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Implementation of initiatives to reform the quality of education in rural Ghanaian junior high schools

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IMPLEMENTATION OF INITIATIVES TO REFORM THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN RURAL GHANAIAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS.

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Abstract

Despite Ghana's record investment in education, in 2008, only 40% of students passed the Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE) at the end of junior high school and gained admission into senior high school. Urban schools continue to outperform rural schools and the gap between Ghana's best and worst performing schools continues to widen.

This study investigated the effectiveness of education policy implementation and how this has impacted on education reform in one rural district of Ghana's Upper West Region. The research investigated the status of education in Junior High Schools, the impact of Reform 2007 and the factors that influenced the implementation of the reform initiatives.

Following analysis of Ministry of Education policy documents, a questionnaire elicited detailed background information from head teachers about junior high schools and the impact of the reform on their schools. Interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders were used to assess the extent of coherence in purpose, policy and program implementation at district, regional and national levels.

It is evident from research data that the low academic standards and low pass rate at BECE is the result of inexperienced head teachers, the lack of qualified teachers, low teacher professionalism, low community support for education and inadequate resources. Reform 2007 refocused attention on curriculum, teacher education and supervision initiatives. However, the hierarchical structure and values of Ghana Education Service, poor communication especially at District level, lack of professional learning opportunities to interpret the policies, inadequate human and material resources to implement programs were factors that limited the implementation of the reform initiatives.

The current study has added to existing knowledge on implementing education policy to support reform initiatives. This study addresses the gap in the literature on the implementation of education policy through programs and its impact on performance in JHSs in a rural district of Ghana. Recommendations have been developed for reform of program implementation that will lead to enhanced educational outcomes for JHSs.

Acknowledgements

Dedication
Magnificat!

To my siblings: Grace and Ralph.

The gift is small.

However, it is given out of love.

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List of Acronyms

1. BECE — Basic Education Certificate Examination
2. CBO — Community Based Organisation
3. CRDD — Curriculum Research and Development Division, GES
4. DACF — District Assembly Common Fund
5. DEO — District Education Office
6. DFID — Department for International Development (UK)
7. DST — District Support Team
8. DTST — District Teacher Support Team
9. EA — Equitable Access
10. EFA — Education for All
11. EM — Educational Management
12. EMIS — Education Management Information System
13. ESTAC — Education Sector Technical Advisory Committee
14. FBO — Faith Based Organisations
15. FCUBE — Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education
16. GER — Gross Enrolment Ratio
17. GES — Ghana Education Service
18. GET Fund — Ghana Education Trust Fund
19. GNAT — Ghana National Association of Teachers
20. HRMD — Human Resource Management Division
21. ICT — Information and Communication Technology
22. IEC — Information, Education, Communication
23. IGO — Inter-Governmental Organisation
24. INSET — In-Service Education of Teachers
25. JHS — Junior High School
26. MMDA — Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
27. MoESS — Ministry of Education, Science and Sports
28. MDG — Millennium Development Goals
29. MNS — Minimum National Standard
30. NALAP — National Accelerated Language Program
31. NGO — Non-Government Organisation
32. NIB — National Inspectorate Board
33. NYEP — National Youth Employment Program
34. PMT — Performance Monitoring Test
35. PTA — Parents Teachers' Association
36. PTR — Pupil Teacher Ratio
37. QE — Quality of Education
38. SEN — Special Education Needs
39. SHS — Senior High School
40. SMC — School Management Committee
41. SPAM — School Performance Appraisal Meeting
42. SPIP — School Performance Improvement Plan
43. SRIMPR — Statistics, Research, Information Management and Public Relation
44. ST — Science, Technology [and TVET]
45. TED — Teacher Education Division
46. ToT — Trainers of Trainers/Tutors
47. TVET — Technical and Vocational Education and Training
48. WSD — Whole School Development

CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

Background

This thesis focuses on the implementation of education reform initiatives in Sissala East District, in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The chapter provides background on Ghana and positions the study in the context of policy changes over the last decade.

As the map in Appendix A shows, the location of Ghana "on West Africa's Gulf of Guinea is only a few degrees north of the Equator" (Bureau of African Affairs, 2011, p. 1). Ghana is "238,538 square kilometres, with a population of about 24 million, and about 59% of the population is aged between 15 to 65 years with a population growth rate of 1.2%" (Ghana Statistical Service, 2008, p. 63). Having been a British colony, Ghana inherited the British-style education system with English as the language of instruction. In 1957, Ghana gained its independence and became a Republic in 1960. Ghana now shares borders with three French-speaking countries, namely; Togo to the east, Burkina Faso to the north and Cote d'Ivoire on the west.

The issue of quality education has been a problem in Ghana for a long time. A high level government commissioned report reiterated the need for reform (Anamuah-Mensah, Ankomah, & Mankoe, 2006). Furthermore, a series of reforms have been attempted over the last four decades, with little impact on the quality of education. The need for educational reform initiatives were expressed in an earlier report by Akyeampong and Furlong (2000) who identified the key areas in need of change as access to education, quality teaching and learning, and management efficiency:

> The key strategies included improvements to access through rehabilitation and construction of school facilities, the fostering of full-scale community ownership and management of schools, and measures to increase education participation by girls and disadvantaged children. Other strategies to increase access and participation include the adoption of targets for the reduction of drop out and repetition rates and a social marketing campaign to promote education. Measures to improve the quality of teaching and learning include redesigning of pre-service and in-service training programmes to ensure well-qualified teachers, curriculum review and development, and the more adequate provision of instructional materials. The management efficiency component of the programme involves decentralisation and district capacity building, more effective monitoring, supervision and evaluation of education sector programmes and activities, and more efficient financial and personnel management. (p. 5)

In 2007, the Government of Ghana developed an educational reform initiative to refocus previous efforts in Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE)

(Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 1996b). The long-term objective of the Educational Reform launched in 2007 was to achieve universal basic education, improve on teaching, learning and performance and to expand and increase access to secondary and tertiary education. Basic education as introduced by Reform 2007 and earlier reported by the Basic Education Division of GES (2004, June) included: two years of kindergarten education which starts at age four, followed by six years of primary education, plus three years at the junior high school (JHS) level. Figure 1.1 presents Ghana's structure of basic education.
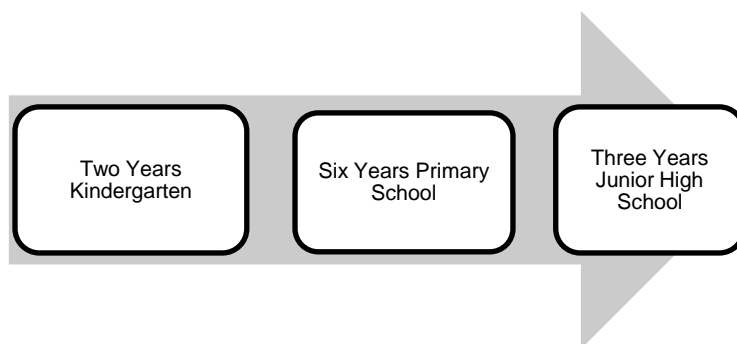
Figure 1.1: Ghana's structure of basic education

At the JHS level, the subject range expanded beyond English, Mathematics and Social Studies. The curriculum Research and Development Division (2007) included Agricultural Science as well as Technical, Vocational and Agricultural Education and Training, Information and Communication Technology as subjects for the JHS. Table 1.1 shows subjects expected to be taught at primary and junior high school levels:

Table 1.1: Subjects expected to be taught as part of Reform 2007

Primary subjects	Junior high school subjects
English Language	English Language
Ghanaian Language and Culture	Ghanaian Language and Culture
Mathematics	Mathematics
Environmental Studies	Social Studies
Integrated Science	General Science
Religious and Moral Education	Agricultural Science
Physical Education	Religious and Moral Education
Music and Dance	Life Skills, Music and Dance, Physical Education (internally examined).
	ICT
	Technical, Vocational and Agricultural Education and Training
	French

The languages of instruction and taught languages were also a major part of this curriculum initiative. At the lower primary level; that is, primary one to three; instruction

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was to be in the mother tongue. As students progressed through the education system, local languages, English and French were to be introduced. English is used as a language of instruction from the fourth year of primary education.

The Ministry of Education aimed to expand and increase access to pre-tertiary and secondary education. Further, this reform raised the three years of senior high school to four years (Bureau of African Affairs, 2011). Figure 1.2 presents education options after junior high school.

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          ┌──────────────────────────────┐
          │  Three Years Junior High School │
          │           (BECE)              │
          └──────────────────────────────┘
      ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────────┐
      │    Four Years    │   │   Technical/Vocational School  │
      │ Senior High School│   │ Two Years Apprenticehip Training│
      └──────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────────┘
            │  ┌──────────────────────────────┐
            ├──│      College of Education      │
            │  │(includes Distance Learning Colleges)│
            │  └──────────────────────────────┘
            │  ┌──────────────────────────────┐
            ├──│          Polytechnic           │
            │  └──────────────────────────────┘
            │  ┌──────────────────────────────┐
            └──│          University            │
               │        (includes Open          │
               │          University)           │
               └──────────────────────────────┘
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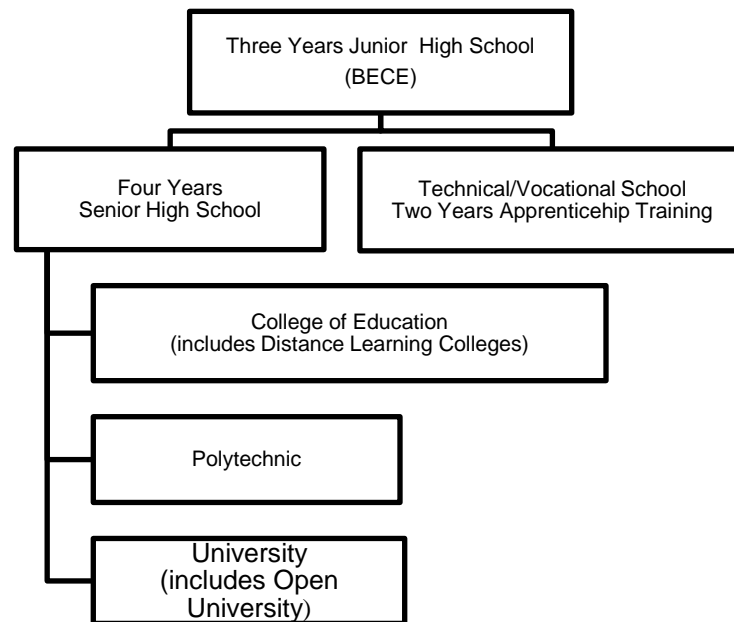
Figure 1.2: Education options after junior high school

In the final year of JHS, students sit the Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE). The BECE results have been used to select and place candidates into Senior High Schools (SHSs) and Technical/Vocational Institutes (Thompson, 2010 April, 19). Candidates with a BECE aggregate score of 30 or less qualify to enter senior high school education in Ghana. The BECE thus remains a high stakes external and summative examination which determines students' ability to progress further in education (Tagoe, 2011). Additionally, only about 40% of junior high school graduates gain admission to senior high school, and "about 34% of senior high school graduates are able to gain admission to universities and polytechnics, plus another 10-20% to diploma-level post-secondary" education from either the Colleges of Education or the polytechnics (Bureau of African Affairs, 2011, p. 4).

Problem

For some time now, the academic performance of junior high school graduates has been falling in Ghana. The incidence of only 40% of BECE graduates qualifying to gain

admission into senior high schools each year is well documented (Ghana Education Service, 2009; Kingsford, 2010, January 3). This means that as many as 60% of JHS students leave formal education after they fail the examinations. Statistics also indicate that there are some schools in rural communities that continually register a zero per cent pass rate for the BECE (Henaku, 2009, November 30)**.** Consequently, Ghanaian stakeholders in education are concerned about the BECE results and the social and economic impacts of this high failure rate.

Although many students appear to have sufficient knowledge to prepare them for the BECE, there seems to be a lack of basic skills needed to express their knowledge in the examinations. Many students are academically capable of continuing on to SHS education, but the exams do not provide an appropriate opportunity for them to demonstrate their knowledge in their chosen field (Ghana News Agency, 2011, May 17).

Despite record investment and a series of unsuccessful implementations of reform initiatives in education, BECE results from 2008 to date indicate that the gap between the country's best and worst performing schools is continuing to grow (Ghana News Agency, 2011, February 27). As a result, many children fail to reach an educational standard that will benefit society and Ghana's economic progress. Such children fail to ascend the educational ladder because they have no academic certificate to qualify them into further academic pursuits.

Rationale and Significance

This research is important to address the educational, social and economic costs of such a high failure rate at the BECE. The educational cost is the 60% of the students who fail the BECE and are excluded from further formal education. The social cost is the outcome for the students who fail the exams such as turning to a life of crime or falling into depression. The economic cost is the failed students' burden on society when they cannot find a job and so turn to their already poor family for support.

The importance of strengthening and promoting quality education should not be underestimated. Governments have the responsibility for ensuring quality education which will develop citizens with the capacity to meet the human resource needs of the country (Harbison, 1973; Sydhagen & Cunningham, 2007; Wang & Sun, 2009). Educated individuals make informed contributions to decision making processes regarding issues of public and personal interest. To support building the capacity of students, confident and effective teachers are required to assist in the teaching and

learning process (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, AITSL, 2011; Hattie, 2003, October).

Consequently, Reform 2007 considered curriculum development, teacher education and governance as key initiatives that had the potential to positively impact on BECE performance for all students. This study was conducted to investigate the impact of the reform initiative on the quality of education and the factors that influenced the effectiveness of its implementation.

The new knowledge generated in this study relates to the effective implementation of reform initiatives, will be of immense benefit to two institutions: the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MoESS) which develops policy and the Ghana Education Service (GES) which implements policy. The study contributes new understanding about the impact of the reform on the low BECE pass rates. The findings have the potential to inform program development and administration by the GES. Finally, the study developed a model that could be used in Ghana to investigate problems related to educational policy, programs and educational administration. The results of the study may not be applicable to educational systems outside Ghana. Nevertheless, comparative studies could be carried out among communities where diverse demographic backgrounds of schools and students could trigger similar educational issues.

This study builds considerably on my own experiences as a teacher within the Ghana Education Service. It informs my personal understanding of factors impacting on the implementation of reform initiatives. While there is an extensive body of literature focusing on systemic education policy implementation there is little research investigating implementation of reform initiatives at school level to be added to the existing body of knowledge.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the implementation of Reform 2007 and its impact on the quality of education and BECE results in JHSs in one district of the Upper West Region of Ghana. The research assessed the roles that key personnel in GES played at the various levels of educational administration and other factors that impacted on the implementation of the policy.

Research Questions

The three research questions which were addressed in this study are listed below:

1. What is the status of the quality of education in JHSs in the Sissala East District of Ghana?

2. What impact has Reform 2007 had on the quality of education and the BECE results?

3. What factors have impacted on the implementation of the reform initiatives?

Overview of the Thesis

The study involved an investigation of the implementation of Reform 2007 and its impact on JHSs in one district of the Upper West Region of Ghana. The research involved an assessment of the roles that key personnel in GES played at the various levels of educational administration that impacted on schooling at the district level.

Chapter One: Introduction. This introductory chapter presents the problem being addressed through this research. The rationale and significance of the study as well as the purpose for conducting the study is stated. This study was guided by the three research questions outlined above.

Chapter Two: Literature Review. This chapter presents an overview of seven education reforms which includes the most recent initiative, Reform 2007. The second section leads into a general discussion of literature on education policy objectives and options; policy implementation, evaluation and maintenance. The third section presents literature on administration and leadership approaches as well as possible applications of different leadership approaches to the GES. The final section presents the conceptual framework for the present study which is based on Bybee's (2003) framework for effecting educational change.

Chapter Three: Methods. This chapter outlines the epistemological position and theoretical perspective that underpin the study and elaborates on the quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry utilised in the study.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis; Head teachers' perspectives. This chapter focuses on emergent themes in relation to school background data from the Sissala East District. The findings were derived from the questionnaire and focus group discussions with junior high school head teachers.

Chapter Five: Data analysis; District perspectives. This chapter presents the results of the focus group discussion with circuit supervisors and interviews with key

stakeholders and educational leaders of the GES within the District. The findings are presented as themes.

Chapter Six: Data analysis; Regional and Central administration perspectives. This chapter presents the results of interviews with stakeholders and educational leaders of the GES from the level of regional and central administration.

Chapter Seven: Discussion. The chapter discuses the current status of JHS education; the impact of Reform 2007; factors impacting on the implementation of reform initiatives; and, initiatives needed to address unresolved problems. A new model for policy implementation has emerged from the synthesis of the discussion.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions and Implications: The final Chapter presents the conclusions and discusses the implications of the research findings. Recommendations are made to inform future policy development and implementation.

The next chapter presents a review of the literature associated with the current study.

CHAPTER TWO:
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the literature of policy implementation in relation to education reform. The discussion begins with background literature that presents an overview of six education reforms that existed before the most recent initiative, Reform 2007. The second section presents a general discussion of literature on education policy objectives and options; policy implementation, evaluation and maintenance. The third section leads into the literature on education administration and leadership approaches as well as possible applications of different leadership approaches within GES. The final section presents the five Ps model as well as the conceptual framework for the present study which is based on Bybee's (2003) framework to effect educational change.

Overview of Education Reforms in Ghana

Ghana has experienced many education reforms over the last four decades as shown in Figure 2.1. The following reports, acts and programs indicate that a lot of work has been done over the years to improve education, however, educational stakeholders still identified a need for further reform, hence the most recent initiative of Reform 2007. The discussion that follows addressed each of the reforms in turn:
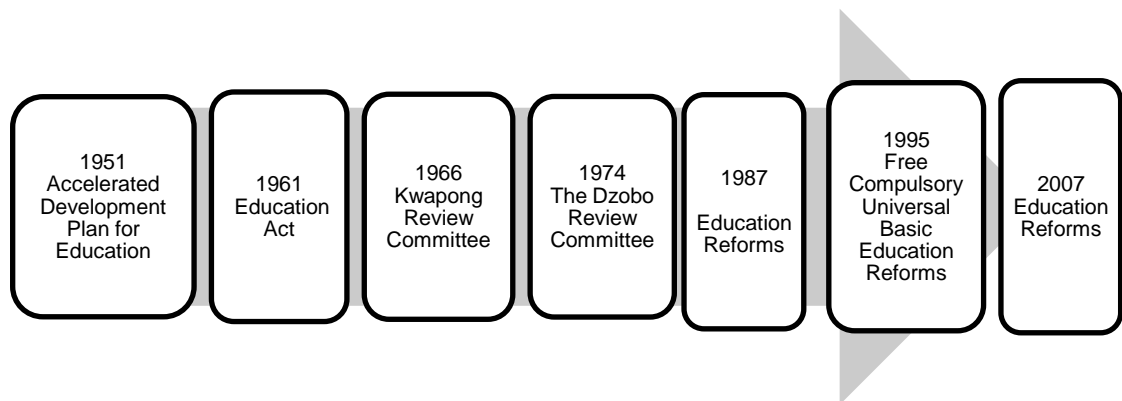
Figure 2.1: Ghana's education system reforms since 1951

1951, Accelerated Development Plan for Education

According to Akyeampong, Djangmah, Oduro, Seidu, and Hunt (2007, p. 5), the 1951 Accelerated Development Plan for basic education aimed to provide a six-year basic primary course for all children at public expense. The Plan produced a basic education structure that consisted of "primary education of six years and middle school education of four years" (both terminal and continuing). Sackey (2008) asserts that continuing students could move into technical education, teacher training, secondary schooling of five years and a sixth-form education of two years for entry into tertiary education. Additionally, the Plan expanded access to education through initiatives such as the abolishing of tuition fees in all public primary schools. Most of the formerly unaided primary schools were brought into the public education system and these became eligible for public funds. Figure 2.2 presents Ghana's structure of Education in 1951.
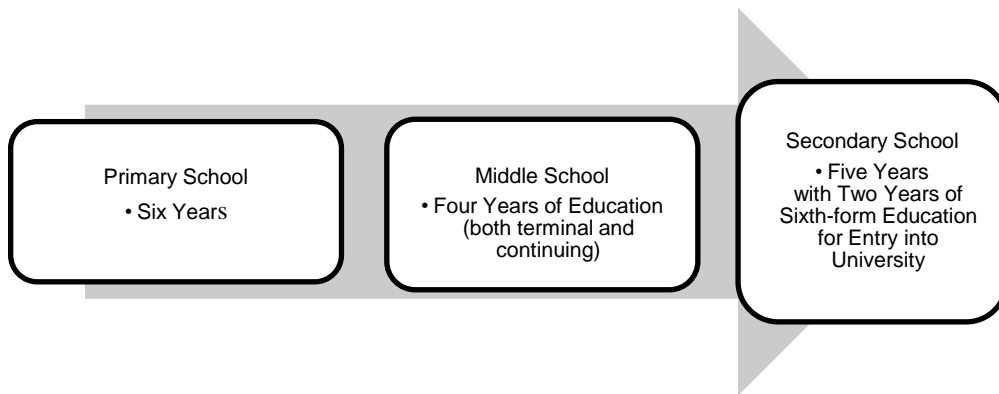
Figure 2.2: Ghana's structure of Education in 1951

A large number of untrained pupil teachers came in to help staff the classrooms, and the proportion of trained teachers in primary and middle schools dropped sharply from more than 52 to 28 % (Godwyll, 2003).

1961, Education Act

Akyeampong, et al., (2007, p. 5) mention the "introduction of the 1961 Education Act" and government's commitment to a "fee free, compulsory primary and middle school education". Additionally, Agbenyega (2007), acknowledges the contribution of the 1961 Act to the policy theme of educational access which is stated in the Basic Education Division of GES report (2004, June):

> Every child who has attained the school going age as determined by the Minister shall attend a course of instruction as laid down by the Minister in a school recognised for the purpose by the Minister. (p. 6)

Thus pre-tertiary schooling had become tuition free at every level of the public education system. Furthermore, the Government was to provide free textbooks for all

children in public primary, middle, and secondary schools (Adamu-Issah, Elden, Forson, & Schrofer, 2007).

The White Paper on Education (Government of Ghana, 2004), noted that without ensuring sufficient numbers of trained teachers, rapid expansion risked compromising the quality of education. Foster (1965, p. 190) cited in Akyeampong, et al., (2007, p. 5) argued that "the opponents of the Educational Plan in reiterating criticisms which had formerly led the British administration to proceed cautiously in the allotment of education facilities, ignored more noteworthy outcomes of mass educational expansion". Further, Akyeampong et al., (2007) cites Foster (1965) to affirm that:

> There is little doubt that the period of rapid expansion did lead to a lowering of academic standards within the primary and middle schools. It is equally true that the emergency teacher training schemes could enable the system to recover at a rapid rate once the initial peak of enrolments was past. (p. 5)

However, at the time, the number of untrained teachers at the primary level made up 65 % of the total teaching staff (Akyeampong & Furlong, 2000). At the secondary level, Ghana remained heavily dependent upon expatriate teachers. Throughout the school system education remained almost entirely academic and more and more pupils were leaving the middle schools after receiving only a general education. These trends added to the numbers of the unemployed.

Lessons learned from these perspectives indicate that early policies to increase access to education were that expansion and quality improvements needed to work together so as to produce mutually beneficial effects (Adamu-Issah, et al., 2007). Additionally, effective teacher supply, management, and improvements in instructional inputs were acknowledged as essential elements of expansion policies to improve access for all.

The debate (Fobih, Akyeampong, & Koomson, 1999; Foster, 1965) among stakeholders regarding quality of education versus expanded access to education produced calls to cut back the accelerated education expansion plans and to focus more on the provision of quality education. Other concerns related to the employability of school leavers and the relevance of their education to the world of work.

1966, Kwapong Review Committee

In 1966, the Kwapong Review Committee on education recommended that elementary education be extended to eight years (Government of Ghana, 2004). In year eight, suitable candidates were selected for a further four years' secondary education, while those "not selected went on to complete two years of continuation classes with an emphasis on pre-vocational education" (Akyeampong, et al., 2007, p. 6). The Kwapong

Review Committee's recommendation saw many middle schools become continuation schools in the early 1970s. In the late 1960s to early 1970s, primary education was seen mainly as preparation for entry to either secondary education or middle schools for early employment. Middle school leavers could attend technical and vocational schools and four-year post-primary teacher training colleges (Martin, 1976). Figure 2.3 presents Ghana's structure of Education in 1966:
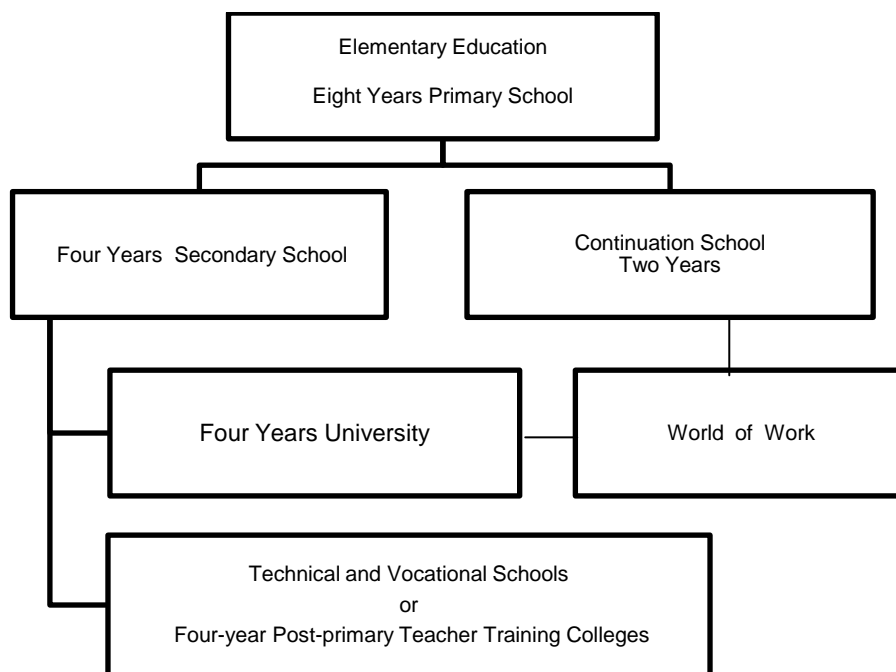
Figure 2.3: Ghana's structure of Education in 1966

Additionally, issues of inadequate access, resulting from non-enrolment and drop-outs did not feature as prominently as they did in the late 1950s to mid 1960. Concerns about inequitable access to secondary education became an issue in the early 1970s (Adams & Anum, 2005). The continuation school concept was criticised as "promoting inferior education for the masses whilst secondary schools became the preserve of elite Ghanaian children" (Akyeampong, et al., 2007, p. 6).

1974, Dzobo Review Committee

Tagoe (2011) reiterated the view of the Ministry of Information and National Orientation (2007, p. para) in stating that education reforms in 1974 introduced the idea of 13 years of "pre-tertiary education. Six years of primary school was followed automatically and compulsorily by three years of junior secondary" schooling. Further, selection for entry into a senior secondary school is based on the "outcome of the Basic Education Certificate Examination" [BECE] that is written at the end of junior secondary education. The BECE was introduced to replace the Common Entrance Examination in 1974 (Tagoe, 2011). Senior secondary school was for duration of four years. The

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Review Committee also considered the idea of pre-technical and pre-vocational subjects (Government of Ghana, 2004). This was an attempt to make the junior secondary school curriculum comprehensive and thus cater for all talents and provide students with practical skills (Akyeampong, et al., 2007). Figure 2.4 presents Ghana's structure of Education in 1974.

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                  ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                  │    Six Years PrimarySchool      │
                  │               +                 │
                  │ Three Years Junior Secondary    │
                  │           School                │
                  └─────────────────────────────────┘
                   │                              │
        ┌──────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────────────┐
        │ Five Years Senior│          │  Four Years Middle School│
        │ Secondary School │          │ Two Years Continuation   │
        │                  │          │         School           │
        │                  │          │      World of Work       │
        └──────────────────┘          └──────────────────────────┘
            │
        ┌──────────────────┐
        │ Two Years Sixth  │
        │       Form       │
        └──────────────────┘
            │
        ┌──────────────────────────────┐
        │ Technical and Vocational     │
        │ school                       │
        │            or                │
        │ Four-year Post-Primary       │
        │ Teacher Training College     │
        └──────────────────────────────┘
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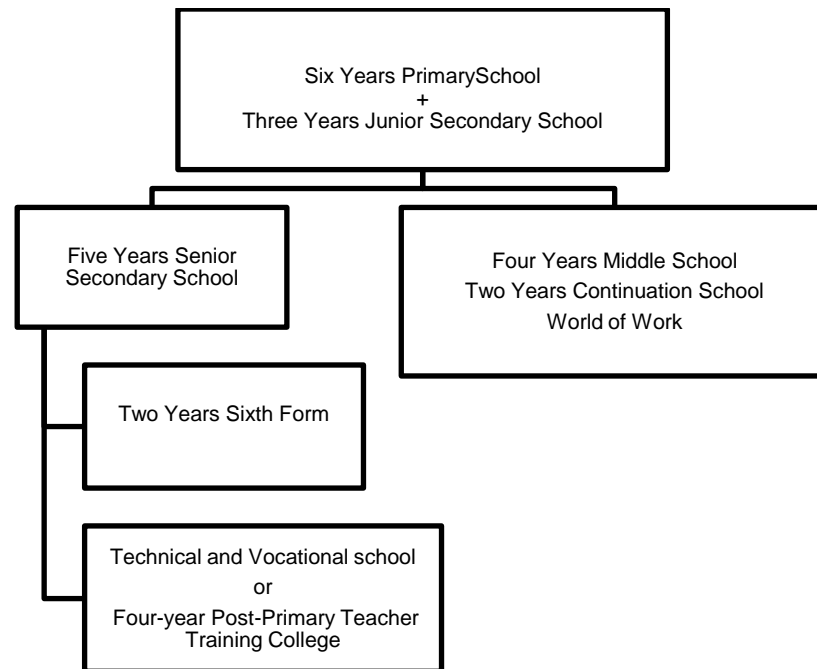
Figure 2.4: Ghana's structure of Education in 1974

The 1974 educational reforms were implemented in pilot form at a time when the Ghanaian economy had declined considerably. Akyeampong, et al., (2007, p. 8) state that between 1970 and 1982, the index of monthly earnings fell from [US]$315 to [US]$62, additionally, "in 1982, per capita income was 30% below the 1970 level". Furthermore, during this period there were acute shortages of "teachers, textbooks and instructional materials throughout the country's schools". From the mid-1970s, thousands of teachers seeking better conditions of service moved from Ghana to neighbouring Nigeria to enjoy its new found oil wealth (Ghana Statistical Service, 2003). Ghanaian society broke up increasingly into two groups: the rich and the poor. Education became a tool for social stratification (Addae-Mensah, 2000, April; Ghana Statistical Service, 2000). It was during this period that most rich families sent their wards abroad to access quality education, while the masses remained in Ghana with the deplorable state of education.

1987, Education Reforms

The 1987 Education Reforms aimed to improve access to basic education and implement the 1974 reforms nation-wide. It also emphasised the need to include

measures that improved quality, efficiency, and equity within the education sector (Ghana Education Service, 2004, June). The first of three key objectives of the 1987 reforms as suggested by Akyeampong, et al., (2007) is:

> To enable all products of the primary school to have access to a higher level of general academic training as pertained in the lower forms of the traditional secondary school. This will address the inequity between secondary school and the middle school/continuation school. (p. 9)

A second objective refers to the provision of practical skills' training in technical and vocational subjects for all children. The final objective according to Akyeampong, et al., (2007), was about preparation of the majority of children whose formal education terminated after junior secondary school for the world of work. These reforms changed the structure of the education system. Figure 2.5 presents Ghana's structure of Education for the reforms of 1987:
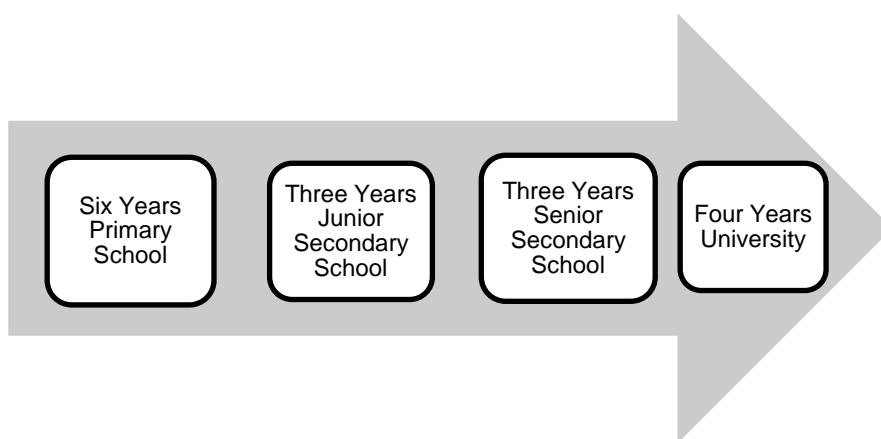
Figure 2.5: Ghana's structure of Education in 1987

Progression from primary to junior secondary school required no external examination. In place of the four years senior secondary school (two-year lower followed by the two-year upper senior secondary) proposed under the 1974 Plans, it introduced a three-year senior secondary school. The Curriculum Research and Development Division of GES (2007), indicates that the curriculum combined general academic studies and practical skills training activities as expressed in the Ministry of Education document (2000):

> Among the physical activities taught were: English Language, Ghanaian Language and Culture, Mathematics, Environmental Studies, Integrated Science, Religious Moral Education, Physical Education, Music and Dance. Junior secondary school curriculum comprised of English Language and Culture, Mathematics, Social Studies, General Science, Agricultural Science, Pre-vocational Skills, Pre-technical Skills, Religious and Moral Education and

optional French" [Other subjects taught but examined internally were] Life Skills, Music and Dance, and Physical Education. (p. 2)

The subjects taught at junior secondary school were based on the 1974 reforms. The curriculum catered for all talents and provided students with practical skills. Additionally, the 1987 reforms increased investment in improving access and quality of basic education. According to Akyeampong (2002) the well-equipped junior secondary school workshops intended for skills training in pre-vocational and pre-technical education failed to work as planned, due to an inadequate supply of well-trained technical and vocational instructors. It is worth noting that most of the subjects taught under 1987 Reforms are repeated in the current primary and junior high school time tables under Reform 2007.

1995, Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education Reforms

Agbenyega (2007) notes that the provision and support for Education has been granted by the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana as a basic human right for all Ghanaians. Further, as expressed in the Basic Education GES report (2004, June):

The Government shall within two years after parliament first meets after coming into force of this constitution, draw up a program for the implementation within the following ten years for the provision of a free, compulsory universal basic education. (p. 2)

Tagoe (2011) acknowledges that the Free, Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) reform 1995-2005 was introduced to overcome weaknesses in the 1987 reforms. Additionally, Tagoe (2011) agrees with Sackey (2008) about the main policy objective of the FCUBE program:

Improve teaching processes and learning outcomes, build capacity to manage the basic education system and improve access to basic education, particularly for girls and the poor in society as well as other vulnerable groups. (p. 10)

Though the initial target was fixed for the year 2005, this indicative target has been missed. The Basic Education, GES report (2004, June) states that the additional dimension to the 1995 reforms included measures to sustain the FCUBE program:

The decentralisation of the management of the sector's budget for pre-tertiary education: This involved capacity building for budgeting and financial management at the District level. (p. 4)

Figure 2.6 presents the structure of education by which the FCUBE program aimed to achieve universal primary education:
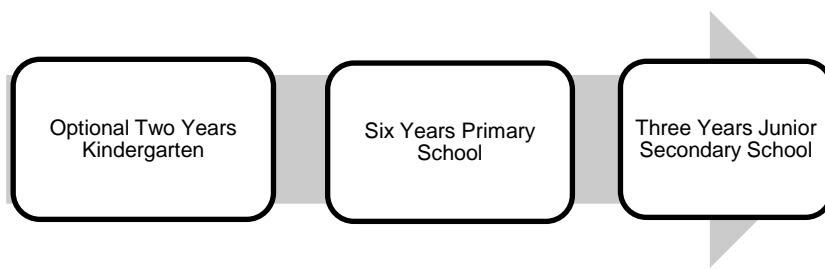
Figure 2.6: Ghana's structure of Education in 1995

The Ministry of Information and National Orientation (2007, p. para) states that pre-tertiary education in 1996 included two years optional kindergarten and "six years of primary education". Additionally, there are "three years at the junior secondary level and three years at senior secondary level" and as a result, "pre-tertiary education was shortened from 17 to 12" years. After junior secondary school, there were several options for students. Students could exit from this level into Technical/Vocational School and then to the world of work after two years of apprenticeship training. Successfully completing three years "senior secondary school leads to admission eligibility at training colleges, polytechnics or universities" (Bureau of African Affairs, 2011, p. 3).

Akyeampong, et al., (2007, p. 10) suggest that the 1995 FCUBE reforms also faced challenges similar to those faced by previous reforms in terms of "how to sustain early gains in enrolment and universalise basic education for all". Bame (1991), considered the view that challenges were linked to an over-emphasis on material inputs rather than to how teachers' attitudes and behaviours in the existing education system could be mobilised to handle the unfamiliar pedagogical issues embedded in the revised curriculum. Additionally, "a mix of policies targeted at specific areas and a host of initiatives to increase demand for basic education, especially in rural areas" were needed. Furthermore, management weaknesses including "poor supervision at system and school level undermined the impact" of the reforms (Maikish & Gershberg, 2008, p. 6). Other challenges included arrangements for the effective supervision and monitoring of the program at the district level, and how provision was to be made for the necessary logistical support to make such supervision feasible, which were matters that were left unresolved (Kadingdi, 2004).

Additionally, a suggestion by Akyeampong, et al., (2007) resonates with the claim of Maikish and Gershberg (2008, p. 10), "about lessons learnt from the implementation

regarding continual expansion to access to basic education and increasing physical inputs into the system alone, as not effective. Alongside increasing physical inputs, "the quality of activities at the school level need to be improved significantly" (Tagoe, 2011, p. 2).

2007, Education Reforms

Education Reform 2007, as the most recent reform initiative, refocused on past Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education goals. Reform 2007 concludes the overview of seven educational reforms that span from 1951 to 2007. The literature reveals that different reforms seemed to have had varying levels of emphasis in terms of focus (Adamu-Issah, et al., 2007; Akyeampong, et al., 2007; Kadingdi, 2004; Tagoe, 2011). Over the years challenges of policy implementation have contributed to the emergence of new reform which was expected to correct the problems of previous ones. However, the striking feature with all of these reforms were the undertones relating to improving access to education; improving teacher supply and teacher capacity building; and, enhancing supervision and teaching as well as ensuring adequate material resources.

Educational Reform 2007 has relevance for teaching and learning initiatives at the JHS level and therefore for this research. The current research is valuable for curriculum development, teacher education and governance as these are key initiatives that have the potential to positively impact on BECE performance.

The next section presents a general discussion of educational policy with special reference to policy implementation and the evaluation process.

Education Policy

The policy process frames the conversation about policy. The policy process as presented by Sutton (1999, August) portrays the process as linear, rational or a top-down strategy with two distinct phases; namely, formulation and implementation of policy. However, Howard (2005) expressed the view that theorists, such as Bridgeman and Davis, (2003) highlight the importance of adaptations to policy as they present a cycle as the standard for understanding public policy decision making. Howard (2005, p. 3) suggests that writers make claims "that the policy cycle is an impractical, normative model for decision making". This resonates with Everett's (2003, p. 66) assertion "that politicians and administrators have limited [capacity] to compare options"; since their emphasis is more on formal procedures, they ignore the complex, value-laden nature embedded in a policy cycle (Howard, 2005). The argument affirms that inputs to major government decisions were multifaceted, and required widespread,

methodical techniques to inform decision-making. Policy development is dynamic and involves multiple actors and negotiations and the rigid form of the rational and scientific model does not leave room for this. Howard (2005) cites Radin's (2000) post-Machiavellian policy analysis, and makes the following assertion:

> The policy cycle has the potential to capture some of the fundamental features of current policy formulation, including the existence of numerous decision makers, the high degree of competition and contestability among sources of policy advice, and the substantial impact of previous policies on new efforts. (p. 3)

Additionally, Howard (2005) suggests that the policy cycle needs to capture how politicians collaborate with bureaucrats to carry out good analytical work. Everett (2003, p. 66) agrees with Davis, Wanna, Warhurst, and Weller (1993) that the policy cycle is "an administrative and bureaucratic mechanism for effectively setting a process in place once the difficult decisions have been made".

Recent research (Burton, 2006; Rodrigue, Comtois, & Slack, 2009) suggest that a full policy process starts with a definition of the problem as well as the rationale for its existence. Furthermore, defining the problem helps to set the context which further, directs and frames the actions to be considered in subsequent steps of the policy process. In providing background studies into the state of affairs; the actors, as well as the concerns and options for the way forward will also be identified. According to Everett (2003) it is important that trends are forecasted so as to determine if issues are likely to change.

The Research Information Network (2010, p. para) refers to dissemination of information "helping to place research output on more media platforms". RIN (2010) is of the view that the challenge of stakeholders is with their ability to keep pace with changes so that opportunities are exploited to the full. A Rural Health Research Panel (2007, p. 2), admitted that "providing decision makers with timely, objective, and expert analysis of the implications of policy was appropriate". Chilisa and Preece (2005) suggest that baseline data has to be made available to policymakers as these help to redress misrepresentations, so that the problem warranting the need for a policy will be fully understood. Furthermore, there is considerable agreement that dissemination and change clearly emphasise the need for unlimited support, such that opportunities for debate and dialogue should not be overlooked (Bybee, 2003).

Consequently, the concept of dissemination includes efforts at setting targets for reform initiatives in school improvement plans. According to Nkansah (2006, July), raising understanding and support for targets of policy goals are important. The preparation of

school improvement plans has enhanced the goal of establishing awareness of targets for JHSs.

Policy Objectives and Options

Everett (2003), Hess (1999) and Davis, et al., (1993) support the view that "some proposals for reform fare better than others", additionally, Hess (1999, p. 495) notes that "interviews with policymakers reveal that they are more highly selective in their consideration of evidence [related to the] potential of new reforms than with carefully calibrated assessments of demonstrated performance". Consequently, it is important that clear objectives are set if a policy is to succeed. Additionally, Rodrigue, et al. (2009) expressed the view that objectives must be consistent and flexible enough as circumstances evolve. Six criteria for the formulation of objectives are outlined by Rodrigue, et al., (2009):

1. Identify the present conditions and situation,
2. Indicate what the goals are,
3. Identify the barriers to achieving the goals,
4. Identify what is needed from other agencies and the private sector,
5. Determine how success will be judged and measured, and
6. Identify what steps are required to achieve success. (p. 295)

Compared with Hess (1999) and Everett (2003) who refer to the choice of problem and objectives based on what is 'speedy and workable' rather than Rodrigue, et al., (2009) who consider that the problem and objectives has to be clearly defined, and the policy options formulated and evaluated. In addition, Rodrigue, et al., (2009, p. 295) further state that "more than one solution has to be considered for policy adoption", so that there will be options to select from. In realizing the objectives, Rodrigue, et al., (2009, p. 295) suggest that "best practices from other" [areas] "may be considered, and moreover, all other possible solutions need to be considered".

The importance of policy interpretation according to Dyer (1999), lies in increasing understanding of and support for performance targets. Further, studies (Dempster, 2009; Ohi, 2008) look at improving education quality by linking research with policy, programs and practice. Additionally, Bybee (2003) considers the need for a careful analysis, as well as challenging current perspectives so as to highlight the level of coherence between the problem statement and the steps required to achieve the objectives.

Policy Implementation

According to Bybee (2003, p. 23) "implementation involves changing policies, programs and practices to be consistent with standards". Further, implementation is about policy becoming action. Implementing the selected option according to Rodrigue, et al., (2009) is a vital aspect of the policy process. A review of policy implementation literature (Birkland, 2010; Rodrigue, et al., 2009; Sabatier, 2007) portrays varying numbers of policy process models in relation to implementation of public policy. Fullan (1994) points out that neither centralised nor decentralised change strategies seem to work. He therefore suggests that a blend of the two orientations is essential for an effective implementation. Additionally, theories of policy processes operate under either a top-down or bottom-up orientation. The top-down approach described by Birkland (2010):

> An approach in which one first understands the goals and
> motivations of the highest level initiators of policy, and then tracks
> the policy through its implementation at the lowest level. (p. 183)

However, Birkland (2010), based on Sabatier's (2007) studies on the factors required for successful policy implementation, outlines five basic assumptions for the top-down strategy:

> 1. Top-down implementation strategies depend on the capacity of policy
> objectives to be clearly and consistently defined,
>
> 2. Policies contain clearly defined policy tools for the accomplishment of goals,
>
> 3. The policy is characterised by the existence of a single statute or other
> authoritative statement of policy,
>
> 4. There is an implementation chain that starts with a policy message at the top
> and sees implementation as occurring in a chain, and
>
> 5. Policy designers have good knowledge of the capacity and commitment of
> the implementers. (p. 183)

In a top-down model, the policy implementer assumes that any problems suggested by these assumptions (Sabatier, 2007) can be controlled. However, Birkland (2010) outlined problematic features of the top-down model to include the emphasis on clear objectives devoid of a consensus on program goals, knowing that it is hard to set a standard for program success and failure. Birkland (2010) also describes bottom-up approach:

> This approach involves understanding the goals, motivations, and
> capabilities of the lowest level implementers and then follows the
> policy design upward to the highest level initiators of policy. (p.
> 185)

Elmore (1997) advocates the bottom-up approach to the top-down implementation process. The implementer in the bottom-up approach begins at the lowest level to the

topmost policy designers, the relevant relationships in the process are mapped backwards. Assumptions underlying bottom-up approaches are in sharp contrast to those of top-down approaches. Literature reveals (Birkland, 2010; O'Toole, 2004; Sabatier, 2007) that firstly, bottom-up approach recognises that goals are unclear and may conflict with other goals within the same policy area. These goals may also conflict with the norms and motivations of the lowest level implementers. Hill (2003) sees the issue of compliance arising where there is a conflict of interest between implementation agencies and politicians. Top-down approaches insist on compliance, while bottom-up approaches value understanding how conflicts can be reduced through bargaining and sometimes compromise. Birkland (2010) therefore views implementation in a bottom-up approach as a continuation of the conflicts and compromises that come up throughout the policy process.

According to Birkland (2010), a second assumption with bottom-up approach is that it does not require a single defined policy or statute. Rather, policy can be thought of as a set of laws, rules, practices, and norms that shape the ways in which government and interest groups address these problems (Birkland, 2010). However, there is an overemphasis on bottom-up approach of the ability of the lowest level implementers to upset the goals of top level policy makers (Sabatier, 2007). These lowest level implementers are constrained to act according to their professional norms and obligations with legal sanctions applied for noncompliance.

Thirdly, bottom-up approach assumes that groups are active participants in the implementation process. Birkland (2010) is of the view that this is not always true since some policies are without publics. Some policies are developed and implemented with relatively little public input. This could be the case with highly technical projects. A further issue to be considered is that bottom-up approaches involve the power differences of the target groups. Those with greater power can have a greater influence on the impact of policies that affect them than can other groups; they therefore get different treatment as reflected in the choice of policy tools. The choice of tools is made at the top, based on the desired behavioural change and the nature of the target population itself.

However, considering what these two approaches do best, first, the top-down approach is more useful when there is a single, dominant program that is being implemented. Bottom-up on the other hand makes sense when there is no one dominant program. According to Fullan (1994) a given intervention often determines the model that could be most appropriate and sometimes combinations have been found to be effective.

There are instances when not all policies get implemented in their original form. Kruger (2002) suggests that changes in policy may be made for economic reasons, such as to do with the cost of education. Gouger (2007) views a change in policy as sometimes for demographic reasons, perhaps the population trends have changed; or for ideological reasons, perhaps the concept of a 'good' education has changed. Policy development is dynamic and it is a highly political process that involves multiple actors and negotiations (Keeley, 2001). Sabatier (2007), Hill and Hupe (2002) are of the view that what happens at the implementation stage influences the actual policy outcome. Bybee (2003, p. 23) suggests that "implementation involves changing policies, programs, and practices" so that they are consistent with targets. In a study to evaluate policy implementation, Dionco-Adetayo, Makinde and Adetayo (2004) stated that sound policies were formulated but failed at the level of implementation. Among the constraints listed as reasons for implementation failure were: "inadequate definition of goals; over-ambitious policy goals; and, choice of inappropriate organisational structure in implementation of policies" (Dionco-Adetayo, et al., 2004, p. 13).

Additionally, four key anchors that are essential for the "effective implementation and sustainability of educational policy" according to Fredua-Kwarteng (2008, p. 433) include: "flexibility to implement the policy at the community school level; support of critical stakeholders" as well as a curriculum being made to suit local needs "and, compulsory teacher certification courses in local philosophy and pedagogy". Fredua-Kwarteng (2008, p. 434) argues that in relation to resolving implementation challenges there was the need to incorporate "a bottom-up approach to policy implementation" that will encourage local community participation. This will satisfy the need to feel that they all have a stake in the process of policy implementation.

Implementation literature presents a range of policies as well as a diversity of socio-economic conditions that policies could be applied to. Based on such a premise it becomes a challenge to present an implementation procedure that fits all. A 10 point model of policy implementation is presented by Rodrigue, et al., (2009):

1. Policies must not face insurmountable external constraints,
2. There must be adequate time frame and resources,
3. Implementing agency must have adequate staff and resources,
4. The premises of policy and theory must be compatible,
5. Cause-and-effect relationships in the policy must be direct and uncluttered. Based on clear and unambiguous relationships,
6. Dependency relationships should be kept to a minimum,
7. The basic objectives of the policy need to be agreed upon and understood,

8. Tasks must be specified in an appropriate sequence,

9. Communication and coordination need to be on the same wavelength,

10 There must be compliance. Those agencies involved in implementing the policy must work towards total compliance. (p. 297)

Key Ghana Education Service (GES) personnel would be expected to interpret policy goals and help to increase understanding and support for these goals. Implementation is around programs and practice or new practices. Sometimes classroom teachers have failed to make meaning of new curricula and its unfamiliar pedagogical demands (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2007a). Anecdotally the reasons given are that this is largely driven by the Head teachers and senior teachers who in fact, have limited authority and lack the skills to translate policy into practice at the grassroots level.

Policy Evaluation and Maintenance

Sutton's (1999, August) idea of top-down strategy conflicts with Howard's (2005) suggestion which allows adaptations to policy in the form of a cycle as the standard for understanding public policy. According to Bybee (2003, p. 23) presenting the process as a cycle allows the value-laden nature embedded within the policy process to be "gathered about various impacts that contribute directly to improvement".

Bybee, (2003, p. 23) considers monitoring and feedback within the various components of the system as essential since this results "in an ongoing evaluation of policies, programs, and practices"; additionally, expressed by Rodrigue, et al., (2009):

> By evaluating the options it may be possible to identify the one that best meets the goals that have been established and at the same time is the best fit for local circumstances. These types of evaluations are referred to as ex ante, because the outcomes are being assessed even before the policy is put into practice. Although one can never completely anticipate the outcome of different prospective policy options, ex ante evaluations are capable of bringing to light what problems may develop when the preferred option is implemented. Thus, when the future policy is to be evaluated (ex post), problems of data, reporting, and identification of success criteria may have been already anticipated and resolved through an earlier ex ante assessment. (p. 295)

According to Todd and Wolpin (2006) policy makers attach great importance to both ex ante and ex post evaluations of the policy process. Rodrigue, et al., (2009, p. 295), as well as Todd and Wolpin (2006, p. 1) agree that ex ante evaluations save the possibility of "high cost of implementing programs that are later found to be ineffective". Additionally, an "ex ante assessment can provide evidence on what range of impact to expect after the program is implemented".

Rodrigue, et al., (2009, p. 297) suggest that consideration should be given to how policy objectives, the results, as well as the beneficiaries are to be evaluated right at the inception when the policy is formulated. Additionally, ideas about managing the process should include "performance-based management as an essential tool in the policy process". According to Bybee (2003), to ensure effective reform of policy and programs so that standards can be enhanced, evaluation is built into all the stages of the policy process. Additionally, it is important that indicators are agreed upon by the policymakers who carry out the programs as well as the units that undertake them. These indicators assist in facilitating evaluations at the ex post stage of the policy process. The next section presents the picture of educational administration and leadership approaches in Ghana. The section also discusses literature about instructional and transformational leadership as some of the different leadership approaches in operation (Dempster, 2009; Hallinger, 2003; Hargreaves, Brennan, & Fink, 2003; Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009).

Education Administration and the Impact of Leadership Approaches

The current administrative approach in the Ghana Education Service is clearly based on a top-down, instructional model**.** Apart from a central administration, Ghana is divided into 10 administrative regions with Regional Education Offices, which are subdivided into 138 District Education Offices (Maikish & Gershberg, 2008). These Education Offices represent the Ministry of Education and, are responsible for implementing policies at local government areas. Local government areas are located within District Assemblies. This therefore makes the head of District Assemblies the most senior chief executive within the local government area. As often as it becomes necessary, local government administration has to be ready to surrender their power and prerogatives to that of central administration. Literature reveals the need for a considerable amount of cooperation between the different levels of government (Hall & O'Toole, 2000; O'Toole, 2004).

The GES organogram Figure 2.7 depicts formal relationships in the organisational hierarchy and stipulates the line and staff relationships in terms of roles and responsibilities of management and staff (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 1996a). The organisational structure (Figure 2.7) helps to explain leadership approaches and outcomes that are at play within the GES. The Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service are the administrative structures that support education and its impacts on programs in schools in the country. The Ministry of Education is the political sector responsible for formulating policy within the context of

the ruling party's manifesto. Ghana Education Service is mandated by law to implement educational policies. The use of the rhomboid is to highlight the hierarchical structure of the GES. The GES is headed by a Director-General. The "management of education at central, regional and district levels are strengthened by posting qualified personnel to all managerial and administrative positions in the service" (UNESCO-IBE, 2006, p. 3). Most of the administrative power and authority lies with only a few people at the top. The people at the bottom have much less power and authority though they have the advantage of numbers. However, Sabatier (2007) expresses the view that the lowest level implementers do have the strength of numbers which can upset the goals of top level policy makers. Rodrigue, et al., (2009, p. 297) therefore suggest that "communication and coordination need to be on the same wavelength and additionally, the premises of policy and theory need to be compatible". The organogram Figure 2.7 shows, that the structure for policy dissemination and implementation is top-down.

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│          Ministry of Education           │
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│       Ghana Education Service (GES)       │
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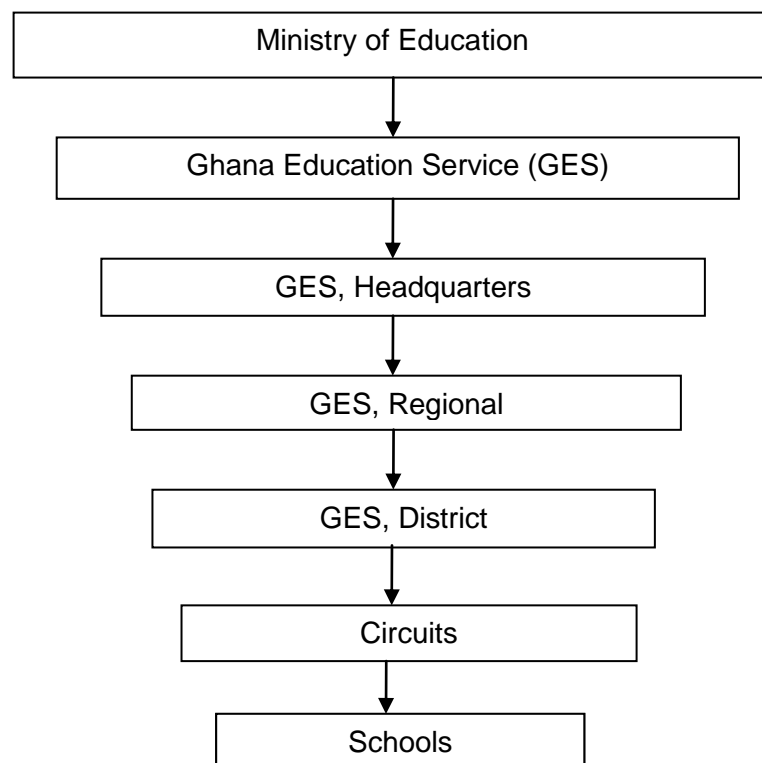
Figure 2.7: Relationships between Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service

The line of command indicates that word goes out from the Ministry of Education through GES central administration and then to Regional Directors, District Directors, Deputy Directors, Circuit Supervisors, Heads of schools and finally to teachers in the schools. This has often been the model for implementing directives that come into District Offices and then to the schools around Ghana. Anecdotal evidence (Ghana

Education Service, 2009) reveal that some Districts and schools in remote areas of the Region sometimes only receive notification of upcoming events after those programs are over. This is due to the poor network of roads and to communication barriers.

Education sector policy objectives in Ghana aim to create a well-balanced and self actualised individuals with essential "knowledge, skills, values and aptitudes for the socio-economic and political transformation of the nation" (Maikish & Gershberg, 2008, p. 9). Evaluation of this objective in Ghana, has, largely centred on performance and the number of children who qualify for further formal schooling by passing the BECE examination. Key personnel at this stage of the process within the District are: District Directors; Deputy Directors; Circuit Supervisors; school Heads; and teachers. Goals for revision of policy are related to purpose, policy and program and these would be expected to be carried out at the levels of the Director-General, Regional Director, and District Director. Effective education reform requires coherence in the roles within the system with its purpose.

The targets as stated in the national education strategic plan are policy objectives for curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2003) (see Appendix B). There is widespread support for the argument that there is a need to improve basic education learning targets (Ghana News Agency, 2011, May 17). Further, education learning targets are designed as tools for facing the challenges of basic education, therefore providing a benchmark for the measurement and evaluation of performance.

Education Performance Indicators

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) provides a framework to guide the entire international community in making education for all a reality. Consequently, it is the vision of the international community to collectively employ strategies that will ensure that basic learning needs of all individuals are met through education (World Education Forum, 2000). At a conference in Dakar in 2002, six goals were outlined for all member states to achieve [Education for All] EFA (Government of Ghana, 2006). Ghanaian national plans of action were to be derived from the six EFA goals by the end of 2003, to indicate how Education for All would be achieved (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2003).

Furthermore, Tagoe (2011, p. 20) confirms that "preparation of the Education Strategic Plan [ESP] has been informed by the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy [GPRS], [Education for All] EFA goals, the [Millennium Development Goals] MDGs and other sectoral and national reports". Tagoe (2011, p. 19) admits that the "Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2003-2015" is designed as a tool "to deal with the challenges

facing education in Ghana". According to the Basic Education Division of GES (2004, June, p. 11) the ESP (2003) "lays the foundation for a sector wide approach to education sector development in Ghana". The four key areas of the Education Strategic Plan include: "Equitable Access to Education (EA); Quality of Education (QE); Educational Planning and Management (EM); Science and Technology, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ST & TVET)" (UNESCO-IBE, 2006, p. para). Appendix B shows policies, indicative targets, strategies and activities outlined by the Ghanaian education system. Further, education performance indicators suggest that there is still more to be done to enhance the attainment of universal "access to basic education" goals in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals (Akyeampong, 2009; p. 175).

This study therefore sought to examine the range of factors that impacted on the performance of JHS in Ghana from a district perspective of educational administration. A policy focus on the measurement of the success or failure rates very often indicates a failing system. This is based on the premise that the current educational reform which refocuses FCUBE and reform 2007 policy initiatives as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) has been in existence for over a decade and yet issues of underperformance still persist. Hattie (2003, October) resonates with Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, and Hopkins, (2006, p. 3) when they suggest "that school leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning". This therefore buttresses the claim that leadership has a pride of place in the school learning process. The next section will focus on the effects of leadership approaches on students.

Leadership Approaches

Leadership and change in the GES organogram (Figure: 2.7) is shaped by constraints such as the status given to number of years of service. Within the GES, progressions through the professional ranks are made on the basis of years of service followed by qualifications and suitability for the post. Additionally, attendance at a prescribed promotion interview, as stipulated by the conditions of service and professional ethics of the Ghanaian National Association of Teachers, applies (Ghana Education Service and Ghana National Association of Teachers, 2000). According to the Ghana National Association of Teachers, the GES places high political interest in matters of educational policy making. However, the GES is expected to adopt a professional approach to the implementation of educational policies (GNAT, 2010).

Additionally, leadership theorists and Researchers (Hallinger, 2007, August; Leithwood, et al., 2006; Robinson, et al., 2009) make reference to three leadership fundamentals

namely; purpose, context and human agency. Dempster (2009) considers the issue of a school's management efficiency as not being all that matters as much as the ability to add value to students' learning, as an equally essential aspect of effective schooling. Further, as leadership is located within a context, it is important that leaders are able in their roles to judge how they can best exploit potential and support within the school and the wider community. Furthermore, Demspter (2009) cites Leithwood, et al., (2006) to suggest that leadership needs to be seen as a collective activity and not only as a position:

> Leaders affect learning by building vision and setting directions; by understanding and developing teachers; designing effective organisational structures; coordinating the teaching and learning program; by attending to the conditions for learning; and sharing leadership broadly and deeply. (p. 5)

These leadership fundamentals run through subsequent sections as evolving models of leadership are highighted. The next section examines literature on two models of leadership approaches within the context of improving educational outcomes.

Instructional Leadership

Hallinger (2003, p. 343) and Day, Harris and Hadfield (2001) consider instructional leadership as employing a top-down approach since "leadership focuses on direct coordination, control, and supervision of curriculum and instruction". Management of existing relationships and maintenance of the status quo according to Angus (1998) would imply that "basic regulatory structures are left in place and therefore unlikely to see any enduring change" to leadership approaches. Furthermore, removal of these structures; will leave the leadership out of control of the system they are employed to manage.

There is a consensus of opinion (Graeme, 2007) about the focus on school improvement which can also be seen as "transactional in the sense that it seeks to manage and control organisational members to move towards a predetermined set of goals" (Hallinger, 2003, p. 338). According to Birkland (2010, p. 183) "an implementation chain starts with a policy message at the top and sees implementation as occurring in a chain". The leader expects all teachers to work towards total compliance. The system denies teachers the freedom to act in ways other than those prescribed. Additionally, the instructional arrangement leaves no room to assess a teacher's creativity and commitment.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) acknowledge that teachers have very complex roles that require instruction, counselling and supervision of students, who vary in their needs and capacities. This is one of several instances where a sensitive professional

judgement by the teacher is required, rather than a top-down directive by a distant authority. The instructional leadership approach offers the promise of efficiency, control and predictable routines.

Transformational Leadership

Graeme (2007, p. 214) suggests that transformational leadership focuses on building the "organisation's capacity to select its purpose and to support the development of changes to practices of teaching and learning". This is done by motivating teachers through shared values and vision to school change.

Graeme (2007) and Hallinger (2003) further describe transformational leadership as a type of shared leadership that stimulates change through bottom-up participation. Bottom-up approaches value understanding as to how conflicts can be reduced by bargaining and sometimes through compromise. The leader focuses on understanding individual needs and empowering others. Furthermore, the leadership focuses on capacity building rather than leading, directing, or controlling (Hallinger, 2007, August). Additionally, transformational leadership is illustrated in Hallinger's (2007, August, p. 5) statement that the leadership by the school's "principal is essential in supporting the commitment of teachers". However, "teachers can themselves be barriers to the development of teacher leadership" as reflected by Hallinger (2007, August):

> Transformational principals are needed to invite teachers to share leadership functions. When teachers perceive principals' instructional leadership behaviours to be appropriate, they grow in commitment, professional involvement, and willingness to innovate. Thus, instructional leadership can itself be transformational. (p. 5)

Ohi (2008) advocates the importance of the role of teachers and suggests that whether it involves nationwide targets or curriculum frameworks, it is important as opined by Wagner (1998) that there is discussion of the need for change. Wagner (1998, p. 512) is of the view that discussions "should be among groups that are most directly affected, namely teachers, parents and students and further recommends a collaborative approach to achieving high standards". Educational leaders (Wagner, 1998, abstract) "have begun to realise that a lack of broad support for the goals of change can be a significant impediment to change". Fullan (2002) considers that ability to mobilise peoples' commitment to harnessing their energies into actions designed to improve situations, as the litmus test of all leadership.

Figure: 2.8 presents Dempster's (2009) synthesis of five leadership research reports about successful school leadership. Purpose, context and the human agency continue to be the common thread running through leadership fundamentals that underpin

research studies. The report supports eight statements on how leaders affect students' learning outcomes as expressed by Dempster's (2009, p. 9):

1. They have an agreed and shared moral purpose;
2. There is 'disciplined dialogue' about learning in the schools;
3. They plan, monitor and take account using a strong evidence base;
4. They are active professional learners with their teachers;
5. They attend to enhancing the conditions for learning;
6. They coordinate, manage and monitor the curriculum and teaching;
7.They use distributive leadership as the norm; and
8.They understand the context of their work and connect with parent and the wider community support for learning. (p. 9)

Figure 2.8 communicates a path that leaders aiming to improve student learning and performance travel in pursuit of their moral purpose.
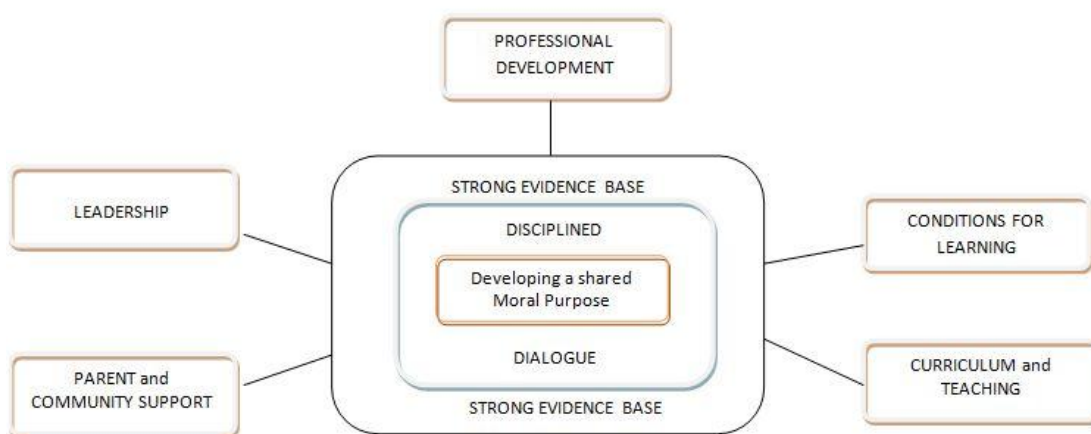
Figure 2.8: A framework for leadership for learning (Dempster, 2009, p. 10)

Possible Applications of Different Leadership Approaches to the GES

Results from summative assessment have pride of place in administration since that has become a major criterion in determining successful schools based on students' learning and performance. Consequently, the obsession with BECE results contributes to the suppression of learning. Hargreaves, Brennan, and Fink (2003, p. 2) speculate that in "responding to high stakes testing, learning for all, needs to be improved in the belief that raised scores would follow". Sharing in the moral purpose is one important aspect of the work of effective leaders. There is need for the kind of leadership which accommodates holistic assessment practices of students' learning.

The largely top-down leadership approach of the GES reinforces the level of prominence attached to the head teachers' position as key implementers of policy. The

top-down structure safeguards the positions of traditional power blocs. The leadership counts on the support of line officers to ensure compliance with government directives in the schools. Hargreaves, et al., (2003) mention the need for a sustained leadership that considers leadership succession. Further, the suggestion that school improvement plans should include succession plans suggests the need for training successors if leadership must continue. Currently, the ongoing priority attached to harnessing capacity and professional development among teachers leaves them with a Diploma in Basic Education as the minimum qualification. Furthermore, Pont, Nusche and Moorman (AITSL, 2008, p. 136) support the view that "school leadership requires specific skills and competencies that may not have been developed with years of teaching alone".

The issue of language and the role it plays in enhancing positive dialogue about learning in the schools cannot be overemphasised. Additionally, it is interesting to notice the common practise of making no distinction in addressing gender. Whether the situation has male or female connotations, all are addressed as male. Further, there is a deep set attitude that is tied to positions, particularly, positions of authority, seniority and gender. The language used for what is male, position and authority becomes synonymous. However, Sabatier (2007) expresses the view that the lowest level implementers do have the power to upset the goals of top level leadership. It is therefore the view of Rodrigue, et al., (2009, p. 297) that "communication and coordination need to be on the same wavelength" and additionally, it is important that the premises of practice and theory are well-matched. This will facilitate policy dissemination, interpretation and implementation.

An area of malaise is to do with levels of information sharing that should extend to Parents/Teachers' Association and the School Monitoring Committee. For some schools, these groups either exist only in name or they do not exist at all. It is through such groups that parents and community can be alerted to their roles regarding their children's learning. As suggested by Dempster (2009, p. 10) maintaining a "strong evidence base" and sharing information supports the development of a shared moral purpose". However, Pont, et al., (AITSL, 2008, p. 17) suggests that "effective school leadership may not reside exclusively in formal positions but may instead be distributed across a number of individuals in the school". Bybee's model of enacting education reform is presented in the next section.

The Five Ps Model

The Five Ps model is based on Bybee's (1997a, p. 28) "framework for describing and analysing reform initiatives" which includes: purpose, policy, programs, practice and performance:

> Purpose includes aims, goals and rationale. Statement of purpose is universal and abstract. Policy is more specific statements of standards. Policy statements are concrete translations of the purpose. Programs are the actual materials that are based on policies and developed to achieve the stated purpose. Practice is based on educators' understanding of the purpose, objectives, curriculum, school, students and their strengths as a teacher. [Performance is assessment that assists in the evaluation of what has been learnt]. (p. 28)

The model adopts a systems wide approach to policy implementation. The relevance of Bybee's (2003) framework to the Ghanaian situation lies in the objective of the study to investigate the level of coherence and consistency in the various roles with the purpose of the system wide education policy implementation. To implement policies, through programs that reform practice and performance, a number of implementation goals have to be achieved. Consequently, the Researcher has drawn on Bybee's (2003) goals within the context of education policy reform implementation to examine the extent to which the Ghana Education Service (GES) has functioned effectively in achieving its implementation goals.

Bybee's (2003) framework presents a strategy for an educational, system's-wide policy implementation. The framework (Table 2.1) appears to be linear however; the many layers of the framework are anything but linear. The approach to implementation can run both top-down and bottom-up with one level informing the next and thereby leading to a deeper interpretation of goals. Additionally, (Bybee, Ferrini-Mundy, & Loucks-Horsley, 2010, p. 326) suggest that "monitoring, and adjusting policies, programs and practices", pervades all the other dimensions of the framework. The assertion about the place of evaluation is consistent with the view of Rodrigue, et al., that to ensure effective reform of policy and programs so that standards can be met, "evaluation is built into all the stages of the policy process" (2009, p. 298) Table 2.1 presents Bybee's (1997b, 2003) strategic framework for standards-based reform:

Table 2.1: Strategic framework for standards-based reform

Dimensions	Goals	
Dissemination Goal	Developing awareness	Getting the word out
Interpretation Goal	Increasing understanding and Support	Getting the idea
Implementation	Changing policies, programs	Getting the job

Goal	and practices	done
Evaluation Goal	Monitoring and adjusting policies, programs and practices	Getting it right
Revision Goal	Improving the efficacy and influence of standards	Doing it all again

Source: (Bybee, 2003, p. 23, 6)

To ensure effective policy implementation a number of goals have to be achieved in relation to dissemination, interpretation, implementation, evaluation and revision of policy. Considering the roles embedded within the GES system, the current research investigated these objectives as derived from Bybee (2003) in Table 2.1:

Dissemination Goal: [How did key personnel of the Ghana Education Service (GES)], get the word out [about the Education Reform?]

Interpretation goal: [How did GES] get the idea?

Implementation goal: [How did GES] get the job done?

Evaluation goal: [Has GES carried out evaluations?]

Revision goal: [Has GES made any revisions to more effectively implement the policy?] (p. 23)

The framework below is a way to conceptualize policy implementation and its impact, ultimately, on learning outcomes through achieving the implementation goals (Table 2.1). Figure 2.9 presents the conceptual framework which encapsulates Bybee's (2003) idea of policy implementation which guided the current study:

Conceptual Framework of Policy Implementation
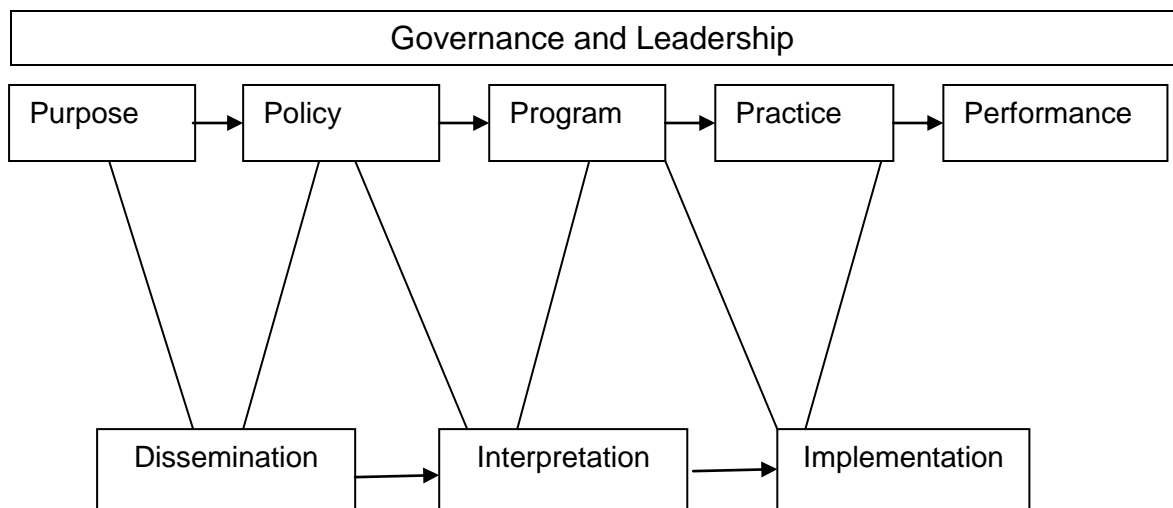
Figure 2.9: Conceptual framework of policy implementation

The current research investigates the implementation of policy to support reform initiatives in Ghana. It investigated the effectiveness of education policy implementation and how this has impacted on education reform in one rural district of the Ghana Education Service directorate in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The conceptual

framework (Figure 2.9) therefore highlights key stages and processes of disseminating, interpreting and implementing policy through programs initiated to reform practice and performance.

Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter related to the historical highlights of education reforms in Ghana. Also reviewed were education policy implementation literature, education administration and leadership approaches as well as applications of different leadership approaches within the GES. The review included the five Ps model as well as the conceptual framework for the study. The next chapter presents the methodology of the research study.

CHAPTER THREE:
METHODS

Introduction

The research employed a case study approach to investigate the implementation of education reform in one rural district in Ghana. The methodological approach selected for the study was designed to reveal key stakeholders and educational leaders' experience of the reform at school, district, region and national levels.

The use of an interpretive approach was an attempt to understand and interpret the different perceptions of the phenomena of a failing school system where there were significant differences between the vantage points of head teachers, circuit supervisors, senior officers, the teaching profession and the community. These multiple perspectives allowed for different interpretations of the social reality by different groups.

The first section of this chapter outlines the research approach taken for this study. Detailed justification is included of the chosen epistemology and methodology. The second section of this chapter outlines in detail the data collection and analysis procedures used in this study.

Research Approach

Understanding the effectiveness of Education Reform requires not only the employment of a general conceptual framework and theories but also methods for understanding what is particular and unique about the system of education. The conceptual framework for the study (Figure 2.9) therefore highlights how policy ideas and expectations are disseminated, interpreted and implemented and evaluated. Sabatier (2007) argues that a conceptual framework should bring together the best of the top-down and bottom-up approaches. This idea links with the current and on-going decentralisation policy within the Ministry of Education in Ghana. The decentralisation policy brings into focus the top-down education administrative structure of the current education sector in contrast with the bottom-up participatory structure of the local government arrangement of the District Assembly (Ghana News Agency, 2011, February 26). As expressed by Birkland (2010):

> The top-down approach is best where there is a dominant program that is well structured. By contrast the bottom-up approach is best where one is interested in the dynamics of local implementation and where there is no single dominant program. One begins by analysing rather diffuse lowest-level behaviour rather than focused top-down activity. Because of this diffuse behaviour, gathering the needed data to tell the implementation story can be challenging, as multiple sources must be consulted and analysed. (p. 271)

Additionally, Sabatier (2007) is of the view that gathering data poses challenges when the Researcher has to include lowest-level behaviour as well as focused, top-down activity. This involved interviews with key personnel at national, regional, district and school levels who were involved with policy development as well as those with responsibilities for policy implementation.

The research approach employed for this project was determined by the research questions, the conceptual framework for the research activity and the methods developed to collect and interpret data. The approach selected to investigate the complex issue of implementing educational reforms was a qualitative case study approach with its interpretivist epistemology.

Interpretivist Epistemology

The purpose of a particular piece of research determines the mode of inquiry, and consequently the "set of basic beliefs that guides action" (Guba, 1990, p. 17; Lincoln & Guba, 2011). The two main paradigms that form the basis of research in the social sciences are the quantitative and qualitative approaches. The major differences between these approaches are in their underlying beliefs and assumptions in terms of either being a positivist or anti-positivist paradigm (Willis, Willis, Muktha, & Nilakanta, 2007).

A positivist paradigm lends itself to an approach that relies exclusively on what can be observed (Denzin, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). This paradigm begins with the assumption that an objective reality exists separate from subjective human knowledge, and that an objective reality can be understood through a scientific method of enquiry. Positivists believe in cause and effect; one thing leads to the other. According to Willis, et al., (2007, p. 6) "the interpretivist theoretical perspective on the other hand, is a reaction to positivism, which maintains the worldview that what we see around us is a creation of the mind". However, the interpretivist assumes that what is real is constructed by people through their social understanding and experiences. This approach privileges subjectivity over objectivity and examines multiple experiences and shared meanings held among groups of people. Furthermore, Creswell (2009), suggests that the way the interpretivist Researcher and informants interact, their dialogue, and the context are critical aspects of data that influence the meaning that is constructed.

The interpretivist epistemology advocated for this study is based on a constructivist perspective, which postulates that knowledge claims are made through interpretations and therefore the judgments and conclusions that are drawn by different participants and Researchers will vary (Willis, et al., 2007). The interpretivist approach used in the current study draw on the different perceptions of the phenomena from the vantage

points of head teachers, circuit supervisors, senior officers, the teaching profession and the community. These multiple perspectives enabled the Researcher to develop rich insights into the education reform initiatives, and to triangulate perspectives thus ensuring the confirmability of findings.

Case Study Methodology

Creswell (2009) explains that the strength of case studies is that they employ detailed, in-depth data collections from different sources. Data derived from such sources are usually rich in contextual information (Flyvbjerg, 2006). These underlying assumptions were met by the use of a questionnaire, open ended interviews, focus group discussions and analysis of policy documents for the study. Data generated from cases can be used for description, to generate theory or test theory. The study investigated the Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education policy as well as the Education Reform of 2007 and its implications for junior high schools (JHS) in a district of Ghana.

Yin (2009) is of the view that the skill and competence of the Researcher gives credibility to the study and suggests that Researchers take advantage of their expert knowledge to advance the analysis. The Researcher brought practical knowledge of the current junior high school environment in Ghana and considerable insider knowledge. This provided an advantage in examining the current issues facing the Ghana Education Service (GES). The Researcher had considerable professional experience as a teacher in the GES and had taught in both advantaged and disadvantaged schools. The Researcher had leadership experience after being a headmistress of a basic school for six years. During this period, she was chairperson of the District Association of head teachers and served on the District Education Disciplinary Committee. She also served in the Educational Directorate as public relations officer and Guidance and Counselling Coordinator for three years. Her research background includes a Master of Philosophy in Educational Administration. According to Creswell (2009), the insider experience of the Researcher is a great strength of this research paradigm, because the Researcher shares some knowledge with participants, while also having knowledge outside of the group as the Researcher. In this sense, the Researcher had a better understanding of the phenomena she is studying than if she was only an insider, or only an outsider. The Researcher made assertions about the current situation by interpreting the views of the respondents. The conclusions the Researcher has reached are based on the data gathered and the interpretations made. Denscombe (2007) suggests that precautions be taken as an insider to ensure that preconceived prejudices did not overly influence data interpretations. The Researcher's use of multiple data sources to cross-check

information gained from interviews with key personnel at national, regional and district levels of the education system ensured the credibility of information gained.

Research Rigour in Qualitative Research

It is clear that qualitative data need to be tested for trustworthiness (Fenton & Mazulewicz, 2008; Gary, 2006). Denzin, et al., (2011) identify credibility, transferability and dependability as key aspects of the trustworthiness of qualitative data. In testing for credibility of findings, the question as to whether the data really represents and means what it claims should always be in mind. Corroboration of all the approaches makes a case study report more convincing. However, Gary (2006, p. 22) suggests that "validation is more than corroboration; it is a process for developing sounder interpretations of observations".

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) consider that triangulation assists the elimination of bias so as to obtain trustworthy data. Furthermore, the process of triangulation is facilitated with the use of multiple data sources to cross-check information gained from, for example interviews with key personnel at national, regional and district levels of an education system.

Creswell (2006) and Creswell, Vicki, and Plano (2008) share the view that when contrasting methods of data collection produce similar results, credibility and dependability are instilled in the findings. Additionally, Flyvbjerg (2006) suggests that the use of a tape-recorder removes another aspect of bias as accurate transcripts rather than summary notes can be taken. Further, qualitative Researchers can ensure trustworthiness through member checks which enable the Researcher to not just play back what the research participant said, but to "clarify and interpret the significance of their self understanding in ways that the participant may not have been able to make meaning" (Tuckett, 2005, p. 30). Flyvbjerg (2006) affirms that member checks ensure appropriate interpretation of the data has been made. To further ensure objective interpretation of data, Flyvbjerg (2006) suggests peer review of data and data interpretations through reading and critiquing. Such critiques from academic supervisors and fellow PhD candidates confronted this Researcher on choices and data interpretations as a further step in strengthening data trustworthiness in this thesis.

ixed Methods Research

Three different approaches to research suggested by Bryman (2006) are: quantitative; qualitative and mixed methods. Additionally, mixed methods is defined by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 17) as "the class of research, where the Researcher mixes or

combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study". Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 15) point out that "mixed methods as a paradigm has the advantage of drawing from the strengths and reducing the weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative approaches instead of replacing them", as it encapsulates the strengths of the two traditions.

As in all research methodologies, there is need for alignment of rationale with the use of the particular method. Bryman's (2006, p. 111) suggestion, supported by Tuckett (2005), was that when rationale and use are not aligned the result is the possibility of generating data "which are highly unlikely to shed light on the topic of interest".

Among points to be considered prior to the use of mixed methods would be whether to choose to work within a dominant paradigm or not. Secondly, Creswell (2006) suggests that the Researcher needs to consider whether to conduct the phases simultaneously or sequentially. In collecting data sequentially, the Researcher allows one phase to contribute to data collected in the next. Creswell, et al., (2008) believe that Researchers cannot always find everything they need to discover by using only one research approach. However, Silverman (2011) is of the view that Researchers should not presume that simply combining methods and aggregating data yields a more complete picture, or increased reliability.

A mixed methods research design that was largely qualitative was used in the current study to probe further into the issue of education reform implementation, by gaining insight into perspectives and attitudes of key informants. Interviews, policy documents, focus group discussions, and a questionnaire were among the multiple data sources used for the study. The interviews allowed educational leaders and stakeholders to be better positioned to articulate their views about the implementation of reform initiatives. The focus group discussions and the open-ended questions gave the circuit supervisors and head teachers a chance to express their opinions in their schools and mention issues that they wished to discuss.

Study Sample and Sampling Procedures

In Ghana, the administrative structures that support education and the governance of programs in schools are the Ministry of Education and the GES. These two administrative structures and the geographical region of the Upper West and its district, Sissala East, set the boundaries for this case study. The typical rich, qualitative, descriptive case study approach gave the Researcher the data needed to understand the complex factors and relationships that are impacting on effective delivery of programs in schools within this district of Ghana. The case study required purposive

selection of key personnel from the GES taking account of the very hierarchical, top-down organisational structure (Figure 3.1).

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │        Ministry of Education         │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
                                    │
                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │     Ghana Education Service (GES)    │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
                                    │
                       ┌────────────────────────────┐
                       │      GES, Headquarters      │
                       └────────────────────────────┘
                                    │
                                    ▼
                       ┌────────────────────────────┐
                       │    GES, Upper West Region   │
                       └────────────────────────────┘
                                    │
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                       ┌────────────────────────────┐
                       │   GES, Sissala East District │
                       └────────────────────────────┘
                                    │
                                    ▼
                          ┌──────────────────────┐
                          │     Five Circuits     │
                          └──────────────────────┘
                                    │
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                          ┌──────────────────────┐
                          │        36 JHSs        │
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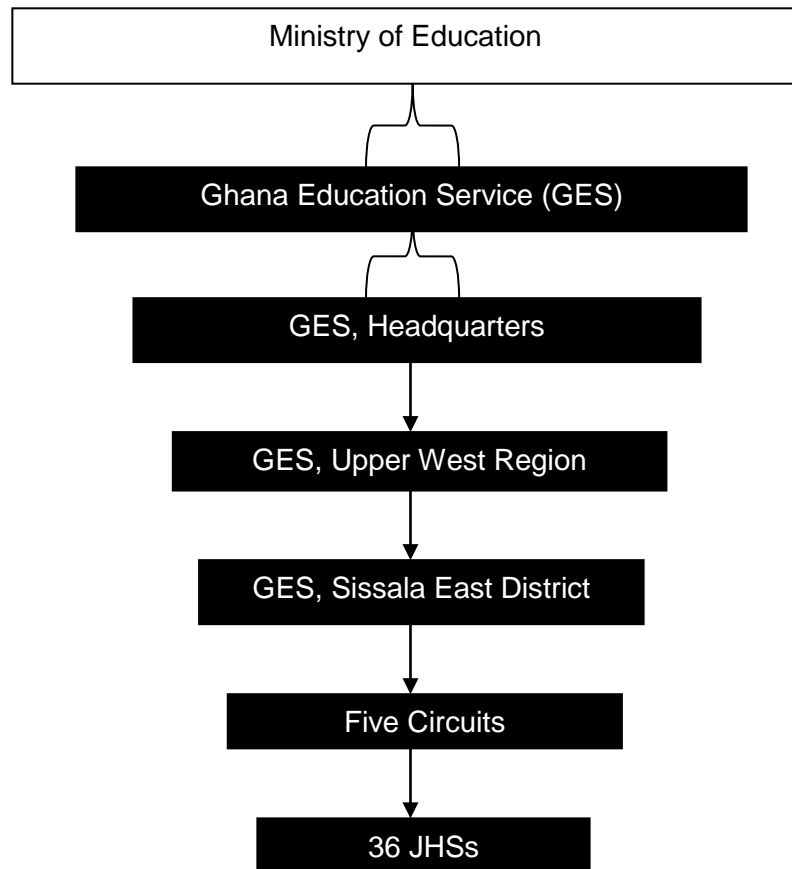
Figure 3.1: The boundaries of the case study

The boundaries of the case study include one senior official from the GES
Headquarters, one from the GES regional office, and eight officers from the district
office who were selected to represent central, regional and district perspectives of the
GES. Stakeholders in education within the Sissala East District of the Upper West
Region of Ghana were also purposively sampled for the study for an in-depth interview.
These stakeholders were highly informed, local people with affiliations to the Ghanaian
education system. Additionally, they offered a variety of insider and independent
perspectives on the local education policies. All 36 public JHS head teachers of the
District were included in the study. Head teachers were included because research
evidence **"**shows leadership as the second strongest influence on student learning
after classroom teachers" (Hattie, 2003, October; Leithwood, et al., 2006). Even though
the respondents seemed few, the boundaries of the case study was purposively set to
include participants capable of sharing insight into the quality of the change process as
experienced by these respondents (Appendix C). The questionnaire sought
background information about the head teachers, their schools, teachers, curriculum,
and factors that impacted on teaching and learning service provision. Additionally, the
research investigated the influence of the Free, Compulsory, Universal Basic Education

(FCUBE) policy and the 2007 Education Reform. A summary of participants in the case study is presented in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Distribution of case study participants: sample size 50

Key personnel interviewed
Ghana Education Service: Divisional Head :Director, Basic Education (1) Regional Director of Education (1) District Director of Education (1) Deputy Director, Human Resource Management and Development (1) Deputy Director, Supervision (1) Circuit Supervisors (5) Head teachers (36) **Stakeholders:** District Chief Executive (1) Ghana National Association of Teachers, Secretary (1) Teacher Educator (College Principal) (1) Parent/Teacher Association, representative (1)

Focus group discussions with the head teachers explored findings from their questionnaires in some detail and sought to corroborate findings from the questionnaire data. The focus groups provided a forum for debate, negotiation of meaning and potential reconciliation thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the rich data generated. The focus group with Circuit Supervisors was conducted after the focus groups with the head teachers so that the Researcher was informed about the head teachers' concerns and these could be explored with the Circuit Supervisors.

The District Chief Executive (DCE) was the highest authority at the level of District administration. The DCE has overall responsibilities for the GES in the District and therefore had a contribution to make in the investigation of the implementation of reform initiatives.

The Secretary of the Ghana National Association of Teachers' represented the professional association of teachers and was therefore able to provide objective feedback on the appropriate ways to address issues of Ghanaian educational policy reform. As an independent person, his perspective of the implementation of the reform initiatives offered another dimension to the current study.

The teacher educator (College of Education Principal) also informed the Researcher about how Reform 2007 was implemented and what difference the policy made to teacher education.

The Parent Teacher Association representative was another independent commentator outside the GES to share comments on factors that affected students doing well in the BECE. He was able to provide a parent's perspective about the reform implementation process. Additionally, data aggregation has protected the identity of senior officials.

Instrumentation

Three types of instruments were developed and used to collect data in the current study. First of the instruments was a 29 item questionnaire for the 36 head teachers. The second of the instruments was a focus group discussion guide for both head teachers and circuit supervisors. The third type of instrument was a set of semi-structured interview questions for each of the nine leaders who were engaged in an in-depth interview.

The questionnaire

The rationale of the questionnaire was rooted in the conceptual framework and the research questions. The questionnaire was administered and completed by head teachers to gather information about what was happening in the schools, with teachers, the curriculum, and with factors that impact on the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, head teachers' perspectives of the influence of FCUBE and the 2007 Education Reform on their school were sought. The questionnaire was structured into five sections as follows:

Section A: The biographical details of each head teacher, consisted of five items. These items provided information about the capacity of the head teachers for leadership of the implementation of reform initiatives.

Section B: The details of each school consisted of four items. Respondents indicated their school's enrolment details as reflected in their school attendance registers. They also reported facilities that were available in their schools. The four items offered background data about school size, and available resources.

Section C: The curriculum consisted of two items. Respondents ticked boxes to indicate the subjects taught in their junior high school. The second part required them to describe in their own words the kind of educational services provided in their schools. Curriculum reform appears to be one initiative with great potential to influence student performance.

Section D: The schools' teachers consisted of four items. Respondents supplied information about teachers. They were required to indicate gender and whether they taught full-time or part-time and their qualifications. A third part sought information

about the number of teachers who were upgrading their qualifications. Head teachers were also asked to tick a box if in-service training for teachers had been available during the previous academic year 2009. Based on the response, the next question asked for details of the in-service training received. Thus, *Section D* gave background information on the calibre of personnel teaching in the District's JHSs.

Section E: Teaching and learning, also had four parts to it. A Likert Scale was used for respondents to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with statements about teaching and learning. There was a second scale to indicate the extent to which stated factors limited the quality of teaching and learning. The third part was a scale about the extent to which the quality of teaching of the various subjects caused concern. The final part to *Section E* required respondents to tick boxes indicating the medium of instruction in the year levels and whether this was of concern. This gave a picture of the factors impacting on the quality of teaching.

Section F: The Reform Initiatives section comprised nine items. Respondents indicated the extent to which cost prevented parents from sending children to school. The second part was a scale in which respondents indicated the progress made in implementing the latest reform initiatives in their schools. The third item required the respondents to state specific initiatives taken to encourage student attendance at their schools. The fourth item required respondents to indicate whether their school was inspected or not and the year of the last inspection if any. The fifth item asked about the process by which information about the reform was communicated to schools. The sixth and seventh items asked about the support GES provided to schools for implementation of reform initiatives. The last two items required respondents to describe in their own words any barriers to attempts at implementing the reform initiatives in their schools (see Appendix D for questionnaire).

Focus group questions

The focus group discussions focused on identifying difficulties faced by schools regarding the adequate preparation of students for the BECE exams and impacts of the FCUBE and Education Reform 2007 initiatives.

Analysis of the head teachers' questionnaires informed the further development of the questions used in the head teachers focus group discussions and the focus group with circuit supervisors. The focus group questions explored the implementation and impact of the FCUBE and the Education Reform of 2007 (see Appendix E for focus group questions).

In-depth Interview questions

The rationale for the in-depth interview questions is also rooted in the conceptual framework and the research questions. As a result of the interest in how policy implementation goals were to be achieved, these questions were based on the concepts of policy dissemination, interpretation and implementation in relation to policies, programs and practice. These questions were refined after the analysis of the focus group discussions with the JHS head teachers and circuit supervisors in the District. The issues that were explored in the individual interviews focused on the adequate preparation of students for the BECE exams and the difficulties faced by schools in this regard. The interviews also discussed the implementation and impact of the FCUBE and Education Reform 2007 (see Appendix G for in-depth interview questions).

Pilot Study

A pilot survey was conducted to test the questionnaire, using three volunteer head teachers and a second pilot test was conducted of the interview questions with a focus group of five participants outside the study sample. These pilot studies were considered necessary in order to establish the effectiveness of the instruments in terms of both the content and process of administration. After obtaining responses from the pilot studies, the suitability and content of the research instruments were verified. The results showed the appropriateness of the questions and the type of responses expected from the interview schedules. The pilot also provided the Researcher with valuable experience in conducting interviews and focus groups.

Procedure

Four main forms of data collection were used in this study, namely; document analysis, questionnaires, focus groups and interviews. Field trips were made to all the circuits and offices to negotiate access prior to the actual field work and to prepare the ground for the questionnaires, focus group discussions and the interviews. Respondents were given assurance that all research data would be confidential. The data collection period covered the second and third terms of the 2009/2010 school year in Ghana.

Document Analysis

According to Creswell (2006), documents can be used for gathering information in mixed methods designs. These documents complement and foster elaboration of results from other methods. All organisations involved in this research stored their documents in both paper and digital formats. Existing Government policy documents including sectoral and national reports and circulars helped the Researcher to

investigate policy settings and implementation expectations. Research findings of education-related non-governmental Associations and Research Centres (Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity) were consulted. Media commentaries and releases were additional sources of evidence since information of this sort was often current and very much addressed the burning issues of the day. Aspects of these documents were compared and contrasted for purposes of extracting major themes (Byrne, 2001). These themes have been incorporated as supporting evidence in the current research. According to Scott (2006, p. 297) "the inference of meaning is possible only by relating the text to some other frame of reference and entering into a dialogue with the text". The researcher's frame of reference became the springboard from which main ideas that emerged from each document source were subjected to textual analysis .

Questionnaires

Walen and Fraenkel (2001) consider questionnaires to be efficient for collecting data from large groups of subjects in a form that is easy to analyse. Questionnaires that call for short responses are known as restricted, structured or close-ended. A questionnaire has the potential to elicit important information with regards to the personal views of the respondents. Unstructured qualitative questionnaires consisting of open-ended items are generally used for smaller sample sizes. Creswell (2009) is of the view that this type of questionnaire has the advantage of allowing respondents to express how they feel about the situation as it exists in a descriptive manner. Open format questions call for a free response in the respondents' own words.

The questionnaire used in this study comprised mainly closed items supplemented with a small number of open items. The Researcher met each JHS head teacher involved in the study to deliver and pick up and completed questionnaires. To ensure a high return rate, the Researcher stayed on in the remote schools and waited on the head teachers to complete their questionnaire and have them returned. Only one head teacher failed to return his questionnaire.

Focus Groups

Recent research (Cheng, 2007) reveals that gathering data through focus group interviews is a common method for collecting qualitative data in academic fields. A focus group discussion allows the Researcher to hear a range of opinions. Cheng (2007) expresses the view that the number of discussants per group should be between five and 12 because there is a correlation between the number of people involved in a focus group discussion and the amount and quality of collected data. The strategy of a focus group discussion is intended to minimise interviewer effect found

with one-on-one interviews which can sometimes be over-bearing and intimidating. It also provides an opportunity for vital information that might be left unsaid in a preliminary interview schedule, to be captured at the level of the focus group discussion.

Creswell, et al., (2008) are of the view that focus group interviews have the advantage of producing rich data from a large number of individuals quickly. Fallon (2002), suggests that focus group discussion allows a process of member checking, debate, negotiation of meaning and potential reconciliation. Further, views generated from the discussion can be tested for validity. Focus groups were used to obtain opinions about what the key stakeholders and educational leaders considered as being the most appropriate ways of reforming policy, programs and educational leadership and administration so that educational standards can be enhanced. The Researcher brought ideas that surfaced from the questionnaires and preliminary interviews to the focus group for discussion. The focus group discussion explored the findings in some detail and checked findings for a consensus of opinions on individual points of view. This enhanced the trustworthiness of the rich data generated.

There were seven focus groups conducted in this project, and of these, five comprised a group of six head teachers, one a group of five head teachers and one was a group of five circuit supervisors. The focus groups with head teachers were completed before the circuit supervisors' focus group. This arrangement enabled discussion at the level of circuit supervisors to be enriched by the findings from the head teachers. The circuit supervisors' focus group identified difficulties they faced in communicating reform initiatives to the head teachers. Most of the head teachers' focus groups were at locations of their choice which were central to their schools. However, focus group of circuit supervisors was at the District Office. All discussions were digitally recorded.

Data from focus group discussions were richer than the questionnaire data and corroborated the survey data. This was a check on reliability and internal consistency of the data. The interviews were conducted after the completion of the questionnaires and focus groups.

Interviews

Interviews are a useful method for obtaining in-depth information from the individuals' viewpoint. The advantage of interviews lies in their detailed investigative abilities. The data collection matrix in this project identified who had the information that was needed (see Appendix C). There are two main types of interviews: structured and unstructured (Walen & Fraenkel, 2001). The structured interview requires the interviewer to ask questions in the exact way they are worded. This facilitates data analysis as questions

in all interviews are the same. There are also semi-structured interviews in which the interviewer varies questions to suit the particular interview subjects and uses further questions to solicit further explanation from the interviewee. The unstructured approach was used in this study because the flexibility allowed interview questions to be raised in a way that was meaningful to the interviewees.

Altogether, nine key informants participated in an in-depth interview to further elaborate on current events and to ascertain their understanding of purpose which defines what is to be improved; policy which outlined the strategy for improvement; programs that put policy into actions; practice that improved students' learning; and, progress in learning which provides a measure of performance. They were asked to explain the extent to which there was coherence in national purpose, policy and program. Key informants for the in-depth interviews consisted of the six preliminary interviews with leaders and stakeholders followed by interviews with three senior GES personnel. These three senior GES personnel included Director, Basic Education at the level of central administration. Next on the hierarchy was Regional Director of Education who is head of regional level administration and then the District Director of Education who was head of district level administration. These additional interviews were for the purpose of comparing data through triangulation, getting corroboration and validation of the preliminary findings from survey data, focus group discussions and the preliminary interviews, and identifying different perspectives. The choice of locations for the different interviews was determined by what was convenient to the informants. The in-depth interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim to enhance the credibility of the data collection procedure (Tuckett, 2005).

Data Analysis

Data were analysed to assess the roles that key personnel in GES played at the various levels of educational administration and other factors that impacted on the implementation of the policy. Data from the following sources were analysed: documents; questionnaires; and, transcripts of head teachers and circuit supervisors' focus groups as well as transcripts of interviews of key personnel.

The approach taken for the three types of questionnaire items: objective items where respondents selected from provided responses; scale items; and open-ended questions. For instance the first question of the questionnaire about location of JHSs, involves two locations; that is, either 'Tumu Central' or 'Outside Tumu'. This yielded nominal data to which the Researcher assigned the code one for 'Tumu Central' and the code two for 'Outside Tumu'. Responses to scale items were assigned a score corresponding to the response to the scale. This enabled mean item and scale scores

to be calculated. Appendix H presents a comprehensive coding guide for the quantitative data analysis. Questionnaire answers were categorised and recorded in PASW version 18, generating descriptive statistics and summary categories. These were generated as frequencies and percentages. The head teachers' responses to open-ended questions were grouped into categories and the frequency and percentage of responses in each category were calculated.

The interviews and focus groups were digitally recorded and later transcribed in full. The analysis began by reading and re-reading the discussion transcripts. In this way the Researcher became more familiar with the data, and could recognise the general themes as they began to emerge. The main ideas emerging from each source were compared and contrasted for purposes of extracting major themes. Three themes captured the predominant issues raised in the focus groups regarding perspectives on policy implementation to support reform initiatives these were: accessibility to education; barriers to quality education; and, building teacher capacity.

The method of analysis is consistent with the view of Punch (2005), Glaser (1999) and Silverman (2011) who suggest organising excerpts from the transcripts into categories and searching for patterns and connections within the categories to identify themes. During this process, the volume of data was reduced, enabling the Researcher to focus more on the main themes. However, additional themes emerged from the interviews as informants raised further ideas about what impacts effective implementation of reform initiatives. As a result, additional themes were developed. For example, in the discussion with the District level stakeholders monitoring, supervision and communication emerged as important themes.

During the process of data analysis, the Researcher also made notes and recorded her thoughts as she identified common concepts within the data and as she recognised links between ideas (Miles & Huberman, 2002). These notes helped in formulating themes and making sense of the data.

Creswell (2009) suggests member checking as a method of validating the accuracy of data interpretations, some stakeholders were later contacted to ensure that the data summaries accurately therefore reflected their opinions.

Table 3.2 shows the method of data collection based on the research questions and the particular data analysis used.

Table 3.2: Data Analysis Plan

Data collection and analysis procedures		
Research Questions	Method of Data Collection	Data Analysis
1. What is the status of the quality of education in JHSs in the Sissala East District of Ghana?	Questionnaire	Data coding and descriptive statistics
	Policy documents and reports	Document analysis
	Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews	Thematic analysis
	Policy documents and reports	Document analysis
2. What impact has Reform 2007 had on the quality of education?	Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews	Thematic analysis
	Reports	Document analysis
3. What factors have impacted on the implementation of reform initiatives?	Focus group discussion and in-depth interviews	Thematic analysis

Key findings and assertions were used to summarise findings as they emerged and to document data interpretations. The key findings and assertions provide an audit trail linking data, data summaries and data interpretations to the conclusions.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics clearance was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee at Edith Cowan University and the head of the Education Directorate at the Sissala East District, Ghana, to administer the questionnaires and to conduct the focus group discussions and interviews on appropriate days and times. A cover letter was attached to the questionnaire for the convenience of the respondents. All participants who indicated willingness to contribute to the focus group discussions and the nine key officers who did the face-to-face interviews were assured of anonymity. Written

permission, containing description of the study and the right of withdrawal were obtained from all participants.

Additionally, prior to each interview, the Researcher re-stated the rationale of the research study and assured informants of confidentiality. Furthermore, permission was sought from participants to record the conversation by using a tape recorder. The recording enabled the Researcher to describe accurately what transpired during the interviews in order to eliminate bias. Further, as Cohen, et al., (2007) suggest, the participants were made aware that the research report could be accessed locally and abroad. To ensure that the, top executives included in the study such as the District Chief Executive and Director, Basic Education could not be identified their data were reported in aggregate form. In reporting data, the Researcher has indicated who the informants are but it is not possible for the reader to track which comments were made by particular informants. In this way the Researcher has maintained the level of anonymity required by ethics.

In appreciation of the participants' time and involvement in the interviews, each was given a small gift. This supports DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree's (2006) concept of acknowledging contributions that informants make towards the success of the research activity. The basis for this exchange is respect for the participants' time and efforts and the risk of exploitation.

Summary

In conclusion, the chapter has established that a case study research was the preferred choice for the investigation into the implementation of education reform initiatives. Underpinned by a constructivist epistemology and informed by the interpretivist paradigm, a mixed-methods but largely qualitative approach grounded the research in the social reality and everyday actions of the participants. Through the use of a questionnaire, focus groups and semi-structured interviews, quantitative and qualitative data were gathered about the experiences of the informants. While the limitations of qualitative research are acknowledged this study has also capitalised on the strengths associated with this method of inquiry. This allowed for an insider's view of the lived realities of key personnel of the education service. The next chapter presents the background data from the head teachers' questionnaire and focus group discussions.

CHAPTER FOUR:
HEAD TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

This chapter presents the background data from the head teachers' questionnaire and the head teachers' focus group discussions held in the Sissala East District in Ghana (January and February, 2010). There are 36 junior high schools (JHS) in the Sissala East District, seven (22%) of these schools are in the Tumu circuit which has an urban setting, and 28 (78%) are outside Tumu, in a rural setting. All 36 JHS head teachers were surveyed and, of these, 35 completed and returned questionnaires giving a 97% return rate.

Background Data on Head Teachers

Demographic data are reported for head teachers in relation to: gender; age; teaching and headship experience; highest qualifications; and, professional learning.

Age and Experience

Most (91%) of the JHS head teachers in the study were men. The majority (77%) of head teachers were between the ages of 31 and 50 and only 17% were younger than 31 years. The age distribution of head teachers is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Age distribution of head teachers (n=35)

Age group	Number of head teachers	Per cent of head teachers
30 or less years	6	17
31 – 40 years	16	46
41 –50 years	11	31
51 or older	2	6
Total	35	100

Many head teachers (43%) have less than six years of teaching experience with two-thirds in their first year as a head teacher (Table 4.2). Less than half (46%) of the head teachers exceed 10 years of teaching experience and only six per cent exceed 10 years experience as a head teacher. A summary of head teachers' years of teaching and headship experience is presented in Table: 4.2.

Table 4.2: Teaching and headship experience of head teachers (n= 35)

Years of experience	Per cent of head teachers	
	Teaching experience	Years as head teacher
Less than one year	26	67
1 - 5 years	17	14
6 – 10 years	11	11
11 – 15 years	23	3
16 – 20 years	23	3

Head Teachers' Qualifications

Head teachers' qualifications are an important indicator of the preparation for their role. In Ghana the basic three year qualification is the Post-Secondary Certificate 'A' which is now being replaced by the Diploma in Basic Education (Teacher Education Division, GES, 2000). Those who do further study to become four year trained do a Post Diploma in Basic Education or a Bachelor in Education. The survey data indicate that the majority (54%) of these head teachers have three years of basic teacher education and 20% have a science degree without a teaching qualification. Only 26% have an additional professional qualification such as Post Diploma in Basic Education or Bachelor of Education. The summary of head teachers' highest qualification is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Head teachers' highest qualification (n=35)

Highest qualification	Number of head teachers	Per cent of head teachers
B.Ed.	2	6
Post DBE	7	20
B.Sc.	7	20
Post Sec Cert. 'A'/DBE	19	54
Total	35	100

Note. Post Sec Cert. 'A'/DBE = Post Secondary Certificate 'A'/Diploma in Basic Education. Post DBE = Post Diploma in Basic Education.

Head Teachers' In-service Training

As leaders of their schools it would be expected that head teachers would maintain the currency of their professional knowledge by participating in professional development workshops (Ghana Education Service, 2007). Of the 35 head teachers, 19 indicated they had not attended any in-service training last year. Very small numbers attended the five professional learning programs reported by the head teachers. The three that attracted most participation were the National Accelerated Language Program (six), lesson preparation and presentation (six) and HIV/AIDS training (five).

Background Data on Classroom Teachers

Head teachers reported demographic data about the teachers in their schools. They indicated that the majority of teachers are full–time (96%) and male (81%). Data about the teachers' qualifications and studies to upgrade qualifications are reported in this section.

Qualifications of Classroom Teachers

A majority (55%) of teachers have a three-year Post-Secondary Certificate 'A' or its upgraded equivalent of a Diploma in Basic Education and only eight per cent of the teachers have an additional professional qualification of Post Diploma in Basic Education or Bachelor in Education. Sadly, 34% of teachers in the District are untrained with no post-secondary qualifications. A summary of teachers' highest qualification is presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Classroom teachers' highest qualification

Category	Number of teachers	Per cent of teachers
B.Ed.	5	3
Post DBE	8	5
BA/B.Sc.	5	3
Post-Sec Cert 'A'/DBE	92	55
Untrained	56	34
Total	166	100

Staff development was one of the 2007 Education Reform Initiatives. Head teachers and classroom teachers are expected to participate in workshops as a way of updating their knowledge (Focus group at Bujan: 22.01.10). Teachers can upgrade their qualifications by distance learning programs (short courses during school holidays and weekends). The education strategic plan for Ghana considers "distance learning programs as providing further professional training for teachers in service" (Government of Ghana, 2003, p. 9).

Upgrading Qualifications

The data indicate that 51 of the 166 teachers are upgrading their qualifications which represent 31% of the teachers. Only 25 of the 56 untrained teachers were studying to gain the basic qualification of a Diploma in Basic Education. The numbers of male and female teachers updating their qualifications are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Number of male and female teachers upgrading their qualifications

Qualification	Male teachers	Female teachers	Total
Untrained to DBE	19	6	25
Cert 'A' to DBE	10	0	10
DBE to Post DBE	12	2	14
B.Ed./B.A. to Masters	2	0	2
Total	43	8	51

Key finding 4.2

Many of the classroom teachers were three year trained (55%) and eight per cent have additional higher professional qualification. Of concern is the fact that 34% of the teachers are untrained. Of the total 166 Junior High School teachers in the District, 31% are currently at various stages of upgrading their professional qualifications.

School Enrolments

School attendance has been a concern in Ghana and ensuring all children have a basic education is a goal of the Free, Compulsory Universal Education and the 2007 Education Reform policies. This section presents data about student enrolments in 2010; student: staff ratios; and factors affecting students' school attendance.

Enrolments and Student: Staff Ratios

Student attendance at school is important because it promotes effective learning. This leads to the attainment of set targets such as: completion of syllabus; arresting dropout rates in school; minimizing student absenteeism; and, encouraging punctuality (Focus group at Bugubelle: 29.01.10). The summary of enrolments at 35 junior high schools in each year group in 2010 is presented in Table: 4.6.

Enrolments in the first year at JHS are high and yet the figures in the third year at JHS are lower. Of the total student population of the 35 JHSs (2879) 59% are girls and 41% are boys. The number of girls declined from 737 in JHS first year to 393 in JHS third year.

Table 4.6: Student enrolments at 35 junior high schools in 2010 (n=35)

Gender	JHS 1	JHS 2	JHS 3	Total Enrolment
Girls	737	574	393	1704(59%)
Boys	434	455	286	1285(41%)
Total	1171	1029	679	2879

The decline in numbers could be due to two different causes: students leaving school that is attrition; or, the numbers of students commencing school in year one are progressively increasing. To further clarify the issue of drop out, supplementary data for a single cohort from 2007-2010 was obtained from the District Education Office. The cohort analysis (Table 4.7) shows for the group that entered year one in 2007 there was a high level of attrition; 37% for girls and 42% for boys. The two sets of data in Table 4. 6 and 4 .7 shows there is a high level of attrition that impacts on access to education.

Table 4.7: Cohort analysis of JHS I-III enrolments (2007 – 2010) in the Sissala East District (n=35)

Gender	JHS 1 2007/2008	JHS 2 2008/2009	JHS 3 2009/2010	Attrition rate
Girls	648	546	407	37%
Boys	543	428	314	39%
Total	1191	974	721	42%

Source: Ghana Education Service, Sissala East District, 2009

A total of 2879 JHS students are enrolled in the 35 schools, with an average school enrolment of 82. This means school populations are very small. The student: staff ratios indicate that there is an adequate number of teachers in the District. Student: staff ratios ranged from three up to 44. Student: staff ratios for Tumu and outside Tumu circuit schools are presented in Table 4.8:

Table 4.8: Comparison of student: staff: ratios for Tumu and outside Tumu circuit schools

	Student: teacher ratio			
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Tumu schools (N=7)	10	44	24	10.3
Out of Tumu schools (N=28)	3	38	14	7.9

Note. Tumu is a district capital. Tumu schools are in town and therefore in an urban setting. Out of Tumu schools are in rural settings and are village schools.

Educational staffing is related to school population (Interview at GES District office: 27.1.10) and policy directs that a teacher handles at least 35 students in a class except

in very remote situations. Classes are supposed to be combined where numbers are below 35 (Ghana Education Service, 2009). However, demographic data on school enrolments in rural schools reveal some classes having only four students in a class (Interview at Kunchogu: 05.02.10). Further, some urban schools have very large enrolments, with class sizes that range from 82 to over 100 students (Focus group at Tumu: 29.01.10). These large classes have a problem of limited space. Comparatively, head teachers reported low enrolment figures for most of the rural schools. Head teachers were of the view that having to handle such small class sizes was not challenging enough for the teacher. Views as expressed by head teachers, were based on the demands of regular monitoring of individual as well as whole class performance.

Factors Influencing School Attendance

The Sissala East District School Mapping Report of 2006 (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2009), which surveyed a random cross-section of children as to why they were out of school, suggests that there are nine main reasons for non-attendance: (1) I became pregnant; (2) I have to be a baby sitter; (3) I have to help my father on the farm; (4) I have to take care of the bullocks, coupled with migration practices of nomadic households; (5) I was forced into marriage; (6) My parents are dead; (7) My parents are divorced; (8) My parents cannot pay school fees; and, (9) My parents don't see the benefit of schooling.

Head teachers were asked to rate the extent to which various educational costs prevent parents from sending children to school. The survey data reveals that the two costs that affected most families were books and uniforms (Table 4.9). A head teacher revealed that some students are known to bring a single notebook that they use for all subjects simply because the student cannot afford a second one (Focus group at Welembele: 29.01.10).

Table 4.9: Head teachers' rating of the extent to which various costs prevent parents from sending children to school (n=35)

Cost of:	Number of head teachers giving this rating				Mean rating
	For no families	For some families	For many families	Not applicable	
Books	2	18	13	2	2.20
Uniform	1	24	9	1	2.17
Contributions towards school maintenance work	4	6	13	12	1.57
Exam fees	6	11	7		1.40
Contributions towards class/school celebrations	4	10	5	16	1.11
Contributions for Pre-Vocational or Pre- Technical lessons	4	4	6	21	0.85

Note. Ratings were scored: No families = 1, some families = 2 and Many families = 3.

Data from head teachers' focus group discussion indicated that some heads selected the not applicable response as they considered the Capitation Grant is expected to cover costs such as exam fees and other levies.

The following section summarises information about initiatives undertaken for improving school attendance as an effort to improve quality basic education.

Improving Attendance

Of the six initiatives for improving school attendance identified by the head teachers, the three most commonly implemented initiatives are: awareness raising of Parents/Teachers Association and School Management Committee, Capitation Grant; and, interventions from non-government organisations (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10: Initiatives for improving school attendance (n= 35)

Initiatives	Number
Awareness raising of Parents/Teachers Association/School Management Committee (PTA/SMC)	15
Capitation Grant	12
Interventions from non-government organizations (NGO) as motivational packages	10
Teaching/learning materials	5
Co-curricular activities	4
Extra classes	3

Three of the six initiatives were instigated by individual head teachers: awareness raising of Parents/Teachers Association and School Management Committee; co-curricular activities; and, extra classes. The Capitation Grant provided by the Ghana Education Service is an initiative for improving school attendance. This Grant takes care of school fees for all school children within the basic education sector. Data from focus group discussion reveal that students get motivated to attend school when teaching and learning materials are available (Focus group at Bujan: 22.01.10).

Non-government organisations also have programs for improving school attendance. The World Food Program provides take home ration for girls who maintain a minimum level of school attendance. The Catholic Relief Service helps with a school feeding program and also provides package for children who are really needy. The package consists of basic school needs such as school uniform, sandals, school bag, exercise books, maths set, pens and pencils (Focus group at Nabulo: 27.01.10).

Key finding 4.3

School sizes in the District are small with an average enrolment of 82 students. Student/staff ratios ranged from 44 to three which indicates that there is an adequate supply of teachers although not all are qualified. Many students who commence Junior High School do not complete the three years of schooling. Attrition rates are 9% over the three-year period. The financial constraints of parents is an issue influencing school attendance. Among initiatives supporting school attendance are the Capitation Grant and NGO interventions.

Teaching and Learning

Data are reported for head teachers' perception about the impact of various factors on the quality of teaching and learning; facilities and services at their schools; the extent to which the teaching of various subjects causes concern; the extent to which English is used as the medium of instruction; and, curriculum.

Of the six factors impacting on the quality of teaching and learning, the mean ratings recorded in Table 4.11 indicate teachers' content knowledge, English competence, knowledge of syllabus and adequacy of lesson preparation have the greatest impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The head teachers indicated that loss of teaching time did not have a large impact on teaching and learning.

Table 4.11: Head teachers' rating of the impact of various factors on the quality of teaching and learning (n=35)

	Factors	Large Positive Impact	Some Positive Impact	No Impact	Some Negative Impact	Large Negative Impact	Mean rating
1	Level of teachers' content knowledge makes a difference to students' learning.	22	13	0	0	0	4.62
2	Teachers' English competence is necessary for appropriate teaching skills.	22	12	1	0	0	4.60
3	Teachers' knowledge of syllabus and pedagogy is key to adequate lesson preparation.	20	15	0	0	0	4.57
4	Lack of preparation for lessons.	3	4	2	13	13	3.82
5	Loss of teaching time due to teacher distance learning program.	2	8	5	18	2	3.28
6	Loss of teaching time due to student involvement in out of school activities.	2	5	5	20	3	3.14

Note. Scoring of 5-1 accounts for positive items (1-3) and reversal of scores for negative items (4-6)

Facilities and Resources

Head teachers focus groups and observation data revealed that none of the 28 schools out of Tumu and most of the seven Tumu circuit schools had any staff common rooms and therefore teachers do not have an office to mark class exercises, revise their notes and conduct personal research when they are not teaching. Some of the teachers sit outside under trees in the fresh air on the school compound during their off duty period (Focus group at Nabulo: 27.01.10).

The head teachers were asked to rate the extent to which access to various resources limits the quality of teaching and learning. These data are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Head teachers' rating of the extent to which access to resources limits the quality of teaching and learning (n=35)

Factors	Large positive Impact	Some positive Impact	No Impact	Some negative Impact	Large negative Impact	Mean rating
Teachers access to textbooks and curriculum materials for teaching.	26	6	2	1	0	4.63
Students sit in classrooms for lessons	25	8	1	1	0	4.63
Adequate access to textbooks by students.	18	14	3	0	0	4.51
Students have access to potable water.	20	11	1	1	2	4.31
Supply of pencils, pens and notebooks for students.	14	16	2	2	0	4.11
Students have access to electricity.	10	16	3	2	4	3.74

Note. These are all positive items and the scoring of 5-1 has been used as weights.

The survey data revealed that head teachers believe that access to resources has a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The three factors that had the largest positive impact with a rating of greater than 4.5/5 were: teachers' access to textbooks and curriculum materials for teaching; students sit in classrooms for lessons; and, adequate access to textbooks for students.

The survey data revealed that 30 schools have their own rooms, three schools share rooms and two are under trees. A recent news item (Ghana News Agency, 2011, February 27) that mentioned that all schools under trees will be removed by 2012 substantiated the assertion of a head teacher about some schools in the District that are currently under trees. Head teachers are of the opinion that students sitting in a classroom for lessons makes a large positive impact rather than sitting under trees. Evidence of this situation is expressed by a head teacher in these words:

> On the issue of resources it is actually a serious matter, because if children have to sit under trees and sheds to learn certainly they can't concentrate well. Anything that passes by catches their attention. If they are in a well enclosed classroom they won't get easily distracted. (Focus group at Nabulo: 27/1/10)

Survey data further revealed that the need for potable (drinking water) water cannot be overemphasised. Tumu circuit schools had access to potable drinking water. In most outside Tumu circuit schools, students had to fetch water from sources very far away from the school. There is also loss of teaching time due to student involvement in out of school activities such as helping out with harvesting farm produce or some sporting activities.

Out of 35 schools, only 18 reported that they have library boxes. Even with those that had access to these reading facilities the majority complained of the reading materials not being stocked with relevant reference materials. None of these schools reported having a room designated for the purpose of reading.

None of the schools surveyed had access to a well equipped school laboratory and workshop for practical lessons. There is no practical teaching of Information and Communication Technology or pre-technical skills or science experiments; students therefore do not have a practical feel of lessons. A head teacher referred to the situation in these words:

> Some of the subjects need practical and technical equipment for practicals. You explain theoretically, and the child goes to the exam hall, he is asked to describe how an experiment is carried out, already, the child is at the first step into failure. (Focus group at Kunchogu: 5/2/10)

Guidance and Counselling services were available in 18 schools of the 35 schools. At some point in the past, each school had a school based Guidance and Counselling coordinator, but constant transfer of teachers have left some schools without one. A head teacher describes his perception of Guidance and Counselling as a service expected to be provided under the reforms.

> Each school is supposed to have a school based guidance and counselling coordinator. Among the many roles of the counsellor, time is actually spent guiding students in their choice of a program as to General Arts, Science, Visual, Technical or Vocational assessment of their interests and capabilities. For some of the schools no one is assigned to that role. (Focus group at Tumu: 05.04.10)

A summary of the extent to which English is used as the medium of instruction is presented in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Extent to which English is used as the medium of instruction (n=35)

Level	Taught in English only	Mixed English and vernacular	Vernacular only	Number of classes
JHS I	26	7	1	34
JHS II	29	2	2	33
JHS III	30	1	2	33
Total	85	10	5	100

The data in Table 4.13 show that most of the teaching at the sampled schools is through the medium of English. There is concern over the use of only vernacular in five classes. A head teacher refers to this situation as "a lack of foundation for literacy and numeracy skills" (Focus group at Welembele: 29.01.10). The summary of head teachers' perception of the extent to which the quality of teaching of the following subjects causes concern is presented in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Head teachers' rating of the extent to which the quality of teaching of the following subjects causes concern (n=35)

Quality of teaching in:	No concern	Some concern	Great concern	Mean rating
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	3	10	22	2.54
English Language	9	10	16	2.20
Mathematics	10	12	13	2.08
Ghanaian Language and Culture	2	11	16	2.05
Social Studies	11	14	10	1.97
General Science	9	10	12	1.85
Pre-Technical Skills	3	11	9	1.48
Pre- Vocational Skills	2	20	3	1.45
Religious and Moral Education	6	13	5	1.34
Physical Education	4	14	4	1.25
Music and Dance	2	5	5	0.77
Agricultural Science	5	4	3	0.62
Life Skills	2	3	1	0.31
French	2	2	0	0.17

Note: The scoring of 1-3 has been used as weights for above items.

The head teachers' ratings reported in Table: 4.14 indicate that there is considerable concern among head teachers about the quality of teaching of core subjects at the JHSs. At least one-third of head teachers have great concern about quality of teaching in English, Mathematics, Ghanaian Language, Social Studies and General Science. These are core subjects for the Basic Education Certificate Examinations, and they are taught in all schools at all year levels.

A Ghanaian language is reported as only taught in 15 of the 35 schools. Determination of which language to teach as the Ghanaian Language for the Basic Education

Certificate Examination subject, varies according to the location. As Sissala, the local language of the Tumu District, still lacks a written form, the Ghanaian Language taught as a Basic Education Certificate Examination subject is Dagaare, which does have a written form. As none of the District's teachers are trained to teach Dagaare, this is a concern (Focus groups at Tumu, Bujan & Welembele 2010). As a head teacher explained:

> Take Ghanaian Language which is to be implemented; Ghana has about 46 spoken languages. Only nine out of this total are written. The possibility of a Ghanaian child not understanding any of the nine written languages is very high. In my school most of us, we are Sissala. The Language written at Basic Education Certificate Examinations in this our Upper West Region is Dagaare. I don't understand Dagaare. The people to implement cannot be effective. So it is not practical. We are involved, but the effectiveness of our involvement is questionable. (Focus group at Bujan: 22.01.10)

The survey data revealed that Pre-vocational skills are taught in 20 schools and Pre-technical skills in 23 of the 35 schools. These are specialised subject areas and schools that do not have teachers for those areas fail to teach those subjects.

French is recorded as optional in the current Reform Policy (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2007b). Moreover, the teachers are not available so it is only taught in the two schools that happen to have teachers. Only two schools did not teach Information Communication Technology (ICT). All the schools teaching ICT could only do so in theory, as the Education Service has not supplied schools with computers and none of the schools have electricity. Teaching ICT merely in theory is explained by a head teacher in the following words:

> Many of these students have never seen a computer before [Teachers] are forced to do something [improvise] to represent something because students are going to write BECE in April 2010, only three months away. (Focus group at Welembele: 27.01.10)

This explains why 22 of the 35 head teachers expressed great concern about the teaching of Information and Communication Technology.

Key finding 4.4

Head teachers' rating of the impact of various factors on the quality of teaching and learning indicate teachers' content knowledge, English competence, knowledge of syllabus and adequacy of lesson preparation have the greatest positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Also in terms of resources the following had the greatest positive impact: teachers' access to textbooks and curriculum materials for teaching; students sit in classrooms for lessons; and, adequate access to textbooks by students.

There is considerable concern over the teaching of core subjects and Ghanaian Language. English is used as medium of instruction in most of the classes, though it is a concern that some Junior High School classes still use vernacular as the medium of instruction. One-third of head teachers have great concern about the quality of teaching in English, Mathematics, Ghanaian Language, Social Studies and General Science which are core subjects for the BECE.

Implementing the Education Reform

The head teachers' questionnaire and focus group discussions probed their perceptions of progress being made on implementing the Education Reform 2007. Data on the implementation of the reform are reported as follows: how head teachers were informed about the reform; progress made in implementing the latest reform initiatives in the school; and, barriers to policy implementation.

Of the four ways (Table 4.15**)** by which head teachers were informed about the education reform, the two that attracted the highest number of responses were a meeting at the District Office and a radio broadcast. Some head teachers received information from multiple sources. Apart from the meeting in District Office to which all head teachers were invited, brochures were distributed in addition to the radio broadcast. An interesting minority claimed they received no information about the reform.

Table 4.15: How head teachers were informed about Education Reform 2007 (n= 35)

Category	Number of head teachers
Meeting at District Education Office	24
Radio broadcast	20
Brochure	10
Not informed	5
Total	59

The summary of head teachers' rating of progress made in implementing the latest reform initiatives in the schools is presented in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16: Progress made in implementing the latest reform initiatives in the school (n=35)

Reform Initiatives	Achieved	Working towards	Not started	Mean rating
Use of English throughout JHS	14	19	2	2.34
Co-curricular activities	10	24	1	2.26
Teachers' professional development	2	27	6	1.89
Expanded curriculum beyond literacy, Numeracy and creative arts	0	27	6	1.71
Guidance and counseling	3	18	9	1.54
Library and information services	1	16	16	1.46
Special learning needs	0	7	10	0.69
Internet access	0	1	14	0.46

Note: The scoring of 3 – 1 has been used as weights for above items.

Survey data (Table 4.16) indicates that most head teachers are working towards implementing reform initiatives. In terms of the use of English and co-curricular activities about a quarter of head teachers have achieved implementation. Almost half the total numbers of JHSs have no library and information services. With the low enrolment figures it will be costly to have resources for special learning needs, so that initiative has not started. Observation data was confirmed by head teachers who indicated that the schools are not wired for electricity and none of the schools have computers (Focus group at Kunchogu: 5/2/10).

One of the reform initiatives was to establish a National Inspectorate Board; however, survey data revealed that none of the head teachers seemed aware of its presence. from the regional administration of the Ghana Education Office. Only four schools (11%) had been inspected by staff. Sixteen schools (46%) had been inspected by officers from the district directorate. The head teachers' were unanimous in their statements about the four major barriers to policy implementation. They indicated that there is: a lack of motivation; a limited supply of qualified teachers; limited supply of textbooks and infrastructure; and a lack of in-service training. Ten of the heads also mentioned that there was no collaboration between stakeholders.

Excerpts from the head teachers' focus group discussions illustrate their views about barriers to policy implementation. The following is the comment regarding how head teachers described their involvement in Reform 2007:

> I have no idea because I only heard that they are changing the subjects. They didn't call us for any orientation. Before I realised they have changed the subjects and that French and ICT are compulsory. Unfortunately some of us have never touched the computer before. If I say I know something about the Reform 2007, it is not true. They have not educated us about the Reform. (Focus group discussion at Bujan: 22.01.2010)

Head teachers believe that the authorities in administration need to bring them into the policy process. Head teachers expect to have been taken through an orientation, so that they themselves will understand what they are supposed to implement (Focus group at Welembele: 29.01.10).

Head teachers face the challenge of delivering quality education with a limited supply of qualified teachers and therefore some subjects are left untaught (Focus group at Bujan: 22.01.10). The lack of so many resources is another barrier to policy implementation. Some schools still lack certain syllabuses and textbooks; "you get the textbooks and then, no teachers' guide" (Focus group at Bujan: 22.01.10).

Key finding 4.5

The head teachers indicated that a meeting at District Office and a radio broadcast were the main ways by which they were informed about Reform 2007. Most head teachers are working towards implementing the latest reform initiatives in their schools. The head teachers were not aware of the existence of the National Inspectorate Board as one of the reform initiatives. Head teachers made a positive comment related to parents increased ability to send children to school now that the Capitation Grant covers school fees. Key barriers to policy implementation include low motivation to change; lack of professional learning support; limited supply of qualified teachers; and inadequate resources.

Head Teachers' Focus Group Discussions

This section analyses the perspectives of head teachers based on five focus group discussions conducted in the circuit centres of Sissala East District in January and February 2010. The discussions explored the head teachers' opinions regarding education policy, departmental administration, their teachers and students, the relationship with their schools' parents and the wider community. Five themes emerged from the analysis of the data, namely: impact of family circumstances; children's lack of foundation of literacy and numeracy for schooling; teacher supply, skills and motivation;

resources, culture; and, communication with and support from the Ghana Education Service. These themes are discussed below.

Impact of Family Circumstances

In the focus group discussion, the head teachers, identified aspects of the children's family circumstances that acted as barriers to effective schooling.

Over 78% of the District's inhabitants are farmers (School Mapping Report, 2006) and according to the head teachers, farming activities are intensified during the rainy season (May to October). The rainy season affects the circumstances of many families as many people work on their farms for longer hours, sometimes beginning at dawn and only returning to their homes at dusk (Focus group at Bujan: 22.01.10). During this period, parents and guardians have little time or energy to supervise or support their children's schooling.

Secondly, head teachers considered the poor parental control and the failure of parents and guardians to provide for the basic needs of children as a major barrier to quality schooling (Focus group at Welembele: 29.01.10). One head teacher suggested this failure to provide children's basic school needs contributed to irregular school attendance leading to a high dropout (Focus group discussion at Bujan: 22.01.10). While head teachers acknowledged that regular school attendance is characteristic of quality schooling, the cohort analysis of enrolments (2007-2010) revealed attrition rates greater than 35% over the three years of junior secondary school.

One head teacher explained that some school-children are breadwinners for their parents (Focus group at Tumu: 29.01.10). A head teacher mentioned school girls, who travelled to mining cities to engage in 'galamsey' [illegal mining] activities especially during the school's long vacation holidays. Others travel to big cities for menial jobs. In one case, a girl who had registered to write the BECE that year returned pregnant after her work at a mining site and eventually dropped out of school (Focus group at Bujan: 22.01.10).

Head teachers recommended that PTA meetings should be revived to assist in informing, empowering and alerting parents to their roles under FCUBE and Education Reform 2007. There is the need to encourage parents to reassess their priorities and commit themselves to fulfilling their responsibilities regarding their children's education.

Children's Lack of Foundation of Literacy and Numeracy for Schooling

The head teachers' considered children's lack of foundation of literacy and numeracy skills to be a challenge for effective schooling. Head teachers considered that the students' lack of basic skills as well as their lack of an intrinsic urge to read on their own greatly affected their school performance. They agreed that good results can only be attained when a good foundation has been laid.

Head teachers believed that the ability to read and write in English is very important because English is the medium through which all subjects are taught except Ghanaian Language and French. One head teacher recounted that once the children are unable to read and understand English language text, it becomes very difficult for them to do any other subject (Focus group at Welembele: 29.01.10).

The head teachers recommended that writing and other basic skills should be included in their school timetable. According to the head teachers this will provide a sound foundation for further learning.

Teacher Supply, Skills and Motivation

Head teachers believe that effective teaching and learning from dedicated and motivated teachers leads to good results. Head teachers were unanimous in saying that quality schools have a record of students registering very good grades from Basic Education Certificate Examinations and the graduates gain admission to higher levels of learning, and later in life, are well placed in society (Focus group at Kunchogu: 05.02.10).

Head teachers' raised issues relating to the lack of skilled teachers and hence the need for teacher capacity building. Head teachers identified five key barriers to effective teaching and learning, namely: inadequate staffing; untrained teachers; teacher upgrading; inadequate monitoring and supervision; and, teacher motivation.

Head teachers were concerned about the inadequate supply of well-qualified teachers in most of the schools. Additionally, head teachers also expressed concern over what they referred to as impromptu transfer of teachers because this interfered with the teaching of specialised subjects (Focus group at Kunchogu: 05.02.10) such as Basic Design Technology. Further, one head teacher stated that some subjects were left untaught. The inadequate supply of qualified teachers leads schools to recruit untrained persons as class teachers, rather than as teaching assistants (Focus group at Kunchogu: 05.02.10). Head teachers acknowledged that many of those teachers presently in their schools have not gone through any training system.

According to the head teachers, teacher motivation is critical for the improvement of schools in Ghana (Focus group at Tumu: 29.01.10). They believed that if schooling is to improve, then teachers must be sufficiently well motivated to do their best (Focus group at Bujan: 22.01.10). It was the view of head teachers that currently, teacher motivation is negatively influenced by poor salaries and accommodation (Focus group discussion at Kunchogu: 5.02.10). This was illustrated by a head teacher's comment that they did not feel motivated and felt that they deserved better treatment than they are receiving. The informant revealed that teachers sometimes took time out of the instructional period to undertake more financially rewarding activities (Focus group at Kunchogu: 5.02.10).

The head teachers did consider further professional development was needed to help teachers to adequately prepare lessons and to teach the new syllabuses (Focus group at Bujan: 22.01.10). Head teachers considered that it is imperative that teachers get adequate training for effective teaching of the new and changed subjects resulting from Education Reform 2007 (Focus group discussion at Welembele: 29.01.10). Head teachers recognise the need to intensify monitoring and supervision in order to curtail the laissez-faire attitude teachers took to lesson preparation and presentation and to maintain some level of professionalism (Focus group discussion at Kunchogu: 05.02.10).

The head teachers recommend the intensification of teacher sponsorship and bonding to retain qualified teachers especially for teaching of core subjects. Additionally, they expressed the need for further training of the current teachers so that they are able to teach the new additions to the syllabus. Head teachers were of the view that teachers need to reassess their priorities and commit to fulfilling their responsibilities regarding education of children at their schools. Finally, they suggest that teachers should be provided with better working and living conditions.

Key finding 4.8

Head teachers reported that there is a lack of skilled teachers and hence the need for teacher capacity building. Teachers' low motivation to change is negatively influenced by lack of incentives. Additionally, they recognise the need to intensify monitoring and supervision.

The head teachers recommended the need for more teacher recruitment; full and appropriate teacher training; intensification of teacher sponsorship and bonding; better salaries and conditions in comparison with jobs of similar qualifications; and, better monitoring and supervision.

School Resources and Culture

Head teachers raised issues about school resources and culture. Head teachers perceived quality schooling as requiring provision for adequate infrastructure; teaching/learning materials; a lot of reading materials; and, a positive relationship between the community and school (Focus group at Nabulo: 27.01.10). They were unanimous in their statement about the inadequate state of facilities and resources for most of the schools. A head teacher reported that two schools are under trees (Focus group at Nabulo: 27.01.10). Head teachers are of the view that effective teaching or learning cannot occur if children have to sit under trees and sheds to learn. (Focus group at Nabulo: 27.01.10). Additionally, while head teachers acknowledged that there is some evidence of increased supply of textbooks, one head teacher commented on the lack of equity in distribution of available teaching/learning materials (Focus group at Welembele: 29.01.10). The head teachers gave the impression that some schools were favoured and given supplies in preference to others. While some urban schools have seen improved textbooks supply, most of the village school heads complained about the limited supply of syllabus documents and some textbooks.

One head teacher saw resourcing the policy change as the key issue. As his school still has no textbooks for some of the new programs that have been introduced, it becomes very difficult for the teacher to actually implement the policy changes (Focus group at Tumu: 29.01.10).

Head teachers believed that the welcoming aura of a quality school helped draw children to the school. According to the head teachers, community support is required if the goals for quality schooling are to be achieved. One head teacher believed that quality education could not be attained when community members did not give the necessary support to teachers, who were doing their best (Focus group at Nabulo: 27.01.10). A concern was raised by head teachers that the issue of teacher motivation was not limited to support alone, but showing appreciation for their efforts through schemes such as the Best Teacher Award (Focus group discussion at Welembele: 29.01.10).

Head teachers considered that the recognition of effective teaching is central to the effective implementation of reform initiatives (Focus group at Tumu: 29.01.10). The head teachers believed that at the end of the day whether the children pass or fail depended on what went on in the schools. Head teachers suggested that instead of naming just a few teachers to receive the Best Teacher Award, that scheme could be spread out to benefit many more teachers in the teaching service (Focus group at Bujan: 22.01.10).

Head teachers recommended that as a matter of urgency schools need to be provided with classrooms and other essential facilities so that no schools meet under trees. Further, the supplies of teaching and learning materials need to be improved. They also suggested that a positive relationship between school and community needs to be developed with improved support for teachers and recognition for good teachers.

Key finding 4.9

The head teachers reported that there is inadequate resourcing of policy change. They recommended that adequate resourcing be made to meet the challenges of policy change. They also recommended enhanced support for teachers from the GES and the broader community.

Communication with and Support from the Ghana Education Service (GES)

Head teachers see themselves as partners in the process of policy implementation and believe that in developing new policies, GES must get teachers involved (Focus group discussion at Nabulo: 27.01.10). Head teachers listed five issues regarding communication with and support from the GES namely: recognition for teachers; problems of bureaucracy; language of policy; and, lack of support from the GES.

The head teachers are of the view that teachers need to be accorded a role in the policy development and implementation process. Additionally, they suggest that policy directives need to be clearer and better resourced and more thoroughly evaluated.

A head teacher described the crucial role of the teacher and the relevance for ongoing communication and collaboration among educational leaders and stakeholders for the good of the student (Focus group discussion at Kunchogu: 05.02.10). Head teachers explained that too frequent policy change posed significant barriers to effective educational reform in Ghana. Head teachers are of the opinion that some of the past policies have been hindered by a lack of clarity in the language of the policy, making them difficult to interpret and implement (Focus group at Tumu: 29.01.10). This is reflected in a further concern raised by the head teachers regarding the reluctance of teachers to implement even the new policies likely to bring about improvement in schooling.

Additionally, the policy regarding students repeating the same class calls for greater dialogue with the GES and mutual understanding of the individual situation (Focus group at Welembele: 29.01.10). The practise has been automatic progression between classes resulting in students who would be better off repeating a year are made to write the BECE, therefore adding to the school's record of exam failures. Another issue related to poor communication with head teachers both on the initial inclusion of ICT as a core subject for BECE and the subsequent sudden withdrawal of this subject without consultation.

A head teacher revealed that the process of getting approval for School Performance Improvement Plans (SPIP) was so cumbersome that accessing the Capitation Grant becomes a major issue. A frustrated head teacher felt that given the difficulties involved in getting the SPIP approved and accessing this Grant to buy teaching materials, he was better off not applying for the money at all. While the money will be there, he said access to the money is a problem because there are many head teachers who have difficulty getting their SPIPs right (Focus group at Bujan: 22.01.10).

One head teacher considered the attitude of those in the GES office towards the teachers sometimes affects the teacher's work (Focus group discussion at Tumu: 29.01.10). Head teachers had expressed concern over the behaviour of some circuit supervisors. When circuit supervisors represent the District Director at PTAs, they sometimes make comments that demean the authority of the head teacher in the presence of the community (Focus group at Kunchogu: 05.02.10).

As regards communication with and support from the GES, head teachers are of the view that there is need to show respect for teachers' authority and professionalism, especially in official line management interactions in the departmental bureaucracy. Additionally, head teachers expect to be consulted when teachers of their schools are to be transferred.

Key finding 4.10

The head teachers reported issues of weak partnership between teachers and the GES in policy implementation. Additionally, there is a lack of clarity in the language of the policy, making it difficult to interpret and implement. The bureaucratic attitude of those in the GES Office towards the teachers often negatively affects the teachers' work.

The head teachers recommended that there needs to be a strong partnership role between teachers and the GES to offer instructional support to schools.

Summary

This chapter reports head teachers' survey and focus group data. It identifies the qualifications and experience of the head teachers, demographic data about teachers and school sizes, as well as some barriers to quality education. Ten main findings from the survey and focus group of the head teachers indicate that there are some aspects of successful policy implementation and other barriers to quality education.

Most head teachers are working towards implementing the latest reform initiatives in their schools. Head teachers made a positive comment related to parents increased ability to send children to school now that the Capitation Grant covers school fees. However, during the rainy season, parents and guardians have little time to supervise their children's schooling and some fail to provide for the basic needs of children, resulting in irregular attendance and high dropout rates. Head teachers recommended that PTA meetings should be revived to assist in informing, empowering and alerting parents to their roles under FCUBE and Education Reform 2007. The head teachers were not aware of the existence of the National Inspectorate Board as one of the reform initiatives

Additionally, the head teachers commented on the lack of skilled teachers and hence the need for teachers' capacity building. Teachers' low motivation to change is negatively influenced by lack of incentives. Additionally, they recognise the need to intensify monitoring and supervision.

The head teachers recommended the need for more teacher recruitment; full and appropriate teacher training; intensification of teacher sponsorship and bonding; better motivations in comparison with jobs of similar qualifications; and, better monitoring and supervision.

Key findings emerging from the chapter show that some aspects of the policy have been effectively implemented. The next chapter presents perspectives from the key stakeholders and educational leaders within the District.

CHAPTER FIVE:
DISTRICT PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

This section analyses the views of key stakeholders and educational leaders at the level of district education directorate about the implementation of Education Reform 2007. Informants included the District Chief Executive, a representative of the Parent/Teacher Association, the District Director of Education, Deputy Director, Human Resource Management and Development, Deputy Director, Supervision, as well as five Circuit Supervisors. The organisational chart (Figure: 5.1) shows the functional relationships between district leaders and administrators.

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        ┌─────────────────────┐
        │  District Chief     │
        │  Executive          │                    ┌──────────────────────┐
        └──────────┬──────────┘                    │  Parent/Teacher      │
                   │                                │  Association         │
        ┌──────────▼──────────┐                    │  (representative)    │
        │  District Director  │                    └──────────────────────┘
        │  of Education       │
        └─────┬──────────┬────┘
              │          │
  ┌───────────▼──┐   ┌───▼──────────────┐
  │ Deputy       │   │ Deputy Director, │
  │ Director,    │   │ Supervision      │
  │ Human        │   └────────┬─────────┘
  │ Resource     │            │
  │ Management & │   ┌────────▼─────────┐
  │ Development  │   │ Circuit          │
  └──────────────┘   │ Supervisors      │
                     └──────────────────┘
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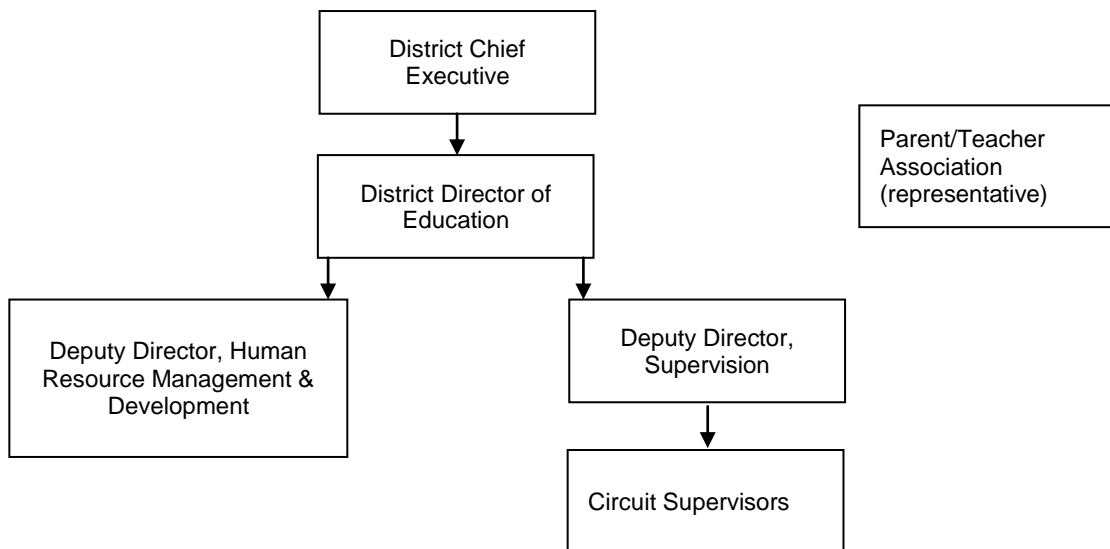
Figure 5.1: Organisational charts showing the functional relationships between district leaders and administrators.

Semi-structured interviews and a focus group were conducted in February and March, 2010. The interviews with officials and the focus group discussion with the circuit supervisors explored their opinions regarding education policy, departmental administration, the schools' teachers and students, and the relationship between schools and parents and the wider community. Four themes relating to education reform emerged from the analysis of the data namely: making education accessible; barriers to quality education; building teacher capacity; and, the communication process.

Accessibility to Education

The data revealed that the issue of accessibility to education is complex and not easily resolved, and that the challenges have implications for resourcing the change that has come with the Free, Compulsory, Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy and Reform 2007. Additionally, educational leaders explained the policy directive that kindergarten education should increasingly become part of the universal, free and compulsory basic education structure. They reiterated that the FCUBE policy mandates that every child of school-going age should attend school. When asked about the priorities for education reform in the District one leader explained that the mission statement of the District Education Office of the GES is:

> To make high quality pre-tertiary education and training accessible
> to all children of school going age in the Sissala East District. This
> would be done with the support of stakeholders for the manpower
> needs of the country. (Interview at Tumu: 10.03.10)

The data indicate that the issue of accessibility involves both bringing children of school age into schools as well as retaining those already in school (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2009). Concern was raised by the informants about the considerable number of children in the District who were not in school. One leader quoted district data to show that 30% or more of the school aged children in his district could be out of school. He considered this figure to be illustrative of the very large number of children out of school in the large, village communities (Interview at Tumu: 27.01.10). To place their own experience into a district context, leaders referred to a survey carried out by a local non-government organisation, Action for Sustainable Development (2007) which substantiates the District report that the number of school age children not attending school was considerable (Interview at Tumu: 16.02.10) . These concerns raised at district level were consistent with those raised by the head teachers, who also identified school attendance as a critical issue (see Table 4.10).

Enhanced Enrolments

Educational leaders and stakeholders were consistent in their views about the need to enhance enrolments. They identified the following issues as strategies to enhance students' attendance namely: the Capitation Grant; support from the PTA; and, community initiatives. The Capitation Grant aims to enhance equity in the provision of education. The informants were of the view that some parents could not pay fees charged by schools, and the Capitation Grant scheme was set up to improve access and enhance enrolment. The Grant takes care of school fees for all school children within the basic education sector. Furthermore, schools were able to buy basic

sporting, cultural and even some teaching and learning materials from the Grant. The PTA representative described how the Grant was being used by schools:

> I think now with these reforms the Capitation Grant has been introduced by the GES. This Capitation Grant is actually to relieve parents from paying school fees and also the schools are expected to use the grant to defray cost of minor school repairs and other expenses. There are a lot of uses such as for teaching and learning materials, and buying equipment like footballs and others. (Interview at Tumu: 04.02.10)

Stakeholders unanimously affirmed that in terms of resourcing FCUBE and enhancing enrolments, the introduction of a Capitation Grant was a positive outcome of FCUBE and Education Reform 2007. One leader affirmed the positive impact of the Grant on school attendance:

> The Capitation Grant is part of the FCUBE: the 'free,' and now that parents don't pay many levies in schools as they used to pay before, enrolment has increased making some classrooms very full, more than they used to be. So I feel there is some impact. (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

In addition to the Capitation Grant school leaders explained that support from non-government organisations such as World Food Program and Catholic Relief Services has also enhanced enrolments and retention especially of female students.

The data indicate that the PTAs provide considerable support in cash and kind for schools that had them. Communities now offer their skills, time and labour in sharing responsibility for carrying out school projects. The PTA has provided various forms of support for the development of their schools. The following words of a PTA representative described their support to schools:

> The PTA [in the District] supports schools through communal labour. Sometimes communities join in communal labour by carrying out school projects such as clearing a plot of land for a school field or farm. The PTA also gives support when they levy themselves and put up infrastructure like toilets and sometimes provide furniture for the school. (Interview at Tumu: 04.02.10)

The educational leaders affirmed that, in line with the FCUBE policy directive, two years compulsory kindergarten is now part of all basic schools' requirement (Government of Ghana, 2004). A circuit supervisor explained that "with the onset of FCUBE, schools have been opened in many more communities". The implication is that many more children will be able to read and write to a basic standard (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10).

Educational leaders indicated that there was a heightened awareness towards community ownership of schools. The implication is that communities now see it as communal responsibility to take care of their schools. Additionally, the leaders explained that these communities have erected school blocks through communal labour and without clearance from the Education Office. An informant shared an

observation that it was a popular strategy among a number of communities that in pushing for a community school, the community needed to take the initiative to get the structures for the kindergarten and the lower primary off the ground. Their next step was to get many of their children into the classrooms and then they begin to put pressure on the office for staffing (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10). This explains why communities do not see it as a good idea to seek clearance from the Education Office before putting up school buildings. A leader described the desire for ownership of community schools:

> Every community is asking for a school. The politicians will always promise schools to communities without first consulting the education directorate to see if there will be teachers for these schools. Some of these schools are only about four kilometres apart, just too close to each other. Moreover, some of these schools don't even have many children to fill the classes. (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

Comments from the PTA about the importance of the Capitation Grant support and, community initiatives raised at district level were consistent with those raised by the Head teachers who also agreed that these strategies are important to enhance students' attendance (see Table: 4.10).

Threats to Accessibility

The data revealed that there are two components of accessibility to education namely, access and retention. The first of these relates to bringing in children of school age into school. The second, retention, is related to retaining children in school till completion. The educational leaders identified three barriers to accessibility and retention in the District's schools: family circumstances; loss of contact hours; and, lack of motivation.

Family circumstances

The first of these issues related to family circumstances. Stakeholders reported that during the rainy season the parents often expected their children to stop going to school so that they would help out on the farms. One informant recounted that some parents do not allow the children ample time to concentrate on their studies. He said parents also occupied these children with a lot of household chores after school hours (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10). The data revealed that the culture and family circumstances seem to be the root cause of children's hunger and the lack of parental care. A circuit supervisor commented on the plight of the hungry and tired students trying to study:

> The child sets out for school at 6am on empty stomach. Some walk several kilometres to get there. From around mid day some sneak off to the house with the hope of finding something to eat. Due to the distance some don't return. For most of those who stay back, you see that the concentration level is low due to hunger. So one of the issues here, is parental care; the other one, is school feeding, if there is something for the child to eat at school. (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

Additionally, data from GES, District Mapping exercise (Ghana Education Service, 2005) corroborates the finding from interview data that the illiteracy rate in the community is high and particularly among the parents. They were of the opinion that opportunities for collaboration between community and school would encourage some of the parents to value education and enable them to encourage their children to learn. A PTA representative had this to say about the need to raise the awareness levels of parents:

> Illiteracy rate is very high here and so are most of the parents. Some of the parents are not able to appreciate any value for education. They are not able to prompt their children to learn or do the homework they bring from school. They are unable to help them and in most cases, there is nobody in the house to help them. (Interview at Tumu: 04.02.10)

Furthermore, stakeholders were convinced that parents failed to control their children. They cited example of parents going to sleep without first checking to know where their children were. Further, some parents would drag their children to school to be disciplined for offences that had been committed at home. A stakeholder explained that there was a need for collaboration between communities and schools to address these problems:

> Head teachers are not succeeding with stopping their students from visiting the records' nights and video shows: PTA can intervene and put a ban on such video shows and jazz dance that go on late into the night. If the PTA or local community takes a decision the school has to help to [enforce] implement it by disciplining culprits at school. (Interview at Tumu: 04.02.10)

Stakeholders explained that a number of students dropped out of school either due to unwanted pregnancies, elopement or they followed friends elsewhere. One stakeholder further explained the illiteracy levels of parents and its repercussions in relation to their school age children:

> This again boils down to the illiteracy of the parents. Like you rightly pointed out, at this time the girls have reached adolescence. And this issue of sex and other things comes in. It is a natural phenomenon. Even both boys and girls reach a certain stage that if you don't have good parents or people guiding and counselling or advising you, you become a victim of that one, and a lot of them fall at this stage. In that respect it is not their fault because it is

natural. It is difficult to resist that temptation. Those who are able to resist, I count them as lucky and with good guidance especially if you come from that environment, your home background has role models. From rural background, it takes very little effort to lure these young adolescents with really small offers of anything from a boy or man here and there and they have surrendered. So, some of such reasons account for the high dropout rates, and this is a very serious problem of the district. (Interview at Tumu: 04.02.10)

Additionally, in a comment on the effectiveness of the implementation of FCUBE and 2007 Reform initiatives, one leader pointed out that the issue of dropout and retention has not only been a challenge for the girls alone. Some parents were keeping their boys from school for farm work. Bullock farming is increasingly practised, especially in the Sissala East District. The boys very often had responsibility for the use of bullock traction in ploughing farmlands during the planting season. Bullock traction is becoming a lucrative business for the families with bulls. Due to the superior physical strength of boys compared with girls, they were kept from school so as to be available for the purpose of farming (Interview at Tumu: 16.02.10).

Educational leaders believed that there was a need to enforce the educational policy about every school age child being in school, to ensure that the policy is effective. The leaders were of the view that GES needed a mandate to take a parent to court for failing to take their children to school.

Loss of contact hours

The second key issue identified by stakeholders and leaders was that many teachers failed to be available for the students for the required number of hours stated on the timetable. A leader said with the loss of contact hours, teachers were unable to cover the syllabus to enable students to confidently write and pass the BECE (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10). To further explain the issue of loss of contact hours, educational leaders acknowledged the unavoidable loss of contact hours that came with the observance of statutory dates; which is not the teachers' choice. The leaders explained that school time was taken in preparation for activities to observe the national day celebration and sporting events (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10).

Educational leaders and stakeholders shared varying views about the challenge to the supply of quality teachers. The argument here is that adequate use of contact hours is related to quality teaching. Loss of contact hours was seen as a threat to accessibility since students would usually play truant when they observed that their teachers were not regular or punctual in their school attendance. Some of these teachers travelled from their schools in the village to attend to business in town during school hours.

A different view held by one educational leader reported that he saw no correlation between the increasing number of trained teachers and their commitment to quality teaching and learning. To illustrate the issue of teachers' lack of commitment, an informant cited the situation where many teachers commuted long distances and got to school very late and this affected the quality of work in the classroom (Interview at Tumu: 04.02.10). Stakeholders and leaders reported that sometimes loss of contact hours by teachers was deliberate due to their lack of professionalism and lack of commitment to work (Interview at Tumu: 27.01.10).

Lack of motivation

A third and related issue to threats to accessibility identified by the leaders was to the need to motivate the classroom teachers, as they were seen as the most critical factor in the process of policy implementation. The informants considered commitment and motivation as essential elements for teachers:

> Imagine teachers teaching all these new subjects without orientation. Even those who may not have the subject knowledge in most of the subject areas, but lack commitment and also because of the lack of motivation. (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

Stakeholders reported that motivation from the authorities was necessary to sustain the teachers' commitment to teaching. The informants said it was important that teachers were well motivated to give their best in teaching and that class sizes and issues of discipline were problems:

> When teachers continue to handle such large classes of that sort and there is nothing given to them so that they can feel motivated this makes them lose interest about the work. However effective you are, when classes are so large and class control becomes such a problem, teaching and learning can't be effective. (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

Educational leaders stated that the need to attract teachers to rural areas has featured in policy development over the past decade. The informants reported that among inappropriate attempts to motivate teachers were rural incentive packages which included items such as silver pots, pans and a jumbo size 'ghetto blaster'. The data revealed that the teachers did not appreciate the package since they did not find it convenient to use the silverware in their smoky firewood fireplaces or have to spend money for eight large dry cell batteries to run the 'ghetto blaster'. One informant therefore suggested the provision of decent accommodation and support to purchase a motorbike that could be paid for over a period could be considered (Interview at Tumu: 27.01.10).

Additionally, the leaders mentioned the reactivation of the Best Teacher Award scheme as a source of motivation for teachers. The award scheme is a motivation that enables teachers to strive to put up their best, make teaching attractive and reduce the loss of teachers from the profession. This observation of the leaders corroborated the head teachers' focus group data on the issue of teacher supply, skills and motivation. The reactivation of the Award scheme is a joint undertaking between GES and District Assembly:

> District Assembly has not been doing well in the aspect of motivating teachers for some years now. We are going to award them from the time the previous administration stopped. I understand GES has the list of teachers that are to be awarded. As soon as we get some funding we will have to call GES to the Assembly to sort out the kind of package that should go to every hardworking and committed teacher. (Interview at Tumu: 09.03.10)

Key finding 5.1

Though both FCUBE and Education Reform 2007 attempted to improve access to education and the Capitation Grant and greater support from PTAs have helped increase enrolments and reduced attrition rate. Students are still missing out on educational opportunities due to insufficient family support, and teachers lacking in professionalism and motivation.

Barriers to Quality Education

Education Reform 2007 reformed the curriculum. The main changes emphasise the integration of knowledge, skills and values in the eight key learning areas of the curriculum. Educational leaders considered the curriculum restructuring of the Education Reform 2007 as productive since the changes were fundamental to the needs of the District and the country as a whole. Stakeholders identified three barriers to effective delivery of quality education namely; language proficiency, curriculum restructuring and, staffing.

Language Proficiency

English is not the children's first language. The language of instruction in the JHS should be in English. Anecdotal evidence reveals the outcry from the general public over fallen standards and the fact that JHS children's English is poor. This therefore limits their ability to learn all other subjects. A recent policy on National Accelerated Language Program (Ghana Education Service, 2008a) encouraged the use of the mother-tongue from kindergarten stage one to primary three as a medium of instruction. The leaders are of the view that this Program will help with developing the reading and speaking skills of the students. Additionally, the local language studied as

a subject for the BECE is Dagaare. This language is not the mother-tongue of the Sissala area since their language lacks a written form. The first of these issues reported by the educational leaders suggested that the issue of language is two-fold namely; English competency levels and, a Ghanaian Language as an elective subject for BECE. The informants expressed concern that the English competency levels of students are a problem.

The data revealed that a contributory factor to the problem was seen to be the students' poor foundation in the acquisition of basic literacy skills. The informants were convinced that there was a problem with the use of English for both teachers and students:

> The English Language is actually a problem, because if a child can
> read and write the student has advantage to learn other subjects.
> (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

Additionally, educational leaders were concerned that students have to write an exam in Dagaare, a language they do not even speak, and the District does not have teachers to teach this language. Educational leaders were aware that the West African Exams Council's (WAEC) policy stipulates that all students within a locality write in the same language (Ghana Education Service, WAEC, 1993). They explained that a child proficient in another language cannot sit the BECE examination in that language in Sissala East. Consequently, the leaders recommended that students irrespective of location at the time of the exam should be able to select from any local language presented in the exam based on their individual competency levels.

The educational leaders explained that the problem of the students' use of English is only a symptom of an issue that originates from the teachers. A leader substantiated this view by describing the way teachers prepared and presented their lesson notes:

> When you look at the way the teachers prepare their lesson notes,
> which tells you very little is done in the different aspects of English.
> Aspects such as grammar, comprehension, literature and others.
> They lump everything together. (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

Curriculum Restructuring

Some subjects have been combined and others removed as a result of the curriculum restructuring. For example Creative Arts is a combination of Music and Dance, Cultural Studies, Art and Drawing. Social Studies is now Citizenship Education. Agricultural Science and General Science are now combined as Integrated Science. The stakeholders and educational leaders explained that the changes were not accompanied with the appropriate resources:

> The reform came with the introduction of new subjects, into the school timetable. They came without resource materials. They came also without teacher training and yet these were supposed to be implemented. (Interview at Tumu: 27.01.10)

Additionally, the stakeholders reported that the students having to write an exam in Information Communication Technology (ICT) at the BECE (2010) was one example of curriculum restructuring that has not worked well. Inadequate resourcing was still a major issue:

> For instance even this year the children are writing ICT in the BECE. ICT was introduced at both primary and JHS level at the same time. There were other subjects introduced with no resource materials. When the syllabi came it was on a CD. We had to produce hard copies from that for the schools. So a lot of them were teaching the old syllabus that they had. (Interview at Tumu: 27.01.10)

Additionally, these educational leaders were of the opinion that if more than one elective subject apart from the five core BECE subjects, then many students of the district will be denied placement into high school. This is because they are required to obtain good grades in both core and elective subjects to get a place in senior high school. Students need to attain an aggregate grade (Akuffo-Badoo, 2006, July) between 6 and 30, the level required to enable them to enter second cycle education. Teachers' reservation was about the belief that the district's schools will not pass Dagaare, They were also of the view that students could not do well in French. The educational leaders said that there were no qualified teachers for the Ghanaian Language, French and, Basic Design Technology. The following statement highlights the state of teacher supply:

> Teacher supply is a very big barrier. The inadequacy impedes quality delivery as some classes are even without teachers. (Interview at Tumu: 10.03.10)

Stakeholders foresee a bleak future in terms of a good pass rate for placement of the District's students into senior high school. Teachers need to be adequately prepared to handle the new subjects of the curriculum and there should be an adequate supply of trained teachers for all examination subjects. This brings to the fore the disparity between policy intent and the capacity to implement policy as intended.

Staffing schools

A fourth and final challenge reported by the leaders related to staffing schools and there were several aspects to this. These were identified by the educational leaders as involving teacher supply and teacher training.

The first of these issues about staffing schools reported by the leaders acknowledged that a relationship exists between educational staffing and school population. The data indicates that the policy on pupil/teacher ratio operates on the strength of the school population (Interview at Tumu: 27.01.10). The informants explained that the national pupil: teacher ratio target is 35 pupils to one teacher at primary and 25 pupils to one teacher at JHS (Education Statistics, 2008). A single stream JHS (i.e. a school with only one class in each grade) is supposed to have a minimum of three and a maximum of five teachers to take the different subjects. By comparison, a double stream JHS (i.e. a school with two classes in each grade) should have between seven and 11 teachers. Stakeholders' and educational leaders' interview data corroborate that of head teachers' survey data (Table 4.8) in the extreme variations of class and school sizes in urban and very remote schools. The informants explained that teachers of small rural schools have a challenging workload as they have run of the school in addition to teaching the kindergarten, primary and JHS classes:

> When you go to the schools you get three or two teachers from KG
> through to JHS and you can imagine the quality of teaching in such
> schools. The workload alone does not allow you to do your best.
> (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

Under such circumstances, the option has been to put all the children together while employing multi-grade teaching, however, the teachers lacked skills in multi-grade teaching. The pupil teacher ratio seems adequate when all categories of teachers, are used to compute the ratio, however, this includes both trained and untrained teachers.

Secondly, the data indicated that the small sizes of schools in remote areas made it difficult for the District to request additional teachers**.** The educational leaders explained that the policy on transition classes (Ghana Education Service, 2010) stipulates that professional teachers handle entry and exiting points. These require the special attention of trained teachers:

> The policy was that primary one, six and JHS grade one must
> always be handled by a trained teacher because they are
> transitional points. But what do we see these days. Most of these
> classes are handled by pupil teachers. (Focus group at Tumu:
> 26.02.10)

Thirdly, the leaders held that the inadequate supply of trained teachers also challenged staffing within the District. The educational leaders have a dilemma to grapple with. In the face of what is required by policy, coupled with the inability to meet policy demand, and yet feeling better off that at least they have the untrained teachers rather than leaving the classes without teachers. An informant claimed that their situation supports the adage that 'half a loaf is better than none'. However, a concern was expressed about the state of inadequate supply of teachers:

> Most importantly is the lack of adequate qualified teachers in our classrooms. Two thirds of our teachers are untrained with some classes still empty. Additionally, head teachers are inexperienced and lack training. (Interview at Tumu: 10.03.10)

The head teachers' survey data substantiated the interview data from these leaders that there are 34% untrained teachers on the ground (Table 4.4). They revealed that the National Youth Employment Program (NYEP), which provides untrained teachers, has helped to address the issue of student: staff ratio:

> It is difficult as a district to request for additional teachers. The National Youth Employment Program (NYEP) has come to minimise that problem for us but in terms of professionally trained teachers it is a big challenge to us. We have close to 50% of our teachers untrained in the district. (Interview at Tumu: 27.01.10)

The leaders explained that had it not been for the presence of these untrained teachers, most classes in the district would have been combined. District data (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10) revealed that despite the use of untrained teachers there were still some classes without teachers.

The fourth and final issue challenging staffing is that while the policy of posting most of the newly trained teachers to the remote areas was in place, the Tumu central schools are crowded with most of the female teachers reluctant to move into remote areas far away from their spouses. The data reveal that schools in the Tumu central area have a greater proportion of the trained staff (Interview at Tumu: 27.01.10).

Additionally, the educational leaders identified three groups of untrained teachers namely: National Youth Employment Program (NYEP) teachers; untrained teachers recruited directly through the Ghana Education Service (GES); and, community volunteers. As regards the issue of the presence of groups of untrained teachers, the leaders explained that the NYEP teachers were not trained and they were recruited through the youth empowerment office of the District Assembly. The leaders also mentioned a second group of untrained teachers; these were recruited directly through the GES. There were also community volunteers. These were neither under NYEP nor on GES payroll, were they supported by the community. The following described one leader's view on the outcome of inadequate numbers of trained teachers:

> We lack professional teachers in the system. Even those they recruit to fill in for professionals still have problems, no training. (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

The leaders reported on a recent District analysis of BECE performance (2008) carried out by the Inspectorate unit. The performance analysis revealed that BECE results of students in the subject areas of these categories of untrained teachers came up with better performance than from those of the trained teachers. Further, in spite of the

higher concentration of professional teachers in Tumu circuit, the performance indicators of their JHS level students show no correlation in terms of the overall pass rates at the BECE; the other rural circuits register better grades. The outcome of the analysis therefore supports the argument of these leaders that the issue of commitment of these teachers to their work is crucial:

> We lack a lot of commitment from our teachers so that is affecting the output of the teachers in the classroom. Even though the trained teacher population is increasing the numbers are reducing in terms of commitment to do the work. (Interview at Tumu: 27.01.10)

Earlier points about trained and untrained teachers within the education system indicate that it is important that the teachers are trained to teach. However, data from the field indicated that issues of lack of professionalism among teachers were not only as a result of inadequate training as much as the lack of motivation to teach well in their communities.

The educational leaders also made available, data from a recent general community review on BECE results in terms of performance this data revealed that the performance indicators of Tumu circuit schools' was rather the worst in the District. Tumu JHS presented 100 candidates and over 50% of them have failed at the BECE. The District office indicated that this has been the trend in all the town schools (Interview at Tumu: 27.01.10). Stakeholders were aware of the presence in the urban centre schools of students who have registered to re-sit BECE papers. These continued to swell the numbers of students who pass or fail these exams.

Additionally, the inability to introduce JHS students to printed examination questions, through mock examinations before the final examinations, has been another concern. Considering that many of these students were only used to reading from the chalk board, a mock exam would have offered them great benefits in terms of preparation for the BECE. Further, the data indicated an acute shortage of furniture and poor and inadequate classroom structures. The inadequate supply of furniture was a limiting factor to the numbers that conveniently access the facility.

In the face of what looks like an adequate supply of teachers within the District, issues of policy on transition classes; posting policy; inadequate supply of trained teachers; untrained teachers; and, inadequate classroom structures pose challenges for quality education delivery.

Key finding 5.2

While the integration of subjects and the restructuring of the curriculum was a positive outcome of Education Reform 2007, implementation of that new curriculum has been constrained by:

- the lack of trained teachers able to teach the subjects of the new curriculum,
- the lack of motivation to teach well in their communities,
- the inability to comply with the policy of providing trained teachers in each of the transition classes,
- the lack of proficiency in the English language among both students and teachers, and
- the inflexible policy requiring all the students in the district to be examined in the same local language, namely Dagaare, regardless of how proficient students and teachers are in that language

Building Teacher Capacity

The educational leaders reported on three aspects of building teacher capacity namely: professional upgrading, in-service training, and teacher-trainee sponsorship.

Professional Upgrading

The first of these issues related to programs to enable underqualified teachers to top-up their qualifications. Many teachers are currently underqualified holding only a Post-Secondary Certificate 'A'. The educational leaders explained that one of the reform initiatives required teachers to upgrade these qualifications to diploma status. Teachers could either do the upgrading in a Distance Learning program during vacations or full-time on study leave with or without scholarship. Educational leaders referred to the Distance Learning arrangement as a 'top-up' program when 'Certificate A' teachers were required to upgrade to the Diploma in Basic Education as the current minimum teaching qualification. These leaders shared the view that the 'top-up' program was ineffective. The following was the premise for their argument:

> The teachers have been without studies since they left college and to do this crash program in two long vacations over two years wasn't enough time (to develop new knowledge). The results of their terminal exam came out, and several of them were referred (failed). They are back to base (in the classroom) and you actually do not see any change in them. (Interview at Tumu: 27.01.10)

The leaders were of the opinion that these teachers required a longer program than they were given. However, the Distance Learning Program has enabled teachers to

upgrade while still at their teaching post. The leaders said that the advantage has been in retaining the teachers in the classroom while they upgraded their qualifications:

> Distance learning has made so many teachers to upgrade themselves and they are able to handle subjects that would otherwise have been very difficult for them. (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

However, the leaders agreed that these positive initiatives were hampered by inadequate supply of qualified teachers especially in English, Maths and Science. To address this teacher shortage there are scholarships to support teachers who opt to study English, Maths, or Science on a full-time basis. Regarding the leaders' assertion that most schools lack teachers for these subjects this is what one of them said:

> There are certain subject areas that teachers even have chances for study leave (scholarship) but scarcely do they apply for those areas. Most schools lack teachers for these subjects such as English, Maths and Science. (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

In-service Training

The second issue reported by the educational leaders relates to the in-service training workshops which were to be implemented as part of the reform initiatives. The workshops usually followed a train-the-trainer model. This pattern involved in-service training for head teachers and circuit supervisors which they in turn were expected to provide similar training at the primary and secondary levels for teachers. Among these were workshops in: multi-grade teaching; Information Communication Technology; the use of the new syllabuses and, management and financial administration, continuous assessment, guidance and counselling for heads and teachers:

> When they introduced the Reform, 2007, we had to send a team from the District for some subjects [to be trained] in the new syllabus. We just train them and no resources are sent for the implementation. (Interview at Tumu: 16.02.10)

The leaders explained that these training programs have still not been carried out at school level:

> There was a training of trainers' workshop on the use of the syllabus and up till now those who went for that training have not trained teachers on how to use the syllabus or the textbooks on the restructured curriculum. (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

The leaders explained that there is a need for multi-grade teaching in the District. One of the informants recounted that a visit to some rural schools revealed the presence of only two or three teachers handling kindergarten through to junior high school:

> We went for a workshop on this multi-grade teaching, which was a training of trainers' workshop to come and train teachers in the District. Up till now nothing has happened. No funds! (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

The leaders said that the workload alone did not allow the teachers to do their best. Additionally, apart from the challenge of managing the pressure of work, teachers are ill equipped with the skills of handling multi-grade classes:

> The absence of capacity building in multi-grade teaching, ICT, the use of the new syllabuses and managerial skills, are all factors that affect the quality of schooling and pass rates in the BECE exam. (Interview at Tumu: 10.03.10)

Head teachers as frontline supervisors at the school level are, expected to identify teacher professional learning needs which become the basis for cluster-based workshops in which the District Teacher Support Team and head teachers act as resource personnel. The District Teacher Support Team has responsibility to organise in-service training sessions at cluster centres. The leaders explained that where solutions to challenges are beyond the expertise of head teachers and the support team, other cluster centres are to be approached for assistance. As they further explained, that coordinating efforts should ensure that in-service training as planned is carried out. They disclosed that the Office is expected to run two in-service trainings in every school term, but resources were not sufficient to do this.

Teacher-Trainee Sponsorship

The third issue relates to building teacher capacity through the teacher-trainee sponsorship program. This is a joint GES and District Assembly arrangement that bonds teachers in training to the particular District where they receive financial assistance while in training. When the District Education Office endorses the form of an applicant to attend a college of education of his/her choice, this endorsement places the prospective teacher-trainee on the District Assembly list for sponsorship and bonding. The implication here is that the prospective student teacher is then assured of a teaching vacancy in the District upon completion. District Assembly sponsorship of teacher-trainees depends on how many trainees the Assembly can financially support:

> There is this arrangement of pushing teacher-trainee sponsorship to District Assemblies. In a way this is increasing our trained teacher population. (Interview at Tumu: 27.01.10)

There is a College of Education at Tumu which only prepares early childhood education teachers. The District has to use sponsorship to source primary and secondary teachers from other colleges outside the District, since some of those other colleges offer programs in specialisations such as Maths, English and Science. Many

more teacher-trainees opt for the more general teacher education program rather than for specialisations such as for Science, Maths or English.

The leaders reported that in the 2005-2008 sponsorship periods, a total of 49 teacher-trainees were sponsored and 31 of these were posted to the District upon completion. Further, during the 2009 period, 21 student teachers were sponsored and all were posted back to the District. They said that for the 2007-2010 periods, 54 students were sponsored. They also said that the District has 15 teacher-trainees in colleges outside the District and, out of the 15, only two were specialising in science, meanwhile, the District lacks science teachers. This depicts a case of dissonance between policy implementation and the District's manpower needs (Interview at Tumu: 10.03.10).

Additionally, a leader observed that students selecting teacher training programs are influenced by perceptions of status. Many of them elect to enrol in the primary program rather than the Early Childhood program for reasons of perceived status:

> It is an erroneous impression that has been created over the years that once you are handling a lower class it meant you are inferior compared to your colleagues. Imagine a graduate teacher is asked to teach primary one, there is some amount of resistance. He says: P1, what is he going to teach in a lower class after having gone through higher education and studied so much, so he is there wasting his brains; his brains will rust. There is some kind of prestige they attach to teaching in the higher forms. (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

The leaders were of the view that the District Education Office needs to better manage admissions into teacher education to better fit the manpower needs of the system. The leaders suggested that there was need to insist on getting student teachers from other colleges into the various subject areas. This will help to solve the teacher shortfall for subjects such as Science, Maths and English.

Key finding 5.3

The leaders explained that Reform 2007 included three programs to increase teacher capacity. They reported that the distance education program provided to top-up under qualified teachers to diploma level were too short in duration to build the teachers' capacity. In-service training of teachers at school level had not been fully implemented due to lack of funding and logistical problems. The teacher-trainee sponsorship scheme had limited success as it failed to attract teachers into Science, Maths and English programs.

Monitoring and Supervision of Teaching and Learning

Three key structures identified by educational leaders that support educational management through monitoring and supervision include the District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC); the District Disciplinary Committee (DDC); and, the National Inspectorate Board (NIB) (Interview at Tumu: 10/3/10). These are three independent groups that are expected to support the District Education Office in the smooth functioning of schools.

District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC)

The DEOC is the highest governing authority on education at the District level (Kumi-Kyereme, 2008). The role of DEOC is to oversee all matters that relate to education at the District. It also enhances broader stakeholders' participation in the monitoring, supervision and general governance of schools in the communities. The DEOC is expected to ensure an adequate supply of learning materials and the safe and clean condition of schools. To enable DEOC to act responsibly on these issues, it is important that the DEOC receives timely information from the other stakeholders in education delivery (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2003).

The chairperson of the DEOC is the District Chief Executive or his representative and the District Director of Education is the secretary to DEOC. Representatives of stakeholders include the District Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) Secretary and PTA representative.

District Disciplinary Committee

The District Disciplinary Committee has oversight on "all disciplinary issues" that the District Director refers "to it or appeals that may be made to it" (Ghana Education Service, 2008b, p. 26). The work of the Committee is guided by the GES code of ethics for teachers:

> [Rules and regulations] are meant to ensure that the conditions for effective teaching and learning are created and maintained in the country's educational institutions. [Additionally, the regulations also] inspire public confidence in teachers to whom is entrusted the physical, mental, moral, religious and spiritual up-bringing of the country's children. (p. 3)

The chairperson of the Committee is the District Director of Education or his representative, and a GES Officer is secretary to the DDC. Other members of the DDC include representatives of stakeholders such as heads of institutions, DEOC, GNAT, and PTA.

National Inspectorate Board (NIB)

The educational leaders said that establishment of the National Inspectorate Board (NIB) is one of the Education Reform 2007 initiatives (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2007b). The NIB reports to the Ministry of Education Science and Sports as an external evaluating authority for the GES (Ghana News Agency, 2010, October 4).

The functions of the NIB include monitoring the quality assurance issues of pre-tertiary education in the public and private sectors (Ghana National Association of Teachers, GNAT, 2010). The Board is expected to set up inspection panels to provide an independent external evaluation of the quality and standards in educational institutions by focusing on the quality of leadership and management of the institution, and the quality of teaching and learning it provides. Additionally, the directors and supervisors within the regional and district directorates of education are expected to undertake, in accordance with the guidelines of the Board, routine inspection of schools to ensure the maintenance of standards of performance in teaching and learning (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2007b).

The Minister of Education has authorised the Chief Inspector of Schools who is the executive secretary to the Board to act as chairperson. The members of the Board include representatives of all sectors of education, the teaching profession and the community (Figure 5.2) (Ghana National Association of Teachers, GNAT, 2010, p. Act 778).

The circuit supervisors in the District Office report to the District Inspectorate unit. The District Office in turn reports to the Regional Education Office of the GES. The Regional Education Office reports to the Central administration and at the discretion of the Director-General at the top of the GES, the report is passed on to the NIB within the Ministry of Education.

Challenges of Monitoring and Supervision

Challenges encountered in monitoring and supervision include committees that have oversight of quality and yet are not functional; lack of funding to enable circuit supervisors to get out to schools and monitor their work; head teachers are not checking lesson planning and teaching in their schools; all this results in weaker management of government schools than private schools. The state of the GES and District Assembly functional relationship can be deduced from the following statement:

> It is unfortunate we haven't been able to activate DEOC and that is a source of worry to us. I have spoken to my District coordinating Director to try and let us put up this District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC). We haven't been able to inaugurate that committee. I have seen that DEOC has to be put in place if we really want education to work in the District. We are planning towards the end of the week to get the people involved informed and inaugurate the committee to ensure it is working well. (Interview at Tumu: 09.03.10)

Both stakeholders and educational leaders said they were in the process of re-organising the DDC and DEOC, so as to ensure that these two committees are functional.

The informants further explained that the NIB has not commenced work yet. As regards the impact that the National Inspectorate Board (NIB) could have on school inspection the leader had this to say:

> The National Inspectorate Board is one of the wings of the Education Reform. It is there on paper but it hasn't taken effect yet. No one from that unit has come to our District so far, so I can't talk much about its impact. (Interview at Tumu: 16.02.10)

Further, they described the NIB to be a step further in strengthening monitoring and supervision in their capacity as external auditors when it takes off. However, the informants were of the view that the role of the NIB is a duplication of what GES already has in its Inspectorate division at the District, Regional and Central Education Offices, though these serve as internal audit to the service (Interview at Tumu: 16.02.10).

There have been some steps taken towards decentralisation. The informants acknowledged that the shift that has already taken place in the decentralisation process is that the Ghana Education Service is now answerable to the District Assembly. Transfer of some responsibilities for services at the level of Central administration has moved to the District Education Office. The educational leaders were of the view that in a way that was an advantage in the sense that at that level there will be collaborative planning among district level stakeholders.

The composition of DEOC brings together a good number of community stakeholders and educational leaders. The educational leaders considered DEOC as a community structure that facilitates access to basic education and also strengthens monitoring and supervision in schools. DEOC is answerable to the District Assembly. An excerpt from NIB guidelines reported by Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT, 2010) indicates:

Both directors and supervisors within the regional and district directorate of education shall undertake routine inspection of schools to ensure the maintenance of standards of performance in teaching and learning. (p. Act 778)

The District Disciplinary Committee is answerable to the District Director of Education (DDE). A report that needs to go beyond the District will first get to the Regional Director before reaching the Central administration at the headquarters. At the discretion of Director-General at the headquarters then and only then, a decision could be taken to report to the NIB because the issue of maintaining standards is also a concern for both bodies. The end of the reporting line from the NIB is to the Minister of Education. The layers of educational bureaucracy leave an obvious gap between District Assembly and the NIB (see Figure 5.2).
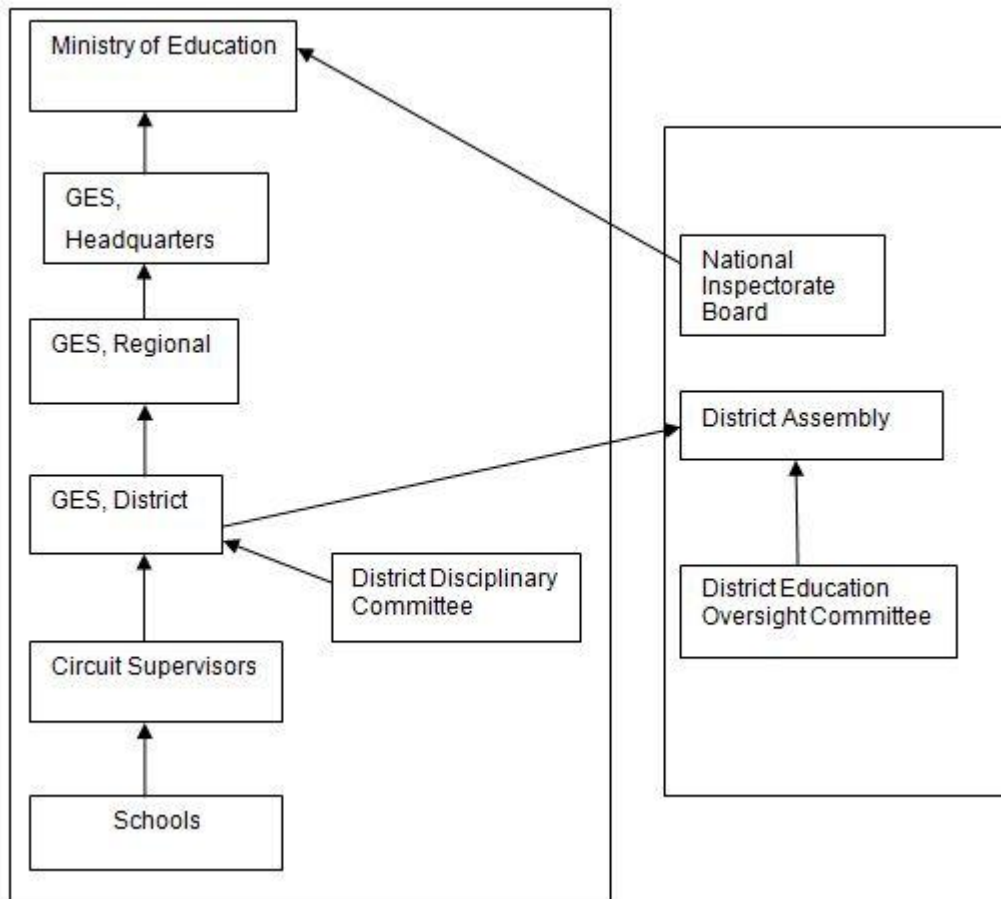
Figure 5.2: Organisational charts showing the reporting lines between agencies that have a role in inspection and supervision of schools.

The leaders expressed concern over insufficient monitoring and supervision in schools due to lack of logistical support. The issue of lack of funds for logistical support for circuit supervisors limits their ability to monitor to ensure all is in place and teachers are teaching well for students to go into exams well prepared. Additionally, the leaders held the view that supervision played a key role in the improvement of schools for quality education and that management of private schools is superior to that of public schools:

> There is a need to sensitise the communities in particular areas that they should take education seriously. Also, I don't know but here, because of the poverty levels, in other areas, private schools have been established. And when you have the private schools the management is very, very good. Down south I have seen some people open private schools and teaching and learning progressed under good management. And then I think the unit schools, you see, these faith based schools, the religious units; the churches, Islamic faiths, if they also step in to manage the schools, the JHS, it will go a long way to enhance the supervision. The public schools because it is public schools, the supervision and all these things is a little bit loose, management is not very effective. (Interview at Tumu: 04.02.10).

Educational stakeholders believed that management in private schools was more effective. The elements of ownership and commitment appear to be two strong factors that underpin the effective control of school management.

The informants acknowledged that average school sizes revealed adequate numbers for the student: teacher ratio; but the issues here are that of teachers who are neither skilled in multi-grade teaching nor competent enough to teach the subjects. The teachers have not been taken through these new materials (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10). According to the leaders, the head teachers and inspectorate unit should ensure that lessons are properly planned and delivered.

> We observe in most of our rounds that some head teachers do not monitor effective teaching and learning, such as ensuring that teachers' lesson notes are marked. This should not happen. (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

The informants identified two levels of supervision within the inspectorate division within the District Education Office. They referred to the first of these levels as subject coordinators e.g. Physical Education coordinator, the Culture coordinator; and, Mathematics coordinator, etc. As the leaders explained, the District office does not have a full complement of coordinators for all subject areas.

The second level of supervision described by the leaders referred to the circuit supervisors. The informants further explained that circuit supervisors were expected to check teacher and student attendance as well as lesson preparation and delivery in schools. The leaders said they were expected to even check on logistics and materials needed for teachers to work well. Additionally, the Inspectorate identifies weaknesses in curriculum implementation from school visits of circuit supervisors. The leaders were of the view that if circuit supervisors did their work well by sitting in classes to observe lessons, they should be able to come up with what may be weaknesses:

> If head teachers and circuit supervisors work round the clock and ensure that they play their roles effectively, the classroom teacher will do the work and we will expect good results at the end of it. And obviously, a major issue is head teachers lack of training, experience and authority to manage their schools. (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10)

The informants referred to head teachers as frontline supervisors at the school level and, expect them to be able to identify professional learning needs which become the basis for school cluster-based workshops.

> **Key finding: 5.4**
>
> The leaders reported that front line inspection and monitoring of teaching and learning in schools is the responsibility of head teachers and circuit supervisors, however, these were ineffective. Key elements of the reform included the establishment of the National Inspectorate Board, National Teaching Council and the District Education Oversight Committee but these as yet have not been established.

Given the complex and multilayered governance structures at district, regional and national levels there is need to have highly efficient communication processes.

Communication Process

The significance of how key personnel of the Ghana Education Service, got the word out about Education Reform 2003, cannot be underestimated. Furthermore, these District level informants were convinced that due process had been followed to the letter; however, there are repercussions of missed opportunities resulting from any communication gaps.

The informants reported how the policy change was communicated to head teachers and classroom teachers in the District. Educational leaders affirmed that the most common practise was the use of circulars. They said copies of documents were sent to the District Office from the Regional Office. Duplicated copies of the documents were distributed to give out information to head teachers and teachers by circuit supervisors who go round schools in their circuits with the circulars or verbal instructions. Further, the local FM radio was used for very urgent issues. The informants said that a meeting of all teachers was held at District level with the District administration and it was at such a District meeting that word was given out about the most recent policy change. This meeting came up in the course of the school term when the current reform was already in progress. The head teachers had indicated that a meeting at District Office and a radio broadcast were the two ways in which they found out about the reform (KF 4.5) thus corroborating the leaders' views. The informants also mentioned the practise of having workshops and conferences to review policy implementation processes. An informant mentioned that "workshops, conferences and in-service trainings have brought some teachers abreast with policies and methodology" (Interview at Tumu: 10.03.10). Despite this claim there have been consistent reports that planned workshops and in-service trainings have not been implemented due to limitation in funding.

The leaders were of the opinion that the cost involved in policy dissemination and implementation is enormous. They recommended that there is the need to solicit assistance from development partners to address the challenges.

Missed Opportunities

Finally, the issue raised by the leaders and stakeholders as a threat to accessibility, concerned missed opportunities of the rural schools. By the time information came in about upcoming events, dates have already come and gone. The leaders believed this had a lot to do with the existing communication patterns. Communication trickled down through layers of administration before getting down to the base. These informants explained that children of the District missed out on many opportunities that students in urban areas benefit from especially as part of preparations for the BECE. They also suggested that it will be better if the decentralisation policy was fully implemented rather than just leaving it on paper. The leaders believed that this will help to bring administration closer to remote areas such as the District. Additionally, these leaders lamented over being a disadvantaged location of the District and they were of the opinion that they are not accessing the full allocation of resources that they should get.

Key finding 5.5

The data indicates that information about Reform 2007 was communicated to schools by sending out circulars, a meeting at District Office and by an FM radio broadcast. The shortfall in the field indicated that remote and rural area schools have often been left out of information circulation. Sometimes copies of circulars addressed to some schools never reached them or arrived when scheduled dates of events have long expired. Additionally, poor communication through the many layers of the educational bureaucracy hindered accessibility to educational opportunities.

Performance

As yet the performance data as indicated by the BECE do not show any significant increase in the schools of the District between 2007 and 2011. Table 5.1 presents percentage pass rates from 2007 to 2011 as indicated by the analysis of West African Examination Council (WAEC) results:

Table 5.1: BECE pass rates % for the Sissala East District: 2007-2011

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Pass rates with an aggregate 6-30	58.86	36.35	48.79	36.60	48.80

(Source: GES Sissala East District 2011)

To get a pass in the examinations the aggregate of numerical grades for the subjects need to be 30 or lower. Having an aggregate of 30 or lower does not guarantee a place in the SHS unless candidates have scores less than five in all their core subjects (Ghana Education Service, WAEC, 1993). The general figure that is used as the pass rate for 2007, in the District (58.86%) is based on candidates with an aggregate score of 6–30. What is perhaps more relevant is to focus on the pass rate of those candidates with an aggregate of 6-30 but with a score of 5 or less in the core subjects. It is these candidates that will automatically gain a place at SHS. If the District solely concentrates on the overall figure it will possibly develop a misunderstanding of how many students are likely to progress into SHS. The use of the Computerised System by WAEC to register candidates, also means that those candidates who may have an aggregate of 6-30 yet have not 'passed' one or more core subjects, will have more difficulty being placed in SHS as the computerised system will automatically allocate places to those that are better qualified.

On a positive note, if one looks at the pass rate of candidates with an aggregate of 6-30 and no core subject higher than 6, then this figure is 56.46% just over 2% less than the general figure adopted for 2007. The point to make is that potentially there is a very large group of students that are very close to achieving a pass recognised by WAEC. If this is the situation in most years in the District then there is potential to improve the overall pass mark substantially. However, the trend as presented in Table 7.1 indicates a sharp drop from a percentage pass rate of 58.86 in 2007 to 36.35 in 2008; 48.79 in 2009; 36.60 in 2010; and, 48.87 in 2011. Additionally, there are greater percentages of rural community JHSs that consistently register a zero percent pass rate for their BECE candidates.

Key finding 5.6

BECE performance has not increased in the District between 2007 and 2011. The pass rate between 2008 and 2011 has not been above 48% which is 10% lower than what it was in 2007.

Summary

This chapter builds on the findings previously reported in Chapter four from the Head teachers' survey and focus groups. Findings have been derived from interviews and focus group of educational leaders and stakeholders at District level. The five main findings from the interviews of the leaders and focus group of the circuit supervisors indicate that there are some aspects of successful policy implementation and other barriers to quality education.

The first key finding revealed that though both FCUBE and Education Reform 2007 attempted to improve access to education, the Capitation Grant and greater support from PTAs have helped increase enrolments and reduced attrition rate, however, students are still missing out on educational opportunities due to insufficient family support, and teachers lacking in professionalism and motivation.

The second key finding is that while the integration of subjects and the restructuring of the curriculum was a positive outcome of Education Reform 2007, implementation of that new curriculum has been constrained by:

- the lack of trained teachers able to teach the subjects of the new curriculum,
- the inability to comply with the policy of providing trained teachers in each of the transition classes,
- the lack of proficiency in the English language among both students and teachers, and
- the inflexible policy requiring all the students in the District to be examined in the same local language, namely Dagaare, regardless of how proficient students and teachers are in that language.

The third key finding is that the leaders explained that Reform 2007 included three programs to increase teacher capacity. They reported that distance education program provided to top-up underqualified teachers to diploma level were too short in duration to build the teachers' capacity. In-service training of teachers at school level had not been fully implemented due to lack of funding and logistical problems. The teacher-trainee sponsorship scheme had limited success as it failed to attract teachers into Science, Maths and English programs.

The fourth key finding the leaders reported indicated that front line inspection and monitoring of teaching and learning in schools is the responsibility of head teachers and circuit supervisors, however, these were ineffective. Key elements of the reform included the establishment of the National Inspectorate Board, National Teaching Council and the District Education Oversight Committee but these as yet have not been

established. Additionally, Whole School Development, School Performance Improvement Plan, Performance Monitoring Test, School Performance Appraisal Meeting and District Teacher Support Team all assist with monitoring and supervision of schools.

The fifth key finding the data indicates that information about Reform 2007 was communicated to schools by sending out circulars, a meeting at District Office and by an FM radio broadcast. The shortfall in the field indicated that remote and rural area schools have often been left out of information circulation. Sometimes copies of circulars addressed to some schools never reached them or arrived when scheduled dates of events have long expired. Additionally, poor communication through the many layers of the educational bureaucracy hindered accessibility to educational opportunities.

The sixth key finding is that BECE performance has not improved in the District between 2007 and 2011. The pass rate between 2008 and 2011 has not been above 48% which is 10% lower than it was in 2007.

The next chapter presents perspectives from the key stakeholders and educational leaders at regional and central levels of educational administration.

CHAPTER SIX:
REGIONAL-CENTRAL PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

This chapter analyses the views of key stakeholders and educational leaders at the level of regional-central educational administration of the implementation of Education Reform 2007. Informants included the Director, Basic Education at the national office, Regional Director of Education, a College of Education Principal from the Region, and, the Regional Secretary, Ghana National Association of Teachers. The organisational chart (Figure: 6.1) shows the functional relationships between regional-central leaders and administrators.
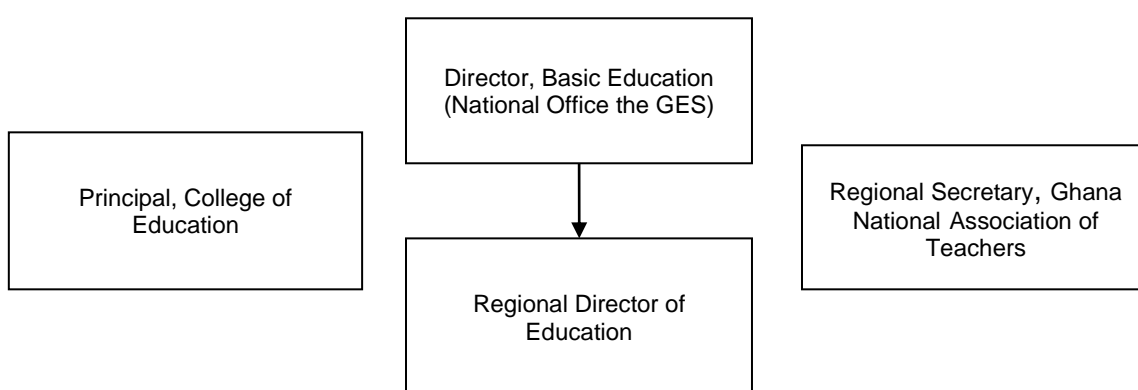
Figure: 6.1: Organisational charts showing the functional relationships between regional-central leaders and administrators.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants in February and April 2010. The interviews explored opinions regarding education policy implementation and departmental administration. Three key themes emerged from the analysis of the data about education policy implementation, namely: making education accessible; barriers to quality education; and, building teacher capacity.

Accessibility to Education

The leaders agree with Akyeampong (2009) that the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy demonstrates Ghana's commitment to the Education for All (EFA) goals (Cobbold, 2007). The purpose of EFA is that all children should be in school with no group left behind. Additionally, it is an EFA goal that all children continue in school until at least the end of the basic education cycle, and these children show a measure of proficiency in reading, writing, mathematics, and life skills (Ghana News Agency, 2011, May 17). In a similar vein, the FCUBE policy makes the education of the

child an indisputable right. From the FCUBE, (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2003) Ghana Education Service (GES) is able to derive the national objectives which drive education delivery. The informants affirmed that FCUBE frames the national objectives; they are now able to review the state of education and come up with areas of concern:

> Now in terms of these plans we are focusing on critical issues. Now we have indicators and we know where we are lacking and where we are not lacking so that at least we can address these challenges. (Interview at Accra: 12.04.10)

As regards accessibility to education the data revealed four issues that impact on schooling, namely: girls' education; issues of attrition; strategies to enhance enrolments; and, community participation in education service delivery.

Girls' Education

The data indicate that the leaders considered girls' education to be a top priority. The leaders believed that the negative effects of not attending school were greater for girls than for boys (Interview at Wa: 23.03.10). Both boys and girls drop out of school for various reasons and re-engagement into school seems to be more difficult for the girls. For instance when girls dropped out of school as a result of being pregnant, in most cases, that marked the end of school for them because poverty and illiteracy, coupled with the burden of caring for a child puts them at a disadvantage. However, boys were usually able to return to school even after they dropped out for a while. Statistics outlined by stakeholders and educational leaders in terms of access indicated that more girls suffer greater disadvantage than the boys. The leaders stated that from primary one admission enrolments for boys and girls were almost equal, however, more girls drop out than boys. The informants considered girls education as an issue since they were convinced that the ripple effect of educating a woman can resound within and beyond a household. The establishment of a Girls' Education Unit within the Basic Education Division of the GES is an indication of efforts showing the importance attached to girls' education. The Unit ensures that the aims of FCUBE are met especially in ensuring that girls' enrolment and retention increased:

> We are attaching importance to the education of girls so as to encourage them to attend school. At the time of registering to enrol there are almost equal numbers of boys and girls. The dropout rate for the girls by the time they finish has often been the problem. (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10)

The issue of enhanced enrolment is consistent with the report from district level educational leaders about the positive impact of government and non-government interventions. The "Science, Technology, and Mathematics Education (STME)" clinic is

one of such interventions for JHS girls (Focus group at Tumu: 26.02.10; KF5.1). The STME clinic which usually came up during the long vacation helped to sustain the interest of girls in science and related subjects in the SHS and universities. However, the concern expressed indicated that as the students progress through the grades the girls begin to drop out and by the time they finish junior high school, there were only a few of them. The leaders further suggested that the issues about dropout centre on some of these students who got into the local practice of elopement and early marriages. The leaders said that a contributory factor to this problem was seen to be the lack of a program about family life, and sexual reproductive and health education in the schools. Further, it was also reported that some Muslim families got their girls married early out of fear that someone of another religion may take the girls away. Girls' education was therefore not a priority:

> The problem of family life and sex education is lacking in the schools. Moreover, Muslims don't take chances with their girls in terms of marrying them off early for the dowry so that someone from another religion won't take them away. (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10)

Issues of Attrition

The second key issue in relation to accessibility of education reported by the leaders indicated that the main problem is dropout of students at JHS One, Two and Three. Approximately 40% of students who manage to complete JHS, gain admission into SHS. Statistics presented from the District Office indicated that 36.4% of students in the Sissala East District passed the BECE in 2008/2009 (Ghana Education Service, 2009). The leaders said that 60% JHS students who did not pass their exams left school ill equipped and not proficient in reading, writing, mathematics or craft and technical skills to enter the job market and this view was also reported by the Ghana News Agency (2010, April 12).

Furthermore, the BECE is used both for certification and placement. The leaders said that anybody who was able to go through the 11 years basic education and attempts the BECE qualified for a certificate irrespective of whether they gained a place in senior high school. Since admission into SHS is highly competitive, high grades are required to get a place into SHS. One informant argued that the end of JHS should not be the end point of education for so many students. BECE should not be seen as a terminal point in education (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10).

Strategies to Enhance Retention

Ampratwum and Armah-Attoh (2010) state that within the 2004-2005 academic year, Ghana took on a policy to abolish school fees. Within the same year Capitation Grant

was introduced, to enhance the attainment of universal access to basic education. Furthermore, the Capitation Grant Scheme supports the FCUBE policy of free, universal primary education (Ampratwum & Armah-Attoh, 2010). The government supported each child in basic education with a Capitation Grant of about 4.5 Ghana cedis (US$ 3.1) per pupil per year (Maikish & Gershberg, 2008). Additionally, Ampratwum and Armah-Attoh (2010) suggest that the school fees abolition policy is also part of the mandate for Ghana to meet its Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets (Two and Three). MDG Two refers to universal primary education and MDG Three is about gender equality in education (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2003). The informants explained that both the Capitation Grant Scheme and the School Feeding Program have been employed by the Ghana Education Service as strategies to enhance enrolment and retention of children in school. The leaders further explained that these programs assisted in alleviating the financial burden poor parents shouldered in meeting the cost of primary education for their children (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10).

The positive impacts of the Capitation Grant mentioned by informants at regional-central level were consistent with those raised at the district level and by head teachers (see Table 4.10; KF5.1). Ampratwum and Armah-Attoh (2010, p. 3) indicate that "Capitation Grants were to be used to support the implementation of the School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP)". Consequently, head teachers ability to access their school's allocation of Capitation Grant was determined by successfully drawing up their school's SPIP and getting it approved by the GES Office. Head teachers' focus group shared their frustration in accessing this Grant when one informant said: "the money will be there, but, to get it, is very hard!" (Focus Group Discussion at Bujan: 22.01.10; KF 4.10). Another head teacher explained that due to the low enrolment figures of his school, he simply left his Capitation Grant to grow for a couple of years before cashing it (Focus Group Discussion at Kunchogu: 5.02.10). That head teacher loses his school's allocation altogether since the leaders explained that monies that are not cashed at the end of the year were usually returned to chest. The informants expressed the view that as soon as the Capitation Grant came, the various monies that teachers took from the students reduced:

> This is helping to alleviate poverty. As soon as the Capitation Grant came, catering for small levies that teachers take from children decreased remarkably. (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10)

The data revealed that enrolments have increased since parents no longer pay fees. This is consistent with district level reports from PTA representative (Interview at Tumu: 04.02.10 & KF 5.1) that affirmed that more families were sending their children to school. The leaders explained that this helped parents pay for school uniforms and

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exercise books, pens and pencils so that children can actively participate in class work. The informants were of the opinion that due to the prime importance given to the implementation of the Capitation Grant program, considerable improvement can be seen in some quarters of education delivery in Ghana.

Additionally, the data indicated that the Catholic Relief Service's school feeding program made it possible for some school children to get a meal at school. The leaders explained that when school children have their basic needs satisfied they become more relaxed and happy. Further, they participate fully in school activities and that enhances good performance. The data revealed that Catholic Relief Services also came in with interventions in support of girls' education such as a bicycle they would ride and come to school in time. As indicated by the data, ordinarily, these girls were from homes that perhaps could never afford a bicycle so this becomes a huge incentive to the girl and her whole family. Further, the World Food Program provides a take-home ration made up of a measure of maize and cooking oil enough to feed three people, for girls who obtained a minimum of 80% school attendance within a term. The informants believed that this was a contributory factor to the high' enrolment figures for girls in the region. They said this explains why the gender parity index within the region is now 1:1 and at certain places it is 1:1.5. The leaders' observation revealed that the gender parity index of 1:1 holds true for only the lower primary especially around the early stages of enrolment. The issue of retention continued to be a challenge beyond the level of primary school.

Community Support for Education

The fourth and final issue raised by the leaders was that some of the children go to school without the requisite materials. The question here is: how can the children write? The informants also said, some of the children go to school hungry; because their parents could not give them anything to eat. Sometimes there are situations as ordinary as even the poor state of a child's school uniform: it could be very dirty or tattered, needing to be laundered and yet there seems to be no one to guide the child to do things right from home. The observation of these leaders corroborates findings from district leaders and head teachers' on the issue of culture and family circumstances (KF 4.6 & KF 5.1). The leaders recognised that these are challenges that emanate from the home:

> The challenge of management is to be able to count on the contribution that parents, SMCs, PTAs and all who are in support of the schools need to make. Some of the children go to school empty handed and without a book or a pen; how can they write? Some of the children go to school on empty stomach; because they don't eat early in their homes. (Interview at Accra: 12.04.10)

The data indicate that GES is required in its role to work together with the School Management Committee (SMC) and Parents-Teacher Association (PTA), Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) and civil society organisations (e.g. faith based organisations, community based organisations, and NGOs) since they all have a stake in school management (Ghana Education Service, 2001). The data indicate that the SMC is a school community-based institution aimed at strengthening community participation and mobilisation for education delivery. Membership of SMCs includes representatives from local communities, parents and teachers. The SMCs are expected to support head teachers in the general management of the schools and assist them in identifying priority areas for school development and mobilising community support. The SMC, PTA Handbook (2001) further describes PTAs as associations of parents and teachers in a particular school or cluster of schools. Parents in each community can also be provided information through School Performance Appraisal Meetings (SPAM) conducted by circuit supervisors who report on how their schools performed on each of the school assessments.

Additionally, if teachers were not coming to school, agencies like GNAT, SMC, PTA and local associations could even come in to help school management to arrest the situation. Further, the community could also offer assistance in safe-guarding school land from trespassers:

> Additionally, educational leaders agreed that a safe school environment was conducive for learning. The leaders said that there were some individuals and communities that continue to encroach on school lands. The leaders believed that if GES was not careful a time will come when there will no longer be space for play grounds. They agreed that play is important for children in learning so there was need to safeguard school land. (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10)

Additionally, the leaders suggested that some evidence of impact of reform initiatives was seen in the renewed importance attached to the role of School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). Activities that heightened community participation played central role in supporting school improvement. The leaders explained that the aim was to strengthen "communities' sense of ownership and community commitment in education service delivery" (Akyeampong, 2004, p. 4). The informants are of the view that when the school children see their parents involved with the school it helps to boost their enthusiasm for school (Interview at Accra: 12.04.10).

Barriers to Quality Education

The educational leaders and stakeholders suggested that barriers to quality education were encountered in the administration of key FCUBE and 2007 Education Reform programs namely: low levels of teacher professionalism and inadequate supervision of teaching; an insufficient supply of trained teachers; and, access to and participation in teacher education. The leaders believed that barriers to these key areas brought about basic challenges that affect education quality.

Teacher Professionalism and Supervision of Teaching

The data revealed issues that need to be addressed by management, namely: loss of contact hours through teacher absenteeism and poor supervision. The loss of valuable contact hours often resulted in teachers and students not covering the entire syllabus as required for the BECE examinations. The informants expressed concern over the spate of teacher absenteeism:

> Whether teachers absent themselves with permission or without permission, all leads to loss of contact hours. (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10)

The concern raised about loss of contact hours is consistent with those mentioned by key personnel at the district level who also identified the issue of teacher time on task as critical (Interview at Tumu: 27.01.10; KF5.1). However, the issue of loss of contact hours was not considered as critical by the head teachers as revealed in their survey (Table 4.11) regarding the impact of factors affecting the quality of teaching and learning. The informants said that under such circumstances, syllabi for the BECE classes were never fully covered. The leaders drew attention to the fact that the three year program in the JHS in effect ended up as a two and a half year course because BECE is written in April but the syllabus is programmed to end in August of each academic year. According to the educational leaders and stakeholders there are many teachers that are not committed enough to give the extra time required to ensure that their class completed the syllabus. Additionally, the comment of the leaders about

teachers' lack of commitment to teaching corroborates interview data from district level (Interview at Tumu: 26.02.10), who further reiterated the issue of poor morale among the teachers as a contributing factor to their low level of commitment.

The second issue relating to management efficiency was reported by the informants that the parents seemed to lack the zeal to compete, in a way that could challenge them to further financial commitment for the sake of an improved BECE results for their wards. The GES counts on the contribution of parents towards their children's' education. When parents fail to take their share of responsibility towards their children, it becomes a concern for management to devise ways and means of satisfying these basic preparatory needs of the school children so as to positively affect their learning. Among such needs are the extra literature and writing materials that can support student learning. Further, the leaders mentioned private agencies that set sample examinations questions and brought these to the Districts for a fee. The leaders observed that the poverty levels of parents especially in Sissala East District were such that they would not pay for what they considered as extra examination tuition. The perception of the parents is that the school should be doing enough to prepare the children for the BECE:

> Our people, especially the Sissala East District are not ready to invest in the education of their children. They will not pay for extra school materials. Students are therefore limited to what their teachers teach and only set test items based on what they have taught. (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10)

However, teachers set test items based on only what they have taught so if they were not able to finish the syllabus, they set the test only on those topics they have been able to teach which is a limiting factor that affects the students negatively. Based on this observation, GES Regional administration organised mock examinations for all JHS grade three students in the Region. The exercise was set on BECE mock examination standards and therefore helped give feedback to students and teachers about what further work was needed to master the syllabus. Additionally, the exercise allowed the students the opportunity of experiencing a BECE style examination. Stakeholders agreed that parents were not to be asked to pay because they were certain that they would not get their cooperation on that. The leaders said the Regional Minister was asked to get the District Chief Executives to consult the District Assemblies to pay for these maiden 2010 BECE mock examinations.

The third concern expressed by stakeholders was that little or no supervision of teaching and learning out in the schools. Each cluster of schools forms a circuit. A circuit supervisor appointed to each circuit is expected to inspect schools within the circuit and support the head teachers in developing leadership and management skills

and competencies. among other functions, inspects schools within the circuit and supports the head teachers in developing leadership and management skills and competencies. Stakeholders were of the opinion that the Inspectorate divisions at the various education offices were not doing enough as regards the supervision of teachers as they teach in their schools. One informant described a situation where some teachers spend a lot of time under trees on the school premise chatting away during contact hours (Interview at Wa: 04.02.10):

> Inspectorate divisions at the various education offices to me, I think that enough is not done in that respect since supervision of teachers as they teach in their work places is not effectively done. (Interview at Wa: 08.02.10)

This finding supports the comment of one head teacher that teachers would benefit from more direction in terms of lesson preparation from the authorities (Focus group discussion at Kunchogu: 05.02.10).

Inadequate Resources to Support Policy Implementation

The educational leaders raised concerns about the lack of resources needed to implement Reform 2007. A lack of ICT resources, instructional materials and inadequate buildings were barriers to quality education.

The first of these issues reported by the leaders about ICT as a reform initiative was that, it is expected to be one of the core subjects to be studied by students at the JHS as well as the College of Education. The data revealed that GES wanted to start with ICT in BECE in the 2010 academic year, but unfortunately GES did not have enough schools with computers. The gap here was an issue for the lack of adequate resourcing of the expanded curriculum (Table 4.14). This finding substantiates head teachers focus group (Focus group at Kunchogu: 05.02.10) data that stated that none of the schools have computers. Additionally, the leaders reported that the requisite textbooks were not available, and so students shared the few available books for reading:

> We have introduced ICT for instance, but, how many schools have computers now? We don't have the right textbooks. In a class you may find three students sharing one book for reading. (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10)

However, the data revealed that in some schools textbooks were available but head teachers decided to pack them up somewhere for fear that if the books were given out to the students, the books will get lost. However, head teachers' survey data reported that textbooks were in short supply (Focus group at Welembele: 29.01.10). The implication here is that, students will be seen sharing a few textbooks among themselves even when there could be enough copies stored away. This therefore adds to the wastage within the system.

The second key issue reported by the data revealed that teaching and learning materials were in short supply with special reference to the need at the Information Communication Technology centre at the College of Education. However, the Government had assured the teachers college that computers will be sent to them in due course, and that was yet to be realised. At the pre-service level it is a policy initiative that teacher-trainees also study and write exams in ICT as part of their program of study.

A third issue reported by the leaders was that schools initially received their copies of the new syllabi on CDs. The schools needed to complain for the Office to be aware that the schools could not access the information on the CD for lack of computers and so hard copies were later dispatched from the Districts to all the schools. Additionally, this incident is another issue highlighting inadequate communication between the levels of administration. This corroborates data presented at the levels of district and head teachers' perspectives on this issue of inadequate resourcing to support policy implementation (Focus group at Tumu: 29.01.10 & KF 4.1).

The fourth and final key issue identified by the stakeholders mentioned that school buildings were not adequate. As regards inadequate resources they said there were still schools that were under trees, and this is a barrier to quality education (Focus group at Nabulo: 27/1/10 and Interview at Tumu: 10.03.10). The leaders acknowledged that all basic schools were mandated to have kindergartens (KG) attached. In as much as KGs were expected to be opened in all basic schools, the issue of inadequate classrooms to contain the KGs still persist. The issue of inadequate classrooms corroborates the reports of the head teachers in focus group discussion (Focus group at Kunchogu: 05.02.10). Some classrooms are totally without furniture since the students sit on the bare floor. One informant said he had visited some of the schools to see the classrooms and found it "was simply appalling" (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10).

Key finding 6.2

Two significant barriers to quality education include high levels of teacher absenteeism due to low levels of teacher professionalism and inadequate supervision, and inadequate ICT and teaching resources to support policy implementation.

Inadequate Supply of Trained Teachers

The educational leaders identified the inadequate supply of qualified teachers as a major factor limiting the quality of education in junior high schools.

Lack of Teachers Qualified to Teach Specialist Subjects

The first of the issues reported by the leaders revealed that the implementation of the curriculum gets hampered when some teachers decided not to teach certain subjects. The leaders said their training from the college of education equips them as primary teachers to handle all the JHS subjects and it is therefore unacceptable that teachers leave some portions of the syllabus untaught.

Furthermore, the data indicated that the local language Sissala is not an approved language for the school timetable, so there is no program that teaches Sissala in any of the colleges. This concern of the regional leaders corroborates what has been reported by educators within the District. Both teachers and students find teaching and studying a Ghanaian language other than their own very challenging (Interview at Tumu: 27.01.10 & KF 5.2). Similarly, French is also included as an elective subject, however, there was no teaching of that subject since there was no qualified French teacher in the District (Interview at Tumu: 09.03.10). Additionally, the leaders questioned the relevance of French as a new addition to the expanded curriculum. They went on to say that Ghana is first beside the sea along the south. The surrounding countries on the east, north and western sides are French speaking countries but, how much French is spoken in Ghana? French has been made compulsory in schools, but, how many French teachers do these schools have, was the rhetoric. Some of the leaders at regional and national levels believed that teachers were not preparing adequately for their teaching before they go to the classroom:

> Sometimes some of them have decided not to teach the subject. So their interest is not there and some do not even make the advance preparations before they go to the classroom. I think that professionally they are not preparing for their lessons. (Interview at Accra: 12.04.10)

The leaders said some teachers were not using the appropriate methodology and were lacking in professionalism.

Shortage of Teacher Supply

A third and related challenge to the quality of teaching and learning in the Upper West region and particularly the Sissala East District has been the shortage in teacher supply even though there is a College of Education located right there in the District. The present situation of so many untrained teachers in the JHS negatively impacts on the output of work in the schools (Interview at Accra: 12.04.10). The head teachers' survey reveals that 34% of JHS teachers are untrained (Table: 4.5). An informant explained that the untrained teachers have come into the system due to a deployment challenge. The informants observed that wastage in the system in the form of teachers

trained at government's expense but do not accept a posting to a school and then never return to the education service. The informants referred to these teachers as missing in transit (Interview at Accra: 12.04.10). The leaders saw this as an indication that facilities in our schools are not good enough in terms of the socio-economic conditions of some of the stations. The leaders expressed the view that the presence of untrained teachers in the education system affects quality delivery. This view resonates with the national education indicators which states that determinants for quality teachers were well qualified teachers (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2003). The leaders explained that at the inception of the Reform 2007, all the untrained teachers in the system were given the opportunity to upgrade to the Diploma in Basic Education. Furthermore, the sponsorship idea was introduced so that when teachers finish training they would have been bonded to go back to teach in the district where they were sponsored. The informants affirmed that this arrangement has been very helpful but there is still a long way to go.

The leaders considered the shortage to be particularly critical for the core subjects of Mathematics; Science; Social Studies; and, English:

> We have a problem with quality delivery especially in some critical subject areas. We find it very difficult getting trained teachers to teach Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and English. (Interview at Accra: 12.04.10)

The informants explained that when students obtain grade seven or lower in any of these core subjects, they do not qualify to go to the SHS. The reality is that most students register very poor grades and therefore fail in these subjects. The informants unanimously agreed that JHS education performance is not acceptable.

The leaders also considered the cost involved in the training of specialist teachers in core subjects such as Maths and Science. The informants were convinced that with so many small schools it would not be a worthwhile venture:

> The problem with the specialist training is the fact that it is very expensive. If you train a teacher for Maths and he goes to the school and only has a handful of students that is not worth the investment. In some districts the average pupil/teacher ratio is a teacher to 16 students at the JHS and in many others it is even less. So it is not very economical. So teachers who go in to the JHS should be given additional form of training to bring them to a higher level, but generally they should be able to handle the JHS with a little support. (Interview at Accra: 12.04.10)

The leaders explained that if the shortage of these specialist teachers is to be alleviated the District Assembly should sponsor more teacher-trainees in the 15 colleges for Science and Mathematics. The Assembly needs to identify what the needs are, and communicate these to the applicants through the GES. The leaders are of the

view that the District Assembly needs information from the GES in order to carry out such a mandate. They explained that such teacher trainees would usually sign a bond to at least serve the District for not less than five years before they can then leave on transfer elsewhere. The informants were aware that the District Director of Education is secretary to the education sub-committee which is one among several other social services of the District Assembly. They explained that, it is this sub-committee that decides on how many students are to be sponsored by the District Assembly to the various levels of higher education (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10).

Key finding 6.3

The schools experience difficulty in accessing an adequate supply of specialist teachers for core subjects and to teach French and the local language, Sissala. The leaders indicated that the District Assembly should sponsor more students to study specialist subject at the College of Education.

Access and Participation in Teacher Education

The leaders were of the view that there were basic challenges that affected education quality in the area of access and the level of participation of stakeholders in teacher education. The informants identified three factors limiting the effectiveness of pre-service teacher education namely: awareness of the program; quota system; and, control of curriculum design and examinations in the colleges of education.

Awareness of the Program

The first of these issues related to prospective candidates' lack of awareness of the programs and needs of the District. The data indicated that the general public needed to be aware that Tumu College of Education is one of seven colleges of education offering specialisation in Early Childhood Development as an elective. The leaders explained that there are 15 colleges that offer a special diploma program in mathematics and science. Additionally, there are 10 colleges that offer technical education. There are three colleges that offer French as a special program. There are also three colleges that offer admission to students with disabilities; namely visually and hearing impaired. All 38 teacher training colleges have been upgraded to Diploma awarding colleges. Teachers trained from these colleges are capable of teaching all subjects at the primary and junior high school levels. One informant explained that advertisements for admission to colleges need to state clearly the kind of program the college offers (Interview at Tumu: 10.03.10). Based on the result slips (academic transcript from the senior secondary examination) of applicants, the college has been

able to further sort out and re-direct candidates to colleges where they should go rather than ending up in the wrong program.

According to the leaders, students recruited were to have the requisite entry qualification of a minimum of aggregate 24 (this aggregate is based on four core subjects and two electives) since they are now studying for a Diploma. The leaders said the colleges looked out for the best so that students can pursue the program without difficulty:

> Students who are admitted must have a right entry qualification for a diploma program. Our selection criteria look out for the best so that people can follow the program without problems. We conduct written as well as oral interviews to select from, and our minimum qualification is aggregate 24. (Interview at Tumu: 9.03.10)

The leaders believed that a lot of time is required for awareness raising about the programs offered by the colleges:

> Sensitisation should start at the secondary school level. Very soon we want to take advantage of the local FM radio station in selling out the college program, as sensitisation to the general public about what is going on. (Interview at Tumu: 09.03.10)

Quota System

Secondly, the leaders explained that the colleges have no control over the number of students that are admitted because admissions are based on quota allocations. The quota which has been generated for a college is based on information which would have been initially supplied by the college, and this has become the basis for resource allocations of all supplies that come from government to the college. The number of applicants to the teacher education program is often much greater than the current quota. The leaders said many applicants get turned away each year for lack of places. It should be possible to look closely at the result slips of these applicants and re-direct them with sponsorship to places and programs that have the vacancy. In so doing, the District gains some additional specialist teachers that are in short supply (Interview at Tumu: 09.03.10).

Control of Curriculum

The third and final issue raised by the leaders was that colleges are not in control of designing their curriculum. The informants explained that the curriculum was designed by the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of the Ministry of Education in Accra (Curriculum Research and Development Division, 2007). They explained that colleges only provided support services in terms of teaching and supervision of the training of the teachers. Additionally, the exams were prepared by

the University to which the college is affiliated. The informants are of the view that as an institution the colleges are not in control of key activities. The colleges of education are all under the administration of the National Council for Tertiary Education. Salaries of their staff continue to reach them through the GES, National Office. Additionally, recruitment of candidates for the colleges is through the District Education Directorate and District Assembly. The concern was that sometimes the college had some issues about the courses offered in terms of its content and assessments but had no mandate to make any alterations (Interview at Tumu: 09.03.10).

The informants were convinced that for a successful and effective education in the district, pre-service and in-service need to collaborate. The informants were concerned that the college only trained teachers but does not know how they perform in the District. They believe that there should be some conscious efforts in following up to see their effectiveness, in terms of strengths and weaknesses.

Key finding 6.4

While Reform 2007 enhanced access and participation in teacher education, there were still constraints regarding college applicants' awareness of the programs of study offered by different colleges, quota systems for enrolments in the colleges' lack of control of the curriculum.

Building Teacher Capacity

Harnessing capacity and support in the education service and the wider community is an essential aspect of leadership. Consequently, educational leaders' believed that capacity building at all levels within the hierarchy of the Ghana Education Service (GES) is critical for raising education standards. According to the informants, capacity building normally involved training that follows a top-down approach, namely, the Directors coming first before the teachers in the classrooms. The informants indicated that all leadership training programs were designed to support managers within the GES. There are several financial management training programs also earmarked for teachers in key positions so that efficiency can be improved. They were of the view that financial management needs to be included in professional development. According to the informants, this is to ensure that there is prudency in the use of finance for educational activities.

The leaders identified five strategies which were all central to the education reform. These include: reform of teacher education; the District Teacher Support Team; the NIB; educational decentralisation; and, enhancement to communication processes.

Reform of Teacher Education

The first of these strategies reported by the leaders was about the ways by which reform initiatives impacted on teachers. In relation to the target for teachers' upgrading their qualifications, the leaders revealed that by the year 2015, the least qualified teacher in Ghana should hold a Diploma in Basic Education. The onus now lies on the college of education to train the new teachers to be placed at the level of Diploma. The teachers in the schools who are untrained or hold certificates must be upgraded to Diploma level.

The leaders at Regional and National levels explained that underqualified teachers were encouraged to participate in what is referred to as the 'top-up' program. This substantiates the issue of professional upgrading raised at District level interviews (KF5.3). According to the informants regarding efforts to improve on teacher quality, teachers are being encouraged to take advantage of the distance learning programs that are organised by the Universities of Education, in Winneba and at Cape Coast respectively.

> These are efforts to improve on teacher quality. We are also encouraging many teachers to take advantage of the distance learning programs that are organised by the Universities of Education Winneba and Cape Coast. Most of the lectures and assessment exams take place over the weekends so that teachers can improve upon quality and then we can be sure something good is happening about teachers' qualification. (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10)

The leaders were also concerned about the lack of program specialisations in the colleges of education for kindergarten (KG) attendants and the high incidence of untrained teachers in kindergartens. An informant explained that:

> Currently most attendants in KG's are untrained. People tend to think that no specialisation is required at this level. Even for us who more or less admit the students into the program, just because they are desperate in getting admission, we don't use any criteria in determining who is where for now, just an arbitrary distribution. But you find out that some express interests, others think to go to KG, is to underrate him or her. (Interview at Tumu: 09.03.10)

The informants claimed that people tend to believe that no specialisation was required for work at the KG level. The leaders confirmed that no criteria were used in determining the placement of students at the time of admission to teachers colleges. The data indicated that it was a random distribution of students on admission. The leaders said that sometimes students expressed particular preference; however, there were applicants who believed that it was too demeaning to do the Early Childhood program and that influenced their choice of program.

The informants explained that the Tumu College now runs a three-year Diploma in Basic Education, offering specialisation in Early Childhood Development as an elective, instead of the three year post-secondary Teachers' Certificate 'A' program. There are teaching modules to ensure positive impact:

> The reform has come with some modules to ensure that these initiatives actually impact on teacher education. We are now running three year diploma courses instead of the three year certificate 'A'. (Interview at Tumu: 09.03.10)

Furthermore, the informants mentioned the In-In-Out program for the Colleges of Education as an arrangement that allows teacher-trainees to be at college for the first two years for course work; the third year, they are out in the schools. Towards the end of the year out as teaching mentees under a mentor in a school, trainees return to college to finish up their training with a written exam. The 'out' program exposure helps to give a meaningful balance to content and methodology. The leaders explained that there are on-going attempts at harmonising the curriculum of the college with that of basic school (Interview at Tumu: 09.03.10). Products from the teacher education program come out as teachers for basic schools, namely; KG, primary and the JHS. One informant said that each teacher trainee is given a set of the entire syllabi of the basic school subjects. The trainees are taken through the methodology of teaching those subjects as part of the training program. In this way whether teacher-trainees were assigned to teach KG, primary or JHS, they would have been duly exposed. According to the informants there was a conscious effort to ensure that the college curriculum synchronises with that of the basic school. In the areas of ICT, French, Creative Arts, Citizenship Education and Early Childhood education there is an emphasis on methodology. ICT is a major course in the college now and it is examinable for the teacher-trainees. These trainees come out of college expected to be capable of teaching these subjects despite limited ICT resources in the colleges and in schools.

Additionally, the calibre of staff that is recruited to teach in the Teachers' College is different from what existed in the past. Consequently, tutors of the college have embarked on programs to upgrade their qualifications:

> Most of the tutors only have first degrees and being a college staff there is the need for upgrading. Currently most of the college staff have started on upgrading either through sandwich, distance learning or full time programs. (Interview at Tumu: 09.03.10)

According to the informants, the new dispensation requires a college tutor to have a minimum of a master's degree to teach in the College of Education. They said attention on recruiting staff now is on second degree holders:

> The college now recruits staff who are second degree holders. Current tutors have embarked on programs to upgrade themselves. By our new dispensation you need a master's degree to teach in the college. (Interview at Tumu: 09.03.10)

District Teacher Support Team

The second key issue identified by the leaders was about the District Teacher Support Team (DTST). The head of this team is District Head Teacher Advisor. The District Teacher Support Team has responsibility to organise in-service training sessions at cluster centres (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10). The purpose of the DTST is to improve the organisation of in-service training for teachers. Schools in the District are zoned into clusters of about six to ten schools. Head teachers within a cluster are expected to meet with the DTST to identify common issues relating to teaching and learning in the schools within the cluster that need to be addressed through in-service training (Teacher Education Division, GES, 1999):

> DTST meets all head teachers to identify unsolved problems of teaching and learning. At this meeting they identify topics that will benefit all teachers. Then the DTST prepares on these topics and then deliver it at cluster based workshops. (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10)

The data indicated that DTST and head teachers are expected to act as resource personnel at a cluster based workshop. However, head teachers' survey data contradicts this finding in the sense that even though heads have a responsibility to organise school-based in-service training for their teachers, not all head teachers and classroom teachers participated in the few that were organised at District level (Finding 4.1). The school head's obligation towards DTST:

> All teachers are supposed to attend DTST seminars because that serves as in-service training for the teachers who attend. It is a responsibility for all head teachers to put such training in their School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) and to budget for in-service training. (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10)

Additionally, partnerships of head teachers in close collaboration with District Teacher Support Team offer instructional and management support to schools. According to the informants, it is also a responsibility of all head teachers to draw a School Improvement Plan (SPIP). This view of the leaders resonates with the predicament expressed by some head teachers over challenges experienced in seeking approval for their schools' SPIPs (Focus group at Bujan: 22.01.10). The SPIP is a requirement for accessing the Capitation Grant, and must be endorsed by the School Management Committee (SMC) (Interview at Tumu: 10.02.10). This makes it imperative for all schools to have a functional SMC. However, head teachers' focus group data revealed a situation where some schools claimed that their communities are illiterate to such an extent that they

considered it a better option to leave parents out of official discussions (Focus group at Nabulo: 27.01.10). According to Osei, Owusu, Asem and Afutu-Kotey (2009) the Capitation Grants are used to support the implementation of the School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP). The SPIP which is to be produced on an annual basis outlines the key actions the school will take to improve school management, the school environment, and more effective teaching and learning practices. Head teachers are expected to include goal setting and appraisal of the school in drawing up the School Performance Improvement Plan. The SPIP also includes "designing and preparing a school budget that is included in District budgets as well as a plan of action to promote community involvement in the work of the school" (Akyeampong, 2004, p. 9).

Further, the informants stated that in relation to mandatory in-service training, the Ministry of Education and GES has come up with an in-service training policy. The data indicated that there are in-service training guidelines and these are available to all the schools (Ghana Education Service, 2007). Additionally, education leaders said that taking part in in-service training will be made compulsory for teachers whether trained or untrained. The informants explained that for purposes of promotion, if a teacher is to attend an interview the teacher will be asked about the in-service trainings attended. The leaders said if a teacher has not participated in any in-service training over a period then that teacher may fail to get promoted. Mandatory in-service was to ensure that teachers updated their knowledge:

> There are in-service training books and these are for all schools. We want to make it compulsory for all teachers to begin to take part in in-service training in their schools. For purposes of promotion, and teachers professional development it will be expected that they would have done some in-service training. (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10)

Additionally, the National Accelerated Language Program (NALAP) which is an in-service training program for teachers was introduced to address the problem of literacy so as to help improve teaching and learning. Stakeholders acknowledged that most Ghanaian children are not able to read and write in both the Ghanaian Language and the English Language. The leaders agree that NALAP is an intervention to address quality as far as using language to improve teaching and learning.

Educational Decentralisation

A third issue relating to strategies supporting management as reported by the educational stakeholders is educational decentralisation. According to Akyeampong, et al., (2007) decentralisation is intended to improve operational efficiency and promote a more responsive approach to education service delivery at the district, community and

school level. Further, the informants suggested that there were indications that this was not proceeding satisfactorily:

> The issue is that if you want us to take ownership of our schools and everything then at the district level we should be able to hire and fire. We should take control over paying the teachers, employing them, firing them when they are not performing. Section 4(2) of the Ghanaian Constitution states: "A District Assembly shall have power for the discharge of any of its functions." As there isn't complete decentralisation all salaries are still processed centrally in Accra and whether a teacher is not performing or has vacated post, sometimes the salary continues to come. (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10)

To further explain the incomplete decentralisation process, the informants referred to patterns of education delivery which is characterized by a top-down approach, where decisions are taken at the centre and expected to be implemented at all schools irrespective of their peculiar circumstances (Maikish & Gershberg, 2008). However, according to an informant (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10) resources allocated from GES Headquarters to the District Education Offices are based on performance targets stated by Districts in their action plans. GES report (Ghana Education Service, 2004, June) states that the decentralisation of the management of the sector's budget is part of the FCUBE program:

> When these districts have been provided with their budget allocations, they lodge the funds at local banks, and draw action plans, which are approved by their DEOCs and implement them without reference to GES Headquarters. 'Non-ready districts' on the other hand have their resources lodged at the Regional Directorates. They have to prepare work plans and accompanying documents for implementation. Regional Directors supervise the implementation activities. (p. 4)

Head teachers' survey data indicate that 78% of JHSs within the study are rural schools and inadequately resourced. A comment of one informant on the decentralisation process:

> More power has been given to the District Assembly. We all are under them. I think the District Assembly has more than they can offer. They are constrained. If government is now saying that we should turn to the Assembly to address our needs and we are not careful the Assembly will be overwhelmed. This is a problem. (Interview at Tumu: 09.03.10)

The informants recognised that the education decentralisation policy has empowered District Assemblies; however, they do not have total autonomy. The informants are of the view that a lot of time should be taken to make the public and communities aware of this challenging role of the District Assembly, and the idea of ownership of schools, and to know the implications of what owning schools mean.

The data indicated that all executive responsibility for the provision and management of basic and senior secondary schools is vested in the District Assembly. The leaders were convinced that the Assembly has an overwhelming role. One educational leader commented on the expenditure pattern of the Assembly and said that the GES alone takes the greater share of the common fund that is allocated to the Assembly and yet GES is unable to satisfy its needs. So there is a gap. As the informants said, if things are not working, then targets will never be met.

Ghana has 10 Regional and 138 District Education Offices (Maikish & Gershberg, 2008). These Education Offices represent the Ministry of Education and, are responsible for implementing policies. The signal that instituted the decentralisation policy is in "Article 240 (1) of the Constitution of Ghana which provides that Ghana shall have a system of local government administration which shall, as far as practicable, be decentralised" (Government of Ghana, 1992). It is worth noting that while the education administration delivery is characterised by a top-down approach, the local government arrangement encourages a bottom-up, participatory approach. Both approaches are in operation and for that reason there is ambiguity over the dividing line between centralised and decentralised administrative strategies.

Further, the informants revealed that the Region has printed out a monitoring and supervisory school inspection schedule for all circuit supervisors. They said that is a schedule which requires that circuit supervisors spend at least two days in each school collecting all necessary school data. The informants suggested a change of name from circuit supervisor to 'circuit supporter' of schools. They explained that as the circuit supervisors go round to look at how teachers teach, and also look at how head teachers carry out administration they offer support in areas where they may be lacking. They were confident that if the circuit supervisor makes the head teacher know that they come not to inspect and find fault, but to offer support, there would be better collaboration.

National Inspectorate Board (NIB)

A fourth strategy employed to support monitoring and administration of teacher supervision is the establishment of the National Inspectorate Board (NIB). The informants said the NIB initiative was included in the new Education Act (Ghana National Association of Teachers, GNAT, 2010). The informants explained that when an Act like the NIB is passed; a Legislative Instrument (L/I) is required to guide its implementation. The informants explained that the legislative instrument in respect of that Act has not been passed by parliament. Further, the data indicated that this Education Reform of 2007 was launched by a previous government. The leaders

indicated that the current government is not particularly committed to implementing Act 778. The informants explained that for instance, the Act 778 stipulates that SHS education is for four years, the current government wants it to remain three years, so instead of issuing the legislative instrument for its implementation, because they want it amended, some of the statements cannot be carried out (Interview at Wa: 22.03.10).

Communication Process

The fifth and final issue raised by the informants related to communication of policy change to head teachers and classroom teachers. The educational leaders said before the new policy was written, there was a stakeholders meeting. Then experts developed the new syllabus and objective. The leaders said that after everything had been printed, they were distributed to all schools since they claimed that is part of the process of policy dissemination. The leaders also added that trainers from the regions were trained so that they could train districts' officers, and the districts to train the head teachers and the head teachers to train their teachers on how to follow the new curriculum. The assumption that trainers would go back to their districts to train their schools about the reform has become an issue. On the issue of expected workshops for head teachers that are still pending the informants said, if the head teachers are saying that they were not trained, then the fault is coming from the District. The leaders were of the opinion that GES at the District did not do their work. However, the leaders were quite emphatic when they said that it is not everything about the policy that concerns the classroom teacher. They are of the view that the classroom teacher's concern should be the syllabus which is to be taught (Interview at Accra: 12.04.10).

Stakeholders expressed the view that the reforms are major and a lot of time is required for debate, dialogue and consensus building. Additionally, roles of teachers, parents, assemblies and the entire major stakeholders concerned in the education reform, needed to have been determined for easy participation in the implementation process.

Key finding 6.5

The fifth and final key finding indicates that building teacher capacity enabled further professional development, while the District Teacher Support Team fostered better organisation of in-service training. However, there were unresolved attempts at decentralisation as well as the need to establish the role of the National Inspectorate Board. The communication process though vital to policy dissemination passes through several layers of the educational bureaucracy.

Summary

This chapter complements the findings reported in chapter five from educational leaders and stakeholders at district level by examining the findings derived from interviews of educational leaders and stakeholders at regional-central levels. The five key findings from the interviews of these leaders indicate some aspects of successful policy implementation and highlight key barriers to quality education.

The first key finding is that both FCUBE and Education Reform 2007 have made positive contributions towards access to education through the interventions in place to enhance enrolments and retention. However, the problem of dropout at JHS still persists due to insufficient family support.

The second key finding indicates that two significant barriers to quality education include high levels of teacher absenteeism due to low levels of teacher professionalism and inadequate supervision, and inadequate ICT and teaching resources to support policy implementation.

Thirdly, the data indicated that the schools experience difficulty in accessing an adequate supply of specialist teachers for core subjects and to teach French and the local language, 'Sissale'. The leaders indicated that the District Assembly should sponsor more students to study specialist subject at the College of Education.

The fourth key finding shows that while Reform 2007 enhanced access and participation in teacher education, there were still constraints regarding college applicants' awareness of programs of study offered by different colleges, quota systems for enrolments in the colleges' lack of control of the curriculum.

The fifth key finding indicates that building teacher capacity enabled further professional development, while the District Teacher Support Team fostered better organisation of in-service training. However, there were unresolved attempts at decentralisation as well as the need to establish the role of the National Inspectorate Board.
Communication process though vital to policy dissemination passes through several layers of the educational bureaucracy. There are peculiar attitudes and behaviours towards information and information use.

The sixth and final key finding is about centralised structures that have been re-defined to take newly established institutions such as the NIB, NTC and of course DEOC which only needs to be reactivated.

Key findings emerging from this chapter thus show that some aspects of the policy have been effectively implemented. There are nevertheless, significant barriers to implementation of some themes and the senior managers still believe that they fail to gain maximum cooperation from those at the lowest levels of the education system.

The next chapter presents a discussion of findings and answering of research questions.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings reported in Chapters four to six. Findings are discussed against the backdrop of the conceptual framework presented in Chapter two and are interpreted drawing on research literature to develop a number of assertions. The discussion examines the extent to which the Reform 2007 policy has been effectively implemented. The chapter discuses the current status of JHS education; the impact of Reform 2007; factors impacting on the implementation of reform initiatives; and, initiatives needed to address unresolved problems.

Status of JHS Education

The data revealed that the main factors impacting on the quality of education in the District's JHSs are inadequate staffing of schools, low community support for education and limited resources for teaching. This chapter argues that the low BECE pass rate is a consequence of inexperienced school leaders, lack of trained teachers, low teacher professionalism, low community support for education and a lack of resources.

Staffing of Schools

The average national pupil: teacher ratio (PTR) in junior high schools is currently 22:1 and is 15: 1 in the Sissala East District (Ghana Education Service, 2009; Government of Ghana, 2003). The considerable difference in ratios between the national and district averages is a reflection of the large number of small schools in the rural areas. Cobbold (2007) asserts that whether enrolments are high or low, there is the need for an adequate number of qualified and competent teachers. One of the most significant factors that affects the status of education in JHSs within the Sissala East District is the quality of the teaching workforce rather than the pupil: teacher ratio.

Underqualified and inexperienced head teachers

The majority (74%) of head teachers are three-year trained but almost half had no more than five years teaching experience. Two-thirds of head teachers had less than one year's experience as a head teacher. Even though some in-service training was available, few head teachers attended (KF 4.1). Consequently, most of the head teachers have had no training in relation to the reform initiatives. Most of these head teachers were male, young and inexperienced. The traditional belief that most men are bread winners of their families could be an added reason for most of these male teachers often scouting around for extra jobs in addition to teaching so as to make

more money. Additionally, others only use teaching as a stepping stone to jobs with non-government organisations or other agencies that may offer better conditions of service (KF 4.8). These young and inexperienced head teachers lack the knowledge, skills and authority needed to be effective leaders of a school community and to effectively supervise their teachers. Without effective leadership it is difficult to attain high academic standards and good pass rates in the BECE.

Lack of qualified teachers

Survey data revealed that school sizes are small with an average enrolment of 82 students. Pupil: teacher ratios ranged from 44 to three which indicates that there is an adequate supply of teachers although not all are qualified (KF 4.3). In actual fact, urban centre schools have higher enrolment figures with adequate numbers of qualified teachers, compared with the remote area rural schools that have smaller school sizes and fewer teachers many of whom are underqualified and inexperienced. Many of the classroom teachers were three-year trained (55%) and only eight per cent have additional professional qualifications. Of greatest concern is the fact that 34% of the teachers are untrained. Of the 166 JHS teachers in the District, 31% are currently at various stages of upgrading their professional qualifications (KF 4.2). Some informants expressed the view that commitment to duty or teacher professionalism outweighed the issue of teachers' qualification (KF 6.2).

Educational leaders expressed divergent views regarding the inadequate supply of qualified teachers (KF 5.2). Some were convinced that it is a problem of deployment of trained teachers rather than simply increasing the number of new entrants to the profession. The belief was that the system needs to ensure that posted teachers actually get to their schools and remain there and teach. Mpokosa and Ndaruhutse (2008, p. 35) explained that many of these teachers do not stay long enough to make any "significant impact on the learning environment of children". Stakeholders also commented that their conditions of service especially salaries and incentive packages needed to be reviewed to address issues of retention and attrition of teachers (KF 6.2). Cobbold (2007, p. 10) suggests that "these beginning teachers think they are neglected by the system once they are posted to schools", as they neither receive resources to work with nor induction to help them settle in.

District Education statistics indicate that the prospect of teacher supply for the District was positive (Ghana Education Service, 2009). These figures indicate that there is a regular flow of newly trained teachers coming into the system each year. If there is such a regular inflow of newly trained and qualified teachers coming into the system, then how does one explain the lack of qualified teachers in the schools (KF 5.2)?

First of all, some teachers fail to accept posting. Other teachers, who are trained for teaching in basic schools, claim that they do not feel competent enough to teach some time-tabled subjects. Some teachers lack competence with English Language and this impacts on the implementation of the curriculum (KF 6.2). English Language lesson notes of some teachers clearly showed how much of the real content of lessons was regularly ignored by these teachers. Consistent with the view of Ampratwum and Armah-Attoh (2010) head teachers' reported that teachers' content knowledge, English competence, knowledge of syllabus and "adequacy of lesson preparation have the greatest impact on the quality of teaching and learning" (JICA, n/a, p. 10). There is considerable concern over the teaching of core subjects and Ghanaian Language (KF 4.4). Additionally, the inflexible policy requiring all the students in the District to be examined in the same local language, namely Dagaare, regardless of how proficient students and teachers are in that language is yet another constraint (KF 5.2). English is used as the medium of instruction in most of the classes, though it is a concern that some JHS classes still use vernacular as the medium of instruction. One-third of head teachers have great concern about the quality of teaching in English, Mathematics, Ghanaian Language, Social Studies and General Science which are core subjects for the BECE (KF 4.4).

The data indicated that the schools experience difficulty in accessing an adequate supply of specialist teachers for core subjects and to teach French and the local language, Sissala (KF 6.3). Part of the difficulty in getting specialist teachers can be attributed to the fact that school sizes are small with an average enrolment of 82 students and given the small number of teachers at these schools it is not possible to have specialists for all subjects. The reality of the situation from field observations is that there are many combined classes with the teachers having no skills for multi-grade teaching. Head teachers reported that there is a lack of skilled teachers and hence the need for teachers' capacity building especially in relation to multi-grade teaching (KF 4.8). Furthermore, the lack of trained teachers means that the District is not able to comply with the policy of providing trained teachers in each of the transition classes (KF 5.2).

The high proportion of untrained teachers and teachers attempting to teach core subjects without specialist training also impacts negatively on the quality of teaching and learning. Considering the fact that "teachers are the greatest source of variance that can make a difference to students' achievement" (Hattie, 2003, October, p. 3) it becomes a concern when it is the wrong sort of influence.

Low teacher professionalism

Educational leaders considered the College of Education program to be comprehensive and adequate for the training of emerging teachers (Teacher Education Division, GES, 2000). Graduates from these Diploma awarding institutes are expected to teach all subjects on the basic school time-table. Furthermore, Campbell (2007) argues that it is important for teachers to bring enthusiasm to the work of teaching. This enthusiasm is demonstrated in the preparations made before each class, with a readiness to read around the subjects, and teaching themselves what they are preparing to teach their class. This is in contrast to other teachers also within the system who would simply walk into class unprepared and just teach anything. This contradicts the statement in the rules of professional conduct for teachers: "a teacher shall prepare relevant and adequate teaching notes for his/her work in advance. It shall be the responsibility of the head of the institution to see to it that this is done" (Ghana Education Service, 2008b, p. 7). Among the many young and inexperienced head teachers are those that feel threatened and incapable of confronting such defaulting teachers. There are some teachers who only want the tick and signature of the school head appended to their lesson notes to signify that their lessons notes have been vetted. Anything beyond that has sometimes created unacceptable and unethical scenes; some teachers do not accept being corrected. Head teachers feel disempowered and without the backing from District Office in their role as frontline supervisors, they cannot exert their authority (KF 4.10).

Furthermore, significant barriers to quality education include high levels of teacher absenteeism due to low levels of teacher professionalism, inadequate supervision and the high proportion of untrained volunteer or 'helper' teachers who are not salaried (KF 6.2). Teachers' lack of professionalism and motivation (KF 5.1) are indications of dissatisfaction with their conditions of service. Some teachers express the view that it is not worth sweating over what is not his father's business. A statement such as this alludes to the level of apathy within the system. It is common practise especially in the remote schools to find some teachers taking a whole class to help out with planting or harvesting on his private farm or some personal engagement. It is also, common place to find teachers in petty trading, bringing some of their wares to school for sale. Some could be so daring as to even involve the children in seeing to their trade which breaches the teachers' code of conduct about "improper use of children's labour" (2008b, p. 8). Many of these remote area schools least expect to see a GES officer visiting their schools, this therefore buttresses the argument that if supervision could be intensified, many of these teachers will learn to do the right thing at the right time (KF 4.8, KF 5.4 & KF 6.2). Additionally, the Australian statement of professional standards

for teaching include standards related to planning for teaching and learning, assessing and providing feedback, engaging in professional learning, and engaging professionally with colleagues, parents and the community (Sempowwicz & Hudson, 2011).

Low levels of professionalism such as lack of punctuality and absenteeism, inadequate preparation for teaching and not giving feedback have implications for the quality of teaching and learning. These account for the teachers' inability to cover the syllabus and children not being well prepared for their examinations which leads to low pass rates in the BECE.

Resources for Teaching and Learning

Many rural communities attach a great sense of prestige to having a school in their village. There are a number of communities that started off their schools through communal labour, and contributions in cash and kind. These communities led the initiative for community participation in education service delivery which is implied in the FCUBE policy mandate.

First of all, the rural schools are small. Secondly, they have come into existence when they were not planned for, therefore over stretching the already limited resources of the District. As a consequence the rural schools have limited physical infrastructure and it is not a surprise to find several classes crowded into one little space, or children sitting on the bare floor of a classroom or even having classes under trees (Ghana News Agency, 2011, February 27). Consequently, these schools barely exist. However, in terms of resources, head teachers indicated that access to textbooks and curriculum materials for teaching; classrooms for lessons; and, adequate access to textbooks by students have the greatest positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning (KF 4.4). Some head teachers even expressed the view that there is inequality in the distribution of school supplies (KF 4.9). They believe that there are times when the Office has denied them their fair share of school supplies. Head teachers see their counterparts in urban centre schools with their supplies, and they simply do not understand why allocations do not reach them. Head teachers were aware of what quality schooling is like and were therefore able to state their real needs in terms of resources. Additionally, they considered that adequate ICT and teaching resources were needed to support policy implementation (KF 6.2). Without access to an adequate number of qualified teachers, classrooms, classroom furniture, textbooks, and curriculum materials, quality teaching and learning are impoverished. According to Mpokosa and Ndaruhutse (2008, p. 15) "effective teachers are key to delivering the education for all goals but good teaching is only able to thrive within a favourable

environment". The lack of educational resources in the Sissala East District limits teachers' ability to deliver quality teaching and learning.

Low Community Support for Education

There are several urban centres around Ghana that do not have the issues of student access or attrition that is experienced in most rural communities. Research (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2009) reveal that among the range of factors contributing to issues of low motivation for school enrolment and retention are high levels of illiteracy and poverty that are more pronounced in rural communities, as well as the lack of role models. Teachers' code of conduct (2008b, p. 10) suggests that teachers serve as "role models to learners showing a high degree of decency in speech, mannerism, discipline, dressing and general performance of their roles". However, the District Disciplinary Committee in recent times has had to deal with a number of issues of unethical behaviour among the District's teachers. On the other hand, most homes in rural communities may not have older siblings to look up to as role models as the educated ones tend to leave for greener pastures in the cities. Moreover, farming is the means of livelihood in most of these rural areas. One of the leaders shared the view that seasoned farmers in the children's homes are making it in life without formal schooling. If going to school means joining in on the farm after completion, then there is no motivation for schooling. It is therefore not surprising that during the rainy season, parents and guardians have little time to supervise their children's schooling and some fail to provide for the basic needs of children, resulting in irregular attendance and high dropout rates (KF 4.6, KF 5.2).

Additionally, there are many students who commence JHS and do not complete the three years of schooling. Data reveals that attrition rates are greater than 35% over the three-year period. Further, financial constraint is an issue influencing school attendance (KF 4.3). A recent study by a local non-governmental organisation (2007) indicates that students are still missing out on educational opportunities due to insufficient family support (KF 6.1). According to Education Partnerships (2004, p. 3), "students need to understand that attending school is important in the context of their future plans and goals, not just in terms of grades and academic success". Additionally, a study by Philips (1997), affirms that a positive correlation exists between school attendance and achievement. Without community support for regular school attendance it is difficult for schools to improve achievement and BECE pass rates.

BECE Pass Rate

Research (Anamuah-Mensah, et al., 2006) has revealed that only about 40% of BECE graduates qualify to gain admission into the senior high schools each year in Ghana.

However, data on pass rates in rural schools of the District indicate that many schools continually register a zero per cent pass rate (Henaku, 2009, November 30). Without passing the BECE with good grades, students cannot continue to senior high school. Thompson (2010 April, 19) suggests that it is not in the best interest of so many children at around age 15, to terminate their education because of low academic performance. He argues that space has to be created in senior high schools for children who are naturally late developers.

Head teachers report that students' lack of basic skills is a barrier to progress in learning and achievement (KF 4.7). The lack of basic skills is a consequence of lack of support from the community and limitations in the staffing and physical resources of the schools and this leads to low academic standards. The impoverished rural background of communities from which the children emerge provides little support for the development of literacy and other academic skills. Some of the teachers are untrained community volunteers and therefore cannot be held accountable. Additionally, these teachers are not regular and reliable because they look for other means of livelihood. In most rural schools many grades are taught together because of the lack of teachers and this results in children not getting the individual attention of their teachers who often lack skills of multi-grade teaching.

The low pass rate is a consequence of inexperienced school leaders, lack of trained teachers, low teacher professionalism, low community support for education and a lack of resources. Thompson (2010 April, 19, p. 1) argues that there are "many students who are victims of a broken educational system with low quality of teaching".

Assertion 7.1

The young and inexperienced head teachers lack the knowledge, skills and authority needed to be effective leaders of a school community and to effectively supervise their teachers. Without effective leadership it is difficult to attain high academic standards and good pass rates in the BECE (KF 4.1). The high proportion of untrained teachers and teachers attempting to teach core subjects without specialist training also impacts negatively on the quality of teaching and learning (KF 5.2). Low levels of professionalism accounts for the inability to cover the syllabus and children not being well prepared for their examinations (KF 6.2). Without access to an adequate number of qualified teachers, basic classrooms, classroom furniture, textbooks, and curriculum materials, quality teaching and learning is impoverished (KF 4.3). The Community support for regular school attendance is necessary for schools to improve achievement and BECE pass rates (KF 4.6). It is therefore evident that inexperienced head teachers, lack of qualified teachers, low teacher professionalism, lack of community support for education and inadequate resources result in low academic standards and low pass rate at BECE.

Impact of Reform 2007 on Education

A striking feature of Reform 2007 is that most of its objectives centre on initiatives that began before 2007. Education Reform 2007 refocused on past FCUBE goals (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2002a) and included initiatives to improve access to education, teacher supply and teacher capacity building; as well as initiatives to enhance supervision of teaching.

Initiatives to Improve Access to Education

The range of initiatives to improve access include: the Capitation Grant scheme; two year pre-school; training of pre-school teachers; enhanced access from JHS to SHS; STME program to boost students participation in Maths and Science; COTVET to boost students' participation in Technical and Vocational programs; and, review of Capitation Grant policy.

The Capitation Grant scheme has been in existence since the 2003/2004 academic year. This intervention supports Reform 2007 and the FCUBE "policy of free, compulsory, universal basic education" as well as the decentralisation policy, by allocating a per-pupil amount of funding (4.5 Ghana cedis: US$ 3.1) to all basic public schools (Ghana Education Service, 2004, June, p. 6).

The challenge with the availability of the Capitation Grant lies in the fact that it has brought an increased management burden on head teachers, who lack the financial management skills required to complete the accountability guidelines and forms. The nine forms to be completed by the head teachers include a School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) (Ghana Education Service, 2007; JICA, n/a). This is clearly a large responsibility, and head teachers cannot do this quickly. Some of them may need to do it many times before succeeding. Other head teachers consider that their small schools will attract negligible funds and so would rather wait for the funds to increase. Head teachers expected the GES office would be a little more supportive in facilitating access to the Capitation Grant. Some of the head teachers referred to the very bureaucratic procedures in the GES (KF 4.10). As many of these head teachers are inexperienced and lack in-service training, they would need to learn to process the forms from their peers.

The Capitation Grant scheme has also challenged the ability of head teachers to work with their Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and School Management Committee (SMC) in the preparation of the School Performance Improvement Plan which is necessary to secure a Capitation Grant as explained in the School-Based and Cluster-Based in-service training (SBI/CBI) manual of JICA (n/a):

> The School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) is to be prepared by the head teacher with the approval of the SMC. When the SPIP is prepared, the head teacher and the SMC should agree on the plan. The SMC is to oversee the implementation of the SPIP. (p. 39)

Some head teachers claimed that the parents in some rural communities were illiterate and unable to make helpful contributions to discussions and therefore left them out of this management process. Some head teachers were yet to come to terms with managing the volume of school records they are expected to keep and some have had issues with misappropriation. For some, managing the Capitation Grant paperwork has been very challenging. Nevertheless, the grant has created an avenue for community participation through monitoring how the Capitation Grant is used and consequently, more schools have functional PTAs and SMCs in place (KF 5.1 & KF 6.1). This finding is consistent with the collaboration between USAID and the Government of Ghana (Ghana Education Service, 2001) which has had a focus on improving quality education through community participation.

The communities are highly alert to the fact that public funds have been released to cover school fees. Parents are keen to ensure that funds do not get misappropriated. The Capitation Grant arrangement increased parents' ability to send children to school (KF 4.5). This resonates with a finding from a study that suggests that "basic school

enrolment have increased since the introduction of the Capitation Grant" (Ampratwum & Armah-Attoh, 2010, p. 5). Increased enrolments contributed to widening the PTR especially in the urban centre lower primary schools. Some ratios moved from a standard 35:1 to over 80:1. Some schools in urban centres run the shift system and others have streams of the same class so as to maintain reasonable class sizes. Even though similar interventions are ongoing in all the public schools of rural communities, the rural schools continue to have many children who do not attend school (Table 4.8). This claim is supported by a study (2007) that reports 20% of the District's children as missing from school. The fact that almost every community has a structure to function as a pre-school centre and a primary school is expected to enhance access. Asare (2009, April 15) cites the Ministry of Education Science and Sports report (2003) on key targets on access:

> The gross enrolment rate (GER) at pre-school level is expected to be at 86% by 2015. The GER in primary schools to rise from 79% in 2002 to 100% by 2010, and 100% completion rate by 2015 at Primary level. The GER in JHS schools was expected to rise from 62% in 2002 to 75% by 2010 and 90% by 2015. Furthermore, the quality target of untrained teachers at JHS to be not more than 5% in 2015 across the basic level. (p. 2)

While the study focused on JHS, mention is made of pre-school education as a significant initiative to develop the basic skills needed by children to engage more effectively in schooling. The basic skills acquired impact on children's readiness for the Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE) later on in life. Under Reform 2007, the two years of pre-school are part of the basic school system. Previously, it was the preserve of private individuals, NGOs, and Department of Social Welfare and District Assemblies, to own and run pre-schools. Now as part of the public school system, pre-school education is tuition free and all children of school going age are expected to enrol. Local politicians have taken advantage of the trend among communities to own a pre-school and they make promises of pre-school infrastructure in manifestos. One circuit supervisor expressed with a sense of contentment that soon every child will be able to read, write and do basic mathematics. Soon, there will be schools at almost every door step, children will not have to walk too far to school and they will not have to worry about school uniforms (KF 4.5; KF 5.1 & KF 5.7).

Seven out of the 38 public Colleges of Education in Ghana, are designated for training teachers in early childhood education. The existence in the District of a College of Education solely responsible for preparing early childhood education teachers will help to dispel the erroneous impression that pre-school teaching requires no professional training.

There are educationally endowed districts and, the Sissala East District is comparatively less endowed, considering the fact that the District has only one senior high school and one senior technical school. After successful completion at JHS, students progress into the SHS or to the technical school. Anecdotal evidence demonstrated that the comprehensive renovation with additional classrooms and dormitories made to the existing SHS has boosted access. This means many more of the successful JHS graduates have a chance of gaining admission (KF 5.8).

The "Science, Technology, Mathematics Education (STME) clinic" for JHS girls was started by the Girls' Education unit of the GES as a way to sustain the "interest of girls in Science, Technology and Maths Education" (Ministry of Information and National Orientation, 2007, p. para, archive) .This initiative further supports the third Millennium Development Goal of promoting gender equality and empowering women (Ghana Education Service, 2002) and is a further expression of the GES placing a premium on girls' education. The STME program is now decentralised to the districts and this has boosted the participation of students in the clinic. As a result of these STME clinics, more students are getting at least a pass in science which is one of the core subjects at BECE. Additionally, there are many more girls applying to study science and related subjects in the SHS and universities. Further, stakeholders have succeeded in getting educational leaders to include boys in STME clinics, since the program is beneficial in widening access for all. Educational leaders consider that the STME and Technical, Vocational Education and Training provide students at the general level of education with options that will suit students with different abilities and interests (KF 5.9)

Additionally, "the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET) has been set up to develop policy, co-ordinate and regulate all aspects" of technical and vocational and agricultural education (Ministry of Information and National Orientation, 2007, p. para, archive). The COTVET is expected to create avenues for students to branch off into technical or vocational programs other than science and general arts if they so wish. In the face of great financial constraints, donor agencies such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have been instrumental in keeping this unit afloat. The survey data revealed that three out of the 35 JHSs have laboratories for lessons in pre-technical skills. However, none of these three schools have the full complement of tools and machines. Furthermore, none of the JHSs indicated that they have a laboratory for Basic Design Technology (BDT) (KF 4.9). BDT seemed a popular choice as an elective subject for most students and the teachers. The head teachers expressed the view that it was easier for most schools to select BDT as an elective subject since from that program they would choose Catering which most students managed quite well. The choice was in spite of the fact that the

cost involved in Catering practicals sometimes prevented some students from participating in lessons (Table 4.9). Over the years, Catering as a subject seemed to have offered greater potential to improve students overall BECE pass mark (Ghana Education Service, 2009). Pre-Technical skills on the other hand, require properly trained technical teachers who are in short supply in the District. Very often the subjects a JHS offers at BECE are determined by what the teachers are able to teach. It therefore becomes quite disturbing when teachers get transferred after only a short stay in a school since they may be the only teacher available for the particular subject (KF 5.2a).

Some school head teachers charge additional fees to cover other school running cost: this implies that the Capitation Grant is inadequate. However, there have also been times when head teachers did not know when the grant was going to be available. The financial burden on parents that comes with the additional fees charged in the schools is part of the reason that some children stay out of school, since they have no means of paying the extra charges. Nevertheless, there is need for an upward review of the Capitation Grant. When the Capitation Grant is increased, a matching expansion of physical infrastructure has to be considered to accommodate the expected surge in enrolments. According to the Ghana Education Service (2004, June, p. 9), "the sector has made a lot of progress in the area of access, equity and content of education". To affirm this assertion, one parent said that it seemed like a beautiful dream: all children getting a tuition-free basic education! He further explained that he would not be able to pay fees for the many children under his care. Although, the burden of tuition fees has been removed, the basic needs of individual children are not always being provided by the family, resulting in children dropping out of school because there is no one to care for them. Making schooling tuition free does not seem to solve the problem (KF 4.6).

Managing the Capitation Grant has challenged the ability of head teachers to design their school's improvement plans, administer performance monitoring tests, and organise school performance appraisal meetings. Additionally, they have also been challenged to have in place and to work with their PTA and SMC. It is a GES requirement for schools to have PTAs and SMCs since these support communities sense of ownership and participation in education service delivery.

The impacts of initiatives on access to education are seen in programs that are functioning. Among such programs are the compulsory two-year kindergarten, training of pre-school teachers, Capitation Grant scheme, STME program and COTVET and enhanced access from JHS to SHS. Access to the Capitation Grant has been limited by head teachers' difficulties with the bureaucratic requirements of the GES. The

greatest impact on access to education is within early childhood years and this is important since it develops the basic skills for more effective learning in the long term.

Initiatives to Improve Teacher Supply and Teacher Capacity Building

The Ghana Education Service (2004, June, p. 22) has high expectations of teachers and claim that their "efforts would improve quality teaching, social cohesion, democratic values and culture of peace in schools and communities". To provide quality education therefore, it is imperative that the teachers receive adequate training. Recruitment of students into teacher education is within the policy area on equitable access to education (Government of Ghana, 2003). There are three policies relating to teacher training. These include the District Teacher Training Sponsorship Scheme; Untrained Teacher Training Diploma in Basic Education; and, the Quota System on Paid Study Leave. These policies represent a decentralisation of teacher education.

The extent to which decentralisation of teacher recruitment has worked is seen in the fact that senior secondary school students who want to access teacher education recognise that the place to process an application for sponsorship is at the District Education Office. When students from these rural areas are selected by the District Sponsorship Screening Committee for sponsorship, they would be expected to return to the District to teach in the schools after training as teachers (Teacher Education Division, GES, 2000). Beneficiary teachers sign a bond as part of the agreement for sponsorship and this commits them to the District for at least for three years (K F 5.3).

The teacher-trainees' allowance covers boarding and lodging, travel, as well as basic textbooks (Teacher Education Division, GES, 2000) and this allowance is provided through the GES. Additionally, district sponsorship avails the teacher trainee of a second source of funding which comes from the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF). Sissala East District is predominantly rural and has a high population of untrained teachers. The low internal revenue generating capacity of the District yields a DACF that is unable to cater for the needs of the District. There are often more candidates applying for sponsorship than funds. This threatens the viability of the scheme in the District. Additionally, there are some teachers who in spite of the bond will make excuses that they need to be elsewhere. In fact, there have been cases of teachers who readily paid the fine for defaulting rather than accept the posting.

Educational leaders expect the District Assembly and GES to sponsor more students for specialist study of core subjects at the College of Education (KF 6.3). The leaders argue that the sponsorship screening team has to be highly selective in allowing greater consideration for the needs of the District's schools. Currently, data from

District's schools reveal that there is a dire need for teachers of core subjects (KF 4.4, & K.F 5.2).

The recruitment of untrained teachers continues to be attractive for several reasons. In most cases, these untrained teachers from the rural areas are mature age; they accept postings to remote areas because that is where they reside; and they accept meagre salaries, especially when they have no other means of livelihood. However, Anamuah-Mensah, et al., (2006) are of the view that if Ghana is to make any gains towards the attainment of universal basic education a greater part of the large population of untrained teachers has to be trained and fully qualified as teachers.

The GES enrols untrained teachers in a four year school-based in-service training program that leads to the award of a Diploma in Basic Education (Teacher Education Division, GES, 2000). Over the four year program, the teacher trainees teach in their schools during the school term, and during long vacations they stay in a College of Education for course work taught by the college tutors. The training offers them formal recognition as being part of the teaching system, as well as providing a sustainable income. Upgrading status of Teacher Colleges to Diploma awarding institutions was a great motivation for teachers. Had it not been for this development, teachers would have needed to attend a university program to earn a Diploma and for many of them, financially, this would not have materialised. While the untrained teachers retain their classroom jobs, through distance education they are able to complete their course work over a period of four years, and become certificated and licensed teachers. According to Asare (2009, April 15, p. 2), the program was "introduced in 2005 and currently has 27,183 teachers subscribing to it". The program contributes to the provision of quality basic education for all by 2015 which is a goal of Education for All (KF 4.8).

Finally, while teachers take advantage of opportunities for capacity building, as encouraged by Reform 2007 (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2007b), the GES has the task of streamlining the implementation of the study leave policy. Streamlining calls for "linking study leave to the gaps in the teacher delivery system" with a view to choosing programs determined by the needs in the field; is what Asare (2009, April 15, p. 2) referred to as the criterion for consideration of a teacher for the paid study leave policy is for the teacher to have "at least three years post qualification experience in teaching." Teachers who meet the selection criteria need to be within the quota allocation of the region. Teachers for Maths and Science have been in high demand (KF 5.2), and therefore have a higher quota allocation though this is underutilised because the numbers opting to study Maths and Science

have not always been high. The study leave is arranged in such a way as to allow teachers to do full-time study on their regular monthly salary.

The era of Reform 2007 has come with heightened levels of debate about the viability of the study leave with pay policy (Asare, 2009, April 15; Owusu-Mensah, 2005, December 28), especially as it involves large numbers of teachers. Anecdotal evidence reveals that study leave has often been the point from which many teachers have left the teaching service. The educational leaders consider the issue of teacher deployment and placement as a major challenge for the Ghana Education Service. Asare (2009, April 15) suggests in relation to the study leave policy:

> The best interest of the child, the teacher and the education system, has to be considered when reviewing the study leave policy of the GES. The review has to be done in collaboration with Teachers' Unions in a manner that] saves resources and increases the number of qualified teachers who remain in the classroom while up-grading themselves through distance education. (p. 2)

In spite of the policy in place about placement of newly trained teachers starting in rural schools, there are many of the newly trained teachers who do not want to be in rural communities and transfer out of the district, so the district that trained them loses them altogether.

Educational leaders suggest that there should be some element of motivation tied to the process of posting to rural and deprived communities. It is more likely that a teacher will accept a posting to a remote and rural village if that teacher hails from there. First, accommodation will not be an issue and most likely, there will not be the need for induction and assistance with settling down. On the other hand a young teacher who is new to a community will need to be assured of accommodation and assistance with transport and also provided with some bare necessities of life. Sometimes young teachers refuse postings because of preconceived ideas they have gathered about certain communities. Some even believe that certain communities are hostile towards people who do not come from the particular village. It is sometimes difficult, with that kind of mindset, to get teachers to accept a posting to such communities. There have been cases of harassment and sometimes there are genuine reasons for the fear expressed by these young teachers. In these cases there should be greater support from the authorities, and yet for some of them, nothing can make them accept such a posting (KF 5.2).

Another aspect to the issue of access relates to making the teaching profession a little more lucrative for teachers. There have been various across-the-board increases to teachers' salaries, but the issue for the GES is to pay salaries that compare favourably with colleagues of similar academic qualifications within the civil service. Sometimes in

making career choices, young people consider both salary and fringe benefits. Young people find the idea of the stipend enticing while in training: however, beyond training, they consider the salary to be inadequate. Incentive packages for rural teachers that include accommodation have to be reviewed and implemented (KF 4.8). Furthermore, incentive packages need to remove barriers that limit teachers' upgrading and in-service training. This is because tuition fees involved in distance education are expensive for teachers and because the studies are often part-time they extend, a long time. Teachers need all the support they can get for professional development. Better conditions, are needed to check the issue of teacher retention and attrition (Blessing, 2011, April 17).

Anecdotal evidence confirms the widespread support for the Reform 2007 policy as regards teacher supply and capacity building. The issue of teacher recruitment by the Reform 2007 agenda has been rewarding for many untrained teachers within the education system. The survey data indicates that a significant proportion of the teachers in the District are undergoing training and upgrading of qualifications. However, the issue of District sponsorship of teacher trainees is challenged by the low internal revenue generating capacity of the District, and retention of teachers will require further improvements to conditions of service.

Initiatives to Enhance Supervision of Teaching

The range of Reform 2007 initiatives that enhance supervision of teaching include: the Whole School Development program (WSD); the School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP); the "Performance Monitoring Test (PMT); the School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM)"; and, the District Teacher Support Team (DTST) (JICA, n/a, p. 40).

The WSD program was an attempt by the Ministry of Education to bring about greater efficiency and effectiveness in education delivery at all levels of the education sector. Akyeampong (2004, p. 9) noted that the WSD program as a school improvement initiative, worked "through the existing structures of the GES headquarters, regions and districts" to achieve the objectives of the policy. The WSD has been implemented through the School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) and the District Teacher Support Team to enhance supervision and teaching (KF 5.4).

WSD workshops were provided to develop the skills of designing School Improvement Plans. The SPIP, which is to be produced on an annual basis outlines the key actions the school needs to carry out to improve school management, the school environment, and improve on teaching and learning practices. Further, the SPIP as described by Akyeampong (2004, p. 9) "includes target setting and appraisal for the school;

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designing and preparing school budget for inclusion in District budgets and a plan of action to promote community involvement in the work of the school". The WSD operated on a principle of empowerment and strengthening the capacity of stakeholders and this was done through training workshops. Workshops have been organised to target the various levels of educational leaders and stakeholders, hence the remarkable lease of life that is observed even in some PTAs and SMCs. This assertion emanates from the competitive spirit among some of the communities as they aim to out-do each other in projects that they are able to execute for their schools. Additionally, this assertion supports GES data that showed that all training is aimed at supporting the efficiency of management roles. Some groups have been able to utilise the skills they acquired but others routinely attended workshops without acting on the skills gained. Most of the current cohort of head teachers in the District have had no training in the WSD workshops (KF 4.8).

The SPIP is relevant to the theme of supervision, since it becomes the coordinating link running through the management of the school environment and the community. For instance, key activities that could be included in the SPIP are events to build the community and school relationship or school and cluster based in-service training. The head teacher needs to state clearly the actions to be taken including: PTA meetings; who is responsible; resources needed; and, who monitors outcomes (Akyeampong, 2004). This is a suggested action plan owned by the community and is usually held in small village communities; almost everyone is involved in monitoring because they are often curious about things happening around them. In terms of resources, if there is a need for cash, that money should already be stated within the Capitation Grant allocation; and the person responsible does not necessarily have to be the head teacher. Whoever is responsible for the particular activity is the signatory and must present an accurate account of expenditure.

The SPIP employs a bottom-up policy implementation strategy and this links to the decentralisation policy envisaged within GES administration. Angus (1998, p. 140) suggests that pre-existing centralised structures have not been dissolved therefore, if "basic regulatory structures are left in place it is unlikely to see any enduring change" to leadership approaches. Further, removal of these structures; will leave the leadership out of control of the system they are employed to manage". There can be a disparity between policy intent and the capacity to implement policy if centralised structures remain in place when attempting to decentralise.

Bennell and Akyeampong (2007, p. 9) suggest that in order to accommodate the appraisal agenda of the SPIP, WSD worked in partnership "with the Inspectorate Division of the GES to train district" education personnel in how to administer the PMT

and conduct SPAM. Ankomah, Koomson, Bosu, and Oduro (2005, p. 22) have noted that both the PMT and SPAM "have proved to be effective tools in monitoring, teaching and learning outcomes in basic schools"; however, data gathered in this study indicate that head teachers in the Sissala East District have not attended any workshops relating to the WSD agenda.

Furthermore, a meeting of SPAM is expected to include circuit supervisors, school management committees (SMCs), teachers, chiefs, assembly members and parents. Such meetings can provide stakeholders with comprehensive feedback on the state of learning achievement and needs in relation to the provision of adequate teaching and learning materials within the circuit. The stakeholders are expected to identify and discuss problems based on the results of this locally administered test, and from the deliberations on the data, targets are set and the way forward to achieve the targets through improving the quality of teaching and learning is decided (Akyeampong, 2004). Communities have been known to bring marked enthusiasm to such meetings. However, there are other communities that fail to organise any SPAM. Informants revealed that SPAM in the District is reduced to once a year and it is organised at District level rather than at circuit or school levels. This therefore reduces the level of community participation since the meetings were not held at the local village.

Additionally, the District Teacher Support Team (DTST) is another feature of the WSD. The DTST and school clusters are structures that have been established for supporting and training teachers so as to improve the quality of teaching, learning and supervision at the district level. The purpose of the DTST is to improve the organisation of in-service training for teachers by providing support in terms of "good practices in literacy, numeracy, leadership and problem solving" (Akyeampong, 2004, p. 9). Training has been based on the train the trainer model at regional or district level and those trained are expected to return to cluster centres to train others in the field. Schools in the District are zoned into circuits and these are further divided into clusters of about six to 10 schools. Depending on the teaching and learning issues identified in the schools, the DTST is expected to facilitate the planning of in-service training for the schools. There is evidence to show that the DTST has not been functional in the District due to lack of funds. The team does not have sufficient resources to enable it to organise cluster-based workshops.

Frontline inspection and monitoring of teaching in schools is the responsibility of head teachers and circuit supervisors; however, these were ineffective. The evidence as revealed from District data indicates that many of the head teachers are inexperienced and lack adequate support from the GES office to perform this role adequately. If the

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academic performance of students is to improve, head teachers need to check teachers' lesson preparation and monitor their teaching. Additionally, circuit supervisors fail to do routine rounds of their schools for lack of motivation, incentives and appropriate resources to reside in the circuits. The circuit supervisor or the head teacher should be able to sit in a class and observe lessons. Educational leaders recognise the need to intensify monitoring and supervision systems (KF 5.4).

Teacher supervision and monitoring by head teachers and circuit supervisors is ineffective. Activities of the DTST and in-service training are at a standstill because of the lack of funds. Head teachers need further training and support to be effective in their leadership roles. Additionally, circuit supervisors lack adequate resources to carry out their supportive role within their circuits.

Assertion 7.2

Significant initiatives that improved access, teacher supply, supervision and teaching already existed before Reform 2007. Reform 2007 can therefore only take credit for refocusing and enforcing mandates that existed. Managing the Capitation Grant has challenged the ability of many head teachers to design their school's improvement plans; administer performance monitoring tests; and organise school performance appraisal meetings. Many head teachers have also been challenged to establish and work with the PTA and SMC (KF 4.5).

The issue of teacher recruitment by the Reform 2007 agenda has been rewarding for many untrained teachers within the education system (KF 6.4). However, the District sponsorship of teacher trainees has been limited by the low internal revenue generating capacity of the District. (KF 6.3). The teacher-trainee sponsorship scheme had limited success as it failed to attract teachers into core subject programs such as Science, Maths and English (KF 5. 1; KF 5.3 & KF 6.3).

The supervision and monitoring of teachers by head teachers and circuit supervisors is ineffective. Activities of the DTST and in-service training are all at a standstill for lack of funds Additionally, circuit supervisors lack adequate resources to carry out their supportive role within their circuits (KF 5.4 & KF 6.5).

Factors Impacting on the Implementation of the Reform Initiatives

Among factors impacting on the implementation of reform initiatives are the hierarchical nature of the GES; the failure of decentralisation; inadequate material and human resources; and, inadequate communication and interpretation of policy.

Hierarchical Nature of the Ghana Education Service (GES)

The GES is a highly hierarchical organisation which is imbued with a culture of compliance. Different levels of the hierarchy are expected to comply with policy and play their role as explained by an informant in the statement "carrying out orders from above". The GES practice is consistent with what Sabatier (2007) refers to as the policy implementation in a top-down model assuming that any problems in the process of implementation can be controlled. This means that officers are expected to carry out instructions as it is received from their higher authority. The word is given out down the line, and it is expected that the implementers lower in the hierarchy will accommodate any issues that develop in the course of implementation. For example, educational leaders would consider that they have done their work by ensuring that a number of train the trainer workshops have been provided for senior personnel. The business of employing the cascade model of in-service training at district level remains the concern of officers at the district level. The district level is where the data indicates the high levels of inadequacies in both human and material resources (KF4.9 & KF 5.2), creating an implementation gap; a missing link. The lack of professional learning opportunities is therefore a key factor impacting on policy implementation.

The several layers of the educational bureaucracy determine the line of reference in policy dissemination and communication. This supports, head teachers views that the bureaucratic attitude of those in the GES Office towards the teachers often negatively affects the teachers' work (KF 4.10). Teachers' inquiries are often referred to higher levels in the GES and there are often delays; in many instances, nothing happens. As a result, there is a weak partnership between teachers and the GES as regards policy implementation. Furthermore, the issue of weak partnership needs to be considered if policy makers and policy implementers are to collaborate and share in a common purpose.

Failure of Decentralisation

Akyeampong (2004) suggests that decentralisation is necessary for effective policy implementation and education reform:

> Educational decentralisation as understood under WSD is a strategy for enhancing the participation and involvement of all key partners in planning and decision making. The assumption underpinning the policy is that a decentralised education system is more responsive to local need and nurtures a culture of ownership, partnership, and commitment. (p. 8)

As part of the decentralisation arrangement, "District Assemblies have the responsibility to build, equip and maintain" education directorates within their districts (Ankomah, et al., 2005, p. 23). However, the standard centralised structures have simply been re-defined to take responsibility for new institutions that have been established. There is a disparity between policy intent and the capacity to implement policy as intended

Key structures established by Education Reform 2007 included the National Inspectorate Board, National Teaching Council and the District Education Oversight Committee but these have not, as yet, been made fully functional (KF 5.4). A substantive head to the National Inspectorate Board has been named, and assigned to that role. The current discussion among stakeholders contends that the newly established National Inspectorate Board (NIB) will duplicate the functions of supervision and evaluation of schools which are currently performed poorly at district level (Ghana News Agency, 2011, February 26). The National Inspectorate Board has been presented on paper as an elaborate and idealistic plan. The NIB is a national body and will have no direct interaction with district education personnel. The NIB seems to be an additional concentration of authority at the top and therefore ridicules the idea of its existence aiding decentralisation. However, full implementation of the NIB should foster the quality of supervision and monitoring through the inspectorate divisions at the national, regional and district administrations of the GES. It is therefore not surprising that most of the teachers knew nothing about its existence or the role of the NIB, since it is not functioning.

Furthermore, the National Teaching Council is expected to license and give certificates to all teachers and also enforce policy on ethical and professional standards (Ghana Education Service, 2008b). While that body is yet to come into existence, the National Council for Tertiary Education plays its role. Additionally, salaries for College of Education Teachers are still managed at a national level by the Controller and Accountant General in the GES. These are among many unresolved attempts at decentralisation (KF 6.5).

Further, the presence of a District Education Oversight Committee enhances broader stakeholders' participation in school monitoring and supervision. The District Education Oversight Committee has become an important link between GES and the District

Assembly. This body oversees stakeholders' participation in monitoring and supervision of schools. There is a need for further action to ensure that this body is fully empowered to function in the capacity with which it is accredited. A further reason for lack of implementation is a lack of understanding of the policy intent (KF 5.4).

There have been some successful aspects of the decentralisation policy such as schools that have active PTAs and SMCs which encourage community participation in school activities. However, there are some school heads who consider PTA/SMC involvement in school affairs as interference and a waste of time and for that reason would only include parents when convenient. For instance, a head teacher who may be struggling to design his school's SPIP would not want to involve the SMC, especially if he thinks they may have no helpful contribution to make.

Lack of Resources

The head teachers indicated that resources have a major impact on the quality of teaching and learning (KF 4.4). They reported that teachers need access to textbooks and curriculum materials for teaching and students need to sit in classrooms for lessons and have access to textbooks if there is to be a positive impact on learning outcomes (Table 4.12).

Two-year kindergarten has been made compulsory and therefore space needs to be created for such classes. Further, the new subjects added to the school time-table called for the accompanying teaching and learning materials. Educational leaders were unanimous in saying that there is inadequate resourcing of policy change and especially, inadequate ICT and teaching resources to support policy implementation (KF 4.9). Apart from an inadequate supply of material and infrastructural resources, additional human resources are required.

In some cases expectations for implementing policy are clearly understood, however, for various reasons the policy has not been implemented. For instance, both ICT and French are time-tabled. The schools see value in acquiring ICT skills and having access to the internet but many rural schools lack electricity, access to computers and ICT teachers and text books. In addition, there are no French teachers. Teachers may not be well versed in English, the local Ghanaian language or French to be competent to teach. Science resource centres and ICT are available in city schools; however, they are not available in the rural districts (KF 5.2).

Lack of resources has limited the roll-out of workshops and activities of Circuit Supervisors. Adequate resourcing is a key factor in an effective implementation

process. The data presented confirms that the lack of resources has limited policy implementation at district level.

Communication

The organogram in Figure 2.2 indicates that the Ghanaian structure for education policy dissemination and implementation is top-down. However, Sabatier (2007) advocated that the lowest level implementers do have the power to upset the goals of top level policy makers. When the authorities fail to recognise and empower the lower ranks to take up their rightful roles, they feel marginalised. Hartman (1997) suggests that Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is important for consideration by educational leaders. The implications for leadership are that when basic needs are not satisfied as was revealed in school leaders' focus groups attention gets divided and this means that if any communication arrives, the message received is likely to become distorted. Rodrigue, Comtois and Slack (2009, p. 297) note the need for "communication and coordination to be on the same wavelength and additionally, the premises of policy and theory need to be compatible". Further, Dempster (2009) suggests that some level of disciplined dialogue about learning within the school context and with its wider community should be on-going. Considering the difference teachers make to students' learning it is important that teachers regularly use the opportunities to become well informed (Hattie, 2003, October).

Head teachers reported that the two ways in which the new policies were communicated to them were a meeting at District Office which was advertised in circulars, and by a single FM radio broadcast (KF 4.5). Even though some copies of circulars remained in the District Education Office pigeon holes because they were not delivered, use of circulars still remains one of the two most reliable means of information dissemination between the Office and the schools (KF 4.5 & KF 5.5). When circuit supervisors are able to do regular rounds, they would usually be expected to take out any material that would be pending.

Moreover, there is inadequate dissemination of information about roles of stakeholders. Additionally, there is an issue about attitudes and behaviours towards information and information use. The issue of attitude towards information dissemination creates a dichotomy between the authorities, who consider their role as sole interpreters of policy, and teachers in the classrooms, who implement reform initiatives. As it was teachers simply carried out directives given out by the GES authorities. The issue of empowerment leaves much to be desired because as frontline supervisors, head teachers need to be well informed through workshops so that they can implement policy adequately (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, AITSL,

2011). The authorities consider certain issues of policy as inappropriate for the teaching public. One informant expressed the view that head teachers have no reason to complain that they have had no orientations to prepare them for the new additions to the curriculum. In the words of the informant, schools have been given the syllabus of what they are mandated to teach, and that was considered as adequate. This has implications for issues of inadequate communication of policy and interpretation.

Interpretation of Policy

The capacity of policy objectives to be clearly interpreted is a factor for the successful implementation of top-down reform initiatives (Birkland, 2010). Makinde (2005, p. 63) argues that an implementation gap is about the "widening of the distance between stated policy goals and the realisation of such planned goals". Such a gap may arise because aspects of policy are not clearly defined or clearly understood.

There are issues for interpreting the language and expectations of the policy, making it difficult to implement (KF 4.10). Currently, there is a large proportion (67%) of head teachers who have spent less than five years in the GES. These head teachers have had no orientation or in-service training to ensure that they actually understand basic tenets of policy expectation. Some have never been taught to draw up the SPIP and so they do it in their own way. Some have not understood that Capitation Grant is for current, not future use.

The issue of medium of instruction seemed to pose some level of ambiguity and confusion for head teachers. The head teachers' survey (Table 4.11 & KF 4.13) revealed the level of concern about English Language competency levels of both students and teachers and confirms the need for a concerted effort to improve the use of English in teaching and learning. However, the NALAP policy encourages the use of the mother tongue. There is thus an amalgamation of various concepts in terms of a child's language development and what may be more advantageous at a particular stage in the life of the pupil (KF 4.4).

The head teachers' survey revealed the state of head teachers' marked confusion in the face of the numerous, different messages (KF 4.10). This claim is evidenced by the statement of an informant that the changes were too numerous and too frequent. Instances cited by the head teachers of such messages included: instructions for the medium of instruction policy determining when to use mother tongue or English; ICT programmed for BECE and then suddenly being removed from the time-table; and rescheduling of meetings, without due notice. This has resulted in teachers sometimes wasting time and effort.

> Assertion 7.3
>
> It is part of the GES culture to uphold the various levels and roles within its hierarchical structure. The many layers of administrative bureaucracy impacts negatively on policy dissemination and implementation since access to authority especially from the lower ranks is curtailed. Head teachers and teachers form the majority at the lowest levels. Their challenging conditions of service need to be enhanced for reforms to be implemented (KF 5.2).
>
> The existing means of circulating information is based on an old GES practice. The issue here has to do with the persistent failure in ensuring that all circulars get delivered. There is poor communication especially at District level resulting in gaps in communication to those who have to interpret and implement policies (KF 4.5 & KF 5.5). Additionally, the lack of professional learning opportunities incapacitates the head teachers and teachers to fully understand, interpret and implement policy. Finally, the inadequate material and human resources are key factors in limiting implementation of reform initiatives (KF 4.4; KF 4.9, and Table 4.12).

Synthesis

Introduction

This synthesis presents a mapping of the current research findings onto the initial conception of what was previously known about the problem area. Findings are discussed against the backdrop of Bybee's (2003) five Ps model which is a significant component of the conceptual framework of the study. The findings are synthesised in terms of purpose, policy, programs and performance. The fifth 'P', classroom practice was not investigated in this study.

Steps of Policy Implementation

Purpose

The purpose of Reform 2007 is to ensure education for all. Additionally, Reform 2007 reinforces the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) two and three; and, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) goals in their rationale (Ministry of Information and National Orientation, 2007). The second and third Millennium Development Goals are expressed in the 2008 Ghana MDG Report (2010, p. 25, 19) and Lim & Tang (2006):

> The second MDG is to "ensure that by 2015, children everywhere boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary-schooling. The third MDG promotes the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015. (p. para)

Policy

Policies represent concrete translations of purpose that are used to drive implementation of the purpose. Policies to support initiatives that improve access to education include: the Capitation Grant which is available to basic schools; compulsory pre-school and teacher college programs for pre-school teachers; enhanced access from JHS to SHS; and STME program, among others (Ghana Education Service, 2004, June).

Policies to support initiatives that improve teacher supply and teacher capacity building include: "District Teacher Training Sponsorship Scheme; untrained teachers' training Diploma in Basic Education; and, quota system on paid study leave" (Asare, 2009, April 15, p. para). The Ministry of Education Science and Sports' (2007b), report, lists teacher education policies to cover aspects such as:

> Training of teachers in technical, Vocational, Agricultural, and Special Needs Education, Guidance and Counselling, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and French as well as a training program for kindergarten teachers. Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET) has been set up to develop policy, co-ordinate and regulate all aspects of technical and vocational and agricultural education. (p. 3)

Policies to support initiatives that enhance supervision of teaching include: the Whole School Development program (WSD); School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP); "Performance Monitoring Test (PMT); School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM)"; and, District Teacher Support Team (JICA, n/a, p. 40).

Programs

Programs are based on policies and these are developed through various initiatives to achieve the stated purpose. There are programs to support initiatives that improve access to education. These programs include the Capitation Grant scheme (KF 4.5; KF 5.1 & KF 6.1); compulsory two year pre-school; college programs to train pre-school teachers (KF 5.6); enhanced access from JHS to SHS (KF 5.7); and, STME program to boost students' participation in Maths and Science (KF 6.1).

There are programs to support initiatives to improve teacher supply and teacher capacity building. These programs include the District Teacher Training Sponsorship

Scheme (KF 5.3); the untrained teachers training Diploma in Basic Education (KF 5.3); and, the quota system on paid study leaves (KF 6.3).

There are several programs to support initiatives that enhance supervision of teaching. These include: the Whole School Development program (WSD) (KF 5.4a); School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) (KF 5.4b); Performance Monitoring Test (PMT) (KF 5.4c); School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM); and District Teacher Support Team (DTST) (KF 5.4d). There have been issues about implementing these initiatives to bring about change at the school level. Some data suggest that programs such as the Capitation Grant scheme have greatly enhanced school enrolment in some communities (KF 4.5 & KF 5.1). However, there are other programs at district level such as the capacity building workshops that have not been as successful (KF 5.2 & KF 6.3).

Bybee (2003) argues there must be coherence in purpose, policy and programs if practice and performance are to be improved. The study reveals that there is reasonable coherence in the intended purpose, policy and programs of the GES; however, there have been failures, at the levels of program implementation and performance, as indicated by BECE results of the GES.

Performance

BECE performance did not improve in the District between 2007 and 2011. The pass rate between 2008 and 2011 has not been above 48% which is 10% lower than it was in 2007. There have been no positive impacts of reform initiatives on performance (KF 5.6).

Effectiveness of Policy Implementation

Bybee's (2003) model indicates that to effectively implement policy a number of policy implementation goals have to be met, particularly the dissemination, interpretation and implementation goals.

Dissemination Goal

The top-down, hierarchical structure of the GES impacts on information dissemination in such a way that one cannot help but be aware of all the layers of bureaucracy between national, regional and district levels. Information dissemination is slow because the methods of communication seem quite limited. The compartmentalising of layers within the structure inhibits communication and interpretation of policy. Data revealed that officers would expect Directors to keep within the bounds and levels of their responsibilities to resolve issues. There is a particular problem with poor

communication between the District Office of the GES and rural schools because circuit supervisors make so few visits to schools.

Information about the policy was communicated to schools through circulars, a radio announcement and a meeting at the District Education Office. Considering that 78% of the District's schools are in remote locations with no electricity, the likelihood of most of them missing the radio announcement could be understood (Table 4.15).

Interpretation Goal

There have been no workshops or meetings at which people could discuss policy matters. Head teachers have had no capacity building programs to develop the skills to develop School Improvement Plans; or to hold meetings with the PTA and SMC. Survey and interview data confirmed the assertion that there were issues of interpreting policy due to a lack of adequate training (KF 4.8; KF 5.2 & KF 6.3).

There has been a failure to provide professional learning workshops to support head teachers understand and interpret the policy. Consequently, head teachers lack the skills necessary to develop school improvement plans. There is also a lack of resources to support circuit supervisors to visit the schools and support the head teachers with policy interpretation.

Implementation Goal

The largest gaps in implementation of Reform 2007 have been the failure to roll out initiatives at district and school levels. At various times officers and some selected head teachers have been sponsored for a train the trainer model, which has to be cascaded to the rest of the District but these have not been fully implemented. Additionally, the DTST which is expected to run capacity building workshops seems to exist in name only. There has not been a full implementation of decentralisation to support interpretation and implementation of policy at the District level. There have been no evaluations or policy revisions to enhance effective implementation. There are some data from the current research on the extent to which Reform 2007 has impacted on the practice of schooling that suggests that there have been real issues with implementation (KF 5.2 & KF 6.2).

Barriers to Implementation

Barriers to implementation have been around policy dissemination and interpretation as well as interpretation and implementation. The barriers to implementation as included in Figure 7.1 are: the hierarchical structure and values of GES, which includes poor communication especially at District level; lack of professional learning opportunities to

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interpret the policies; and, inadequate human and material resources to implement programs. Consequently, the new model that has evolved from the current study is presented in Figure 7.1:
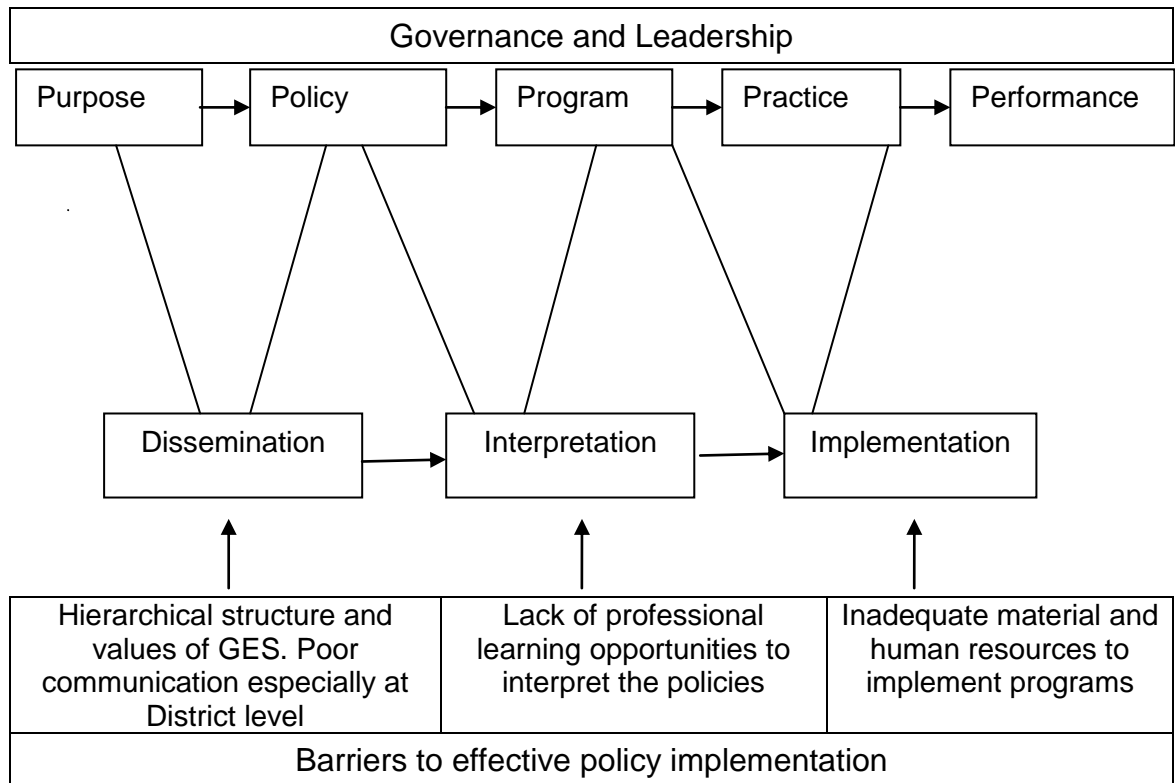
Figure 7.1: Barriers to effective policy implementation

This study shows that head teachers are at the end of the policy dissemination process but they are at the front and centre of policy implementation. Findings reveal that head teachers and circuit supervisors require empowerment to enable them to assume their roles as frontline supervisors and implementers of reform. It is therefore evident that the low academic standards and low pass rate at BECE are the result of inexperienced head teachers, a lack of qualified teachers, low teacher professionalism, low community support for education and inadequate resources (Based on Assertion 7.1). If this unsatisfactory situation is to be reformed, the barriers to policy dissemination, interpretation and implementation need to be addressed.

This synthesis helps to conceptualise policy implementation and its ultimate impact on learning outcomes. The Researcher has drawn on Bybee's (2003) model to examine the extent to which the Ghana Education Service (GES) has functioned in achieving its implementation goals.

CHAPTER EIGHT:
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter includes an overview of the study and presents the conclusions, highlights the study's contribution to knowledge, its limitations and discusses implications for policy dissemination, interpretation, and implementation to support reform initiatives. This will enhance the status and quality of education in rural JHSs in Ghana.

Overview of the Study

The study investigated the implementation of educational policy through programs and its impact on practice in junior high schools (JHS) in one district of the Upper West Region of Ghana. The research assessed the roles that key personnel in Ghana's Education Service and other education leaders played at the various levels of educational administration in terms of policy implementation.

The research used a case study design. Document analysis, a questionnaire, focus groups and interviews were used for the purpose of gathering data required to answer the three research questions:

1. What is the status of the quality of education in JHSs in the Sissala East District of Ghana?

2. What impact has Reform 2007 had on the quality of education?

3. What factors have impacted on the implementation of reform initiatives?

In all, 50 participants were involved in the research comprising 36 JHS head teachers, five circuit supervisors, five key officers of the GES, and representatives of the Professional Association of Teachers, Parent/Teacher Association, the District Chief Executive, and, the Principal of a College of Education.

The head teachers completed a questionnaire to gather data about the status of education in their schools. Focus group discussions were held with head teachers and with circuit supervisors and semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of nine other leaders. The questionnaire and interview schedules were pilot tested to determine the appropriateness of the instruments and the type of responses expected from them. After obtaining responses from the pilot study, the suitability and content validity of the research instruments were verified.

A selection of Ministry of Education policy documents, district and national reports were analysed to clarify policy settings and to research programs being implemented. A

questionnaire was used to elicit detailed background information about the current status of education in the JHSs of the District. The focus group discussions and interviews were used to gather qualitative data on the extent of coherence in purpose, policy and program implementation. The study draws on the perspectives of a range of key stakeholders and uses a range of data types so that data could be triangulated to ensure confirmability of findings.

Conclusions

The conclusions of the current research are based on the data gathered from the questionnaire, focus groups, interviews and documents. The data were analysed to generate key findings which were interpreted in relation to the literature and then generalised to develop assertions which have informed the conclusions. The conclusions are presented as responses to each of the research questions.

Research Question One

What is the status of the quality of education in JHSs in the Sissala East District of Ghana?

Analysis of data revealed that the schools were staffed with young and inexperienced head teachers who lacked the knowledge, skills and authority needed to be effective leaders of a school community and to effectively supervise their teachers. Without effective leadership it is difficult to attain high academic standards and good pass rates in the BECE (KF 4.1). Most of the head teachers were in their first appointments and within their first year as head teachers. Consequently, most of them were new to the reform initiatives in progress, and in addition, they had received no orientation or professional development in relation to the reform initiatives.

Furthermore, interview data revealed that the high proportion of untrained teachers and teachers attempting to teach core subjects without specialist training also impacted negatively on the quality of teaching and learning (KF 5.2). Without an adequate supply of qualified teachers, classrooms, furniture, textbooks, and curriculum materials, the quality of teaching and learning were impoverished (KF 4.3).

Further, low levels of professionalism such as punctuality, attendance and absenteeism, have implications for the quality of teaching and learning. These account for the inability to cover the syllabus and children not being well prepared for their examinations which leads to low pass rates in the BECE (KF 6.2).

Finally, without community support for regular school attendance it is difficult for schools to improve achievement and BECE pass rates (KF 4.6). Most of the students

come from farming communities where there are few positive role models of academic success. It is common for children to return to help out on the farm after finishing their BECE. As a result, children do not get much encouragement to continue their schooling.

The status of the quality of education in JHSs in the Sissala East District is summed up in issues of inexperienced head teachers, a lack of qualified teachers, low teacher professionalism, a lack of community support for education and inadequate resources. The combination of these issues results in low academic standards and low pass rates at BECE (KF 5.2 and Assertion 7.1).

Research Question Two

What impact has Reform 2007 had on the quality of education?

Improving access to education is an important goal of the Reform 2007. Initiatives to improve the quality of education include: the Capitation Grant scheme; compulsory pre-school; training of pre-school teachers; enhanced access from JHS to SHS; the STME program to boost students' participation in Maths and Science; as well as boosting students' participation in Technical and Vocational programs (KF 5.1). The inexperienced head teachers' had difficulties managing the Capitation Grant, designing their School's Performance Improvement Plan, (SPIP) administering Performance Monitoring Tests (PMT), and organising School Performance Appraisal Meetings (SPAM). They also experienced difficulties establishing productive PTAs and SMCs. These challenges have exposed their inexperience and limited leadership skills (KF 4.8 & KF 5.2) of the head teachers. These key initiatives were designed to enhance access to education and the communities' involvement with their schools. Focus group data revealed that many more schools have had their SMCs and PTAs inaugurated. However, there were head teachers who said that, these bodies exist merely in name, since community members did not respond to calls to meetings. Other head teachers said they are yet to form a group. What is positive is that there is awareness about the role expected to be taken by the PTA/SMC so as to encourage the participation of communities in education service delivery and head teachers have a lead role in making this happen (KF 4.10).

An important focus of Reform 2007 is the enhancement of teachers' recruitment and the upgrading of teacher qualifications. Teacher recruitment initiatives have already been rewarding for many untrained teachers within the education system. However, the issue of the District sponsorship of teacher trainees is challenged by the low internal revenue generating capacity of the District Assembly. Further, the teacher-trainee sponsorship scheme had limited success because it failed to attract teachers into core

subject areas (KF 5.1, KF 5.3, & KF 6.3). Most of the District's schools need additional teachers who are competent to teach the core subjects of Maths, Science and English.

Finally, the level of teacher supervision and monitoring by head teachers and circuit supervisors is ineffective. Available data indicated that these frontline supervisors have not had the required in-service training to empower them to those roles. Additionally, circuit supervisors lack adequate resources to carry out their supportive role within their circuits. Activities of the District Teacher Support Team (DTST) were at a standstill for lack of funds (KF 6.5 & KF 5.4). Additionally, the National Inspectorate Board has also had limited impact (KF 5.4 & KF 6.5).

BECE performance has not increased in the District between 2007 and 2011. The pass rate between 2008 and 2011 has not been above 48% which is 10% lower than it was in 2007 (KF 5.6 and based on Assertion 7.2).

Research Question Three

What factors have impacted on the implementation of reform initiatives?

Even though the current case study focused on one District which is only a single decentralised arm of a broad and centralised administration of the GES, consideration was given to purposively interviewing the Director who heads Basic Education. This informant was positioned at the level of central administration, to comment on his perspective about the implementation of the Reform 2007. Apart from including the perspective of this chief executive in the aggregate of data analysed, the interview also drew attention to the distance existing between the District and the central administration. Additionally, there are several layers of bureaucratic bottlenecks between District and central administration. In fact, no one expects District Office personnel to communicate directly with central administration. The recognised procedure is that District personnel reports to the Regional Office and then, Regional personnel reports to central administration. The pace of information dissemination between central administrations and the District is slow. Focus group and interview data revealed that there were several occasions when circulars addressed to schools remained sitting in District Office pigeon holes without reaching their schools. Communication bottlenecks are therefore a strong factor impacting negatively on the pace of policy dissemination.

Additionally, interview and focus group data provided considerable information on the centralised structures that have been re-defined to take on newly established roles. Among these bodies are the National Inspectorate Board (NIB) and National Teaching Council (NTC). The NTC is expected to enforce ethical and professional standards.

The NIB is expected to enforce standards in all pre-tertiary schools. At the time of data collection, head teachers were not aware of the existence of these bodies. The District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC) on the other hand, belongs to the decentralised structure of the District Assembly. Additionally, DEOC is an existing body that was dormant at the time of data collection (KF 5.4). The informant assured the Researcher that DEOC would soon be functional again. Anecdotal evidence reveals that there is a conflict of roles between the top-down, centralised and hierarchical approach, and the decentralised, bottom-up, participatory approach. Apart from the lack of collaboration within the levels of GES administration there is also a lack of collaboration between head teachers and their communities whose participation is required for effective education service delivery. Without the support of the community and effective PTAs and SMCs, head teachers will struggle to raise standards and increase participation in education. Without collaboration stakeholders will not be able to fully participate in decision making. There is also an inadequate dissemination of information about the roles of stakeholders (KF 6.6).

Furthermore, head teachers' comments on the questionnaire centred on issues about attitudes and behaviours towards information and information use. The hierarchical structure and its bureaucratic procedures, coupled with a culture that bows to every word from the top, is an added conflict to the re-defining of new decentralised roles in old practises. This has implications for issues of poor interpretation of policy and communication (KF 6.7). Informants seem to suggest that policy information in its totality is not for the consumption of everyone. The idea here is to say that head teachers and teachers only need to know about the new additions to the curriculum and the syllabus to go with them. The belief is that, if teachers are ignorant of the Reform 2007 package that is not so much an issue however, it is the teacher who implements policy through reformed classroom practice.

Obviously, there are missing links in the flow of information between parties within the policy process. At the same time, levels within the hierarchy are compartmentalised in such a way that these levels seem to stand alone; thereby contributing to gaps in the flow of information and its interpretation. Finally, the inadequate materials and human resources are key factors in limiting implementation of reform initiatives. The lack of professional learning opportunities, human and material resources limits the capacities of the head teachers and teachers to fully understand interpret and implement policy. (KF 4.4; KF 4.9; Table 4.12 and Assertions 7.3)

Contributions to Knowledge

The current study has added to existing knowledge on implementing education policy to support reform initiatives. This study addresses the gap in the literature on the implementation of education policy through programs and its impact on performance in JHSs in a rural district of Ghana. This study has also generated a model to frame investigations of policy implementation based on the Five Ps model (Bybee, 2003). This new conceptual model acknowledges the potential that resides in all stakeholders within the system, including the policy formulators and the implementers; both are vital partners within the policy process. Evidence from this study reveals that there is a need to enable and empower the Ghanaian implementers in their roles, particularly at District level. This will then allow all stakeholders at the level of policy formulation to develop a coherent response to the policy and to achieve its purpose.

The study generated new knowledge that is of relevance to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports which develops policy, and to the Ghana Education Service (GES) which has the responsibility of implementing pre-tertiary education policies formulated by the Ministry. The study has contributed new knowledge about the implementation of education policy and developed recommendations for reform. The findings will contribute to a more informed debate on educational standards in Ghana and will inform policy development within the Ministry. The findings will also inform program development, and implementation by the GES. The study developed a model that can be used in Ghana, and other developing countries with similar issues and bureaucratic structures, to address problems related to educational reform.

The current research is important to address the educational, social and economic costs of such a high failure rate at the BECE. The educational cost is that a high proportion of students fail the BECE and these students are thus excluded from further formal education. The social cost is the outcome for the students who fail the examinations, such as turning to a life of crime or falling into depression (Ghanaian Chronicle, 2007, June 29). The economic cost is the failed students' burden on society when they cannot find a job and so turn to their already poor family for support.

Finally, the research provided useful information to all the participants in the current study; it was a positive learning experience for all.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations to the study. First, the sample of this study was restricted to the public JHSs of the Ghana Education Service within one District. The study ignored the existing private JHSs since public JHSs were more accountable to the GES for

implementation of initiatives to reform the quality of education. The data reflected views of JHS head teachers and personnel who were key stakeholders of the Education Service in one district only.

The current study focused on a particular group of participants within a particular context and therefore is not representative of the general population. There are therefore limitations on the generalisability (Colin & Echo, 2006) of the findings from this study.

Due to the constraints of the study it was not possible to collect data about teaching practice before and after the implementation of Reform 2007. The lack of research related to this 'P' of the 5Ps model is therefore an important limitation of the study.

Implications and Recommendations from the Study

There are implications that arise from this study for further research and recommendations have also been developed to address unresolved issues.

Implications for Further Research

The study's scope was based on Bybee's (1997a) model for describing and analysing reform initiatives which has a focus on purpose, policy, programs, practice, and performance. However, this study did not adequately address the fifth 'P' which is classroom practice. Further research is therefore suggested to investigate the actual practice of teaching and learning, with reference to evaluation and feedback to create a more complete picture of the effects of policy implementation on practice and performance.

Secondly, researching NGO interventions to basic schools and tracking the accountability measures in place will offer another dimension to ensure that the goals of implementation are attained. Further research could include private schools since these schools also benefit from government interventions.

Recommendations to Address Unresolved Issues and Barriers to Effective Implementation of Education Policy

The following recommendations address unresolved issues in relation to: (1) building leadership capabilities and effective supervision of teachers, (2) lack of professional learning opportunities, (3) inadequate human and material resources to implement programs, and (4) the hierarchical nature and values of the GES which include issues of communication especially at District level.

1. Building leadership capabilities and effective supervision of teachers

Initiatives should be implemented to:

- build a cohort of experienced and well trained head teachers who are skilled to provide effective leadership to their schools.
- enhance the monitoring of teaching and mentoring of teachers
- intensify supervision of teachers by senior officers at all levels of the education directorate.
- ensure that circuit supervisors visit schools regularly to support quality education delivery for improved performance of learners.
- enhance the supply of trained and experienced teachers.

2. Increase professional learning opportunities to interpret the policies

- The amount and quality of in-service training (INSET) given to teachers, the focus of these school workshops, and the evaluation of INSET must be given a higher priority.

3. Increase the human and material resources required to implement programs.

- GES and District Assembly must provide stronger leadership to directing and recruiting potential teachers in critical subject areas required by the District.
- The District Assembly must play a stronger role in making adequate provision for teaching and learning materials and educational infrastructure for the effective delivery of Education for All (EFA) goals.

4. Hierarchical nature and values of GES which include issues of communication especially at District level.

- An ethos of collegiality and collaboration needs to be imbued into the GES to facilitate effective communication between central, regional and district levels and to support decentralisation initiatives.
- Structures such as DEOC, SMCs, PTAs and SPAM, need to be adequately resourced so that they can function effectively as they offer opportunities for collaboration and dialogue between the district education authority schools and communities.

A Final Note

The low BECE pass rate is a result of inexperienced school leaders, lack of trained teachers, low teacher professionalism, low community support for education and a lack of resources. This study has demonstrated that there is need for adequate dissemination, interpretation and resourcing of policy if the goals of school improvement are to be realised.

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Appendix A: Map of Ghana

Source: Ghana   Country   Information   (2009)

Appendix B: Education Performance Indicators 2003 – 2015

and Development Partners to participate	CBO/NGO/FBO/IGO provision over the same target periods. 20% of those primary and JHS schools that are identified as deprived rehabilitated each year.	5. Develop and circulate IEC plan to encourage community involvement.	4. 2003-2015 5. 2003
EA7 Provide equitable educational opportunities	50% female share in Primary enrolment by 2005. Retention rates of females and males on a par by 2010. Full enrolment of hard-to-reach and out of school children by 2015. Integrate all children with non- severe SENs in mainstream schools by 2015.	1. Conduct IEC programs to raise awareness of the importance of girls' education. 2. Enforce policies on non-repetition in all cases, except prolonged illness and other exceptional circumstances. 3. Support hard-to-reach children and complementary/alternative education programs. 4. Provide specialised training in multi-grade teaching for teachers serving in rural areas and reward teachers accordingly. 5. Provide training for all teachers in SENs. 6. Design and implement programs for the integration of complementary schools with formal schools. 7. Redesign school infrastructure to facilitate the accommodation of pupils/students with special needs.	1. 2003 2. 2003-2015 3. 2003-2015 4. 2004 5. 2004 6. 2003-2015 7. 2004
EA8 Provide conditions for universal functional literacy	Agreed national functional literacy test validated and in use by 2006. 5% sample of adult population tested by December 2008 to determine rate of literacy. Identified and targeted literacy programs in place and operational by 2008. Literacy rate improved by 3% points per year from 2008 to 2015.	1. Design national functional literacy test. 2. Conduct national functional literacy test. 3. Design and implement functional literacy programs in 15 Ghanaian languages. 4. Evaluate the functional literacy programs implemented 5. Provide incentive package for volunteer facilitators. 6. Provide material support to learners with special needs. 7. Review curriculum to make it relevant to the needs of the learners. 8. Conduct training in micro-credit scheme for learners. 9. Establish community reading centres. 10. Provide solar panels to communities. 11. Publish community rural newspaper.	1. 2004 2. 2005 3. 2005 4. 2005 5. 2003-2015 6. 2003-2015 7. 2005 8. 2003 9. 2005 10. 2005 11. 2005
EA9 Prioritise the disadvantaged in	Support systems in place for children with SENs by 2015. Increase attendance of those with	1. Evaluate, and build upon, programs for the disadvantaged that are already in operation, including complementary and alternative education programs.	1. 2004 2. 2003-2015

society	special needs in schools to 50% in 2008, 80% in 2012 and 100% by 2015. IEC program for disadvantaged in place by 2005 An inclusive education system achieved by 2015, including girls and boys with non-severe SENs integrated into mainstream schools. Support systems in place for excluded children by 2015.	2. Reach and integrate excluded children (out –of –school, hard –to- reach, street – children, internally – and externally – displaced children, victims of child abuse, child labour and child trafficking, truants, intra-cycle dropouts and adolescent mothers within the formal system.) 3. Organise screening and identification of children with special needs. 4. Institute scholarship schemes for needy pupils. 5. Establish special education assessment centres in all districts. 6. Organise sensitisation workshop for parents and children with special needs. 7.Incorporate training in SENS into all Colleges of Education courses (also see EA7, strategy 5	3. 2005 4.2003-2015 5. 2004 6.2005-2015 7. 2004
EA10 Promote gender equity in enrolment and retention	50% female share in Primary enrolment by 2005 Retention rates of females and males on par by 2010	1. Conduct IEC programs to raise awareness of the importance of girls' education. 2. Enforce policies on non-repetition in all cases, except prolonged illness and other exceptional circumstances.	1. 2003 2. 2003
EA11 Prioritise female education at all levels, including technical and vocational education	Enrolments and completion rates of boys and girls at parity at all levels by 2015 Gender parity in primary schools by 2005 and Junior Secondary Schools by 2008 Gender-appropriate technical and vocational courses introduced in schools by 2005	1. Eliminate gender stereotyping in teacher preparation and in teaching materials. 2. Modernise technical and vocational courses for JSS, making them relevant and gender free. 3. Support access programs for females at all levels, particularly at the basic level and entry into Colleges of Education. 4. Design and implement IEC and sensitisation programs to raise communities' awareness of the value of formal education for girls, particularly at the basic level. 5. Provide suitable school facilities for females (students and teachers).	1. 2003 2.2005 3. 2003 4. 2003 5.2004
EA12 Promote the recruitment and deployment of female teachers	IEC in place for teacher recruitment, especially females by 2004 Provide motivational package to teachers in hardship areas by 2004	1. Implement district sponsorship program for teacher trainee in all districts. 2. Support teacher deployment in deprived areas, particularly females. 3. Provide 'deprived area incentive package' (e.g. teacher	1. ongoing 2. ongoing 3.
Provide scholarship	by 2015	6. Construct and rehabilitate 15 regional libraries.	6. 2003-

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school teachers and caregivers	training in pre-school education by September 2005 INSET courses to train existing teachers in pre-school instruction beginning 2005 43% increase in enrolments in Colleges of Education	4. Develop inset COURSE. 5. Train INSET instructors. 6. Prepare and publish IEC materials to promote teaching as a career. 7. Recruit and deploy teachers.	5. 2005 6. 2003 7. annual
EA4 Provide and ensure access to free basic education	GER in primary schools to rise from 79% in 2002 to 100% by 2010 100% completion rate by 2015 at Primary level GER in JHS schools to rise from 62% in 2002 to 75% by 2010 and 90% by 2015 Average national PTR in primary schools to increase from 33:1 currently, to 35:1 by 2010 and at least maintained thereafter. Average national PTR in junior secondary schools to increase from 18:1 currently, to 22:1 by 2010 and 25:1 by 2015. Universal Primary completion by 2015	1. Conduct school mapping of Primary and JHS schools 2. Write guidelines as to what constitutes fee-free and 'cost-sharing' (i.e. enforcing the abolition of fees and levies and the introduction of Capitation Grants for basic education and ways to implement cost sharing at the post basic level). 3. Circulate to all deliverers within the education system. 4. Circulate guidelines to the districts, regions and other stakeholders. 5. Monitor schools to ensure adherence to guidelines on fees/costs. 6. Determine physical infrastructure needs for basic schools. 7. Determine teacher needs for basic schools according to establishment norms. 8. Prepare and implement a 3-year rolling plan to develop physical infrastructure in basic schools 9. Prepare and implement a 3-year rolling plan to develop teacher deployment according to needs in basic schools.	1. 2003 2. 2003 3. 2003 4. 2003 5. 2003-2015 6. 2003 7. 2003 8. 2003-2015 9. 2003-2015
EA5 Provide free compulsory universal basic education (FCUBE)	Universal Primary Completion by 2015 All children receive six years (or equivalent of fee free primary education All students receive three years (or equivalent of fee free junior secondary education.	1. Define free *compulsory* universal basic education (FCUBE). 2. Finalise Draft Education Bill 3. Design, publish and circulate IEC materials to sensitise communities as to the importance of compulsory basic education for all.	1. 2003 2. 2003 3. 2003
EA6 Provide infrastructure and encourage the Private Sector, CBOs, NGOs, FBOs, IGOs	35% increase in primary infrastructure by 2015. 22% increase in JHS infrastructure by 2015. Commensurate increase in	1. Conduct school mapping of primary and JHS schools. 2. Determine physical infrastructure needs for basic schools. 3. Determine rehabilitation needs annually. 4. Prepare and implement a 3-year rolling plan to develop physical infrastructure in basic schools.	1. 2003 2. 2003 3. annual

public library facilities and encourage community/private libraries	All libraries/resource rooms (schools and public) with minimum stock, storage and retrieval systems – including computers) by 2015. IEC system for libraries/resource rooms in place by 2012	3. Provide all schools with a library/resource room. 4. Design and publish IEC materials for libraries. 5. Develop a program involving Das, communities and the Private Sector, for the provision of libraries at the community level.	2015 3. 2004-2015 4. 2003-2012 5. 2004
QE3 Improve the effectiveness of teacher preparation, upgrading and deployment at all levels, with emphasis on the recruitment and deployment of females.	Reduce % of untrained teachers from 21.2% at the primary level and 12.8% at JHS to not more than 5% in 2015 across the basic level. IEC in place for teacher recruitment, especially females by 2004. Provide motivational package to teachers in hardship areas by 2004.	1. Implement district sponsorship program for teacher trainees in all districts. 2. Support teacher deployment in deprived areas, particularly females. 3. Provide 'deprived area incentive package' (e.g. teacher accommodation, transport and services). 4. Support volunteer teacher program in rural areas, with an emphasis on local recruitment (especially of females). 5.Review policy on study leave (with a view to reducing the number of teachers taking study leave annually, reducing the financial burden of the study leave system, and placing a greater emphasis on distance education as a means of professional development). 6. Strengthen supervision and inspection systems. 7. Design and publish IEC materials. 8. Rehabilitation of Ghana Education Staff Development Institute. 9. Introduce a teacher rotation/redeployment system to supply remote rural areas with qualified teachers.	1. 2003 ongoing 2. 2003 3. 2004 ongoing 4. 2003 5. 2003 6. 2004 7. 2004 8. 2003 9. 2004
QE4 Develop a motivated teaching cadre for all levels with support from the Private sector, CBOs, NGOs, FBOs and Development Partners	Career path, criteria for promotion, annual review of performance, conditions of service for teachers at all levels drafted/revised and published by early 2004, implemented by 2005.	1. Define and institutionalise a multi-level career path with a clearly defined promotion policy based on equity and merit with appropriate incentives and rewards to those who remain in service. 2. Review policies and procedures for promotion, discipline and staff development.	1. 2003 2. 2003
QE5 Improve the relevance	National curriculum at basic level published and circulated to all schools by	1. Review national curricula at all levels in collaboration with key stakeholders to: ensure relevance to local needs and	1. 2003 2. 2003

Objective	Targets	Actions	Timeline
of the curriculum at pre-tertiary levels	end of 2003. Basic level teachers trained in the new curriculum by 2004 New curriculum examined from 2004 onwards for BECE. Next revision of basic curriculum to be in 2006.	conditions; remove bias e.g. related to special needs or gender; include education on peace culture, civic responsibilities and living values. 2. Print and distribute new syllabi to schools. 3. Develop/Up-grade teacher training programs (INSET and PRESET) to train teachers in the new curricula. 4. Conduct examinations based on the new curricula. 5. Institutionalise remedial programs as a core part of the basic education sub-sector. 6. Ensure textbooks are revised and developed in line with new curricula. 7. Establish Curriculum Oversight Committee within the MoESS. 8. Redesign academic training at all levels to integrate rigorous entrepreneurial training and career counseling into the academic program at all levels.	3. 2004 4. 2004 5. 2004 ongoing 6. 2004 7. 2003 ongoing 8. 2005
QE6 Develop a reliable pupil/student/learners testing and assessment system.	Minimum national standards (MNS) test agreed, standardised and validated by December 2004. First cohort/sample of students (25%) tested for competency on single agreed MNS test by December2005; sample rising to 30% by 2015	1. Review current approaches/tests to evaluate learning outcomes at primary and JHS levels by developing learning standards and learning targets with particular emphasis on P1 – P3. 2. Adopt and agree a single *Competency Based Approach* to evaluate learning outcomes at primary and JHS levels by defining and adopting minimum national standards (MNS) for students at agreed stages (P3, P6, JHS2). 3. Provide feedback to inspectors and community on the outcomes of all tests.	1. 2004 2. 2004 3. 2003 ongoing
QE7 Develop effective Accountability systems	Criteria and roles of supervision and inspection revised and published by end 2003. Supervisors and inspectors trained and in place by 2004. Ensure 90% attendance of teachers in basic schools	1. Review monitoring and inspection systems for management at ministry, agency, regional, district levels and at all school/institutional levels. 2. Improve the teacher supervision system to provide support for professional development and enhanced teacher performance. 3. Provide material support for supervisors and inspectors. 4. Develop and implement a system to effectively monitor and sanction teacher absenteeism and tardiness.	1. 2003 2. 2003 3. 2005 4. 2003

QE8 Review guidelines on language policy (medium of instruction and languages taught) at all pre-tertiary levels of education.	Guidelines on language policy published and circulated to all schools by December 2003. Foreign language (French) program fully developed and in place at JHS level by 2010. Ghanaian Language policy reviewed in 2008. Guidelines on revised policy distributed and acted upon by 2009.	1. Develop, publish and circulate to all schools, guidelines on language policy. 2. Develop and introduce a comprehensive Foreign/Second Language (FRENCH) program at JHS level. 3. Support the development and production of textbooks in English, Ghanaian Languages and French and other teaching/learning materials. 4. Expand and promote the study of French in teacher training colleges. 5. Conduct comprehensive review of Language policy in 2008.	1. 2003 2. 2004 3. 2004 4. 2004 5. 2008
QE9 Ensure literacy and numeracy in English and a Ghanaian Language.	Minimum National Standards in literacy and numeracy in English and the Ghanaian Languages set for Primary and JHS 2005. Literacy and numeracy in a Ghanaian language by 30% of Primary 3 pupils by 2007. Literacy and numeracy in Ghanaian Language by 50% of Primary 6 pupils by 2010. Literacy and numeracy in English by 30% of Primary 3 pupils by 2007. Literacy and numeracy in English by 50% of Primary 6 pupils by 2010	1. Provide INSET courses for language teachers in P1 to P6 on a regular basis. 2. Provide at least one specialist language teacher to serve a cluster of primary schools. 3. Support the development and production of textbooks and other teaching/learning materials in English and Ghanaian Languages. 4. Distribute the recommended textbooks and teaching guides for the Ghanaian Languages. 5. Revise Ghanaian languages syllabus at Colleges of Education to focus on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. 6. Develop and implement a more effective methodology for the use of the English Language as a medium for teaching and learning. 7. Revise timetable to increase time allocation for the teaching of literacy and numeracy in English and Ghanaian Languages. 8. Develop minimum national standards to monitor learning achievements in English and Ghanaian languages for all levels of pre-tertiary education. 9. Organise tests to measure literacy and numeracy standards in P3 and P6 according to MNS set	1. 2003 ongoing 2. 2004 3. 2003 4. 2003 5. 2003 6. 2003 7. 2003 8. 2004 9. 2005
QE10 Expand and improve	Expanded and improved School Health and School Hygiene systems at all levels	1. Develop and publish guidelines on minimum standards for health, sanitation and safety in institutions at all levels of	1. 2003 2. 2004

School Health, Sanitation and Safety systems.	to 60% coverage by 2008. Guidelines for School Health, Sanitation and Safety published and distributed by end of 2003. All schools rehabilitated in terms of safety, sanitation and health by 2015. Provide first aid facilities in all schools by 2015 Potable water available in all schools by 2015.	education. 2. Provide adequate safety, sanitation and basic health care facilities and access for children with disabilities, in accordance with guidelines. 3. Establish effective guidance and counseling systems for pupil/student welfare at all levels. 4. Ensure each basic level institution has a designated school health officer and that this person is trained in basic first aid. 5. Ensure that there is potable water within 500m of all school sites and that there are adequate sanitation facilities on site (especially for girls and women) at all pre-tertiary institutions.	3. 2003 4. 2004 5. 2003 - 2015
QE11 Encourage the participation of the Private Sector, CBOs, NGOs, FBOs and Development Partners in the integrated School Health system.	40% of all health funding from non-governmental sources by 2010. IEC Health programs in place by 2005	1. Establish linkages with Non-Government bodies to work with government on School Health programs. 2. Collect and publish data on the health and nutritional status of children in basic schools. 3. Design and implement IEC Health Programs to educate and disseminate information in the area of school health.	1. 2003 2. 2004 3. 2004
QE12 Identify and promote STD/HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support at all levels of education.	HIV/AIDS programs operational in schools/institutions by 2004. All new teachers trained in STI/HIV/AIDES basic counseling, prevention, care and support by 2005. All currently serving teachers trained in STI/HIV/AIDS basic counseling, prevention, care and support by 2006. IEC programs for HIV/AIDS in place by 2004. Programs for pupil/student peer educators in place by 2004 HIV/AIDS workplace programs in place by 2004	1. Introduce HIV/AIDS programs in teacher training syllabuses and conduct INSET courses for currently serving teachers. 2. Establish and develop district based HIV/AIDS committees. 3. Develop system to monitor the prevalence of HIV/AIDS amongst staff and pupils. 4. Establish HIV/AIDS clubs in schools/institutions at all levels. 5. Design and implement IEC programs to educate, and disseminate information, in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention and management. 6. Train pupil/student peer educators. 7. Appoint focal persons to implement HIV/AIDS programs within the workplace. 8. Train workplace peer educators and focal persons. 9. Provide logistical support to HIV/AIDS Secretariat	1. 2004 2. 2003 3. 2004 4. 2003 5. 2003 6. 2004 7. 2003 8. 2004 9. 2003 10. 2004 11. 2004 12. 2003 13. 2003

			Date
		(MoESS). 10. Train staff in HIV/AIDS secretariat. 11. Organise advocacy workshops to high level management (political leaders and education executives) to increase commitment. 12. Develop manual and guidelines for the operation of NGOs working on HIV/AIDS programs in schools and institutions. 13. Review manuals for workplace (officers) on HIV/AIDS.	1. 2003 2. 2004 3. 2004
QE13 Integrate HIV/AIDS in the curriculum	Every basic school with one teacher designated and trained as an HIV/AIDS counselor by 2005	1. Develop special HIV/AIDS modules for insertion into all syllabuses where appropriate. 2. Introduce HIV/AIDS programs in teacher training syllabuses. 3. Train HIV/AIDS counselors and care teams to operate in basic schools.	

Strengthen and Improve Educational Planning and Management (Policy Goal 5)

			Date
EM1 Identify, clarify and strengthen management rules at all levels of the education system	New Education Act passed by 2004. IEC programs for the Education Bill in place 2004. Operational Manuals for officers in central ministry/agencies/regions/districts developed and in place by 2005. All desk officers at all levels have supervised and agreed Work Programs in place by December 2003 and reviewed annually thereafter. HRD and Capacity Building program designed, in place and operational during the period 2003 – 2008. All schools have a School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) in place by December 2004 and operational by 2005. Monitoring and evaluation system developed by end 2003.	1. Complete Draft Education Bill and submit to Cabinet by December 2003. 2. Clarify the roles of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the GES. 3. Strengthen monitoring mechanisms and accountability measures including performance appraisal and institutional performance reviews for management at ministry, agency, regional, district, school and institutional levels. 4. Establish SWAP Management/Communication system, ensuring quarterly meeting of ESTAC and monthly meetings of EA, QE, EM and ST Thematic groups. 5. Develop public awareness programs (IEC) on the basic elements of the Education Act to sensitise all stakeholders on their rights and responsibilities in the provision, management and administration of education. 6. Identify HRD needs and competencies at all levels of the management system (central and non-central) and provide targeted training to upgrade the technical competence of selected staff.	1. 2003 2. 2003 3. 2003 - 2005 4. 2003 5. 2004 6. 2003 7. 2003 8. 2003 9. 2003 - 2004 10. 2004 11. 2003 12. 2003 - ongoing 13. 2003 - ongoing

Objective	Target	Activities	Timeline
	Annual appraisal/review and audit systems at all levels in place by 2004. First Annual Review of Sector Performance to take place in 2004, and annually thereafter.	7. Prepare guidelines for drawing up School Improvement plans and distribute to districts and schools. 8. Strengthen pre-school unit of GES to ensure the capacity to implement the expansion. 9. Identify 'good practices' for all levels of management. 10. Prepare and publish operational manuals, including guidelines for harmonising 'good practice' for use at all levels of education management. 11. Prepare detailed work programs for desk officers at all levels of management. 12. Systematic management training of head teachers. 13. Enforcement of all rules and regulations pertaining to the delivery of education.	
EM2 Strengthen monitoring and evaluation, and accountability systems across the whole sector.	Monitoring and evaluation system developed by end 2003. Annual appraisal/review and audit systems at all levels in place by 2004. Head counts for payroll conducted on an annual basis.	1. Strengthen monitoring mechanisms and accountability measures including performance appraisal and institutional performance reviews for management at ministry, agency, regional, district, school and institutional levels. 2. Conduct annual headcounts to ensure accuracy in the payroll of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and its agencies (with an emphasis on removing ghost names).	1. 2003 2. 2003
EM3 Strengthen the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and improve education statistics.	EMIS reviewed and strengthened by December 2003. Education Statistics Abstract published annually from 2004 (containing national-level data, including the ESP indicators). EMIS systems established in all districts by 2015	1. Design user-friendly EMIS application to accurately capture all indicators in the ESP to enhance monitoring and evaluation systems (including financial information). 2. Identify and monitor the contribution that the private sector makes to education. 3. Sensitise officials at district /regional levels on the purposes and value of having an accurate EMIS. 4. Statistics Unit of SRIMPR adequately staffed and re-trained/up-graded in both data collection and analysis. 5. Establish EMIS systems in all districts. 6. Conduct training in use of EMIS at HQ, Regional and District level. 7. Computerise the documentation centre of MoESS. 8. Subscribe to journals and other materials for the centre. 9. Conduct, publish and distribute annual education census,	1. 2003 2. 2003 3. 2004 4. 2005 5. 2003 - 2015 6. 2003 – 2015 7. 2004 8. 2004 9.2003 annually

Objective	Target	Activities	Year
		including schools in the distribution.	
EM4 Ensure equity in resource allocation	Universal Primary Completion achieved by 2015. Gender parity achieved by 2005 at primary level, by 2008 at JHS level and by 2015 at all other levels.	1, Use mapping and other needs assessments (including manpower needs) to determine educational needs at all levels. 2. Review the 'disadvantaged criteria formula'. 3. Design resource formula to ensure equity across districts at all levels.	1. 2003 2. 2003 3. 2003
EM5 Ensure effective decentralisation and community participation	Every Primary School and JHS has SMC properly constituted by December 2004. Basic school fees/levies abolished by 2004. Every Primary School and JHS receives a per capita allocation (directly from the centre) to be accounted for and spent in accordance with its SPIP.	1. Review guidelines as to the establishment and operation of SMCs – with an emphasis on financial resource management – and distribute these to districts and schools. 2. Establish SMCs to cover all basic schools. 3. Design and implement a system to monitor and evaluate the operations of SMCs, PTAs, and DEOCs. 4. Investigate the issue of Capitation Grants for basic schools. 5. Enforce the abolition of school fees/levies at basic level. 6. Strengthen communities to manage pre-schools	1. 2003 2. 2003-2004 3. 2003 4. 2003 5. 2004 6. 2005
EM6 Strengthen the involvement of civil society in education delivery	See EM4 above ESTAC and EA, QE, EM and ST Thematic groups operational from mid 2003 First Annual Review of Sector Performance in 2004 and annually thereafter.	1. Establish an *Education Sector Technical Advisory Committee* with representatives from stakeholder communities. 2. Establish Thematic groups for SWAP Management and Implementation. 3.Conduct review of ESP progress in November 2003 4. Conduct Annual Reviews of Sector Performance beginning April/May 2004.	1. 2003 2. 2003 3. 2003 4. 2004
EM7 Review the management of schools in partnerships with religious bodies.	New Education Act in place by 2004 Regulations for the management of schools in partnership with religious bodies published and made available by 2005.	1. Collaborate with Faith Based Organisations to re-focus their support towards the holistic development of schools and students and not the partisan interests of specific religious denominations. 2. Review partnership arrangements with FBOs and engage their participation within the SWAP approach. 3. Develop and publish regulations regarding the management of schools in partnership with religious bodies.	1. 2003 2. 2003 3. 2004
EM8 Provide guidelines on	National Guidelines on Cost Sharing and Cost Recovery in Education available	1. Write guidelines on 'Cost-Sharing' and Cost Recovery and circulate to all deliverers at all levels within the education	1. 2004 2. 2004

cost sharing and cost recovery.	before December 2004. Also see EA4 and EA5 above.	system by 2004. 2. Make guidelines available to all stakeholders – including the public, districts and regions. 3. Monitor schools to ensure adherence to guidelines on fees/costs.	3. 2005 - ongoing
EM9 Increase private sector participation in the education sector.	Schools, communities- Businesses partnership programs in place at national and local levels by 2005. Also see EA4 and EA5 above.	1. Determine and provide enabling environment for the Private Sector to participate in the education process. 2. Develop partnership initiative through inclusive management approaches (aimed at Schools, Communities and businesses).	1.2004 2.2004
Extend and improve Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Policy Goal 3)			
Science and Technology (ST) ST1	A comprehensive relevant TVET program to be established by 2005. Colleges of Education to be provided with additional facilities to train Technical Teachers. 5000 youth to benefit annually from entrepreneurship programs by 2005.	1. Finalise national policy on TVET in collaboration with other MDAs and the private sector. 2. Establish an inter-ministerial council to encourage skills training for the youth. 3. Establish Trained Advisory Committee to facilitate the link between the technical curriculum and industry. 4. Organise entrepreneurship programs that build upon, and strengthen, learning and life skills for the youth. 5. Provide additional Technical facilities to Colleges of Education and upgraded in order that they can provide diploma courses to train Teachers for Technical Institutes and technical subjects in JHS.	1. 2003 2. 2005 3. 2004 4. 2003 5. 2004
ST2 Promote science, mathematics and technology education and training.	Rehabilitation of existing JSS workshops by 2006. 50% of JHS to have workshops by 2015. IEC programs to promote Science and TVET circulated by end 2004	1. Design national science and technology policy. 2. Revitalise existing technical subjects workshops at all JHS and establish additional workshops (assisted by the design of appropriate low-cost JHS workshops). 3. Ensure that practical skills are examined (and provide the funds for such examinations). 4. Increase investment in science and technology through provision of facilities, training for staff in the use of such facilities and arranging for work – experience (in collaboration with the private sector, industry and commerce).	1. 2003 2. 2003 - 2015 3. 2005 4. 2005 5. 2005 6. 2003 7. Ongoing.

Strategy	Indicators	Activities	Time
		5. Provide support packages to improve education in science, mathematics and technology at the basic level. 6. Develop and publish IEC programs to promote science and TVET, with an emphasis on attracting female students and those from rural areas. 7. Continue to promote and support the use of STME clinics to encourage girl pupils' interest and achievement in Science, Technology and Mathematics Education.	
ST3 Promote Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in schools and institutions of higher learning.	National policy on ICT in Education (ICTE) finalised and published by end of 2003. Sufficient staff trained in ICT delivery by 2005. Relevant basic and advanced level ICT training programs in place by 2005.	1. Finalise national policy on ICTE including syllabi. 2. Train a core team in ICT as ToTs. 3. Provide appropriate ICT training opportunities at all levels, utilizing Science Resource Centres (SRCs). 4. Develop a cadre of trained persons to support the delivery of ICT in schools and institutions (pre-service and in-service). 5. Provide access to the Internet and establish a networking system as a basic part of the instructional environment in selected primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. 6. Construct/rehabilitate computer laboratories in schools and institutions.	1. 2003 2. 2004 3. 2004 4. 2004 5. 2004 6. 2004

Source: Ministry of Education (2003)

Appendix C: Data Collection Matrix

Data Collection Matrix		
Research Questions	Method of Data Collection	Participants
1. What is the status of the quality of education in JHSs in the Sissala East District of Ghana??		
	Questionnaire	Head teachers
	Focus group discussion In-depth interviews (face to face) Document Analysis	Head teachers Circuit Supervisors Nine key officers PTA (representative)
What impact has Reform 2007 had on the quality of education?		
	Focus group discussion In-depth interviews (face to face) Document Analysis	Head teachers Circuit Supervisors Nine key officers PTA (representative)
What factors have impacted on the implementation of reform initiatives?		
	Focus group discussion In-depth interviews Document Analysis	Head teachers Circuit Supervisors Nine key officers PTA (representative)

Appendix D: JHS Head teachers' Questionnaire

Implementation of Initiatives to Reform the Quality of Education in Rural Ghanaian Junior High Schools.

Section A: Biographical Details of Head teacher

Please tick in appropriate boxes:

1.   Location of your school: Tumu Central ☐   Outside Tumu ☐

2.   Indicate gender: Male ☐   Female ☐

3.   Indicate age: 30 or less   ☐   31-40 ☐   41-50 ☐   More than 50 ☐

4a.   How long have you been a teacher, including as a head teacher? _____
       (please write down your answer in years).

4b.   How long have you been a head teacher?_____

5.   Indicate all of your qualifications (tick all that apply):

      Post Sec. Cert 'A'   ☐   Dip. in Basic Educ.   ☐

      B.A.   ☐   B.Ed.   ☐

      B. Sc   ☐   Post-Dip in Basic   ☐

      M Sc.   ☐   M.PhiL   ☐

      M.Ed.   ☐   PhD   ☐

Section B: School

6. Indicate the number of boys and girls in your JHS classes in the table below:

Gender	JSHS I	JHS II	JHS III
Girls	N=	N=	N=
Boys	N=	N=	N=
TOTAL	N=	N=	N=

7. Indicate the number of available classrooms for each year level:

Level	Own Room	Shared Room	No Room (Under Trees)
JHS I			
JHS II			
JHS III			

8. Does your school have a workshop for Pre-Technical Skills? Yes☐ No ☐

9. Does your school have a laboratory for Pre- Vocational skills? Yes☐ No: ☐

Section C: Curriculum

10. Indicate the subjects taught at your JHS this year by ticking boxes in the table below:

Subject	Taught in JHSI	Taught in JHSII	Taught in JHSIII	Not offered at this school
English Language				
Ghanaian Language and Culture				
Social Studies				
Mathematics				
General Science				
Agricultural Science				
Pre- Vocational Skills				
Pre-Technical Skills				
French				
Life Skills				
Religious and Moral Education				
Music and Dance				
Physical Education				
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)				
Others				

11. Does your JHS provide educational services in the following areas:

a. Library and Information services   Yes ☐   No ☐

Describe:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

b. Special Learning needs   Yes ☐   No ☐

Describe:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

c. Guidance and Counselling   Yes ☐   No ☐

Describe:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

d. Internet Access   Yes ☐   No ☐

Describe_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section D: Teachers

12. State the number of teachers who teach in the JHS:

Gender	Full time	Part time
Male		
Female		

13. Indicate the number of your JHS teachers upgrading their qualifications:

Upgrade	Number in teacher gender categories	
	Male	Female
Untrained to Diploma in Basic Education		
Diploma in Basic Education to Post-Dip in Basic Education		
B Ed/BA to Masters		
Other, please specify		

14a. Was any in-service training provided for your teachers last year? Yes: ☐ No: ☐

14b.   If your response to question 4a above is Yes, please provide the following information:

Topic (Course)	Provider of training	Number of teachers attending

15. Please tick boxes to show the qualification of your staff that teach in the JHS:

Teacher	Untrained	Post Sec. Cert 'A'	Dip. in Basic Educ.	Post-Dip in Basic Ed	B. Sc	B. A.	B Ed.	M Ed.	M Sc.	M Phil.	Gender M/F	Other
Teacher 1												
Teacher 2												
Teacher3												
Teacher 4												
Teacher 5												
Teacher 6												
Teacher 7												
Teacher 8												
Teacher 9												
Teacher 10												
Teacher 11												
Teacher 12												

Section E: Teaching and Learning

16. Extent to which English is used as the medium of instruction in these year levels:

Level	Taught in English only	Mixed English and Vernacular	Vernacular only
JHS I			
JHS II			
JHS III			

17 & 18. Indicate on a scale of 1-5 (by ticking):

1=+ve large, 2=+ve Some, 3= No impact, 4=-ve Some, 5=-ve large, how strongly you agree or disagree with the following perceived statements on Teaching and Learning

Statement (Issues)	Large positive Impact	Some positive Impact	No Impact	Some negative impact	Large negative impact
Level of teachers' content knowledge makes a difference to students' learning.					
Teachers' knowledge of syllabus and pedagogy is key to adequate lesson preparation.					
Teachers' English competence is necessary of appropriate teaching skills.					
Loss of teaching time due to teacher distance learning program.					
Loss of teaching time due to student involvement in out of school activities.					
Lack of preparation for lessons.					

19. Indicate the extent to which the following factors limit the quality of teaching and learning:

Factor	Large positive Impact	Some positive Impact	No Impact	Some negative Impact	Large negative Impact
Students sit in classrooms for lessons					
Students have access to pipe borne water.					
Students have access to electricity.					
Teachers access to textbooks and curriculum materials for teaching.					
Adequate access to textbooks by students.					
A supply of pencils, pens and notebooks for students.					

Please tick in appropriate boxes:

20. Extent to which the quality of teaching of the following subjects causes you concern:

Quality of Teaching in:	No Concern	Some Concern	Great Concern	Not Applicable
English Language				
Ghanaian Language and Culture				
Social Studies				
Mathematics				
General Science				
Agricultural Science				
Pre- Vocational Skills				
Pre-Technical Skills				
French				
Life Skills				
Religious and Moral Education				
Music and Dance				
Physical Education				
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)				

Section F: Reform Initiatives

Please tick in the boxes below to indicate the proportion of families that could be proposed as sending their children to school due to cost listed:

21. Extent to which these costs involved prevent parents from sending children to school:

Cost of:	For no families	For some families	For many families	Not Applicable
Uniform				
Exam fees				
Books				
Contributions for Pre- Voc or Pre- Tech lessons				
Contributions towards school maintenance work				
Contributions towards class/school celebrations				
Other (Indicate)				

22. Progress made in implementing the latest reform initiatives in your school:

Reform Initiatives	Achieved	Working towards	Not started	Not Applicable
Expanded Curriculum beyond Literacy, Numeracy and Creative Arts				
Use of English throughout JHS				
Co-curricular Activities				
Teachers Professional Development				
Library and Information services				
Special Learning needs				
Guidance and Counseling				
Internet Access				

23. What initiatives have you taken to encourage student attendance at your
    school?_____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

24. Please indicate which office carried out an inspection of your school, as well as the
    year of inspection

Office/Institution	Tick	Inspected	Not inspected
National Inspectorate Board			
Regional Administration			
District Administration			

25. How you were informed about Education Reform 2007. ?

Brochure ☐

Meeting at District Office ☐

Radio broadcast ☐

Not informed ☐

Other _____

26. Were you given any support from the Circuit Supervisor to understand and implement the reform?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Not Applicable ☐

27. Were you given any support from the District Office to understand and implement the reform?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Not Applicable ☐

28. What barriers are there, if any to implementing the reform in your school?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

29. Any other comment about Education reform 2007?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for responding to this questionnaire

Appendix E: JHS Head teachers' Focus Group Questions:

1. What are the main difficulties you face in preparing students for the exams?
2. What does quality schooling look like for your students?
3. What are the main difficulties you face in providing quality schooling?

   Prompts:

   Professional development/ qualifications/English competency levels / teaching hours/ crowded curriculum

4. What has been your involvement in the 2007 Education Reform?
   Prompts:

   Focus/key Initiatives/Curriculum /resources/staffing/ enrolment numbers

5. To what extent have you been able to expand the curriculum beyond literacy, numeracy and the creative arts?
   - Provide English-based teaching
   - Professional development for teachers?

   Prompts:

   Difficulties/ Limiting factors/Effect of an expanded curriculum/enrolment

6. Has there been any clear evidence of the 2007 Education Reform improving student performance in your school?
   Prompts:

   Student Grades/ number of successful completions/extra classes and remedial lessons

7. To what extent has the District Office helped inform you about Education Reform 2007 and helped you implement the reforms?
    Prompts:

   Information dissemination/ Meetings/ Workshops/ collegiality

8. What do you think needs to be done now to improve schooling and exam performance?

    Prompts:

   Professional development/expanded curriculum/use of English/infrastructure

Appendix F: Circuit Supervisors' Focus Group Questions:

1. What are the main factors limiting the quality of schooling and pass rates in the BECE exams in this district?

   Prompts:

   Resourcing / student demographics/ staffing /

2. Did the FCUBE reforms have any impact in this District level?
   - Has it made a difference?
   - What evidence do you have?
   - Can you give me examples?

   Prompts:

   Free uniform/feeding programme/attendance register /crowded curriculum /monitoring and evaluation/student attendance

3. Which aspects of Education Reform 2007 have been implemented in your district?
   - Was it successful/unsuccessful?
   - What evidence do you have
   - Can you give me examples?

   Prompts:

   Top up program for teachers/ expanded curriculum/English/ impact

   School Performance Assessment and Monitoring / Inspection/Appraisals/ Promotions

4. What do you think needs to be done now to improve schooling and exam performance?
   Prompts:

   Teacher professional development/ monitoring and evaluation/expanded curriculum.

Appendix G: Interviews

1. Divisional Head: Basic Education

- What are the priorities for education reform in Ghana?
- What are the main factors limiting the quality of schooling and pass rates in the BECE exams in the country?
- What impacts have FCUBE and Education Reform 2007 had on programs in Ghana?
- Were there any barriers to program change and delivery?
- How was policy change communicated to head teachers and classroom teachers in the country?
- How could this process of dissemination in 2007 have been improved?

2. Regional Director of Education

- What are the priorities for education reform in the District?
- What are the main factors limiting the quality of schooling and pass rates in the BECE exams in this district?
- What impacts have FCUBE and Education Reform 2007 had on programs in your district?
- Were there any barriers to program change and delivery?
- How was policy change communicated to head teachers and classroom teachers in your district?
- How could this process of dissemination in 2007 have been improved?

3. District Director of Education

- What are the priorities for education reform in the District?
- What are the main factors limiting the quality of schooling and pass rates in the BECE exams in this district?
- What impacts have FCUBE and Education Reform 2007 had on programs in your district?
- Were there any barriers to program change and delivery?
- How was policy change communicated to Head teachers and classroom teachers in your district?
- How could this process of dissemination in 2007 have been improved?

4. District Chief Executive

- How is the JHS infrastructure, (school buildings and other physical resources) managed in this district?

- What functional relationships are there between your office and the GES?

- Can you identify any improvements to JHS from the 2007 Education reform?

- Is there any evidence of the impact of Education Reform 2007 on the quality of schooling? Examples?

- How can school infrastructure be better managed and improved?

5. Principal of the Teachers' College

- What have been the main factors limiting the effectiveness of pre service and in service teacher education in this district?

- FCUBE and Education Reform in 2007 targeted teacher education:

  In what ways have the reform initiatives impacted on teacher education at this college and on schools in this district?

- To what extent has teacher education changed in your college?

- How have the changes impacted on student teacher recruitment?

- From your perspective, are there any further barriers to quality teacher education in the district?

- How can this be addressed by a college like this?

6. Deputy Director, Human Resources Management Division

- Are there any challenges for staffing schools in your district?

- Has there been any effect of Education Reform in 2007 on teacher supply and quality?

- Could you comment on the effectiveness of the "top up" program?

- How effectively have education policies such as FCUBE and Education Reform 2007 been implemented?

- What changes need to be made to enhance policy and improve implementation?

7. Deputy Director, Inspectorate

- What role can inspection play in school improvement?
- What impact has the National Inspectorate Board (NIB) had on school inspections in your district?
- How does your inspectorate division work with the NIB?
- What impacts have FCUBE and Education Reform 2007 had on schooling in your district?
- How effectively have education policies such as FCUBE and Education Reform 2007 been implemented?
- What changes need to be made to enhance policy and improve implementation?

8. Secretary of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT)

- What is the mission and role of GNAT?
- What do you see as the main factors limiting the quality of teachers and teaching in Ghana?
- Did GNAT have a role to play in the implementation of FCUBE and the Education Reform of 2007?
- To what extent has the GES supported JHS teachers in implementing reform policy?
- Is there any evidence of impact of Education Reform 2007 on the quality of schooling? Examples?
- Given limitations in available resources, what should be done differently to improve education in our JHS's?

9. Representative, Parents/Teachers' Association (PTA)

- Would you comment on the quality of schooling in this district?
- In your opinion why are students in this district failing the BECE?
- How does the PTA support schools?
- Have there been any changes to JHS since 2007?
- What does the GES do to support the schools?
- Given limitations in available resources, what should be done differently to improve education in our JHSs?

Appendix H: Coding Manual for Quantitative Data

ID Number	Variable name	Coding instructions
1	Location	1= Tumu Central
		2= Outside Tumu
2	Gender	1= Male
		2= Female
3	Age	1= 30 or less
		2= 31-40
		3= 41-50
		4= more than 50
4a	Teaching experience	1= Less than 1 year
		2= 1-5 years
		3=6-10
		4= 11-15
		5= 16-20
		6= more than 20 years
4b	Experience as head teacher	1= Less than 1 year
		2=1-5 years
		3=6-10
		4=11-15
		5=16-20
		6= more than 20 years
5	Head teacher's highest academic qualification	0= Post Secondary Certificate 'A'
		1= Diploma in Basic Education
		2=Post Diploma in Basic Education
		3= Bachelor of Art
		4= Bachelor of Education
		5= Bachelor of Science
		6= Master of Education
		7= Master of Science
		8= Master of Philosophy
6	Boys and Girls in JHSs	1= F1
		2= F2
		3=F3
		4=M1
		5=M2
		6=M3
7	Available Classrooms	1= Own room
		2=Shared room
		3= No room (under trees)
		0= Not applicable
8	Pre-Technical Lab	1= Yes
		2= No
9	Pre-Vocational Lab	1= Yes
		2= No
10	Subjects taught at JHSs: English Language	1= Taught
		2= Not taught
		0= Not applicable
11	Services available	A: 1= Yes 2 = No
		B: 1= Yes

		2 = No
		C: 1 = Yes 2 = No
		D: 1 = Yes 2 = No
12	Male and Female teachers in JHSs	Male full-time Male part-time
		Female full-time Female part-time
13	Teachers' highest academic qualification	1= Untrained
		2= post-secondary certificate 'A'
		3= Diploma in Basic Education
		4= Post Diploma in Basic Education
		5=Bachelor of Science
		6= Bachelor of Arts
		7= Bachelor of Education
		8= Master of Education
		9= Master of Science
		10= Master of Philosophy
		11= Other
14	Number in teacher gender category upgrading	1=Untrained to Diploma
		2=Certificate 'A' to Diploma
		3=Diploma to Post Diploma
		4=Bachelor of Education (BA) to Masters
		5=None
15a	In-service training	1= Yes
		2= No
15b	In-service training programs	1= Lesson preparation
		2= National literacy acceleration program
		3=Educational resource
		4= Capacity building
		5=HIV/AIDS training
		6= Lesson preparation and capacity building
16	Teaching and Learning (a)	1= Large positive impact
		2= Some positive impact
		3= No impact
		4= Some negative impact
		5= Large negative impact
17	Teaching and Learning (b)	1= Large positive impact
		2= Some positive impact
		3= No impact
		4= Some negative impact
		5= Large negative impact
18	Quality of teaching	1= No concern
		2= Some concern
		3= Great concern
		4= Not applicable
19	English used as medium of instruction	1= Taught in English
		2= Mixed English and vernacular
		3= Vernacular
		4= Not applicable

20	Reform initiatives: Cost involved	1= For no families
		2= For some families
		3= For many families
		4= Not applicable
21	Reform initiatives: Progress made	1= Achieved
		2= Working towards
		3= Not started
		4= Not applicable
22	Initiatives towards attendance	1= Interventions from Action Aid, ASUDEV, WFP, etc.
		2= Capitation grant towards TLMs
		3= Sensitisation of parents through PTA/SMC
		4= Organise extra classes before morning assembly and co-curricular activities.
23	School inspection	1= Inspected
		2= Not inspected
24	Method of dissemination	1= Brochure
		2= Meeting at District Educ. Office.
		3= Radio broadcast
		4= Not informed
		5= Other
25	Support from circuit supervisor	1= Yes
		2= No
		3= Not applicable
26	Support from District Education Office	I= Yes
		2= No
		3= Not applicable
27	Barriers to policy implementation	1= New subjects: ICT, French, Creative Art, Citizenship Education
		2= Limited supply of textbooks, infrastructure (equipment)
		3= Limited supply of qualified teachers
		4= No collaboration between stakeholders
		5= Motivation, in-service
28	Comments	1= In-service training, monitoring and supervision needed.
		2= Reform has enhanced students attendance.
		3= Inadequate infrastructure
		4= No consistency in policy.
		5= No motivation and community involvement.

Appendix I: Qualitative Data Analysis

Head teachers' Focus Group Discussion Themes Analysis Table

CODE	Identified themes
A	10. Lack of orientation and follow-up for teachers
A	14. Difficulty in accessing Capitation Grant.
A	49. Supervision and monitoring
A	53. Supervision is not rigorous enough
A	65. Increased supervision from regional and district office
A	40. Lack of role models
A	21. Teachers as role models
A	69. Circuit Supervisors from district office get too bossy
A	66. Information dissemination meeting : getting the word out
A	90. Attitude of higher authority frustrates and dampens morale.
A	57. Lack of Orientation for parents
A	32. Lack of cooperation from parents
A	35. Frequent change of policy
A	36. Ineffective policy
A	54. Policy inconsistency
A	62. Fallen standards in education due to policy inconstancy
A	3. Change of subjects
A	48. Lesson delivery – teaching the new additions
A	50. More demands now working cumulative records for continuous assessment
A	58. Composition of BECE exam committee
A	52. Stakeholders not in agreement over repetition of students
A	63. Collaboration among stakeholders
A	47. Enrolment drive for school children
A	55. Improved textbooks supply in some schools
A	67. Syllabuses and some textbooks were distributed much later
A	38. Structure of education
B	28. Inadequate staffing
B	29. Untrained teachers
B	30. Lack of orientation for untrained teachers
B	4. Few teachers, and as a result some subjects are left untaught.
B	5. Teacher professional development
B	7. Lack of commitment
B	34. Lack of commitment
B	46. Lack of commitment
B	45. Laissez-faire attitude of teachers
B	9. Pressures of work
B	44. Lack of orientation of teachers
B	64. Haphazard teacher transfers interfere with teaching specialized subjects
B	68. Lack of funds for orientation
B	42. Lateness and absenteeism of students and teachers to school
B	43. Influence of social life in communities
B	31. Inadequate supply of teaching and learning materials
B	37. Inadequate infrastructure
B	39. Very large classes, classrooms too small, ineffective teaching
B	56. Inadequate textbooks supply in some schools

B	13. Study pattern
B	51. A stop to wholesale promotions
B	33. Lack of motivation
B	8. Lack of motivation
B	6. Lack of professionalism
B	2. lack motivation to read on their own
C	15. Dedicated and motivated teachers
C	18. Available infrastructure
C	24. Town schools are quality schools
C	25. Large enrolments of school children
C	26. Welcoming atmosphere
C	27. Awards from sports and cultural activities
C	17. Qualify to higher levels, good results
C	23. Fitting well in society after school
C	22. Basic needs provided
C	19. Regular school attendance
C	16. Effective teaching and learning
C	20. Good use of English, read and write
C	59. Poor parental control
C	61. Children lack basic needs
C	60. High dropout rate among the girls
C	32. Lack of cooperation from parents
C	1. Lack foundation for literacy and numeracy skills
D	70. Teacher training
D	75. Teacher sponsorship and bonding
D	71. Provision of adequate Teaching Learning Materials
D	76. Adequate infrastructure
D	77. Commitment
D	74. Qualified teachers
D	89. Support for teacher
D	91. Postings of teachers
D	92. In-service for teachers
D	72. Timetable too loaded
D	73. Include writing skills in time table for lower primary
D	84. Package for teachers
D	85. Better salary and other incentives
D	86. Accommodation
D	87. Best teacher award
D	88. Time duration for school
D	83. Language of policy should be clear /not ambiguous
D	82. Parents to visit schools of wards occasionally
D	90. Attitude of higher authority frustrates and dampens morale.
D	80. Need to respect and dialogue
D	79. Consultation, collaboration and open confrontation among stakeholders

Mapping table for chapter headings and new categories/themes

Category A	Themes: 26
Head teachers' focus on Educational Reform	
	10. Lack of orientation and follow-up for teachers
	14. Difficulty in accessing Capitation Grant.
	49. Supervision and monitoring
	53. Supervision is not rigorous enough
	65. Increased supervision from regional and district office
	40. Lack of role models
	21. Teachers as role models
	69. Circuit Supervisors from district office get too bossy
	66. Information dissemination meeting : getting the word out
	90. Attitude of higher authority frustrates and dampens morale.
	57. Lack of Orientation for parents
	32. Lack of cooperation from parents
	35. Frequent change of policy
	36. Ineffective policy
	54. Policy inconsistency
	62. Fallen standards in education due to policy inconstancy
	3. Change of subjects
	48. Lesson delivery – teaching the new additions
	50. More demands now working cumulative records for continuous assessment
	58. Composition of BECE exam committee
	52. Stakeholders not in agreement over repetition of students
	63. Collaboration among stakeholders
	47. Enrolment drive for school children
	55. Improved textbooks supply in some schools
	67. Syllabuses and some textbooks were distributed much later
	38. Structure of education

Category: B	Themes: 25
Head teachers' view of capacity building for teachers	
	28. Inadequate staffing
	29. Untrained teachers
	30. Lack of orientation for untrained teachers
	4. Few teachers, and as a result some subjects are left untaught.
	5. Teacher professional development

	7. Lack of commitment
	34. Lack of commitment
	46. Lack of commitment
	45. Laissez-faire attitude of teachers
	9. Pressures of work
	44. Lack of orientation of teachers
	64. Haphazard teacher transfers interfere with teaching specialized subjects
	68. Lack of funds for orientation
	42. Lateness and absenteeism of students and teachers to school
	43. Influence of social life in communities
	31. Inadequate supply of teaching and learning materials
	37. Inadequate infrastructure
	39. Very large classes, classrooms too small, ineffective teaching
	56. Inadequate textbooks supply in some schools
	13. Study pattern
	51. A stop to wholesale promotions
	33. Lack of motivation
	8. Lack of motivation
	6. Lack of professionalism
	2. lack motivation to read on their own

Category: C	Themes: 17
Head teachers' perceptions of quality school	
	15. Dedicated and motivated teachers
	18. Available infrastructure
	24. Town schools are quality schools
	25. Large enrolments of school children
	26. Welcoming atmosphere
	27. Awards from sports and cultural activities
	17. Qualify to higher levels, good results
	23. Fitting well in society after school
	22. Basic needs provided
	19. Regular school attendance
	16. Effective teaching and learning
	20. Good use of English, read and write
	59. Poor parental control
	61. Children lack basic needs
	60. High dropout rate among the girls
	32. Lack of cooperation from parents
	1. Lack foundation for literacy and numeracy skills

Category D:	Themes: 21
Head teacher's recommendations	
	70. Teacher training
	75. Teacher sponsorship and bonding
	71. Provision of adequate Teaching Learning

	Materials
	76. Adequate infrastructure
	77. Commitment
	74. Qualified teachers
	89. Support for teacher
	91. Postings of teachers
	92. In-service for teachers
	72. Timetable too loaded
	73. Include writing skills in time table for lower primary
	84. Package for teachers
	85. Better salary and other incentives
	86. Accommodation
	87. Best teacher award
	88. Time duration for school
	83. Language of policy should be clear /not ambiguous
	82. Parents to visit schools of wards occasionally
	90. Attitude of higher authority frustrates and dampens morale.
	80. Need to respect and dialogue
	79. Consultation, collaboration and open confrontation among stakeholders

Frequency of key themes raised by District level stakeholders:

Code	Themes	No. of mentions	DCE	PTA	CS	A/DS	D/DHR	D/DE
A	Make education accessible	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
A	Give quality education to every child	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
A	Enhance effective monitoring and supervision	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
A	Build teacher capacity in ICT	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
A	Train teachers in multi-grade teaching	4			1	1	1	1
B	Capitation Grants	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
B	Increased access	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
B	Enrolment and retention	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
B	Children's work commitments	2		1	1			
B	Children's hunger and parental care	6		1	1			
B	Community support for schools	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
B	Loss of contact hours	3		1	1		1	
B	Missed opportunities compared to city children	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
B	Teacher motivation	4	1	1	1			1
C	BECE failures	5	1		1	1	1	1
C	Inadequate supply of trained teachers	4			1	1	1	1
C	Expanded curriculum	4			1	1	1	1
C	Teaching learning materials inadequate	4		1		1	1	1
C	Influx of untrained teachers	6	1	1	1	1	1	1

			DCE	PTA	CS	D/DS	D/HRMD	DDE
C	Groups of untrained teachers in District	4		1		1	1	1
C	Policy on pupil/teacher ratio	4			1	1	1	1
C	Policy on transition classes	4		1	1		1	1
D	Key role of inspection in school improvement	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
D	Levels of supervision within the inspectorate	4		1	1	1	1	
D	Coordinated efforts	3		1	1		1	
D	Institution of vital committees: DEOC; DDC	2					1	1
D	Teacher statistics	4			1	1	1	1
D	Comparative output analysis of trained verses and untrained teachers	2		1			1	
D	Lack of commitment from teachers	3		1		1	1	
D	National Inspectorate Board (NIB) and NTC only on paper	2					1	1
D	Lack of funds	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
D	Improved logistics supply	3		1		1		1
D	Process of communicating information	1						1
E	Ineffective 'top-up' program	2		1		1		
E	Untrained Teachers' Diploma in Basic Education	3		1			1	1
E	Sponsorship program for teacher trainees	4	1		1		1	1
E	Policy requirement for professional upgrading	3		1			1	1
F	Lack training for multi-grade teaching	3			1		1	1
F	In-service training	5		1	1	1	1	1

Note. DCE (District Chief Executive), PTA (Parent/Teacher Association), CS (Circuit Supervisors), D/DS (Deputy Director, Supervision), D/HRMD (Human Resource Management Director), DDE (District Director of Education.

Theme A: **Accessibility to Education**	**Sub-themes: 11**
	Capitation Grant
	Make education accessible
	Increased access
	Give quality education to every child
	Enrolment and retention
	Community support for schools
	Children's work commitments
	Children's hunger and parental care
	Loss of contact hours
	Teacher motivation
	Missed opportunities compared to city children

Theme B: **Barriers to Quality Education**	**Sub-themes: 8**
	Expanded curriculum
	BECE failures
	Inadequate supply of trained teachers
	Teaching learning materials inadequate
	Influx of untrained teachers
	Groups of untrained teachers in District

	Policy on pupil/teacher ratio
	Policy on transition classes
Theme C: **Building Teacher Capacity**	**Sub-themes:20**
	Enhance effective monitoring and supervision
	Build teacher capacity in ICT
	Train teachers in multi-grade teaching
	Key role of inspection in school improvement
	Levels of supervision within the inspectorate
	Coordinated efforts
	Institution of vital committees: DEOC; DDC
	Teacher statistics
	Comparative output analysis of trained verses and untrained teachers
	Lack of commitment from teachers
	National Inspectorate Board (NIB) only on paper
	Lack of funds
	Improved logistics supply
	Process of communicating information
	Ineffective 'top-up' program
	Untrained Teachers' Diploma in Basic Education
	Sponsorship program for teacher trainees
	Policy requirement for professional upgrading
	Lack training for multi-grade teaching
	In-service training

Theme D: **Recommendations from District level perspective**	**Sub-themes: 15**
	Using appropriate syllabi and ensuring curriculum as it is planned is followed
	Mandatory in-service training for teachers
	Untrained teachers to be placed where they are most capable
	Meeting new policy demand for teachers' upgrading - duration
	Sponsorship of teachers in core subjects
	Need for adequate capacity building avenues
	Mandate to enforce FCUBE policy
	Collaboration between GES and District Assembly
	Monitoring and supervision of schools to be intensified
	Decentralization policy has to be developed
	Optional subjects for flexibility in choice
	Exam Council policy stipulating all students write in same language must be reviewed
	Issue of politicising education should be

			checked
			Policy review on teachers' motivation
			Process of disseminating policy information has to be reviewed

Frequency of key themes raised by National and Regional level stakeholders

Code	Themes	No. of mentions	DBE	Regional	GNAT	College P
A	Access	2	1	1		
A	Girls' education	3	1	1		1
A	Early Childhood Education	3	1	1		1
A	Erroneous impressions about KG teaching	1				1
A	Capitation Grant	1		1		
A	Needy children's package	2	1	1		
A	School feeding program	2	1	1		
A	Catholic Relief Service (CRS) intervention	2	1	1		
A	Increased enrolments	2	1	1		
A	School dropout to early marriage or pregnancy	2	1	1		
A	Basic Education Certificate Examination results	2	1	1		
A	BECE certification	2	1	1		
A	BECE placement	2	1	1		
B	Inadequate numbers of trained teachers	4	1	1	1	1
B	Expanded curriculum	4	1	1	1	1
B	Lack of professionalism	3	1	1	1	
B	Teachers' lack of commitment	3	1	1	1	
B	Inadequate supply of teaching/learning materials and logistics	4	1	1	1	1
B	Issue of deployment	2	1	1		
B	Loss of contact hours	2	1	1		
B	Inadequate supervision and monitoring	4	1	1	1	1
B	Poverty levels and lack of a competitive spirit	2	1	1		
B	Poor conditions of service	2	1	1		
B	Lack of funds	1			1	
B	Quota system for admissions	2		1		1
B	Decentralisation policy	2		1		1
B	Duplication of roles	2		1	1	
B	School duration	2		1	1	
B	Enrolment Indicators	2	1	1		
B	Head teachers' concern	1	1			
B	Curriculum designed by external body	1				1
B	Exams controlled by external body	1				1
B	Lack of awareness of programs	3		1	1	1
B	Process of communicating policy information	3		1	1	1
C	Policy for training untrained teachers.	3	1	1	1	
C	Policy for District Teacher Support Team	1			1	
C	Target for teachers' upgrading	4	1	1	1	1
C	Education sector plan	1	1			

C	Mandatory in-service training	2	1	1		
C	Sponsorship for teacher trainees	3	1	1		1
C	Quality teaching and learning	4	1	1	1	1
C	National Inspectorate Board (NIB)	1		1		
C	Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET)	1		1		
C	Science and Technology	1	1			
C	Circuit supporter of schools	1		1		
C	Collaboration between Ghana Education Service (GES) and District Assembly	3		1	1	1
C	support of stakeholders	2	1	1		
C	Role of key stakeholder -GNAT	1		1		
C	Pre-service teacher education	1				1
C	Departure from duplications of the past in terms of focus	1				1
C	Management efficiency	3	1	1	1	
C	Identity of GNAT	1			1	
C	Mission of GNAT	1			1	
C	Role and objectives of GNAT	1			1	
D	Place premium on girls' education.	2	1	1		
D	Expand curriculum to further include family life and sexual reproduction education.	4	1	1	1	1
D	In-service training policy	3	1	1	1	
D	Need for teacher upgrading	4	1	1	1	1
D	NIB is a duplication of roles.	1		1		
D	Supervision to be intensified.	3		1	1	1
D	Collaboration of stakeholders for management efficiency	4	1	1	1	1
D	Adequate supply of teaching/learning materials and logistics	4	1	1	1	1
D	Decentralization policy is still to be completed.	3		1	1	1
D	Need for committed teachers ready to make up for loss of contact time and endeavour to complete syllabus.	4	1	1	1	1
D	More focused Education Sector Plan.	3	1	1	1	1
D	Institutional memory of good practices to be maintained	2	1	1		
D	Issue of deployment	2	1		1	
D	Supervision factor could be strengthened	2		1	1	
D	Sponsorship for teacher trainees	4	1	1	1	1
D	Issue of low quota	2		1		1
D	Possible candidates for teaching apprenticeship	1				1
D	Adequate remuneration for teachers	2		1	1	

Note. DBE (Director Basic Education), Regional Director of Education, GNAT (Ghana National Association of Teachers), College of Education, Principal.

Theme A: **Accessibility to education**	**Sub-themes: 13**
	Access
	Girls' education
	Early Childhood Education
	Erroneous impressions about KG teaching
	Capitation Grant
	Needy children's package
	School feeding program
	Catholic Relief Service (CRS) intervention
	Increased enrolments
	School dropout to early marriage or pregnancy
	Basic Education Certificate Examination results
	BECE certification
	BECE placement

Theme B: **Barriers to quality education**	**Sub-themes: 21**
	Inadequate numbers of trained teachers
	Expanded curriculum
	Lack of professionalism
	Teachers' lack of commitment
	Inadequate supply of teaching/learning materials and logistics
	Issue of deployment
	Loss of contact hours
	Inadequate supervision and monitoring
	Poverty levels and lack of a competitive spirit
	Poor conditions of service
	Lack of funds
	Quota system for admissions
	Decentralisation policy
	Duplication of roles
	School duration
	Enrolment Indicators
	Head teachers' concern
	Curriculum designed by external body
	Exams controlled by external body
	Lack of awareness of programs
	Process of communicating policy information

Theme C: **Building Teacher Capacity**	**Sub-themes: 21**
	Policy for training untrained teachers.
	Policy for District Teacher Support Team
	Target for teachers' upgrading
	Education sector plan
	Mandatory in-service training
	Sponsorship for teacher trainees
	Quality teaching and learning
	National Inspectorate Board (NIB)
	Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET)
	Science and Technology
	Circuit supporter of schools
	Collaboration between Ghana Education Service (GES) and District Assembly
	support of stakeholders
	Role of key stakeholder -GNAT
	Pre-service teacher education
	Departure from duplications of the past in terms of focus
	Management efficiency
	Identity of GNAT
	Mission of GNAT
	Role and objectives of GNAT

Recommendations at national and regional levels

Theme D: Recommendations	Sub-themes : 18
	Place premium on girls' education; "Girl Child" education initiatives : STME, etc.
	Expand curriculum to further include family life and sexual reproduction education.
	In-service training policy
	Need for teacher upgrading
	NIB is a duplication of roles.
	Supervision to be intensified.
	Collaboration of stakeholders for management efficiency
	Adequate supply of teaching/learning materials and logistics
	Decentralization policy is still to be completed.
	Need for committed teachers ready to make up for loss of contact time and endeavour to complete syllabus.
	More focused Education Sector Plan.
	Institutional memory of good practices to be maintained
	Issue of deployment
	Supervision factor could be strengthened
	Sponsorship for teacher trainees
	Issue of low quota
	Possible candidates for teaching apprenticeship
	Adequate remuneration for teachers

Appendix J: Mapping of Key Findings with Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the quality of education in JHSs in the Sissala East District of Ghana?					
Under qualified & inexperienced head teachers	Lack of qualified teachers	Low teacher professionalism	Resources for Teaching & learning	Low community support for education	BECE pass rate
Most (91%) of the head teachers were men and a large proportion (77%) was aged between 31-50 years. The majority (74%) of head teachers was three-year trained but almost half had no more than five years teaching experience. Two-thirds of head teachers had less than one year's experience as a head teacher. Even though in-service training was available, few head teachers attended (KF4.1).	Many of the classroom teachers were three year trained (55%) and eight per cent have additional higher professional qualification. Of concern is the fact that 34% of the teachers are untrained. Of the total 166 of JHS teachers in the District, 31% are currently at various stages of upgrading their professional qualifications (KF4.2).	Two significant barriers to quality education include high levels of teacher absenteeism due to low levels of teacher professionalism and inadequate supervision (KF6.2).	Rating the impact of various factors on the quality of teaching and learning. This shows teachers' content knowledge, English competence, knowledge of syllabus and adequacy of lesson preparation has the greatest positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Also in terms of resources the following had the greatest positive impact: teachers' access to textbooks and curriculum materials for teaching; students sit in classrooms for lessons; and, adequate access to textbooks by students. There is considerable concern over the teaching of core subjects and Ghanaian Language. English is used as medium of instruction in most of the classes, though it is a	During the rainy season, parents and guardians have little time to supervise their children's schooling and some fail to provide for the basic needs of children, resulting in irregular attendance and high dropout rates (KF 4.6, KF 5.2).	Students' lack of basic skills is a barrier to progress in learning and achievement (KF 4.7).

			concern that some JHS classes still use vernacular as medium of instruction. One-third of head teachers have great concern about the quality of teaching in English, Mathematics, Ghanaian Language, Social Studies and General Science which are core subjects for the BECE(KF4.4)		
	Teachers' low motivation to change is negatively influenced by lack of incentives (KF 4.8).	Implementation of the new curriculum has been constrained by: the lack of trained teachers able to teach the subjects of the new curriculum, the inability to comply with the policy of providing trained teachers in each of the transition classes, the lack of proficiency in the English language among both students and teachers, and the inflexible policy requiring all the	Head teachers' rating of the impact of various factors on the quality of teaching and learning. This shows teachers' content knowledge, English competence, knowledge of syllabus and adequacy of lesson preparation has the greatest impact on the quality of teaching and learning. There is considerable concern over the teaching of core subjects and Ghanaian Language. English is used as medium of instruction in most of the classes, though it is a concern that some JHS classes still use vernacular as medium of instruction. One-third of	Inequality in the distribution of school supplies (KF 4.9).	Data revealed that attrition rates are greater than 35% over the three-year period. Financial constraint is an issue influencing school attendance (KF 4.3).

		students in the District to be examined in the same local language, namely Dagaare, regardless of how proficient students and teachers are in that language (KF5.2).	head teachers have great concern about the quality of teaching in English, Mathematics, Ghanaian Language, Social Studies and General Science which are core subjects for the BECE (KF4.4).		
		Rating of the impact of various factors on the quality of teaching and learning. This shows teachers' content knowledge, English competence, knowledge of syllabus and adequacy of lesson preparation has the greatest impact on the quality of teaching and learning. There is considerable concern over the teaching of core subjects and Ghanaian Language. English is used as medium	Teachers lack in professionalism and motivation (KF5.1).	ICT and teaching resources were needed to support policy implementation (KF 6.2).	Data revealed from a recent ASUDEV study that children are still missing out on educational opportunities due to insufficient family support (KF 6.1).

		of instruction in most of the classes, though it is a concern that some JHS classes still use vernacular as medium of instruction. One-third of head teachers have great concern about the quality of teaching in English, Mathematics, Ghanaian Language, Social Studies and General Science which are core subjects for the BECE (KF4.4).			
		The schools experience difficulty in accessing an adequate supply of specialist teachers for core subjects and to teach French and the local language, Sissala (KF6.3).	Lack of skilled teachers and hence the need for teachers' capacity building (KF4.8).		

Research Question Two: What impact has Reform 2007 had on the quality of education?		
Initiatives to improve access to education	Initiatives to improve teacher supply and teacher capacity building	Initiatives to enhance supervision of teaching
The Capitation Grant scheme increased parents' ability to send children to school (KF4.5b, KF 5.1, and KF 6.1).	District Teacher Training Sponsorship Scheme (KF 5.3).	Whole School Development program (WSD) (KF 5. 4)
Compulsory two year pre-school helps children to engage more effectively in basic schooling (KF 5.6).	Untrained teachers training Diploma in Basic Education (KF 5.3).	School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) (KF 5.4).
College program in place to train pre-school teachers for compulsory two year pre-school (KF 6.8).	Quota system on paid study leaves (KF 6.3).	Performance Monitoring Test (PMT) (KF 5.4)
Enhanced access from JHS to SHS demonstrated in the structural additions to existing SHS (KF 5.7).		School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM) (KF 5.4).
BECE performance has not improved in the District between 2007 and 2011. The pass rate between 2008 and 2011 has not been above 48% which is 10% lower than it was in 2007 (KF 5.6).		
STME program to boost students' participation in Maths and Science (KF 5.8)		District Teacher Support Team (DTST) (KF 5. 4).
COTVET to boost students' participation in Technical and Vocational programs (KF5.9).		

Research Question Three:				
What factors have impacted on the implementation of reform initiatives?				
Failure of Decentralisation	Hierarchical Nature of the GES	Lack of Resources	Poor interpretation of Policy	Communication
National Inspectorate Board (NIB) is yet to be fully operational (KF 5.4.)	Inadequacies in both human and material resources resulting in implementation gaps (KF 4.9 and KF 5.2).	Assertions on what makes positive impact on learning outcomes include: access to textbooks and curriculum materials for teaching and learning (KF 4.4).	Written exams cannot be given in Ghanaian languages that lack a written form (and yet, there isn't the freedom to write in any written form of choice) (KF 4.10).	Recognise and empower lower ranks to take up rightful roles (KF 4.10).
National Teaching Council (NTC) is yet to be fully operational (KF 5.4).	Bureaucratic attitude in the office towards the teachers often negatively affects the teachers work (KF 4.10).	Compulsory two year pre-school with direction to start just anywhere; no structures in place (KF 4.9).	Issue of medium of instruction poses some level of ambiguity (KF 4.4).	Two ways in which the new policies were communicated to them were a meeting at District Office for which they got informed through circulars, and by an FM radio broadcast (KF4.5).
District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC) is yet to be fully operational in the District (KF 5. 4)				

Appendix K: Extract from AITSL National Professional Standards for Teachers

Domains of Teaching	Standards	Focus Areas and Descriptors
Professional Knowledge	1. Know students and how they learn	Refer to the Standard at each career stage
	2. Know the content and how to teach it	
Professional Practice	3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning	
	4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments	
	5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning	
Professional Engagement	6. Engage in professional learning	
	7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/ carers and the community	

Source: Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2011)