher and seemed so happy with that. However, some few inappropriate expressions like "listen attentively, if not you won't find it easy with me", "if you say this in Accra, they will just burn you into ashes". These were the kind of threats the teacher gave to some students when they made mistakes in the class.	Some of us speak Bimoba, Bissa and Mampruli. But our teachers speak English to us in school
Bamahu JHS (Gh Language) (Rural EMD)	The teacher taught in three languages, Da, Mampruli and English. He taught the lesson in Da. He did the explaining in either Mampruli or in English. He used simple language for the students to follow and contribute. Students also tried to speak Da during the lesson even though they speak Mampruli at home.	No, we speak Mampruli at home but we are taught in English or Da at school. We don't have much problem expect those (Konkomba) who do not understand Mampruli.
Bunkuma Primary (Maths) (Rural EMD)	The teacher used English to deliver his lessons but has to mix it with the local language for the children to understand in working the fraction. Almost the whole class understood what he taught and got involved. (P5 and 6)	The teacher teaches in English but he explains to us in Mamprulie to enable us understand very well. The language of instruction is English. The teachers do explain things in the Mampruli. If teacher uses only English it is a big problem for us because we don't understand" (FGD was conducted solely in Mampruli)

(Source: classroom observation, FGD with pupils, TENI field research)

## 8.4 Promoting and inhibiting factors in relation to quality learning

In the three northern regions the study found several factors inhibiting effective classroom learning. Besides the teacher centred dominant pedagogy, which did not actively engage learners, most learners lacked the basic teaching and learning resources such as exercise books, pens and pencils. Most pupils were simply passive listeners to the teacher's talk. The teachers themselves came to class ill prepared to teach. Many taught without preparing or even referring to the teaching lesson notes. They also lacked teacher resources such as syllabi and reference textbooks posters and other learning materials for their classrooms to come alive; these basic resources were also needed across the subject areas in order to help them adequately prepare for lessons. In some schools children were not only crowded but also lacked seating and writing places. Another factor found to inhibit learning was the high rates of teacher absenteeism and the impact this had on destabilizing classroom learning and pupil achievement. Teacher punctuality and regularity were also quite problematic which had a devastating impact on children's notions of a "responsible teacher". Most teachers did not reside in the school communities but commuted long distances to school and arrived late and tired to do any effective classroom lessons that were teacher and pupil engaging.

The quality of teaching and learning was worsened by teachers' misuse of instructional hours. As a result of the lack of pupils' textbooks, teachers' use of instruction time copying long passages on the board before the actual lesson started. Sometimes teachers deprived pupils of their break time resulting in most cases misuse of the break time that was postponed. Teacher output of work also inhibits effective classroom learning. Teacher assessment and assignment were often reduced to oral exercises that did not engage all pupils' faculties for learning. Therefore children who best learn by doing were thereby isolated and ignored. Finally lesson and exercises which were given were rarely marked often demoralizing the students and parents who were keeping an eye on the teachers output. Yet, another inhibiting factor is hunger. FGD with teachers and pupils revealed that most children come to school unfed. By the second break most pupils lose concentration and the teachers' talking strategy no longer worked with them as their attention was focused on the food being prepared in the school kitchen especially in schools with school feeding programme.

Evidence from across Ghana suggests when parents know the degree to which their children are performing in the school this can have an impact on the efforts and demand they make for quality education (Casely-Hayford, et al. 2010). The Link Community Development Evaluation found that where SMC's and parents are given the opportunity to learn about the results of their children's progress in the core subject areas this can stimulate change in the school through usage of the School performance appraisal process. In this process parents and teachers sit down to discuss the situation of children at the school and see how best both sides can support child learning in the classroom. The evidence from this chapter suggests there is a significant breakdown in the teachers' ability to assess children's learning in the classroom and this has had a ripple effect on the parents' ability to assess the child's learning due to the fact that very few exercises are available on a regular basis for the parents to assess. Performance monitoring tests appear to be very important mechanisms along with SPAMs in order to ensure that teachers are held accountable for their work and the learning process of the child. The next chapter will

therefore look at the impact this was having in the TENI and Non-TENI districts in which in some cases PMT's were done and varying degrees of SPAM.

Another key finding from the report suggests that all the resources are available to make learning environment for children yet the management systems are needed to ensure that vital resources such as the capitation grant, free school uniforms and school feeding are properly used to ensure learning takes place. The study found that large numbers of children were still without the basic needs such as exercise books, pens and pencils which could have been catered for by the capitation grant support.

## Chapter 9.0 Community Demand and Support for Quality Education

Global literature suggests that community demand and support is seen as a way to increase resources and improve accountability of schools that serve their communities (CREATE, 2011). Community demand for and participation in quality education often ensures that education managers are cost effective in their use of resources and that their activities and actions are more responsive to the local need of communities. The Education for All Global Monitoring report on Quality places the community at the centre of the demand process in order to ensure that systems of accountability at the school, district and national levels are able to respond to the necessary changes to bring about quality education (UNESCO, 2010). The quality of education study looked carefully at the degree in which communities were engaged in supporting education quality and their experience in advocating for improved quality. Key areas of investigation included exploring parental perspectives on the degree to which children were learning at the school, the level of quality of education, understanding their approach to holding teachers and head teachers accountable for the delivery of quality education, and finally looking at factors which ensure communities are able to support quality education across different types of communities. Three key sub questions were asked from the study:

- *How can we create/generate demand for improved education quality, learning outcomes and performance among marginalized and disadvantaged communities and children?*
- *What are the most important roles, practices and strategies at school/community level for improving education quality and inclusiveness (i.e. retention, transition and performance) among disadvantaged and marginalized children in Ghana (i.e. girls and disabled)?*
- *What good practices ensure community participation in improving quality and inclusiveness in basic education in Ghana?*

The Community score card was used to capture the opinions of key stakeholders in the community regarding the performance of the school, the degree of quality education being offered and the challenges which were being faced in the delivery of quality education. Focal group interviews with women's groups, chiefs, elders, SMC's and others were used to solicit the views of key stakeholders engaged in quality education. Home visits to some selected households in which SEN children, girls who had dropped out and other vulnerable children in the community were visited in order to also conduct the score card and interview the family members in the community. The results of these research events are captured in this chapter and the annex 9 which is attached. The analysis also takes into account the urban/rural dichotomy, the type of school (DA/RC/EA), the performance ranking of the school (High or Low performing), and whether the child's school was in a TENI or Non-TENI district.

Key findings across the three northern regions reveal that parents were willing, and actively participating "doing their best" to support teaching and learning processes in their schools but they were still receiving sub-standard services. Communities were supporting the gaps in trained teachers at their schools by employing community based teachers, paying them small stipends

(“Soap Money”) and ensuring that “community based volunteer” teachers were always present in the school even if the trained teachers were absent.

Findings from the research revealed that communities were highly active and engaged in several forms of school support activities such as building kitchens, school blocks and providing classroom furniture to ensure that teachers deliver quality education in schools. Communities were attempting to send most of their children to school and children themselves were also very keen to attend school despite high levels of extreme poverty in their communities; for instance in the Northern region where School for Life had been present a large number of School for Life graduates were found attending school at the upper primary level. Girls that were also working as “Kayayoo” during the July and August break times would also return to attend school in September and were struggling to continue to JHS through their own financial support. The research revealed that the communities and children in the Northern Region were ready to learn and desperate to see their children escape poverty through the opportunity of a quality education.

Studies in Ghana under the RECOUP project suggest that communities were well aware of the fact that education was one direct route out of poverty particularly if the child attained SHS or beyond. Public awareness has helped ensure that communities are committed to sending their children to school and devote large proportion of their income despite the high levels of poverty in order to educate their children. Communities in the study area also revealed that they were not seeing the returns from this investment and were quite worried that their children were suffering due to the poor quality of education being offered. Focal group interviews with SMC’s, PTA’s, parents and chiefs revealed that several communities particularly those in the rural areas of the study feared speaking out about the problems they were confronting with the schools in their communities and did not know where to send their complaints since the District Education offices had not been responsive to their demands for better quality education.

The vast majority of communities interviewed were unhappy with the performance of their teachers but were not able to complain due to the fear that “trained teachers would not be sent again to their communities if they complained and that the school might be closed down.” Experiences by some communities were that when they complained to the authorities such as the District Education offices they would be told that “they may not be able to receive any more trained teachers if they continued to report cases of non-performance teachers and in a few communities this led to the transfer of trained teachers from their schools.

Community score card findings suggest that parents in the Upper West were deeply concerned with teacher motivation in order to maximise performance compared to the views of parents from the Northern Region where it was lowest. On the average, rural parents were more concerned about teacher motivation than the urban. The level of motivation given to teachers by parents and other community members was found to be highest in the Upper West Region and among rural parents compared to urban parents across all districts. Because rural parents were more afraid of losing their teachers, they tended to give more attention and support to make them stay in the community.

The Communities’ overall assessment of whether children were learning or not in school has been demonstrated in several ways across the six districts, the overriding indicator by most

communities was the use of the BECE results. The BECE results were the most widely visible measure of school and pupil achievement which was accessible to parents. Unfortunately parents would have to wait at least nine years before they would receive the BECE results on their own wards...which could result in limited options for their children if they did not do well, and/or repetition of JHS. The BECE results were also a general measure of the community on the quality of education and the effectiveness of the teaching force at the JHS level.

Parents explained that they also used the children's exercise books to track the level of learning; this was popular among illiterate parents experiencing difficulties evaluating their children's performance especially at the primary school level. A few communities, mostly within the TENI districts had been educated on what to look out for in pupil's exercise books especially when in recent times most teachers failed to provide report cards and examination papers. Parents were trained by the PTA/SMC/NGO to refer the symbol "√" as good performance, and "0" or 'X' mark as poor performance. There were other modes by which parents used to determine the performance of their children in school. These included observing children if they bring textbooks or exercise books home to read, if pupils are able to speak English and read letters or notes for parents, and when children are promoted from one class level to the next.

Across all the regions, one of the most obvious indicators mentioned by parents as to whether children were learning in school or not was based on the presence and pattern of attendance of the trained teachers in the school. Focal Group interviews with parents suggest that the key factor in their assessment of the schools quality was based on the head teacher and trained teachers' regular attendance at the school; this was the primary marker of good school quality. Unfortunately this marker was rarely attained in district assembly rural primary schools across the three northern regions.

Communities' perception of quality education largely influenced their level of demand for schooling. Findings from FGD with parents and community members based on the community score card method reveals that there was a high level of dissatisfaction among parents on the quality of education delivery across the three regions. The situation was more pronounced in the Northern and Upper West Regions where only 17% and 19% of parents thought there was a high quality of education being delivered in their schools with over 80% of parents saying that the school was of very poor quality. In the Upper East Region, 42% of parents/community members said there was a high level of quality education being delivery.

Across all districts and regions, it appeared that rural parents were the most dissatisfied with the quality of education when compared to urban parents. This perception of quality education delivery was highly influenced by two visible factors: the presence of textbooks and the presence of the trained teachers. Parents and community members also rated the quality of education provided by their schools in terms of the presence of government intervention policies such as the provision of free uniforms, exercise books, food and other facilities. The highest perception of the positive impact of this was in the Upper East Region with a rate of 79.5% among parents who perceived that the presence of such government policies meant there was quality education. The percentage was also relatively high in the Northern Region with 54% of parents appreciating the presence of these programmes, while the Upper West Region had 37.5%. It is important to

note however that the majority of parents who were satisfied with these government programmes were from urban communities.

Focal group interviews with parents suggest that community demand and support for quality education related to a number of issues and some parental responsibilities. Parents were keenly aware that they first of all have a role to play in ensuring that their children have access to quality education. Parents interviewed understood that their role was to ensure that children attend school each day and that they must provide all their basic school needs such as food, uniforms, pens, pencils and exercise books to their wards. They also added that they (as parents) should ensure the good health of their children in order to enable them to attend school each day. A few parents who were forthright in admitting that their children were unable to attend school each day and blamed the situation on poverty; some also had withdrawn their children or the child had dropped out due to the frequent failure and repetition of their children to move to higher levels of education which discouraged them from keeping their children in school.

Access to quality education by Special Education Needs (SEN) children was a key focus in the Quality of Education research study. Interviews with parents, particularly parents with special needs children revealed that parents were still not schooling their SEN children and this phenomenon was high among the communities across the north especially in the rural areas. The non schooling of SEN children was also closely linked with the expensive nature of educating SEN children in terms of the provision of the necessary aids (wheeled chairs, etc), unsuitable nature of the mainstream school system and the lack of attention for SEN children by teachers and other pupils. Across the three regions, 17%, 15% and 12.5% for Northern, Upper East and Upper West (respectively) parents said they were not in support of sending SEN children to attend school because of the burden it places on both the child and the parents.

Findings from discussions with parents/community revealed that key community barriers and inhibitors to quality education related mainly to the lack of commitment by teachers and community members themselves. Most parents interviewed also recognized the fact that teachers were not doing their work and there was very little they felt they could do about it. There have been several attempts by parents to report persistent absenteeism, and lateness by teachers to the district offices but in the end no action was taken against them. FGD's with SMC's, women's groups and PTA's revealed that community members and community leaders felt the situation had become so bad that there was little they could do and that they as parents/communities were helpless on the situation of teachers. Parents reported in interviews being continuously threatened by teachers putting them in a state of "fear and apprehension" even in just visiting the school. A clear case in point is the West Mamprusi district where teachers threaten that they will leave the school and community if parents complain about their absenteeism, lateness or non-attendance. Several other examples of women who would visit the schools and then not be spoken to or ignored by the teachers; some parents reported saying statements such as who would remark "who are you to come here". Teachers in several schools were letting parents know that they were "illiterates" and "too known to be coming to the school"<sup>41</sup> to monitor the activities of the teachers. There was a culture of silence developing between the teaching force and the parents who wanted to seek answers on the behaviour and poor conduct of some teachers

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<sup>41</sup> "Being too known" means that the person is "acting as if they can do something" but is considered incapable capable of carrying out the monitoring exercise due to their social status or level of literacy yet still they carry it out.

at their schools but facing a challenge in finding a channel for justice. In one focal group interview with the SMC, the parents asked “are our teachers allowed to pull the dresses of our girls down.” Parents were asking questions which revealed their level of helplessness and lack of direction. Some chiefs who were attending the meetings conducted by the community with the research team, warned the community members “not to speak too much and then have to face the consequences” (SMC meeting, Upper West Region)

Another key finding emerging as a barrier to quality education which was evident in the Upper West and Northern Regions was the phenomenon of teachers taking pupils to their farms. Parents also complained that teachers were constantly using pupils as “labourers” on their farm at the expense of important instructional time in the classroom. Several parents remarked that they are beginning to complain and wonder if they should take their children to help them on their farms instead of leaving them to go the teachers’ farm and not learn at the end of the day. Some parents would be very upset during focal group interviews explaining that if their children went to school and none of the teachers came on a certain day... the children would be beaten for not having come home to help them on their farms. Other barriers relate to the incidence of video shows and cinemas in communities especially at night. A few communities together with their chiefs and elders had succeeded in placing a ban on video shows in their communities. This however still persists in several other communities especially in the West Mamprusi district.

## **9.1 The Community Assessment of children’s learning**

Focal group discussions across all three northern regions with SMC/PTA and parents suggest that there is very little learning going on in primary classrooms in northern Ghana. This is closely linked to the results of BECE and placements of pupils in SHS across the country. Common ways parents and communities assess the learning of their children according to FGD with SMC/PTA include whether children are promoted to the next class each year, whether children can read basic literature such as insurance /hospital cards, ability to speak English and ability to transition from Primary to JHS and then to SHS. In general parents argued that there was a total lack of quality especially in rural areas and they attributed this to lack of commitment by teachers, high rates of teacher absenteeism, and the inability of head teachers and Circuit supervisors to give out any sanctions to non performing/recalcitrant teachers. Parents across the regions feel powerless to take any action against teachers and lamented on the fact that their children were suffering since they were continually being repeated and unable to reach desirable levels in education as a result of poor teaching at the school. Interviews with parents suggest that the situation was dire particularly since poor parents were investing very important household resources in poor quality learning environments. The outcomes were likely to be devastating for both the children and families (Casely-Hayford, 2000; 2010).

### **9.1.1 Northern Region**

Across the nine schools visited in the West Mamprusi district, with the exception of Manga DA primary school, a high performing school, parents from the rest of schools appeared unsatisfied with the learning outcomes of their children. As mentioned these learning outcomes were often in the form of testing children on their ability to read simple instructions, speak English and show some work in their exercise books. Parents from Manga Primary school pointed to the

fact that they receive good reports from both teachers and their pupils. Manga was a unique case in which the Head teacher was exceptional in managing his teaching force to perform, maintaining a high standard of discipline and quality education. Parents said that they were very satisfied with the performance of the Manga School which was manifested in the BECE pass rates achieved over the last few years. *“They are learning very well. This is because we receive good reports from children and teachers. Those who get to JHS also pass well and get placement to SHS (FGD with SMC/PTA, Manga D/A Primary School, WMD).”* However there was not always a high level of satisfaction among parents regarding their children’s learning even among high performing schools. For instance at Wurshie B primary and Ninsali primary schools which are both high performing according to PMT results, these schools were not performing to the parents’ satisfaction. This analysis is based on focused group discussion with SMC/PTA in the West Mamprusi district. The following are voices of parents and SMC members from the West Mamprusi District related to the performance of their schools and wards.

*“We are illiterates; we cannot tell whether our children are doing well or not. The teaching and learning are poor. There is no learning going on. Both teachers and parents and pupils do not take serious interest in the education”. (FGD with SMC/PTA, Zori D/A Primary School, WMD).*

*“We don't blame the teachers at all; the big problem is from us the parents, because we encourage our girls to go for kayaye to bring money home, especially the mothers. We pull them out of school for non-performance”. (FGD with SMC/PTA, Ninsali D/A Primary School, WMD).*

*“Parents visit the schools to check teaching and learning in school. Others think they are not learning since there are no teachers in the school”. (FGD with SMC/PTA, Bormanga D/A Primary School, WMD).*

*“There is a reduction in performance - evidence is this year’s BECE results”. (FGD with SMC/PTA, Kupiel JHS School, WMD).*

The situation in the **East Mamprusi district** was not much different. Parents were far more negative and lamented over the poor teaching and learning going on in the district. In East Mamprusi, three of the four SMC’s interviewed in rural schools stated that they were not happy with the performance of their school. Across the urban schools in the district, parents appeared to be more satisfied with school performance compared to rural schools. Parents were particularly concerned and alarmed at the increasing rates of indiscipline among teachers manifested in high rates of teacher absenteeism and poor performance in the BECE results. None of the sample schools visited across East and West Mamprusi had their full teaching force in place for teaching at the time the school opened. The following are voices from parents during FGD with SMC/PTA;

*“That is what is killing us in this community. We only see children coming to school and teachers sometimes come to school or absent themselves from school”. (FGD with SMC/PTA, Zangu D/A Primary School, EMD)*

*“They are not learning well. Girls are doing worse because they perform poorly. They face many challenges and still they are not discipline. They (girls) like attending video shows and cinema a lot” (FGD with SMC/PTA, Bamahu D/A JHS, EMD)*

*“We the PTA/SMC visit the school to see how they teach. The teachers too give exercise*

*to our children both at school and at home. We also provide our children the books to learn, especially the exercise book and textbooks. Children bring us test papers marked by teachers”. (FGD with SMC/PTA, Bunkuma D/A Primary School, EMD)*

*“We are not too sure of what they are learning. This year’s BECE results only one girl got placement and that girl has been married off by her parents”. (FGD with SMC/PTA, Wuyela E/A JHS, EMD)*

The following table presents the score card data from East and West Mamprusi related to the parents knowledge of the children’s learning across high and low performing schools. The Score card results reveal that 90% of parents in East Mamprusi “sometimes knew” whether the children were learning. A very small proportion (10%) said they always know. 25% of parents in low performing schools in the West Mamprusi district said they “never” know how their children are doing in school.

When considering the high and low performing schools, 16.7% of low performing schools in East Mamprusi said their children are “always” learning compared to 25% in the West Mamprusi district. For high performing schools, 0% of parents in the East Mamprusi said their children were always learning in school compared to 33.3% in the West Mamprusi district. This results show that parents in the TENI district (West Mamprusi) are more aware of their children learning status in school and are likely to take action compared to parents in East Mamprusi (Non TENI) who are less aware of their children’s status of learning in school. This awareness among TENI parents is likely a result of sensitization that has been on-going in the district through the TENI project.

**Table 9.1: Parents Knowledge of children’s learning in High/Low Performing schools (Northern)**

Name of district				High or Low			Total
				TENI/ Non- TENI	High	Low	
EAST MAMPRUSI	Do you know if your child is learning in school?	Sometimes	Count		4	5	9
			% within High or Low		100.0%	83.3%	90.0%
		Always	Count		0	1	1
			% within High or Low		.0%	16.7%	10.0%
	Total	Count		4	6	10	
		% within High or Low		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
WEST MAMPRUSI	Do you know if your child is learning in school?	Never	Count	0	0	1	1
			% within High or Low	.0%	.0%	25.0%	7.1%
		Sometimes	Count	1	6	2	9
			% within High or Low	100.0%	66.7%	50.0%	64.3%
		Always	Count	0	3	1	4
			% within High or Low	.0%	33.3%	25.0 %	28.6%
	Total	Count	1	9	4	14	
		% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

(Source: TENI field survey, 2012)

Home learning is a fundamental practice that contributes to a pupil’s performance at school. Readiness to learn is promoted when children are exposed to conditions that enable them to learn

at home before and during the normal schooling hours. In this study, the community and parental assessment of child readiness to learn independently at home were measured by comparing observations of children based on their access to reading materials at home by parents. Table 9.2 below represent parents' perceptions of children's access to reading materials for home learning.

**Table 9.2: Children's access to school materials for home learning from High/Low performing schools (Northern)**

Name of district				High or Low			Total
				Non-TENI	High	Low	
EAST MAMPRUSI	Does your child ever bring textbooks or reading books home to study?	Never	Count		0	1	1
			% within High or Low		.0%	16.7%	10.0%
		Sometimes	Count		4	4	8
			% within High or Low		100.0%	66.7%	80.0%
		Do not know	Count		0	1	1
			% within High or Low		.0%	16.7%	10.0%
	Total		Count		4	6	10
			% within High or Low		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
WEST MAMPRUSI	Does your child ever bring textbooks or reading books home to study?	Never	Count	0	2	1	3
			% within High or Low	.0%	22.2%	25.0%	21.4%
		Sometimes	Count	1	7	3	11
			% within High or Low	100.0%	77.8%	75.0%	78.6%
	Total		Count	1	9	4	14
			% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: TENI field survey, 2012)

The table above reveals that school reading material accessibility was better for pupils in the East Mamprusi district, where only 10% have never observed a child with the materials, compared to the West Mamprusi District which was over 21%. The table above further confirms that both High and Low performing schools in the West Mamprusi district had reading material accessibility problems with 22.2% and 25% of parents never seeing their children with reading materials at home. Generally however, 80% of the East and 78.6% of West Mamprusi respondents sometimes saw their children with reading materials from the schools. This lack of reading material availability for children at the home has a negative impact on the development of children's reading skills (Abadzi, 2006).

Parents also reported in the score card exercise on the value of government assistance programmes and interventions (free exercise books, school uniforms, school feeding) in helping keep children in school. The table below indicates that apart from both rural and urban respondents agreeing that the assistance "sometimes or always" helped in child retention in school, the choice of the *always* response option was higher in East Mamprusi district for both rural and urban areas. While in the West Mamprusi district, the rural respondents scored 55.6%, it was 20% for the urban schools. Accordingly it may be concluded that Government social interventions in deprived areas are known to be improving child retention in schools among the rural communities in particular but urban areas as well.

**Table 9.3: The Influence of government assistance on child retention in school (Northern)**

Name of district				U/R/SU		Total
				RURAL	URBAN	
EAST MAMPRUSI	Do government policies e.g. free uniforms, free exercise books help keep the children at school?	Sometimes	Count	2	1	3
			% within U/R/SU	28.6%	33.3%	30.0%
		Always	Count	5	2	7
			% within U/R/SU	71.4%	66.7%	70.0%
	Total	Count	7	3	10	
		% within U/R/SU	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
WEST MAMPRUSI	Do government policies e.g. free uniforms, free exercise books help keep the children at school?	Sometimes	Count	4	4	8
			% within U/R/SU	44.4%	80.0%	57.1%
		Always	Count	5	1	6
			% within U/R/SU	55.6%	20.0%	42.9%
	Total	Count	9	5	14	
		% within U/R/SU	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

### 9.1.2 Upper East Region

Findings from the Upper East Region FGDs with SMC/PTAs revealed that parents have difficulties evaluating their children's performance since most of them have no education themselves and often feel shy to approach teachers to ask how their children are doing. The common ways that parents assess children's learning include asking the children about their learning in school, asking children to read from their exercise books, by observing their exercise books using a process they have learnt through SPAMS by counting "x" and "√" ("x" for wrong and "√" for correct) marks to see how well the child has done in school. In a few families where they are lucky to have an educated person in the house; they often supervise or support the younger children. According to the community scorecard with parents, a few schools/teachers send the report cards for the children to show to parents at home, but this process was very rare and no pattern could be seen in urban/rural or high/low performing schools in the region. Other ways mentioned by parents in the Upper East Region as ways of assessing children learning is to see if they ever bring homework. The following are voices from FGD with parents in the Talensi – Nabdam District (TENI).

*"We are able to assess that children are learning by checking their exercise books every day when they come back from school. We know that "x" stands for wrong and "√" for correct. We also do that by looking through their test papers as well as termly report cards." (FGD PTA/SMC Kpatuya, Urban, TND)*

*"Exam papers, homework and when children pass exams and move to a next level we know the teachers have taught and pupils have learnt." (FGD SMC/PTA Zuaringo, rural, TND)*

*"Based on exercise books or home work inspected. Because parents are illiterates they use the symbol 'O' or 'X' to identify bad performance and '√' to show good performance.*

*Some girls pass very well even to SHS others are not serious. Those who get pregnant drop-out.” (FGD SMC/PTA Kulenga, urban, TND)*

*“Parents stated that their illiteracy prevented them from assessing performance of their children.” (Scorecard, Kulenga, Urban, TND)*

*“They check their exercise every day when they come from school. If their performance is not good, the parents go to school to find out why the children are not learning.” (Scorecard at Ayimpoka, Rural low-performing school.*

There were similar ways mentioned by parents through FGD in the Bongo District (Non - TENI) used for assessing children’s learning. These included checking the exercise books when the children come home, their examination papers, the school report cards (when available), and going to school to see if the children are present or not. There was no significant difference seen between rural and urban, or high and low performing schools across the Upper East. The following are voices from the Bongo District (UE) describing the experience parents have in assessing the quality of education and level of learning among their wards.

*“The children bring home assignment and try to do it before they go to sleep. We are checking their exercise books any time they come home. Regular visits to the school to check on the child presence and performance”. FGD SMC Adakudugu Primary School*

*“The children come home with homework and parents check that children do the homework and then check the mark. Any time the parents are passing, they see the children in the classes with the teachers, but some children are not doing well so maybe they have Special Educational Needs. We (parents) cannot read and write so we cannot tell if they are doing well. Children should be left to learn instead of doing household chores. FGD SMC Lanwana PS*

*“We see the children’s report cards. Also most of the pupils pass the BECE and are able to get placement in schools (SHS). When we look into their books we can see if they are doing well or not. After looking through the books if we feel they are not performing well then we visit the school to enquire from the teachers why that is the case” FGD SMC Adakudugu Girls JHS (High performing School)*

*“Our school does not have adequate teachers and also pupils come home and report that some teachers did not come to school or that they did not learn anything in school”. FGD SMC Gungolgu PS*

*“As Parents we visit the school to know whether our children are in school and also to see whether teachers are teaching them. We look into their books and test papers to see the correct marks in the books and test papers. FGD SMC Gungolgu PS*

According to the community scorecard in the Upper East Region, the common methods used by parents to assess children’s learning included observing children’s reading at home with materials from the school, receiving terminal reports on how they learn in the school, and

whether they were promoted to the next class or to the Junior High School level when they were due for transition. Most parents observed that their children sometimes bring textbooks and other reading materials to the house to learn. In the Bongo District, the community/parent score card results indicate that both DA and RC school parents had higher scores for *sometimes* seeing their children learning at home with materials from the schools while in Talensi-Nabdam the situation existed where about 36% of parents have never seen children with school books for learning at home. Low performing and urban schools in Bongo had a high level of parents admitting that their children bring books home to read. This was the opposite in the Talensi-Nabdam district.

Report cards for pupils have been proven to be one of the most effective way for parents to assess whether children are learning in school or not. Unfortunately only a few teachers and schools visited were filling report cards for pupils. In the Bongo district as many as 69% of DA schools had never received their children's school report cards. At RC schools 50% of parents admitted always receiving report cards from children. In Talensi-Nabdam, most parents have never received reports, while only few communities reported "sometimes or always doing so". Generally, school report cards were issued to pupils more in rural schools than urban schools and favour the High than the Low performing schools. Parents with better access to the report cards knew better about their children's learning than those who did not.

Parents also used the promotion and transition of their children from lower to higher classes and from the primary to the JHS to assess the performance of their children. In the Bongo District, Roman Catholic (RC) school parents saw their children to be learning better than those of the DA schools since more RC children were promoted and transited to the next class and from primary to JHS level than in the DA schools. In the Talensi-Nabdam District on the other hand, only DA schools were represented and parents were satisfied with the promotion of their children at the primary school level, better than their transition to the JHS level. Low performing and rural school parents were more satisfied than high performing and urban parents in Bongo, while high performing and urban school parents were satisfied with child transition in the Talensi-Nabdam District. The major reasons given for the non-transition of children from primary to the JHS were poor performance, some children stopping school and then continuing again, teachers' advice and parental decision.

### **9.1.3 Upper West Region**

According to FGD with SMC/PTA in the Upper West Region, parents appear satisfied with the level of quality in the district given their responses. This was however negating when teams visited classrooms in the district. Notwithstanding a few other schools, mostly Catholic schools appear to be doing very well in terms of performance in the Jirapa District. According to SMC/PTA, common ways of assessing children's learning include observing children read their textbooks at home, children's ability to read letters for parents and other community members and children's ability to be transitioned to the next class without being repeated. In the Jirapa District, eight out of nine schools SMC/PTAs said their children were learning effectively. The following are responses by parents during the FGD with SMC/PTAs in the Jirapa District regarding how they measure their child progress and level of learning at the school.

*"Children read on their own at home after closing. When children are able to read letters for us. We also know children are learning or not using their PMT Results. This year results were very good. The school was second. Teachers and pupils are punctual, they*

*are in school by 7:00 am and in class by 8:00 am”. (FGD with SMC, Sognaayili R/C Primary School)*

*“Learning is effective. The children are doing well. Many children passed the BECE this year (2012)”. (FGD with SMC/PTA, Kuvarpuo R/C JHS).*

*“Children are able to transition to JHS and SHS levels. Girls also do well in the transition process but boys do better than girls. Looking through their exercise and counting the ticks”. (FGD with SMC/PTA, Kuvarpuo RC Primary School)*

*“Check their assignment done at school. Children studying at home. Girls studying after cooking”. (Instrument 438: FGD with SMC/PTA, Safaliba Primary School).*

*“The teachers now available do not work hard. In the recent past most children in our school passed with aggregate 6 and even these encouraged children out of our community to transfer to other schools but now the BECE results are poor”. (FGD with SMC/PTA, Duori J.H.S).*

The Score card results in annex 9C for the Upper West show 20% and 50% of rural and urban parents in the Jirapa district saw that there was a high level of quality education provided in their schools compared to 16.7% and 100% for rural and urban parents in the Lawra district. This meant that there was a belief that urban schools were receiving a higher standard of education compared to the rural areas. The situation was therefore better in the urban areas as 50% and 100% of parents in Jirapa and Lawra districts saw quality education was being provided by the schools “always” compared to 20% in the rural areas.

In the Lawra district, interviews with SMC/PTAs revealed that there was some (low) level of learning going on in the schools although they are not satisfied with the current situation. Parents and community members recounted that over the years there was a high level of repetition rate among pupils due to poor performance. This they said has decreased drastically in recent times as a result of the improvement in teaching and learning in the schools. Some of the parents check the exercise books of their children in order to be able to know if they are learning or not. Below are some of the responses given by parents and SMCs from a number of schools in the Lawra district:

*“For the past years children were not performing but for the past year, children that were repeated are few. We check the children's books although we are illiterates we have learn how correct sign in the exercise books looks like”. (FGD with SMC, Dery D/A Primary School).*

*“Some are learning effectively while others are not. Similarly some girls are learning seriously while others are not serious. We ask them, what they have learnt in school. Some of us inspect their exercises. We also ask them if they have been given homework or not. We do this to draw their attention about our concern for their schooling”. (FGD with SMC, Dery D/A J.H.S).*

*“The literate parents check children exercise books. Parental visits to monitor teacher and pupils performance at school. Terminal report cards given to pupils to send to parents at the end of the term”. (Instrument 502: FGD with SMC, Balangtaa D/A J.H.S).*

*“Parental visit to the school. Examination reports are discussed with parents BECE results. PTA meetings organized thrice in a year, pupils’ performance are reviewed and discussed. When the children speak English in the house and also reading of letters. Also when they are able to write permission letters on their own to the school. Children brought from other communities to the school is an indication that there is quality teaching and learning in the school”. (FGD with SMC, Tuutinli D/A Primary).*

Another method of assessment of children’s learning was by looking at children’s school reports. But this depended on the receipt of the reports by parents of the various school types. In both the Jirapa and Lawra Districts, issuance of school report cards was better for urban parents than the rural, and the results favoured RC school parents more than those of the DA. Urban parents therefore knew more about their children’s learning in school than rural parents. Parents saw the movement of their children from lower to higher classes at primary or JHS levels as being an indicator of how well their children were learning. The results showed that parents of the rural RC schools in the Jirapa District saw more of their children being repeated than those of the rural DA schools, while in the Lawra District, about 33% of participants of the rural DA schools could boast of all their children being promoted to the next class at the end of each year. 50% of the DA school parents in the Jirapa District said all their children were always promoted, their counterparts in the Lawra said the promotion of all their children in a year happened sometimes. Learning was seen to be effective for those who were always promoted according to parental observation. (See Annex 9C)

## **9.2 Communities Perception of the Provision of Quality Education in their Schools.**

The communities’ perception of the quality of education being offered at their school related to score card questions such as “does the school provide good quality education”, “have any of your children been held back from transition to JHS” and the reasons why. Focal Group discussions with parents explored issues related to textbook availability, performance of children in BECE, ability of children to move from one class to the next, and the presence of government social intervention programmes such as the GSFP, and free school uniforms. Focal group discussions with parents and SMC’s also explored the reasons why parents thought the school was of high or poor quality; probing also related to the performance of the head teacher and teachers at the school.

### **9.2.1 Northern Region**

Parents’ perception of whether children are learning or not were manifested in a number of ways: according to PTA/SMCs, promotion and repetition of pupils was the most obvious way both literate and illiterate parents determined whether their children were learning well or not. Parents also spoke of how they tested their child’s ability to read and speak English using practical home bound tests (e.g. reading a fertilizer container, speaking to a visitor in English etc). The promotion of pupils to the next class at the basic school level is an annual process and pupils

who fail to meet certain standards in the overall performance determined by the school authorities are considered to be academically weak and so are not promoted to the next class or are repeated. This is rarely carried out due to the GES policy on automatic promotion yet some schools in the study sample, particularly in the Upper East, were found to “hold back children at a grade level to ensure that they were able to cope at the next class level.

Findings from 7 Focal Group Discussions held with parents (scorecard) across rural and urban West Mamprusi in the Northern Region revealed that only one SMC/PTA (Manga) responded that there was quality of education delivered in their school “always”. The rest of communities/parents said they “sometimes” experienced quality education in their schools. They attributed this to reasons such as inadequate numbers of trained teachers, TLMs and large class sizes. In the East Mamprusi District, all 5 Focal Group discussion with parents suggested that there was a lack of quality education delivery in their schools. “We do not have good teachers. They are just in town but most of them do not come to school regularly. Some of the teachers are drunk. Our biggest problem is just the teachers. Some of the children are not serious but we believe it is because the teachers don't come to school every day” (SMC/PTA Zonzongeli primary school, EMD). The following are voices from SMC/PTA discussions;

*“All passed in the BECE, Children don't roam at night, all the teachers are punctual and serious, Regular PTA/SMC meetings to address pupils problems”. (FGD with SMC/PTAs, Manga D/A Primary School, WMD).*

*“Children are not able to perform very well. Teachers are inadequate. Overcrowded classrooms. Parents not committed in supporting the school”. (FGD with SMC/PTA, Ninsali D/A Primary School, WMD).*

*“We don't have enough teachers, there is no enough classrooms, no textbooks, the few teachers in school are regular and punctual in school but performance is still not good” (FGD with SMC/PTA, Bormanga D/A Primary School, WMD).*

*“The success of previous years has led to increase in class sizes. This has culminated in poor performance as this increase in enrolment was not complemented with increase in teachers and other teaching and learning materials” (FGD with SMC/PTA, Kupiel JHS, WMD)*

*“Teachers sometimes do not show up in school. Teachers are sometimes seen sitting and conversing with each other instead of teaching”. (FGD with SMC/PTA, Zangu D/A Primary School, EMD)*

*“They send them to farms. Teacher absenteeism. Students play because there are no teachers”. (FGD with SMC/PTA, Wuyela E/A JHS, EMD)*

*“Large class size: Too many children in class. Most of our children had placement to SHS”. (FGD with SMC/PTA, WurshieB2 D/A Primary School).*

*“Some of the teachers are not committed. Pupils don't perform due to long sitting to watch TV or attend dances or weddings. Some of the CS don't work to check teachers to be on their toes”. (FGD with SMC/PTA, Ngbaripe Islam E/A Primary School).*

The following section describes the parental observations of the transition of their children from primary to JHS in rural and urban communities in the Northern Region. The Tables 9.4 and 9.5 reveal that there is a high level of dissatisfaction among parents in both rural and urban schools across the two districts in the Northern Region. In the East and West Mamprusi districts, 71% and 66% of parents in rural and urban schools have had their child repeated in the school which was one indicator of their dissatisfaction with the quality of education delivered in their schools. In the West Mamprusi district 88% and 60% of parents said that their children had repeated in school.

**Table 9.4: Parents observations of transition from primary to JHS in rural and urban areas (Northern Region)**

Name of district				U/R/SU		Total
				RURAL	URBAN	
EAST MAMPRUSI	Have any of your children ever been held from moving to JHS?	Yes	Count	5	2	7
			% within U/R/SU	71.4%	66.7%	70.0%
		No	Count	2	1	3
			% within U/R/SU	28.6%	33.3%	30.0%
	Total	Count	7	3	10	
		% within U/R/SU	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
WEST MAMPRUSI	Have any of your children ever been held from moving to JHS?	Yes	Count	8	3	11
			% within U/R/SU	88.9%	60.0%	78.6%
		No	Count	1	2	3
			% within U/R/SU	11.1%	40.0%	21.4%
	Total	Count	9	5	14	
		% within U/R/SU	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

**Table 9.5: Parents Observations of transition from High/Low performing schools**

Name of district				High or Low			Total
				TENI/Non-TENI	High	Low	
EAST MAMPRUSI	Have any of your children ever been held from moving to JHS?	Yes	Count		4	3	7
			% within High or Low		100.0%	50.0%	70.0%
		No	Count		0	3	3
			% within High or Low		.0%	50.0%	30.0%
	Total		Count		4	6	10
			% within High or Low		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
WEST MAMPRUSI	Have any of your children ever been held from moving to JHS?	Yes	Count	1	7	3	11
			% within High or Low	100.0%	77.8%	75.0%	78.6%
		No	Count	0	2	1	3
			% within High or Low	.0%	22.2%	25.0%	21.4%
	Total		Count	1	9	4	14
			% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

Score card findings suggest that there was a high level of repetition among high performing schools compared to low performing schools in the East Mamprusi district. While 100% of parents in high performing schools agreed to have their child repeated, only 50% of parents in low performing schools did. The score card results suggest that 100% of parents from high performing schools agreed to have their children repeat a class level compared to only 77.8% in the West Mamprusi district. Interviews with school heads suggest that in high performing schools, only “good children” were promoted to the next class.

Some of the reasons given for the non-transition of children according to the respondents included poor performance at the primary school level with most pupils struggling to read and write in the English Language, others fell sick during end of year transition examinations, while other parents said they take the advice of teachers to repeat their children because they may not perform well even if they qualify for transition to the JHS. Focal group interviews with children suggest that some children stopped schooling for a period of time and when they return to school they are held back from transiting to the JHS level. Parents participating in the score card exercise also identified poverty on the part of some parents as the reason children have to engage themselves in child labour to cater for their school needs... this also affected their performance. For those who said their children are always promoted, they gave reasons such as good academic performance and adequate provision of their basic school needs.

The research results from the community scorecard in the Northern Region also indicated that the majority of community members and parents did not feel their schools were providing a high quality of education. Table 9.6 below gives a breakdown for high and low performing schools in terms of parents’ perception of the provision of good quality education in their schools. The tables reveal that only 25% and 16.7% parents and community members in high and low performing schools respectively in the East Mamprusi district (Non TENI) saw that there was “always good quality education” provided by their schools. The perception of parents was much worse in the West Mamprusi district with 0% and 25% of parents in high and low performing schools saying that there was always good quality education provided. Generally 20% of all parents in the Non-TENI district saw a good quality of education being provided to their children compared to 14% in the TENI districts<sup>42</sup>.

**Table 9.6: Perceptions on the provision of quality education by Non-TENI/High/Low schools (Northern Region)**

Name of district				High or Low			Total
				TENI/Non-TENI	High	Low	
EAST MAMPRUSI	Does the school provide good quality education.... for all children at the school?	Never	Count		0	1	1
			% within High or Low		.0%	16.7%	10.0%
		Sometimes	Count		3	4	7
			% within High or Low		75.0%	66.7%	70.0%
		Always	Count		1	1	2
			% within High or Low		25.0%	16.7%	20.0%
		Total	Count		4	6	10
			% within High or Low		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
WEST MAMPRUSI	Does the school provide good quality	Never	Count	0	3	0	3

	education.... for all children at the school?		% within High or Low	.0%	33.3%	.0%	21.4%
		Sometimes	Count	1	4	3	8
			% within High or Low	100.0%	44.4%	75.0%	57.1%
		Always	Count	0	2	0	2
			% within High or Low	.0%	22.2%	.0%	14.3%
		Do not know	Count	0	0	1	1
			% within High or Low	.0%	.0%	25.0%	7.1%
	Total		Count	1	9	4	14
			% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

### 9.2.2 Upper East Region

Focal Group Interviews with SMC/PTAs in the Upper East Region revealed that parents were relieved and happy when there was teaching and learning going on in their schools. Parents in high performing (mostly catholic schools) and urban schools were more satisfied with learning than low performing and rural schools. In schools where they appeared satisfied with teaching and learning, they attributed this to increasing numbers of children passing the BECE and the number promoted to SHS. Also parents tended to compare results of their children with different schools. Other indicators of quality teaching and learning according to parents include knowledge of English language (spoken and written), discussions with teachers to find out how children were doing in school, and presence of teachers in school. The following are parental and school management committee member voices from the Upper East Region;

*When teachers are dedicated and committed to their work...there is effective supervision of the teachers by the Head teacher. The class is manageable and teachers have the opportunity of giving more exercises (FGD School management committee, Adakudugu Primary school---high performing school).*

*The teachers are doing well – when children absent themselves the teachers follow up to their homes. Some children could not speak English but now there is a rule in school that Ghanaian language is not allowed so the children are forced to speak English, so learning is going on well. When the children come home we look at their books if there are lots of ticks we know they are doing well but if there are lots of crosses, we know they are not doing well. [What do you do if they are not doing well?] We encourage the children to be serious. Pay a visit to the school and find out from the teacher why the child is not performing well – are they not concentrating or are they not attending school. The school is in our hands we have a responsibility to make sure that it is working well. (FGD School management Committee, Lanwana primary school)*

*Teachers are few (not adequate) coupled with large class sizes so they are not able to talk for all pupils to hear. Pupils are not disciplined. (FGD SMC Gungolgu Primary school)*

Parental perceptions of the quality of education were often judged based on the child's performance and sometimes on teachers' attitudes and behaviour. Most often during focal group discussions when parents were asked whether they were happy with the performance of the teachers/schools, their reply focused on their observations of teaching and learning when they

visited the school to check on whether teaching and learning was taking place. At times the response was about teachers' presence in schools. In communities where the majority of the population was judged as "illiterate" (more often by the teachers themselves), the question arises as to how "illiterate" parents can assess the quality of teacher performance. Focal group discussions revealed that often they were being challenged or ignored by the teachers at the schools they observed since they were monitoring the schools on behalf of the community/SMC and teachers would pass a comment to make them feel that "who are they to be monitoring a school". This social struggle among the "educated" teacher and "uneducated" parent appeared across several schools but was most visible in communities where the teachers were habitually late and uncompromising when requested by parents to attend school more regularly.

Despite the challenges being faced by parents and the school teachers/heads, they continued to monitor the schools. They judged teaching and learning by first looking at the number of teachers present in a class and the level of engagement with pupils in learning interactions; this was their clearest indication of whether or not some level of learning was taking place. Undoubtedly, in the schools where the parents pay regular visits, teacher attendance was better and in some cases the teachers appreciated the parents' interest in their activities.

The score card and focal interview process also explored the availability of textbooks and externally influenced motivational factors to promote child readiness to learn and/or retention in school, through government policies involving the provision of free uniforms, free exercise books and school feeding programmes among others were considered as major indicators for quality education. The results indicated that parents from RC, high performing and urban schools in the Bongo District saw their schools providing a better quality of education as compared to the parents who were sending their children to DA schools.

Parents with children in District Assembly (DA) and rural schools in the Talensi-Nabdam District were satisfied with the quality of education. In Talensi-Nabdam, textbook availability favoured high performing and rural DA schools according to respondent scores. In the Talensi Nabdam district, parents were also not happy with the performance of children. Parents who were sending children to the Roman Catholic, low performing and urban school saw the situation of textbook available as better compared to parents who were sending their children to high performing DA schools in the Bongo District. The following section presents some of the voices of parents/ SMC/PTA members:

*"Learning in the school is not good. The children sometimes score zero at the exams. Ineffective teaching because the teachers are not adequate. There are too many pupil teachers coupled with high enrolment. 60-70 children in a classroom" (Chuchuliga Primary TND)*

*"The parents don't have time for the children. The children sometimes stop on the way and play instead of coming to school. The textbooks are lacking. This year, because the PTA is discussing with the parents, the people started to buy the books for the children. The children are not properly fed, nor at home neither at school, so that influences the quality of learning".(Chuchuliga Primary TND)*

*“Teachers are always in class teaching so we know they are learning. Exam papers, homework and when children pass other text and move to a next level you know the teachers have taught and pupils have learnt”. (Zuaringo Primary TND)*

*“The school does not have adequate textbooks for students to learn. Students are not regular because some of them engaging in mining activities. Parents do not provide children their school needs. Children own unpreparedness to learn because they will eventually not qualify their exams to further their education”. (SMC PTA FGD, Ayimpoka, TND)*

*“Drop out and absenteeism as result of mining. Teenage Pregnancy. Lack of teaching materials. Lack of teacher commitment because parents do not appreciate their work”. (FGD SMC PTA, Ayimpoka TND)*

*“Poor performance in the BECE. Lack of adequate teachers to teach all subjects. Poor parental background to provide adequately their wards school needs”. (Ayimpoka TND)*

Parents complained about the lack of TLMs and high Pupil Teacher Ratio. The findings suggest that this challenge was present in most of the schools visited. The only situations where the parents were happy with the quality of education was where the children passed their exams at the JHS BECE level and are not sent back to P6 after they were admitted to JHS.

### **9.2.3 Upper West Region**

The general perception by parents and other community stakeholders regarding the quality of education provided by their schools varied only slightly across the two districts. Rural and urban community score card participants in Jirapa, as well as rural Lawra participants saw the quality of education in their schools to be “sometimes good” while about 50% of urban respondents for the Lawra District said it was “always” good. The issue of quality education in the schools generally favoured rural high performing schools in both districts, according to the participants’ observation reports. Further observations were made to explain participants’ perception of quality. The availability of textbooks was again one of the key indicators of quality of education according to the respondents. Comparatively, the textbook availability favoured DA schools in the Jirapa District, while about 50% of both DA and RC school participants in the Lawra District (rural and urban), said the textbooks were not enough *at all*. They felt that this had negative implications on the teaching and learning process in the schools.

The research results from community scorecard administered indicated that the community members and parents made efforts to monitor and observe their schools in terms of the quality of education being provided. Tables 5.9 and 5.10 shows the responses to the question of whether the schools provided quality education by parents and SMC/PTA in the various schools visited in the Upper West Region. Findings suggest that 20% and 50% of rural and urban school parents in the Jirapa district saw that there was “always” quality education delivered compared to 16.7% of rural parents in Lawra district. Urban parents in the Non-TENI district saw that there was “sometimes” quality education delivered, but not always (see annex 9C for the details). The following are voices from parents and SMC’s on the quality of education provided in their schools:

**Table 9.7: Evidence from FGD with SMC/PTAs on the Quality of Education in Schools in Upper West Region**

<b>Jirapa District</b>	<b>Lawra District</b>
<p>“The teachers now available do not work hard. In the recent past most children in our school passed with aggregate 6 and even these encouraged children out of our community to transfer to other schools but now the BECE results are poor”. (Instrument 446: FGD with SMC/PTA, Duori J.H.S).</p> <p>“We think they are learning well, the girls are very active and assertive in school and at home. Girls have positive attitude towards the English language. Marked exercise books and terminal exams papers. A girl had to transition from primary five to JHS 1 based on excellent academic performance. SMC parent says she is restricted to watch TV at home. The girls are doing very well. One of the girls was promoted to JHS from primary 5. She jumped P.6. That girl is doing very well at JHS”. (Instrument 375: FGD with SMC/PTA, St. Bamvum’s Primary School).</p> <p>“There are evidences of children being repeated at the JHS level. Some are not able to cope up in town schools so they rather migrate to more rural JHS. The repetition is to ensure that children with poor performance improve before being promoted.” (Instrument 387: FGD with SMC/PTA, St. Kambali’s Primary School).</p>	<p>“Children are promoted to J.H.S level. <b>Instability of teachers in the school affects teaching quality</b>”. (Instrument 483: FGD with SMC, Balangtaa D/A Primary School).</p> <p>“This is because pupils’ performance at the BECE 2012 shows a decline in pupils’ performance. A few pupils gained admission into SHS including only one girl”. (Instrument 538: FGD with SMC, Kakpagyili D/A J.H.S).</p> <p>“We have 6 classrooms with large enrolment but we have only 3 teachers. Some children have single parents or orphans and do not have people to support or provide them with basic needs because of poverty”. (Instrument 493: FGD with SMC, Tuokuo D/A Primary School).</p> <p>“Children for the past year had not passed their BECE and also there were lots of repetition but for the past year BECE results children passed and also currently there are few people who are repeated. Also when we check children exercise books we can see the year doing well as compared to previous years”. (Instrument 473: FGD with SMC, Dery D/A Primary).</p> <p>“Most children not serious. They do not take their lessons serious and they throw away the textbooks when they come home. Previously teachers were woefully inadequate leading to poor performance in the BECE but currently with the turnover of leadership and staffing, students are doing well in school”. (Instrument 530: FGD with SMC, Dery D/A J.H.S).</p>

(Source: FGD with SMC/PTA, TENI field research)

Interestingly most communities recognized the tremendous contribution and investment the Government of Ghana was making in terms of social interventions; the parents saw the school and children benefiting from the government’s interventions such as free exercise books and school uniform as well as school feeding as government’s recognition of the quality of education provided in the beneficiary schools. Beneficiary parents generally expressed satisfaction in the quality of education provided in their schools regardless of locality and school type. Rural beneficiaries were highly motivated by the interventions and felt that the intervention policies were meant to promote child retention in the schools. Some parents also felt that the support projects targeted low income and deprived communities to help promote quality education.

### **9.3 Community Support for Quality Education**

Community support for improving the quality education delivery in schools was a key factor observed across all the districts and regions. As governmental support rose to open access to a larger proportion of the population, evidence showed rising levels of community support across the Northern Region. The findings from the study suggest that communities were not only focused on construction of building and ensuring children were able to get to school, they were also making significant contributions in supporting school feeding programmes with community volunteer cooks and ensuring community teachers were in place due to the unstable nature of the professionally trained teachers. Communities were often paying for these volunteer teachers to be in place in order to ensure that at least one teacher showed up to work in a day. They were also attempting to solve endemic absenteeism problems among the teaching profession by building accommodation for trained teachers to stay in their communities. Unfortunately research suggests that this strategy would not guarantee a trained teacher would stay (AfC, 2011).

Community Support for education was particularly important for ensuring that teachers were monitored and knew that the eye of the community was “on them”. Evidence from Ghana also suggests that when communities are able to support the process of ensuring quality education, they are better able to demand for it from education managers (AfC, 2010/LCD Evaluation). Findings across the three regions under study reveal that there was greater rural community support to provide good quality education in their schools than there was for urban schools (e.g. paying community volunteer teachers, providing accommodation and sometimes food for teachers).

#### **9.3.1 Northern Region**

Findings from the West Mamprusi District (Head teachers Interviews) revealed that parents were making tremendous efforts and “doing their best” to support their children’s education in order to ensure quality. Field researchers found it depressing to see the level of effort being applied by communities in order to ensure that the quality of education was provided for their wards when teachers’ willingness to perform was not found in these same communities. Community/Parental support took different forms across rural and urban schools. The most common support by communities towards the school included supporting teachers in terms of accommodation, providing furniture for pupils, building classrooms and sanitary facilities as well as kitchens. Community support also came in the form of financial and in-kind contributions (labour) by parents to support volunteer teachers and ensure that the basic necessities of their children were being met.

One of the key findings highlighted by the study, in the area of community support for quality education, was the increasingly important issue of the support communities were providing for a volunteer member of their community to act as a teacher in the local school; some of the communities through their SMC/PTA, were paying community volunteer teachers and National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) teachers with monthly allowances, commonly referred to as “soap money”. This support was either in cash or in kind e.g. food and/or accommodation. The phenomena of community volunteer teachers was apparent in both urban and rural schools, but more prevalent in the rural schools, where high rates of absenteeism, unwillingness of teachers to live in the community and teachers travelling long distances to schools had motivated

a new type of teacher emerging in northern Ghana—the community volunteer teacher. In six out of the seven schools visited in northern Ghana, both urban and rural, the communities provided basic school infrastructure such as teachers' accommodation, classrooms and urinals. This was confirmed in most cases by the head teachers of the various schools.

Another finding was that periodic visits were being made to the schools by parents especially the SMC/PTA executives, to check on teaching and learning in the school and to interact with the teachers. The following are voices from parents and head teachers in the West Mamprusi district related to the type of support communities were providing to their teachers:

*“Currently the SMC/PTA are helpful and supportive . When the school recently went for a tournament in Wulugu, the SMC/PTA supported by providing food for a week for the children. The PTA/SMC meets twice a week to discuss issues concerning the school”. (Head Teacher Interview, Manga D/A Primary School, WMD).*

*“They contribute food items for the teachers. They provide teachers accommodation”. (Head Teacher Interview, Zori D/A Primary School, WMD).*

*“They provided teachers. School building and accommodation for teachers”. (Head Teacher Interview, Zori J.H.S, WMD).*

*“The SMC has supported the teachers with accommodation for those teachers who are coming from outside the community”. (Head Teacher Interview, Bormanga D/A Primary School, WMD).*

*“Frequent visitation of the school. Encouraging teachers to be frequent in class. PTA used to provide newly posted teachers with accommodation and other items. But now due to large size of the community, they have relaxed”. (Head Teacher's Interview, WurshieB2 D/A Primary School, WMD).*

*“They have built toilets, urinals and three classrooms n plus office for the school. Due to delay in capitation, SMC/PTA paid for common exams. SMC/PTA chairman and members regularly visit the school”. (Head Teacher's Interview, Ngbaripe Islam E/A Primary School, WMD).*

In situations of extreme poverty especially in rural schools, parents interviewed spoke of how they offer their services in the form of labour to support teachers' on their farms, offer their children to assist the teacher at the house or on the farm and build infrastructure using local materials to support schools. They also visit the schools regularly to ensure that teachers are in school and kids are learning while in school. Parents interviewed demonstrated their understanding of the value of education and that they were ready to do almost anything to ensure that their children were able to transition through basic education and on to SHS. The following are the words of a parent in rural West Mamprusi;

*“I have never been to school and it is a worry for me, I do not want my children to be like me in future and also if we do not visit and monitor the teachers, some of them will not teach our children very well. Some of the teachers are very lazy”. (Scorecard interaction with Parent, Northern region primary school)*

In the East Mamprusi District, there was very little parental support for education in the urban schools as opposed to the rural schools visited. There is very little interaction and support by parents in the urban schools based on the head teachers interviews. Head teachers revealed that SMC/PTA are inactive and are not supportive. They however pay occasional visits to the school to check on their children. In the rural schools, parents appeared to be highly active in terms of supporting quality education by ensuring children are in school and support is given to infrastructure (kitchens and urinals). Head teachers in rural schools confirmed that communities have supported the provision of accommodation for teachers, building kitchens for school feeding programme and visiting the school from time to time to know their problems. The following quotes are from the Head teacher interviews on community support for quality education in the East Mamprusi District.

*“They built a kitchen for the School Feeding Programme for feeding the children. - They constructed the urinal. -Some years ago, they constructed the Primary 1 & 2 with mud, which is about falling down in the next rainy season. - they also visit the school”. (Head Teacher Interview, Zangu D/A Primary School, EMD)*

*“Some parents help drive children from home to the school. They provide accommodation for the head teacher”. (Head Teacher Interview, Bunkuma D/A Primary School, EMD)*

*“Parents do not provide any support to the school except the PTA chairman who visits the school regularly” (Head Teacher Interview, Wuyela E/A Primary School, EMD)*

*“Two of the teachers are accommodated by the parents and are fed by these parents as well”. (Head Teacher Interview, Wuyela E/A JHS, EMD)*

Another means by which communities and families support the quality of education of their children was by providing the children with their basic educational needs such as uniforms, exercise books, food health care, pens and pencils among others. Ensuring that children (boys, girls and SEN) go to school on a daily basis was also identified by parents and community members as a way of supporting delivery of quality education particularly in Ghana’s most extremely poor communities<sup>43</sup>. The research findings suggest that all parents across the two districts expressed the desire to support the education of their children until they completed their basic education at the JHS level.

Findings from the Northern Region (captured in table 9.8) also suggest that the girl child and special needs children were still not being sent to school. Parents still had reasons for not sending their girl child to school and this focused mainly on issues of early marriage, fosterage, labour needs at the household, preference for boys and the cost of sending the girl to school. In the West Mamprusi (TENI) district, only 11% and 60% of rural and urban parents ensured that their girl children were “always” in school compared to 28% and 67% in the East Mamprusi district (Non-TENI as shown in table 5.11). Parents explained that the girls in school were often impregnated by teachers and their male colleagues so they were concerned that their daughters

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<sup>43</sup> The northern region of Ghana has the highest proportion of households under the poverty line, living in extreme poverty and experiencing “educational poverty” with a high proportion of youth (17-22) who have never been to school.

were at risk when attending school. This phenomenon was common in rural schools as can be seen from the tables below (the issue is further discussed in the next chapter).

### 9.8: Ensuring girls' daily attendance to school in rural and urban areas (Northern Region)

Name of district				U/R/SU		Total
				RURAL	URBAN	
EAST MAMPRUSI	Do you ensure that all your girl children attend school each day?	Sometimes	Count	5	1	6
			% within U/R/SU	71.4%	33%	60.0%
		Always	Count	2	2	4
			% within U/R/SU	28.6%	67%	40.0%
	Total	Count	7	3	10	
		% within U/R/SU	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
WEST MAMPRUSI	Do you ensure that all your girl children attend school each day?	Sometimes	Count	8	2	10
			% within U/R/SU	88.9%	40.0%	71.4%
		Always	Count	1	3	4
			% within U/R/SU	11.1%	60.0%	28.6%
	Total	Count	9	5	14	
		% within U/R/SU	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

The special needs child continued to face daunting challenges which prevented them from being in school. Parents saw the sending of a SEN child to be a great burden on both the parents and child. Table 9.9 below indicates that 14% and 50% of parents in rural and urban East Mamprusi ensures that their SEN children were “always” in school compared to 11% and 60% of parents in rural and urban schools in West Mamprusi.

**Table 9.9 Ensuring SEN children's daily attendance in rural and urban areas (Northern Region)**

Name of district				U/R/SU		Total
				RURAL	URBAN	
EAST MAMPRUSI	Is it a priority to ensure that all your Special Needs children attend school?	Never	Count	2	0	2
			% within U/R/SU	28.6%	.0%	22.2%
		Sometimes	Count	4	1	5
			% within U/R/SU	57.1%	50.0%	55.6%
		Always	Count	1	1	2
			% within U/R/SU	14.3%	50.0%	22.2%
	Total	Count	7	2	9	
		% within U/R/SU	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
WEST MAMPRUSI	Is it a priority to ensure that all your Special Needs children attend school?	Never	Count	1	1	2
			% within U/R/SU	11.1%	20.0%	14%
		Sometimes	Count	7	1	8
			% within U/R/SU	77.8%	20.0%	57%
		Always	Count	1	3	4
			% within U/R/SU	11.1%	60.0%	29%
	Total	Count	9	5	14	
		% within U/R/SU	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

### 9.3.2 Upper East Region

The provision and promotion of quality education at the community level is not the sole responsibility of the Government, but rather a collective responsibility. As such, while community members had the opportunity to express their opinions about the type of education that is of quality for their children, they were also able to identify the roles they had to play in supporting educational delivery in their schools. According to Head teachers and SMC/PTAs in the Upper East Region, parental support took three forms: firstly infrastructural support: secondly involvement of parents in the educational process of their children through the provision of their basic needs (food, clothes, books etc) to enhance children's ability to learn in school; and thirdly, Head teachers reports that sometimes SMC/PTAs reward teachers with gifts, like foodstuffs and supporting them on their farms.

PTAs are reported to support the provision of infrastructure by building mud structures as classrooms and urinals, buying computers and installing electrical wires, and taking care of the plants at the school compound. Teachers and Head teachers across the region maintained that parents and community members have been instrumental in promoting quality education by visiting the school and sending children back to school if they see them in the market during class hours, as well as encouraging the teachers. Parents also support quality education according to head teachers when they provide the basic needs of children to support them to learn.

According to the community scorecard, parental willingness to support the education of all their children was answered in the question of whether they would they support their children's education until they completed JHS. All parents (100%) across the two districts in DA/RC schools, urban/rural, high/low performing schools said 'Yes' that they would support their children's education . Apart from what parents do to ensure the daily school attendance of their children, other actions included the supervision of children's homework.

Ensuring girls and SEN children are always in school constituted an important indicator for community support for quality education and inclusivity. Table 9.10 reveals that 90% of parents in the TENI district ensure that their girl children are in school always compared to 73% in the non TENI district. Equally important is the issue of SEN children being always in school. Table 9.11 shows that the TENI district has a high level of SEN children going to school with 87% compared to 54% in the non-TENI district.

**Table 9.10: Ensuring girls' daily attendance to school in High/Low schools (Upper East)**

Name of district				High or Low			Total
					High	Low	
BONGO (NON –TENI)	Do you ensure that all your girl children attend school each day?	<b>Sometimes</b>	Count	0	3	1	4
			% within High or Low	.0%	33.3%	20.0%	26.7%
		<b>Always</b>	Count	1	6	4	11
			% within High or Low	100.0%	66.7%	80.0%	73.3%
	<b>Total</b>			Count	1	9	5
				% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
TALENSI-	Do you ensure that all your girl	<b>Sometimes</b>	Count		0	2	2

NABDAM (TENI)	children attend school each day?		% within High or Low		.0%	14.3%	9.5%
		Always	Count		7	12	19
			% within High or Low		100.0%	85.7%	90.5%
	Total		Count		7	14	21

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

**Table 9.11 Ensuring SEN children's daily attendance in rural and urban areas (Upper East)**

Name of district				U/R/SU		Total
				RURAL	URBAN	
BONGO	Is it a priority to ensure that all your Special Needs children attend school?	Never	Count	2	1	3
			% within U/R/SU	25.0%	33.3%	27.3%
		Sometimes	Count	1	1	2
			% within U/R/SU	12.5%	33.3%	18.2%
		Always	Count	5	1	6
			% within U/R/SU	62.5%	33.3%	54.5%
		Total	Count	8	3	11
			% within U/R/SU	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
TALENSI-NABDAM	Is it a priority to ensure that all your Special Needs children attend school?	Never	Count	1	0	1
			% within U/R/SU	11.1%	.0%	6.2%
		Sometimes	Count	0	1	1
			% within U/R/SU	.0%	14.3%	6.2%
		Always	Count	8	6	14
			% within U/R/SU	88.9%	85.7%	87.5%
		Total	Count	9	7	16
			% within U/R/SU	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

The support of community members and parents towards the improvement of quality education also relates to their actions that influence children's learning at home. Supervision of children's homework appears to be one of them. Table 5.15 represent the responses from parents and SMC/PTA when they were asked whether they supervised their children's home work. Findings in Bongo District suggest that 23% of parents said they "never" supported their children's homework assignments. There was a wide variation between rural and urban parents responses when it came to "always supporting their children's home work" with 66.7% of urban parents saying they "always supported" compared to only 27% of rural parents. This is likely a reflection of the kind of work parents are engaged in; in rural Ghana long hours are required to be spent on the farm and there is limited access to lighting in the evening, as well as the high rates of illiteracy among parents in the rural areas.

**Table 9.12: Parental supervision of children's homework in High and Low schools (Upper East)**

Name of district				U/R/SU		Total
				RURAL	URBAN	
BONGO	Do you supervise your child's homework assignments?	Never	Count	3	1	4
			% within U/R/SU	27.3%	16.7%	23.5%
		Sometimes	Count	5	1	6

			% within U/R/SU	45.5%	16.7%	35.3%
		Always	Count	3	4	7
			% within U/R/SU	27.3%	66.7%	41.2%
	Total	Count	11	6	17	
		% within U/R/SU	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
TALENSI-NABDAM	Do you supervise your child's homework assignments?	Never	Count	4	3	7
			% within U/R/SU	28.6%	37.5%	31.8%
		Sometimes	Count	3	1	4
			% within U/R/SU	21.4%	12.5%	18.2%
		Always	Count	7	4	11
			% within U/R/SU	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
		Total	Count	14	8	22
	% within U/R/SU		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

### 9.3.3 Upper West Region

In the Upper West Region, community support for improving quality education took the form of providing infrastructure such as accommodation, urinals and kitchens for teachers and pupils. Communities also provided maintenance support for the school and providing labour on the school farm to support feeding of the children in school. Community members and SMC/PTA also pay periodic visits to school to check on the welfare of both teachers and pupils. According to head teachers, communities have embarked on enrolment drives to ensure that all children of school going age are in school. This support by community members was seen across both TENI and non-TENI districts and in high and low performing schools. The following table presents the responses of head teachers related to the support provided to schools by SMC/PTAs and community members.

**Table 9.13: Evidence from FGD with SMC/PTAs on what Support they Provide in Upper West Region**

<b>TENI (Jirapa District)</b>	<b>(Lawra)</b>
<p>“Regular visits to school to check how teachers are teaching and pupils also learning. Parents give pieces of advice to the pupils at the close of the term. PTA/SMC helps to maintain discipline in the school especially when we get wayward children. PTA contributes for the school to go to the district capital for foodstuffs for school feeding programme”. (Instrument 397: Head Teacher Interview, Sognaayili R/C Primary School).</p> <p>“The PTA has given financial support to teachers and acquired a land for the construction of a JHS block. And also PTA assists financially in the printing of terminal exams materials.”(Instrument 415: Head Teacher</p>	<p>“They provide basic needs for school to their children. They sometimes contribute money to support school development activities. They visit the school to see how teachers and pupils are doing”. (Instrument 477: Head Teacher Interview, Balangtaa D/A Primary School).</p> <p>“The PTA/SMC supports the school by cultivating crops for the school on the school farm. The PTA built a kitchen for the school to cook for pupils. The PTA/SMC helps to mobilize new children in the community to be enrolled in the school. The parents also pay periodic visits to the school to know the welfare of teachers and pupils”. (Instrument 487: Head Teacher Interview,</p>

<p>Interview, Kuvarpuo J.H.S).</p> <p>“Parents especially the PTA executives’ pay periodic visits to the school to know the status of the school with regard to teaching and learning and also to ask the teachers if they faced any challenge.” (Instrument 422: Head Teacher Interview, Kpaguri Primary School).</p> <p>“The PTA/SMC has been able to provide the school with a kitchen and a pavilion where the school cook prepares the pupils food. They are also in the process of contributing money to put up a building for the KG.” (Instrument 432: Head Teacher Interview, Safaliba Primary School).</p> <p>“Provision of furniture through levies. Donated a Xylophone to promote the teaching of Ghanaian Language and culture. Provide accommodation on subsidized bases for teachers living in the community. Do maintenance works on school block.”(Instrument 442: Head Teacher Interview, Duori J.H.S).</p> <p>“PTA has contributed immensely in the areas of putting up the lower classroom block. Constructed a standing pipe for the school. Put electricity in the school and paid the light bills. They also pay volunteer teachers in the school to motivate them.” (Instrument 369: Head Teacher’s Interview, St. Bamvum’s Primary School).</p>	<p>Tuokuo D/A Primary School).</p> <p>“The SMC/PTA supports in school maintenance projects such as working on faulty doors. The PTA helped in preparing a playground for the school. They also advice parents to support their children and entreat teachers to put on a positive work attitude”. (Instrument 506: Head Teacher Interview, Tuutinli D/A Primary School).</p> <p>“The PTA/SMC has been able to build a urinal for the school. They also build fallen classroom blocks. The SMC/PTA also visits the school almost every day to greet teachers and see how teaching and learning is going on in the school”. (Instrument 515: Head Teacher Interview, Yelibuori D/A Primary School).</p> <p>“The only initiative of the PTA/SMC is levying themselves to patch up potholes in the classroom although this support has not been realized”. (Instrument 533: Head Teacher Interview, Kakpagyili D/A J.H.S).</p>
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(Source: FGD with SMC/PTA, TENI field research)

A positive form of community action to encourage good performance among teachers is by motivation (e.g. food stuffs, accommodation, incentives). Tables 9.14 and 9.15 show how respondents perceived the motivation of teachers in their communities and how often they motivate their teachers in the Upper West to promote quality education.

**Table 9.14: Level of Community motivation for teachers in High and Low schools. (Jirapa)**

U/R/SU				High or Low			Total
					High	Low	
RURAL	20. Does the community motivate teachers to teach to the highest standard and deliver their best through providing accommodation, food and other incentives?	<b>Never</b>	Count	0		0	1
			% within High or Low	.0%	50.0%	.0%	20.0%
		<b>Sometimes</b>	Count	2	1	1	4
			% within High or Low	100.0%	50.0%	100.0%	80.0%
		<b>Total</b>		Count	2	2	5
				% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
URBAN	20. Does the community motivate teachers to teach to the highest standard and deliver their best through providing accommodation, food and other incentives?	<b>Sometimes</b>	Count		1	1	2
			% within High or Low		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

	Total	Count		1	1	2
		% within High or Low		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

**Table 9.15: Community motivations for teachers (Lawra)**

U/R/SU				School Type		Total
				DA	RC	
RURAL	17 Does the community motivate teachers to teach to the highest standard and deliver their best through providing accommodation, food and other incentives?	Never	Count	2		2
			% within School Type	33%		33%
		Sometimes	Count	3		3
			% within School Type	50.0%		50.0%
		Do not know	Count	1		1
			% within School Type	17%		17%
	Total		Count	6		6
			% within School Type	100.0%		100.0%
URBAN	Does the community motivate teachers to teach to the highest standard and deliver their best through providing accommodation, food and other incentives?	Sometimes	Count	2	1	3
			% within School Type	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Total		Count	2	1	3

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

Tables 9.14 and 9.15 above reveal that there was a high level of teacher motivation from parents and community members according to the community scorecard exercise. In the TENI district (Jirapa) 80% of rural parents “sometimes” motivated teachers to perform their best compared to 100% of urban parents. However in the Lawra district, 50% of rural parents and 100% of urban parents said they “sometimes” motivate their teachers. Findings suggest that there was a higher level of motivation for teachers in urban schools compared to rural schools.

The study results revealed that parents in the Upper West Region perceived the provision of good quality education to be a shared responsibility of the community and the government, as they were able to identify what role they should play to support quality education in the schools. In the first place, the participation of the community people and parents in school decision making on matters affecting the schools and the learning of their children through organized school meetings with PTA/SMC members was identified as one of the major ways by which communities support in the provision of good quality education for their children. This however, depended on whether the schools regularly organized and involved parents in such meetings.

The results of community scorecard indicated that half of the respondents of both rural and urban areas in the Lawra District reported that the schools always organized and involved parents and community members in meetings. This practice was largely found among urban respondents in the Jirapa District. Parents also reported that they were exposed to how their children were learning and the conditions under which the teaching and learning processes were taking place. This enabled them to contribute to the solution of problems that negatively affected quality education. For instance in both districts, parents and community members reported that they had contributed money to recruit and pay volunteer teachers in schools where trained teachers were

in short supply or unreliable in attending school. Parents had also provided accommodation for teachers, and additional school infrastructure such as classrooms and kitchens

Parental involvement at the school had also influenced the performance of teachers by prompting poor performing teachers to improve their teaching practices and time on task through consultation and negotiation; reporting non performing teachers to the GES for official action to be taken against them. In most cases parents reported that although teachers were reported to the GES district offices these complaints were rarely acted upon and sanction were not imposed. Most parents, especially in the rural areas also motivated their teachers by giving them gifts such as food stuffs, small ruminants and sometimes access to farm land. Almost all respondents were also willing to support the education of their children until they completed the basic education programme at JHS by giving them their basic education needs as discussed earlier (the full score card data is available in Annex 9C for this district).

## **9.4 Community Demand for Quality Education**

The perceived quality of educational services provided by any school often determines the demand for its services in the catchment area although rural parents are often restricted to locality through long distances to urban capitals. Evidence from the field research suggests that parents across the three northern regions were well aware that better quality schools were available in the urban areas due to the presence and often over supply of trained teachers in the urban school setting. Parental interviews also suggest that parents were aware that mission or religious unit schools (e.g. catholic) particularly in the Upper East and Upper West were providing a higher quality of education than DA schools. What rural parents were not aware of was the negative impact that dysfunctional schools could have from a long term effect on their children's education particularly due to the limited information which was available concerning their child's performance and the negative impact that not learning to read at lower primary level would have on the performance of their children at the upper primary and high levels.

### **9.4.1 Northern Region**

Parents enrolled children in school with the hope that the schools would give them the best education needed for them to "perform" and transition to higher levels of education and to fulfil their educational goals in the future; although this was not always the same for parents' aspirations in relation to their girls. Thus, whether a school is measuring up to a community's expectations or not, is determined by parental satisfaction with their children's performance as reflected in their report cards and exercise books among others. Tables 9.16, 9.17 and 9.18 present the parental responses to the question of satisfaction with regard to their children's performance after seeing their school reports or work completed in pupil exercise books. Proportionately, in the East Mamprusi District only about 10% of parents were "*always*" satisfied with their children's performance compared to 7% in the West Mamprusi District.

**Table 9.16: Satisfaction with Children's Performance in High and Low schools (Northern)**

Name of district				High or Low			Total
				TENI/Non-TENI	High	Low	
EAST MAMPRUSI	Are you satisfied with your child’s performance at the school?	Never	Count		1	1	2
			% within High or Low		25.0%	16.7%	20.0%
		Sometimes	Count		3	4	7
			% within High or Low		75.0%	66.7%	70.0%
		Always	Count		0	1	1
			% within High or Low		.0%	16.7%	10.0%
	Total	Count		4	6	10	
		% within High or Low		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
WEST MAMPRUSI	Are you satisfied with your child’s performance at the school?	Never	Count	0	3	1	4
			% within High or Low	.0%	33.3%	25.0%	28.6%
		Sometimes	Count	1	6	2	9
			% within High or Low	100.0%	66.7%	50.0%	64.3%
		Always	Count	0	0	1	1
			% within High or Low	.0%	.0%	25.0%	7.1%
	Total	Count	1	9	4	14	
		% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

Tables 9.16, 9.17 and 9.18 below present participants' responses to the question of whether they were satisfied with their children's class teachers' performance. For the school types and among the faith schools in East Mamprusi, the Presby school parents were sometimes satisfied while the parents using English Arabic schools were never satisfied with the teachers' performance in the East Mamprusi. The score card data reveals that a greater proportion (62.5%) of parents sending their wards to DA schools were "sometimes" satisfied while other parents said they were either "never satisfied or did not know" about the teachers' performance in East Mamprusi.

In West Mamprusi, only some DA parents (41.7%) expressed dissatisfaction with the teachers' performance, while all others were "sometimes" or "always" satisfied. In East Mamprusi, parents who were never satisfied with their teachers were also using low performing schools while in the West Mamprusi parents also expressed dissatisfaction even when their wards attended high performing school (as shown in Table 9.17 and Table 9.18 below). This further indicates that parents who were not satisfied with their school teachers were from both rural and urban areas of the East Mamprusi, while in the West Mamprusi districts dissatisfied parents were all from rural areas. Rural parents were therefore more dissatisfied with their teachers; more parents in West Mamprusi (37.5%) were not satisfied with teachers' performance compared to 20% in the East Mamprusi.

**Table 9.17: Parental satisfaction with teachers' performance in High and Low schools (Northern)**

Name of district				High or Low			Total
				TENI/ Non-TENI	High	Low	
EAST MAMPRUSI	Are you satisfied with the teachers' performance at the school?	Never	Count		0	2	2
			% within High or Low		.0%	33.3%	20.0%

		Sometimes	Count		4	2	6
			% within High or Low		100.0%	33.3%	60.0%
		Do not know	Count		0	2	2
			% within High or Low		.0%	33.3%	20.0%
		Total	Count		4	6	10
			% within High or Low		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
WEST MAMPRUSI	Are you satisfied with the teachers' performance at the school?	Never	Count	0	4	1	5
			% within High or Low	.0%	44.4%	25.0%	35.7%
		Sometimes	Count	1	3	2	6
			% within High or Low	100.0%	33.3%	50.0%	42.9%
		Always	Count	0	2	1	3
			% within High or Low	.0%	22.2%	25.0%	21.4%
		Total	Count	1	9	4	14
			% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

**Table 9.18: Parental satisfaction with teachers' performance in rural and urban areas (Northern)**

Name of district				U/R/SU		Total
				RURAL	URBAN	
EAST MAMPRUSI	Are you satisfied with the teachers' performance at the school?	Never	Count	1	1	2
			% within U/R/SU	14.3%	33.3%	20.0%
		Sometimes	Count	5	1	6
			% within U/R/SU	71.4%	33.3%	60.0%
		Do not know	Count	1	1	2
			% within U/R/SU	14.3%	33.3%	20.0%
		Total	Count	7	3	10
			% within U/R/SU	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
WEST MAMPRUSI	Are you satisfied with the teachers' performance at the school?	Never	Count	5	0	5
			% within U/R/SU	55.6%	.0%	35.7%
		Sometimes	Count	2	4	6
			% within U/R/SU	22.2%	80.0%	42.9%
		Always	Count	2	1	3
			% within U/R/SU	22.2%	20.0%	21.4%
		Total	Count	9	5	14
			% within U/R/SU	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

The demand for quality education from a school by community members and parents is also influenced by the relationship between the school and the community/parents. When school authorities organize community meetings and invite parents, parents were provided with information on what happens in the school and the classrooms, and made aware of what roles they have to play in supporting the school. Tables 7.21, present the findings on the question of whether the schools organize meetings to discuss issues of child performance with parents.

Table 9.19 reveals that non-involvement of parents and community members in school meetings was common in both districts. Apparently there was more meetings and consultation going on among low performing schools compared to high performing schools in both districts. Score card data revealed that only 14.3% in West Mamprusi and 10% of parents East Mamprusi said their schools “always” organized meetings to review performance of pupils across TENI and non – TENI districts. Parental participation in school meetings was higher in the TENI district of West Mamprusi with 50% of parental groups saying that they “sometimes” had meetings to review the school/child performance compared to the Non TENI district (40%). Generally organization and participation in meetings for child performance reviews was poor in both districts.

**Table 9.19: Review of child performance with parents through meetings in Non-TENI/High/Low schools (Northern)**

Name of district				High or Low			Total
				TENI/ Non-TENI	High	Low	
EAST MAMPRUSI	Does the school organize meetings to review the school and child performance and discuss this with parents in the community?	Never	Count		2	2	4
			% within High or Low		50.0%	33.3%	40.0%
		Sometimes	Count		2	2	4
			% within High or Low		50.0%	33.3%	40.0%
		Always	Count		0	1	1
			% within High or Low		.0%	16.7%	10.0%
		Do not know	Count		0	1	1
			% within High or Low		.0%	16.7%	10.0%
		Total		Count	4	6	10
				% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
WEST MAMPRUSI	Does the school organize meetings to review the school and child performance and discuss this with parents in the community?	Never	Count	0	4	1	5
			% within High or Low	.0%	44.4%	25.0%	35.7%
		Sometimes	Count	1	4	2	7
			% within High or Low	100.0%	44.4%	50.0%	50.0%
		Always	Count	0	1	1	2
			% within High or Low	.0%	11.1%	25.0%	14.3%
		Total		Count	1	9	14
				% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

Community demand for quality education in the Northern Region means that parents/communities are constantly checking on teachers to see if they report to school and were actually teaching their children. The results of the score card reveal that there is very little going on in terms of checking teachers performance. Communities in the north express their powerlessness and sometimes incapacity to assess teachers’ performance. In the non TENI (East Mamprusi) district, 5 low performing schools visited said they “never” check performance of

teachers, and 4 high performing schools said they sometimes check their performance. Only one low performing school said they “always” check the performance of teachers in school.

In the West Mamprusi (TENI) district, all 9 schools (5 high and 4 low performing schools) have “never” checked the performance of teachers in their schools. All the parents, Chiefs and Elders who responded to the Community Scorecard also said that they “never” check the performance of teachers at their schools. The main reason cited for “never” checking was the perception that they lack the authority to check upon teachers and they are illiterates hence cannot assess whether teachers are teaching well or not. Some of their responses are seen below.

**Table 9.20: Evidence from FGD with SMC/PTAs on Whether they Check Teacher Performance Northern Region**

<b>West Mamprusi (TENI)</b>	<b>East Mamprusi (NON-TENI)</b>
<p>“We do not visit the school for the purpose of assessment of teachers. Most of us are illiterates”. (Community/Parent Scorecard, PTA Manga D/A Primary School)</p> <p>“We the PTA/SMC executives do come to the school and check attendance of teachers and find out their problems as well as progress.”. (Community/Parent Scorecard, SMC Manga D/A Primary School).</p> <p>“We do not have the authority to assess the teachers’ performance”. (Community/Parent Scorecard, Parents Manga Primary School).</p> <p>“We fear the teachers. If we push so much they will not come to teach the children again. . (Community/Parent Scorecard, Parents Zori D/A Primary School).</p> <p>“We are illiterate. We only see the teachers in school but we cannot tell whether they teach or not”. (Community/Parent Scorecard, SMC/PTA Zori Primary School).</p> <p>“We are illiterates and do not know what the teacher is supposed to do”. (Community/Parent Scorecard, Parents Ninsali D/A Primary School)</p> <p>“We do not have the authority to do that (check on teachers), so we are not doing it”. (Community/Parent Scorecard, SMC/PTA Bormanga D/A Primary School).</p> <p>“We visit school as PTA to check if it is well with teachers”. (Community/Parent Scorecard, SMC/PTA Kupiel J.H.S).</p>	<p>“We know most of the teachers do not show up or show up late. But because there is no accommodation for them in the village we cannot say much”. (Community Scorecard, Chiefs and Elders, Zangu D/A Primary School, EMD)</p> <p>“We sometimes visit the school and ask children when they come back from school”. (Community Scorecard, Community, Zangu D/A Primary School, EMD)</p> <p>“We do not go to the school. We cannot assess the teachers” (Community Scorecard, Women, Nintendo D/A Primary School, EMD)</p> <p>“Students are punctual due to teachers’ seriousness. We find out that from our children. People also talk about them” (Community Scorecard, Mothers, Bamahu JHS, EMD)</p> <p>“Is only the men who can ask the teachers. We (the women) cannot say anything to the teachers. “It is only men who can answer this question”. It is only their fathers who can go. We the women cannot go, because is the fathers that are controlling we and the children.” (Community Scorecard, Women’s group, Wuyela E/A Primary School, EMD)</p>

(Source: FGD with SMC/PTA, TENI field research)

## 9.4.2 Upper East Region

The Score card and focal group discussions with women, men, parents and community leaders in the Upper East suggests that community demand for quality education was on the rise. Communities saw the need to educate their children and were making the effort to take their

children to school by ensuring that they provide the minimum required materials for them to be in school. The problem highlighted in most of the focal group discussions with parents and community members was that quality of education delivered at their schools did not meet the expectation of both parents and children. Many of the parents said they were going to the school to check on the teacher's attendance, and sometimes they formed committees for supervising the school to make sure the teachers were in the classrooms.

Some communities interviewed did not always feel empowered to take action when teachers failed to deliver; in a few cases where they had a strong SMC/PTA, they addressed issues through the PTA and Head Teacher. In two schools out of nine in the Bongo district, the parents reported that they would talk to the circuit supervisors or directly discuss issues with the District Education Director if the teachers misbehaved and the problem couldn't be solved at school/community level. In one such school the community took action to ensure improvement in the quality of their school BECE results. The parents recounted that two years ago as a result of a strained relationship with teachers due to high rates of teacher absenteeism and poor performance, the teachers took offence and taught the pupils carelessly resulting in very poor performance at the BECE results - placed 20<sup>th</sup> on the league table, whereas prior to this it was a good performing school. The SMC/PTA in collaboration with the chief and elders took the matter up and demanded for new teachers. The Director investigating the complaints transferred all the teachers including the Head teacher. The subsequent year's BECE results (2011/2012) showed tremendous improvement, 6<sup>th</sup> on the District School Performance League Table (Gungolgu JHS SMC). This was one of the few cases reported where parents to have been able to seek redress and find a solution through the DEO. Since this incident took place, Gungolgu JHS has become a "no go area for lazy teachers" since the students send reports to their parents as to whether teachers are teaching them well or not and the recalcitrant teachers are reported to the circuit supervisor for reprimand and necessary action. This has led to good Parents-Teacher relationships such that parents always advise teachers to change their attitude towards their work (Scorecard interaction with parents, Gungolgu JHS). The Gungolgu case also suggests the need for strong District Education Office leadership to take action on issues which have been investigated. The following are some of the voices from parents from the Bongo and Talensi Nabdam District in the Upper East:

**Table 9.21: Evidence from FGD with SMC/PTAs on Whether they Check Teacher Performance Upper East Region**

Talensi – Nabdam District	Bongo District
<p>"We visit the school to make sure the teachers are present and are teaching in the classroom. If there are teachers who don't come to school or are drunkards, the parents report them to the head teacher and, if the situation is not solved, to the circuit supervisor. The attendance of the teachers is good, according to the opinions in the community scorecards. (Ayimpoka TND)</p> <p>"The parents' don't feel they can't do anything if teachers don't come to school and the parents very seldom visit the school (Dappore primary, TND)</p>	<p>"We always advise the teachers to have change attitude towards their work. The recalcitrant ones are reported to the circuit supervisor". Scorecard, Gungolgu JHS</p> <p>"We are aware that we can report non performing teachers to the Chief or Social Welfare - that would be the correct thing to do, but we fear to do so because it will mean that relationships with other community members and the teachers will be soured and there is also the risk that the teachers will mistreat our children". Scorecard, Bulika</p>

<p>“they do not do anything because their contact with the school is limited to only being invited to the school.” They do not visit very often so they don't know which teachers have been absent or are not performing. (Kulenga, TND)</p>	<p>We do nothing to those teachers because we don't have the authority to question them. We also fear teachers might target our children if we talk about it at PTA meetings. (Scorecard, Wuntenga)</p> <p>Ask from any teacher available why that teacher is not in school. Some of us certain ask the teacher when we meet why he/she is not in school. Scorecard, Akugri</p> <p>“We sometimes report non-performing teachers to the Executive Members of PTA/SMC which the community has selected or the district director of education.” Scorecard, Akugri</p>
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(Source: FGD with SMC/PTA, TENI field research)

However, in Talensi –Nabdam district (TENI) several parents “feared” taking action because the teachers might mistreat their children. In other communities that had suffered closure of their school because of lack of teachers, community members felt they could do nothing as the teachers may not be replaced by the district office and their school could be closed for the second time.

In several rural areas parents and communities appeared helpless when it came to confronting sensitive issues such as teacher performance, teacher conduct and absenteeism; this affected their ability to demand for quality education for their children as a right. Parents/communities in several cases were scared that doing the right thing – reporting to the GES or Head teacher would mean that relationships with other community members and the teachers would be soured and there was a risk that the teachers would maltreat the child of the parent who reported them. Other parents also felt that they were tired of reporting these cases since similar actions in the past had not received any action from the District Education Directors.

According to Focal Group Discussions with SMC/PTAs, urban parents in the two districts took more radical actions such as reporting teachers to the Circuit Supervisors and the District Education Office, while rural parents mostly did not go beyond complaints at PTA and other school meetings, for fear of provoking the teachers, which could stop them from helping their children. In the Talensi Nabdam district, parents showed they are interested in the quality of education of their children, but many times they tended to equate quality to the infrastructure and TLMS and teacher attendance. In most schools in the Talensi Nabdam district, parents felt that they could hold teachers accountable through PTA meetings, there were only a few cases where parents reported that they felt they could not meet the head teachers to discuss the problem because there might be repercussions for their children. If the teachers were missing classes regularly, parents simply looked on and could not initiate any action. Where they were bold enough to deal with the challenge the option open to them was to meet with the head teacher through the SMC/PTA. In some cases, the parents faced the teachers directly in the PTA meetings or even individually when they meet them at school. Despite the growing interest of parents and the community in demanding for quality education very often they did not know or did not feel they had the authority to make these demands from the teachers.

In the community/parents scorecard exercise, FGDs with chief and elders and the SMC/PTA members, community members were required to comment on how they monitored teacher performance. In the majority of responses to this question parents and community members including chiefs and elders, usual response was that they observed the teacher's presence in school and in the classes teaching but could not say much more than this.

### 9.4.3 Upper West Region

Equally important in this TENI research was the need to assess the demand for quality education by the beneficiary communities, as well as the efforts being made by the local people themselves to achieve this for their children. On the demand side, one of the indicators was whether parents allowed their children to attend school regularly, with considerations for all children, girls and special education needs (SEN) children. Findings indicated that in the Jirapa and Lawra Districts, all parents "sometimes or always" ensured that all their children attended school each day. Parents of the RC schools and urban parents in general, were more willing to ensure the daily school attendance of all children in the region, including girls and SEN children. Lawra however did better in terms of ensuring the schooling of SEN children than Jirapa across the sampled schools (see table below).

**Table 9.22: Ensuring children's daily school attendance in High and Low schools (Jirapa)**

U/R/SU				High or Low			Total
				TENI/Non-TENI	High	Low	
RURAL	Do you ensure that all your children attend school each day?	Sometimes	Count	2	1	1	4
			% within High or Low	100.0%	50.0%	100.0%	80.0%
		Always	Count	0	1	0	1
			% within High or Low	.0%	50.0%	.0%	20.0%
	Total		Count	2	2	1	5
			% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
URBAN	Do you ensure that all your children attend school each day?	Always	Count		1	1	2
			% within High or Low		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Total		Count		1	1	2
			% within High or Low		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

**Table 9.23: Ensuring children's daily attendance to school by High/Low (Lawra)**

U/R/SU				High or Low			Total
				TENI/Non-TENI	High	Low	
RURAL	Do you ensure that all your children attend school each day?	Sometimes	Count	2	1	1	4
			% within High or Low	100.0%	50.0%	50.0%	67%
		Always	Count	0	1	1	2
			% within High or Low	.0%	50.0%	50.0%	33%
	Total		Count	2	2	2	6
			% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
URBAN	Do you ensure that all your	Sometimes	Count	0	0	1	1

	children attend school each day?		% within High or Low	.0%	.0%	100.0%	33%
		Always	Count	1	1	0	2
			% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	.0%	67%
	Total		Count	1	1	1	3
			% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

Parents ensured the daily attendance of their children by providing them with their basic school needs such as food, writing materials, good health, sandals and school bags. Since quality education can only be provided when children are always in school, there was evidence that parents in the region had a high demand for good quality education. However, the schooling of **all children** was often affected in the rainy season, when children had to help parents on the farms. Girls may sometimes be held back from school by their mothers to help nurse babies or perform domestic activities such as fetching water, firewood gathering, as well as economic activities such as going to the market on market days. Parents also reported that “poverty” prevented some parents from being able to provide all the school needs of their children, and this prevented some of their children from attending school sometimes; poverty had a particularly negative impact on SEN children who needed special aids for schooling.

Another indicator used to measure the community demand for quality education included the determination of children’s interest in school. The results indicated that in both Jirapa and Lawra, urban children were more interested in school than rural children, while among the rural schools, RC children were always more interested in school than those of the other schools, and many of the children who were “always” interested in school were in the high performing schools. The findings reveal that a high level of child interest in the school was related to the perceived level “good quality” education in the region. For instance urban parents in Roman Catholic schools perceived that they were receiving a “high quality education”; the score card findings also found that the children’s interest in school was also high.

**Table 9.24: Perceptions of child interest in school in High and Low schools (Jirapa)**

U/R/SU				High or Low			Total
				TENI/Non-TENI	High	Low	
RURAL	Are your children interested in school?	Sometimes	Count	1	1	1	3
			% within High or Low	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	60.0%
		Always	Count	1	1	0	2
			% within High or Low	50.0%	50.0%	.0%	40.0%
	Total		Count	2	2	1	5
			% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
URBAN	Are your children interested in school?	Always	Count		1	1	2
			% within High or Low		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Total		Count		1	1	2
			% within High or Low		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

**Table 9.25: Perceptions of child interest in school in High and Low schools (Lawra)**

U/R/SU	High or Low	Total
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				TENI/Non-TENI	High	Low	
RURAL	11. Are your children interested in school?	Sometimes	Count	0	1	0	1
			% within High or Low	.0%	50.0%	.0%	17%
		Always	Count	2	1	2	5
			% within High or Low	100.0%	50.0%	100.0%	83%
	Total	Count	2	2	2	6	
		% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
URBAN	Are your children interested in school?	Always	Count	1	1	1	3
			% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Total	Count	1	1	1	3	
		% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

Parents and community members who were seeking good quality education for their children would also made an effort to know more about the learning outcomes for their children, as this influences further demand decisions for the services of any particular school. The results indicated that most parents in the Jirapa District knew more about their children's learning compared to parents in the Lawra district in both rural and urban areas, but generally, all parents felt that they could "sometimes or always" know if their children were learning at school or not.

**Table 9.26: Knowledge of the learning of children in High and Low performing schools (Jirapa)**

U/R/SU				High or Low			Total
				TENI/Non-TENI	High	Low	
RURAL	Do you know if your child is learning in school?	Sometimes	Count	1	2	1	4
			% within High or Low	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%	80.0%
		Always	Count	1	0	0	1
			% within High or Low	50.0%	.0%	.0%	20.0%
	Total		Count	2	2	1	5
			% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
URBAN	Do you know if your child is learning in school?	Always	Count		1	1	2
			% within High or Low		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Total		Count		1	1	2
			% within High or Low		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

**Table 9.27: Knowledge of the learning of children in High and Low performing schools (Lawra)**

U/R/SU				High or Low			Total
				TENI/Non-TENI	High	Low	
RURAL	Do you know if your child is learning in school?	Sometimes	Count	1	2	2	5
			% within High or Low	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%	83.3%
		Always	Count	1	0	0	1
			% within High or Low	50.0%	.0%	.0%	16.7%
	Total	Count	2	2	2	6	
		% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
URBAN	Do you know if your child is	Sometimes	Count	1	1	1	3

	learning in school?		% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	<b>Total</b>		Count	1	1	1	3
			% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

Also related to parental interest in children's learning is the assessment of the learning process; in other words how effective are the children learning in terms of outcomes or performance? The findings revealed that almost all parents across all the school types in the Jirapa and Lawra Districts sometimes or always assessed their children's performance as well as that of the teachers. RC and urban school parents however did so more than the rest, and the proportion of parents who assessed their children and teachers' performance were higher in Jirapa than Lawra. The rural parents who assessed their children's performance used teacher interview, SMC/PTA meetings, and inviting educated adults in the community to assess their children at home or interpret their school reports for them. Score card interviews with more "educated parents" on the other hand, interpreted the terminal reports of their children and could test them by asking them to read or solve problems.

In the case of teacher assessment the score card findings revealed that few rural parents in both districts assessed teachers, while the majority of urban parents said they did so. The methods used in teacher assessment included visits to the school, especially by the SMC/PTA Executives, to see whether teachers were regular and prompt to school attendance and performed their duties well. Other parents either asked their children or were told about the teachers by the children. The teacher and child assessment results enabled parents to determine the quality of education that the schools were providing.

**Table 9.28: Assessment of teachers' performance in High and Low schools (Jirapa)**

U/R/SU				High or Low			Total
				TENI/Non-TENI	High	Low	
RURAL	Do you assess the Teachers' performance and conduct at the school (absenteeism, lateness etc)	<b>Sometimes</b>	Count	2	1	1	4
			% within High or Low	100.0%	50.0%	100.0%	80.0%
		<b>Always</b>	Count	0	1	0	1
			% within High or Low	.0%	50.0%	.0%	20.0%
		<b>Total</b>	Count	2	2	1	5
			% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
URBAN	Do you assess the Teachers' performance and conduct at the school (absenteeism, lateness etc)	<b>Never</b>	Count		1	0	1
			% within High or Low		100.0%	.0%	50.0%
		<b>Sometimes</b>	Count		0	1	1
			% within High or Low		.0%	100.0%	50.0%
		<b>Total</b>	Count		1	1	2
			% within High or Low		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

**Table 9.29: Assessment of teachers' performance in High and Low performing schools (Lawra)**

U/R/SU				High or Low			Total
				TENI/Non-TENI	High	Low	
RURAL	Do you assess the Teachers'	<b>Never</b>	Count	1	0	0	1

	performance and conduct at the school (absenteeism, lateness etc)	Sometimes	% within High or Low	50.0%	.0%	.0%	16.7%
			Count	1	1	2	4
			% within High or Low	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	66.7%
		Always	Count	0	1	0	1
			% within High or Low	.0%	50.0%	.0%	16.7%
	Total		Count	2	2	2	6
			% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
URBAN	Do you assess the Teachers' performance and conduct at the school (absenteeism, lateness etc)	Sometimes	Count	1	1	1	3
			% within High or Low	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Total		Count	1	1	1	3

(Source: Community Scorecard TENI field survey, 2012)

The support of community members and parents towards the improvement of quality education was also related to the actions communities took which had an influence on teacher conduct. The following responses from community members reflect the action they took to control acts of absenteeism and poor performance by teachers in their schools in their responses to question 15 of instrument 12, which states that: “What does the community do if the teachers are not performing and absent from the school on a regular basis?” At the Tuokuo rural community, a participant said: *“SMC executive reports these cases to the Chief. Discuss with CS and education official for redress”*.

Most other responses from the rural respondents were of this nature, adding that the issues could be discussed at PTA meetings between teachers and the PTA executives for amicable solutions to the problems. Community members saw the importance of using the SMCs/PTAs as the main representative and voice of the community on matters affecting children in the school/community. In communities with a healthy school/community relationship, problems of teacher conduct could sometimes be addressed amicably at the community level, but where cooperation failed, teachers were reported to the GES for further actions to be taken. Interestingly different from the rest, the parent respondent for Balangtaa DA Primary said:

*“The community does not do anything. We do not want to meddle in the affairs of the school; the teachers are doing their work. We are not educated so we do not want police to arrest them”*.

The statement reaffirms earlier contributions by the same participant who saw no reason to assess the children’s and teachers’ learning and performance respectively. Among the urban respondents, a parent of the Dery DA Primary said:

*“When teachers do not perform and are absent from school, the SMC/PTA reports them to the Ghana Education Office through the Circuit Supervisors if the teachers involved are trained teachers. In the case of community volunteer teacher who misconduct themselves, we just stop paying them”*.

This is a reflection that urban community members in the district who actively monitor the activities of all categories of teachers and know what action to take for the various categories of teachers (Government employed and volunteer teachers). A somewhat similar response to that of

the Balangtaa parent was recorded in Lawra Township in the Upper West, when a parent of the St Gabriels Primary said:

*“We do not take any action because we fear them and do not want them to transfer their anger on to our children”*

Implied in this response is that community action could have a negative effect on teachers' performance depending on the purpose and manner of the action. Parents feared that teachers might not teach their children “properly” or might use harsh punishment on them if they made complaints about the teacher. There were however some more positive forms of community action that could prevent or reduce incidences of poor performance and absenteeism among teachers without parents having to report them to the GES; the “motivation” of teachers is discussed in the next section.

Since the end result of educational services like any other service is to satisfy the expectations of the beneficiary communities and parents, this study accordingly provided an opportunity for parents to express the level of satisfaction they derived from the education of their children through the performance of the children as well as the teachers. The results indicated that all parents in both districts were sometimes or always satisfied with their children's performance, but generally parents in Lawra were more satisfied than those of Jirapa, since the proportion of parents who chose the *always* option to the associated question on the score card were more in Lawra. A similar pattern was observed for the teachers' performance. It was therefore observed that the performance of pupils and teachers provided a good condition to promote parental demand for the services of the schools in the districts studied. However, the score card exercise did indicate that some challenges remained to be addressed in terms of pupil and teacher performance in the schools.

## **9.5 Community Barriers/Inhibitors to Quality Education.**

Findings from the community focal group interviews and score card exercise indicate that community barriers and inhibitors to quality education were mainly related to the lack of commitment and dedication by teachers towards the promotion of quality education. Parents and community members recognised that teachers were not always regular at school, and in some cases were worried that their children were not learning; in several cases parents felt helpless and incapable of holding teachers accountable partly due to the fact they did not feel that the District offices were able to act objectively on complaints they might pose. According to community members and parents, there have been several attempts to address indiscipline among teachers by reporting them to the district office but their efforts did not result in action. In communities where there was strong head teacher leadership, school governance and a good relationship with community members and teachers, then researchers observed higher levels of discipline among the teaching force.

Another key quality education inhibitor as indicated by parents and communities was the inadequately trained teachers supply at their schools and the unwillingness of trained teachers to accept postings to especially rural communities. Most teachers prefer to live and work in the urban areas because of the lack of suitable social amenities in the rural communities. Most

parents especially in rural schools complained that trained teachers preferred not to live in the community even if they had provided accommodation free for them. The major problem for urban schools was not so much the lack of teachers, as in the rural schools, but the poor quality and lack of professionalism exhibited by teachers in the form of absenteeism, lateness and general a lack of preparedness to teach. Closely linked to inadequate teacher supply was the issue of teaching and learning materials across schools. Communities complained that there was very limited TLM supplied to their schools and this had affected their children's ability to learn.

Low self-esteem especially among rural communities appears to be a very critical inhibitor to the demand for quality education delivery. Many times researchers were told the team, "I am an illiterate, I can do nothing" and "the teachers are untouchable" "if we threaten they will go". In recent years communities in their quest to demand for quality education have been disempowered by threats from education managers to close down their schools. This has actually happened in a number of communities over the last few years. Threats by teachers' to leave certain communities have become a regular threat in some school communities such that they are totally demobilized from fighting for the right to their children to quality education. Therefore these communities were found in a state of helplessness with respect to what they could do to improve the levels of performance by teachers in an atmosphere of indiscipline. The question which researchers had was the level of involvement by civil society in assisting these communities since so many NGO's were working in the communities which were visited. Evidence does not suggest that there was a formalized channel for communities to seek redress apart from going to the District education office and this needed to change. A much more visible and non education focused mechanism was needed at district level to ensure that the process of lodging complaints, investigation, negotiation and redress could be found.

Community members believed that the education managers at the district level were in support of the teaching force. An interview with a district director in one of the districts revealed that due to the numerous conflicts between communities and teachers regarding teachers indiscipline, he has threaten communities that *"if they had any more problems with their teachers and they decide to leave, there will be no teachers posted to their school and he will eventually close down the school"*. With this approach, communities' learned to be quite and the teachers' non-cooperative attitude was strengthened. This corroborates findings from the study that suggest that in some districts there was an attempt to stifle community efforts at demanding for quality education for their children. In deed this has reinforced the community perception that the school belongs to the government and they the community members and parents can do nothing to change the situation existing in their schools. The emergence of the "community volunteer teacher" may change this in future if these teachers receive some training and are supported by civil society.

Although attitudes to girls' and SEN education was changing especially in the urban areas, the community level exploration revealed that parents still see education for special needs children as a challenge due to the cost and the effort that they must make. In terms of Special Educational Needs the main challenge that community members felt they faced was the lack of facilities in schools (including trained teachers) who could "handle" differently able children. Parents interviewed whose children fall in to this category found that managing to transport their children to school was too great a challenge. Although many responded positively to the question about ensuring that special needs children were in school, evidence from other interviews indicates that there were a significant number SEN children out of school some of

whom had never been enrolled in school but others who had been enrolled but had either been withdrawn from the school by parents or had been sent home by the school who found they were unable to cope. In terms of socio-cultural factors, there was evidence of stigma attached to children with special needs but community members felt that this was changing. However, while there was some stigma attached to children with hearing, visual or physical impairments, or those children who had medical conditions (eg epilepsy), other evidence suggests that children with moderate to severe learning difficulties (eg Down's Syndrome) were thought to be uneducable.

The rising phenomenon of pupils staying up late to watch television and engage in video dances has been identified by parents and teachers as a major inhibitor to quality education. They attributed this to poor parental supervision leading to child neglect. This problem was more common among urban children compared to rural children. Mobile usage among school pupils and the fact they will use them in class was often cited as an inhibitor to quality education especially in urban schools. It was often stated that there were too many distractions in the urban areas and that the pupils were not serious about their studies.

Due to the lack of an adequately trained teacher supply in schools especially rural schools, the use of volunteer teachers had become a common trend among rural communities. They would usually recruit volunteer teachers from their communities to teach with no or very little training on how to teach. This usually results in the use of poor teaching methodologies and ultimately poor teaching and learning outcomes. Also these volunteer teachers were often unpaid and in their attempt to survive they would also absent themselves from schools in order to engage in farming activities particularly during the rainy season. A few communities were able to support these volunteer teachers with soap money or labour on their farm, however in most cases, they were not paid even their stipends regularly. Volunteer teachers also used pupils at least once in a week to help them on their farms. Interviews with pupils reveal that they resented this practice and often absented themselves from school on the appointed days.

## Chapter 10: Learner Characteristics and Child Readiness to Learn

### 10.0 Introduction

In most instances, children come to school ready to learn but with different socio-cultural and home based experiences to draw from. To promote learning for all children, educators must provide a school environment that acknowledges children's diverse backgrounds/needs, help children transition comfortably into the next instructional level, and provide community support when necessary. Such provisions support the child's readiness to learn as well as each school's readiness to educate young children. Findings from the TENI research revealed four key factors inhibiting child readiness to learn across the three study regions including: economic, socio-cultural, environmental and psycho-social responses to learning (including responses to the learning environment).

Findings from the TENI Study on the quality of education suggest that: poverty remains a key barrier to child readiness to learn across the three regions. Parents' inability to provide the basic needs for children in school continued to be a major reason for children who were out of school and unable to complete the full cycle of basic education. The quality of education study in northern Ghana also revealed that SEN children and girls were the most affected by child readiness factors since parents were unable to provide for their basic needs such as sanitary materials and other personal items making them feel uncomfortable among their peers which often led to drop out. This issue has become a major source of worry for girls especially in the Northern Region. Focal Group interviews with girls revealed that this has led several girls to engage in transactional sex activities with older men in order to enable them to provide for their basic needs. This was more pronounced in the Northern Region.

The most common child readiness inhibitor mentioned by different stakeholders across the 54 sampled schools was the hunger children experienced in the classroom and the insufficient feeding of the children before and during school. Several times, teachers and head teachers reported that children came to school hungry, or did not have money to buy food, so they leave early to go home and eat. Focal group discussions with children themselves pointed to the fact that hunger often left them unable to concentrate and focus in the classroom and prevented them from learning. Children also reported that they would be able to stay in school and remain for the whole day if there was a school feeding programme operational in the school.

Findings from the study also reveal that children were influenced to a large extent by the physical environment of the school. Children preferred schools that had furniture, flowers, playground, and shaded trees for them to play around. Focal group discussions with children also revealed several socio cultural factors that inhibited children's readiness to learn. The common factors included: early marriage and gendered roles and responsibilities at the home particularly for girls. The study revealed that girls were being over burdened with household chores and this sometimes prevented them from going to school. Other key community level inhibitors to child readiness were related to teenage pregnancy, child migration to urban areas in order to support their own and their family's economic needs (e.g. Kayayoo).

Learning readiness also depended on the presence and effective application of a number of tools to promote readiness in the child; most important of these was the schools' readiness for children. In order to assess and to understand child readiness to learn, it is necessary to examine the way children are treated and prepared for and in the classroom.

The results of the focus group discussions with the children revealed that approaches to teaching and learning were inadequate and thus hindered their readiness to learn. Schools and teachers do not introduce or expand approaches that have been shown to raise achievement. Some of these approaches mentioned by the children included 'chalk and talk' where the teachers lectured to the children using the blackboard. The language of instruction used was also an issue. Many of the children interviewed admitted not being able to comprehend instructions or concepts being taught adequately if the English language was used as the sole language of instruction without translation into the mother tongue. The unavailability of teachers and lack of trained teachers due to either inadequate teacher supply or teacher absenteeism was one of the most serious setbacks to promoting child readiness to learn within the study areas.

Without exception, all 60 focal group discussions with children across the 54 schools in the six selected districts of the three northern regions reported the negative effects of the use of abusive language and unfriendly attitudes of teachers. Teachers were largely not sensitive to the needs of individual children, including the effects of poverty, gender, and disability. For instance, the focal group discussions with children cited cases of teachers referring to them in derogatory language as well as refusing to allow those considered as less intelligent to participate in asking questions or answering questions. Some children also disclosed that when they do not achieve the desired mark in a test or exercise or get answers wrong, they were punished. Thus although corporal punishment is officially abolished in Ghanaian schools, there is still a high prevalence of the practice. According to the children various types of corporal punishments including caning, kneeling in class or in the sun, picking stones among others were meted out to them. Further, instances of sexual abuses and attempted amorous relationships were reported as some of the factors that detracted from children's readiness to learn. Moreover, among the children, bullying was commonplace, most commonly "mocking" by other peers, or cases of punishments being administered by older pupils or prefects. Bullying was particularly visible with special needs children when the school was unsupervised.

### **Child Readiness to Learn**

The 'Child Readiness to Learn' chapter aims to provide detailed evidence and analysis of the prevailing conditions in the localised classrooms from the pupils' own perspective taking into consideration the schools learning condition and presenting the findings in relation to its nature, contradictions, and compliance to policy. Education goes beyond schooling to include ensuring the cognitive development of learners, nurturing the creative and emotional growth of learners, and in helping learners to acquire values and attitudes for responsible citizenship. Child readiness is an assessment of the level of preparedness of pupils to learn.

With the understanding that the different cultural and environmental experiences of children affect their ability and readiness to learn, the education system and parents or caregivers are expected to meet, encourage and support the process of preparing children to be ready to learn.

This process requires that both the school and home acknowledge children's diverse backgrounds and help them transit the different education levels smoothly. Thus a *school* child's *readiness to learn* refers to the conditions that give the child the capacity to learn specific materials as well as a specific set of cognitive, linguistic, social, and motor skills that enables a child to assimilate the curriculum.

This section on child readiness is based mainly on the focal group interviews with parents, teachers and children. The findings from these interviews were analysed using a gender and inclusivity lens and analysed across the different urban and rural communities, faith-based schools (e.g. Catholic schools, Presbyterian and English Arabic units) and District Assembly (D/A) schools. The data was assessed in relation to assisting children prepare for school and exploring the key promoters and inhibitors of quality education mainly from a child perspective. The action options presented and relate to the potential steps which can be taken to ensure that the school promotes the readiness of all children to learn.

### **10.1 Roles and Responsibilities of Children in Relation to Learning from a Gendered Perspective**

Readiness to learn by children is only attainable if every child irrespective of their background is permitted and provided a level playing field. In most communities in northern Ghana, however, gender dynamics which are deeply embedded in cognitive frameworks greatly impact on the ability of learners to fully participate in schooling. Northern communities have continued to maintain and ensure that the strict gendered roles of men and women are sustained at the home, school and within the community. This is often compounded by the traditional beliefs and practices that limit the opportunities girls have within a male dominated social order that restricts her options particularly those which involve free choice (eg marriage, education, future plans etc). Right from infancy, girls are socialised and trained in order to maintain these cultural standards, roles and responsibilities which in some cases prevent the girl from fully participating and completing her education.

In order to create and offer equal opportunities, education practitioners and policy-makers need to make sure that the education they provide meets the needs of girls and boys, young women and young men equally by supporting those most disadvantaged by cultural biases through a gender-responsive education. A gender-responsive education system is one that ensures male and female learners of all ages enjoy quality, relevant and protective educational opportunities. Considering that various socialising agents teach and reinforce gender roles throughout the child's lifespan, the Quality of Education and Inclusivity study saw it necessary to look at the education system and learning in schools, districts and regions studied with a gender lens. The objective was to identify and understand gendered inequalities in relation to the participation, needs and realities of girls and boys.

Findings from the Focal Group interviews with children revealed that traditional roles and responsibilities had a direct impact on pupils schooling and learning experience. Household chores for example impacted negatively on the girl child's readiness to learn. Basic school children irrespective of gender, school type or community background, TENI and Non-TENI schools affirmed that girls engaged in all domestic chores: washing, cooking, baby-sitting,

fetching of water/firewood, cleaning, selling for parents, farming and many others whilst boys took care of domestic animals/livestock and farm and played with their friends. It was clear that the female child had a lot more responsibilities in the upkeep of the house and taking care of younger children than the boy child; these roles often transcend from the house/community to the school. The following table presents the types of roles that girls and boys were found to play across the three northern regions based on focal group interviews with children (boys and girls separately across the sample schools mainly at upper primary level).

**Table 10.1: Roles of Boys and Girls at School and in the Community: Responses to FGD**

	Upper West	Upper East	Northern
<b>Girls</b>			
Rural	<p>“In terms of duties, girls sweep and clean the urinal and shell groundnuts. Whilst boys weed, uproot groundnut and clean their urinal. In the community, girls do all the household chores, such as looking washing, sowing whilst boys play football, go to farm and shepherd flock. Girls said in their homes the boys would normally say am not a girl to be doing household chores” (UNIQ#373 St. Bamvum’s RC Primary RC High Mixed P3)</p>	<p>“Roles in School, girls sweep the classroom, clean the urinal and toilets. Sweep the weed after boys weed during the rainy season. Boys sweep compound because they do not know how to sweep well and when the boys do not sweep well the girls stay in their class during break time. Boys weed around the compound. Roles in the community for girls are fetching water, sweep, and wash bowls/utensils/clothes cook. Boys take care of animals, fetch firewood, and prepare muds with their fathers for building thatched roofing materials” (UNIQ#306 Wuntenga Primary DA High Girls P5)</p>	<p>“We normally fetch water, cook, sweep, take care of children and sometimes sell things for our mother (sales of sandals "bofrot" and rice) so we get tired and sleep in the class so when the teacher is asking of old issues we did in the past lesson, we do not know how to answer” (UNIQ#162 INST#9 Wuyela JHS EA Low Girls JHS2)</p>
Urban	<p>“In school, boys alone clean the black board and blackening the board. However, the school compound is swept by both boys and girls. At home, Girls sweep, cook, fetch water, wash bowls which boys do not take part. Boys take care of livestock which girls do not” (UN#471 Dery Primary DA Low Girls P6)</p>	<p>“Their roles in the school and at home are different to the boys'. In school the girls clean the latrines and the boys do the weeding. At home and school girls fetch water and wash bowls, etc” (UNIQ#174 INST#9 Kulenga Primary School DA Low Girls P6)</p>	<p>“Regarding the roles and responsibilities in school the girls think they work more than the boys for instance only girls are asked to clean the toilet, urinal and fetch water for the school” (UNIQ#80 Wurshie B JHS DA Girls JHS1)</p>
<b>Boys</b>			
Rural	<p>“Only boys farm on the school farm while girls plant or sow seeds. There are some games girls play only and boys do not. Only girls sweep the classrooms and offices. Only girls become office girls, there is no office boy. Girls do household chores like cooking, cleaning and child care. Boys do mainly outdoor activities like weeding on farms, taking care of animals, building, etc.” (UNIQ#481 Balangtaa Primary DA High Boys P5)</p>	<p>“At school, boys sweep the compound, while the girls sweep the classroom and fetch water. Boys also help the girls fetch water. The girls wash teacher's cup and bowls and clean their desks and chairs. The girls do not have to work more than the boys. At home, the boys are taking care of the animals, the girls are cooking and washing bowls, sweep and look after the little ones” (UNIQ#277 Adakudugu Primary RC High Boys P6)</p>	<p>“Boys and girls have different roles. The boys sweep the compound while the girls sweep the classroom. In the community and at home girls sweep the inner compounds, wash dishes, fetch water, fire wood and wash clothing of their brothers and parents and sometimes cook. The boys go to farm and take care of animals” (UNIQ#39 Bormanga DA Primary DA High Boys P6)</p>

URBAN	<p>“They both sweep the compound together but the girls fetch water and sweep classrooms. The boys on the other hand clean the blackboard. At home girls perform household chores while boys go to farm” (UNIQ#460 Lawra Primary School RC High Boys P5)</p>	<p>“There are different roles between boys and girls, for example boys play football and girls play handball during P.E. At the community level boys gather animals and girls wash and cook” (UNIQ#175 Kulenga Primary School DA Low Boys P6)</p>	<p>“Girls collect rubbish while the boys sweep the compound. We the girls we fetch water, sweep, wash bowls and help in the farm, but the boys they play ball, go to farms with our fathers” (UNIQ#101 Zonzongeli Primary DA Low Mixed P2)</p>
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(Source: focal group interviews with children across the study sites)

Across all the three regions similar roles and responsibilities were expected of girls and boys. For instance, in all regions girls were expected to fetch water, wash clothes, cook and take care of the younger siblings. The stereotypical roles for boys and girls at home and in the community were often carried into the school and reinforced by peers and teachers. At school girls were often made to sweep and fetch water while boys were asked to weed and clean the blackboard.

When pupils were asked about what they need at home in order to support their learning, children (particularly girls) stated that they needed more time to study and that in order to do so they would have to reduce the number of household chores and other activities required by their families; Children, particularly girls, said they would also need to carry out these chores or be allowed to do them at different times so that they could do school work during the daylight hours.<sup>44</sup> This reaction indicates children’s desire to learn and the need to adjust their roles at home in order to maximize their ability to learn and fully benefit from school. In one particular interview a girl said that she liked that the school was so far from her home because it meant that it was much more difficult for her mother to come and collect her from school if she needed her to carry out some kind of errand. Although there is dissatisfaction of girls related to how the work they do at home interferes with school, there is also a general acceptance of their roles, as the girls at Adakudugu Junior High (high performing urban catholic school) responded when asked how they felt about the work they had to do at home and in the school... “*It is our duty*”...

### 10.1.2 Food Insecurity

The objective of this section is to identify the key barriers that children experience in relation to food and establish what hunger does to the child in the classroom. Early childhood nutrition is crucial for children’s health, well-being, growth and survival. Child malnutrition underlies more than half of all deaths among young children<sup>45</sup>. Insufficient food and poor quality food, with too few micronutrients, weakens children’s immune systems, making them more vulnerable to disease. Malnutrition also hinders cognitive development and the capacity to learn, limiting progress towards child readiness to learn and attain a quality education<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> Adjusting the time girls spend at household work and cooking is quite challenging since the main time the women need the girls to assist is often in the late afternoon when the family is back from the farm and they are preparing for the evening meal. This is often between 3-6 and the sun goes down at 6:00pm.

<sup>45</sup> Blossner, M. and de Onis, M (2005), *Malnutrition: Quantifying the Health Impact at National and Local Levels*. Geneva, Switzerland, World Health Organization. (WHO Environmental Burden of Disease Series, 12)

<sup>46</sup>EFA Global Monitoring Report (2012), *Youth and Skills: Putting education to work. Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 7, Place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France

Key findings from Focus Group Interviews with pupils in Primary and Junior High Schools across the study areas brought to the forefront the significant role feeding at home and school plays in enhancing the learning abilities and capabilities of children. Most of the pupils interviewed mentioned learning was difficult for them because they usually always go to school on an empty stomach. Except for schools which were implementing the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP), children were expected to stay in the classroom without food for close to six hours because parents had failed to feed them breakfast or give them pocket money for lunch. This fact is supported by the responses from boys and girls that *“we need sufficient food to eat before and after school”*. Food was seen as a critical factor by teachers and children in order to accelerate the child’s readiness to learn. Although parents were seen to be the key players in ensuring their wards were fed for school, it was not being done. The children articulated the need and role of food in relation to improving their schooling experience and learning readiness *“if we are given proper pocket money, if we eat small, we will learn hard, we will not sleep in class”*.

Even though some parents claimed during the interview that they fed their children and ensured they went to school at all times there was evidence that most parents did not only fail to feed the children but also failed to provide children with the basic school needs such as exercise books, pens, pencils etc. FGDs with children revealed that most children attended school on an empty stomach. According to many of these children interviewed *“being in class without food”* made learning difficult because when pupils come to school hungry, it affects their level of concentration during lesson delivery hence pupil appeared not serious or not to enjoy learning. This trend was found among children in both Jirapa and Lawra Districts whether they resided in the rural or urban parts of the district and transcended the child’s gender as well as type of school attended. (Instrument 12, Q 11b). Pupils hunger in the Upper West and in some cases the Northern Region, was aggravated by having to walk long distances to school from home.

Focus Group Discussions with children in the Upper East Region revealed two effects of inadequate meals for the children. In the rural parts of Talensi Nabdam District, the interview showed that food was such a critical ingredient to child readiness that some children even transferred from schools that did not provide School Feeding into schools where this facility was available. Pupils also reported the coping strategies they used: *“At break time we go home to eat and if we don’t get food we don’t come back... If we get food and we are late we do not come back because the teacher will cane us”*. The following table outlines the importance of food and being fed based on FGD’s across the three regions incorporating rural and urban school/communities. The questions asked to Focal group interviewees were: *What changes would you like to see in your school and classroom in order to improve your learning?, and what makes learning difficult for you?*

**Table 10.2: Pupils’ Responses to Questions about what they need to help them to Learn**

FOOD	Upper West	Upper East	Northern
<b>Girls Rural</b>	<p>“Lack of concentration / pupil not serious. When pupils come to school hungry” (UNIQ#412 Kuvarpuo Primary School RC Low Mixed P6– Jirapa TENI)</p> <p>“Parents should provide food for them to learn better” (UNIQ#519 Yelibuori DA Primary School DA Low Boys P4 –</p>	<p>“Parents need to provide us with enough food at home and in school so that we can learn well” (UNIQ#359 Gungolgu JHS DA JHS1)</p> <p>“Sometimes we don’t get food to eat and it is difficult to go back home during break time to eat because of the distance. We walk to school” (UNIQ#318 Q#14</p>	<p>“We do become hungry in school. If you are hungry, you are not happy” (UNIQ#6 Manga Primary DA High Mixed P5 &amp; UNIQ#28 Zori Primary DA Girls F2 – West Mamprusi District – A TENI District)</p>

	Lawra Non-TENI)  “Need for food before coming to school” (UNIQ#537 Kakpagyili DA JHS DA Girls JHS2 – Lawra Non-TENI)	Bongo Akugri Primary DA Low Girls P4). “Due to poor performance parents may refuse to provide their needs and when one is hungry, you cannot concentrate” (UNIQ#206 Q#10 TND Chuchuliga Primary DA Low Girls P6).	“We want parental support, praise and want to have sufficient food to be able to concentrate and to motivate us” (UNIQ#137 Q#17 East Mamprusi District = Non TENI Bamahu JHS DA Low Girls JHS)
<b>Urban</b>	“Need for food before coming to school” (UNIQ#537 Kakpagyili DA JHS DA Girls JHS2). “Being in class without food made learning difficult according to the children” (St Bamvum’s Primary RC High Mixed P5 – Jirapa TENI District).	“When we are hungry, our minds are not on the lesson, or when you are feeling tired or sick. When do you feel tired and hungry? We often feel tired and hungry in the afternoon from 1 to 1:30 and sometimes in the morning. Because we come early and sometimes don’t have practical equipment, it makes us feel dull and we are not listening. We have made up our mind that we need to see it and because we can’t, we will do our own thing like copying work or talking” (UNIQ#299 Adakudugu Girls’ JHS RC Girls F3)	“Hunger when your mother does not cook food in the house you cannot read with the hunger” (UNIQ#154 Wuyela Primary EA Low Girls P6)  “Sometimes we feel hungry and cannot concentrate” (UNIQ#80 Wurshie B JHS DA Girls F1) “We need sufficient food to eat before or after school” (UNIQ#71 Ngbaripe Islam Primary School EA Low Mixed P3)
<b>Boys Rural</b>	“When we do not eat before coming to school and we don’t have money to eat at school. Some colleagues sleep in class and others bring food into the classroom to eat. These things happen almost every day in class” (UNIQ#206 Q#10 TND Namonsa Primary DA High Boys P6) “Parents should provide food for them to learn better” (UNIQ#519 Yelibuori Primary DA Low Boys P4) “Lack of concentration / pupil not serious. When pupils come to school hungry” (UNIQ#412 Kuvarpuo Primary School RC Low Mixed P6 – Jirapa TENI)	“The School Feeding Programme should also be introduced in Zuaringo Primary School. Some pupils moved to nearby Kontitaba Primary School because of the provision of the School Feeding there” (UNIQ#240 Zuaringo Primary DA High Boys P5).  “When we are hungry and don’t get food to eat before coming to school, we will not be able to concentrate in class” (UNIQ#307 Bongo Wuntenga Primary DA High Boys P5).	“We need sufficient food to eat before or after school” (UNIQ#71 Ngbaripe Islam Primary School EA Low Mixed P3)  “There should be strict monitoring to ensure better supply of food and checking the cooks from stealing the food as well as the teachers who steal from the head teacher’s office and give it to their girlfriends. We want more food; though the school is a feeding school but the portions are too small” (UNIQ#54 Q#10 & Q#13 West Mamprusi District = TENI Ninsali Primary DA High Boys P6)
<b>Urban</b>	“Only ‘3 out of every 7 pupils in the class ate before coming to school whilst rest were given money to buy food” (St Bamvum’s Primary RC High Mixed P3) “Provision of school lunch because some of us do not get food to eat in the morning before coming to school” (UNIQ#470 Dery DA Primary School DA Low Boys P3 – Lawra Non-TENI) “Need to Provide food to learn better” (UNIQ#529 Dery DA JHS DA Boys JHS1 – Lawra Non-TENI)	“Five years ago they had school feeding but now at the break some children go home to eat and they don’t come back. “Are you hungry? Yes. So why don’t you go home? Because we are older and we have learned to cope, but the smaller ones can’t control their hunger” (UNIQ#253 Ayimpoka Primary DA Low Boys P6)	“We need food always in the morning” (UNIQ#81 Wurshie B JHS DA Boys F1 – West Mamprusi District = a TENI District) “We need a full belly” (UNIQ#94 Gomlana Presby Primary PRES High Girls P4 – East Mamprusi = a non-TENI District) “We need food” (UNIQ#102 Zonzongeli DA Primary DA Low Boys P5 – East Mamprusi = a non-TENI District)

(Source: FGD with pupils, TENI field research)

Older children spoke of how their younger brothers and sisters were struggling with hunger in the classroom: *‘we are older and we have learned to cope, but the smaller ones can’t control their hunger’*. In Bongo District, in the Upper East there were vivid descriptions of how food insecurity was affecting children’s schooling and learning readiness. The pupils said because they come to school early, they do not take breakfast at home and so *‘when we are hungry, our minds are not on the lesson and it makes us feel tired or sick especially in the afternoon from 1:00pm to 1:30pm and sometimes in the morning’*. The food insecurity in Ghana affects mainly the three northern regions where levels of child undernourished have reached endemic levels and is the main cause of infant mortality. Stunting of children is also very prevalent across the three northern regions. Children stunted by malnutrition are not only short for their ages but their physical and intellectual development maybe affected in the long term. The situation in the Northern Region did not seem any different. The children said lack of food before going to

school produces debilitating effects on their concentration level in the classroom indicating that *'we need sufficient food to eat before or after school' 'we need a full belly to learn'*.

### 10.1.3 Material Insecurity for the Children

In the majority of schools studied, the children in focus group discussions mentioned material insecurity as a key factor that hinders their ability to remain in the classroom to participate in learning. Material insecurity is a state of insecurity created when poverty, lack of basic personal needs, school supplies, sanitation facilities and or learning materials makes a child feel like he or she is not good enough compared to others and which produces a vulnerability condition that undermines self confidence and esteem. This deprived condition can lead to a situation which makes the affected child feel marginalised and could become depressed without the proper support needed to promote their participation in learning and sustain their interest in attending and continuing in schooling (Lister, 2006).

Focal group discussion with upper primary children in the Upper West Region, revealed that the majority of school children from the faith-based school schools (RC) mentioned the lack of learning materials such as pens, books and personal needs like uniform as their main concern of material insecurity. The respondents from the District Assembly (DA) administered schools however, spoke mainly of the lack of physical infrastructure such as sanitation facilities, school buildings, furniture, electricity, and water in addition to learning and teaching materials.

FGDs in the Upper East Region revealed that children also lacked their basic needs such as books and also some infrastructure at the schools including the need for computers to help them learn information communication technology (ICT). Although all pupils in the country sit for the same ICT exam, the majority of the schools are without computers. In this case, the children are severely disadvantaged when it comes to studying and learning ICT.

FGD's in the Northern Region revealed that boys were concern about the congestion and crowded conditions within the classrooms pointing out that *'more class rooms for P2 were needed as the pupil sit under the tree<sup>47</sup> as well as wanting a JHS in the community'*. The girls had an entirely different story to tell. According to some of the girls interviewed; material insecurity compelled some parents to push them into child labour or transactional sex, oblivious of the negative consequences on the development of the girls. According to them *"anytime we ask our parents for money for books, uniforms, they prefer us to sell ourselves or go to the bush to carry firewood to come and sell to get our basic needs"*. This either limited the time or completely takes them away from the classroom during teaching and learning sessions. The following table presents the responses of children in relation to the types of needs the children had and what children need to learn better at school (probe from home and from the teachers):

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<sup>47</sup> Under trees' refers to a normal educational institution designed for teaching of pupils like any other public school but in this case teaching and learning takes place outside of a traditional school building. Instead teaching occurs 'under a tree' due to lack of enough classrooms or buildings are dilapidated or they are non-existent at all.

**Table 10.3: Pupils' Responses to Questions about what they need to help them to Learn**

	TENI DISTRICTS	NON-TENI DISTRICTS	
Jirapa	<p><i>"Parental support in providing school supplies such as pens, books, uniforms, sandals, pencils, examination fees, etc"</i> (UNIQ#386 St. Kambali's Primary RC Low Girls P6)</p> <p><i>"Provision of textbooks to the school. School uniforms"</i> (UNIQ#394 St. Bamvum's JHS RC Mixed JHS2)</p> <p><i>"We need pipe water (water supply) to keep us in school. Light in our houses for studies. Provide uniforms, exercise books, bags, sandals, and food"</i> (UNIQ#412 Kuvarpuo RC Primary RC Low Mixed)</p> <p><i>"They need textbooks, sandals, and uniforms. They also need money to pay exams fees. They need teaching and learning materials like exercise books, pens pencils, school bags etc"</i> (UNIQ#402 Sognaayili RC Primary RC High Mixed P4)</p>	<p><i>"Provision of textbook because currently we have only 12 English books and most of the pages are removed and although we try to read by pairing but most of the pages are removed. Provision of TLMS"</i> (UNIQ#482 Q#13 Balangtaa DA Primary DA High Girls P4)</p> <p><i>"For girls they said they needed adequate books to enable them learn on their own at home so that they can answer questions in class more often"</i> (UNIQ#459 Q#13 St Gabriels Primary RC High Girls P5)</p> <p><i>"We want parents to give us books, uniforms, school bags, and take care of us when we are sick"</i> (UNIQ#469 Q#13 Dery DA Primary DA Low Girls P3)</p> <p><i>"Need adequate supply of textbooks, provision of basic school needs e.g. exercise books, pens and pencils, etc. Means of transport for children living far away from the school e.g. bicycles"</i> (UNIQ#470 Q#13 Dery DA Primary DA Low Boys P3)</p>	Lawra
TND	<p><i>"They need parents or siblings to assist them to do their homework and be provided with pen or pencils, bags and sandals. They want their parents to buy them English reading books and to inspect their exercise books"</i> (UNIQ#187 Kpatuya DA Primary DA Low Girls P5)</p> <p><i>"Supply of adequate reading books for every child and exercise books. Provision of school uniforms, bags sandals, pens and pencils, furniture, food before, during and after school"</i> (UNIQ#232 Namonsa DA Primary DA Girls JHS1)</p> <p><i>"They need their parents support in terms of provision of textbooks, TLM, school bags, sandals, mathematical sets, food before, during and after school, resource the household chores always given them after school"</i> (UNIQ#218 Chuchuliga DA Primary DA Low Girls P6)</p>	<p><i>"We need adequate writing materials, uniform, school bags and sandals"</i> (UNIQ#359 Gungolgu JHS DA Boys JHS1)</p> <p><i>"They need textbooks and bags for the books. Exercise books and uniforms. One of them has only two notebooks and uses them quite randomly. They need to read at home. The boy who has only 2 notebooks says that he was taking care of the animals when the free uniforms were distributed at the school, so he didn't receive a uniform. He went to somebody's farm and worked (weeding) and he earned some money and he bought his uniform. The other boys received the uniforms from school (3 of them) and one through EQUALL, a school support programme"</i> (UNIQ#317 Akugri DA Primary DA Low Boys P4)</p> <p><i>"In teaching we don't get practical lessons. Like what? In science and Pre-tech, we don't have the instruments that we need for learning. We don't have</i></p>	Bongo

		<i>textbooks, inadequate furniture” (UNIQ#29.Adakudugu JHS RC High Girls JHS3)</i>	
WMD	<p><i>“First is a new JHS block, textbooks. We need more furniture, uniforms pens and exercise books. (UNIQ#50 Kupiel DA JHS DA High Girls JHS1)</i></p> <p><i>“Reading books, school bags more furniture, more teachers (ICT). They should connect electricity for lights to the school so that we can learn at the night” (UNIQ#81 Wurshie B JHS DA High Boys JHS1)</i></p> <p><i>“Adequate school facilities such as furniture toilet, changing rooms and textbooks” (UNIQ#80 Wurshie B JHS DA High Girls JHS1)</i></p> <p><i>“Uniforms for all and sandals or shoes for all. Maintenance of school building, leaky roof while drawing cups and bowls for feeding, lockable toilets so that the community cannot come and dirty them as currently happens. First aid box” (UNIQ#54 Ninsali DA Primary DA High Boys P6)</i></p>	<p><i>“We need serious support from parents to visit our schools, books; both textbooks and exercise books, sandals, uniforms, and food. They should provide us with our basic needs” (UNIQ#111 Zonzongeli DA JHS DA Girls JHS2)</i></p> <p><i>“We need a fence wall around our school to prevent children from roaming. Outside the school, there should be first aid box in school because children are asked to go home for minor illness” (UNIQ#93 Gomlana Presby Primary PRES High Girls P5)</i></p> <p><i>“We need textbooks, exercise books, teachers and desks, containers for water, and portable water. As for home, anytime we ask our parents for money for books, uniforms, they refer us to sell ourselves or go to the bush to carry firewood to come and sell to get our basic needs” (UNIQ#118 Zangu DA Primary DA High Girls P6)</i></p>	EMD

(Source: FGD with pupils, TENI field research)

#### 10.1.4 Work and Child Labour

The continuous existence of non-school going children who are supposed to enjoy free basic education is disturbing. FGD with children reveals that parents would often sacrifice children’s education to meet their farming needs. Boys and girls will all be drafted to the farm to sow, weed or harvest etc. The findings reveal that child labour was prevalent amongst children across the 54 school investigated.

Most children who had dropped out of school or had never been to school at all were engaging in menial jobs such as *kayayoo*<sup>48</sup> in the southern part of Ghana. Even some children who were in school were also engaged in some kind of work such as petty trading in order to assist family earnings. More serious were cases where children were being used on teacher’s farms especially on Fridays to generate income for the teacher at the expense of instructional hours. Some children admitted they decide not to go to school on such days. Further, parents were also noted to be taking their children especially girls out of school for farming activities by either stopping them from going to school or interrupting with their classes’ hours. Parents themselves admitted to this claim of girls during the Community/Parent Scorecard that they ask children to help them on the farm and chores which gives girls no chance to learn well. Girls in response re-affirmed

<sup>48</sup> Young adolescent girls and boys migrate south to seek for capital through either head porter-ship by girls and carrying out odd menial jobs such as weeding cocoa farms by boys.

the issue of being over worked at home which hampers their learning; “we get so tired after farm work in the evening so when we come to school the next morning, we are forced to sleep after remaining silent for some time”. Consequently some actually pleaded to be relieved saying “we want our parents to reduce our work load at home and give us the chance to study”.

Child after child narrated numerous activities which was their responsibility and in many instances indicated that such demands interfere with their learning. From the children in the focus group discussions in the Upper West Region, we found out that sometimes girls get up and want to come to school but their parents (mothers) tell them not to because of excess household chores. Others disclosed that ‘in the harvest season sometimes our parents ask us to go to the farm instead of school and sometimes to take care of our younger siblings’. It was evidently clear that girls were more overburdened with work fostered by gender and biological roles which interfered with learning than boys. They actually told the research team that:

*‘too much household chores make girls not able to learn as the boy child. Sometimes when not feeling well or feeling sick when menstruating it makes learning difficult. When mothers are sick, girls are to take care of the home that makes learning difficult’*

In the Talensi Nabdam District of the Upper East Region the challenge of disadvantage and disengagement among boys in upper primary and junior high school grades was apparent. Pupils had been exposed to the desire to seek money that had preoccupied them such that they often abandoned school in search of money and independence. The available data as captured in the children’s focus group interviews shows that boys were less likely than girls to enrol at upper primary levels and JHS and perform well.

*“Boys were much particular about their colleagues who do not come to school but rather go to the mining site to do illegal mining commonly known as ‘galamsey’. This mining issue keeps most of their colleagues away from school with young girls involved.*

The following table provides some of the responses from pupils at upper primary level across the six sampled districts in relation to work and schooling. The questions asked during the focal group interview were: *do you know of any children who do not go to school (probe for reasons why)?, what prevents you coming from school sometimes and how are you treated at home as compared to school?*

**Table 10.4: Pupils’ Responses to Questions about why Children do not Come to School**

<b>DISTRICTS</b>	<b>RURAL SCHOOLS</b>	<b>URBAN SCHOOLS</b>
<b>EMD</b>	<p><i>“Yes, a lot of them some are married, some went to kayayo, others too, sickness, some too feel they would not waste their time in school. They prefer to buy and sell to get fast money. Some got pregnant and dropped”</i> (UNIQ#118 Q#21 Zangu Primary DA High Girls P6)</p> <p><i>“Yes (They are many) some have gone to learn sowing, other have gone to Kayayo. Those who went to learn tailoring usually tells us their</i></p>	<p><i>“Farm work also prevent some of my friends from school” (UNIQ#93 Q#12 Gomlana Presby Primary PRES High Boys P5)</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, there are children not in school. Don't like school and refuse to go. they are not living with their parents but staying in a boarding house and have to work - child labour” (UNIQ#94 Q#12 Gomlana Presby Primary PRES High Girls P4)</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, a lot of them are at home. Some due to poverty they can't make it and have to go and work for money than being in school. Some are</i></p>

<b>DISTRICTS</b>	<b>RURAL SCHOOLS</b>	<b>URBAN SCHOOLS</b>
	<p>masters do not cane them but our master cane. Those who go to Kayayo get money more than us. They sometimes give us pens and books” (UNIQ#162 Q#12 Wuyela JHS EA Girls JHS2)</p>	<p>also sent to their farms instead of school. Some of us over work in the house that we don't have the chance to read our books at home. Somehow we come to school we sleep or come late and being punished” (UNIQ#111 Q#12 Zonzongeli JHS DA Girls JHS2)</p>
<b>BONGO</b>	<p>“Yes there are children within the community who are not in school. REASONS School dropout and engage in menial jobs like selling pure water. Some go to Accra” (UNIQ#306 Q#12 Wuntenga Primary DA High Girls P5)</p> <p>“Some of them are not in school because, their parents are farmers and want their children to help them during farming season and after the farming season, they cannot cope at school again” (UNIQ#318 Q#12 Akugri Primary DA Low Girls P4)</p> <p>“Yes there are children within the community who are not in school. They do nothing, they just roam at home and one pupil goes round stealing. Pupil could identify 4 pupils who had dropped out from P.1-P.3 and are just roaming or taking care of animals. The boys prefer to send bicycles across the borders (smuggle) for a fee of 0.50p each and one boy had stopped school to do that” (UNIQ#349 Q#12 Bulika Primary DA Low Girls P4)</p>	<p>“The children mentioned sickness or when their parents engage them in any house hold chores and they are not able to finish on time, you may stay away from school for the fear that you will be beating, but if you stay away from school, even though you will be punished you will tell lies that you were sick and be free” (UNIQ#276 Q#21 Adakudugu Primary RC High Girls P6)</p> <p>“When we are at school we get to learn and so prefer to be at school because I want to be somebody tomorrow. While we were discussing this issue a man from the village was at the nearby borehole - irrespective of the fact that the children were engaged in our discussion he called on girl over to pump the water for him” (UNIQ#291 Q#21 Lanwana Primary DA Low Girls P6)</p>
<b>LAWRA</b>	<p>“Too much work/e.g. sweeping and weeding. When some pupils are learning and others are playing outside the classroom” (UNIQ#481 Balangtaa Prim DA High Boys P5)</p> <p>“In the harvest season sometimes our parents ask us to go to the farm instead of school and sometimes to take care of our younger siblings” (UNIQ#492 Q#21 Tuokuo Prim DA Low Mixed P6)</p> <p>“When girls are supposed to go to farm in the farming and harvesting season, it prevents them from coming to school. When parent ask girls to stay back home and assist with chores” (UNIQ#501 Q#21 Balangtaa JHS DA Girls JHS1)</p> <p>“Treatment at home comprises preparing meals; go to farm whiles at school the treatment is different in the sense that we do not do that. At school we are treated better than home because at home our parents engage us more and we do not learn but in school we weed small and learn” (UNIQ#509 Q#22 Tuutinli Primary School DA High Girls P4)</p>	<p>“There are some children known in the community who do not go to school. They are not in school because of lack of parental care (orphans who do not have any person to take care of them) and pupils working i.e. involve in menial jobs for money or material gains in order to provide for basic educational needs” (UNIQ#472 Q#12 Dery Primary School DA Low Boys P6)</p> <p>“Too much household chores make girls not able to learn as the boy child. Sometimes our parents tell us (girls) not to go to school in order to take care of our young ones and that affect our learning. Sometimes when not feeling well or feeling sick when menstruating makes learning difficult. When mothers are sick, girls are to take care of the home that makes learning difficult” (UNIQ#471 Q#23 Dery Primary School DA Low Girls P6)</p> <p>“We (girls) are treated differently at school and at home. At home we sweep, cook; fetch water, wash clothes and care for animals. At school, girls sweep the classroom and boys sweep the compound. Only girls wash cups and basins and fetch water for pupils and teachers to drink” (UNIQ#469 Q#22 Dery Primary</p>

<b>DISTRICTS</b>	<b>RURAL SCHOOLS</b>	<b>URBAN SCHOOLS</b>
		School DA Low Girls P3)
<b>WMD</b>	<p>"There are many boys who do not attend school but are in the community. They go to farm with fathers. There are fathers take them away claiming of poor performance" (UNIQ#6 Q#12 Manga Primary School DA High Mixed P5)</p> <p>Yes, a few are in the community helping their fathers in their farm and others are doing nothing. Some of the girls are at home helping mothers in the market" (UNIQ#32 Q#12 Ninsali Primary School DA High Girls P6)</p> <p>"There are many not in school; about half the number who is in school. Parents take children out of school for farming. Large families cause parents to send only a few children to school. PTA dues discourage parents from sending children to school. Reason for dropout includes farming, dislike of school and lack of parental support" (UNIQ#49 Q#12 Kupiel JHS DA Boys JHS1)</p>	<p>"Sometimes our parents make us fetch water. They sometimes want to take us to Accra. They do not want us to come because of farming" (UNIQ#71 Q#21 Ngbaripe Islam Primary School EA Mixed P3)</p> <p>"Work at home sometimes girls are made to work when is time to school which does not allow them come to school" (UNIQ#72 Q#21 Ngbaripe Islam Primary School EA Mixed P5 &amp; 6)</p> <p>"Engaging in petty trading and closing late. Teachers usually take us to farm on Fridays. So if I know we will go to farm, I will not come to school" (UNIQ#80 Q#21 JHS DA Girls JHS1)</p>
<b>TND</b>	<p>"When the teachers asks us to buy something and our parents cannot pay we always leave the school and go to Galamsey. The school asks them to pay for pamphlets and exams fees. All of the girls have done galamsey by digging for gold. They get money or grade of stone they did up valuing between GHC8.10 and GHC16. If they do not find a good grade stone they get no money. You could go there and get nothing so you have to stay extra days" (UNIQ#263 Ayimpoka Girls JHS2)</p> <p>"When there is plenty work from your parents without support for them to complete early before doing work assignments" (UNIQ#218 Chuchuliga Girls P6)</p> <p>"Some also go for "galamsey" mining claiming the school is not more profitable".</p> <p>"Our parents should send us to go and sell only after school. I sell kenkey with my mother at night. If I do not sell I will get money for books and other school needs" (UNIQ#80 JHS DA High Girls JHS1)</p> <p>"We also need our parents to not engage us so much at home but give us the time to learn" (UNIQ#60 WurshieB2 Primary DA High Mixed P2)</p>	<p>"Out of school children are mainly those who have moved to Kumasi to work. They described how these children do not listen to their parents so the parents "just leave them". When asked if these children are sent to Kumasi or go of their own accord, the latter was usually the case. When asked about their own attendance, they said they only stayed away from school because of illness or if they have to run errands for their parents" (UNIQ#174 Q#12 Kulenga Primary DA Low Girls P6)</p> <p>"The children know other children who do go to school. They gave the reason as some of the children want quick money and therefore engage in petty trading" (UNIQ#187 Q#12 Kpatuya Primary DA Low Girls P5)</p> <p>"The girls generally felt that their home lives and the things they were expected to do at home did not help them to get on with their school work. They felt they had to work hard at home. Pupils reported that they are treated better in school than at homes. Domestic chores for girls are burdensome" (UNIQ#174 &amp; 187 Q#22 Kulenga &amp; Kpatuya Primary DA Low Girls P6 &amp; P5)</p>
	<p>"Sometimes girls said, they get up and want to come to school but parents (mother) tell you not to because of excess household chores. And girls complained that when they are constantly absent for a week, catching up with their colleges in school is difficult" (UNIQ#401 Sognaayili Mixed P2)</p> <p>"Too much household chores make it difficult for them to learn in the sense that they wash bowls,</p>	<p>"Some children do not go to school because of their friends. Some children follow bad company. When they listen to friends sexual endeavours, they are influenced to engage in sex. Some their father dies and mother is poor; poverty of parents. Some children also engage in child labour to get money" (UNIQ#386 Q#12 St. Kambali Primary School</p>

<b>DISTRICTS</b>	<b>RURAL SCHOOLS</b>	<b>URBAN SCHOOLS</b>
<b>JIRAPA</b>	<p><i>sweep the compound, cook and take care of their younger siblings” (UNIQ#402 Sognaayili Mixed P4)</i></p> <p><i>“When they get tired from household chores they cannot concentrate in the classroom. During the early farming season, girls are told to go and sow seeds on the farms so they do not go to school” (UNIQ#427 Kpaguri Mixed P2)</i></p> <p><i>“Some of the girls said their parents treat them well as they are able to provide them with clothing and basic needs while others said their teachers treat them well as they provide them with books, pens and even school uniforms” (UNIQ#402 Sognaayili Mixed P4)</i></p> <p><i>“In the house we have so many responsibilities when it comes to work (chores) but in school we only sweep, fetch water and clean desk and go to class to learn” (UNIQ#417 Kuvarpuo JHS Mixed JHS3)</i></p>	<p><i>RC Low Girls P6)</i></p> <p><i>The pupil admitted they knew and had friends who did not go to school and had dropped out because of forming cliques and getting contracts to work on someone’s farm for money or herd cattle for money. Another finding was girls or boys who travel to the south during vacations get into amorous relationships and refuse to go back to school due to their new found lovers (UNIQ#436 Q#12 primary School DA Low Mixed P2)</i></p> <p><i>“When child is an only son, father engages them to help in farming. Then they are unable to perform in class and when parents are unable to support them. Parental poverty” (UNIQ#385 Q#12 St. Kambali Primary School RC Low Boys P6)</i></p>

(Source: FGD with pupils, TENI field research)

This might explain reasons why boys attain lower learning achievement due partly to disadvantage related to poverty, and partly from disengagement associated with disaffection for school coupled with a sense of not belonging to the school community.

Girls were also involved in the quest for funds in order to sustain them and provide for their basic needs at an early age. For example, respondents mentioned that ‘there are girls who don’t go to school but were engaged in washing bowls and gamamsey in Kumasi. Among the reasons adduced for this trend as ‘when the teachers ask us to buy something and our parents cannot pay we always leave the school and go to Galamsey. The school asks us to pay for pamphlets and exams fees’. All of the girls have done gamamsey by digging for gold. According to the narratives of the respondents, if they get money from gamamsey then that takes care of their financial needs otherwise they have to search and gather stones according to prescribed grade valuing up to between GHC8.10 and GHC16. If they do not find a good grade stone, they get no money. ‘You could go there and get nothing so you have to stay extra days’, one girl intimated and this implies more lost days from the classroom and consequently lost time of learning.

#### **10.1.5 Social and Community Activities**

During the focus group discussion with children, it emerged that cattle herding, kayayoo, early marriages, lack of support and encouragement for pupils who were slow learners or have some of disabilities as well as orphans came up as some of the reasons that kept children out of school. For instance in the Northern Region, there appears to be a clear pattern of reasons underlining school dropout between girls and boys. When asked if they knew of any children in the community who were not going to school, the responses were in the affirmative. “Yes there are children not in school, but more children in school than not”. Dropout groups include cowboys who look after cattle; girls who are given out to marriage (teen marriage, forced marriage or early marriage) and some school children also leave to learn a trade such as hair dressing while many migrant to big towns or cities like Accra to engage in *Kayayoo*. The two main reasons for this migration are in search of better opportunities of livelihood than they could find in their

villages while others also escaped with friends from ethnic conflicts. Main types and causes of out of children in the Upper West Region include ‘when parents refuse to support the child, parents failed to send them to school, teenage pregnancy, early marriage, poor academic performance, some are orphans and don’t have care takers. There are SEN children in the community. Some are in school while others are not in school. Some their fathers die and mothers are poor’. The field work revealed that children were not attending school was often due to community stigmatisation and/or parents failed to enrol them in school because they felt it was “a waste of time”.

Another finding was that there were some girls and boys who travelled to the south during vacations and get into transactional sex relationships and refuse to go back to school due to these new relationships. The situation in the Upper East Region is not much different from those described for the other two regions although minor variations do exist. The field work revealed that ‘there are children who are not going to school because their minds were not in school’. They roam and they go fishing in the river and they cook the fish or they sell it. There were also children who were identified as out of school because they are over-aged children and felt shy to go to school to mix with younger children. Table 10.5 presents findings from the FGD with children on the question regarding “do you know any children not in school”; the field teams also probed for issues around drop out, reasons for non attendance and special needs children.

**Table 10.5: Pupils’ Responses to Questions about why Children do not Come to School**

Unique Number	Name of School	Rank	Gender	Response
117 EMDR	Zangu D/A Primary	High	Girls	Yes there are children not in school. Dropout: cowboys- look after cattle; teen marriage; some leave to learn a trade such as hair dressing. Kayayo, some also accompany their mothers to look after younger siblings. There are SEN in the school. 3 hearing impaired and 1 speech impaired. There are 3 children with disabilities in the community.
137	Bamahu D/AJHS	Low	Girls	Yes, there are. Don’t go to school because parents don’t want them to go, no money for school and orphans. Dropout reasons: pregnancy, roaming following bad friends, pressure on pupils from teachers wanting relationships with girls. There are no SEN in school, their disability does not allow them to go.
32 WMDR	Ninsali D/A Primary	High	Girls	Yes, a few are in the community helping their fathers in their farm and others are doing nothing. Some of the girls are at home helping mothers in the market. Others too are sick in the house. Some parents asked them to stay at home because no teachers. Others are saying they can’t afford books or uniforms. Due to long absenteeism of teachers in school. Some too punishment by the teachers. They are sick and parent don’t want them to come to school.
40	Bormanga D/A Primary	High	Girls	Some parents ask their children take care of their sister and brothers. Some decide to migrate to the South. Some also drop out from school to go and learn trade like hair dressing and others.
61	Manga D/A Primary	High	Mixed	Because of the perception that girls have not use in school, fathers concentrate all their resources and time on the boys and ask mothers to take care of the girls, which most cases mother are unable to cater for the needs of the girls. The boys usually fool around with the girls and when girls go to sleep , the boys go to learn.

(Source: FGD with pupils, TENI field research)

## 10.2 Children's Perception and Assessment of Their own Learning

During the TENI field research, it was unearthed that most children were prepared to be in school and learn. Despite the fact that most of them did not have uniforms, sandals, exercise books and pencils, they made the effort to attend school in torn muftis and rubber-thongs slippers known in the local parlance as “charley-wote” and on empty stomachs. One response summed up the pupils’ endless motivation to get themselves educated as ‘we like education generally and that translates into our liking of the school whether teachers come or not’. Field work observation revealed that children would often sit and wait in classrooms for hours or days for their teachers and some children would turn the school premises into a playground when teachers did not show up.

### 10.2.1 Teaching Methods and Children's Assessment of own Learning

The role of the teacher is highly significant to child readiness to learn in the classroom. It has both a functional and symbolic value to the child. Teachers’ knowledge and abilities are at the heart of children’s learning in school. Yet, all too often, teachers are either insufficiently prepared or lack the commitment to teach and this has led to crisis in learning. The teacher is very central to child readiness to learn as he or she is the pivot inside the classroom where actual learning is supposed to go on. The quality of teachers is the single most important factor affecting pupil performance, and that schools which score highly on standardized tests have multiple policies in place to ensure that the teachers they employ are as effective as possible. There are several indicators for assessing how much the teacher facilitates real learning within the classroom environment. Presently in this section, we examine the evidence of teaching methods, teacher’s personal demeanour, communication skills, preparedness and commitment to work as well as control over lesson and pupils in classroom.

In the focus group discussion with the children, they identified some of the teaching methods they thought facilitated learning. Many of the respondents in the focus group discussion cited situations when teacher demonstrates by acting, explanations, use of interesting teaching and learning materials, giving good examples, use of funny jokes as ice breakers, repeating questions, and relating the topic to the pupils’ daily lives that makes the lesson more practical and interesting to participate in.

A large proportion of children interviewed mentioned the usage of interactive teaching approaches as inspiring methods which helped them learn more effectively. These included teaching techniques such as the teacher: involving pupils in discussions, the teacher talking slowly for pupils to grasp what is being taught and the teacher not rushing through a lesson delivery. Indeed, the children could tell they were getting quality learning if their teacher explained lessons for them to understand using both Ghanaian and English language. One benchmark that girls mentioned as an indicator for assessing their own learning and progress was in relation to literacy and numeracy. Female pupils interviewed in the FGD’s mentioned that their assessment of their own learning was based on their ability to speak and write “good” English and do arithmetic. One girl said *“I want to be taught English to know how to read and write so that one day I will be like you people (referring to the interviewers) and be in a big office”*. Boys on the contrary perceived learning as a way to building self confidence and

acquiring useful skills for solving problems saying “*it promotes my self esteem and makes me have hope in the future to perform well in my jobs and minimize mistakes*”. The table below provides responses from FGD’s with children at upper primary to the questions: “when do you enjoy learning”, “when do you not enjoy learning” and “what do you need to learn better?”.

**Table 10.6: Pupils’ Responses to Questions about when they Enjoy Learning**

Unique Number	Name of School	Rank	Gender	Response from focal group discussion
161 EMDR	Wuyela E/A JHS	Low	Boys	When the class is very quite. When the teachers explanation is clear. When the teacher speaks loudly. When there is no caning. Students listen attentively and ask questions. Student answer questions and look happy.
162	Wuyela E/AJHS	Low	Girls	We are usually sad. We think about why we are in school. We ask more questions. The teacher becomes very angry and he will cane the whole class. You don't feel like coming to school. You think coming to school is just useless.
93 EMDU	Gomlana Presby Primary	High	Boys	You will want the teacher to go out of the class. You will not write anything in the class. You will not like to answer his/her question in class. Students will not participate or answer question in class. You will not respect him/her, you will be absent minded.
102	Zonzongeli D/A Primary	Low	Mixed	Teacher cane us when we don't do his/her lesson. We sit to play ground and make noise a lot and some will sleep on our desks. No, madam, you see, sometimes the teacher will give us work and be sitting down till its time, then he leaves.
111	Zonzongeli D/A JHS		Girls	We need serious support from parents to visit our schools, both text and exercise books, sandals, uniforms, and food. They should provide us with our basic needs. If teachers are absent, some of us have to learn on our own. The teachers have to be given training to interact with students properly. Some of them too, their approaches are very poor. They don't know to deal with students problems in class.
49 WMDR	Kupiel JHS	High	Boys	When you enjoy learning, it promotes self-esteem, you have hope from the future, you can memorize what you have learnt, it can help you perform well in your jobs, you perform well in exams, it minimizes your mistakes, it can help you get a good job.
32	Ninsali D/A Primary	High	Girls	We become dull and misbehave in class. He We becomes sad. At time you feel like leaving the school. Not so often, when the teachers are lazy. We sleep in class and make hell of noise. Immediate we see the teacher we are angry. It make us dislike
7	Manga Primary D/A	High	Mixed	We sit and play. We sleep in class. We chat and not listen to teacher. If teacher shouts a lot. If teacher canes us. When he teach very fast.
39	Bormanga D/A primary	High	Boys	When teacher do not give a lot of examples. When the teacher is fast we cannot follow. When the class is noisy and distractive. These happen every day.
80 WMDU	D/A JHS		Girls	Children do not understand/pay attention. Children's minds are not in class children are not engaged/participate in the lesson.
60	WurshieB2 D/A Primary	High	Mixed	We don't learn anything and some of us go outside to play. when teacher does not give us any assignment, we are not happy.

(Source: FGD with pupils, TENI field research)

In the Upper West Region, child readiness was evidenced by pupil migration to urban towns for work in order to purchase textbooks and other school needs. In Dery D/A JHS for example, pupils were buying their own books and uniforms from income derived from farming and performing other menial jobs, as well as to pay for the upkeep and feeding at school; some of the pupils would also migrate in order to work in the ‘galamsey’ (gold mining) areas. The field researchers also observed that the bigger pupil attendance testified to the pupils’ readiness to learn. For instance at Dery D/A Primary school in Lawra, notwithstanding the fact that the pupils in P5 had no teacher in the class for three continuous days; other teachers at the school were

irregular; with another teacher riding his motor bike in and out of school several times and not attending class, the pupils were still in school and ready to learn. Pupils across the three northern regions demonstrated a level of obedience and self discipline by remaining in class even though neither the head teacher nor any other teacher attended to them. The attendance in the P3 class which was observed showed only 2 pupils out of 56 who were absent on the day of the observation.

In the **Upper East**, boys in focus group discussions mentioned that *‘there are a lot of their colleagues who are not in school’*. Boys thought that their colleagues do not go to school because teachers beat them. Other pupils also reported that non attending pupils do not want to sweep when they come to school. Some mentioned that their colleagues ‘drop out of school because they failed their exams and then decided not to continue’.

In the Northern Region, the majority of the respondents showed an understanding of what was required for them to learn.

*“We need sympathetic and understanding teacher, we need to be able to answer questions, and we need a full belly. If the teacher is not there we need to take a book and pens; if we do not have book, we need to read our notes. We need to ask for help from our peers and older sibling if we do not understand something’.*

The children explained during FGD’s that they sometimes feel intimidated to ask the teacher to slow down the pace of the lesson or ask further questions to seek clarifications in areas they do not understand because the teacher may take offence or punish them. Many of the girls mentioned this factor as an impediment to effective learning in the Northern Region.

*‘The last lesson was in Integrated Science; the teacher goes too fast, we are afraid to tell him to slow down as the teacher gets angry when we ask questions. It demoralises us and we lose interest in Science. We are afraid to ask questions because when you ask questions wrongly, the teacher will beat you. This does not help us to learn well’* (FGD with Girls at upper primary level in Northern Region).

### **10.2.2 English Factor (Language of Instruction)**

On the whole the children interviewed in Focal Group Discussions indicated that their limited understanding of the English language posed some challenge to their learning. Pupils across the 54 schools in the six districts indicated on several occasions that a blend of the English language together with the local language was their preferred method of receiving teaching instructions. This view was more pronounced among pupils interviewed in rural areas as well as in schools rated as low in performance. They articulated that they speak the local language at home while the teacher uses English to teach in the classroom and this makes learning difficult because they do not understand English very well. According to the children interviewed, though teachers use English in the class to deliver lessons, many children realised that this was not effective in helping them; they preferred it when explaining some concepts in English, the teacher switch to the use of the local language and this appears to help children learn and it helps them to learn and speak English. FGD’s with children also revealed that in cases where the teacher is not a speaker of the local language, then the use of English language as a medium of instruction

inhibits child learning. The following table is based on the FGI question *with children: “is the language you speak at home the language your teacher uses in the classrooms (probe for how this affects the child’s learning?”*

**Table 10.7: Pupils’ Responses to Questions the Language they speak at Home and at School**

BOYS	GIRLS	MIXED
<p>“When teacher uses only English to teach or give instructions. When pupils cannot speak and understand English. When pupils do not participate in the lesson, when pupils are given old and damaged textbooks to learn or when pupils are not able to answer questions” <b>(Lawra District UNIQ#481 Q#16 Balangtaa Primary School DA High Boys P5)</b></p> <p>“The use of English (L 2) alone as a medium of communication does not help pupil to deepen their understanding of concepts taught. The children reported that the language they use in the house is <i>Talen</i> which is different from what the teacher uses (English).The children claimed that they understand concepts taught in English. However, sometimes when the concept is difficult to understand, teacher uses <i>Talen</i> to explain it” <b>(Talensi Nabdam District UNIQ#218 &amp; 231 Q#16 Chuchuliga Primary School DA Low Boys P6 /Namonsa JHS DA Boys JHS1)</b></p>	<p>“At home the girls said they speak <i>Frafra</i> with their mothers but English with their peers. At school the main language is only English but sometimes the students use a mixture. For some students it is difficult because they do not understand English because they are not used to it because they speak <i>Frafra</i> at home for these pupils their strategy is to not say anything in class” <b>(Bong District UNIQ#299 Q#16 Adakudugu Girls’ JHS RC Girls JHS3)</b></p> <p>“At times they don’t understand some things or concepts but this is not always the case. They even prefer the English language used by teacher to teach because when they travel out of their community they have to use English and they want to learn it very well” <b>(Talensi Nabdam District UNIQ#217 Q#16 Chuchuliga Primary School DA Low Girls P6)</b></p> <p>“We sometimes speak both English and the local language more especially at home. When we speak English those who do not understand get angry and say “<i>ya ku tuuri tin ni</i>” which means you are ‘just insulting us’. This usually brings fights amongst us at home” <b>(West Mamprusi District UNIQ#28 Q#16 Zori JHS DA Girls JHS2)</b></p>	<p>“Pupils seemed so dormant and did not want to answer questions even after consenting to probing in their own mother tongue. All they could say was they liked what the teacher taught in the last lesson though from the field researchers’ perspective the pupils seemed so distanced and lacked self esteem. Also teacher used English which we don’t understand quite well. Pupils stated that they spoke both <i>Dagaare</i> at home and school and that does not make them fluent in the English language” <b>(Research field notes, Sognaayili Primary School RC High Mixed P2).</b></p> <p>“The teachers teach in English but they use local language to explain to us when we do not understand. This is very helpful. She tried to make us understand the lesson today. She spoke in the local language. When teacher translates into L1, it helps to assimilate comprehension, teacher uses only English to help pupils improve upon their fluency, teacher phonetics (pronunciation and explanation of keywords), and teacher’s choice of vocabulary. It is not the same; it doesn't affect much our learning in the school. We are speaking <i>Mampruli</i> at home and taught with English at school, few of us also speak <i>Kasim</i> in the house” <b>(UNIQ#72 Ngbaripe Islam Primary School EA Low Mixed P5 &amp; P6)</b></p>

(Source: FGD with pupils, TENI field research)

This phenomenon is not restricted to only low performing schools, the gender of the children or even location of the school or the type of management in place. The majority of boys in P5 at Balangtaa D/A Primary School in rural Lawra District of the Upper West Region interviewed in a FGD expressed the same sentiment that the language of instruction was a key barrier to their learning and often manifested itself in lack of participation and children’s inability to answer questions posed by the teacher.

*“When teacher uses only English to teach or give instructions. When pupils cannot speak and understand English. When pupils do not participate in the lesson, when pupils are given old and damaged textbooks to learn or when pupils are not able to answer questions”.*

### 10.2.3 Availability and Attendance of Teachers

Key findings from gender disaggregated focal group perspective include the fact that many of the girls prefer to see teachers make good use of instructional time while boys suggested that

teachers should be regular and punctual in attending school and delivering lessons in the classroom. The matter of teacher absenteeism and the need for more trained teachers cut across focal group interviews with boys and girls. Field observation in the majority of sampled schools revealed that the full contingent of teachers was not available particularly the trained teacher. The field observations and focal group interviews with children suggest that the few teachers who were available had were not always punctual and managing time effectively; some teachers reported to school late and left unannounced or would not teach for more than two subjects a day. Several schools visited that had teacher attending distance education programmes for upgrading their qualifications, were absent on Fridays and Mondays pursuing distance classes.

The problem of inadequately trained teachers was pervasive across the six districts. Within the inadequate teachers supply category, ICT teachers were seen to be the highest in demand in schools visited. Boys in particular had a strong desire for ICT teachers and specifically requested for the supply of more ICT teachers to help improve the teaching and learning of the subject. There are only 24% of teachers in Ghana who have received some form of training in the use of computers, with quite minimal training in the pedagogical integration of ICT. Even more worrying is the fact most teachers do not seem prepared to integrate ICT in their teaching practices<sup>49</sup>. The girls on the other hand proposed teachers making themselves available to give more exercises and provide individual attention in order to help them assess whether they were learning or not. The table below presents information related to the questions asked in FGI with children: *what changes would you like to see in your school and classroom in order to improve your learning?*

**Table 10.8: Pupils’ Responses to Questions about what needs to Change at School to improve their Learning**

REGION	URBAN	RURAL
Northern	<p>“Teachers should avoid absenting themselves from school. Teachers should give us exercises and quizzes. Most teachers come to school late and because of that most lesson times are lost” (UNIQ#80 JHS DA High Girls JHS1)</p> <p>“We need lights, ICT teachers, school bus to be able to visit place and more text books” (UNIQ#81 JHS DA High Boys JHS1)</p> <p>“Teacher lateness should be stopped. The large number of pupils in class with limited writing and seating places” (UNIQ#80 JHS DA High Girls JHS1)</p> <p>“If it is absenteeism, some of us have to learn on our own” (UNIQ#111 Zonzongeli DA JHS DA Girls JHS2)</p>	<p>“Teachers to stop beating. Teachers sometimes set class test so that when the pupils fail the teacher will have an excuse to beat them. This should stop. Want extra classes. The pupils organize extra classes and pay 1.50 GHS so the teacher will teach extra curriculum. Not all Pupils pay so the teachers stop the extra classes. The money was paid to school prefect and has not been returned. The pupils want the situation resolved. They want the extra classes. Want parental support and praise to motivate pupils. The teachers give praise and encourage but not parents. Need book, text and reading” (UNIQ#137 Bamahu DA JHS DA Low Girls JHS3)</p> <p>“Our parents withdraw us to the house to help them in the farm” (UNIQ#118 Zangu DA Primary DA High Girls P6)</p> <p>“Adequate and hardworking teachers, punctual and good attendance of teachers, infrastructure more class rooms and reading/textbooks”</p>

<sup>49</sup>Boakye, K.B., & Banini, D.A. (2008). Teacher ICT Readiness in Ghana. In K. Toure, T.M.S. Tchombe, & T. Karsenti (Eds.), *ICT and Changing Mindsets in Education*. Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa; Bamako, Mali: ERNWACA /ROCARE.

	<p>“We also need teacher and time to study. We need extra classes” (UNIQ#110 Zonzongeli DA JHS DA Boys JHS2)</p> <p>“We need qualified trained teachers” (UNIQ#111 Zonzongeli DA JHS DA Girls JHS2)</p>	<p>(UNIQ#49 Kupiel DA JHS DA High Boys JHS1) “We like to see our teachers always in school and teach. Good learning environment” (UNIQ#40 Bormanga DA Primary DA High Girls P2) “More and committed teachers. More classrooms for us. More TLMs” (UNIQ#39 Bormanga DA Primary DA High Boys P2)</p>
UPPER EAST	<p>“Teacher attitude to teaching since the teachers teach well. Students learn to study by themselves. For example they read over their books and know how to read. Teachers teach hygiene. Teachers come early (are punctual) and students come early to clean” (UNIQ#174 Kulenga DA Primary School DA Low Girls P6) “They like that the teachers are teaching, while at other schools they just stay under trees and discuss politics. Teacher repeats lessons when the kids don't understand. One boys says he likes that the teachers teach well and he understands” (UNIQ#188 Kpatuya Primary School DA Low Boys P5) “They want the teachers to come to school on time and regularly” (UNIQ#187 Kpatuya Primary School DA Low Girls P5) “Their teachers are able to teach them well to understand. They encourage them to speak English all the time whether in class or out of class. Almost all their teachers come to school before assembly and are always in school” (UNIQ#276 Adakudugu RC Primary School RC High Girls P6) “The teachers teach well. If they raise hand and say they didn't understand, the teacher explains again by that the learning is enhanced. They are concentrating when teaching is going on. The teacher learns them and gives them exercises and they like that” (UNIQ#277 Adakudugu RC Primary School RC High Boys P6) “I like the school because, we learn a lot. Our teachers are hardworking and they come to school most times” (UNIQ#290 Lanwana Primary School DA Boys P6) “We need two teachers in a class and the teachers should be regular and punctual at school. We also want our teachers to stop beating us” (UNIQ#290 Lanwana Primary School DA Boys P6)</p>	<p>“They also like the school because the teachers come to school every day to teach them” (UNIQ#336 Gungolgu DA Primary DA High Boys P6) “They like that the teacher comes to school every day and teaches them. They like when they understand” (UNIQ#317 Akugri DA Primary DA Low Boys P4) “We need our teachers to be present at school all the time to teach us to learn better” (UNIQ#307 Wuntenga DA Primary DA High Boys P5) “Teachers should also be regular and punctual. Some of them live far away and come to school late and at times absent” (UNIQ#359 Gungolgu DA JHS DA Boys JHS1) “Some teachers do not come early but others are always punctual to school according to the boys” (UNIQ#206 Namonsa DA Primary School DA Boys P6) “Some teachers do not come early but others are always punctual to school according to the boys” (UNIQ#206 Namonsa DA Primary School DA Boys P6) “Teachers should always come to school and teach them well” (UNIQ#290 Lanwana Primary School DA Boys P6) “In school they needed the following: Trained teachers. Teachers should be coming to school on time and regularly. Teach to the understanding of pupils” (UNIQ#231 Namonsa DA Primary DA Boys JHS1) “They also expect their teachers to come to school every day and on time to teach them well to understand” (UNIQ#232 Namonsa DA Primary DA Girls JHS1)</p>

UPPER WEST	<p>“Teachers should stop lateness. Some teachers come when we are at assembly ready for classes. Teachers should stop being lazy about teaching. They should stop giving plenty exercises or explaining questions as teaching because they are lazy” (St Kambali Primary School RC Low Girls P6)</p> <p>“Almost all their teachers come to school before assembly and are always in school” (Adakudugu Primary School RC High Girls P6).</p> <p>“Teachers should come to school every day and make use of instructional hours” (UNIQ#471 Dery DA Primary DA Low Girls P6)</p> <p>“Regular attendance of teachers to the school” (UNIQ#472 Dery DA Primary DA Low Boys P6)</p> <p>“We need more trained teachers. Regular attendance by teachers to teach” (UNIQ#460 St Gabriels Primary RC High Boys P5)</p>	<p>“Teachers should always come to school. Teachers should use instructional hours well so that they can teach more subject a day. Teachers should also come early. Teachers should also use approaches that will let us learn some practical things” (UNIQ#482 Balangtaa DA Primary School DA High Girls P4)</p> <p>“Punctuality of teachers, no absenteeism and not taking alcohol before coming to school. They should be friendly and approachable to students. They should also encourage pupil to learn. They should also help pupils form study groups. They should also stop sending students to their farms” (UNIQ#445 Duori JHS DA Mixed)</p> <p>“Teachers should be punctual at school and regular e.g. some teachers come to school at 12:00 noon” (UNIQ#536 Kakpagyili DA JHS DA Boys JHS2)</p>
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(Source: FGD with pupils, TENI field research)

In some schools the situation had reached crisis point where according to boy interviewed ‘*there were no teachers for all subjects in their school and even the schools with teachers had issues with punctuality to classes and adherence to proper teaching conduct in general*’. This need for committed and trained teachers who could adopt and use effective teaching methods was crucial to children interview and revealed that children believed that teachers could be readily available if accommodation was provided for them to stay in communities.

In many of the rural schools visited, it was discovered that a greater number of the teachers were living in the district capitals considered as relatively well endowed in terms of the provision of social amenities. It was from these towns that the teachers commute to school irregularly. For instance at Bunkuma Primary in West Mamprusi District, there were only four teachers in the school compromising the head teacher who is a trained teacher and three untrained teachers. Although the teachers are committed and effective in teaching, the large school population of 287 pupils including children with special needs has overwhelmed the teachers compelling them to combine some classes for effective teaching and learning. The sum effect is that though the school performs very well in transition to JHS and BECE, many of the children nonetheless fail and/or were repeated while others either rebel against their teachers and parents by refusing to attend school preferring to do *kayayoo* instead or remain in the house and end up in early marriage.

In Lawra District of the Upper West Region for instance, girl respondents wanted ‘teachers to come to school every day and make use of instructional hours’ while boys said they ‘need more trained teachers as well as regular attendance by teachers to teach’.

In the District Assembly managed schools, the nature of complain by the pupils about teachers was related how they were used as farm labour. They said ‘teachers should also stop sending students to their farms’ but pupils in the Catholic schools were concerned about teacher attitude narrated as ‘teachers should stop lateness and being lazy about teaching’. Children blamed bad attitudes of teachers towards work such as lateness and absenteeism, inadequate number of teachers and administration of corporal punishment as factors that inhibit effective learning.

While the general issue of inadequate supply of teachers most especially trained equally affected the schools in Upper East Region, the rural and urban schools of Bongo district exhibited case of inequitable teacher deployment. Whereas at Gungolgu JHS in rural Bongo, the children commented on the poor teacher attitude “teachers should be regular and punctual, some of them live far away and come to school late and at times absent”.,. “We need two teachers in a class and the teachers should be regular and punctual at school”.

### **10.3 School’s Ability to Support Child Readiness and Inclusive Learning**

Regarding the issue of inclusivity whereby gender becomes a problem in a child’s learning process, for instance some children proved they could learn better with same sex teachers. In the case of some girls they preferred being in school with their fellow girls and not mixed with boys because they felt the presence of boys would intimidate them. For these girls they were comfortable with their fellow female pupils because cooperation was better that way.

#### **10.3.1 Disciplinary Practices Including Corporal Punishment and Verbal Chastisement**

Many progressive nations have seen the harmful effects of corporal punishment on children and on their educational outcomes and have abolished it. In Ghana, legislation on corporal punishment is not adequate in explicitly prohibiting all forms of corporal punishment. While the Children’s Act prohibits the use of mental and physical torture or other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment against children, it allows for a degree of “reasonable” and “justifiable” punishment<sup>50</sup>. Thus the use of corporal punishment is both subtle and overt. The Ghana Education Service (GES) which has oversight responsibility for policy in schools still maintains caning as the main form of corporal punishment in spite of recognition of the harmful effects of the practice. The GES has however put in place mechanisms to ensure strict supervision in a prescribed measure on corporal punishment in schools in the *Head Teacher’s Handbook* (GES, 1994: 260-261). In this book, the GES Code of Discipline for second cycle schools it provides for corporal punishment in very rare cases but on the condition that a head teacher of the school is the person to give authorisation or the one to administer the punishment. It outlines certain offences that justify corporal punishment after an initial strong warning. The list of offences includes fighting, quarrelling, stealing, squandering of school fees, using drugs, drinking alcohol, smoking, flouting authority, assaulting colleagues, and assaulting staff, among others. The code stipulates that the acceptable rule for using the cane in educational institutions is that caning should be administered by the head of the school in his or her office; the act should not exceed four strokes at the basic education level; the stroke should be recorded in the logbook and put under lock and key; and at the secondary level, the strokes should not exceed six.

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<sup>50</sup> Kyei-Gyamfi, S. (2011), Children in dangerous circumstances: exploitation and abuse - Corporal punishment in Ghana pages 75 – 96 In Robert Kwame Ame; DeBrenna LaFa Agbényiga; Nana A Apt edited Children's rights in Ghana: reality or rhetoric? Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books

Bullying is behaviour, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group, physically or emotionally. One person or a group can bully others<sup>51</sup>. Bullying makes it difficult for young people to learn and can have a lasting detrimental effect on their life chances. It can make the lives of victims a misery; it can undermine their confidence and self esteem and can destroy their sense of security. It does not only happen in normal school hours, it can happen anywhere. Children who are badly bullied in school are more likely than others to be bullied outside of it too. Studies show that there appear to be no gender differences in pupils' attitudes towards school but there are important gender differences in boys' and girls' behaviour. There is evidence that boys and girls who become disaffected tend to take different pathways. In the case of bullying behaviour, evidence shows that girls are more likely than boys to have been the victims of psychological bullying while boys are more likely than girls to have been the victims of physical bullying<sup>52</sup>.

There was evidence of educational policies aimed at protecting children from inappropriate practices bordering on gender bullying in the Bongo District of the Upper East Region. The girls at Adakudugu JHS (all female institution) had the perception that the presence of boys constituted an impediment to effective learning of girls. *"I like my school because I want to be educated and I want to be in the education process. I like it because it is a girls' school and also a Catholic school. If there are boys there, they would block you. Boys will be angry with you if you do something wrong but because we are the same, we cannot do that, we co-operate with each other"*. Further examples cited by the boys FGD respondents in urban Bongo indicate that there could be a very complex cause of bullying often linked to indiscipline and child truancy. *"Some students bully me, and chase and beat small children. Some children, who are not happy with the teacher, are insulting the teacher quietly (with low volume - in undertones). If another child overhears and tells the teacher what was said, the one who was disrespectful would run into the bush and come back the next day. Plus if he catches the one who told the teacher after school, he will beat him"*.

In the Northern Region, both boys and girls were mixed gender in the classrooms visited and on several occasions given equal chance to participate although there were signs that this was challenging for girls who were shy. However, some girls refused to talk or answer questions in class for fear of being laughed at by the boys. For instance at Zangu DA Primary boys openly and unashamedly admitted this saying *"we make fun of our colleagues especially the girls, then the girls do not want to ask or answer questions in class"*. Even more worrying was the discovery of the fact that SEN children are unable to get quality education because they are mocked at and sometimes isolated from the whole which eventually makes them drop out. Teachers were also identified as bullies. In Zonzongeli D/A JHS; girls confessed that:

*"the teachers in this school are very wicked. Some discipline students not because you have misbehaved but rather when teacher is interested in you as a girlfriend and the girl refuse then caning you or making you kneel or hate you to make your life miserable for you. It could also be that, one of the male students has a girl in the same class or school"*

<sup>51</sup> DCSF (2009) 'Safe from Bullying in play and leisure provision'. Department for Children, Schools and Families-00450-2009 available at the National Archives webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20070905115613/http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk

<sup>52</sup> DfES (2007) Gender and Education: the evidence on pupils in England. A summary of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) topic paper, Ref. RTP01-07, June 2007 Document Summary Service (DSS 06/07 44).

*and the teacher is also interested in the same girls, hmm fireworks, then both boy and girl are just in trouble. The teacher will use that opportunity to punish you the little mistake you make”.*

In Jirapa, one of the TENI districts, pupils cited several instances of bullying practices ranging from verbal, emotional, psychological, physical and even into the spiritual realms. In lower primary at Safaliba, the P2 teacher confessed teasing over-aged pupils saying “*yes; friends may laugh at new comers who join P1 because they are over-grown cattle herdsman*”. It is at times too the other way; “*and also the fear of being bullied by boys. The boys in the school also harass and beat them which prevent them from coming to school*”. FGD’s with girls that sometimes when they were learning, the boys pick your books and disrupt your line of thoughts and this affected their level of concentration and ability to learn effectively. Even among the females, bullying was taking place as respondents in Sognaayili Primary stated that “*sometimes feel infuriated by big girls who bully some small ones. Sometimes too we don’t go to school during the menstrual flow for fear of soiling ourselves and being laughed at*”.

One form of bullying that was identified as unique and akin to this area was with regard to “elopement<sup>53</sup>” it had become a form of abduction with the boy “casting a spell and then girls fearing that they would be taken out of the community without their parents knowledge. Although this practice generally exists in the Upper West (Lawra District), the manner in which it is manifesting itself at school leaves much to be desired. At Kuvarpuo Primary, the pupils were convinced that male students could cast spells on girls even at lower primary three such that girls feared to sit among male students. The girls confessed fearing sitting together saying “*siting with boys hampers our learning because boys do not mix with girls in our houses. The boys solicit love from girls and make abusive comments when we refuse. Some boys charm girls to love them. Some girls are eloped*”. The negative bullying using these verbal and sometimes physical thoughts was not only found among the pupils but girls also cited teachers for sexual abuse. “*Sometimes when a teacher proposes to you and you refuse, he hates you and that affect you*”. Teachers were also accused of denigrating the dignity of some of the girls.

*“When girls are punished by shaving their hair roughly by teachers, thus feel shy to come to school until the hair is properly shaved”.*

The table (10.9) below presents the focal group responses to the question: tell me about the last lesson you had (after the classroom observation), *what did you like about the lesson and what did you not like and how does your teacher discipline you when you misbehave, what do you need to learn better? And finally what is happening when you do not enjoy learning or being in the classroom (what are you doing and what is the teacher doing)?*

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<sup>53</sup> Young men pre arrange marriage to their fiancée with one of the parents. This parent agrees to the forced marriage of the daughter. The young man organizes and forcefully catches the young girl at a social function or at night and runs away with her to become his wife. Another practice which is also common is that sometimes the girl runs away with her boyfriend because the parents do not approve of the union between the boy and the girl

**Table 10.9: Pupils' Responses to Questions about Discipline and what they do or do not enjoy in the Classroom**

TENI DISTRICTS WEST MAMPRUSI	NON-TENI DISTRICTS EAST MAMPRUSI
<p><b>Rural --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#8 &amp; Q#13</b>            "Teacher is patient and very calm. He does not shout on us. We like it when he calls us to answer questions. He will cane you if you misbehave in class. He will cane you if you lie, he is teaching us that lying is not good. Teacher disciplines bad behaviour by caning you for others not to emulate. Pulling your ears. Kneeling down. weeding round the school compound. Run round the school block"            "Caning, sometimes if you don't answer question properly the teacher will make you carry your table. Sometimes you will run round the school block 5 or 10 times. At times you will weed"            "By punishing you to be disciplined to become good students and make them understand what is taught us in class"            "Teachers gave warning. They use the can to discipline pupils' bad behaviours"            "He beats us, makes us fetch water, etc He makes the girls to fetch water and wash. He makes the boys to weed the garden and clean the yard"            "At times when you ask a question, he gets angry with us and beats us. It makes us not to have interest in the science subject. He does not introduce the subject to us and starts teaching. He beats us, makes us to fetch water to his house to wash his things. At times, he makes you to weed around the school, go to school farm or run round the football park several times"              "To discipline bad behaviour the teacher will make us kneel and hold a heavy stone, make us stand on one leg, pull our ears, make us squat and sometimes canning"    <b>Urban --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#7 &amp; Q#10</b>            "Our teachers cane to discipline us. Our teacher usually says if you don't stop, she will cane you"            "I don't enjoy learning whenever they cane me in class. I do not enjoy the class whenever the teacher teaches and I did not understand her"            "The teacher gets angry and can us. sometimes the teacher give us warning"            "We lose confidence in ourselves. Our performances are not usually good and sometimes the teacher beats us"</p>	<p><b>Rural --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#7</b>            "Discipline: kneel down in the sun with our hands raised; canning almost every day. Weeding the school compound, not in class time"            "She makes us to kneel, cane us and water the trees we planted as wind breaks"            "Canned when we misbehave. Teacher warns before canning, only canes if warning is ignored. Punishments were many including, weeding, stone gathering to fill potholes, kneeling in the sun or kneel in class, down punishment during class time, it is not fair that we are punished during class time and we miss our lessons"            "The students said, the teacher canes them when they do not know any answer"    <b>Urban --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#7 &amp; Q#13</b>            "The teacher canes once in a while. She punishes by asking pupils to stand and how carry heavy stones, pulls ears, we have to stand with our hands raised above our heads. She punishes for sleeping, making noise, fighting, playing, she uses the cane if we get the answer wrong but if we do not understand, she will explain it to us"            "Our teachers canes you if you don't do her class lessons especially if we don't or refuse to do what she has asked us to do"            "Caning and insults"            "The teachers in this school are very wicked. Some do discipline students, not because you have misbehaved but rather when the teacher is interested in you as a girlfriend and you the girl refused then canning you or make you knee or hate you to make your life miserable for you. It could also be that, one of the male students has a girl in the same class or school where the teacher is also interested in the same girls, hmm fireworks. Then both boy and girl are just in trouble. The teacher will use that opportunity to punish you for the little mistake you make"</p>
TALENSI NABDAM	BONGO
<p><b>Rural-- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#8 &amp; Q#13</b>            "Teacher uses a big ruler to hit those who are making noise and sometimes he makes them kneel down and raise their hands"            "On the part of disciplinary measures to correct them, it collection of stones. They are always punished to pick stones and number of buckets depending on the offence"            "In answer to the question about discipline/punishment-they said they had to wash toilets, hoe weeds, bring stones for selling, hold opposite ears and do squats, arrange the stones in the assembly area or they might be caned on the buttocks"            "Discipline Students are made to run round the school block for a number of times. Teacher talks to students to change and not repeat bad action(s).Students pick stones and bring them to school (a bucket of stones) and the school sells these stones to buy items for school. Wash toilet /Urinal and this punishment is applicable to both sexes. Fetch water for teachers to use in school or at home and teachers residence was less than 100m away but source of water was not within school but within the community. Caning of pupils for coming late or misbehaving or not doing as one has been told. Students did not appreciate caning but said because it pains you, you would not repeat such actions"</p>	<p><b>Rural-- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#7</b>            "Discipline:-Pick stones and bring them to school.-Shout at students.-Canes students"            "The punishments used are: kneeling with the arms rose, caning. If you speak/make noise, the teacher asks you to read or make an exercise, and if you don't know, he canes you"            "In response to the question about discipline the girls said that they would be asked to leave the class if they had not carried out the punishment they had been given. They said they didn't like maths and BDT because the teachers beat them for things like complaining about stomach pain. They also said they would be caned (they registered extreme dislike of being caned). They also have to "pick stones". The girls told us about an incident when a male pupil had been asked to pick stones as a punishment. However, he had wounded himself falling off a bicycle and couldn't carry out the punishment so he was sent home(sacked).Another example the girls gave us was that one of them had been caned on the hand to the extent where his fingers were badly swollen. She was unable to come to school for 3 weeks"            "Disciplinary methods: caning, picking stones (10-15 buckets), kneel for up to two hours"            "The teachers discipline bad behaviour of children by whipping such children with a small cane. Teachers also make such children to kneel down"            "Teacher sometimes hits them with a cane if they misbehave. Teachers also punish them to run to the nim tree 5 times"</p>

<p><b>Urban-- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#8 &amp; Q#13</b></p> <p>"When students were asked about methods of discipline in the school, they made mention of weeding, Canning or lashing, student digging holes to their height which were later (holes) used as final holes for waste disposal sites. This punishment was usually inflicted on the boys who were stubborn and were not afraid of the cane. Students were sacked if they did not comply with school regulations. Pupils feel pains after canning but said it changes the person to behave in a positive way and that being canned on their backs made some cry" (UNIQ#199 Kpatuya JHS DA Low Girls JHS2)</p>	<p>"He didn't cane pupils. Kneel down. Pick stones. Cane pupils which pupil did not like. Teacher asks pupils to hold their ears (lift hand on right ears, vice versa) and students have to squat and come up several times. Pupils hate this more than the cane because of the pains they have in their thighs after doing it"</p> <p><b>Urban-- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#7 &amp; Q#13</b></p> <p>"Discipline in the class, the teacher punishes them by making them kneel. If they miss school one day, the teacher make them kneel and asks them why they missed school, If they tell the truth, he lets them stand up, if they lie, he keeps them on their knees. They get caned sometimes for fighting or for not attending the hours when they clean the school the classroom"</p> <p>"Anytime we do something wrong. Our teacher punishes us, by making us kneel down, by canning us, and making us run around the school block. He also tells us to pick stones, build a fence around a planted tree or give you a disciplinary question and if you are not able to answer, he beats you"</p> <p>"Punishments involve kneeling, canning or back (how do you feel about that) it makes us feel pain - it makes us feel angry with the teacher. Other punishments include running around the block, picking stones, building fences around trees. If the teacher asked questions we don't know the answer, he beats us (how do you feel about that) it make me annoy, it makes us afraid to ask/answer questions"</p> <p>"Discipline: Do you ever break the rules? Sometimes we are noisy in class. What happen? They always cane us or ask us to be quiet. Where do they cane you? They always cane us or ask us to be quiet. Where do they? Any part of the body; our backs, buttocks, legs, or hands"</p>
<p><b>JIRAPA</b></p> <p><b>Rural-- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#7</b></p> <p>"On disciplined measures, students were so passive that they could not give any answer despite all probing techniques, but on a later gesture thy several canning"</p> <p>"Caning, asking them to run"</p> <p>"Discipline takes the form of caning, weeding, collection of stones for construction"</p> <p>"You are asked to leave the class. Sometimes you are made to bring stones"</p> <p>"Teacher canes to discipline children. Collecting stones"</p> <p>"Discipline is by caning /warning"</p> <p>"However, they did not like the fact that their permanent teacher canes them"</p> <p>"Knocking your head, sometimes he sends you to work on his garden, caning. He sometimes sacks you from his class, digging a pit for rubbish disposal site and weeding"</p> <p><b>Urban-- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#8 &amp; Q#13</b></p> <p>"Our teachers should also have computers to teach us" (UNIQ#385 St. Kambali Primary School RC Low Boys P6)</p> <p>"Teachers should stop punishing pupils for not cutting their finger nails and hair" (UNIQ#386 St. Kambali Primary School RC Low Girls P6)</p>	<p><b>LAWRA</b></p> <p><b>Rural --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#8, Q#13, Q#21, Q#22, &amp; Q #23</b></p> <p>"They said going to school very early in the morning and teachers punish them for going to school late"</p> <p>"Punishment in the house is less than school, however at home parents interfere with private studies of their wards"</p> <p>"When they are not able to do their assignment, they refuse to come to school because the teacher will punish them"</p> <p>"Some teachers do not like some of us so the little thing, they punish you and that makes you sometimes feel like not attending school"</p> <p><b>Urban --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#7, Q#12, Q#21</b></p> <p>"Teacher punishes pupils by ordering them to collect sticks or stocks to fence the school garden and in class pupils were made to kneel down for misconduct"</p> <p>"Teachers discipline pupils by asking pupils to read and bring stalks to school as well as bringing of hoes to weed school compound"</p> <p>"Some children have also dropped out of school due to several punishments by teachers and prefects, poor performance in school or their own disinterest"</p> <p>"Some students also drop out because of punishment"</p> <p>"Canning of pupils in school"</p> <p>"When teachers punish excessively. We use the classroom as place to change our clothes. Yes we have separate urinals and toilet facilities"</p> <p>"When they are late we are afraid to be punished"</p>

(Source: FGD with pupils, TENI field research)

### 10.3.2 Sensitivity/Inclusivity

According to the children in FGD, although some teachers took time in explaining lessons and giving examples, they were also caned whenever they could not answer questions posed to them. When teachers get emotionally angry and bring lessons to an abrupt end because children did not understand what was taught this impinges on the pupils' readiness to learn. At Zori JHS in the West Mamprusi District however, male teachers were cited as being more sensitive to girls than boys by caning boys and warning girls which sometimes left boys embittered. This was a TENI district and it is possible to infer that is one of the positive social interventions the project has brought to teaching and learning in the area. Teacher motivation and encouragement especially at the early grades of schooling significantly impacts readiness to learn and remain in school. Furthermore, teachers were thought of as making positive adjustments in class for hearing and visual impaired pupils as well as mixing slow and fast learners. Monitoring SEN children so they do not endanger themselves or other children is also a positive attitude towards teacher sensitivity which teachers lacked.

On the contrary, in East Mamprusi District, teachers were not tolerant of pupils. In Bamahu for example, teachers were exposed during an FGD with children for taking revenge on pupils for reporting their bad behaviours to heads or their parents.

Researchers found that many of the schools knew in theory how to handle and manage children with special education needs (SEN) but in practice there was no evidence of this being done. The environments of many of the sampled schools where the researchers visited were not SEN friendly. Secondly, management of these schools was dysfunctional and that being the case, integrating SEN children could aggravate their already precarious conditions.

Interviews with children in focal group discussions suggested that teacher sensitivity becomes an issue when:

*"The teacher only calls on pupils who can read. He does not give opportunity to slow learners in class" (INST#9 Q#7 West Mamprusi D-U JHS DA Girls F1)*

*"I like the reading but disliked the way the teacher chooses few students to do the reading" (INST#9 Q#7 West Mamprusi D-U JHS DA Boys F1).*

With respect to sensitivity to slow learners the pupils reported that:

*"Teachers involve both boys and girls in class discussions but only call those who don't participate in class. Boys farm in the school farm and sweep compound whiles girls sweep classroom and head teachers office. Boys farm and girls sweep and cook at home" (INST#9 Q#11 Talensi Nabdam D-R Namonsa Prim DA High Boys P6)*

On the subject of integrating SEN children into regular schools, the study findings show that few non-severe SEN cases were enrolled. In most FGI with children as to whether SEN children were enrolled in regular schools parents, FGD with SMC/PTA and pupils point to the fact that SEN children are sent to special schools in Savelegu or Wa respectively from Northern and Upper West Regions. The study also found that there were very few access ramps to accommodate SEN

children in regular schools. There were also no appropriate SEN TLMS available in the schools. Besides the lack of access ramps and TLMs for SEN teachers confessed that they had no skills for handling SEN children.

In the Northern Region during FGD with boys when they were asked about SEN children, one boy from Bamahu DA JHS said *“their school is not here and their TLMs are hard to come by”* (EMDR, pg 14 Q19). The lack of sensitivity to SEN children in the regular schools is the challenge of stigmatized from pupils and school community members. Stigmatization is not restricted to people with disabilities. Some parents preferred to send boys to school rather than girls due to the perception that girls have *“no use in school. In wedlock when wives fail to give their husbands sons, the husbands marry other women to bear them sons. Girls are discriminated against because they are often viewed as waste pipes who take the family resources elsewhere”*: *“Boys are the ones who will bring money home but girls would rather take it to their husbands house”* (WMDR, pg 13, Q21, Manga DA primary). The table below presents some of the findings related to the level in which the teacher engages boys and girls in classroom discussion?

**Table 10.10: Pupils’ Responses to Questions about Whether Boys and Girls are Treated Fairly in the Classroom**

UPPER EAST BONGO INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#11	NORTHERN EAST MAMPRUSI INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#11	UPPER WEST LAWRA INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#11
<p>“Teachers allow both boys and girls to answer questions, ask questions and will also call people who are quiet in class. Roles in School GIRLS:- Sweep the classroom. Clean the urinal and toilets. Sweep the weed after boys weed during the rainy season. BOYS:- Sweep compound because they do not know how to sweep well and when the boys do not sweep well the girls stay in their class during break time. Boys weed around the compound”</p> <p>“Sometimes teacher pays attention to girls than boys and also pays more attention to boys more than girls and all this depends on whose answering questions a lot that day”</p> <p>“The girls get equal treatment. The boys don’t want to sit in the desks with the girls because the others would mock them saying the girls are their girlfriends”</p> <p>“The teacher asks the boys more because the girls are not serious. Some girls are sleeping in the class. Sometimes because they have to fetch water, other times because they go to the festivals and they stay late. The girls stay later than the boys at the festivals because they like to dance”</p>	<p>“The teachers mix the boys and girls, but the girls separate our groups together. Teacher distributes questions equally, but the girls are always reluctant to answer”</p> <p>“The teacher engages boys much more than girls. Girls feel shy to ask/answer questions. When the girls answer a question wrongly the class laughs and they feel shy. When the boys answer a question wrongly the class laughs and they feel motivated to get it right next time and get the praise. Because the girls do not want to answer questions the teachers do not ask. The teachers mix the boys and girls together but the girls separate themselves in the school”</p> <p>“Sometimes she does but some days involve the boys more than the girls she feels we are lazy”</p> <p>“Yes, sometimes he makes the boys to clap hands for us because when he marks the register and we all come to school, he says is a good things”</p> <p>“Most of our teachers treat us equally. Some teachers accept ladies (girls) question than males”</p> <p>“Girls are engaged as much as boys in</p>	<p>“Both boys and girls are treated equally. Teacher (female) gives more attention to the girls to express themselves than the boys” “The teacher engages the girls more than the boys because mostly the boys do not pay attention in class and when she asks them questions they do not like to contribute like the girls”</p> <p>“Yes, teacher engages both boys and girls in class discussions”</p> <p>“The teacher engages the boys more than the girls in the class”</p> <p>“The pupils said SEN children are treated like any other children in the school and community. They accept and play with them. They treat them well and sometimes they are not allowed to do some activities in school if it will affect them negatively. Teachers also include them in lessons. They are treated well like any other student”</p> <p>“Teachers should use teaching methods that will help them learn. Visually impaired children should be seated at the appropriate place. Teachers should take time /spend much time on slow learners to help them”</p> <p>“Those with hearing impairment are not able to hear whatever the teacher says. The blind are not able to see what the teacher does and the lame incapable of performing centre actions due to their disability. More so teachers do not have</p>

<p>“Teacher treats both boys and girls equally during and learning periods in the class. Boys and girls perform different roles in the school”</p> <p>“Yes, their teachers treat both boys and girls the same way. Questions and discussions are opened to everyone in class. Boys and girls in the school do the same work like sweeping, fetching water but in the community are different”</p> <p>“The teacher engages boys most because when a question is asked, the girls do not raise their hands to be chosen to answer”</p> <p>“He engages boys and girls equally”</p> <p>“Girls only school so asked questions around how the teacher ensures that everyone is learning. The teacher can see which of the children are participating because they are raising their hands so they will call on the people who haven't raise their hands”</p>	<p>class. But sometimes the girls will not talk because the boys laugh when we get responses wrong”</p> <p>“The teacher seats boys and girls mixed. The teachers engage with all equally roles in school. Girls sweep classroom and fetch water. Boys sweep compound and fetch garden sticks, roles at home girls fetch water sweep, wash, cook, boy farm”</p> <p>“The teacher calls all of us to answer his questions”</p> <p>“The teacher engages everybody especially the slow learners. He likes asking them questions. With the exception of sweeping the classrooms which girls do, we all do the same work”</p> <p>“No, both boys and girls are treated the same. Boys and girls do the same work in the school”</p> <p>“Most of the teachers engage all of us is asking his questions and we all answer them be a boy or girl, it is the same”</p>	<p>TLMS for SEN children. No SEN child in their class but a hearing impaired boy in class five is a friend and they shout whenever they talk to him to make him hear what they are saying but they all play together”</p> <p>“Pupils don't mingle with the two SEN children in school because they fear their aggressive nature. Because they are deaf and dumb, they do not hear anything and always finds themselves out of place”</p> <p>“Both boys and girls are treated equally. Teacher (female) gives more attention to the girls to express themselves than the boys”</p> <p>“The teacher engages the girls more because when the boys are called to participate they do not contribute well, so mostly is the girls that are more engaged. In the school girls alone sweep the classrooms but both boys and girls sweep the school compound”</p> <p>“Teachers engages both sexes equally in classroom discussion”</p> <p>“The teacher engages both boy and girls equally a boy said the teacher gives more time to the girls to give their answer. Boys weed in the school but girls do not weed. Girls also fetch water in the school whiles boys do not”</p>
<p><b>TALENSI NABDAM</b> <b>INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#11</b></p>	<p><b>WEST MAMPRUSI</b> <b>INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#11</b></p>	<p><b>JIRAPA</b> <b>INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#11</b></p>
<p>“Teachers involve both boys and girls in class discussions but only call those who don't participate in class. Boys farm in the school farm and sweep compound whiles girls sweep classroom and head teachers office. Boys farm and girls sweep and cook at home” (Namonsa Prim DA High Boys P6)</p> <p>“Their teacher engages both boys and girls in discussions but mentioned for their roles as fetching water, sweeping the classrooms while the boys sweep the compound”</p> <p>“Teachers encourage both genders to participate actively by calling any of them to contribute to lesson. (b) In school boys sweep, weed and fetch water just like the girls”</p> <p>“The boys say their teacher treats both boys and girls but chooses those who raise their hands. When they were building around the school trees, boys mix sand and the girls fetch water”</p> <p>“The girls are treated the same as the boys. The only place where they are separated is the work that they have to</p>	<p>“The teacher does not give preference to a particular sex. He poses questions to both girls and boys equally and encourages us to learn”</p> <p>“Teachers engage those who are doing well regardless of gender, some teachers give more preference to girls, some teachers give more preference to boys, the group felt the over preference is given to girls, some teachers like to joke or flirt with the girls”</p> <p>“3 out of 5 teachers are engaging everybody the same. 2 out of 5 teacher engage the girls more”</p> <p>“They are sometimes selective they think the boys know more than us (Saida) but when a boy misbehaves, the teachers cane them and only warn we the girls. This makes the boys to get angry and start to attack us. They usually say the teachers are in relationship with us”</p> <p>“No difference because we are one. Teacher engages all of us by putting us in groups to read. Have quiz and have dictation between terms of roles”</p>	<p>“Teacher failed to engage both boys and girls equally”</p> <p>“He engages all of them in class when it comes to answering questions. When they don't talk he calls them at random to answer questions. Yes in school the girls sweep the classroom, fetch water for the school and sow maize on the school farm”</p> <p>“Engagement according to them was equal”</p> <p>“Teacher engages both sexes equally. Girls are told to fetch water to the kitchen and office. Girls sweep the classroom. Girls and boys sweep the school compound. Boys weed on the school farm whiles girls sow”</p> <p>“The teacher engages both girls and boys in the class. Only the girls wash the urinal unless a boy is punished, they do not wash only girls sweep the classes and office. But both boys and girls sweep the school compound”</p> <p>“Both sexes are equally engaged in classroom exercise. Also a boy and a girl</p>

<p>do – the girls sweep the classrooms and the boys clean the compound”</p> <p>“The girls felt that they were treated equally by the teacher. That they were asked and allowed to ask as many questions as the boys. They also cited the example that when they were learning about adolescence the teacher told them about the boys and then about the girls - they didn't get left out”</p> <p>“The teacher allows girls to talk in class. There is difference because some of the boys don't pay attention in the classroom”</p> <p>“Both boys and girls are called to answer question. At school boys clean chalkboard and sweep school compound. Girls sweep classroom and fetch water”</p> <p>“The teacher ensures that both boys and girls answer the questions and sometimes he asks the children who don't raise their hand. The teacher wants boys and girls to feel equally treated”</p> <p>“The girls wake up as early as 4am to cook, fetch water, wash bowls and read before coming to school. In school girls are engaged in sweeping the compound with boys after which they are given numbers to show participation in keeping the school clean. The girls sweep the class and this is reserved for girls only. Prefects are exempted from sweeping”</p>	<p>“I liked about the reading but disliked the way the teacher chooses few students to do the reading” ( JHS DA Boys F1).</p> <p>“The teacher only calls on pupils who can read. He does not give opportunity to slow learners in class” ( JHS DA Girls F1)</p> <p>“Yes, she involves both boys and girls. All the girls indicated that they were more active in class than the boys. The boys however did not have any rejections”</p> <p>“The teacher involves everybody in the class to learn and she canes us whenever we are not ready to learn. The teacher does not ask question to girls alone or boys alone (the question is evenly distributed among us)”</p> <p>“Yes. The girls are made to sit different from the boys in the class but when they are outside, they mix with each other”</p> <p>“The teacher do engage both sexes equally, question are evenly distributed majority of the girls do not do well than the boys”</p>	<p>were the class prefect. In terms of duties, girls sweep and clean the urinal and shell groundnuts. Whilst boys weed, uproot groundnut and clean their urinal”</p> <p>“Teacher engages us the same. Girls sweep the class. Boys clean the black board”</p> <p>“No difference. Teachers engage boys to help them in gardening but engage girls to fetch water”</p> <p>“The teacher fairly distributes her questions to both boys and girls. There are no different roles in class. When we go to the farm the boys weed but the girls plant. The boys rear animals but the girls cook”</p> <p>“Teacher engages both boys and girls equally. On the school compound both boys and girls perform the same role but performs different roles in class”</p>
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(Source: FGD with pupils, TENI field research)

## 10.4 The Inhibitors of Children's Readiness to Learn

Several factors including environmental, psychological, socio-cultural and economic barriers can interfere with pupils' readiness to learn in an educational setting. Stress from a variety of sources including crowded and chaotic home and classroom environments or problems with family or peers impede learning. The stresses of poverty such as crowded conditions, financial worry, and lack of adequate child care affect stress hormones which inhibit brain function and stifle achievement and lead to impaired learning ability in children from impoverished backgrounds. Stress induced inhibitions impede such higher cognitive functions such as planning, impulse and emotional control, and attention which explains one way in which poverty affects children's development of school readiness skills and later classroom performance.

The research revealed that the physical school environment and school was a factor that either negatively affected or promoted the child's readiness to learn. That is, the trees and beauty of the school, the neatness of the school was a factor which attracted / enticed children to learn and play within the school environment. Most pupils across all the selected schools within the three

regions admitted that the nature of the school either made them feel receptive towards learning or sometimes reject learning at school. Similarly, the classroom atmosphere and the teacher methodologies helped to promote or hinder child readiness. A number of children mentioned that they totally lost interest in learning and even slept or “dozed off” whenever they could not understand whatever lesson a teacher was delivering. The findings suggest that the readiness of a child to learn greatly depends on roles of many players including the parents, teachers, school and the child himself. If these supporting actors fail the child, there is virtually nothing the child can do. Also, some pupils, mainly boys indicated that corporal punishment in school inhibited their learning. They alleged that they did not feel like going to school after teachers have caned them. They reported that the cane instils fear in them.

## 10.5 Promising Promoters of Learning Efficiency: School for Life Mainstreaming Efforts in the Northern Region

There were several interventions which were seen by researchers as promising but one of the most visible signs of success in helping children transition and remain in northern primary and JHS’s was the School for Life model of functional literacy. Although this was an out of school programme, children who graduated from this programme were populating the upper primary levels of schools across two of the most deprived educational districts visited in the sample of schools (eg West and East Mamprusi).

The School for Life (SfL) is a functional literacy programme for out-of-school children in the Northern Region of Ghana. The programme is designed as a complementary educational programme targeted at children between the ages of 8 and 14 years. The programme offers a nine-month literacy cycle in the mother tongue, aimed at assisting children attain basic literacy skills and then integrate into the formal education system.

As part of the TENI Research, the research teams sampled 8 schools (4 each from the West and East Mamprusi districts) in order to assess SfL’s mainstreaming effort which was aimed at contributing to the improvement of quality in the formal school. Overall, the findings were very positive, indicating that SfL’s approach was making an impact on improving access and retention of children across the 2 Districts in the Northern Region. According to the East Mamprusi District coordinator of School for Life, out of a total number of 1,875 pupils enrolled in 75 classes (25 learners per classes) across the district in 2011, all with the exception of 40 children (who dropped out) were transitioned and integrated into the formal school system in 2012.

The table below shows the numbers of ex- SfLers present in class at the time of research.

**Table 10.11: Numbers of Children in Research Site Schools Who have Graduated from School for Life**

Name of School	School Enrolment				SFL Enrolment at the Upper Primary level		
	Class	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
<b>West Mamprusi District</b>							
Bormanga Primary School	P3	10	12	<b>22</b>	2	1	<b>3</b>

Name of School	School Enrolment				SfL Enrolment at the Upper Primary level		
	Class	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
	P4	21	22	<b>43</b>	8	2	<b>10</b>
	P5	20	6	<b>26</b>	10	1	<b>11</b>
	P6	5	8	<b>13</b>	4	3	<b>7</b>
Zori Primary School	P4	13	10	<b>23</b>	6	4	<b>10</b>
	P5	12	8	<b>20</b>	4	2	<b>6</b>
	P6	14	11	<b>25</b>	6	5	<b>11</b>
Zori Junior High School	JHS 1	3	13	<b>16</b>	2	11	<b>13</b>
	JHS 2	17	7	<b>24</b>	9	11	<b>20</b>
	JHS 3	19	17	<b>36</b>	8	3	<b>11</b>
<b>East Mamprusi District</b>							
Nintendo Primary School	P5	25	22	<b>47</b>	4	3	<b>7</b>
	P6	23	27	<b>50</b>	6	2	<b>8</b>
Wuyela Primary School	P4	32	36	<b>68</b>	2	3	<b>5</b>
	P5	38	53	<b>91</b>	4	1	<b>5</b>
	P6	36	48	<b>84</b>	18	16	<b>34</b>
Wuyela JHS	JHS 1	21	27	<b>48</b>	6	3	<b>9</b>
	JHS 2	21	16	<b>37</b>	5	4	<b>9</b>
	JHS 3	25	13	<b>38</b>	8	4	<b>12</b>
Zangu Primary School	P6	29	12	<b>41</b>	9	7	<b>16</b>
Bamahu D/A JHS	JHS 1	122	79	<b>201</b>	13	10	<b>23</b>
	JHS 2	136	136	<b>292</b>	7	3	<b>10</b>
	JHS 3	148	90	<b>238</b>	11	8	<b>19</b>

(Source: TENI field research)

Interactions with teachers and Ex-SfLers revealed that SfL has had remarkable success in addressing gender inequality by, among other things, helping parents to rethink the value of girls' education. Girls who would not normally go to school were transitioned to formal education after the SfL cycle of classes. This had resulted in improved retention rate in the formal school system and a lower dropout rate among children. The classroom observations where SfLer's were present revealed that the Ex- SfLers made a large percentage of the population of the upper primary schools and had become resilient and were making sure that they buy their own textbooks and stay in school to the end of JHS. Focal group discussions with ex SfLers as part of the larger FGDs with upper primary children revealed their future plans for ensuring that they completed JHS (eg some girls were going on Kayayo in order to earn funds to complete basic education). The programme had shown impact on improving the levels of educational attainment and achievement among ex-SfLers within the formal school system in the mid 2000's (AfC, 2008). The Quality of Education study reconfirmed earlier findings that in the

majority of schools observed Ex-SfLers were able to read and write and were mentoring and teaching their colleagues in the absence of their teachers.

## **10.6 Inhibitors and Barriers to Child Readiness and Quality**

In the 54 schools across the three regions, the study found a number of inhibitors to child readiness. FGD with parents, teachers and pupils revealed such child readiness inhibitors as poor classroom conditions: poor ventilation and light, inadequate seating and writing places for children, lack of textbooks and unattractive school environment. There was also the lack of ICT facilities: computers and electricity to power the computers and teachers with ICT skills. Similarly, most schools had no libraries, pipe born water, separate toilet facilities for boys and girls, poor playground and play facilities for all children including SEN. The study also revealed that most parents could not provide basic school necessities as a result of extreme poverty. Other inhibiting factors included socio-cultural barriers, stigmatization of SEN children and the girl child, teacher absenteeism, abuse of corporal punishment legislation in schools, misuse of instructional hours and the burden of domestic chores, particularly on the girl child. These inhibitors cut across all districts and regions regardless of school and community types. The following table presents the focal group interviews with pupils related to the questions: *what affects you most in school and what prevents you from coming to school? How are you treated at home as compared to school and finally what makes learning difficult?*

**Table 10.12: Responses from Children when Asked to Compare Home and School and What Prevents them Coming to School**

Northern (East Mamprusi Rural) --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#21	Upper West (Lawra Rural) FGD with Children Q#22, Q#21	Upper East (Talensi Nabdam Rural) --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#21 & Q#23
<p>“Teachers ask you to go to farm and you can't refuse but as for our parents if they tell you to go the farm and you refuse, they threaten not go give you food or help you at school. We the pupils go to the bush to ‘free ourselves’ except the teachers have latrine for their own use and it is under locked and key” (UNIQ#118 Zangu Girls P6)</p> <p>“Sometimes it is due to sickness. Sometimes too your parents will say help me to go to farm. If you go and come, the thing you need all he will buy it for you. If you don't have books and tell your father to buy for you and he refuses or you mother gives birth to a child, they will say there is no water so go and fetch water, help me wash or set fire and cook or heat water for me to bath the child” (UNIQ#129 Nintendo Girls P6)</p> <p>“Separate sanitary facilities at school are good and adequate. Girls said no problems accessing sanitary materials. Unable to pay school fees and so were being sent to the farm by their parents. Sickness or too much household work could prevent us from attending school sometimes” (UNIQ#127 Bamahu Girls JHS3)</p> <p>“Going to search for water. Long distance to farm. Sickness. Funerals” (UNIQ#145 Bunkuma Girls P6)</p> <p>“Farming, sometimes we go to farm during school days and also the canning, if you are late to school and you remember the pain the cane would inflict on you, then you don't feel like going to school at all. When the teacher is teaching and we do not understand” (UNIQ#154 Wuyela Girls P6)</p>	<p>“Sometimes most of our parents do not provide us with our basic needs and sometime men in the community can give you and in the process boyfriend you and it can affect your learning”</p> <p>“Parents prefer to provide learning material to boys than girls with the reason that they are helpful. Our fathers do not ask them to go to their mothers who do not have because they also live with what is given to them by their husband”</p> <p>“Parents do not provide our needs immediately as the boy children because they don't attach importance to our (girls) schooling”</p> <p>“In terms of resource allocation regarding school needs, parents always respond to the boys first e.g. (uniform, fees, etc) in the school, treatment is equal”</p> <p>“Girls said they are treated better at home than school because at home parents take care of them in terms of feeding and clothing but in school, teachers are only here to work for money in order to take care of their family. And for that matter does not attend to their other needs”</p> <p>“Sickness. Pregnant girls do not come to school again. Laziness stops girls from coming to school. When menstruating, teachers tell girls not to come to school”</p> <p>“Lack of having sandals prevented pupils from coming to school since it was punishable to wear “charley wotey”/bath room slippers. When pupils are not able to pay school fees because parents refuse to co-operate they stay out of school till they get the money from other relatives or commercial activity such as washing, selling mangoes, brewing <i>pito</i>”</p> <p>“We change in the urinal or toilet. We do not have access to sanitary materials for use at school; we have to bring them from the house”</p>	<p>“Absent from school for sickness, funerals, when your mother said you are to respect your grandmother or uncles. When they are menstruating, they come don't to school. They put the sanitary pad on at home before they come to school and if they need to change, they go home” (UNIQ#263 Ayimpoka Girls JHS2)</p> <p>“When one is hungry, you cannot concentrate, when teaching and learning materials are inadequate, if there are not enough reading books, when the teacher is not teaching to your understanding. Due to poor performance, parents may refuse to provide your needs. (UNIQ#218 Chuchuliga Girls P6)</p> <p>“There are a lot of their colleagues who are not in school according to the boys. Boys think that their colleagues do not go to school because teachers beat them. Others too do not want to sweep when they come to school. Some also go for “galamsey” mining claiming the school is not more profitable. Their colleagues drop out of school because they failed their exams and then decided not to continue”</p>
Northern (East Mamprusi Urban) --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#21	Upper west (Lawra Urban) Q#12 Q#14	Upper East (Talensi Nabdam Urban) --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#21
<p>“Teachers are not friendly in class, always beating us, we don't fear the cane any more. Yes, separate sanitary for both for boys and girls. We use our exercise book leaves” (UNIQ#101 Zonzongeli Mixed P2)</p> <p>“Most of the teachers befriend us and when we don't agree, they threaten us and we are compelled to drop out of school. We have different sanitary for boys and girls, even, with the teachers, they separate areas for girls and</p>	<p>“Girls knew children who were not in school and this was because they simply did not have the interest. Also a girl who was an orphan had to drop out because she lost her mother and had a very old father who could not work to support her in school”</p> <p>“Their parents are unable to provide some of their school needs. They don't because such children do not attend school regularly especially on</p>	<p>“On the question of relationships with teachers we probed for what aspects of misbehaviour were punished and what these punishments were: Children are punished for: insults, lateness, stealing, speaking in vernacular, and not tucking school shirts in. Punishments include: caning on the backs, buttocks and legs.</p>

<p>boys. Generally, we don't have changing rooms for both girls and boys. This is a Muslim area, so we use the kettle with water to wash ourselves; this is done by both boys and girls who are in the school. But the students who are not Muslims use their exercise books papers to do their own thing" (UNIQ#111 Zonzongeli Girls JHS2)</p>	<p>market days. Teachers are usually not happy with pupils who are not able to answer questions because they are absent"</p> <p>"There are children in the community including children with special needs who are at home and not attending school. Some children are not in school because their parents have failed to bring them out for enrolment. "Some like trading in the markets" during market days. Parents of children with special needs education feel it is useless sending them to school"</p> <p>"Affirmatively, girls knew some children who were not in school because parents do not have adequate funds to support. On the issue of drop out; some migrate to the south, fear of punishment or loss of interest by pupils. As for SEN, girls confirmed there were a few of them at home but parents did not either see the need to send such children to school or do not have the resources to"</p>	<p>We then asked them if these punishments were such that they would deter them from coming to school, the girls maintained that they have no objection to these punishments. They said that it was particularly painful to be caned across the back but that "it transformed them" - that is to say it made them feel that they would not do the same thing again" (UNIQ#174 Kulenga Girls P6)</p> <p>"Lack of suitable changing room facility for the pupils especially the girls. No sanitary facilities for pupils. What is available are restricted to the use of teacher" (UNIQ#187 Kpatuya Girls P5)</p>
<p><b>Northern (West Mamprusi Rural) --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#21</b></p>	<p><b>Upper West (Jirapa Rural) --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#21</b></p>	<p><b>Upper East (Bongo Rural) --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#21</b></p>
<p>"We don't know what toilet facility is or sanitary because we use paper from the exercise books or stones to clean" (UNIQ#22 Ninsali Girls P6)</p> <p>"We don't have toilet facilities in school" (UNIQ#40 Bormanga Girls P6)</p> <p>"No teachers are harsher. They can and punish us a lot. Those teachers who are good they at times help us if we don't have books to read by providing the books. Our mates, some are ready to help teach you when you don't understand. Some too share their food with the most need pupils. Yes, our toilets and urinal are separated from the boys. We don't have changing rooms. Madam, we tear some of exercise books leaves to use as toilet roll. Both at home and school, we are disciplined but at home, some parents are flexible" (UNIQ#50 Kupiel Girls JHS1)</p>	<p>"When there was a lot of farm work during harvesting, when their mother leaves a little baby, they were asked to stay back and take care of child sometimes" (UNIQ#401 Sognaayili Mixed P2)</p> <p>"Sometimes their parents cannot provide their daily school needs. Others too talked of teenage pregnancy as something that affects them from coming to school. There was also the issue of early marriages among the girls" (UNIQ#402 Sognaayili Mixed P4)</p> <p>"When teacher asks girls to come to his/her home to work. No changing rooms for girls" (UNIQ#426 Kpaguri Mixed JHS3)</p> <p>"When girls are in their menstrual periods, they do not feel like coming to school" (UNIQ#427 Kpaguri Mixed JHS3)</p> <p>"Pupils noted that parents engage them in so many duties such as staying back home to take care of younger siblings. Some also said their menstrual period sometimes prevented from coming to school" (UNIQ#436 Safaliba Mixed P2)</p> <p>"Sometimes because our elder sisters become pregnant in school when we ask for some school needs, our parents refuse us. There is not suitable changing room so they go home if they want to change their pads. We would have preferred a female teacher because after school we can't go to the male teacher to discuss some learning problem" (UNIQ#436 Safaliba Mixed P2)</p>	<p>"When our parents engage us in home duties and you are late to school because you will be beaten when you are late to school. We prefer the school to the home because if you are not able to come to school everyone in the house will send you anywhere but in the school you learn and only come out when is break time" (UNIQ#306 Wuntenga Boys P5)</p> <p>"At any time when we are sick and at any time when we are menstruating and have no sanitary materials. When we are engaged too much in the house and then we are not able to finish and are late to go to school" (UNIQ#337 Gungolgu 'A' Girls P6)</p> <p>"When we are sick, and certain times when our parents engage us in home duties, and we are late for school. If we are asked to pay some levies and we don't get money to pay, you feel shy to come to school. Anytime, we had no learning materials like pen, exercise books, school uniform, sandals, etc" (UNIQ#358 Gungolgu 'A' Girls JHS2)</p> <p>"When we are hungry and don't get food to eat before coming to school because you will not be able to concentrate in class and when you are sick" (UNIQ#306 Wuntenga Boys P5)</p> <p>"Anytime there is no food for us to eat before coming to school" (UNIQ#337 Gungolgu 'A' Girls</p>

Northern (West Mamprusi Urban) --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#21	Upper West (Jirapa Urban) --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#21	P6) Upper East (Bongo Urban) --- INST#9 FGD (Children) Q#21
<p>"We sometimes become hungry in school. And anytime we are not given money to come to school, we feel like we should not come to school" (UNIQ#60 WurshieB2 Mixed P2)</p> <p>"There is no toilet facilities in the school this sometimes prevent us from coming to school" (UNIQ#61 Wurshie B2 Mixed P6)</p> <p>"Sometimes our parents make us fetch water. They sometimes want to take us to Ankraa (Accra). They do not want us to come because of farming" (UNIQ#71 Ngbaripe Islam Mixed P3)</p> <p>"Work at home (sometimes girls are made to work even when it is time to go to school which does not allow them attend school regularly" (UNIQ#72 Ngbaripe Islam Mixed P5 &amp; P6)</p> <p>"Many of the pupils engage in petty trading and close late. Because we do not have appropriate changing rooms when we have our menstrual cycle we don't go to school or we go and run home from school. Teachers usually take us to farm on Fridays. So if we know we will go to farm, we will not come to school" (UNIQ#80 Wurshie B JHS1)</p>	<p>"According to the girls they only miss school when their mother or they themselves are not well. Or when there are at times the workload at home is too much then their parents ask for their absence" (UNIQ#373 St. Bamvum Mixed P5)</p> <p>"Sickness, sometimes parents engage us in farm work. When menstruating we cannot go to school because there are no changing rooms. Light, uniforms" (UNIQ#374 St. Bamvum Mixed P5)</p> <p>"When the teacher asks only girls to do all the cleaning, it prevents you from coming to school. When you are asked to go and fetch water at home before coming to school" (UNIQ#383 St. Kambali Girls P1)</p> <p>"When teacher come to school but do not teach. When teacher threatens me with sex or when pupils mock me always" (UNIQ#386 St. Kambali Girls P6)</p> <p>"There are no changing rooms for girls during physical education" (UNIQ#394 St. Kambali Girls JHS2)</p>	<p>"The children mentioned sickness or when their parents engage them in any household chores and they are not able to finish on time, then they may stay away from school for the fear that they will be beating or punished, and if you stay away from school, even though you should equally be punished, you could tell lies that you were sick and be free" (UNIQ#276 Adakudugu Girls P6)</p> <p>"When we are at school we get to learn and so prefer to be at school because we want to be somebody tomorrow. While we were discussing this issue a man from the village was at the nearby borehole - irrespective of the fact that the children were engaged in our discussion he called on girl over to pump the water for him" (UNIQ#291 Lanwana Girls P6)</p> <p>"The girls talked about 3 girls from their class who had become pregnant and therefore had to leave school. However, there were different cases. When asked what they think makes a school girl get pregnant, they said that think the girls want to try and find money and /or food. All indicated that they are negatively affected when they are menstruating because they have to go home and change their sanitary pads or with period pains" (UNIQ#299 Adakudugu Girls JHS3)</p>

(Focal Group Discussions with Children across the sample schools, Field Work November 2012)

### **(i) Poverty and Socio-cultural Practices.**

Most parents cited poverty as the inhibiting factor preventing them from sending all their children to school. They also blamed poverty for their inability to provide basic school necessities for their children in school (exercise books, pens pencils, school sandals, uniform, school bag etc). Similarly, poverty was seen as the agent pulling and pushing pupils out of school. School drop outs and out of school children, parents claim could have been on the minimum if they had the financial resources to support the children in school. Most children also cited poverty of their parents as the root cause of their not being fed breakfast before they go to school and/or provided lunch. This they argue accounts for their inattentiveness in class and the resultant poor performance. Socio-cultural practice such as elopement<sup>54</sup> and early marriage practices in the three northern regions hamper progression of girls in school and leads to drop out and withdrawal from school.

A new developing cultural phenomenon that has engulfed all the three northern regions is “Kayayoo”. School girls and boys are even sometimes encouraged by their parents to migrate south into urban towns and cities to work for money. Most school children from the three regions travel either to the gold mining centres in the southern part of Northern Region (Tinga gold mines) or to Techiman and Kumasi for menial jobs to earn money to support themselves and their families. FGD with the children revealed that most girls do the Kayayoo to buy their school needs and save some to feed themselves in school. Cultural practices of assigning roles and responsibilities to boys and girls are also an inhibitor to child readiness and to the provision of quality education in the three northern regions. Parents involved children especially girls in so many domestic chores that it affects their attendance and performance. In Zori D/A JHS, girls complained that their parents overburden them with too many house hold chores.

### **(iii). SEN Children.**

Teachers’ lack of training in how to handle SEN children who are integrated into regular schools is a serious inhibitor to quality education provision in the three northern regions. The few admission in the regular schools are not given individual attention as teachers openly confess that they do not know what to do with those children except seat them in front rows in class to enable them to see what is written on the board and to be near the teacher to hear. Teachers do not have resources or teaching materials to deal with SEN children. Stigmatization of the few that do attend also leads to withdrawal and dropout.

Evidence from focal groups with children suggests that barriers to learning for children with special needs are intensified by the way in which some children are treated by their peers. There are very few schools in the study who could show evidence of putting in place strategies for pastoral care, as a result of this children at school who have physical disabilities or moderate to severe learning needs are often teased (mocked at) or even physically bullied by the other children. This leads to the assumption by parents that the school is not a safe place as well as making the children themselves reluctant to attend. The other major impediment to children’s learning is the emphasis placed by a significant number of teachers on focussing their attention

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<sup>54</sup> Young men pre arrange marriage to their fiancée with one of the parents. This parent agrees to the forced marriage of the daughter. The young man organizes and forcefully catches the young girl at a social function or at night and runs away with her to become his wife. Another practice which was found was that sometimes the girl runs away with her boyfriend because the parents do not approve of the union between the boy and the girl.

on the “brilliant” or bright children at the expense of what is termed “slow learners”. Children when interviewed voiced their dissatisfaction at this state of affairs by saying that they didn’t like learning when only the “good readers” are asked to read and when they are not given the chance to answer questions which results in their not being given the opportunity to practice reading skills or check their understanding of what is being taught.

#### **(iv) Gender**

Another key inhibitor to child readiness is the difficulties that all children faced in preparing for school because the amount of work they have to carry out in the home or farm before, after and sometimes during the school day. Girls were responsible for the heavier burden of work which was found to affect their readiness to learn. Evidence was also found in some schools of girls being asked by teachers to carry out similar work in their homes and more seriously, girls suffering sexual abuse by teachers or male pupils. Although it was a small number of schools where girls made disclosures to this effect, there was also evidence from interviews with parents and community members that such practices were going on in other schools. Emotional security was an important promoter of children’s readiness to learn and parental ability to sustain girls in school. Schools’ sanitary facilities were generally good but some young women disclosed that when they were experiencing their menstrual period they felt uncomfortable being at school.

#### **(v). Weak School Management and Teacher Absenteeism.**

In all regions, weak school management that manifested itself in massive teacher absenteeism, which the head teacher could not check was the major persistent inhibitor affecting child readiness to learn. Teachers’ irregular attendance, absenteeism and lateness had become an open secret in all three regions that it needed no investigation. The head teacher was often late and even a casual observer at the school would readily notice the absence of teachers and teachers trooping in late. Most teachers did not stay in their school communities and commuted long distances to school. Even teachers who reside in the district capitals and few urban-like villages go to school late. What is more disturbing is that when they are in school they misuse instructional time. In Ninsali a rural community within the West Mamprusi district, girls reported that their mothers do not allow them to go to school due to long teacher absence. Parents emphasized that their children sometimes do not feel like going to school and even refuse to go because the children themselves know the teachers would definitely not show up in the classroom. Another aspect of absenteeism is the distance learning programmes. Most head teacher admitted that most of their teachers attend Distance education courses and that the courses are beneficial as the course improves teacher competencies in both content and pedagogy. However, head teachers also noted that as a result of the distance education most teachers are absent on Thursdays and Fridays. Besides that they attend school late and are unprepared for their lessons. Most teachers also use instructional hours to prepare for their assignments. Besides absenteeism, teachers’ excessive use of corporal punishment, particularly the cane, scares away some children from school.

Another finding from the study sites was the lack of proper record keeping on teacher attendance. The teacher attendance register were not used properly, often abused and the recordings were unreliable as teachers arrive late and yet record times to indicate that they were

punctual in school. In the mist of all these head teachers look on helplessly. Circuit supervisors fail to take action on teacher absenteeism and expect the District Director to act. Most head teachers do not have the professional confidence to call their teacher to order. The head teachers themselves lack leadership styles for promoting quality education. Yet another inhibitor to quality education is the weak school management structures. Although the SMC /PTAs are demanding for quality education and asking head teachers, teachers and education officers to help them offer quality education and child readiness the district education official and the District Assemblies have failed them.

#### **(vi) Long Distance**

Yet another child readiness inhibitor is the distances children cover travel to the school. Settlements in the three northern regions are far apart particularly in the Northern Region. However, it is not all communities that have schools. In some cases two or more communities share the same school and the school infrastructure is usually built midway between the communities. Therefore most children walked or rode bicycles several kilometres to school. They arrived in school late and fatigued and not always ready for learning. One boy at Wuyela primary had this to say:

*“Distance to school is far, some of us travel long distance to school. We have to cross a river every day. In the rainy season when the river overflows its bank we cannot come to school.”*

#### **(viii) Inadequate TLMS.**

The inadequate supply of school infrastructure hinders the child’s readiness to learn. Some children mentioned they were excited to learn provided there were lots of story books in the school for them to be able to borrow for private reading. For example having free exercise books and uniforms was a motivational factor for pupils to be in school.

### **10.7 Promoters of Child Readiness.**

Notwithstanding the negative picture about inhibitors of child readiness and quality education delivery in the three northern regions, the study uncovered some promoters of child readiness in relation to quality education provision. These included in some schools the: efficient and effective school management both at school and community levels, the welcoming school environment, positive teacher attitudes towards children, positive community support to children and school, pupils motivation to attend school regularly, parents visits to school to discuss their ward’s performance, parents support and encouragement for pupils to learn at home..

#### **(i). Physical Environment of the School.**

In all districts, some schools have been provided new school infrastructure with beautiful environments which were attractive and conducive for learning. In some of these communities old school structures had been abandoned and replaced with new structures and all stakeholders are happy particularly the children and teachers as well as the community members. Children admitted schools that the environment o attracted them. Most pupils commented that they liked their new school buildings.

*“I like the new school because it is a nice building. The classes are big and we do not sweat. The doors and windows have locks and are well painted. Now we have tables and chairs to sit and write, we do not have textbooks but we have library and story books and Da books.”*

## **(ii). Parental, Community and Head teacher collaboration in making schools functional**

The study found in about six to eight of the 54 schools where the head teachers were in control of learning and responsible for ensuring a high learning environment for children<sup>55</sup>. For example in St Kambali JHS in Jirapa (UW), the head teacher had designed a teacher monitoring device enabling the head to track teacher use of instructional hours. A similar situation was also met in Adakudugu, Talensi Nabdam. In this school children were empowered to monitor teacher use of instructional time. As a result pupils were eager to attend school regularly and punctually. School management committees and PTAs in all six districts had provided some support to the schools to promote child readiness and quality teaching and learning regardless of community or school type. The study also found evidence of parental interest in monitoring pupil performance. They claim the SMC/PTAs have taught members and parents what to look for in checking good and bad pupil performance. Even illiterate parents could examine pupils’ exercise books and determine whether their children were performing well or not. Head teachers also reported that most parents come to the school to check on the progress of their children.

In FGD with pupils most stated that they liked their teachers to use translation to help them understand and make meaning of the English medium of instruction. The study also found evidence of parents supporting children to learn at home. At Dery primary the SMC had place a ban on video shows to encourage pupils to learn in the evenings. Parents were also mitigating the challenge of children walking long distances to school by buying bicycles for the children to commute to school.

## **10.8 Summary of Findings**

This chapter reviewed the evidence in relation to child readiness to learn. The discussion reviewed both the inhibitors and promoters of child readiness from a gendered perspective with reference to the roles and responsibilities of children at the home and its impact on learning. The study also looked at food insecurity and its impact on child readiness. Other themes covered included material insecurity and child readiness, child labour, social and community activities, children’s perception and assessment of their own learning, teaching methods and children’s assessment of their own learning, the language of instruction and teacher supply as key inhibitors of child readiness. In addition the study reviewed data on the school’s ability to support child readiness and inclusive learning environments; it identified bullying particularly for girls as a serious inhibitor of child readiness, and teacher sensitivity to inclusivity as key barriers and promoters of child readiness.

With respect to children’s roles and responsibilities from the evidence it was concluded that the girl child was over burdened with household chores that serve as inhibitors to girl child

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<sup>55</sup> This is based on classroom observations whereby at least two of the teachers who were observed in upper and lower primary classes in the school facilitating a “high learning environment”.

education. The study also revealed that the gender roles of children at the home were transferred to the school realm with girls responsible for sweeping the school compound and fetching water while boys did the weeding.

With regard to food insecurity the evidence suggest that hunger was a serious inhibitor to child readiness to learn and it cut across all three regions. The evidence also shows that most children go to school without breakfast and were unable to concentrate after the first and second breaks. On material insecurity the study concluded that poverty was affecting learning outcomes of children since it often forced them to work on a seasonal and sometimes daily basis in order to meet their needs. Girls particularly left school to engage in Kayayoo in order to raise the funds to support their basic needs in school and the boys engaged in menial jobs and mining activities to support themselves and their families. Poverty prevented most parents from being able to support their children effectively in school. Parental interviews revealed that poverty contributed to the out of school phenomena and drop out of children from schools due to child labour and the migration of children to work.

On the subject of children's perception and assessment of their own learning across the 54 northern schools, the evidence suggests that children were very ready and willing to learn but were experiencing learning in very harsh conditions. On the issue of pupils assessing teacher pedagogy the evidence reveals that pupils were not happy with the methods teachers were using since they were not participatory. Pupils also concluded that teacher interactive approaches inspired them to learn more effectively. Children also report that the methods involving the combined use of English and the Ghanaian languages as medium of instruction was more effective help them learn compared to teachers who used only English as the medium of instruction. On the subject of teacher supply and distribution in the three northern regions it came to light that most rural schools lacked female teacher role models and male teachers mostly found in the rural areas. The study also found that girls preferred an "all girls school" since they felt more confident that they would be able to develop their full capacities and not be hindered from speaking out.

## **10.9 Conclusions**

Based on evidence from FGD with pupils, teachers, SMC /PTAs and parents, it can be concluded that child readiness in the three northern regions was challenged by a number of inhibiting factors. Although children are ready to learn teacher attitudes and poor school learning climate hampered pupils' readiness to learn. Poverty was also a significant inhibitor of child readiness by preventing parents from being able to adequately support their children in school. Poverty also accounted for many children going to school hungry. The evidence also revealed that that child readiness was affected negatively by traditional practices of assigning specific roles to gender. In this regard children, mostly girls were affected by "forced marriage", traditional roles of supporting adults which could make them more at risk of abuse, and household chores.

On the positive side evidence available suggest that few and isolated teachers, head teachers and parents were working very hard to promote child readiness. In some communities, the SMC/PTAs particularly had contributed to improving child readiness through support to schools and teachers to promote learning. Some communities had even contributed financially to supporting the volunteer teachers and making efforts to accommodate teachers in the community.

## Chapter 11: Conclusions and the Way Forward

Quality classroom learning is influenced by a number of interacting and interlocking factors. In many studies teachers effective use of instructional time in conjunction with appropriate child centred methods are critical to promoting quality classroom learning (UNESCO, 2010). Equally important is the issue of school management and head teacher leadership in relation to school discipline, promoting a learning climate and ensuring teacher motivation/development. Continuous teacher professional development and effective and efficient monitoring and supervision of teachers' work are also contributing factors to effective and efficient quality classroom learning (UNESCO, 2010). Yet in the present study there was little evidence that these factors were present in enough schools to ensure that the majority of children were learning literacy skills and other basic skills needed to transition to the world of work. In this study we found isolated cases of factors promoting classroom learning such as a fewer than (10) head teachers out of 54 schools whose leadership skills and management styles ensured that children were learning and reaching their potential to develop. There were also isolated cases of teachers who used child centred methods to promote classroom learning. The findings suggest a key promotional factor in relation to education quality at school level was head teacher leadership -- the ability of the head to properly manage a school and ensure discipline among the teaching force resulting in "high learning classrooms" with teachers maximising their teaching time on task, preparing for the class and ensuring TLMs were available. In some cases, head teacher leadership also supported classrooms which were more child friendly, with methods which were participatory in nature, engaging pupils that promoted classroom learning.

The level of training of the teachers did not however relate to whether they used child centered methodologies, the gender responsiveness of the teacher nor their ability to relate to children with special needs. Teachers across the majority of sampled schools were consistently teaching to children who appeared "brighter" more "able" and often not engaging with the majority of those in the classroom, which due to language, background or opportunity had not been able to easily grasp the learning approaches being used in the classroom.

### 11.1 Key Inhibitors to Learning in Ghanaian Primary Schools

Teaching learning processes within public Ghanaian Basic Schools across the three northern regions of the country demonstrated an extremely low level of learning effectiveness and efficiency. High levels of *teacher absenteeism and indiscipline*, and teachers' disconnection from the classroom and children characterized Ghanaian public primary classrooms across both urban and rural environments of the north. There were slight variations amongst schools which were governed by the mission or religious units particularly the Catholic Church due to their double tier governance structures which included regional management, and school based management structures. Often religious units had oversight/management by the clergy involved in the church overseeing school management at the headship level which was often intensive and day to day. The socio economic background, social status of parents and literacy levels among the school populations were also key factors in the effectiveness of school governance due to the increasingly complex challenges at the school headship level.

Findings from all three northern regions show similar factors inhibiting quality education delivery. These include:

- Inappropriate language of instruction
- Lack of textbooks, syllabi, writing and seating places
- Teachers and pupils' irregular school attendance and absenteeism
- Inadequate teacher preparation
- Large class sizes and poor output of work
- Inability to cope with SEN children
- Misuse of instructional hours
- The use of corporal punishment by teachers
- Parents' inability to support and provide for pupils' needs
- Lack of cooperation between teachers and parents

The Quality of Education Research revealed clear management and oversight lapses within the teaching force due to the collusion and in some cases lack of enforced disciplinary procedures by District Education offices. Evidence from both the head teachers and the teaching staff reveal that very little onsite supervision by circuit supervisors and poor levels of mentoring and/professional development in these visits has left the teaching force in a state of being “out of control” and a force unto themselves. The six head teachers<sup>56</sup> across the 54 schools visited demonstrated interest, commitment and basic leadership qualities in overseeing rudimentary functions in school procedure, monitoring teacher absenteeism and ensuring an effective learning environment was created. Interviews with School Management Committees, Parent Teacher Associations and parents reveal a tremendous loss of confidence among the communities in relation to the effectiveness and commitment of their teachers and often the head teacher. Parents were well aware that completing basic education and transitioning to SHS was key to their child's ability to escape the poverty and hardship of the community; the majority of communities in the field study sample demonstrated high levels of support to the school often ensuring that their schools were provided with supplies, infrastructure and incentives to teachers. Several communities particularly in rural Northern Region were financing their own community volunteer teachers in order to ensure teachers were more available at the school. The challenges in these communities were that their own head teachers and district education offices were often unwilling to act on the complaints by parents related to the behaviour of teachers (e.g. continuous absenteeism from the school).

Inside the classroom the picture was not much better with the vast majority of classrooms functioning with very ***limited preparation*** by teachers in order to teach language and literacy skills; teachers had a very poor concept of how to methodologically teach reading and very limited use of phonetic decoding skills was being passed on to learners. Teachers were also not developing a reading habit among pupils by consistently conducting reading periods for children to listen and/or experience shared reading activities. Classroom observations across the majority of classrooms revealed a strong habitual pattern among teachers of engaging children in long episodes of choral reading to pronounce and repeat words but not teaching them how to identify the sounds and connect within the written script in the process of teaching reading. For most of

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<sup>56</sup> St Anthony in Jirapa, Manga in West Mamprusi and Presby primary Gambaga East Mamprusi, St Anne's, Bongo.. Sekote in Talensi Nabdam

the 250-300 head teachers and teachers (86) observed and interviewed across the 86 classrooms reading meant: “pronunciation and recitation” not necessarily connected to written text in books, posters or other media other than the blackboard.

Apart from the methodological challenges in teaching children to read, the greatest inhibitor to learning in the classroom was the *language of instruction* which was affecting learning across the entire primary level of education. The most challenging area of inquiry was at the lower primary level where in the Upper East, English was the main language of instruction used in the classroom; the Northern and Upper West Regions used a mixture of local language interspersed with English. Unfortunately, there was very little evidence that the government’s bilingual literacy programme (NALAP) was embedded in the classroom system of instruction. Observation at classroom level revealed that the NALAP books remained largely unused, sometimes even unpacked and stacked in the head teacher offices. There was no evidence of lessons notes based on the NALAP approach across the 54 schools/research sites (with only two classrooms using NALAP but one of these did not have lesson notes but used some of the materials). This finding suggested that despite high levels of investment in literacy and learning improvement programmes (over 12 million USD) by government and donors, uptake of education improvement programmes would have limited impact.

There was also clear evidence that teaching and learning processes among children were being negatively affected by the *high levels of verbal and physical abuse* by teachers towards learners in the classroom. The study revealed that this was one of the key reasons for absenteeism and drop out among pupils at the school. It was also having a negative impact on pupil participation in the classroom. Focal group interviews with children and teachers suggested that children were being used for hard labour on the teachers’ farms, and menial tasks at the school; children were also asked to kneel in the sun as part of the normal disciplinary practices. The most damaging behaviour pattern observed in classrooms in the sample sites was the consistent and wide spread negative verbal chastisement by teachers when pupils were unable to answer a question; teachers also distanced themselves and marginalised pupils who were considered “slow learners” by rarely asking them questions or showing very little interest in these pupils in their classroom. Research evidence suggests that the vast majority of teachers observed in classrooms, focused on teaching/working with a few of the “capable learners” with much less focus on the children who were not confident in participating in the classroom experience.

*The key recommendations for improving teaching and learning efficiency in Ghana are:*

- *Stronger assessment structures at the national, regional and district levels to hold teachers accountable. These assessment structures need to be fully funded by the Ghana Government in order to ensure long term sustainability with minimal support by outside donors; the assessment process should also be based on international standards which ensure that the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service are held accountable for their performance in the sector. The Ministry of Finance and the New Curriculum and Assessment Council should be the main focus of attention.*
- *Greater public awareness of the problem of poor quality education particularly among the media.*

- *More organised parental voice at district and regional levels with elected assemblies of SMC's and PTA's in order to ensure a larger constituency of parents representing several SMC's/PTAs are able to voice their concerns to government and DA's.*

### **Reaching children who are differently able**

Evidence from the field work revealed the key reasons why children with special needs were not entering, accessing and remaining for the full cycle of primary education in northern Ghana. Observation at the school and classroom levels suggested that teachers were often not creating and supporting a safe child friendly learning environment which made it even more challenging for children with special needs; limited usage of teaching and learning materials, lack of special needs materials and limited knowledge of how to teach children with special needs meant that SEN children were often ignored, isolated nor having inappropriate teaching support. Interviews with teachers suggested that they did not have enough training to ensure they were confident in handling SEN children and peripatetic officers at the district level did not have enough resources to visit schools on a consistent basis. Lack of supervision at the school level was also a key barrier to the special needs child being enrolled in school, and staying in school due to the high rates of bullying, stigmatisation and abuse by other children at the school. The schools visited were largely unsupervised and found to be dangerous for children with special needs particularly those with severe challenges.

Evidence from discussions about special needs children indicated that a universal strategy for dealing with children with special needs (visual and hearing impairments) was adopted by most teachers observed: the teacher would seat the special needs learner close to the blackboard and write clearly and speak loudly. Other types of special needs children with moderate to severe learning difficulties were not supported in the classrooms since most teachers reported not having the expertise to “handle” these types of children. Evidence from the focal group discussions with children and classrooms observed illustrated that children with moderate to severe learning needs were told to sit outside the classroom or allowed to roam around the school compound since teachers were not able to facilitate learning for these children and in some cases they did not see the point in trying.

Teacher interviews revealed that since they believed they were unable to cope with SEN children “they felt there was little point in trying to teach them”. Classroom observations also revealed that teachers were focusing on the higher achieving pupils compared to children who they termed as “*slow learners*” or “*lower achievers*” who “*did not have good memories, speak good English and could not recite appropriately*”.

Special needs children did not receive any special teaching learning materials or assistive devices across the 54 schools. Communities were still unsure of how to educate special needs children and often assumed that their best option for their child was to place these children in the special education schools set up in Wa (School for the Blind and School for the Deaf), Savelugu (School for the Deaf) and Gbeogo (School for the Deaf) which are the only special schools in the three northern regions.

The main findings suggest that the process of helping SEN children learn was not being facilitated by the majority of teachers who were not preparing for the classroom instructional practice nor preparing basic teaching learning materials. Secondly, teachers were not facilitating

“high learning” classrooms due to the lack of teacher pupil interaction, limited usage of participatory teaching approaches particularly in the teaching of reading and concentration on a few pupils to answer questions. Findings from classroom observation and interviews with children suggest that the key factors inhibiting quality education with respect to SEN children were mainly related to teacher attitude and conduct towards SEN children. Parents pointed out that the SEN children were often neglected or not taught in the classroom. Teacher interviews suggest that they believed SEN children should be placed in special needs institutions such as school for the Blind and Deaf; their comments suggest that sending children to special school and by bringing them to primary schools parents were “wasting teachers time” and disturbing the teaching and learning process of other children.

Teachers point to the lack of SEN teaching and learning materials/equipment and the fact that teachers were not specially trained to handle SEN children as a key barrier to learning. Additionally teachers blamed parents and community stigmatisation of severe SEN children by hiding them at homes and their inability to send the children to school regularly. Some parents complained of their inability to buy wheel chairs and that they could not carry the child to and from school daily. For the SEN child the greatest inhibitor to quality education was the community/teacher/pupil stigmatization. Additionally, children spoke of the challenge of lack of appropriate materials to support SEN education and teachers’ negative attitude towards SEN education.

With regard to the **girl child, quality education** inhibitors to quality education generally included:

- a) Teacher/community/parents prejudices towards girls
- b) Teacher differential treatment of boys and girls
- c) The burden of household chores on girls
- d) Teacher/pupil/community sexual harassment of girls
- e) Teacher harassment of young women in school

### **Community demand for Quality Education**

Another key research sub question was the degree to which community members were able to demand for quality education. The focal group interviews with the chiefs, elders and parents showed that they wanted their children to learn but the conditions for learning were not present in the local schools; parents recognized the challenge of limited trained teacher supply and the high rate of untrained teachers as being a major barrier to learning. Communities were supporting their learning processes by paying small stipends for community based teachers. Often communities felt threatened that their schools might close due to complaints made against high rates of teacher absenteeism and that their District education offices said that if communities could support their schools with untrained teachers they would allow the schools to continue. Communities were highly active in contributing to the improvement of quality across extremely deprived areas and in families with poor socio-economic levels. Communities were building kitchens and providing cooks from the community and in some cases were providing food during the “hunger season”. But communities were also well aware that they were obtaining substandard educational outcomes and provision. For instance, some communities were so upset with the results of the BECE tests that they directly confronted teachers with their

disappointment and complained directly to district education authorities. District assemblies were also well aware of the poor learning results from the schools across their district despite the heavy investment by Das.

In rebuttal the district education offices would often warn communities that if they complained, trained teachers would be transferred and not replaced with another trained teacher; teachers at the school level also made these same threats to the SMC's and community members who queried their performance. Communities also feared that if they complained this might further break down teacher community relations and did not want to disclose the challenges they were facing with their teachers during FGD's with the research team. Some communities had suffered school closure in their communities and they had to struggle to get their schools back. Focal Group interviews with the PTA/SMC and the parents recognized that they did not have enough influence in order to ensure that action was taken at the district level. FGI's also suggest that the communities were helpless since even the chiefs did not want the matters to be taken up at district education offices in order not to lose their trained teachers and feared that their children be hurt. The research findings suggest that communities were in a state of "fatigue" and felt disempowered since they did not know who or where they could go with their complaints for action to take place.

Surprisingly these same communities had several NGO's and other interventions working in them but there is limited evidence that these agencies were defending the rights of these communities in regard to finding closure to issues of poor quality education delivery (e.g. CAMFED, VSO, LCD, and Action AID). We did not see or hear that these agencies were effectively following up and ensuring that issues raised by communities were being taken up by DEO's or District Assemblies or DEOCs. It appears that in most cases projects and NGO's had attempted to empower the communities to voice their issues but did not adequately ensure a critical mass of SMC's were voicing their concerns collectively in order to build a case at the District Education office and accompany SMC's in order to bring closure to the issues. Findings from the study suggest that DEO's recognise the weak and vulnerable situation being faced by communities but were not ensuring effective public schooling. Far less work has been done on developing channels of communication to strengthen/accompany communities in their search for action at DEO's and DA's. This is a massive challenge given the current state of teaching and supervision in the country.

The main factors which were inhibiting learning in the classroom were: teacher absenteeism; punctuality and teaching methods; corporal punishment and bullying of pupils by their peers; lack of teaching learning materials; poor infrastructure in the school; usage of child labour by teacher, and parents; migration of children for work and early marriage; food insecurity; and lack of food going to school across the three regions. Focal group interviews with children revealed that children enjoy learning when the teacher appears friendly, smiles and asks questions and allows them to also ask questions without being reprimanded.

## **11.2 Potential promoters of Quality Education**

From the **parents perspective**, the most important promoter of quality education was the presence of a committed head teacher and teacher, adequate numbers of trained teachers at the school and regularity of teachers; second to this was an adequate supply of textbooks in sufficient quantities for all children and the presence of a school feeding programme.

SMC/PTAs, parents and community members were particularly concerned about head teacher, teacher and education authorities' attitude towards their work. SMC's and community members were keenly aware of the investment they had made in their children and knew that lack of teacher punctuality and teacher absenteeism would have a negative impact on their children's future. Teacher regularity, punctuality, presence in class, and proper teacher supervision were key issues parents and community members reported consistently across all three regions but most prominent in the Upper West and Northern.

Parents also noticed that more focus of teachers on their work with children in the classroom was pivotal to improving their child's learning. They were measuring the outputs of teachers through a review of their children's note books and the level of English they could speak. They were aware that teachers were engaged in other activities such as farming and other income generating activities as well as distance education programmes. Fieldwork revealed that parents wanted teachers to be more focussed on their work; additionally, teachers also felt that parents should make more effort to adequately feed, cloth and provide them with school materials before coming to school.

With respect to the processes promoting quality education, interviews with the District Chief Executive and District Education Directors suggests that more supervision was needed to ensure that circuit supervisors were effective in monitoring schools. DDE's also felt that head teachers needed to ensure teacher preparation was adequate in order to ensure efficient and effective instruction/ time on task in the classroom. Teacher competency and more importantly, teacher commitment were seen as vital for arresting the problems of low levels of learning achievement across the three northern regions of the country. Directors also mentioned the need for more training in child-centred and child friendly approaches in order to ensure that individual child differences, inclusiveness and equity to promote more sensitive learning environments.

Adequate assignment and assessment of children were seen as key to promoting quality. Head teachers and teachers expressed the view that efficient and regular quality supervision and monitoring was essential to promoting quality. Interviews and school based observations revealed that proper record keeping, particularly related to pupils' assessment could help track performance and improve quality education delivery. FGD with teachers revealed that head teachers need to carry out far more pedagogic support at the school level: SBI and classroom observation with post observation discussions. FGD with parents revealed that with respect to the processes effective use of instructional hours was the answer to promoting quality. Similarly, teacher behaviour towards pupils was important in promoting quality learning.

Pupils in all three regions were unanimous that the key to quality was that the teacher behaviour and attitude were the most important promoters of quality education: *Dery primary P5 FGD with pupils: 'Only our teachers can teach us. Our parents go to farm; if teachers teach us well and give exercises and mark we will learn more'*. Pupils also spoke of the need for adequate availability of learning resources in order to ensure learning: textbooks, exercise books, pens, classrooms, tables and chairs.

With regard to quality promotion in relation to SEN children's inclusiveness and the girl child FGD with Girls' Education officers and peripatetic officers reveal promoters of quality to include:

- a) Sensitivity to SEN/gender issues and care of girl/SEN pupils
- b) Teacher knowledge of girl/SEN education strategies
- c) Use of appropriate pedagogy for girl/SEN pupils
- d) Community support and encouragement of the education of SEN pupils
- e) Teachers fair treatment of all pupils in school/class (including SEN)
- f) Parental support and provision of girls'/SEN basic needs at home and in school
- g) Provision of gender sensitive and SEN teaching and learning materials

### **11.3 Best Practices and Education Quality Improvements**

Across the three regions there was very limited visibility of best practices currently working to ensure quality education. The few schools where these high learning environments were visible, included schools where at least two teachers and the head teacher were effectively promoting a “high” learning environment. The essential characteristics of a “high learning environment” were: the presence of a resourceful/committed head teacher, effective selection of the language of instruction (was suitable to over half the children), teaching methods which were participatory allowing student feedback and participation and finally, positive teacher demeanour and attitude particularly in relation to disciplinary practices. These key classroom characteristics were confirmed as essential to an enjoyable and effective learning environment according to focal group interviews with children. In most cases, girls’ required in addition a “safe” and empowering learning environment in which they felt comfortable to talk and contribute in class. The majority of SEN families and learners were not found to be able in most cases to access “high learning environments” due to the high levels of bullying and lack of adaptability to support SEN learners at the school level. These high learning environments particularly in the rural zone did not reveal that “training” of teachers made any significant difference in creating a high learning environment.

The study revealed that across the schools which were identified as having very low learning environments; these schools did not have adequate numbers of teachers (trained and untrained) and very weak school management structures and head teacher leadership. Very poor learning environments also had: inappropriate language of instruction in which the majority of children could not understand the language being used, teaching methodology was not creative and the model was very teacher centred (lecture) with very limited student participation. These poor learning environments were also places where the teacher demeanours and attitude was harsh towards the students and classes had very limited teacher/child interaction.

Community views of quality education suggest that most influential factors observed by communities was that high quality schools were available in the urban private sector and among mission managed schools where there were stronger management structures. Communities were also demonstrating that they wanted to take on the responsibility of ensuring that schools functioned effectively by hiring their own community volunteer teachers who they had control over with respect to their management. The emergence of the “community school” in which all the resources including the teacher salaries and oversight of the school was still in a nascent stage in rural northern Ghana but appears to be a growing phenomenon. The study found a tremendous need for the Government to consider expanding the private sectors involvement in

managing schools across the three northern regions and to ensure a more accountable management system based on performance is established.

Finally, the study also suggests that a more cost effective system for particularly rural education are being delivered through more non formal accelerated literacy programmes which ensure basic literacy attainment is achieved for children at early grade level before they are “mainstreamed” into formal schools. These models are being promoted by both SfL and IBIS in northern Ghana as one year programmes for out of school children as an “alternative route” to basic education as is the case in other West African countries. For instance in Sierra Leone and Liberia the governments have been scaling up accelerated literacy programmes for children in rural areas in order to ensure basic literacy is attained before they are mainstreamed at the Junior high school levels or upper primary levels. These alternative approaches often include three years of schooling compared to six (for children 6-11). In the case of SfL’s model it is for nine months but aimed at older children between 8 and 14 years of age.

The Quality of Education Study findings also suggest that participatory assessment processes which inform the community of the performance levels of their children appear vital in the northern regions of the country where schools are not providing regular child performance reports. The VSO/TENI school performance review method continues to be important for communities to ensure that they are well informed of the learning outcomes of their children. The study also suggests that a greater role must be undertaken by NGO’s operating these systems to ensure that the strengthened district education management offices are responsive to the needs and demands of the communities and disciplinary procedures for teachers are carried out. This will likely require a much stronger organised voice and representation of parents through the election of SMC’s at the District and regional levels in order for sustained change and accountability to take place in the education sector over the next five years. NGO’s can play a pivotal role in organising these assemblies of people to represent the parents who are participating in Ghana’s public education system.

## **11.4 The key drivers of change to promote inclusive education for all**

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

The study also found that despite significant resources being placed into the public education system by central government and donor agencies in order to improve direct teaching and

learning processes, instructional practice, and increase access to relevant materials and teaching learning aids, these were not always adopted or sustained in schools which were poorly managed (e.g. NALAP, EQUALL, etc). The findings suggest that in systems where there are high rates of instability (e.g. teacher absenteeism, very poor modelling of head teacher leadership etc), investment and more financing is not always the way forward. Changing behaviour and attitudes particularly of the managers and staff of these resources appears to be at the heart of the change process in order to improve the quality of education in Ghana's northern sector. This is likely to be the main focus of the coming phase of research under the TENI project.

Structural inhibitors to quality change included a clear blockage between the teaching force who was habitually working in a manner which often undermined educational quality change and the population who was unable to hold the teaching force accountable. The findings also suggest that the District Education Offices who are responsible for providing oversight, management and key to negotiate or uphold a level of accountability at the school level were often dysfunctional. Some head teachers who recognized that their own teachers were "out of control" felt that they alone could not manage the teachers under their authority since they had "friends at the district offices who would find ways to overrule their decisions". Being a strong head teacher and school manager was therefore becoming very difficult in the context of northern Ghana where the vast majority of people were using methods to collect their pay without working to serve their people. In this atmosphere the following recommendations to bring about change to civil society and the Ghana Government are made:

- Ensure that oversight to the District Education is by the District Assembly and track school progress by implementing a performance monitoring tests in every district (implemented by the Assembly).
- Tie capitation grants and other financial or social improvement programmes (even school feeding) to functional assessments of school management.
- Significantly downsize the District Education offices as envisaged in the decentralization process ensuring that a minimum number of staff is at the district level. Minimize the usage of circuit supervisors. Release the CS back to the schools as head teachers in order to increase the numbers of trained teachers in rural northern Ghana.
- Ensure clearer oversight to the recruitment of pupil teachers in order that committed and long serving community volunteer teachers receive opportunity for entry into GES and more training.
- Fully externalise the oversight of teachers at the district levels likely to involve the new assessment and inspectorate processes under the newly appointed bodies (Council of Curriculum Assessment, National Teaching Council)
- Strengthen teacher disciplinary measures by including withdrawal of teacher licenses and teacher demotion for non serving teachers at district level. Reinstate the process of salary freezes if teachers are absent for more than 4 times in a term.
- Set up child protection mechanisms which can ensure that serious complaints by communities, parents and children related to abuses within the school system can be reported. This system of complaint would involve an oversight committee at district level made up of District Education Office representatives, Social Welfare, CHRAJ, Police force and one or two other child rights and protection agencies.
- Increase behaviour and attitudinal change programmes for communities and teachers in relation to SEN and girls education.

The key drivers of change towards insuring quality of education have to include the increased oversight by state machinery which likely will need to be outside the main implementers of education processes, and more incentives given to the private sector to increase their management of schools. Strengthened oversight is needed by the Ministry of Education and possibly the Ministry of Finance. Newly created national bodies such as Teacher Licensing Commission, The Assessment and others need to play a more decisive and stronger role in tracking education outcomes for the population. This will also mean that parliament, media and civil society are more involved in assessing learning outcomes on a yearly basis.

- Standardized testing and assessment should be the back bone of holding the system accountable and ensuring that results are widely publicized. This is particularly important for at least P3 and possibly P6 levels. National testing of children is vital to ensure that we know how a school and district is performing.
- Finally the media should be a strong partner in understanding the issues and attempting to present the situation to the public on a regular basis.

From a grass roots perspective, the key drivers of change will be to strengthen the voice and visibility of children who are primarily suffering from schools which are not functioning. Children will have to organise themselves particularly those who have dropped out of school or have not transitioned to JHS or SHS due to a host of factors. Children and youth in the communities should be organising in order to have a voice (e.g. Sfl graduates who have completed JHS but not continued; others who are still not in school).

Secondly, parents who are already in SMC's and PTA's should be empowered by following some of the best practices of VSO, LCD, ISODEC and PRONET by organising more regional and district level forums in which SMC's elect representatives at district and regional levels and hold conventions to ensure that on a yearly basis SMC's assess the state of affairs of their schools with collaboration with the Regional Coordinating Councils and the District Assemblies. Once these platforms are set up and on-going then the information from the Performance monitoring tests and SPR can feed into this process. These forums should be developed through the elected bodies of the SMC's in order to ensure they are sustained and institutionalised.

Grassroots change will also require that much more work is carried out by NGO's to ensure that the mechanisms to seek redress by the PTA's and SMC's are available at the district and regional levels. Continuous awareness creation through TV and radio on the rights of parents and children to quality education should be pursued including their training on the teacher code of conduct and other child rights legislation and CHRAJ mandates. Ghana has set up the legislation and even the instruments and institutions to protect children's basic human right to quality education. Unfortunately the population is still not aware that every CHRAJ office in the country is mandated to ensure that public services including education are functioning in an effective manner.

It is likely that a legal team of practitioners from civil society will have to work closely with the SMC/PTA elected groups at regional level to ensure that a voice is heard and well prepared to take on the task for national transformative change. These legal practitioners can come from organisations which have conducted similar work with coalitions and other sectors of society. Ultimately with bottom up and top down mechanisms for change a more systemic approach to long term transformation may appear.

## 11.5 The way forward for the next phase of research

In moving forward over the next year of TENI research the learning question to be further explored is: *What value addition does volunteerism bring in terms of systemic change to education quality particularly in relation to volunteer teachers and support agents.* The Research question: How effective are volunteers (international, national and local community volunteers) in improving quality education and inclusive practices at basic public school level in Ghana (compared to trained permanent teachers, community based and external volunteers)? This question will require a much deeper investigation of how different types and categories of teachers are able to ensure quality and inclusivity at the school level.

Findings from this phase of the research suggests that the methods and approach of how to change teacher commitment levels and behaviour change will need to be the main focus of the next phase of TENI research. Behaviour and attitudinal change processes should be investigated: teacher location to the communities they serve, the affiliation they have with the children and people they serve, the influence that professional development (pre and in-service training) has on their commitment levels, their professional status as a teacher (e.g. pupil or volunteer); and the influences that school leadership and the culture of teaching has on the change in their behaviour will be critical.

Finally, in moving forward TENI partners will have to prepare themselves for a long journey of engaging with children, parents, media and the state actors in disseminating and consulting on the research findings from this study in order to stimulate change. The voice of children and the engagement with key policy makers at the district, regional and national levels especially with reference to strengthening systems of accountability will be important in bringing about transformative change in the three regions which were included in this study.

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