



NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH  
INTO BASIC EDUCATION  
UEW - WINNEBA



EdQual  
A Research Programme Consortium on  
Implementing Education Quality in Low Income Countries

RECOUP logo  
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Increasing *Access*, Enhancing *Quality* and Achieving *Outcomes* in Ghanaian Schools: A concern for Ghanaians.

# RESEARCH INTO BASIC EDUCATION PRACTICE

*A Quarterly Newsletter of NCRIBE*

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**Editorial Note**

The editor welcomes contributions from  
*CREATE*, EdQual, & *RECOUP* research teams

**Contents**

1. From the Editor
2. DFID Research Consortia (RPCs)
  - *Access (CREATE)*,
  - *Quality (EdQual)*
  - *Outcomes (RECOUP)*
3. RPCs meeting with the Chief Director –MOESS
4. Highlights of NRG meeting- 15<sup>th</sup> Nov 2006
5. Highlights of RPCs meeting with CD- 29<sup>th</sup> Nov 2006
6. NCRIBE Activities for first Quarter of 2007

From the Editor

About  and CREATE

Welcome the first issue of NCRIBE. First, a little bit about NCRIBE and CREATE. NCRIBE is the National Centre for Research into Basic Education based at the University of Education Winneba (UEW) while CREATE is the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transition and Equity funded by the DFID. The NCRIBE research team undertakes CREATE's work in Ghana. Two other institutions in Ghana that assist NCRIBE to do CREATE's work are the University of Cape Coast (UCC) and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST).

We have focused our research on the relevance of access, transition and equity to ensure that all children irrespective socio-economic background of their parents, or where they hail from have meaningful access to basic education in Ghana. With regards to the research itself, for the most part NCRIBE works closely with education practitioners: education policy makers, authorities, teachers, stakeholders and community members to identify barriers to access, transition and equity and to develop realistic and practicable strategies for resolving the problem of access. We will ensure that the challenges identified and the solutions developed will be shared with education policy

makers, stakeholders and community members. We also work closely with the EdQual and ReCoup consortia working on education quality and outcomes respectively.

Work done so far on CREATE is the completion of Ghana's Country Analytic Review on access to education. Highlights of issues raised in the review include three current initiatives directed at improving access to basic education in Ghana:

- Compulsory pre-school (kindergarten) education as key to improving access to basic education. The recommendation is to make a part of the definition of 'free' basic education. But, what is the evidence that 'free' access to pre-school actually improves the chances of children staying on in school to complete basic education? Is it true for all children or for some irrespective of their socio-economic background?
- Government's recognition of alternative and complementary programmes (School for Life and others) as effective strategy for reaching the hard to reach groups (Children in zone 1, never been to school). The recognition of government's efforts at providing alternative schooling through the establishment of the Islamic Education Units and schools. But, what is the evidence that the government's effort is achieving the desired objective? Is it true that the hands off the Islamic schools leads to access to basic education for the Islamic communities?
- The capitation grant as a strategy for improving access. But, are children enrolling merely as a result of the direct funding to schools? Who stays and who leaves and why? Equally, school feeding is viewed as an instrument to further improve school enrollment and attendance. But can the state sustain the capitation and the school feeding programmes? To what extent are these programmes pro-poor? Do all children need the subsidy and school meals irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds?

### **Other issues emanating from the Country Analytic Review (CAR)**

Two major research strands emerged from the CAR, namely, school-community studies (ComSS) and baseline secondary analysis. The ComSS will take the form of community/school based empirical enquires into meaningful access for the four

different zones of exclusion: zone one- total lack of access the never been to school; zone two- school drop outs before completing primary; zone three- those at risk of exclusion with irregular attendance and not benefiting from the curriculum and zone four – primary completers excluded from junior secondary. The ComSS has the following objectives

- Illuminate the dynamics of exclusion in zone 1
- Explore progress within zone two through primary grades
- Establish status and opportunities in zone three and
- Identify changing patterns of transition into lower secondary

The baseline secondary studies will involve retrospective and longitudinal studies of patterns of access and exclusion in relation to different stages and how and why. These studies will also consider barriers to enrolment as well as tracking attendance and participation within the four zones of exclusion. NCRIBE will also conduct studies into specific thematic areas such as the capitation grants and school feeding and their impact on enrolment, attendance, dropout and completion; School, community and local government relationship and responsibilities for promoting access and many other issues relating to access to basic education.

It is my hope that we have been able to give you a taste of what we intend to offer. While wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy NEW TEAR we welcome contributions and comments and entreat you to share and learn with us.

### **DfID Research Consortia (RPCs)**

The DFID research consortia in Ghana have three strands: *CREATE*, *EDQUAL* AND *RECOUP*.

**CREATE** is the Consortium for research on Education Access, Transition and Equity, concerned with the application of knowledge and insight to improve access to basic education. It is also concerned with developing novel conceptual frameworks and insights into how to improve access in equitable and pro-poor ways.

**EDQUAL** is the Consortium for research into quality Education delivery. It is concerned with working closely with schools, teachers, and communities to learn from existing best practices and develop initiatives to implement school effectiveness and education quality.

**RECOUP** is the Consortium researching into educational outcomes. It is concerned with investigating the effectiveness of educational outcomes and its economic and social impact,

educational skills training and labour market outcomes and the effectiveness and influence of international development assistance packages on educational outcomes including the use of sector support modalities.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LAUNCHING OF  
GHANA CONSORTIUM FOR RESEARCH ON  
EDUCATION ACCESS, TRANSITIONS AND  
EQUITY (CREATE)  
WEDNESDAY, 26 APRIL 2006**

In his welcome address, the chairman explained the purpose of CREATE to the participants. He noted that CREATE has an onerous responsibility to encourage the application of knowledge and insights to improve access in equitable and pro-poor ways.

After the Chairman's welcome address, the Director of Centre for International Education, University of Sussex and Director of CREATE, Professor K. M. Lewin introduced 'CREATE' to the participant. He presented an overview of CREATE internationally. In his presentation, the various zones of exclusion were highlighted and figures and graphs were 'power-pointed' to illuminate the characteristics of the zones.

Professor J. S Djangmah (Visiting Professor and Co-coordinator, Ghana CREATE) highlighted key issues pertaining specifically to Ghana.

Mr. Ato Essuman, the Chief Director of the Ministry of Education delivered a speech on behalf of the Minister of Education and Sports. He noted that CREATE had come at the right time because the educational system in Ghana in the past and present has its focus on making education accessible to all as well as encouraging equity in education. It was therefore welcoming news that CREATE, has come to the doorsteps of Ghana. Where there is very much peripheral information about issues concerning of access to education delivery.

Next, the Director-General of Ghana Education Service chair a discussion group led by Professor Mawutor Avoke, a member of the CREATE Team of Researchers.

Dr. Alhassan Seidu, who presented an overview of the Ghana Country Analytical Review (CAR) highlighted the various zones of exclusion viz:

- Zone 1: Pupils who never attended and are not likely to attend school (Basic).
- Zone 2: Entered primary school but do not complete
- Zone 3: Have high risk of dropping out, e.g. due to sporadic attendance
- Zone 4: Complete primary but do not enter JSS either due to inability to make entry requirements, pay fees, lack of interest, or prefer employment in informal sector.

After a tea break, business continued and there were contributions and comments from various groups. After the contributions and comments on the earlier presentations t 4 groups were formed was to discuss issues concerning each of the 4 zones of exclusion. Dr. K Akyeampong (a senior lecturer at the University of Sussex) then appealed to the participants to brainstorm well in order to raise key issues to enable CREATE investigate them empirically. All participants reassembled after the group discussions, and each group presented its discussions and the key research issues that emerged.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MINUTES OF THE  
NATIONAL REFERENCE GROUP MEETING  
HELD AT ALISA HOTEL – ACCRA  
15TH NOVEMBER, 2006**

In a welcome address, the Director of CREATE, Prof. Anamoah-Mensah commented on the poor attendance and urged all NRG members to give off their best to enable the NRG play its important role of shaping the direction of research in basic education in Ghana. He also stressed the need for the RPCs in future to provide synopsis of materials to be discussed in advance of the meeting to all NRG members.

**RPCs Presentations**

All three RPCs gave presentations on their activities. The EdQual group led by Dr Oduro explained that the Quality group is working on five main themes in collaboration with other partner institutions in other countries. The themes with the countries working on them are as follows:

- ☞ School effectiveness and education quality  
(Bristol lead)

- ☞ Implementing curriculum change to fight poverty and promote gender equity (*Wits lead*)
- ☞ The use of ICTs to support basic education in disadvantaged schools and communities (*Kigali lead*)
- ☞ Language and literacy development (*Dar es Salaam lead*)
- ☞ Leadership, management and the implementation of quality education initiatives (*Cape Coast lead*)

On capacity building, the group explained that EdQual is offering two places for qualified members to undertake PhD studies in the universities of Bath and Bristol.

Commenting on the presentation, concern was raised about the need for capacity building to reflect both the needs of the universities and MOESS.

Other concerns members raised include:

- the need for a resource centre to store all research resources for future reference.
- the need to link research to policy and
- the applicability of research findings to rural and deprived schools in the face of decentralization.

Dr Leslie, leading the **RECOUP Group** gave the following as the main aims of the group:

- evaluating educational outcomes with reference to economic, social and human impact.
- Investigating links between education, skills training and labour market outcomes.
- investigating the effectiveness and influence of international development assistance packages on educational outcomes including the use of sector support modalities.

Commenting on the presentation, members regretted the seeming broad coverage area and lack of a research agenda. Concern was raised about the need for the research on outcomes to show how Development Partners' funding support is targeting investment and the impact of the investment on educational outcomes.

On the issue of consortia research coverage, it was agreed that the limit could go beyond basic education to include SSS and tertiary education.

To enable the NRG assess the progress of work of the RPCs it was agreed that RPCs provide targets and work plans for the NRG

**CREATE's** presentation, led by Prof. Djangmah identified the main concerns of its research to include:

1. Identifying new ways to increase and sustain access to basic education for children who are currently excluded.
2. Promoting evidenced based policy dialogue leading towards the MDGs to improve access in equitable and pro-poor ways.
3. Synthesising what is already known, generate new empirical insights, and project activities and findings to a range of stakeholders.
4. Leading a programme of research, capacity building, communication and dissemination with partner institutions in Bangladesh, India, South Asia and UK.
5. Contribute to the achievement of the MDGs and enhance progress towards EFA

### **Other Matters**

The RPCs appealed for easy access to MOESS documentation and the Chief Director agreed to a meeting scheduled for 29th November 2006 to take the issue further.

To improve communication between the RPC and the NRG a quarterly newsletter was approved and UEW given the responsibility for its production with contributions from the other RPCs.

The suggestion that NRG members be remunerated to motivate them to attend meetings regularly was rejected.

Concern was raised about the need for the RPCs to highlight the policy issues arising from the various research agenda as well as the need for the MOESS to collaborate to ensure that the research agenda fits into the MOESS plans.

## NCRIBE ACTIVITIES: First Quarter 2007

DATE	ACTIVITIES	COMMENTS
Jan 7	CRIQPEG –MEETING @ Cape Coast	
Jan 13	Visit to Mfantseman district. Visit to schools to select pilot. Sites.	
Jan 20	Pilot work – data collection	Testing instruments
Jan 27	Fine tuning of research instruments	
Jan 30	Report on piloting	Analysis of pilot data
Feb 2007	School baseline data – pupil attendance records, retrospective survey and interview with district education staff	Data collection for retrospective survey study begins
Feb	Radio programme on piloting	Communicating findings through radio Windy Bay
March 2007	Household survey & interviews for teachers and pupils	

NCRIBE has started preliminary discussions with Mfantseman District Education Directorate for the selection of school for both the pilot and research sites. With the support of the Directorate 18 schools in three circuits (Eyisam, Anomabu and Mankessim) were selected for further studies before finally selecting 12 schools from two circuits (6schs each for pilot and main study). Factors influencing the selection of the three circuits and the 18 schools include the presence of :

- high school drop outs
- poor admission
- low primary and JSS completion rates
- communities known to have low school participation and
- poor performance in BECE

NCRIBE's preliminary study of the district's school mapping statistics reveals that of the eight circuits, two of the selected circuits account for 46.9% of the districts dropout, 36.3% of repeaters at the primary level and 34.6% of the candidates who failed to make the minimum requirement of aggregate 30 and below to qualify for the SSS. NCRIBE is yet to analyse the statistics of individual schools in the two circuits to enable her select the schools.

## RPCs Meeting with the Chief Director - MOESS

At a research partner consortia meeting with the chairman of the NRG, the Chief Director of the MOESS, agreed that MOESS will collaborate to provide access to data to the consortia. The Director directed his assistant to write memos directing Directors for CRDD and BED to make available data in their custody on demand to the 3RPCs.

The meeting also agreed that RPCs share their findings with an NRG executive Committee which will recommend discussions with the Minister of Education. In addition the meeting recommended the expansion of membership of the NRG to include some members of Parliamentary Select Committee on Education and active participation of GES.

There was a consensus on Prof. Djangmah proposal that RPCs participate in a Higher Education Conference on the theme "Fifty Years of Education Policy. What have we achieved?"

The **next NRG MEETING** is scheduled for **March 27th, 2007.**