

AFRICA EDUCATION WATCH: GHANA

GOOD GOVERNANCE LESSONS FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

Ghana, over the years, has shown a strong commitment to achieving universal primary education, which it formally adopted as a goal in the early 1960s. In 2003, Ghana designed an Education Strategic Plan for the period 2003 to 2015, aimed at accessing international financial support to help it achieve the Education for All goals.

As part of the three-year Africa Education Watch programme, Ghana Integrity Initiative, the national chapter of Transparency International in Ghana assessed whether new decentralised education management systems are effective in controlling and preventing corruption. The study examined whether school administrations are genuinely accountable and whether participatory governance systems bring public service closer to the user, particularly parents.

The key objectives of the programme are to:

- identify approximate levels of resource leakages or delays in resource transfer from the central government to school level
- determine the extent of (illegal) fees and other costs to parents, and
- assess decentralised accountability structures and determine how effective they are at controlling resources and preventing corruption.

AFRICA EDUCATION WATCH RESPONDENTS: GHANA

General Public (parents/guardians)	1,020
Head Teachers	60
Parent Teacher Association Chairs/ School Management Committee members	60
District Directors of Education	6

COUNTRY FACTS*

Primary Education in Ghana	FREE
Length of study	6 years
Population 2007	23m
GNP per capita 2007 (PPP US\$)	1,334
Percentage of Population living on Less than US\$1.25 per day	30%
Public current expenditure on primary education as % of GNP (2005)	1.6%
Net enrolment ratio primary school (2008)	73%
Primary-age children (2006)	3.4m



FINDINGS

- Weak school governance system, characterized by low level of participation of parents, School Management Committees, and Parent Teachers, Associations.
- 18 per cent of head teachers and 72 per cent of SMC members have not received financial management training.
- 75 per cent of schools have inadequate or no financial documentation.
- Considerable delays in the transfer of funds to primary schools, compelling some schools to continue to levy fees on parents to meet urgent school needs.
- 9 per cent of parents report paying registration fees, which are illegal.
- Inadequate school infrastructure results in overcrowded classrooms.
- Acute shortage of teachers adversely affects quality of teaching and learning.

“75 per cent of schools have inadequate or no financial documentation”

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Parents and members of the School Management Committees and executive members of the Parent Teacher Association should know their rights and roles in school management so they can participate more actively in school governance.
- There should be more training for School Management Committee members in basic planning and financial management.
- Head teachers who fail to keep proper records should receive extra training and/or be sanctioned to ensure transparency and accountability in school financial management.
- There should be more classrooms and furniture as school enrolment increases and/or open new schools and/or run the shift system in schools with large numbers of pupils.
- Increase teacher-training to make up for the shortfall in teacher supply.

Contact

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