

## **SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES FROM GROUP DISCUSSIONS AT DODOWA 20th April, 2009**

### **Financing Group**

Four key points were identified for discussion. First, members felt that to ensure efficient and effective allocation of educational financial resources, programmed based budgeting should be applied in the financial allocation. With regards to capitation grant, the group noted that increase in capitation should target poor schools and communities to ensure equity and to bridge the gap between the poor and non poor. More importantly, there was urgent call for improved efficiency and effectiveness within the teaching body. The group suggested ways to achieve the above goals, including improving monitoring and supervision of schools particularly those in the rural areas, regular provision of in-service training for teachers and progressive reduction in study leave with pay for teachers.

### **Access and Equity Group**

Group members agreed the need for intervention to identify out of school children, and suggested that instead of allowing significantly overage children to go through mainstream schooling, they should rather be made to go through complementary education system. Again, poverty was recognized to be multi-dimensional and thus called for the need to determine aspects of poverty that prevent children from enrolling in school and for education authorities to be more pro-active in addressing poverty related challenges to access. The group expressed the need for district education offices to be empowered and made responsible for identifying poor households and targeting them with incentives that ensure that they have total access to free education. The Ghana Education Service was called upon to improve on its monitoring and supervision of teachers and schools to improve teacher-pupil contact hours. More attention should be given to unprofessional behaviour of teachers and head teachers and sanctions should be applied frequently to unprofessional behaviour that undermined meaningful access. Furthermore, the group called for a critical look at teachers' conditions of service for improvement, while the district assembly is to accelerate the provision of accommodation to attract and retain teachers. Corporal punishment was to be abolished in schools and laws relating to compulsory basic education should be rigorously applied. Finally, the Ghana Education Service, as matter of urgency should embark on redeployment exercise to ensure that empty classrooms are filled with teachers.

### **SCHOOL COMMUNITY GROUP**

Discussions in this group were guided by the following questions: what is school community? What account for the limited success of School Management Committees (SMCs)? And how do we enhance social capital to improve on community involvement? How do we involve school leadership?

The group found it difficult to define school community but identified community as the internal environment made up of the teachers, pupils, head teachers, parents and SMCs/PTAs as components of school community. It was noted that the political environment in which SMCs operate contribute to its limited success. For example the group identified criteria for selection of members and the debate over whether SMC member should be paid or not; weak capacity among SMCs and serious challenge of civic mindedness of members. Again, community participation was not to be defined solely in terms of financial contributions, but on the ability of the community to contribute to the achievement of educational goals. Finally, the group called on the GES to address weak school leadership problems.

### **Group Sessions 20th April, 2009**

#### **Teacher Deployment and Access**

The group identified two key issues needed to ensure efficient and effective deployment of teachers to schools. First, the formula for determining teacher supply should be streamlined. Secondly, group members called for more attention to be paid to the teacher deployment process. Teacher sponsorship system should be streamlined and made more efficient and effective. There was also the need to improve school infrastructure and facilities for teachers in the communities. Cash incentive to teachers serving in deprived areas of the country was mentioned as an appropriate response to teacher demand needs in deprived areas. Double posting was raised as an indication of an inefficient deployment policy, and requiring urgent attention by the GES. To address this problem coordination between the Human Resource Development and Teacher Education Development units must be improved.

#### **Managing Accountability for Access and Equity**

The GES/DEOs should set targets for schools, head teachers and teachers. Learning should be well managed with school heads monitoring, evaluating and providing feed back to teachers on how best to improve teaching and learning in the school. In addition, the GES/DEOs should ensure regular monitoring, supervision and evaluation of schools. The DEOs should train SMCs and PTAs to improve on their reporting system.

### **Education Sector Review- Expanding the Analytical Base**

First, it was found that the report has no forward. Again, the group observed that while stakeholders including the parliamentary select committee on education and development partners are involved in the preparation of the report; the report lacks in-house review process. It was suggested that the report must go through a systematic review from production to distribution. Again, the group called for disaggregated data that provide in-depth information on certain critical areas in education-as members believed that if the report was to demonstrate different levels of equity/or equity overtime, then disaggregated data would be useful in this direction and suggested the use of maps that highlights certain critical areas. Attention of members was drawn to the fact that the report is about performance and suggested the need to relate performance with Ghana's educational objectives. Finally, it was suggested that the Education Sector Performance Report should be based on clearly specified themes.

### **DEBRIEFING SESSION**

The key message during the debriefing session was that, participants in their individual capacities were urged to have open discussion with their colleagues and superiors on emerging issues from the research in order to affect change in their educational practice and policy.