



# STAR-Ghana

Strengthening Transparency, Accountability  
and Responsiveness in Ghana



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DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

**Education Convention Report**  
**10th – 11th July, 2012**  
**Grand Mensvic Hotel, Accra**

**Theme:**

***“Building Partnerships Towards Quality Education Outcomes”***

**August, 2012**

## Introduction

STAR-Ghana is a mechanism which looks at strengthening responsiveness, accountability and transparency. Its first education convention dwells its approach on enabling CSOs to network and team up in order to engage key players through advocacy at all levels within the education sector around STAR-Ghana education value chain areas. STAR-Ghana envisages greater accountability and better performance in education service delivery in Ghana, specifically around issues of Policy advocacy, access, complementary education, science, technical and vocational education, financing and resource tracking, management and decentralisation, quality, gender equality and social Inclusion (GESI); ultimately seeking that overall access to quality basic education is attained by all and leads to improved numeracy and literacy levels in basic schools. Therefore, STAR-Ghana's support to interventions focuses on advocacy for the provision of ample essential infrastructure, Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs), safe school environment for both boys and girls, and the establishment of schools in hard to reach and deprived areas. Interventions are also directed at inclusive and complementary education as a way of reaching vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, Fulani children, girls, early – exiters from school like pregnant girls who have dropped out of school.

## The Education Convention

The Education convention is one of STAR-Ghana's approaches to promote learning. STAR-Ghana aims to build a solid learning culture by fostering learning among grant partners. This 2012 Education Convention targeted all Grant Partners (GPs) implementing education projects under the education thematic call and GPs that implemented education projects under the Results Initiative Call. Specifically, the event brought together all education grant partners to learn and share lessons about how the projects being implemented are contributing to an accountable education service delivery and enhancing better performance as well as quality basic education outcomes. It additionally created a platform for networking among education grant partners around lessons and results. Furthermore, the event also provided a common space for both GPs and the PMT to discuss feedback on respective projects together. Finally, it built the stage for GPs to start working on "education communities of practice."

This abridged report is a documentation of the education convention. It is composed of three parts:

- **Part I: Framing the current education sector setting.** This highlights the quality challenges from perspectives of implementing partners within the sector as well as stakeholder endorsement messages, explores the faith-based education sector practices, and provides some useful recommendations and tools for best practices.
- **Part II: Plenary and reflections** identifies and discusses issues and lessons in relation to access, financing and resource tracking in addition to management and decentralization. With regard to five key elements of the effective practice of partnership: inclusion, clear definition of purpose and roles, participation/power-sharing, accountability and strategic influence.
- **Part III: Innovative partnership interventions and best practices** briefly outline GPs' interventions and highlights their implications for learning. With the purpose of capturing the richness and diversity of a wide range of stakeholder views and experiences, direct quotes GPs as well as other participants have been given significant space throughout the three sections.



*"Our support to civil society and parliament in a form of grant that we make to organizations, targeted support committees of Parliament and technical support to grant partners to enable them to be more effective in achieving the objectives of their projects and their mandate as civil society organizations"*  
**Ibrahim Tanko Amidu**

## PART 1: FRAMING THE CURRENT EDUCATION SECTOR SETTING



*“This event is a very important engagement for the parliamentary committee. As policymakers, there is the need to come together and see how best to turn around this system to provide us the freedom of free compulsory and quality basic education as our constitution guarantees.”*

*Hon. Tetteh Chaiyei*

*(Parliamentary Education Select committee)*



## 1.0 KEYNOTE ADDRESS - Akwasi Addae-Boahene, Country Director (WUSC)

According to Mr. Akwasi Addae-Boahene, the keynote speaker for the Convention, less than a 3rd of the Primary school children in Ghana reached efficiency levels in English and mathematics where the national education assessment tests in 2005, 2007 to 2009 were concerned. From his perspective, challenges within the education sector contributed to low-level achievement over the period to date. Inequities in learning achievements between rural and urban students presupposing that the geographical locations with their attendant lack was a factor. Secondly, the predominantly high scores of 45% and above recorded in the assessments consisted of pupils in schools within the Greater Accra district and also, Pupil-teacher ratios over the past decade remained above 32.

The keynote speaker added the following to the list of challenges:

- The recruitment and deployment of trained teachers;
- An increase in the number of primary teachers from 8552 to 114,421 between the periods of 2001/02 to 2008/09 academic years; and
- The increase in percentage of untrained teachers from 35.1% to 52% over that same period. The reason being that higher increases in basic school net enrolment were additionally registered over the same period. As a result, high pupil ratios to qualified teachers occurred.

Mr Akwasi Addae-Boahene furthermore cited a World Bank report in 2011 which indicated that pupils learnt in crowded classroom, often with structural problems, were taught by teachers who did not have any experience. This has led to large numbers of children completing basic education with minimal functional literacy skills. On the issue of deployment and distribution of teachers, inequities remained.

Teacher absenteeism has been very high in Ghana. Currently, the absenteeism rate for Ghana is approximately 43 days in an academic year of a child as compared to 11.6 and 13.4 for Tunisia and Morocco. Also, there is an imbalance between the high numbers of enrolment and that quality of outcomes. While the enrolment numbers increase positively, the percentage of children who can read and write with understanding is extremely low.

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*Akwasi Boahene (CD, WUSC)*

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## 1.1 BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TOWARDS QUALITY EDUCATION OUTCOMES: THE EXPERIENCE OF FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN GHANA - Samuel Zan Akologo (Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference)

The Catholic Church regards formal education as a right for every individual. This position is in line with Article 25 of the 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana. Furthermore, a greater percentage of Christian denominations including the Catholic Church consider education a critical development need and a joint enterprise among stakeholders. Over the last decade, two important national frameworks have reinforced the importance of quality education through strong partnerships with FBOs. Firstly, the 1999 Spio Garbrah ministerial directive titled *'The Right of Education Units to manage and supervise educational institutions established and developed by their respective religious bodies in partnership with the Government'* and the Prof. Kwasi Ansu-Kyeremeh seventeen-member Committee review document titled *"1999 Partnership document on education management and the decentralization of education management within the context of current developments in the education sector"*.

### 1.1.1 Partnership track record of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) in the education sector in Ghana

- The religious bodies were the first to introduce formal education in Ghana. The examples include the interventions of the Portuguese Catholic Chaplains in Elimina in 1529 and Islamic Koranic schools in Northern Ghana;
- FBOs have opened schools in the most deprived communities within regions and rural areas in Ghana thereby ensuring that children in these areas have education;
- Mission schools are among the best schools in the country. The national Senior High Schools Performance League Table for example is a credible basis for this.
- They are also synonymous with discipline, dedication and commitment to duty;
- Faith-Based schools furthermore provide options to parents who wish to give their children religious-based education;
- Faith-Based schools facilitate the poor segment of society to have access to top quality education, sometimes;
- FBOs have very efficient established management structures for education from the community to national level;
- Basic curriculum for Faith-Based schools has been consistent with national education curriculum and participate national in education assessments. In terms of performance and achievement the results are good;
- The Catholic Church accounts for over 15% of basic schools, 10% of senior secondary schools, 21% of Colleges of Education and about 39% of Technical and Vocational Schools in the country. It will therefore be remarkable if the Islamic, Ahmadiyya and other Christian Mission Schools are counted and added
- Faith-Based Organizations have additionally pioneered critical areas of education such as Technical and Vocational education training (TVET) for girls and children with disabilities;



**“A great percentage of Christian denominations regard education a critical development need and a joint venture between stakeholders”**

Samuel Zan Akolgo  
**(Catholic Bishop’ Conference)**



### 1.1.2 Useful tools for Faith-based partnerships in the Sector

- Multi-stakeholder dialogue meetings at regional levels involving FBOs, representatives of other CSOs and Directors of GES at the regional and district levels;
- A deliberate and consistent media strategy to regularly share FBO partnerships education outcomes in the public domain;
- Regular dialogue with Government newly-appointed Directors of the GES; and
- The use of FBO Education stakeholders' platforms for learning and sharing ideas and best practices on quality education outcomes at the decentralized level.

## PART II: PLENARY AND REFLECTIONS

### 2.0 EMERGING ISSUES

While the partnership potentials were shared during this session, some of the participants expressed 'quality issues' regarding teacher deployment particularly where teacher training colleges have become transitional points for people who just needed a starting point in their professional careers. Other views included students who did not make it to the Polytechnics and Universities as a result of poor grades and were invariably sent to become teachers. Almost everyone present agreed that teaching was no longer a "calling" and there was therefore the need to begin a public sensitization to remove that perception. It was necessary to rather stress the "professional" dimension of teaching as was done in other professions and specializations.

A good understanding of "partnerships" would minimize the tendency of communities to think that Parliament was responsible for and should be the one to do everything. Partnerships needed to be worked on both internally and outside civil society. Participants further stressed the need for partnerships to go beyond the civil society. While some participants thought a disconnect between our activities as civil society and the grass roots existed, a large number of participants expressed the need to include the people and stakeholders connected to education, citizens and electorates. This must be corrected to ensure that the grass root is always connected to the work.

- Clarity was sought on whether institutional exchanges were in place at the Ghana Education Service level to link experienced professional teachers with those at the basic schools through learning exchanges as a means of building capacities of the weaker ones using coaching and mentoring.

*"The school curricula need to be reviewed regularly reviewed. Here, it is revised and new ones developed but there is a difficulty in getting them to the various schools. For example the last revised curriculum was put on CD roms and sent to rural areas that do not have access to CD players"*

*Akwasi Addae-Boahene, Country Director-  
WUSC*

*We are all responsible for our problem and should quit the blame game. Different groups are represented here: what are we doing with the information that has been put out today? We shouldn't think that Parliament should be the one to do everything. It shouldn't end at this conference. Let us be realistic. STAR is pushing us to a point where if we are unwilling to do anything we should follow Prof Ama Atta Aidoo's concession and quit having kids*

*Nana Ofori Atta, 3 Heads and a Pen*

- Questions were raised regarding the parliamentary mechanisms put in place to encourage and utilize the *tons of rich* research findings *churned out from prominent academic institutions* of our citizens.
- The issue of a Parliamentary legislative instrument on re-enrolling teenage mothers in schools was put before the representative of the Education Select committee. From the Parliamentary perspective, no bill of such nature was in existence. However, it was expected that it would probably come as such a policy directive from Parliament. From their end, the Parliamentarians were interested in knowing what strategies CSOs used after they carried out their research to ensure government worked on the research findings. GNECC’s best practice on this included frequent engagements with the select committee on education, the ministry of education as well as participating in the annual NESAR conference and civil society annual education sector reviews.
- Other concerns expressed were in relation to the low level of proactivity at the Education select committee level, particularly after the point was made by the Parliamentary member. A quick follow-up to this issue was on how civil society could better engage Parliament much better in order to represent their education sector better.
- According to the Hon Tetteh Chaiyeh, three main issues have contributed to the low level of proactivity at the Education Select committee level. Firstly, participants were made to understand that based on their individual professional backgrounds and career experiences, parliamentarians were assigned to committees to work. However, despite the fact that the committee work may correspond to their professional backgrounds, some parliamentarians had not been passionate about their committee activities due to the general lack of interest in the work they had been assigned to. The issue of poor leadership had on another hand been revealed as another contributing factor. Lastly, some of the committees had been under resourced and a typical example was the Education select committee.

## 2.1 Recommendations:

- Build the capacity of Education Select committee members in order for them to be active on the committee.
- Civil society groups should also proactively work hard to bring their findings to the notice of parliament.
- Frequent engagements with the Parliamentary Select committee on education, the ministry of education as well as actively participating in the annual education sector reviews, NESAR
- Structure curriculum around numeracy and literacy competencies to enable the pupils to pass out of school with minimum functional skills.
- Resource rural and deprived communities with basic infrastructure and amenities to attract and maintain teachers

**“Can most professional teachers be brought to the basic level to build capacity of the younger ones?”**

*Fredrick, The Northern Network for Education Development*

**“To what extent is Parliament considering the issue of re-enrolling teenage mothers in schools?”**

*Mr. Seidu, CRIS, Damango*

**“What is civil society doing to rectify the issues that are preventing grass root participation?”**

*Mr. Issaka*

**“One solution would be to build the capacity of committee members in order for them to be active on the committee. Civil society groups should also work hard to bring their findings to the notice of parliament.”**

*Hon. Tetteh Chaiyei, Education Select Committee of Parliament*

**“How can we wash our hands off the dependency syndrome and not rely on foreign aid for everything?”**

*Nana Kobina Nketia V, Paramount Chief of Esikado Traditional area*

**When did our public schools become ‘syto’? What is the rationale behind that name? What can we do to change that brand name given to our basic schools?**

*Mrs. Philomena Johnson, Institute for Fiscal Policy*

- Engage in regular review of basic school curricula every 5 years, documenting them in simple user-friendly tools that can be used in the rural areas and equitably disseminating to all the districts. Building on existing NALAP programme to teach children numeracy and literacy skills first in their mother tongues before introducing English at upper primary
- Involve parents through SMC/PTAs in reading initiatives to bring them on board the process of shaping literacy skills of children that are grounded in local content.

## ***PART III: INNOVATIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS AND BEST PRACTICE***

### **3.0 BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SAFE SCHOOLS - NANA OYE LITHUR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (HRAC)**

In defining the concept, Nana Oye Lithur stated that Gender-based violence (GBV) was an emerging issue in Ghanaian basic schools which unfortunately was not given enough attention. According to her, this type of violence more often than not either occurred between students, students and teachers, between teachers themselves or between other staff members and students. In line with studies she had been involved in and from other notable Ghanaian academic researchers, Nana Oye Lithur stated that in Ghana, as many as 11.2% of school children had one way or the other been victims of rape and defilement and 90.3% of these victims were largely female.

In defining the act, she indicated that GBV could be defined as an act involving a person behaving cruelly towards someone as a result of their gender. She also drew the participants' attention to an emerging GBV trend pervading our schools in Ghana today which unfortunately was not being given enough attention - "sexting". According to her, "sexting" involved the offender using the mobile phone to send messages of sexual nature to school children. Furthermore, the internet had also additionally become a means for high risk offenders to sexually harass, bully their victims and to additionally force their victims to look at pornographic images



***A total of 8 school children out of 35 are reported to have been exposed to pornography in their respective school. Whereas 6 out of the same number have confirmed 'sexting' occurred in their schools***

#### **3.1 Effects of GBV on children**

- Reduced concentration and participation in school activities;
- Temporary absence from school;
- Reduced interest in attending classes;
- Lack of respect for teachers;
- Negative health implications on the victims;
- Risk of HIV/AIDS and STIs, and unwanted pregnancies as well as the risks associated with unsafe abortions;



- School dropout; and
- Pregnant students find it difficult to continue their education and there are unclear GES guidelines about the re-entry policy for pregnant girls.

### 3.1.1 Recommendations for areas of partnership strengthening

- Further training and education of teachers, students and the community on gender-based violence;
- implementation of a protocol for schools on preventing gender-based violence

## 4.0 GHANA’S PROPOSED EDUCATION DECENTRALIZATION FRAMEWORK - Leslie Tetteh, National Coordinator, (Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition)

From his perspective, Mr. Leslie Tetteh indicated that Ghana’s framework for education sector decentralization was mandated by the Education Act 778. He observed that the framework was a combination of two approaches namely “de-concentration” and “devolution”. Mr. Tetteh explained that “de-concentration” referred to the transfer of decision-making from the Ministry of Education (MoE) to either the regional or district offices.

He added that the process of de-concentration normally involved giving those offices increased independence so they are able to recruit, evaluate, and promote education related personnel, assign and reassign budgetary resources. Alternatively, Mr. Tetteh described devolution as the transfer of decision-making from the central government to popularly elect regional or local government authorities.

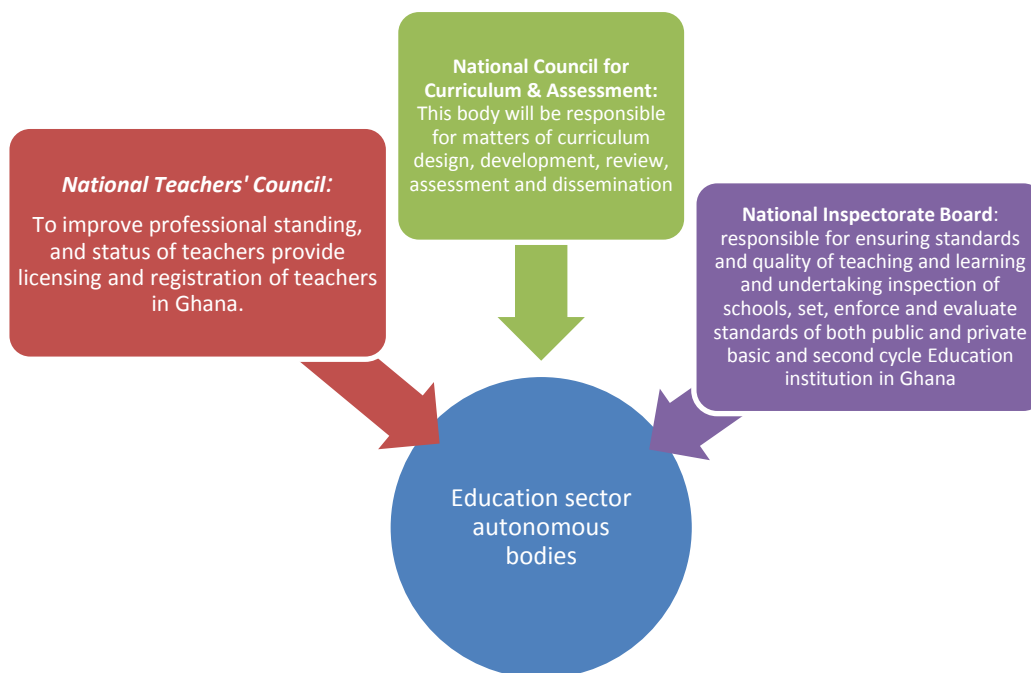
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**Ghana’s process involves the transfer of decision-making from the Ministry of Education to either the regional or district offices. It also includes the transfer of decision-making from central government to popularly elected regional authority**



In further shedding light on Ghana’s framework, he summed up by indicating the following:

- It is expected the Ghana Education Service (GES) will become a much smaller administrative unit of about eighty (80) personnel within the framework, performing mainly co-ordination and monitoring functions.
- In this case, key management decisions, including appointing school heads and principals as well as allocating regional/local education budgets, would lie with either the governor or the mayor who will be elected.
- The Regional Directorates within the framework would now be responsible for liaising on matters of policy and co-ordination with GES Headquarters and DoEYs from the district assemblies including the coordination of the implementation of education policies from primary to secondary in the districts and promotion of national culture and sports in schools among others.
- Regional Directors would also manage second cycle education. District assemblies with a unit in the district called the education office will be responsible for the management of basic education and non-formal education.



**Fig1: Autonomous/semi autonomous bodies would be set up under the new framework**

**4.1 The Critical Issues for best practices from Brazil, New Zealand, Southern America, Uganda, Ethiopia and Nigeria**

- The decentralization framework guarantees improvements in efficiency and effectiveness by holding service providers—schools, local governments, or regional governments accountable for results;
- It recognizes accountability as a process which requires clearly spelt out roles and the responsibilities of the various actors are under the system;
- The framework increases the voice of the beneficiaries’ including parents;
- It decentralizes the processes of teacher recruitment, evaluation, transfer, and salary supplements along with other responsibilities. As a result it places teachers at the centre for delivering instructions to children; and
- The process actively engages the teacher unions regularly.

**4.2 Educational Resource Distribution & the Decentralized Framework**

The framework as proposed provides strong elements of ensuring effective co-ordination of education management processes between the national and district levels, with critical systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The establishment of the three autonomous bodies, NIB, NCCA and NTC, if effectively resourced and when practical programmes are developed will ensure improvements in promoting teacher quality, the framework for effective curriculum development, and improvements in the quality of teaching and learning materials including textbooks.

**4.3 Challenges related to the framework**

- The decentralized framework does not formally integrate parental and community-level participation in decision-making and holding education service providers accountable has not been clearly articulated within the framework.
- The capacity of the SMC/PTAs and other community structures should be built in other areas other than the management of the capitation grant to enable them to participate effectively in teaching and learning materials as well.

- The issues of teacher deployment and distribution which have been unresolved should be dealt with before rolling out the process;
- The framework should include a process for teacher deployment which involves the districts indicating their A well laid-out system of teacher deployment, with districts indicating their needs and the NTC responsible for developing the framework to guide teacher deployment in the country;
- The district and school-level responsibilities for teacher performance reviews, ensuring the disciplining and non-performance of teachers at the school level is not spelt out clearly; and
- The management of teacher unions in the process of rolling out education decentralization is not clearly spelt out within the framework.



### Our Institute's guiding principles

Social inclusion issues

Social Justice

Equity

Right to dignity of life

Pro-poor class positions

## 5.0 EXPENDITURE TRACKING IN GHANA: LESSONS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION OUTCOMES BY MRS PHILOMENA JOHNSON (INSTITUTE FOR FISCAL POLICY)

### 5.1 What is expenditure tracking?

- It is a process that helps to identify issues concerning the needed allocation of funds or financial resources
- It also provides insight into how government manages financial resources to achieve specific results, within the education, health or agriculture sectors for example.
- It provides convincing reasons for civil society to use as a basis to influence government's position.

### 5.2 What are the two ways in public expenditure tracking?

- Utilization of the resources
- Allocation of fiscal resource

The rationale for expenditure tracking is to monitor the implementation of plans and the use of resources. The main concerns that the Institute's tracking activity has focused on has been to identify the fiscal gaps responsible for inequity, gender disparities, exclusion, poor service delivery, poor learning outcomes.

### Some recommended documents to use for expenditure tracking are as follows:

- Annual Budget
- Mid-Year Review
- Year-End Report
- Audit Report.
- Research information, one-on –one interview with some of the officials.

### Lessons Learnt:

- The budget, as an instrument for equitable distribution of the national cake, could have been better shared with all stakeholders to ensure transparency and the achievement of quality education outcomes.
- If existing initiatives such as the SPAM and school level in-service training are given greater influence through capitation grant they could impact more positively on education outcomes.
- Better targeting of resources to specific categories such as textbook ratio, class/pupil ratio and desk/pupil ratio in deprived districts could significantly improve quality delivery and consequently quality learning outcomes.
- Targeting resources toward teacher motivation and effective functioning of the inspectorate division of GES in deprived districts could enhance poor education outcomes.
- Learning outcomes for girls could be better if specific targeting is done to meet their learning needs
- If resource allocation is consistent and predictable for primary and Junior High school levels, quality results could be achieved.