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

The Research Synthesis[1]

Research under the Tackling Education Needs Inclusively (TENI) Project

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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 Programme
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

Chapter 1.0 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. Similar to many sub-Saharan African countries, the Government of Ghana spends a large proportion of its GDP (6.3% in 2011)[3] and annual national budget (25.8%)[4] on the education sector yet consistently research reveals 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 (e.g. Korboe et al., 2010).

The quality of education has a direct impact on the education system's ability to become 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 education research in Ghana points to one important ingredient which does not appear to be happening in the vast majority of Ghanaian basic schools: enough teaching and learning. This is illustrated by the poor performance of Ghanaian pupils based on the National Education Assessment which measures the proficiency of P3 and P6 pupils in English and Math (see Table 1.1 below).

Table 1.1 - 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 Report (2011).

The VSO Ghana through its work under the "Tackling Education Needs Inclusively" (TENI) project has made significant strides in conceptualising a research project with its state and non state partners which opens up the debate on why children are not learning and provides policy makers particularly at regional and district level with the evidence to act on the long road to improving quality education for all. 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

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[3] This is based on the rebased GDP figures in the Annual Education Sector Performance report, 2012.
[4] Taken from Spending report in Annual Education Sector Performance report 2012

rigorous and comprehensive data sets which are used to analyse the quality of education linked to child performance and inclusive education; these form the basis of the School Performance Assessment Meetings (SPAMs) held at community level in TENI districts and help communities hold teachers and education administrators accountable for learning outcomes at the school level. Aspects of this data were used to inform this research study in terms of identifying high and low performing and well resourced and deprived schools.

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-- the learning process and address key learning questions arising in the project. During the TENI Research Launch workshop in January 2012, VSO and Associates for Change (AfC) facilitated a process with all the TENI partners which led to the finalization of the TENI research questions. The TENI Research project collaboration started in full force in September, 2012 and has involved a period of over 4 weeks of field research across three regions of Ghana with 24 researchers visiting over 54 schools, interviewing over 400 teachers/head teachers, observing 86 classrooms and interviewing over 600 parents and children in unravelling the question of learning and why learning is or is not taking place.

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

1. What are the <u>key drivers of change</u> 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 <u>quality and inclusion</u> 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/<u>generate demand</u> 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?

Consultations with the Implementing Partners (IPs) and GES revealed that in order to address the full scope of education quality, there should be four spheres of inquiry for the research: the child/home setting, community setting, the school and the classroom setting, and the policy level

in order to fully analyze the inhibitors and promoters to quality education. From a conceptual perspective, the definitions of what was "quality education" were also discussed during the consultations with key government and non state actors working across Ghana's northern regions. The following definition was highlighted by the TENI partners: that the quality of education relates to the products 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 and the EFA Framework for Education Quality were used to guide the research design; to help define the dimensions of quality education and provide a clear picture of the interrelations between the various inputs and outcomes required for the maintenance or improvement of quality education:

Figure 1.1 - EFA Framework for Understanding Education Quality
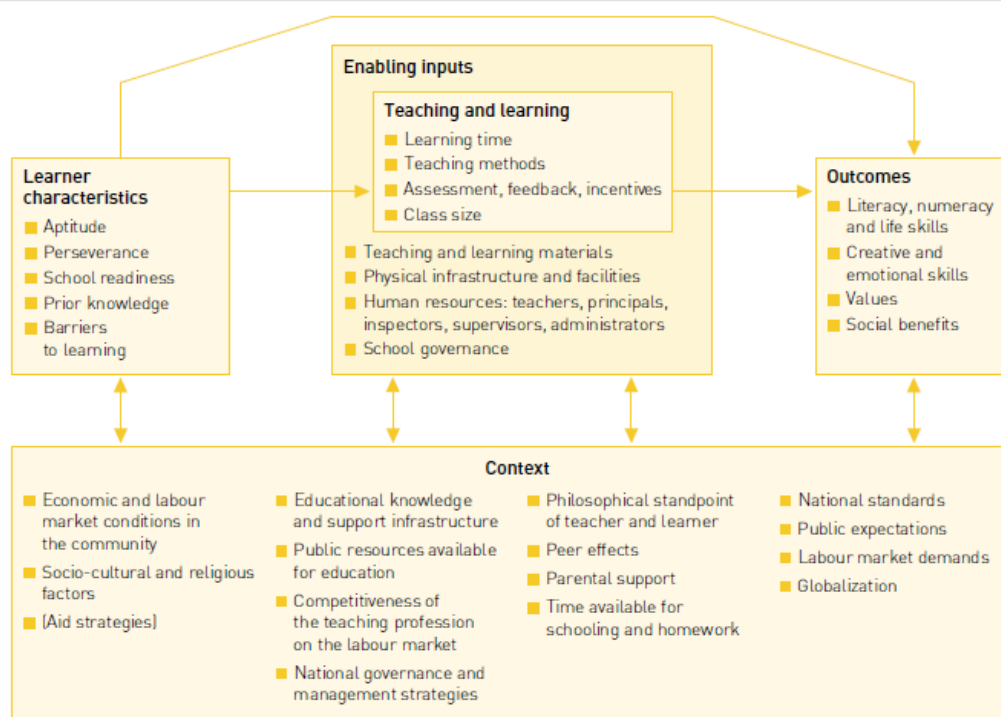
Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2005.

Teaching and Learning is situated at the centre of this conceptual framework for quality education: two factors of which are learning time and teaching methods. 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 research team used the EFA Framework and the Heneveld's Framework which has shaped the thinking at the World Bank as the core conceptual frameworks; these frameworks guided the design, research field instrument development and spheres of investigation amongst children, teachers, head teachers and within classroom observation and other research events.

The key pillars of the research 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 inputs/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; the district support to teaching and learning across the schools was also explored. The context of learning played a significant role in the design and analysis of the research in order to capture the patterns influencing both teaching and learning in the classroom and the inclusivity of children.

1.2   Research Design, Sampling Criteria and Methods

The design of the study included both qualitative and quantitative approaches to exploring the key promoters and inhibiters of quality and inclusive education. The study sampled six districts[5] in Ghana's three northern regions-- with two districts in each region. The sample included schools from districts across the three regions in which TENI interventions had been carried out. These were matched with districts with similar characteristics chosen on the basis of socio-economic and geographical factors such as size, proximity to regional capital and employment patterns across the populations.   The sample would therefore provide evidence of variations between regions and districts in order to identify any similarities or differences in how education services were promoting or inhibiting quality teaching and learning.

Nine schools were selected for the research in each district; this selection took into account the rural/urban dichotomy. One third of the schools were urban and two-thirds rural (i.e. 3 urban and 6 rural per district – see Table 1.2).

Table 1.2 – Criteria for selecting primary and JHS schools in the six districts

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

In each district the most recent Performance Monitoring Test (PMT) and School Education Assessment (SEA) data for English was used to identify and rank high and low performing schools. A cluster approach to school selection was used to identify two primary schools and one JHS using the high and low performance data. In each case the JHS was selected for its proximity to the primary schools in order to gain a holistic picture of the provision of basic education. The cluster sample approach also ensured that at least one relatively high performing and one lower performing primary school was sampled in each of the clusters. In some cases the relative difference between the two primary schools sampled in a cluster was small, particularly in the urban centres where most schools were ranked fairly high based on the assessment data used. Other sampling considerations were that all schools should have a full complement of

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[5] West Mamprusi, East Mamprusi, Talensi Nabdam, Bongo, Lawra and Jirapa districts.

class levels (i.e. P1 through to P6; JHS 1 to JHS 3). In order to fulfil the logistical necessities of the research, schools had to be within a 2 hours drive of the main urban centre (where researchers were accommodated). Researchers should be able to reach the schools in remote areas within a realistic time frame to be able observe the school routine from the beginning of the school day and carry out the necessary observations and interviews by the middle of the afternoon. One day and a half was spent conducting the research in each school.

The key methods included: in-depth interviews with head teachers, school observation and school input checklists, classroom observations at P2 and P5 levels during language and literacy periods, follow up interviews with the teachers observed, focal group interviews with teachers and focal group interviews with pupils observed at the upper primary level, focal group interviews with parents and school management committees, interviews with chiefs and elders and home visits to interview selected parents of children (particularly girls) who had dropped out of the school at upper primary level, and home visits with parents of children who were differently abled.

The schools that were sampled enabled the team to investigate a variety of school conditions/characteristics (well resourced/under resourced, urban/rural, religious mission and non mission), community as well as teacher characteristics which represented a cross section of teachers 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. A detailed description of the research design is included in Annexes 1A to 1D.

The literature review and analysis of the key thematic areas to explore in the research related to the inhibitors and promoters of quality education revealed that more work was needed in the following areas:

- o Teacher's motivation, and their background in relation to quality education;
- o school environment and school conditions for promoting quality learning;
- o community demand, and community participation in relation to achieving quality education and inclusiveness;
- o child readiness and support for quality education and education outcomes.[6]

The Quality of Education Report

Three key documents were produced as part of the Quality of Education Study: a full research compendium of the detailed analysis from across the three regions, a synthesis report which summarises the main findings supported by evidence and the executive summary/policy brief. Two other volumes are also available which complement the study - a detailed research annex and a case study volume. This synthesis presents the key findings of the study linked to some of the evidence and the implications for policy makers and key actors involved in improving education quality in Ghana.

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[6] These were 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.

The three documents use a similar structure; an overview of literature describing the historical and current state of education in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa. Findings from field research are described and analysed so that different contexts are compared (for example rural/urban and District Assembly and Faith Schools) and promoters and inhibitors of quality learning identified. Each aspect of the research is examined according to the main pillars of the research. School inputs are examined from the perspective of the District Education Office and by drawing on evidence of the activities and views of teachers, community members and community leaders. The quality of teaching and learning is assessed based on a detailed analysis of different aspects of teacher attitude/ behaviour, time on task, sensitivity to learner needs and methodologies in the classroom. Child readiness to learn and the extent to which communities support the child's learning process and demand for quality are also described. Across each of these key pillars of the research, the promoters and inhibitors impacting on access to quality education by girls and children with special needs were examined.

Chapter 2.0 Creating an enabling environment for teaching and learning at district 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 in English and Math are less than 35% and 25% respectively (See Table 1.1). Pass rates in the three northern regions are substantially lower than any other region of the country (see table 2.1 below).

Table 2.1 - Pupil Proficiency Pass Rates for NEA in Maths and English by Region in Ghana (2011)

	P3		P6	
REGION	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, CRDD NEA Report (2011).

The poor performance of northern children also reflect the research on equity and efficiency in Ghana's education system (World Bank, 2011; Casely-Hayford, 2011) which shows signiginficant inequity in teacher supply and distribution, ineffective supervision and monitoring, weak school management systems and limited oversight by district education offices to ensure accountability. These regional performance results also reflect the inequity in trained teacher to pupil ratio's and text book pupil ratio's compared to the national average (World Bank, 2011).

2.1   Perception of Quality Education

The TENI research study revealed that the perception of quality education varies across individual districts with some common features. Most of the District Directors of Education across the six study districts perceived quality education in relation to the availability of educational inputs, teachers, supplies and the ability of their management teams/circuit supervisors to effectively supervise the teaching force in their districts. Interviews with District Directors of Education also revealed that they viewed 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 in the six study districts.

Interviews with District Education Office (DEO) staff and directors revealed that tracking the teaching and learning outcomes with respect to pupil achievement in BECE results was vital and that there was growing public scrutiny of these results. The poor BECE results particularly in the rural districts of the three northern regions were of growing concern to the government officials interviewed, and parents in the communities. A greater emphasis by district stakeholders of education (e.g. District Assemblies and DEO's) was being placed on Junior High school teachers to achieve better BECE results.

When children enter JHS they have just 2 years and 2 terms in which to prepare for their BECE's which are usually written in June of the third year of the Junior High level[7]. Unfortunately the poor learning outcomes among many children throughout their lower primary and primary education make this a challenging task in the time available. Interviews with JHS3 teachers revealed that the curriculum and culture of teaching at the JHS was such that there was little or no scope for remediating the skills and aptitudes gaps identified for learners particularly with respect to poor reading competency. Even those students who had repeated some or all JHS levels were still unable to achieve a passing mark when writing the BECE often due to the fact that they could not read to a minimal level of competency and were likely guessing on the exam questions. This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that the BECE is the first national standardized assessment of student achievement but it does not take place until after 9 years of basic school education. With no other interim nation-wide standardized assessment and a growing emphasis on mass promotion, this means that many students are progressing through the basic school system with no assessment of their ability to read, write and numerate. Despite this, 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 TENI midterm evaluation data from the TENI project districts suggested that TENI districts were benefiting from support to prepare and implement performance monitoring tests (PMTs); and that results from school performance monitoring tests conducted by some partners (e.g. ISODEC) in Mathematics, Science and English language suggest an improvement in the quality of education. In addition examination of the pupils' exercises in some schools revealed improved writing skills and performance in class exercises, although all this cannot be attributed to the project alone. The knowledge of the parents of the PMT results through the school performance

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[7] In 2013 this changed to April.

appraisal meetings was also having some impact on their awareness concerning their children's performance in the school.

2.2   School Inputs

The District assessment instrument which was used to track the 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 falling between 1.2% and 16.9% at the primary level and around 10% at the JHS level between 2010 and 2012. Only one district (Jirapa, Upper West) out of the six research districts had science and Ghanaian Language text books in 2010. None of the other districts received any textbooks in English, Maths, Science and Ghanaian Language for the last three years (2010 – 2012). The district and school based checklist assessment also revealed that the supply of exercise books was also not adequate to cater for pupils in view of the total enrolment and number of subjects being studied in the schools.

In 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 to particularly deprived areas of Ghana. Non-availability of textbooks and inadequate supply of exercise books have been a major challenge to all schools across the three regions. Unfortunately none of the 54 schools in the study sample had received the revised syllabuses over the last three years; district education officers explained that the latest syllabus remained on CD Roms at the District Education Offices and was not printed out in order to ensure accessibility by teachers across the districts. Schools in the research sites therefore continue to rely on the old syllabus (developed before 2009) in order to teach their children.

2.3   Teacher Supply and Distribution

West and East Mamprusi districts were not able to produce data on teacher characteristics, availability and deployment. An analysis of the teacher data in the other four districts indicate that over **60%** of teachers engaged in basic schools (primary and JHS) are trained. TENI project districts, Talensi (UE) and Jirapa (UW) have 62% and 66.8% of trained teachers. Non-TENI districts, Bongo (UE) and Lawra (UW) had 61.8% and 58.4% trained teachers respectively. The KG level had the least number of trained teachers with the majority of their teachers being untrained and/or community volunteer teachers.

In all the six sampled districts, the distribution of trained teachers favoured the primary level whose rates ranged between 55.2% and 50.9%. The JHS had between 34.8% and 42.1% of trained teachers. The KG has the least proportion of trained teachers with only 2.7% to 11.3% of trained teachers across the six districts of study. These trends indicate the poor deployment of trained teachers at the KG level often reflecting the attitude of heads that the "trained" teachers should be placed at upper primary in order to prepare children for JHS.

In all the 54 sampled schools there were 65.8% of female teachers on the average deployed in urban community schools compared to 34.2% of female teachers who were found in rural schools. Similarly, the average percentage of trained female teachers in the urban areas was very high at 74.2% as compared to 25.8% female trained teachers in rural communities. Interviews with the Girl Child Education Officers at district level suggest that this was having a negative

impact on girls' education/retention since more female teachers were needed to act as role models and ensure the safety of girls at the school level.

2.4   Teacher Supervision/Monitoring and Support

When asked about their views on the key promoters of quality education, all six District Education Directors stressed that supervision and monitoring was vital in the process of ensuring that effective teaching and learning is taking place in the classroom. Researchers observed that in all the six sampled districts, circuit supervisors were tasked to supervise and monitor teacher performance. Interviews with several teachers and head teachers suggest that they did not monitor the schools on a regular basis and that the quality of their interventions during monitoring visits was limited to observing lesson notes and school registers. There was limited evidence that CS's were mentoring or improving the methodological practices of teachers across all six sampled districts. According to the Circuit Supervisors, the efficiency and frequency of their school visits was constrained by lack of office accommodation within circuits, inadequate funds for fuel to visit schools and non payment of vehicle maintenance allowances.

District Education Offices were unable to fully finance the running costs of Circuit Supervisors' motor bikes because of lack of funding from the central government over the last three years (2010-2012). However, there has been support from various outside agencies; for example: Link Community Development (LCD), TENI/VSO and the PAGE project were identified as assisting DEO's subsidise the fuel costs; District Offices sometimes used their DFID budget contributions to also supplement the running costs of circuit supervisors. Findings from the research suggest that there was a loss of confidence among most head teachers and communities in relation to the effectiveness of DEO's and circuit supervisors in supervising schools and providing oversight. The source of this discontent in some study districts was based on the perceived lack of professionalism exhibited by some members of the teaching force and education management. Community members, head teachers and teachers when interviewed described instances of collusion between teachers and managers to mask or hide instances of teacher absenteeism/ indiscipline. Teachers were reported to have given payments, friendly tokens or simply to capitalise on close social relationships to avoid reporting or action on complaints being taken against them.

In-Service and Training Support

Findings from the 54 research school sites suggest that there was very little in-service training available to teachers (particularly untrained teachers) at the district and cluster based levels despite the introduction of capitation grants over the past eight years. There was some evidence that the in-service training programmes which were available were funded through capitation grants at the cluster level, and through the JICA in service training programme which was being implemented in some of the districts visited. All the six sampled districts had a functional District Teacher Support Team (DTST) which provides some support to teachers. The funding of INSETS was a problem in all the districts due to the inadequate and irregular funding of district education office budgets. The District Education Offices had a small proportion of their budget approved for funding INSET but budgetary releases were often irregular and unreliable. External

support was provided to TENI districts by TENI/VSO, World Vision, UNICEF, PAGE, and LETS. The non-TENI districts were sometimes supported by PAGE and CAMFED.

In all the Districts Education Directorates, pupil teachers were able to undertake the "Untrained Teacher Training Diploma in Basic Education" (UTTDBE) to become professional teachers. Interviews with the untrained <u>community</u> volunteer teachers suggest that there was very little training and INSET 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 to these training programmes. 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 conflicted with teachers focus in the classroom and their ability to adequately prepare for lessons; this resulted in the loss of instructional time in the classroom.

Teacher Attitude, Discipline and Commitment

Field work revealed that various methods were used by the districts to attempt to tackle the issue of teacher indiscipline. 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. Head teachers claimed that the method of salary blockage was no longer effective and therefore rarely used[8]. The second main factor which was identified by District Education officers themselves was the fact that a culture of indiscipline and a "poor work ethic" had crept into the teaching force. Head teachers and district education officers described a problem when some teachers are seen to be too effective and efficient in their work other (non performing) teachers would bully them.   The high performing teachers were found to be ostracized by the non performing teachers who would ask derogatory statements such as: "are you doing your father's work?" According to some head teachers and CS's interviewed, the committed, high performing teachers are known to the vast majority of teachers in the district and sometimes avoid close interaction with the rest of the teaching force at workshops.

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

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[8] 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 month's 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.

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 programme is being earnestly pursued. In all the schools visited untrained teachers eager to have professional certificates in teaching are pursing 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 implemented additional strategies to motivate teachers who operate in rural and hard-to-reach areas. Furthermore, in some communities across the six districts, Head teachers reported that communities harassed, and sometimes verbally and physically assaulted teachers when they were found to be non performing and absent over long periods of time. These actions often demotivated and deterred teachers from serving in the hard to reach areas.

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 twenty-seven schools (60%) out of the 45 the head teachers reported that teachers missed classes once a week. In 41 schools (75.9%) the heads reported that teachers missed school twice a week and in 9 schools (16.7%) the heads reported that teachers missed school more than five times in a month[9]. The teacher absentee rates across a number of schools shows that after once-a-week absenteeism, 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 as the children miss vital classroom lessons/instruction and in some cases reducing children's interest in learning and parental support for schooling. Interviews with the teachers and heads suggest that one of the main reasons for teacher absenteeism was due to their participation in distance education programmes which required that they travel to their learning centres on Fridays and return on Tuesday. These programmes required that the teachers leave on a Friday and often return on Monday (thereby missing the two days of school instruction hours).

Table 2.2: Head teacher reporting on teacher Absenteeism (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

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[9] The 41 schools is calculated by subtracting the number of heads which reported no teachers' absenteeism (11) out of the 52. The head teachers were reporting on the absenteeism rates across numerous teachers under their supervision.

Number of Teachers	Once a week	Twice a week	Once a month	More than five times a month
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 six 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, outdoorings, 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 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 2.3 - Reasons for Teacher absenteeism by Districts

Upper East		Northern		Upper West	
Bongo	**Talensi-Nabdam**	**East Mamprusi**	**West Mamprusi**	**Jirapa**	**Lawra**
Teacher sickness Attending to family / social issues, Salary issues (delay and collection) Distance	Teacher sickness Attending to family/ social issues Salary issues (delay and collection)	Teacher sickness Attending to family/ social issues Salary issues (delay and collection) Distance	Teacher sickness Attending to family/ social issues Salary issues (delay and collection) Distance	Teacher sickness Attending to family issues Salary issues (delay and collection) Distance	Teachers sickness Attending to family / social issues Salary issues (delay and collection)

Upper East		Northern		Upper West	
Bongo	Talensi-Nabdam	East Mamprusi	West Mamprusi	Jirapa	Lawra
Education Problems of transportation Attending workshops and meetings	Distance Education Problems of transportation Attending workshops and meetings Lack of decent accommodation within community/ commuting long distances	Education Problems of transportation Engaged in extra economic activity Weak school management Lack of decent accommodation within community/ commuting long distances	Education .Problems of transportation Engaged in extra economic activity Lack of decent accommodation within community/ commuting long distances Teacher Drunkenness Rainfall	Education Problems of transportation Attending workshops and meetings Engaged in extra economic activity Lack of decent accommodation within community/ commuting long distances	Distance Education Problems of transportation Attending workshops and meetings Engaged in extra economic activity

Source: Head teacher interviews, Quality of Education field research, 2012.

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. In Jirapa, the District Director of Education reports that he has established a Teacher monitoring team to check on the regularity of 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 to teachers who were absent from school. Some heads would record the offence and the name of the teacher in the school's Log Book. Other Head teachers referred recalcitrant teachers to the teacher code of conduct by GES and GNAT. Some head teachers reported that when all the procedures fail, they report the teacher's conduct to the circuit supervisor in order to have the teacher transferred from the school. This implies that districts were transferring poor teacher performance to another school or even district instead of addressing the issue.

2.5 Accountability Management

Data collected from the 6 Education Directorates and 54 research schools indicate that the districts have accountability structures in place but these had limited levels of functionality due in some cases to lack of accountability measures being upheld. 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 complaining about their teachers. Evidence from the field work also suggests that in some schools particularly in the West and East Mamprusi districts, teachers were used to absenting themselves on a rotational basis so that at least one out of 4 teachers would be at the school at any one time. As one group of teachers reported about the issue of posting more teachers to schools to ensure adequate pupil/teacher ratios: "*this does not solve the problem as teachers take advantage of the fact that they (the teachers) are many and therefore they can shuffle attendance among themselves.*" (Wurshie: FGD with 15 trained teachers from JHS1-3)

In both TENI and Non-TENI districts, SMC/PTA's expressed a very keen interest in school development efforts and the performance of their teachers yet they also had been warned by the district offices that if they complained about their teachers (particularly their trained teachers) they would not receive trained teachers in the future[10]. Research findings from the field also suggest that a growing level of corruption was also being experienced in some districts. For instance, district officers and head teachers reported that the potential pupil teacher lists each year were not transparently being filled. Community volunteer teachers who had been volunteering in some cases for up to three years complained that district education directorates were placing their "own people" on these lists instead of reaching out to the broader community of youth who had been serving as volunteer community teachers. This was confirmed in interviews with key stakeholders involved in anti corruption work in the country.

2.6   Key Challenges in promoting learning efficiency and effectiveness

The most common challenge observed by upper primary school children, head teachers and district education officers was the effects of distance learning programmes and the impact this was having on absenteeism and lack of preparedness of teachers in the classroom. Interviews with teachers who were participating in the distance education programme suggest that teachers were absent for between 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.

Similar challenges were being encountered in the delivery of education across all the six study districts. These included: inadequate supply of exercise books and lack of textbooks/syllabuses, trained teacher recruitment and retention and a growing prevalence of "untrained" teachers. The Directors complained that most of the "untrained" teachers, whether they were community volunteer teachers, NYEP volunteers or National Service Volunteer teachers, lacked the basic

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[10] This was based on Community Scorecard interviews and FGDs with SMC/PTAs.

knowledge and skills related to teaching instructional practice to impact on learning efforts of pupils. The study found that the rural communities had a much higher proportion of untrained teachers; the urban schools had a higher proportion of female teachers and trained teachers. Across all the rural schools in the study, 51% of the teachers were GES trained teachers compared to 62% in urban schools.   In the rural school sample 22% of teachers were female compared to 49% in the urban school sample. 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 school each day.

When interviewed staff in all the six districts showed an awareness of the inclusive education policy but felt that its implementation required inputs such as training and other resources. There was also awareness that the basic needs of girls, such as sanitary facilities, are not always met and that the heavy burden of domestic chores serves as an impediment to learning and has forced a number of girls out of school. The districts seemed helpless in dealing with this situation in spite of CAMFED, other NGO and Donor interventions. Similarly, education of children with SENs was posing a challenge because teachers felt ill-equipped in terms of competence and the physical resources needed to provide an adequate learning environment. Furthermore evidence from interviews with a range of stakeholders suggests that several factors would have to change in schools before they could be deemed a safe and nurturing context for children of different abilities; some of these factors cited by teachers were the poor school infrastructure, large class sizes, limited provision of pastoral care and overall supervision of SEN children.

2.7   Learning Outcomes and Assessment

Learning outcome assessments were being offered across the six districts visited but very few district education offices were able to show evidence of tracking learning outcome data nor did they properly store their data from the wide variety of assessments being administered over the last five years. Poor storage of data and lack of committed district education personnel resulted in learning assessment data being lost over a three year period (2009 – 2011) and only the most recent data from the last one or two years (2011 – 2012) was available for the research teams in most districts. Some districts did not keep any learning assessment data on hand to analyse trends in learning outcomes in their districts (e.g. East Mamprusi District). Data gathered from the districts indicates that several different outcome assessments were being implemented at the district levels for the performance assessment of pupils including: the National Education Assessment (NEA), School Education Assessment (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 2009.

TENI districts also used performance monitoring tests (PMT) as a means of tracking learning outcomes. PMT results for 2011 reveal that pass rates for P3 English and Maths were less than 20% and 30% respectively in all 3 TENI districts; and the P6 pass rate for English and Maths were less than 13% and 14% respectively. Apart from Lawra, the Non-Teni districts did not have PMT testing organised making it difficult to conduct any comparison. BECE results over

five years in TENI districts demonstrate annual growth in performance in Jirapa and West Mamprusi recording 1.7% and 13.1% respectively. Talensi District recorded a negative growth based on BECE results of 2.5%. In Non-Teni districts, East Mamprusi and Bongo recorded an annual growth rate of 3.9% and 1% respectively. However Lawra recorded a negative performance growth using BECE results of 9.6%.

2.8   School Characteristics

The evidence from observations across the 54 schools points to head teachers and teachers demonstrating a lack of commitment to their roles. Lack of preparedness for classroom instruction, low time on task and high rates of absenteeism were key factors in assessing the levels of commitment and interest of teachers in the study sites. The teacher commitment level was particularly illustrated by the fact that as field workers arrived at the beginning of the school day they discovered that in the vast majority of schools visited, the full complement of teachers had not arrived at the school. In some cases the teachers, arrived during the course of the morning but in many cases at the time when lessons were scheduled to begin, there would be a number of children waiting for their teacher to arrive (sometimes for the entire day). In some schools where there were no teachers on site, pupils were found playing in the school compound; a situation in some schools which persisted for the entire day. Furthermore, in many schools, observers reported that even if lessons were being delivered, it was likely that teaching would not recommence after either the first break (around 10:00 am), or the second break (around midday). The Table 2.3 shows details of the times recommended by GES for school timetables and figure 2.1 reveals a typical day in a school observed in the Northern and Upper East regions.

Table 2.3 - 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: District Education Offices GES, 2012.

The following are school observation descriptions from a sample of schools visited across two of the three regions (Upper East and Northern Regions). These rural schools reflect the reality of several schools visited by the research teams over the four weeks of field work.

Figure 2.1 –TENI Research field notes and school based observations in 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 after wards.

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 that morning with most of the children rolling on the ground, playing 'Ampe', football, sleeping and some went back home because there was no teaching going on.

This situation did not seem strange to the children /or teachers 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 one... then what can you do about it".

Source: TENI Research Field notes and school based observations in the Northern region schools, November 2012.

Figure 2.2 - TENI Research field notes and school based observations in Upper East

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.   The situation at the school appeared very chaotic as pupils could be seen moving about with limited supervision in the classrooms and on the field. 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 the head teacher at 8:30 am. Pupils defecated and urinated around the school indiscriminately because they were not using the urinals or the toilet facilities in the school.

The bell was rung for only break time. Pupils did not enter classrooms after the 1st break (10:00) immediately 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 other pupils continued to read from the board (with no teacher supervision). The two girls were later made to kneel down in the sun by the class prefects. After 12:00 pm there was no learning going on in any of the classes 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 present at the school 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 the tree writing on a table while one other teacher sat by him to chat.

Source: TENI Research Field notes and school based observations in the Upper East region schools, November 2012.

Conversely, the situation found in the urban Roman Catholic Primary School at the start of the school day was one of orderly discipline:

Figure 2.3 - Assembly and lesson at an RC Primary School in urban Upper East

Source: Quality Education research, 2012.

The findings suggest that in several schools the presence of a large team (up to three or four researchers) did not inhibit the normal routine of the school/and behaviour of teachers (e.g. teachers sitting under trees, misusage of instructional hours etc); only during the lessons when teachers were being observed in the classrooms did the "research factor" and presence of the researchers appear to take route in particular the manner in which punishment was used.

2.9   Classroom Context

The 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, RC and DA 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 and teachers in rural schools. Drawing on the summary analyses of each of these, it is clear that in most districts class sizes are relatively higher in rural schools than in urban schools. A factor which, when taken along with responses by teachers and others in interviews, contributes to teachers' reluctance to give more exercises to children on a more frequent or regular basis.

Table 2.4 - Summary of Information about Teachers Characteristics

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

% Female Teachers	80	12.5	60	22	60	22	40	0	80	12.5	80	37.5

Source: Classroom/Teacher Observations across Research Sites, 2012.

Across all three regions there are a higher proportion of trained teachers and female teachers in the urban schools than in the rural. Those in the rural schools tend to be male and there are a higher proportion of untrained teachers including community service volunteers, National Service personnel, NYEP teachers and pupil teachers.

When Class sizes in the rural schools that tend to be much larger, are disadvantaged by the poorer supply of resources such as textbooks and syllabuses , the inputs for the rural schools (in particular for those classes that were visited by the research teams) are woefully under resourced compared to urban schools. However, when making these comparisons it should be borne in mind that class sizes across all of the classrooms are generally high and very few classrooms had a full complement of textbooks. 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:

Table 2.5 - Detailed Classroom Context Data from Rural West Mamprusi Sampled 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?
									NORTHERN REGION - RURAL WEST MAMPRUSI SCHOOLS									
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: Data collected from Head Teacher interviews across sampled schools

The evidence in tables 2.4 and 2.5 points to the fact that the majority of classes in the rural areas are taught by untrained teachers. What table 2.5 shows is that, particularly in the Northern Region (as compared to the situation in the Upper East), a higher proportion of untrained teachers are Community Volunteers. From a sample of 8 classes in rural schools in the northern region, one quarter of the teachers were volunteers. The presence of teachers who have been

recruited from the community highlights the problem of recruiting and retaining any kind of teachers from outside the community, not just trained teachers. Interviews with SMC/PTA's suggest that communities were recruiting community volunteer teachers due to high rates of teacher absenteeism, lateness and indiscipline. Evidence from interviews with community teachers in the schools observed reveals that, in general teachers felt poorly equipped to enter the classroom to teach, not just in terms of inputs like textbooks, TLMs and syllabus but also in relation to their own professional development either in the form of in-service training or mentoring by school management. 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 teacher, Rural West Mamprusi).

Teachers' views on the subject of inputs are supported by evidence from the study which shows that from the 86 classrooms only 58 had English textbooks of which 10 classrooms only had 1 English textbook which was for the sole usage of the teacher. Ghanaian textbooks were found in just 17 of the 86 classrooms. In a sample of 8 classrooms in rural West Mamprusie just 2 classrooms had any textbooks: the first with 4 textbooks shared between 23 children and the second classroom with 15 textbooks shared between the 17 pupils who were present from possible enrolment of 29. Only 2 teachers were found using a syllabus that they had used to plan their lesson from, but as is described elsewhere, the GES syllabus most recently developed for distribution to basic schools was not being used because heads and teachers had very limited access to it[11].

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. Information provided by District Education Offices confirms schools across all six districts experienced shortages of textbooks and syllabi. Data on teacher deployment also correlates with sample school data in terms of proportions of trained teachers. However, DEO data provided to the research teams was not disaggregated according to rural and urban schools so it is not possible to accurately compare the proportion of trained and untrained, male and female teachers deployed across the rural/urban divide. However, evidence from interviews with teachers and management across the study districts confirms that it is generally difficult to deploy female teachers or trained teachers to rural schools due to lack of staff accommodation, lack of electricity/water and reluctance to living in these areas. It is therefore safe to assume that the situations in the sampled schools are broadly representative of each of the districts as a whole.

Chapter 3: Supervision and Management particularly at the Head teacher level

This chapter explores how the teaching and learning environment is supported in the three northern regions of Ghana. The focus is on the adequacy and timeliness of the supply of school inputs (books, syllabuses and teachers), what new interventions are available to support teaching

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[11] The GES syllabus remained on CD rom in most cases and was not printed nor distributed in hard copy to the schools.

and learning and how these inputs are sustained. The chapter also explores head teachers' leadership styles and how donor/NGO as well as GES district education directorates support the schools.

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 according to the district offices and head teachers visited, the last text books were supplied in 2004. Syllabuses have not been 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 books and teacher supplies. 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 school 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 spaced far apart time wise. Textbook materials supplied were not durable because of the poor quality of binding as well as the large number of children handling the textbooks. Similarly, because of the inadequate supply of teacher syllabuses, teachers resorted to sharing and rotating the few GES syllabuses which were available leading to accelerated wear and tear. Findings from the research also suggest that very few schools had materials adapted for the use of children with Special Educational Needs. The only visible SEN related school input was the presence of access ramps for SEN children in only three schools across the 56 studied.

On knowledge of head teachers and teachers concerning the Ministry of Education's National Accelerated Literacy programme: NALAP, the finding are shocking given that the programme was only recently implemented (beginning in 2010 and was ongoing); the research findings reveal that the majority of head teachers (53.7%) were not aware of the NALAP programme as against 46.3% that were aware of NALAP. Of the 46.3% of head teachers who were aware of the NALAP programme, less than 20% were actively using the NALAP materials. Several school heads had not taken time to properly unpack NALAP materials which were still found wrapped up in their storage rooms. The impact of NALAP in the three northern regions was minimal with only three classrooms demonstrating usage of any NALAP materials. The findings suggest that very few teachers and head teachers were taking interest and seeing the opportunity which NALAP materials and methods could have on improving instructional practice in the classroom particularly in relation to the teaching of reading and writing.

Evidence from school observations (such as those cited above) suggests that head teachers who demonstrate strong leadership are key facilitators of quality education at the school level. School and classroom based observations revealed that where head teachers were found to have strong leadership qualities and management ability teachers were found to be "on task" from the

beginning of the school day to the end, that lessons were taught according to the timetable and there was a strong ethos of professional development. The study however found that in many schools this was not the case and that Head teacher leadership across the six districts was neither focused on promoting learning nor effective in stimulating a culture of effective learning through head teacher leadership. The majority of the head teachers neither queried nor even checked their teachers' use of instructional time and level of absenteeism. 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 mainly associated with fulfilling directives from the Education Directorate (e.g. financial accounting, collective statistics and organising delivery of material inputs from the DEO to the school).

With regard to School management, the study found head teacher's 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 the many head teachers' opinion that there was no cooperation. However, the study found that most PTA/SMCs were not assertive in demanding quality education for their children and a few of the SMC/PTAs who were assertive did not receive cooperation from teachers, head teachers, education authorities nor the District Assembly.

Evidence from school observations and interviews conducted across the six districts suggested that the Roman Catholic schools were better managed due to the church structures that had oversight of school management. With regard to district education office support the study found that in all six districts, District Directors have instituted continuous professional development in-service programmes with District Teacher support teams and Circuit Supervisors championing professional development. District Assemblies had also sponsored some in-service programmes and in some districts had provided support for DEOCs to monitor schools.

The study found Circuit supervisors carrying out only limited level of monitoring and supervision in the schools due to the lack of funds and rigorous supervision of their own work. However, project support districts and districts with NGO support had higher CS turn out. For example in the TENI districts head teachers reported that CS visited schools at least three times a term. During these visits head teachers claimed that CSs supported the professional development of their teachers through organizing workshops on pedagogy. Head teachers reported that during Circuit Supervisor monitoring visits they carried out various activities including: checking head teachers' vetting of teachers' lesson notes, tracking the number of pupil assignments and evidence of marking, resolving disputes between heads and teachers, checking teacher and pupils' examination papers for quality, and checking teacher and pupil absenteeism, regularity and punctuality. The CS role also includes gathering data from schools to monitor pupil enrolment, teacher supply and deployment.

The key findings on management and supervision suggest that with the high level of Government investment to improving quality such as increasing capitation grants, free school feeding/exercise books and the introduction of several programmes to improve quality and ensuring in-service training was available at cluster level, head teachers needed to be much more interested and

committed to bringing about change in their schools to effectively use these resources, ensure effective usage of teachers and government/donor investments[12].

Chapter 4.0   Inside the classroom: a look at teaching and learning

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 the classrooms observed often had very few lessons taking place in the whole school. For instance, in four primary schools in the northern region out of the 56 schools, there was only one lesson observed because there was only one teacher present in the school at the time of the visit in a school. The research remit was that two lessons should be observed in each primary school: one at the lower primary level and one lesson at the upper primary level. The main focus of the research was on observing the language and literacy period in the school. An in-depth interview with the teacher who was observed teaching the lesson and a scrutiny of the exercise books was also involved in the classroom assessment; children's focal group discussions (with 6-10 girls and boys separately from the classroom observed at upper primary level) and head teacher and teacher focal group discussions were also part of the methodological approach to field work.

Based solely on the findings from classroom observations it is clear that in many cases there was little or very low levels of learning going on in the 86 classrooms observed; in most cases learning was based on drilling, rote learning, memorization and repetition with little or no recourse to higher order thinking skills, or participatory learning activities; and that the "basic skills" for literacy (referred to in Goal 6 of the EFA document source: UNICEF) were not being taught or met. This was often due to the lack of understanding by the children due to 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 for helping children to read including how to teach children to decode, sound out simple two and three letter words and regularly expose children to written text.

4.1   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).

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 often understaffed in relation to their trained teachers; most urban schools visited had more than one teacher in the classroom with the second teacher who was to act as an assistant teacher often becoming the regular teacher a few days in the week. Female teachers were very few in the rural zone compared to urban zone. The vast majority of

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[12] Some of the programmes currently operating in Ghana and supporting quality education included TENI, NALAP, Teaching Learning Material Programme by the University of Chicago, JICA's support to in-service cluster based training etc.

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 pupil teacher ratio since most teachers learned to rotate with their other teacher for different periods of the day or on different days; as one example from Urban Talensi Nabdam illustrates: *There was a Pupil Teacher in the class during the lesson. The class is supposed to be split between the two teachers but there are just not enough rooms. So they each teach the whole of P6 for different lessons. The Pupil Teacher stays in the class to "learn from" the other teacher "because he is qualified and has more experience". The Pupil Teacher helps with drawings and checks some of the pupils' exercises* (Source, Lesson Observation note)

In some districts (West Mamprusi) teachers were travelling over 1 to 2 hours from their homes in order to attend school. Interview 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 high number of trained teachers in urban schools does not appear to have any significant impact on quality education delivery. Rural schools were further disadvantaged since they experienced larger class sizes, were poorer resourced (e.g. textbooks and syllabuses are also in shorter supply) and less monitored by the education offices. Interviews with district education directors and district education officers suggest that the quality of education trends found in the studies rural and urban schools reflected the challenges being faced across the district and region.

4.2 Lesson Delivery of the teacher

Across all three regions the evidence from classroom observation reports indicates that the majority of teachers (about 70%) had not prepared for their lessons by writing lesson notes. Those teachers who were unable to produce lesson notes for classroom observers to view were either working 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 other cases the teachers were relying on past experience and were therefore able to "wing it" – which means the teacher could deliver a fairly coherent lesson without a written plan. Of those teachers who were found to be repeating the lesson, various reasons were given by teachers, including the claims that too many pupils had been absent the previous time the lesson had been delivered or that not enough of the students had understood the lesson.

Learning objectives

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 into a lesson without a clear idea of the lesson objectives or purpose. Often teachers were unable to either relate objectives with pupils' previous knowledge or bring a logical conclusion of their lessons. In general, what was observed was teachers writing a subject and topic title on the chalkboard at the beginning of a lesson however 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 that that they did not fully understand what the lesson was about and why they were being taught that particular lesson.

The evidence from the classroom observation indicates that those lessons dealing with subjects other than language (English or Ghanaian) were more likely to begin with some kind of objective; however of the language lessons being taught it was more likely for objectives to be set for those topics dealing with some aspect of grammar or speaking and listening. For example, 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.

4.3   Language of Instruction

Another aspect of the lesson delivery was the language of instruction that teachers were using. The extent to which pupils are able to understand the language of instruction had a significant impact on the quality of learning across all three regions of the country. The study found that if pupils could not understand the teacher due to the language they were using for the majority of the lesson, then very little learning was experienced by pupils in the classrooms observed. In some cases, particularly at the upper grade level and in the Upper East, teachers were delivering lessons wholly in English and observers noted that in many of these cases the majority of pupils were unable to understand the content of the lesson. 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. The following table is a breakdown of the language of instruction used according to class level. In each case the column headed "understand" indicates the number of classrooms where observers felt that the majority of learners were able to understand the language the teacher was using. At the lower primary level (P1 to P3), two lessons were delivered solely in L2 (English) and in both cases there was no evidence of pupil understanding. Where teachers were using mostly English at the lower primary, only 4 of the lessons out of 10 were understood by the children; this was based on classroom participation rates of children).

Table 4.1 - Breakdown of Numbers of Lessons and Type of Language of Instruction Across all 86 Observed Classrooms by Class Level

	All L1	Understand	All L2	Understand	Most L1	Understand	Most L2	Understand	Mixture	Understand	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 across sampled schools, 2012.

Evidence from the research indicates that pupils in JHS classes more frequently understood English. In the Upper East it was observed that the practice of not allowing pupils with poor English and Maths achievement levels to transit from P6 to JHS meant that most JHS pupils were able to speak and understand English compared to the two other regions where the practice of repeating children at the upper primary level due to poor achievement results was not common. Generally, the research team observed a high level of L1 usage in rural schools compared to urban schools in all three regions.

Furthermore in some classes the level of English required in the lesson or text was beyond the English fluency of the students. This was ostensibly with English reading comprehension lessons; usually with respect to the meanings of individual words which were given by the teacher and it was then up to the student to memorise these definitions. In some cases the meaning was translated into the pupils' mother tongue however the result was the same – the word and its translation needed to be memorised by the children.

4.4   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). Key findings suggest that instructional practice, across the three northern regions revealed that teachers hardly ever used child-centred and child friendly teaching methods; with few class discussions, role plays, demonstrations, group work, brainstorming, stimulation, or experiential or hands on deck approaches.

The Quality of Education study also found that teachers were unable to handle large class sizes, multi-grade classes and disadvantaged groups of children, including SEN children. On the subject of head teacher support the consensus was that head teachers supported their teachers through organization of school based in-service and the provision of teaching learning materials for lesson preparation, however school observations and teachers' interviews suggested that this was very limited. Most classrooms did not have any teaching learning materials in easy access of the teachers with the majority of materials 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 and these often involved the constant usage of repetition/memorisation, the approachability of the teacher and the openness of the teachers towards creating a non threatening learning environment in which children could ask questions and explore. 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 phonics in teaching reading across all subject areas.

The Teaching of Reading

Observers were asked to prioritise the observation of language/literacy lessons where possible because of the importance this subject plays in pupils' ability to access other aspects of the

curriculum. In the majority of cases lessons observed across the 86 classrooms where literacy lessons were being taught, teachers were delivering a reading comprehension lesson, either in English or mother tongue, a grammar lesson, or a writing lesson with the focus on how to structure a piece of writing (e.g. an informal letter). In a small number of classrooms a mathematics or science lesson was being delivered. 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 read and repeat was used for the majority of classroom instructional time (Source: field notes from an observer in the Upper East).*

If students made pronunciation errors during their echo reading 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 in other words. Very little instruction was also based on using teaching learning materials such as flashcards, letter/sound cards and small books. 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 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 skills of reading: sounding out letters, learning to decode phonetically constructed words and view text in the context of books was not being taught.

Very few lessons observed 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. 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.

Fig 4.1 - Preparation for English lesson to practise 1and 2-letter sounds (Upper East)

Reading strategies used by teachers consisted mainly of "drilling" students in order to memorise each word, its pronunciation and, in only a few cases helping them understand the meaning of words discussed. According to teachers interviewed, reading meant helping children pronounce and orally learn to understand language not necessarily understand how to use skills to sound out words in a text. This meant that each new word learnt had to be repeated orally after being placed on the board and then repeated by the class in order to ensure that the children learned to "*properly say it*". This also meant that teachers might not need to use a text book to teach reading and that words were not always learned within the context of a passage or text; or linked to the skills needed to go on and decode other new words. When it comes to overall comprehension of the text, this was often first explained by the teacher in English and later in the mother tongue. Comprehension questions that follow this explanation were frequently answered on the basis of the students' ability to have comprehended what the teacher said not what they read in a text. There was no evidence of teachers asking a question and guiding the student to use any kind of reading skill to find the meaning. The questions that were usually asked were relatively closed and low order, so that the question itself 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 chorus response by all the children in the class further emphasising the usage of memorisation as a key step in reading.

From the evidence of classroom observations comprehension skills such as inference, synthesis, judgement or application etc were not taught in the 86 classrooms observed which means that when the pupil reads texts in other subjects, they were not able to synthesise or even express an opinion on the information from those texts, they must simply memorise them. Evidence of this emphasis on memorization of facts can be found in the lesson observation notes by researchers 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 thermometers. 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 West Mamprusi (2011). In the West Mamprusi District, of the 2,816 P6 candidates who took the PMT in 2011 (Reading Comprehension Section) averaged 5.7 out of a total mark of 15. Twenty eight percent (28%) of these P6 candidates scored zero, and 48% scored 5 marks or less.

Teacher Attitude towards Learner Needs

The attitude of teachers towards learner needs is related in many respects to the findings concerning the teaching of reading. Classroom observations suggest across the three regions 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 make progress 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 the reading and answer questions in class. Evidence from the classroom observations, interviews with teachers, and FGDs with girls and boys shows that generally, sensitivity towards different learner needs and the teachers' ability to cater for different needs was very poor across the 86 classroom observations. There were however some teachers who had some sensitivity towards learner needs but overall the vast majority of teachers interviewed and observed did not feel comfortable nor capable of identifying or "dealing" with children's special needs. The following is an example which illustrates poor sensitivity on the part of the teacher towards children with different learning needs:

> *A P1 class (Namonsa 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 as 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. (P1 Classroom Observation, Upper East region)*

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 be able to see it clearly or close enough to the teacher to hear better. Teachers also referred to the strategy of speaking loudly and clearly and drawing/writing on the chalkboard boldly. Here the Upper West Region differs from the Upper East in the extent to which teachers talk about using pastoral care as a strategy to support children who are differently

able. In particular, in the Upper West, 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 (eg flash cards), 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 strategies were being used. In addition, 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 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 that children in their class had some form of special needs, an example of which is the class where observers noted 3 children writing from right to left. In the few instances where classes included children with specific learning difficulties (e.g. Down's syndrome) observers noted that teachers usually ignored or abandoned such children and concentrated on pupils without learning difficulties.

Another aspect of teacher sensitivity towards learners needs related to their ability to be **gender sensitive** in the classroom with respect to their treatment of boys and girls. Evidence from field level interviews with children and classroom observations suggests that in the majority of cases teachers were using strategies to ensure that both boys and girls were given the opportunity to participate in the lesson. Where this was not the case, it was either because the lesson was delivered as a lecture and overall participation was sparse; or as some observers noted, that the teacher was focussing his/her attention on those pupils more able to answer questions or read a text – one example of this was a teacher who felt that girls were less able to understand the more complex aspects of science.

4.5 Teacher feedback and encouragement for learners including disciplinary practices

Teacher disciplinary practices in class with students

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 and quality classroom learning.

The issue of disciplinary practices as observed in classrooms across the three northern regions of Ghana appears to have been influenced by the presence of the research team. There were few cases of disciplinary action being taken in the presence of the research team. The few 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 very few instances 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 on a regular basis as a form of classroom management.

FGDs with children suggested that the use of corporal punishment by teachers, especially the cane, is widespread which points to the level of physical and emotional abuse going on in schools in the North when observers are not around. Interviews with head teachers and FGDs with teachers suggest that caning was still the main method of disciplining pupils' misbehaviour or non performance in class. Some children said that "*caning had to be done in order that they would be corrected*". Focal Group interviews with students suggest that they see caning as good strategy for disciplining students and accepted it as a normal way to correct their behaviour. Pupils also reported that in several instances (12 separate focal groups with girls) that caning was the main reason they absented themselves from school. They also claimed that some of their colleagues stopped schooling because of the teachers' usage of the cane. Pupils also confirmed that this practice had the ability to affect their concentration in class. "*When teachers beat you, you don't understand what they teach; it affects our ability to pay attention, and 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 a negative effect on pupils and eventually made children withdraw emotionally, and physically from participating in classroom discussions. For instance, one classroom observer reported that 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 observer also reported that 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 (Classroom observation, Bunkuma, P5, Rural East Mamprusi, Northern Region).

An analysis of the findings from the classroom observations shows that many teachers were aware of strategies for managing behaviour in class but only a few teachers were using these constructively in their particular 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, 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, forcing children to kneel down, standing for long periods and insults or use of abusive words. Other classroom disciplinary 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 was the usage of caning across all 54 schools visited. Some head teachers tried to deny that caning was the dominant disciplinary practice in class, but follow up discussions with teachers, focus group discussions with teachers and with pupils confirmed the use of the cane as main the 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.

4.6   Learner encouragement/teacher motivational strategies and feedback strategies among learners

Classroom learner encouragement and teacher use of appropriate correction strategies are ingredients for promoting quality learning in class. From the classroom observations and follow up interviews with teachers, field work reveals that very few teachers were aware of classroom correction strategies and teacher behaviours that promote learning apart from using praises, and having the class clap for right answer. The finding shows that the main teacher pupil interaction revolved around asking pupils questions requiring closed yes/no responses or questions requiring recall of simple factual information. Besides calling on individual pupils, teachers sometimes elicited a chorus response from the class. However, as one observer pointed out, although chorus responses gave the appearance of mass participation, it also meant that some pupils' who lacked understanding of the lesson were unable to ask questions and their challenges in understanding were masked:

*He (the teacher) often resorted to closed questions to demand whole class answer relying on intensity of class response to assess the level of understanding of pupils as lesson delivery progressed. The teacher did not have varieties of methods to make his teaching interesting and enjoyable to children or pupils particularly the weaker or slow learners whose voices were hardly heard or hands raised up for a query or answer. (*Source: lesson observation note, Upper East, Talensi-Nabdam, Namonsa JHS, DA, Rural)

 Pupils themselves in FGD 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 observed (only 2 in all 86 lessons observed in the three regions) who discussed <u>why</u> a particular answer was right or wrong. Teachers did not question pupils as to how they could work out the solution to arrive at the right answer if they were not at first correct therefore missing out on the opportunity to lead the pupil to think critically about what they were doing and reinforcing the idea that any given question has a correct answer and this needs to be memorized. A similar situation was observed in the reading lessons.

In more or less all of the lessons observed teachers gave 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 the demeanour of the teacher as a significant factor when describing strategies used in the classroom for learner encouragement and this had a direct relationship between their pupils' willingness to contribute to class discussions and activities. Those teachers who were described as cheerful, warm, friendly, etc elicited many 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 the 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. As outlined in the section of this report on teacher methodology, most teachers made an obvious effort to involve boys and girls equally, but many were not observed to ensure that children with different needs were enabled to fully participate in the lesson. The study revealed that where students felt included in the learning process and their responses were being solicited then this contributed to improving their experience in the classroom. When children's responses were praised and not criticised or ridiculed, then children felt more confident and motivated to participate in the lesson.

4.7   Level of student participation in the classroom

Generally, pupil participation often means the extent to which students were involved in the lesson delivered. Pupil's participation is governed by whether they can access the learning, feel comfortable to respond and whether the strategies used by the teacher invite participation. Teacher centred lessons usually had very little student participation and such participation often took the form of chorus answers, echoing by pupils and yes and no responses to teacher questions. Higher order questions requiring critical thinking and application were often missing from the classrooms observed. Students' access to learning is also determined by several factors including whether the level of the lesson is matched to the learner's level of understanding and whether the student is able to understand the language of instruction. Teacher strategies that particularly invite participation can be broadly described as being child-centred.

 In many classes observed at both the upper primary and lower primary levels, the teacher delivered a lecture to the students, punctuated with an occasional question which was 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 line by line. All the students were involved, but the extent to which they were actually learning is questionable. However there were a significant number of lessons where teachers used a more child-centred approach inasmuch as they required pupils to act out the meanings of words or to provide models or different forms of the target language orally in order to demonstrate their understanding. Observers noted that the participation of pupils in these type of lessons was high.

Generally, student participation was low across the 86 classroom observed particularly in relation to student participation in the form of participatory and experiential learning.[13] In all six districts the majority of rural and urban schools, the dominant form of student participation was

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[13] 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

through chorused child participation in a "parrot – fashioned" approach. In the majority of lessons students' participation did not take the form of student interactive behaviour demonstrating effective recall, critical thinking or comprehension skills through verbal responses to information received from teacher or textbook.

4.8   Teacher assessment and levels of learning

Teacher assessments of pupil learning
Classroom observation 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 most common assessment form found in the 86 classrooms observed were the usage of verbal formative questions to check pupils' understanding, but about half of the teachers set written exercises for the children to complete at the end of the lesson. The extent to which the outcome of these activities was useful in terms of informing the teacher about the levels of learning is varied.   The 'do you understand?' assessment question and its chorus response of 'yes/no' was not often helpful in informing the teacher about the level of learning taking place. Similarly, the use of simple factual recall questions was also limited in informing the teacher of the extent of learning that was taking 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 by teachers tended to be closed, low order questions, what was often assessed was the pupils' ability to recall facts or in the case of reading lessons, recall pronunciation and the meanings of words. Written exercises were not always given and in some cases when they were given, the efficacy of these exercises as assessment activities was questionable. The worst case scenarios were described as a set of examples being written on the board during the course of the lesson and the written exercise exactly replicated the examples on the board with perhaps a few words missing (cloze[14] activity), the resulting "exercise" was then just a copying activity.

With formative assessment where 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. Therefore, in child centred lessons with a high degree of pupil participation, there is a much greater chance for the teacher to judge the extent to which the majority of pupils demonstrate their grasp of 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 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 a student's response will clearly demonstrate whether they have 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 observed classes 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

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[14] A **cloze activity** is an exercise, test, or assessment consisting of a portion of text with certain words removed (cloze text), where the participant is asked to replace the missing words.

schools opened at the beginning of the academic year. Responses from teachers when interviewed on the subject of setting exercises or giving additional attention to children with special needs were generally that it was difficult to undertake these activities on a regular basis or sometimes even at all because of the large number of pupils they had in their classes. The paucity in the number of exercises set (based on the exercise book scrutiny) had an impact on the extent to which parents could evaluate their wards' performance. In FGDs with pupils, parents, 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. Children and parents reported that they were not satisfied with the number of exercises which children were asked to perform over the course of the year.

4.9   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) were very poorly lit. The majority of classrooms observed revealed that there were 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 displayed in the classroom but often found in the head teachers office unused. Very few teachers across the 56 schools were observed using their own initiative and making TLMs on their own in order to support the learning process of children. Again, there were some teachers who had prepared such materials but they were in the minority. In just a few cases teachers provided the opportunity for pupils to "role play".

> *She (the Teacher) 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. (Kambali RC Primary School, Trained teacher, P1, urban Jirapa, Upper West)*

Evidence from the research suggests that where teachers were allowing children to carry out roles or to interact with word cards or pictures, learner participation was considerably increased and a more interactive classroom was observed.

Levels of learning

Central to the whole question of how schools are performing is the extent to which children in the classroom are actually learning. This is particularly important when observing primary schools where formal standardized assessment procedures do not exist as is the case in the study area. Classroom observations suggest that teachers were generally able to judge if learning was taking place particularly where teachers engaged students in activities that required that they demonstrate their understanding. 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. Generally, the level of learning was dependent on the language of instruction. There were some classrooms where very limited learning was taking place. In those classrooms the teacher was delivering a lecture in a language that the pupils were unable to access (mainly English) and the only interaction between teacher and pupil was a written exercise given at the end of the lesson. It was clear in most lessons that were delivered solely in English that pupils were not able to fully participate in the lessons. In classes conducive to learning the language(s) of instruction was familiar to the students (L1) and children were actively participating.

An important aspect of the teaching and learning environment is the way in which teachers comport themselves. The teacher's demeanour can either serve to nurture a positive learning ethos or create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation where learners are reluctant to engage with classroom activities. Where the teacher evinced a warm and friendly or even simply neutral approach combined with rewarding responses from children with praise observers noted a higher degree of pupil participation. Feedback from pupils in FGDs who were asked when they do or do not enjoy learning supports this:

- *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 the teacher looks excited while teaching."*

However, the extent to which the pupils were actually learning was arguable when the content of the lesson was based on the pronunciation and memorisation of words. Where the local language was used the level of learning was high, but where the sole use of English language was adopted the level was low. To avoid English language serving as barrier to effective learning the majority of teachers resorted to translation method of mixing English and local language. Another complexity in the challenges to learning was that the lower primary books were mainly in English and that the teachers were teaching in local language.

School exercise book review

In order to gauge the level of learning in the classroom and to what extent teachers were carrying out some kind of assessment of pupils, observers collected a selection of exercise books from the class that had been under observation. This selection was usually a sample of about 10 exercise books – usually 5 exercise books from both boys and girls. The information taken from the 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 table below represent the averages of the sample of books from each district (aggregated by urban and rural). 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

40

by dividing the average number of days 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 Urban West Mamprusi the exercises would have been set at a frequency of one exercise every 2 to 3 weekdays.

Schools in the targeted research areas commenced school on 4th September 2012 and the field work for this research took place between 29th October 2012 and 17th November 2012 and was concurrent in each region. Each of the schools would therefore have been open for between 40 to 54 working 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. The number of days 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 the average number of days over which exercises were set is 30 out of a total of 40 to 54 school days in which exercises could have been set; the exercise book inquiry also indicated that several schools did not set exercises until well into the terms opening sometimes delaying from 10 to 24 weekdays before teachers set an exercise.

Table 4.2 - Summary of Data from Exercise Book Scrutiny

Region	District	Community Type	Average of Days	Average number of exercises	Average number of checked exercises	Ratio of days to exercises
Northern	West Mamprusi	Urban	30	13	11	2.5
Northern	West Mamprusi	Rural	27	8	7	3
Northern	East Mamprusi	Urban	11	4	4	3
Northern	East Mamprusi	Rural	26	6	5	5
Upper East	Talensi Nabdam	Urban	19	11	9	1.6
Upper East	Talensi Nabdam	Rural	27	7	6	4.5
Upper East	Bongo	Urban	34	15	14	2.5
Upper East	Bongo	Rural	31	12	9	4
Upper West	Jirapa	Urban	21	11	10	2
Upper West	Jirapa	Rural	22	9	7	2.5
Upper West	Lawra	Urban	34	13	12	2.5
Upper West	Lawra	Rural	32	10	8	5

Source: TENI Research Classroom Observation and exercise book notes

From the evidence of the exercise book inquiry, there are certain trends that emerge. The most important finding is that very few exercises were being set for pupils to carry out on a daily and

weekly basis in the classrooms; most teachers had set less than 15 exercises over a 45 day period since the beginning of the school term in September.

The exercise book inquiry by researchers across the 86 classrooms revealed that very few teachers were checking every exercise that is completed by students. This calls into question the extent to which teachers were using these exercises as an assessment tool or even a teaching method. Pupils reported that not having completed exercises marked, checked or corrected was not encouraging or motivating them to learn. 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: 137, Northern, East Mamprusi, Bamahu D/A JHS, Rural, 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 felt they could monitor the performance of their wards is by looking at the exercises given by the teacher and to see how well the children are completing exercises. Given that many of the parents of the children in the schools are unable to read English – the teachers' marks are often the only indicator of how their child is performing. Another trend that can be identified from the evidence of the exercise book inquiry is the difference between the number and frequency of exercises given in rural and urban schools. The findings show that there were much fewer exercises being set among rural school children compared to urban school children (see table 4.2).

4.10 "High" Learning Environment

Evidence from the Quality of Education Study suggests that schools situated in an urban community and schools managed by Religious Units (particularly RC) are more likely to promote quality learning. In some instances, synergy between head teachers, community and district education officials had been achieved and there was evidence of a few (less than 10 out of 54) schools demonstrating characteristics of "high" learning environments across the schools sampled. The characteristics of these schools followed similar but not always identical patterns. The high learning schools in the sampled sites had a head teacher with strong leadership qualities, and a clear vision for school development that included the ongoing training and support of his/her teachers. In "high learning" school environment observed: the head teachers ensured effective time on task was maximised by teachers and that children who were without a teacher were not alone for the entire day; these high performance heads also maintained strong links with the community and the community responded by ensuring the school had the necessary support to function effectively. At the classroom level, the head teacher mentorship and support meant that even untrained teachers within the school were able to facilitate effective learning environments for their pupils. However, while some of the schools identified as "high learning" in the research fit this profile, most schools (46) did not and were categorised as either "medium" or "low" learning environments/schools.

Research findings suggest that there were a range of factors and dynamics which interplay with each other to produce quality learning environments. These included: the professional status and experience of the teacher, effective teacher supervision and management, accessibility to adequate TLMs, high level of teacher commitment and support of all stakeholders and high

levels of school discipline facilitated by the head teacher. The research finding suggest that schools situated in urban areas and particularly those managed by faith-based institutions such as Roman Catholic Church were able to produce high learning environment as a result of strong school management structures or systems including effective supervision, community support, adequate supply of TLMs and engagement of requisite number of teachers with various professional status and experience.

Findings from the research also suggest that there were only a few District Assembly School which had a high learning environment comparable to mission schools. In all the schools both district assembly and mission, the levels of teacher commitment and head teacher leadership was very high to make it a high learning environment. The findings suggest that high learning schools had strong Head teacher leadership providing a lot of support to teachers related to their pedagogical and instructional practices and other professional development opportunities for their teachers. Teachers in the high learning environments also paid particular attention to children with SENS. The functionality of SMC/PTA and oversight in promoting accountability was also very high. There is a high level of discipline among both the staff and the pupils in the schools. The high learning schools also had a cordial community school relationship as well as strong sense of community-school ownership.

In the medium learning environment provision of TLMs was poor. However there was a degree of discipline among the staff. Professional development of teacher was low with head's rarely sharing their instruction practices with their staff. Neither the Head teacher nor the Circuit Supervisor provides any support to improve teachers' classroom performance. The Circuit Supervisors visits to these "medium" learning schools was simply to convey information to the teacher, checking their lesson notes and exercise books. Here we found that the communities would assist the school by paying for a community volunteer teacher since there might be high rates of absenteeism among the trained teaching force.

Schools with low learning environment had a profile quite different from the other learning environments as indicated above. These schools had problems with the supply of vital school inputs such as furniture, TLMs and qualified teachers. Some of the schools had no furniture for the children to sit on and the children were forced to work on the floor. The low learning schools had often strong support by the community members towards their wards but less support to their schools in terms of provision of community teacher volunteers.

Parents are prepared to make any contributions to support their children. In the low learning schools: professional development among teachers was sporadic. The untrained teachers received no training from the heads or district offices. The Head teachers and Circuit Supervisors do not also provide any mentoring to improve the pedagogical skill of teacher. The schools do not have functioning SMC/PTAs. There is also a high degree of indiscipline among teachers which further weakened the community confidence in their teachers' ability to deliver quality education in the school. This was often confirmed in focal group interviews with children.

> *"The children said mostly the teachers either come to sit without teaching and absent themselves a lot from school. Prefects were mostly seen acting as teachers and beating us up and down. And so most of our parents have decided to allow some of us to remain at*

home instead of going to school (FGD with Girls at upper primary level, Quality of Education research study, 2012).

The findings point to some of the difficulties encountered to achieve systemic change. What is clear from the research findings is that various factors must be in place before quality education or learning can be achieved. The achievement of mission schools is based on stronger ties they have with their communities. This relationship is based not only on strong communication between the church, GES and the school and community members but also a high degree of confidence the community has in the school providing high quality education. Community groups attached to low learning schools regularly voiced their disenchantment with the quality of education which was being provided by the schools and therefore saw limited value in continuing to send their children to school.

4.11   Best Practices in the School/Communities

The study findings reveal a fairly bleak situation regarding teaching and learning practices across the study schools. In a number of the schools it is clear that professional norms of behaviour had broken down and a culture of non performance of teachers prevailed. This is exemplified by the number of schools that researchers reported as having only one teacher available for observation despite the fact that the school had often 3 teachers posted, some schools where the teachers stopped teaching after the mid-morning break, and others where the full complement of staff were often not in school. There were however exceptions to this and the overall picture was of individual schools falling into categories that can be described as presenting a spectrum of profiles. These profiles range from poor to very good with some sites presenting evidence that qualifies them for an assessment that falls between these extremes.

The following narrative describes schools that were demonstrating elements of good practice that contributed to positive educational experiences for the young people they served and as such are more likely to facilitate some level of learning. Evidence for this narrative is drawn from a number of sources including: the community scorecard, the focal group discussion with SMC/PTA, interviews with head teachers, individual and groups of teachers, classroom observation and interviews with pupils themselves. A range of sources is used not just to profile a broad spectrum of views but also for the purpose of triangulation.

Community/School Support/Communication and Collaboration
Analysis of responses to 7 questions from the community scorecard representing the views of two separate groups of parents from the community of Manga primary School, West Mamprusi (Northern Region) revealed two areas of good practice in school performance. The first is that there are clear links between the school staff and parents in terms of assessment of children's performance. The school sometimes organises meetings for review of pupils' performance. More importantly, parents stated that they have been taught how to review children's exercise books so that they can keep a more regular check on learning outcomes. Further evidence of good practice in school/community communication, cooperation and collaboration is represented in the

responses to the FGDs with SMC/PTAs. They believe there is a high standard of teaching and learning at the school based on good BECE results, the majority of children transiting to JHS, positive teacher attitude and reports of learning progress discussed at regular intervals with the community[15].

Responses given during interviews with parents and SMCs/PTA's to the questions 'do you know if your child is learning? And if so, how? Do you assess your children's performance? If so, how? And do you visit your child's school? If so, for what reasons? Revealed the following:

> "Yes, we were educated to monitor that and so we are able to find out what they did in school. We check their books and visit them in school."
>
> "Sometimes, we have been educated by the teachers to identify wrong from correct answers. So from their (our childrens') exercise books, we know when they get many wrong or correct answers in their books."
>
> "Sometimes, we assess them by inspecting their exercise books and asking them to tell us what they learnt in school."
>
> "Sometimes, we the PTA/SMC executives do come to the school and check attendance of teachers and find out their problems as well as progress."
>
> "Sometimes, we visit the school to monitor our children attendance and performance. We also visit to encourage students and teachers to work hard."

Similarly, excerpts from the head teacher interviews for the rural West Mamprusi school exemplified good practice of community engagement in school activities:

> "The school reaches out to parents through PTA/SMC meetings, prize-giving days and football match between pupils and community members."
>
> "The PTA/SMC meets twice a week to discuss issues concerning the school."
>
> "Parents visit the school. The school organised on two occasions games and clean up exercises for the entire community to bring them and the teachers together."

Excerpts from community scorecard for <u>urban Bongo RC School</u> (another 'high' learning environment) reveals similar responses to the community support for education when teachers are showing results and sharing learning outcomes with the community:

Do you know if your child is learning? If so, how?

> "Always, the children tell her what they did at school. The teachers inspect their exercises and we inspect the child's books."
>
> "We look at their exercises. They look at the report cards. School visits by parents to monitor teacher and pupils' school attendance and performance."

Do you assess the teachers' performance/conduct? If so, how?

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[15] The TENI year four annual report suggest that SMCs/PTAs and community groups have been effective in securing children's right to education; mainly through skill building in local level engagement, regular SMC/PTA dialogue with school authorities, district coalition of SMC/PTA engagement and active participation in the School Performance Appraisal Meetings (SPAMs) process. As a result of these engagements, at least 32 known local bylaws are being implemented in order to secure the right to education for girls and poor children. For instance, in Jirapa, 4 girls who were previously eloped into marriage have now returned to school as a result of the SMC/PTA intervention through the enactment and enforcement of local bylaws.

> *"The teachers are always early and regular at school. The children are in hurry to get to school before the teachers to avoid being punished. The parents visit child's school and observe teachers, and attend PTA meeting."*

What does the community do if teachers are not performing and absent from school a lot?

> *"The children would write on a piece of paper and give it to the head teacher saying they don't want that teacher in school."*

Do you visit your child's school? If so, for what reason?

> *The parents check if the children are really going to school and to check if the teachers are present. If the teachers are not there, they discuss it at the PTA. The parents also visit the teacher."*

Further evidence of good practice came from interview with head teacher in an urban Bongo RC school as captured the following excerpt to the question 'how do the parents know how their children are performing and how much their children are learning in the classroom':

> *"The head teacher sensitises parents particularly 'the illiterates' on how to assess the performance of children through the following methods: checking pupils' exercise books when they return from school. Good work and bad one and to come to school to interact with class teacher on how wards are performing in school. examination of terminal report cards of pupils. The illiterate soliciting assistance of an educated colleague, friend or relative. Inspection of marked examinations scripts."*

In each case there is similar evidence that reveals the need for community participation in assessing children's performance and the school's facilitation and support for this process particularly in communities where there is high learning outcomes. The practice demonstrates to the community that the teacher are ready to be open and transparent concerning the progress they are making with the children in the community.

Head Teacher Leadership: particularly with respect to continuing professional development of teachers.

The head teacher of Manga Primary during interview reported that he monitors teachers by observing lessons, and provides feedback and "informal training" based on needs. This claim is supported by responses from teachers who when asked what support they receive, made reference to the head teacher providing guidance for teaching strategies and methodology. The claim is further corroborated by the performance of the two untrained teachers who were observed in the classroom by field researchers. They presented lessons that were judged to be at least satisfactory across almost all the key instructional indicators. Excerpts from the head teacher interview for rural West Mamprusi School to the 'what support or activities are you giving to your teachers to improve teaching and learning at the school' he stated: *"Lesson observation with follow up advice. School based INSET. Informal training whenever it's needed."*

Another example of strong head teacher support to school improvement came from urban Bongo school in the Upper East. When the head teacher was asked "What support or activities are you giving to your teachers to improve teaching and learning at the school?

"The head teacher (of Urban Bongo) claims that she has been supporting her teachers through the following: Organise school-based INSET on lesson notes preparation and delivery. Provision of necessary materials to make their teaching enjoyable and child friendly to achieve objectives. Teacher classroom observation and assessment to identify difficulties of teachers to address them. Using best practice models."

The experience of the West Mamprusi rural school and one urban Bongo District school reveal that head teacher facilitation to promote time on task among teachers combined with strong relations with the community to have a positive impact on the learning experiences of the children, the experiences of parents as stakeholders and the experiences of teachers as professionals. The head teachers in the sample sites with a clear grasp of the aspirations of parents, needs of pupils, and teachers galvanizes these different groups to collaborate to fulfil these needs of the school and facilitate pupil learning.

Addressing Inclusive Education in under resourced environments

Evidence gathered during the Quality Education Research study indicates that teachers felt ill-equipped to cater for the needs of children with learning difficulties both in terms of expertise and material inputs. Across the 86 classrooms observed, a number of teachers were observed to use strategies to facilitate the learning of pupils categorised as "slow learners" but in those cases where children who were designated as "mentally ill", or "retarded", teachers resorted to either isolation or simply ignoring them. Among other inhibitors to children with special needs has been the issue of pastoral care. While it appears that stigmatisation of differently abled people is reducing, there was evidence in many schools that children with special needs were either not being enrolled or being withdrawn from school after enrolling because parents were concerned for their safety either travelling to and from school or while at school. Evidence from FGDs with pupils made it clear that either mocking or physical abuse of children with special needs is a commonplace practice in most schools.

An examination of the responses of children and teachers in some schools shows that there were elements of good practice slowly emerging in relation to the issue of inclusivity of children with special needs. Examples of these are captured in the following excerpts. In each case, the teachers are describing how they make their classrooms inclusive. They describe using TLMs, encouraging other pupils to provide support either by working with or being "caring" towards SEN children, or by the teacher themselves adopting a caring or encouraging demeanour. As one teacher describes, it is important: *"To develop a good rapport with the pupil and the use of praises."* The following excerpts from interviews with teachers from three Jirapa schools in the Upper West elucidate this point. How do you make the classroom inclusive?

"I use TLMs to explain to SEN children. There is a retarded child in my class and the teacher only uses TLMs to teach such children. 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. There was a girl who was visually impaired and they have moved her in front and also blackboard illustrations are made larger. The pupils in the class are encouraged to be friendly to her and also a boy who is not mentally sound. Teacher visits the parents of the impaired child and provide necessary support by talking louder and ensuring all can see and read what is on the board. To develop a good

rapport with the pupil and the use of praises. The teacher has to have a positive attitude towards physically challenged boy and he is treated like other pupils."

The final evidence is taken from excerpts from FGDs with pupils from three Jirapa schools regarding the question on 'how are children with SEN treated?'.

"Other children see them as friends. Other children assist SEN children. Teacher puts the SEN child in front. Other children do not make fun of them. Teacher is friendly to SEN children. They take part in children's classroom activities. They are paired with friends to help them. The teacher gives individual attention to such pupils. They make friends with them, and he is always happy. The teacher also includes him in the lesson room and asks him questions."

Table 4.3 – Identified best practices across three districts

District	School	Best practice activities	Outcome
Inclusivity in classroom lesson delivery			
Jirapa	Kambali RC Primary	Use TLMs to explain to SEN pupils. Constant use of L1 for SEN pupils Pair SEN pupils with friends	Participation of SEN pupils in class lesson delivery
Jirapa	Kuvarpuo RC Prim.	Special attention for SEN Pupils	Participation of SEN pupils in class activities
Jirapa	Safaliba DA Prim	Teacher provides pastoral care for SEN pupils	Participation of SEN pupils in class activities and self esteem building
Head teacher leadership			
West Mamprusi	Manga DA Primary	Monitors teachers by observing lessons notes of teacher, provides feedback and informal training and mentorship	Promotion of high learning environment
Bongo	Adakudugu RC Primary School	Head teacher sensitises parents on how to assess children's performance	Enhanced classroom teaching and learning
Parental assessment of learning status of pupils			
Bongo	Adakudugu RC Primary School	Parents inspecting exercise books, asking questions, regular visits to school to check pupils' attendance, interact with teachers and examine report cards.	Facilitating pupil learning abilities
West Mamprusi	Manga DA Primary	- do -	- do -
Community support for educational delivery			
West Mamprusi	Manga DA Primary	The PTA/SMC meets twice a week to discuss issues concerning the school	Collaboration. cooperation and cordiality in community-school relationship

Source: Scorecards with SMC's and PTA's along with Focal Group Discussions with Teachers, Quality of Education Study 2012.

Chapter 5: 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 and school administrators that serve their communities (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2012). Community demand for quality education is expected to ensure that education managers are cost effective in their use of resources and that their activities and actions are more responsive to the local needs of the communities. Findings across the three northern regions reveal that parents claimed that they were willing, actively participating and "doing their best" to support teaching and learning processes in their schools but felt 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 a stipend ("Soap Money") and ensuring that these community based "volunteer" teachers were always present in their school even if the trained teachers were absent.

Findings from the research reveal 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 level 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 working as "Kayayoo" during the July and August break times would return to attend school in September and were struggling to continue to JHS through their own financial support.

Communities in the study revealed that they were committing a large proportion of their income to educate their children despite the high levels of poverty. Unfortunately, interviews with parents and community members also revealed that they have reached a stage of fatigue where they are tired of committing a large portion of resources to school development in the midst of high rates of teacher absenteeism and poor learning outcomes of children. The vast majority of communities interviewed were unhappy with the performance of their teachers but were not able to complain to district education authorities due to the fear that "trained teachers would not continue coming to their villages and that the school might be closed down." Experiences by some communities were that when they complained to 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 of their teachers and in a few communities this led to the transfer of such teachers from their schools. Teacher motivation (communities providing support/incentives to teachers) was highest among parents of the Upper West and lowest in the Northern Region; and on the average, rural parents were more concerned about teacher motivation than the urban parents across all the districts. Because rural parents were more afraid of losing their teachers, they tended to give more attention and support to teachers in order to make them stay in the community

Communities' assessment of whether children are learning or not in school has been demonstrated in several ways across the six districts, the overriding indicator for child success was the BECE results of children. It 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 educated parents on what to look out for in pupils' exercise books especially when in recent times most teachers fail to give out report cards and examination papers. Parents have been educated 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 particularly trained teachers in the school. Focal Group interviews with parents suggest that the key factor in their scoring or assessment of the school was based on the head teacher and trained teachers' regular attendance at the school as the primary marker of good school quality. Unfortunately this marker was rarely attained in non mission rural primary schools visited.

Communities' perception of what constitutes quality education largely influenced their responses as to whether schools were providing quality education. Findings from FGDs with parents and community members based on a score card analysis reveal 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. In the Upper East Region, 42% said there was a high level of quality education being delivered. Across all districts and regions, it appeared that rural parents were the most dissatisfied when compared to urban parents. This perception of quality education delivery was influenced by a number of factors including the adequate availability of textbooks and 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, school feeding, capitation grant and other social interventions. The region most influenced by government social interventions is Upper East where 79.5% of parents perceived that there was a quality education being delivered because of government intervention policies. The percentage was relatively high in the Northern Region with 54% of parents reporting that their children received quality of education, while the Upper West Region had only 37.5% of parents stating that the standard of education was of quality. It is important to note however that the majority of parents who were satisfied with quality delivery of education were from urban communities.

The analysis of the community scorecard data also reveals interesting trends among parents and communities in relation to teacher performance and delivery of quality education. The community score cards asked parents, SMC/ PTA members and opinion leaders: "do you assess the teacher's performance/conduct and if so, how". The findings reveal that there were three negative responses mentioned that indicated lack of confidence and concern on the part of the community or its members or groups to demand quality education from school officials. These included their inability to assess teacher performance, the fear of teacher withdrawal, and non-school visits. On the other hand, the same scorecard data provides four other responses that showed the positive desire of the community or its members or groups to demand and ensure the provision of quality education to pupils. These are children reports on teacher attendance,

committed teachers[16], as well as community members visiting or passing by the school to check on teacher attendance. The score card analysis was carried out by weighting the evidence on the basis of cumulative responses of these two categories to gauge the degree of community concern, commitment and demand for quality education in each district and regions. Overall, more scorecard instruments (37 in all) were administered in Upper East region including those to SMC/PTA executives, Northern region 22, and Upper West 17.

The evidence from the Northern Region suggests that community or its members or groups in West Mamprusi were more likely to visit their schools to check on the attendance or other issues whereas in East Mamprusi, there is a stronger reliance on asking children about teachers' absence or presence at school. The West Mamprusie district also had more intense training for their SMC/PTAs from NGO's (including ISODEC, CAMFED etc) which were focussed on improving quality education.

The evidence from the Upper East Region suggests that community or its members or groups in both Talensi-Nabdam and Bongo districts (in the Upper East) were more confidence in their roles as advocates and monitors of quality of education in their community. In both districts (Talensi and Bongo districts), though slightly higher in Talensi-Nabdam district, there was a high proportion of parents that visited the school to monitor teacher attendance and fewer community members voicing the opinions that they were not in anyway qualified to assess teachers' performance. The findings from the Upper West Region, suggests that there is reasonably high degree of confidence among parents and community groups in Jirapa and Lawra districts to demand quality education. Five of the seven parental/SMC groups interviewed in Jirapa said they made it a point to monitor teachers' attendance while a slightly lower proportion of 6 out of 10 groups in Lawra district were actively checking teachers' attendance at schools in the communities.

A summary of the question: "what does the community do if teachers are not performing and absent from school a lot" reveals eight main themes emerging. While five parental focal groups reported they were about to demand for quality education through reporting teachers (who were absent) to the necessary bodies, three other parental/SMC groups revealed a state of powerlessness[17]. In West Mamprusi, just over half (7 of 13 communities and or groups) claimed communicating with head teachers or school authorities on poor teacher behaviour while under half of the parental group interviewed (6 of 13) reported no action was taken--- mainly four of the groups did 'nothing' with one group each seeing no problem or having no power to act. From East Mamprusi, half of the communities and groups (5 of 9) have demanded action by either reporting or discussing teacher behaviour with one group appointing a committee to address the situation. Three other parental groups interviewed felt they had no power to act on high rates of teacher absenteeism.

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[16] Level of committed teachers expresses the confidence the community or its members or groups feel that the teachers were serious or hardworking while attendance and problems convey the message that they checked whether teachers were in school and tried to check on and or follow up on any problems or issues.

[17] A report means community or its members or groups state their grievance with any of SMC/PTA executive, head teacher, circuit supervisor or district education office on observing or hearing about teacher absenteeism or misconduct. "Advise teachers" means groups either spoke to the concerned teacher themselves or advised or counselled by the head teacher while 'discuss' involves issues being considered at a forum like a PTA meeting.

A summary of responses from the Upper East region indicates that 80% (17 groups) in Talensi-Nabdam (Upper East) were either discussing or reporting teachers, whereas 70% (12 groups) in Bongo (Upper East) made similar claims. On the negative attitude, one group each disclosed never taken any action or had no power to act in Talensi-Nabdam while in Bongo District, four groups felt they had no power with another group saying there were no problems.

Nearly three-quarter or 71% of groups interviewed in Jirapa District (Upper West) or (5 of 7) were either reporting or discussing teacher behaviours but just over half or 56% in Lawra District were making similar demands including appointing a committee to deal with incidents of teacher misbehaviour. Of the 7 groups in Jirapa, one each either had taken no action or said that none needed to be taken while remaining four in Lawra, three had taken no action at all with one saying they had no right or power to intervene.

Findings from the score card exercise and FGDs with parents/community revealed that parents in TENI districts were taking more action in reporting non performing/absentee teachers compared to non TENI districts. The findings also suggest that the key community barriers and inhibiters to quality education borders mainly on lack of commitment by teachers and community members themselves. Parents recognize the fact that teachers are not doing their work and there is very little they as parents can do about it. There have been several attempts by parents to report indiscipline by teachers to the district office but in the end no action is taken against them. In some communities, there appears to be situation where parents/communities are helpless to address poor teacher performance. Parents are continuously threatened by teachers putting them in a state of "fear and apprehension". 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.

Focal group interviews with parents suggest that community demand and support for quality education related to a number of issues. Parents are aware that they first of all have a role to play in ensuring that their children have access to quality education. They must ensure that children attend school each day. They do this by ensuring that they provide all their basic school needs such as food, uniforms, pens, pencils and books. They also added that they ensured 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 blamed the situation on poverty and 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 of the TENI research study. Interviews with parents and parents with special needs children reveal that non – schooling of SEN children was high among the communities in the Northern Region and especially in the rural areas of all the regions. This was 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) of parents said they were not in support of SEN children attending school because of the burden it places on both the child and the parents.

Another key finding emerging as a barrier to quality education which was evident in the Northern Region was the phenomenon of teachers taking pupils to their farms. Teachers regularly use pupils as "labour" on their farm at the expense of teaching them in school. Parents are beginning to complain and wondered if they should take their children to help them on their farms instead of leaving them in school where they eventually go the teachers' farm and not learn in the classroom. Other barriers relate to the incidence of children watching video shows and cinemas in communities especially at night. A few communities together with their chiefs and elders have 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.

Chapter 6.0: Child Readiness to Learn

In most instances, children come to school ready to learn but with different socio-cultural and home environmental 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 supports 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 brought out 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 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 continues to be a major reason for children staying out of school and unable to complete the full cycle of basic education. The quality of education study in northern Ghana revealed that 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 who often led to absenteeism or even 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 to enable them to provide for their basic needs. This was more pronounced in the Northern Region. There is growing evidence that girls clubs are having a positive impact on assisting girls stay and complete primary school and transition to JHS. The TENI midterm evaluation (2012) suggests that: girls clubs were building self confidence among girls and in some cases girls were able to confront issues of abuse within school and in the community. One girls club in Talensi Nabdam District (TND), for example, performed a highly entertaining drama to sensitise the community about the need to send their girls to school, on responsible and irresponsible parenting, and the effects of migration to undertake head-portering, known as Kayaye[18], which affects their schooling. Members of the community are now monitoring the movement of girls in school holidays to try to reduce the numbers who move south for kayaye.

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[18] Kayaye mainly young girls under the age of eighteen who are head porters in the cities. They travel from Northern communities to Accra in search of work.

The most common inhibiter mentioned during the Quality of Education research by different stakeholders across the 54 schools is the hunger children experience in the classroom and the insufficient feeding of the children before and during school. Teachers reported in several community/schools that the children come to school hungry, or don't have money to buy food, so they leave early to go home and eat. Focal group discussion with children revealed 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 go to 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 larger extent by the physical environment of the school. Children preferred schools that had furniture, flowers, playground, and shade 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. It became apparent from the study that girls were being over burdened with household chores and this sometimes prevented them from going to school. Other key community level inhibiters 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) or short term work in the illegal mines (galamsey).

Learning readiness also depends on the presence and effective application of a number of tools to promote readiness in the child; most important of these is the school's readiness for children. The school's readiness is contingent on various aspects, whether teachers are able to adapt teaching styles to suit the needs of all pupils, and to what extent the school is a safe and nurturing learning environment.

The results of the focus group discussions with the children revealed that approaches to teaching in the classroom were inadequate in most of the schools and thus hindered their readiness to learn. Schools and teachers were not using or expand approaches that have been shown to raise learning achievement among children. Some of the limited approaches mentioned by the children include talk and chalk where the teacher just lectured at the blackboard. The language of instruction used was also an issue which emerged from the focal groups with children. 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 promote 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. Although

corporal punishment was officially abolished in schools, there was 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.

6.1   School for Life Mainstreaming Efforts in the Northern Region

School for Life 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 8-14. 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 Quality of Education Research, researchers in the Northern region found during their initial field work that several children at the upper primary and JHS had been attending SfL classes and several girls who in some cases were the only girls at the upper primary and JHS levels had participated in SfL classes. The research team therefore explored the impact that this intervention was making to girls' participation, retention and the quality of education across the study districts by taking 8 schools (4 each from the West and East Mamprusi districts). Overall, the findings were very positive, indicating that SfL is making an impact on improving access and retention of children across these two 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 but 40 transitioned and integrated into the primary school system in 2012.   The findings below summarise the numbers of children who were found at the upper primary school level across the study sites in the Northern region revealing that an average of 26% of pupils enrolled at upper primary and JHS levels were SfL graduates; SfL graduates made up between 10%-80% of the classes under review and girls made up a significant proportion in some cases. The data reveals that in some schools SfLers were quite persistent in completing upper primary level and JHS. Table 6.1 below shows the numbers of ex-SfLers present in class at the time of research.

Table 6.1 - Summary of Enrolment of SfL pupils in Sampled Schools

Name of School	Total School Enrolment				SFL			Percentage of SFL's in relation to total enrolment (%)
	Class	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	
West Mamprusi District								
Bormanga Primary School	P3	10	12	**22**	2	1	**3**	**14**
	P4	21	22	**43**	8	2	**10**	**23**
	P5	20	6	**26**	10	1	**11**	**42**
	P6	5	8	**13**	4	3	**7**	**54**
Zori Primary School	P4	13	10	**23**	6	4	**10**	**43**

Name of School	Total School Enrolment				SFL			Percentage of SFL's in relation to total enrolment (%)
	Class	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	
	P5	12	8	**20**	4	2	**6**	30
	P6	14	11	**25**	6	5	**11**	44
Zori Junior High School	JHS 1	3	13	**16**	2	11	**13**	81
	JHS 2	17	7	**24**	9	11	**20**	83
	JHS 3	19	17	**36**	8	3	**11**	31
East Mamprusi District								
Nintendo Primary School	P5	25	22	**47**	4	3	**7**	15
	P6	23	27	**50**	6	2	**8**	16
Wuyela Primary School	P4	32	36	**68**	2	3	**5**	7
	P5	38	53	**91**	4	1	**5**	5
	P6	36	48	**84**	18	16	**34**	40
Wuyela JHS	JHS 1	21	27	**48**	6	3	**9**	19
	JHS 2	21	16	**37**	5	4	**9**	24
	JHS 3	25	13	**38**	8	4	**12**	32
Zangu Primary School	P6	29	12	**41**	9	7	**16**	39
Bamahu D/A JHS	JHS 1	122	79	**201**	13	10	**23**	11
	JHS 2	136	136	**292**	7	3	**10**	3
	JHS 3	148	90	**238**	11	8	**19**	8

Source: Sampled schools across research sites

Focal Group interviews with girls at the upper primary level suggest that girls who had completed SfL and were now participating in the formal education system were determined to transition to JHS and complete in order to further their education at SHS. Interviews with children in classrooms who were also experiencing an absentee teacher on the day of the research revealed that SfLers were motivating other children to learn and sometimes teaching them how to read by using their own experience in learning the phonics/syllabic approach to reading from SfL. The research team found a few cases when these ex-SfLers were seen mentoring and teaching their colleagues in the absence of their teachers.

Interactions with teachers and ex-SfLers revealed that SfL has had remarkable success in addressing gender inequality by helping parents to rethink the value of girls' education. This has resulted in improved retention rates particularly for girls in the upper primary level and a lower dropout rate among children. Teacher interviews revealed that the manner in which ex-SfLers had become resilient and were making sure that they buy their own textbooks had a huge impact on improving the levels of educational attainment and achievement among ex-SfLers and their peers within the basic education schools visited given that these were often unstable learning environments.

Chapter 7.0: 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 the Quality of Education study we found isolated cases of head teachers promoting 'high' learning environment's within their schools; only (10) head teachers out of 54 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, support in service training 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 making effective usage of varied teaching approaches including the usage of textbooks and other TLMs. In some cases, head teacher leadership also supported classrooms which were more child friendly, with a variety of child centred methods which were participatory in nature, engaging pupils in small groups that promoted classroom learning.

The level of training of the teachers did not however relate to whether they used child centred 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.

7.1   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 and involvement by members of 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 community/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 included:
- Inappropriate language of instruction
- Lack of textbooks, syllabi, as well as inadequate writing and seating places
- Teachers and pupils' irregular school attendance and absenteeism
- Inadequate teacher preparation for classroom instruction
- Large class sizes and poor teacher output
- Inability of teachers to cope with SEN children
- Misuse of instructional hours
- The use of harsh verbal chastisement and corporal punishment by teachers
- Parents' inability to support and provide for pupils' needs
- Lack of cooperation between teachers and parents
- Community lack of confidence in education delivery mechanism to provide quality education.

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 and head teachers. 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 with very limited direction, and discipline. The six head teachers[19] in high learning environments 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 head teachers. 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 available at the school when other GES paid teachers were on distance education courses or absenting themselves on a regular basis. 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).

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[19] Kambali RC in Jirapa, Manga in West Mamprusi and Gomlana Presby Primary, East Mamprusi, Adakudugu, Bongo., Zuaringo in Talensi Nabdam

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 and providing access to reading texts. 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 these with the written text in the process of teaching reading. For most of the 250-300 head teachers and teachers (86) observed and interviewed across the 86 classrooms reading meant: "oral pronunciation and recitation" not necessarily connected to written text in books, posters or other mediums 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.*
- *Concrete steps to hold teachers accountable by instituting and using punitive action against recalcitrant teachers such as salary blockages, demotion from head teacher positions and enforcement of the teacher code of conduct. District education disciplinary committees should be well resourced.*
- *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 appropriate 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 need particularly those with severe challenges.

Evidence from discussions about specials 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 visited. 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), Northern Region and Gbeogo (School for the Deaf), Upper East 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 more "able" 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; they reported that sending SEN children to mainstream primary schools parents were "*wasting teachers time*" and disturbing the teaching and learning process of other children.

Teachers pointed 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 inhibiter 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** inhibiters 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 stipends to community based teachers in their public primary schools. Often communities felt threatened that their schools might close due to complaints made against teachers who were persistently absent 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, their 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 functioning again. 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 with parents 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 might be hurt at the school. 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. 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 that action was taken; the findings suggest that a larger organised voice of parents at the district levels was needed to collectively build a case at the District Education office and accompany SMC's in order to bring closure to the issues. Findings from the study also suggest that DEO's recognise the weak and vulnerable situation being faced by communities but were not providing adequate support to these communities to ensure effective public schooling. Far less work has been done on developing channels of

communication to strengthen/accompany communities in their search for action at the DEO's and District Assembly levels.

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.

7.2   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, petty trading 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, clothe 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 education. 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. FGDs with teachers revealed that head teachers need to carry our far more pedagogic support at the school level: SBI and classroom observation with post observation discussions. FGDs 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

7.3   Education Quality Improvements and TENI Best Practices

Across the three regions there was very limited visibility of best practices currently working to ensure quality education. The few schools where 'high' learning environments were visible, included schools where at least two teachers and the head teacher were effectively promoting a "high" learning environment (annex 1C on high/low). 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 to access "high learning environments" due to the high levels of bullying and lack of teacher/school adaptability to support SEN learners at the school level. These high learning environments particularly in the rural zone did not reveal that the professional status of a teacher was not the key factor in creating a high learning environment. Untrained community based teachers were also found to create '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. The findings suggest that weak head teacher management was one of the strongest factors which impacted on the learning environment for children particularly with respect to: teacher time on task, teacher preparation and teacher usage of child centred methods. 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 that 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 some 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 suggests that a more cost effective system for particularly rural education is 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 the primary school system. These models are being promoted by both SfL and IBIS in northern Ghana 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 the cycle is for nine months but aimed at older children between 8 and 14 years of age (Associates for Change 2011)[20].

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

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[20] Associates for Change (201) Inclusive Education in Northern Ghana: a look at policy and practice in Northern Ghana. (see www.associatesforchange.org).

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.

Best Practices from TENI Mid-Term Report

Work by the TENI Implementing Partners with community groups, Gender Clubs and District Directorates in 2012 resulted in advances being made towards improving community participation in school development and the quality of management and teaching and learning in schools according to the TENI Mid-Term Review Report. Trainings led to the development of Headteacher leadership and managerial skills. Furthermore, communities enhanced their recruitment of community volunteer teachers and worked on strategies to prevent school children from attending night time activities such as record dancing. The midterm review (2012) also reported further improvements to community participation including outlawing negative socio cultural practices and further increases in the awareness and support of including children with special needs in education. In addition further work done on training of teachers in core subjects, planning and teaching methodologies led to changes in learning outcomes.

According to the Midterm Assessment of TENI (2012), in the Talensi Nabdam District, barriers to girls' access to education including teenage pregnancy, forced and early marriages and negative perception regarding girls' education are beginning to be addressed. These have been identified as key impediments on girls' way to accessing education. The incidence of teenage pregnancy and early or forced marriage has been cited as factors responsible for low retention and transition of girls in school. Community sensitization and engagement have highlighted these issues and now the rate of teenage pregnancy has been reduced drastically. The case of reduced incidence of teenage pregnancy was narrated by a circuit supervisor. The Circuit Supervisor for the Baare-Tongo-Beo Circuit explained the experience of Tongo JHS as follows: *"The incidence of teenage pregnancy used to be very high around the district. About 3 to 5 girls could be pregnant in the Tongo JHS, but now, due to the activities of the Girls Club and the intense sensitization and engagement with parents and SMCs, we have not had any report of the incidence for the past one year. This singular relief is one impact of TENI".*

The TENI Mid Term report suggests that TENI has made inroads to tackling socio-cultural barriers to education through its advocacy strategies that have engaged communities, schools and the policy maker. Thus, through the TENI project, the coalitions have been able to reduce cultural barriers to education. A barrier such as parents' preference for their male children to be in school over their girl children is being addressed through a continuous community dialogue and sensitization sessions. Inferiority complex that has been observed to make girls feel inferior in the attainment of educational achievements is being addressed through the activities of the setting up and operation of Gender and Girls Clubs in schools. Indeed, the project has added value to girls' education and this is highly commendable. The presence of the TENI project has created a synergy within the education sector as indicated by all parties (GES, volunteers, PTA coalition, Teachers and pupils, implementing partners). In Ullo circuit for instance, a bye-law has been such that any person who elopes or rapes/defiles a girl and particularly a school girl will

face a fine. The discussion indicated that fine depends on the magnitude of the case and the persons involved (both culprit and victim). This bye-law has been implemented. For instance, in Yaoyiri a girl was eloped and the boy was fined GH¢500.00 while a girl that was impregnated attracted a fine of GH¢500.00. The coalition indicated that the fine is not a defensive tool as "culprits" are still made to face the laws of the country for such offences. The revenue raised through these fines is saved in the girls school account for the general administration of the school. Although change is being recorded in the TENI project across the socio-cultural barriers to girls' education the findings of the Quality of Education Research suggest the need to address the issues of teacher commitment and the culture of learning in the schools demand an even more concerted and strategic effort over the coming five years.

7.4   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. FGDs with teachers, 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 collectively 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 also found that this commitment and dedication to educational transformation 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 increased access to relevant materials and teaching learning aids, 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 among the managers and staff of school related 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 will likely require incentives for stimulating head teacher leadership and punitive action with respect to those who fail to meet the standard. The need to create, find and support more commitment within the teaching force is likely to be the main focus of the coming phase of research under the TENI project.

Structural inhibitors to education quality change included a clear blockage between the teaching force who was often found undermining educational quality and the population who was unable to hold the teaching force accountable. The growing disenchantment of the population towards its teaching force in some communities and districts is a cause of national concern particularly in highly fragile and marginalised communities. 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:

- Fully externalise the oversight of teachers at the district levels. This is likely to involve the new assessment and inspectorate bodies (i.e. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, National Inspectorate Board, National Teaching Council)
- Strengthen teacher disciplinary procedures by enforcing sanctions on non performing and absentee teachers by using salary freezes and systems of demotion particularly for non performing head teachers.
- Ensure effective oversight of the District Education Office by the District Assembly, District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC)
- Track school progress and student achievement by implementing a performance monitoring tests in every district (PMT's should be implemented by the District Assembly) and establish national standards/milestones in literacy and numeracy for primary schools[21]; reinstitute performance contracts with head teachers.
- Ensure that National assessment testing (e.g. Early Grade Reading and Numeracy Assessments, National Education Assessment results are easily available to District Assemblies and District Education Offices in order hold schools/teachers accountable).
- There should be staff rationalisation at district education offices to release professional teachers in administrative positions to work particularly in rural schools.
- Ensure clearer oversight to the recruitment of pupil teachers in order that committed and long serving community volunteer teachers receive opportunity for training and employment in the GES.
- Strengthen and/or set up child protection mechanisms which can ensure that complaints by communities, parents and children related to school based abuses can be reported. This system of complaints should 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.
- Ensure the election of PTA/SMC assemblies at the district and regional levels in order to ensure that a representative voice of parents is strengthened and that complaint/follow up mechanisms of recalcitrant teachers/ dysfunctional schools are brought to the public attention.

The study also found that **teaching and learning practices** at the classroom level were in many cases not promoting quality learning outputs. As such the following recommendations are made to remediate issues around classroom discipline, teaching methodology (including the language of instruction used), and participation especially in terms of the inclusion of children with special needs, girls and other disadvantaged groups:

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[21] This testing will be developed and designed by the District and use for monitoring by the district authorities to track school progress.

Discipline policies with regards to pupil discipline should be reviewed so that schools use child friendly guidelines for disciplining students and abolish corporal punishment in basic schools; review school policies to reflect these guidelines to ensure alternative strategies to verbal or physical abuse are instated[22]. Policies should be fully integrated into school and staff training and undertaken in collaboration with both parents and pupils to ensure that procedures are transparent and staff are held accountable.

Language of Instruction: policies for how and when teachers use pupils' first and second language of instruction across the primary system should be articulated to teachers by the MOE/GES as a matter of national urgency in order to ensure quality education. Already the Government of Ghana has developed a bilingual education approach at lower primary which gradually transitions children from L1 to L2 from KG to Primary 3 class. The National Accelerated Literacy Programme (NALAP) should be fully financially and technically supported by the Ghana Government on a yearly basis in order to ensure that this "flagship" programme is fully embraced and effectively implemented.[23]

Child-centred methodology: One of the greatest constraints teachers have in using child-centred and/or participatory strategies/methodologies is their attitude and relationship towards children in their classrooms. Therefore any trainings or guidance given to teachers needs to include practical strategies of child friendly behaviour amongst teachers, moral leadership qualities, emphasis on learning outcomes using child friendly teaching methods, peer teaching using participatory methods in often under resourced schools and dealing with large class sizes. This training should be mainstreamed in the following areas:
- Review methods taught at training colleges and how teacher trainers are modelling participatory approaches;
- Encourage head teachers to mentor their teaching staff in an informal and formalised manner;
- Expand in-service training to all members of teaching staff, particularly untrained teachers
- Phonic methods for assisting teachers teach reading skills at primary level are needed;
- Sustaining programmes which use phonetic/syllabic and mother tongue approaches should be adequately financed by MOE (e.g. NALAP)

Gender: the majority of teachers were aware of the need to ensure that both boys and girls fully participate in teaching and learning activities. However, some aspects of school life are still gender-insensitive to pupils e.g. teachers' attitudes to girls' attainment in science; children's roles when cleaning the school compound and preparing for the school day. Inhibitors to girls' access included poor sanitation facilities in schools, early age pregnancy, sexual abuse by male peers and teachers. The key recommendations include:

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[22] Basic Education Division is finalizing a set of Child Friendly standards and procedures for schools based on UNICEF best practice globally.

[23] A high level meeting with key Government Stakeholders and the World Bank in Rwanda (2012) identified Ghana's NALAP programme as one of the most successfully designed early grade reading, literacy and numeracy programs in Sub Saharan Africa.

- Reviewing and implementing gender policies in schools which include: guidelines for distributing roles and responsibilities among children at the school, guidelines for how to deal with the incidence of school based abuse, guidelines for care, protection and counselling of girls. Ensuring re-entry procedures are in place for early pregnancy of girls in school.
- Implement, refer and enforce legal procedures for girls' subjected to sexual abuse at school (e.g. Policy Force);
- Review and strengthen life skills curriculum to include sex education particularly with regard to strategies to avoid pregnancy.
- Ensure that there are sanitation facilities available in schools for girls;

Inclusion: The GES should review carefully its inclusive education policy and strategy to ensure that it is adequately prepared to work in unstable learning environments where the policy of integrating children is being promoted. Given the findings from this study, careful consideration should be taken in integrating children with mild to medium learning impairments particularly in under supervised learning environments. Much more work is needed to prepare attitudes and behaviours of teachers who are going to work with children who are differently abled and may be integrated into mainstream schools in Ghana. Teachers need to receive much more current/relevant pre and in service training on teaching methodologies for facilitating learning among differently abled children;

National policy on inclusion – a rigorous review of implementing inclusive education policy in Ghana is needed particularly with respect to:
- Training implications
- Infrastructure of schools
- Community and teacher support
- Cost implications of enabling all schools to facilitate special needs education
- 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 for attaining quality education in Ghana will be to strengthen the voice and visibility of children and parents who are primarily suffering from poor quality delivery of education. 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 inhibiting factors. Children and youth in the communities should be organised in order to have a stronger 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 to organise/elect more regional and district level assemblies; these bodies should hold conventions to ensure that on a yearly basis SMC's assess the state of affairs of their schools across their districts in collaboration with the Regional Coordinating Councils and the District Assemblies. Once these platforms are strengthened at district and regional level, the performance monitoring tests and SPR and national assessment data can provide ongoing evidence of the state of affairs in the schools that they represent. These forums should be developed in order to ensure they are sustained,

institutionalised and seen by both the State and civil society as a constituency based forum able to speak on behalf of parents in the country.

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 quality education delivery. Ghana has set up the legislative instruments and institutions to protect children's basic human right to quality education. Unfortunately, the population is still not fully aware of these mechanisms and institutions which are resourced to ensure that public primary education is able to provide acceptable learning outcomes for all Ghana's children.

The key drivers of change towards ensuring 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 the 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, the 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.

7.5   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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Annexes

Annex 1A: List of all Field Researchers by Region

Table 1 – List of field researchers

	Name	Position/Organisation	Research Team
1	Dr Leslie Casely-Hayford	Lead Researcher	Three regions
2	Dr Alhassan Seidu	AFC – Senior Researcher	Northern
4	Adam Rukayatu	AFC – Research Manager	Northern
5	Honorata N. Akanzinge	ISODEC NSS	Northern
3	Nique Spencer	VSO Volunteer, WMD	Northern
7	Baatiema Leonard	ISODEC, TENI Officer	Northern
8	Stephen Nanda	Stats Officer, WMD	Northern
9	Zakari Serena	SHEP Officer, WMD	Northern
10	Clement Naafo	Stats and EMIS officer, WMD	Northern
11	Imranah Adams Mahama	AFC – Researcher	Upper West
12	Dr Abdulai Abubakari	AFC – Senior Researcher	Upper West
13	Mr Thomas Quansah	AFC – Senior Researcher	Upper East
14	Sheena Campbell	AFC - Researcher	Upper East
15	Charity Bukari	AFC - Researcher	Northern
16	Marian Owusu Afriyie	AFC - (NSS)	Upper West
17	Aminu Akparibu	AFC - Researcher	Upper East
18	Yakubu Bashirudeen	LCD	Upper East
19	Ionut Raita	VSO Strategist	Upper East
20	Fuseini Iddrisu Saani	EMIS Cord, TND	Upper East
21	Edmund Apika	ECCD Cord, Bongo	Upper East
22	Ernest Atubinga	Assistant EMIS officer, TND	Upper East
23	Alice Ayine	Sports Cord., TND	Upper East
24	Francis Bukari (snr)	AFC – Senior Researcher	Upper West
25	Pascal Calestus	VSO	Upper West
26	Salifu Rabi	Pronet	Upper West
27	Kaniman Yaaba Samuel	GES – East Mamprusi District	Upper West
28	Juliet Baliebanoe A.	Pronet	Upper West
29	Kobom Banguu Stephen	Pronet	Upper West
30	Ferdinand Bagyiliko	Jirapa District - GES	Upper West
31	Teri Raymond	Jirapa District GES	Upper West
32	Beyuo Cornelius	Lawra District - GES	Upper West

Annex 1B: Key pillars of the Research (Based on the Instrumentation workshop)

Table 2 - Key Pillars of Quality Education research

	Detailed areas of investigation	Key instruments
School and teacher inputs	• School supply • Teacher supply	School checklist Classroom checklist/classroom observation;
Teaching and learning process, and methods	• Teacher attitude, behaviour • Teacher support, training and supervision	Classroom observation and follow up interview with same teacher
Child readiness to learn	• Inclusivity • Child learning needs	Child focal group discussions
Community support to action and demand for quality education	• Attitudes towards quality • Knowledge of quality • Action towards quality improvement	Focal group discussions with elders. Focal group discussion with District education offices
Outcomes of quality education	• Analysis of the PMT/SEA data • Linkages with the School performance review data • Transition from Primary to JHS • Drop out in primary • Completion in Primary (P6)	
Cross cutting analysis	• The research will be carried out using gender disaggregated instrumentation • Inclusive education lens and questioning • We will be comparing rural and urban environments at the district level • We will also be involved in analyzing the links between the primary schools and JHS's within a district setting;	

Annex 1C Methodology

The design focuses on qualitative analysis of key promoters and inhibiters 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 results for English were used to identify and rank high and low achieving schools, and where PMT results were not available the government's SEA data was used. Schools were purposely selected such that it took into account rural and urban dichotomy. The selection process also ensured that one third of the schools were urban and two-thirds rural since majority of the communities in the northern regions are predominantly rural (i.e. 3 urban and 6 rural selected per district).

A cluster selection approach that ensured a cluster of two primary schools and one JHS was used. Within each cluster, one high and low performing primary each was selected together with one JHS which was serving as recipient of pupils from the two primary schools. 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 3 - 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

The schools that were selected also enabled the research team to investigate a variety of school management types (mission and non mission, DA, Islamic), 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/key pillars for the research included an investigation of: Child Readiness, Teaching/Learning Processes, School/Teacher Inputs, and Community Support/Demand for Quality and the Outcomes to Quality.

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 districts, selection was based on their PMT results which were conducted between 2010 and 2012. The results referred to are from the English tests that were given to P6 children in each of the districts. Selection of

schools in the non TENI districts was based on SEA data available at the district level. This was done in order to enable the team to some extent compare the TENI and Non TENI districts.

The Research Instruments

The design of the TENI research project employed a variety of data collection instruments that provided rich, in-depth qualitative as well as quantitative data. The instruments included the following:

District level interviews

- **District Director of Education interview**: This instrument was used to gather information at the district through the district director of education or his assistant where necessary. It sought to help the team understand the district directors' view of quality education in the district and what his district is doing to improve quality education and also the challenges they were facing towards ensuring quality education in the district.

- **District Education office check list**: The district education checklist list was administered at the district offices to gather relevant data related to enrolment, transition where available, number of trained and untrained teachers, availability and supply of books etc. The main aim of the checklist was to establish the level of school inputs available at each district under the study.

- **Focal Group Discussion with District Circuit Supervisors, and Assistant Directors of Supervision:** The Focal group discussion with frontline directors sought to gather information on their views of the level of quality in the district and what they were doing to improve.

- **District Assembly District Chief Executive and District Coordinating Director interview**: This also was used to ascertain the level of collaboration and work relation between the district assembly and the GES office at the district level. It looked at the activities of DEOC.

- **Interview with the Girls' Education Officer and special Education Needs Officer**: Interviews with the Girls education officer was conducted to get an overview of girls education activities going o the district, the challenges of girls education and what the district assembly, GES and other NGOs (best practices) were doing in the district towards improving girls education. It also looked at the major challenges for the poor performance and progression of girls in the various districts.

Community Based interviews

- **Focal Group interview with SMC/PTAs and parents:** Focal group interviews were conducted with School management committees and parent teacher associations in order to know their perception of quality education delivered in their schools, their support to the school in order to promote quality education and if they were demanding quality teaching from education authorities.

- **Opinion leaders, chiefs and elders focal group interview:** Focal group discussions were held with opinion leaders, chiefs and elders to gather their opinion of whether their children are receiving good quality education and what role they are playing to support education managers provide the quality they expect.

- **Community Score Card exercise with women's groups, SMC's and parents:** A scorecard approach was used to gather in quantitative terms community members perception of the provision of quality education. This was also used to triangulate responses of parents in focal group discussions conducted earlier in the process.

School based interviews and observations

- Head teacher In-depth interview: the head teachers' interview was used to gather information related to their role in facilitating the delivery of quality education across the selected schools. It also looked at the support systems available to teachers through head teachers interventions and innovations. Head teachers interviews also looked at the availability of inputs such as trained and untrained teachers, teaching and learning materials.

- School Based Checklist: The school based checklist approach was used to give a gen
- 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 (boys and girls separately from the class observed at the upper primary level)
- Interview with selection of Class Teachers

Field work

The **field work** took place across the three northern regions of Ghana – two districts in each of the Northern (West and East Mamprusi District), Upper East (Talensi – Nabdam and Bongo) and Upper West Regions (Jirapa and Lawra District). 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.

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. 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 did not only allow us to collect in-depth data from the interviews but also allowed 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).

Analysis of Schools Identified as demonstrating High and Low Learning

Thirteen indicators were used by researchers during the classroom observations (lesson preparation and planning, lesson delivery, language of instruction, subject matter/knowledge and content accuracy, teacher usage of strategies for learning, usage of teaching and learning resources, teacher sensitivity to diverse learner needs, gender sensitivity, disciplinary practices of teachers, teacher demeanour, students participation/engagement, use of questioning and students assessment learner interaction, and time on task). Each indicator was divided into three categories: "poor", "satisfactory" and "very good". Each rating carries a numerical value which was recorded for each element of the lesson. For each indicator the classification was chosen on the basis of "best fit"; that is to say which of the categories had the most descriptors that matched what was observed during the lesson. Further evidence for each of these indicators was given in the form of observation notes. This element of the observation is quantitative and standardized and therefore can be used to compare different lessons across all the classrooms.

Indicators of high, medium and low learning

The 54 selected schools were divided into three categories: High, Medium and Low Learning. The key factors that were used in this categorization are whether both lessons observed during field work were highly rated across all or most of the indicators. The criteria on which each indicator is graded were given separate numerical values ranging from 1- 39. The overall rating is the sum of the numerical values given for each indicator. The maximum possible overall rating is 39, so lessons that fall in the range of 30 to 39 are at least satisfactory with some very good elements or are mostly very good. Those schools that are categorized as Low Learning present two poorly rated lessons, or, as is the case for 4 of the schools, only one lesson – where there is only one lesson it is because on the day of the researchers' visit there was only one teacher available for observation, this categorization is therefore not necessarily a reflection of how well the lesson was delivered but points to a more holistic view of the school and how it is managed – in the case of these schools management of the school had broken down to the extent that all but one teacher had absented themselves from school for that day.