



THE MANIFESTO PROJECT

Promoting responsible and responsive Manifestos for Inclusive Education Sector in Ghana

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Compilation of Issues and
Evidence on Key Sectors in Ghana

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INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The preparation of responsible and responsive manifestos for Education development requires a careful dispassionate approach that makes it possible to position the Education Sector as a critical tool for inclusive development. The Education Sector requires a new approach to managing its existing thematic areas, which are access, quality, management and finance. A manifesto which is intended to improve Education Sector performance must dispassionately reflect on the cyclical occurrences of the Sector's persistent challenges that impede its performance, efficiency, and effectiveness.

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced an unexpected new dimension, that has influenced the operation and analysis of Sector performance. The impact of the pandemic on the Sector led to the closure of all public and private pre-tertiary schools, Colleges and Universities. The consequent disruption in the academic year equally halted the delivery of other services for teaching and learning. Above all, it exposed the Sector's lack of readiness to respond to shocks that affect the teaching and learning environment as well as the failure to implement identified interventions that would make the education system adapt contemporary innovations into teaching and learning. A Manifesto on Education must factor the implications of the COVID-19 for the administration and management of Education.

While the Sector has made significant progress in delivering on aspects of its thematic areas, the changing dynamics at the global, continental, regional, and local contexts, therefore means a renewed response to the handling of its persistent challenges. These challenges should no longer be perceived as insurmountable norms but rather tackled conscientiously with a sense of commitment towards enhancing the quality of service, results, and outcomes of the Sector. The anticipated new approach to moving the Sector forward should be innovative, inclusive, responsible and responsive. This will lead to the creation of a Sector that is resilient and which possesses strengthened competencies to enable it to achieve its mandate, targets, and goals.

The Education Sector performance is guided by the following:

- 1992 Constitution (Articles 25, 28, 29 and 38)
- Global programs (Sustainable Development Goal 4 and its indicators and targets, and previously by the MDGs 1 and 2) and collaboration with international development partners
- Continental strategies such as Africa Union Agenda 2063; Continental Education Strategy (CESA 16-25)
- Local initiatives emerging from National Medium-Term Development Framework 2018-2021 and partnerships with local organizations and communities
- Education Sector Strategic Plans such as Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2019-2020 and the most recent ESP 2018-2030 together with its Education Sector Medium Term Development Plan, 2018-2021

In carrying out its mandate, the Sector through its most recent ESP 2018-2030, has identified the following key areas and goals to direct its actions.

- Basic Education: Improved equitable access to and participation in quality basic education
- Secondary Education: Improved equitable access to and participation in quality SHS education
- Technical and Vocational Training and Education (TVET): Strengthened competency-based skills development
- Non-formal Education: Improved opportunities for non-literate youth and adults to have free access to meaningful quality education and training
- Inclusive and Special Education: Improved access for persons with a disability, the vulnerable and the talented
- Tertiary Education: Improved equitable world-class tertiary education
- Education Management and Finance: Improved planning and management efficiency in the delivery of education

The methodology for this performance review of the Education Sector, include the review and analysis of secondary information on Sector such as reports and other information on work done by experts, researchers as well as international and local organizations that have undertaken work on the Sector. The period of this review spans 2010-2020 and eventually highlights some essential aspects within the sector for the attention and consideration of political parties as they prepare or review their manifestos on the Education Sector. The issues listed below provided the guide for this analysis:

- Improving access to quality and rebuilding demand for public basic schools
- Improving access to sustainable and quality senior high school education
- Improving access to and quality of technical and vocational education and training
- Inclusive and Special Education
- Non-formal Education
- Improving access and quality of Tertiary Education
- Education Management and Finance

Improving access to quality and rebuilding demand for public basic schools

The Education Sector focused its efforts over the past decade on ensuring the achievement of full enrolment and completion at the basic education level. Besides being a requirement under the global commitments for Education development, as in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG, 2000-2015) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), 2018-2030, particularly SDG 4, the 1992 Constitution of Ghana highlights Education as an indicative aspiration for human development and a right for all children in Ghana.

The basic education level continued to benefit from interventions such as the Capitation grant, piloted base grants to selected basic schools, school feeding and free school uniforms. Junior

High Schools, were, however, not covered under the school feeding and free school uniforms. By taking advantage of grants from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the World Bank and other bilateral Development partners, additional facilities were provided in schools to give backing to the national campaign to send children to school.

These interventions, among others, contributed to increasing enrolment at the basic level over the period with strong input from private providers of education. Table 1 shows the enrolment numbers in both public and private sections of education over the period. The data reveals that enrolment grew steadily over the period, with public school enrolment increasing from 5,479,591 in 2010 to 5,807,016 in 2019 while that of private schools increased from 1,309,678 to 2,215,077 in 2010 and 2018. It is worth mentioning that over the period there was almost a doubling of enrolment in private schools. Public schools saw an increase in enrolment of only 327,067 over the same period. The surprising feature of the enrolment trends between the public and private schools is at the Junior High School (JHS), where the flow of learners in private schools from primary to JHS, takes a huge dip into the hundreds after high enrolments of over one million at the primary levels during the years 2014 to 2018. It is not clear what caused this, though anecdotally one could describe it as part of the strategy by private schools to glean their enrolments through various forms of careful selection leading to the retention of a small number of ‘well prepared’ candidates for the Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE). A careful study on this could be immensely helpful for the balanced analysis of performance between private and public schools.

There has been a growing interest in sending children to school over the period. The evidence of the high preference for schooling by parents in Ghana is the fact that seven out of ten children aged between 3-4 years are enrolled in Early Childhood Education (ECD) schools.¹ As the first point of entry into formal education, access to Early Childhood Education plays an important role in developing interest in schooling. The data in Table 1 reveals that public ECD schools have sustained their enrolment compared with private schools. The growing demand would require the opening of more ECD centers, particularly in areas where the numbers of out of school learners are high and where there are fewer ECD centers. It is important to note the efforts of the Ministry of Education acting with support from its partners to increase enrolment in ECD using a campaign on Right-Age enrolment.

¹Ghana Statistical Service, UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank, KOICA and USAID, *Ghana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), 2017-2018 Summary Report: Snapshots of Key findings:40*

Table 1: Basic Education- Enrolment Trends 2010-2018

Year	KG		Primary		JHS		Total	
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
2010	1,180,760	310,690	3,198,520	764,259	1,100,671	234,729	5,479,951	1,309,678
2011	1,199,967	343,347	3,164,830	897,195	1,122,621	130,786	5,487,418	1,371,328
2012	1,226,132	378,373	3,156,572	949,341	1,157,827	294,758	5,540,531	1,622,472
2013	1,241,093	404,457	3,160,894	956,258	1,178,344	295,577	5,580,331	1,656,292
2014	1,285,479	481,236	3,244,997	1,097,318	1,240,416	350,863	5,770,892	1,929,417
2015	1,287,354	483,233	3,256,390	1,101,786	1,254,370	353,012	5,798,114	1,938,031
2016	1,289,541	485,406	3,258,996	1,134,065	1,256,908	353,926	5,805,445	1,973,397
2017	1,250,144	527,877	3,175,338	1,225,856	1,288,425	357,339	5,713,907	2,111,072
2018	1,277,635	555,058	3,217,783	1,293,485	1,311,598	366,534	5,807,016	2,215,077
2019	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: MoE, EMIS Data on School Census, 2010-2018

Despite the consistent rise in enrolment at the basic level, these increases do not reflect full access and participation of all the population of children who should be in school. According to the Global Partnership for Education², there are still about 154,000 children who are out of school in Ghana. Other sources³ place the number of out-of-school children at the primary level around 35,432. The Ghana MICS Report 2017/18 indicates that attendance rates of the population of children who should be in school is 81 per cent at primary level and 40 per cent at JHS. It is anticipated that the forthcoming National Population Census would help resolve this disparity in the out of school children.

In Table 2, the information confirms the existence of out of school children. The Net Enrolment Rate (NER) shows the difference in actual enrolment of children of school-going age in school and those who are out. This indicator, as shown in Table 2, unfortunately, does not offer any reason for excitement about the numbers of children currently in school. Instead, it emphasizes the need for more work to get children into school.

With no clear indication of the cessation of spread of Covid-19, it is not clear what effect the current disruption of schooling will have on attendance when school re-opens. The Ghana Education Service in the interim could begin a community awareness campaign, besides other interventions, to assure parents of the safety of their children to let their wards return to school.

²GPE Data from UIS(<http://data.uis.unesco.org/>) extracted in 2020

³Trading Economics, trading.economic.com/ghana/children-out-of-school-wb-data. Html (World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized sources)

Table 2 also shows information on the gender parity index, which reflects the level of participation of boys and girls in schooling at the basic level. The data proves that the campaign to enroll girls in school is yielding results, albeit at a slow pace. Some recent school of thought posit that the campaign on gender participation in Education has overly focused on girls to the disregard of the challenges confronting boys in schools. The call is to have the Ministry of Education review the gender participation campaign to include issues affecting boys. This situation deserves a very balanced and dispassionate approach so that it would not undo the gains made.

A further analysis of the difference between the GPI and NER data confirms that there are still some significantly high number of girls who are left behind considering that the GPI measures only the actual number of girls in school but not the population.

Table 2: Basic Education: Net Enrolment Trends and Gender Parity Index 2010-2019

Year	KG		Primary		JHS	
	NER	GPI	NER	GPI	NER	GPI
2010	60.1	0.98	77.8	0.97	46.10	0.93
2011	99.4	0.98	81.7	0.97	46.1	0.94
2012	74.8	1.03	84.1	0.99	47.8	0.93
2013	90.8	1.01	89.3	0.99	49.2	0.95
2014	82.7	1.04	91.0	1.00	49.0	0.96
2015	79.5	1.01	91.5	1.01	50.3	0.97
2016	74.6	1.00	91.1	1.01	49.7	0.98
2017	74.6	1.00	89.3	1.00	48.5	1.00
2018	73.8	0.99	87.3	1.00	48.4	1.02
2019	-	-	-	-	-	-

Participation of private schools at the Basic Level

Popular perceptions on enrolment trends between public and private Sector argue that public schools are losing numbers to the private schools. Though the enrolment data do not confirm this, the data on the number of schools in the country over the period under review, may give credence to this. Analysis of the 2010 to 2018 (MOE-EMIS, 2010-2018) report indicates that nationally, the number of public schools increased from 36,822 in 2010 to 41,598 in 2018, an increase of only 4,776. Over the same period, private schools, which numbered 18,380 in 2010 increased to 36,327 in 2018. This is an increase of almost a hundred per cent of the existing private schools. The data further reveals a notable spread of private schools in areas where public schools are

inadequate, for example, in Ga South and Shai-Osudoku in the Greater Accra Region, private schools outnumber public schools in these districts. The number of schools in these two districts is 683 and 182 private schools as against 243 and 163 public schools, respectively. The growth of private schools has given rise to the phenomena that has become known as 'low-cost private schools',⁴ which is a description for private schools established to serve clients in poor communities. This development confirms Tooley's assertion that the trend departs from the 'accepted wisdom' that 'private schools serve the privileged' and the poor only deserve public schools (James Tooley).⁵

The absence of a robust study of private schools at the basic level in Ghana does not help to provide evidence to ascertain the perception that public schools are losing learners to private schools. Most of the available studies on private schools focus on the social and economic dimensions for the choice between public or private schools. Moreover, they are limited in their scope of study to enable their findings to be scaled up for national reference or description. A recent study by USAID⁶ in 17 Districts in Northern Ghana is an example of such a study. The study which analyzed MOE/EMIS data covering the five-year period from 2013/14 to 2017/18 observed that 'on average private schools grew by 36 per cent compared to a 13 per cent growth in public schools over the period' in the districts studied. The study also found and claimed that parents indicated preference for the low-cost private schools in the districts because of the quality of learning outcomes. This was demonstrated through a comparative assessment of learning conducted between the low-cost private schools and selected public schools in the 17 districts.

Private participation in the provision of education in Ghana is supported by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana (Article 25(2)). The participation of private sector in education has contributed significantly to Ghana's efforts at meeting its commitment to the children of Ghana and internationally agreed programmes for the development of Education. Yet children in private schools do not benefit from the many of the incentives that Government provides for children in public basic schools. Prior to 2017, Governments have assisted learners in private schools with teaching and learning materials and for those preparing to sit the final BECE by paying up to 80 per cent of their examination fees. Currently, there appears to be a competition between private and public schools resulting in the learners in private schools losing their entitlements as children under the 1992 Constitution.

The absence of a strong partnership between the Education Sector and private education providers presents a challenge that worsens the plight of parents who are compelled to send their children to private schools, due to the inadequate public schools in their community. Political parties are encouraged to examine this situation and consider reversing it. It is worthy of note that Governments have persistently echoed the fact that private participation drives growth and development and it is surprising that in the Education Sector private sector participation is being

⁴J. Tooley et. al. Private and Public Schooling in Ghana: A census and Comparative Survey in *International Review of Education*, Springer 2007.

⁵James Tooley, *Private Schools for the Poor*, an essay supported by a grant from the John M. Templeton Foundation

⁶USAID, *Final Report of Assessment of FiF/RING II Districts in Northern Ghana*, Accra 2019

resisted. Under an inclusive governance environment, this situation must be re-considered.

Improving quality of education in public schools

The Ministry of Education, however, needs to pay more attention to the challenge of quality in public basic schools if it desires to renew demand for public school. Besides providing more schools in areas where they are lacking or inadequate, existing ones need rehabilitation and additional resources to improve on the quality of teaching and learning. The national efforts to replace schools under trees is proof that seating and writing conditions in some schools, particularly in rural areas, are in a poor state. A related poor condition of facilities such as toilets, water urinals and electricity in schools also has a double effect of threatening the health and sanitation in schools and affecting quality teaching and learning. Table 3 below presents the EMIS reporting on the number of schools requiring major repairs and schools that have water and sanitation facilities.

Improving the quality of teaching and learning in public schools is key to strengthening demand for public schools. If Government fails to take actions to create the conditions that enhance public schools, private schools may become the only choice for even the poor in society. On the other hand, the reverse situation will be parents who cannot afford the cost of education will not send their children to school. Political party manifestos must help to make Government live up to its responsibility of providing education services that promote the public good.

Table 3: Facilities in Schools (2018/19)

Facilities	Public		Private	
	%	no.	%	no.
Classroom*	19	149,963	3	107,395
Toilet**	33	13,891	22	7,873
Water	39	16,170	25	8,941
Urinals	32	13,327	20	7,222
Electricity***	29	12,243	22	8,014

Source: MoE (EMIS School Census Report, 2019/19)

* Classrooms needing major repairs

**Schools with Toilets, water, and urinals

***Schools with Electricity

Improving access to sustainable and quality senior high school (SHS) education

Access to Senior High School rose for graduates completing Junior High School and qualifying for entrance into schools up to September 2017. Enrolment numbers in both public and private senior high schools, which stood at 880,770 in 2016 saw an increase of about 53,000 over the years 2010 to 2015. The introduction of the Free Senior High School policy and its apparent removal of the conditions and criteria for entry, such as the cut-off grade, increased the enrolment numbers, compared with the period prior to September 2017. The enrolment into senior high school in September 2017, saw an increase of 78,049 over the previous year's numbers, bringing the enrolment to 958,819. The 2018 school census put enrolment in senior high schools at 1,155,841 and the number of public Senior High Schools at 643, while private schools numbered 247⁷.

The Education Sector Performance Report indicates, however, that there is no gender parity at the Senior High School. Data from the last two years show the percentage increase in gender marginally rising from 47.6 per cent in 2017/18 to 48 per cent in 2018/2019. The report further suggests that more evidence is required to show the outcome of investments in promoting girl's education at this level⁸.

The Government's commitment to making Senior high school accessible and using the Free Senior High School policy as the vehicle to prosecute that flagship programme presents a mixed blessing in the delivery of quality education in Ghana. A study by the Ghana National Education Coalition Campaign (GNECC) on the implementation of the policy⁹ revealed several teething challenges. Some of these were overcrowding in the dormitories and classrooms, delay in the supply of essential teaching and learning materials, and pressure on existing hygiene and sanitation facilities in schools.

On the contrary, the Ministry of Education continues to express optimism about the potential of the policy and the benefits for the students¹⁰. According to the Hon. Minister of Education, the policy is built on the following expectations:

- Address inequality and ensure equal opportunities for all students through the removal of cost barriers
- Enable students who otherwise would have terminated at the JHS level to acquire functional and employable skills through the acquisition of secondary education
- Enhance the human capital base of the country by making Secondary Education the minimum academic qualification in Ghana
- Improve the quality of secondary education through reforms by ensuring systems improvement, accountability for performance and leadership
- Improve the competitiveness of Ghanaian Students to match the best in the World

⁷MoE, *EMIS School Census Report*, 2018

⁸Education Sector performance Report, 2019 (Draft)

⁹GNECC, *A qualitative assessment of the implementation of the Free Senior High School Policy*, 2018

¹⁰MoE, *Presentation on Implementation of Free SHS*, 2017

The use of the double-track system of enrolment that allows some students to be in school and the next group taking their place at specific periods of the academic year is generally considered a shift system of education, which has shown problems in its implementation at the basic education level in the country. The practice is affecting the full participation of all students in some school programmes, such as speech days and other important activities and events that serve the interest of students. With some students left out, it means these students would leave the senior high school with no experience of such occasions. Moreover, allegations are that student discipline is weakened by poor class attendance, a deliberate late arrival at school, and a general lack of interest on the part of some students.

The Free SHS policy is suffering from mixed views about its implementation, which does not bode well for its sustainability as a suitable policy for delivering senior high school education under its current form. One major issue of concern is the tacit exclusion of private schools in the selection and placement of students for the senior high school. This is creating tensions that hitherto did not exist. The posturing of the Ministry of Education suggests that private schools have no place in a Free Senior High School delivery mode if such schools will demand fees from prospective students. This approach casts doubt about the place of private senior high schools at the second cycle level since preventing them from admitting students implies the schools cannot operate. Amid these challenges, however, some prominent private schools are operating and raising the question whether there is a clear policy of exclusion for private schools.

The study by GNECC highlighted among others an overcrowding in most public senior high schools due to the Free SHS Policy. Hence the question this raises is why the Ministry of Education cannot allow private participation in Senior High School with specific support to the students attending the private schools in which they enroll? This would address the overcrowding challenge and still ensure that qualifying students have access to free education. The idea of introducing a subsidy for qualified students to SHS who cannot find space in public schools is also one way to replace the double track system according to a study done by the Ghana Priorities.¹¹

While the sustainability of the senior high is not in doubt, the implementation of the Free SHS policy reveals the challenges and gaps in the conceptualization of the Free SHS policy, which creates division among actors in the Sector. The Free SHS Policy is wrapped up in an undefined universal secondary education policy. The original logic for the policy emanates from misconception that SDG 4 advocates for a universal secondary education policy. Unfortunately, a careful study of the source of this confusion, shows a lack of clarity in the statement of the target set under SDG4.1.1. The original indicator for measuring that target stated the indicator to measure access and completion of early childhood to primary education and lower secondary. The recent review of the indicator varied it to measure completion in both lower and upper Secondary¹². The confusion is worsened by the intention to extend basic education to upper

¹¹Ghana Priorities (Festus Ebo Turkson, Priscilla Twumasi Baffour and Brad Wong) *Cost-benefit analysis of an intervention to accelerate the end of the Double Track system at the SHS level: Provision of Government subsidies to children to attend private schools*, Copenhagen Consensus Center, 2020

¹²UN, *Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals Indicators*, 2020 ([unstats.un.org/unsd/statacom/51st session/document/2020-2-SDG-IAEG-Rev-EE.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statacom/51st%20session/document/2020-2-SDG-IAEG-Rev-EE.pdf))

secondary, which confounds two ideas, basic education, and universal secondary education. It is important for Education Policymakers to examine the matter and clarify this in the interest of a proper definition of Senior high school education or second cycle education in Ghana.

Furthermore, the implementation of the free SHS policy has created an ambiguity regarding parental responsibility to their wards. While the free concept is highly emphasized, parents are required to procure textbooks for their wards for their respective Elective programmes. The Government according to the policy provides the Core Textbooks. Parents are very divided on this issue and there are many of them who insist it is part of the free policy and are not providing the materials for their wards. This has potential serious implications for learning and could influence the outcome of the forthcoming West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) 2020. Again, clarity is required to enable parents take on their roles and responsibilities for their wards, even amid a free SHS policy.

Quality Technical and Vocational education and training (TVET)

Technical vocational education and training (TVET) in Ghana is intended to provide technical skills through the development and shaping of individual skills for the total development of Ghana. This area of study and training is confronted by different forms of challenges, which are undermining the promotion of science and technology. The most critical of this situation is the apparent lack of consensus on where to place the responsibility for directing the delivery of TVET training.

The passing of the COTVET Act 2006 (Act 718) and the LI 2195 with support from all the major stakeholders of the TVET space was expected to break the ground for new directions and give purpose to how TVET programmes will be delivered. Unfortunately, this does not appear to be the case. The debate, nevertheless, continues with many great contributions proposed to address this situation. Even at the point of preparing this paper, a process is ongoing to pass a new Pre-tertiary Education Act to manage the formal Sector delivery, which includes bringing all TVET delivery modes under the Ministry of Education to be managed by a new TVET Service.

TVET in Ghana is delivered in three different forms of training, which are formal, non-formal and informal (Amedome and Yesueneagbe, 2013)¹³. These are delivered by a variety of institutions and leading crafts persons in different Sectors. The Education Sector leads in the formal training with the National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) providing some type of formalized training which combines a mix of all the three forms of training leading to immediate self-employment and paid employment for young persons. Other Sectors, including a large component of expert private crafts persons, are delivering non-formal training (apprenticeship) and informal training, which are providing quick skills development for employment for interested young persons with pre-existing skills and new learners.

¹³ Amedome, Sherry K and Yesueneagbe A.K. Fiagbe, *Challenges facing Technical and vocational Education in Ghana*, in *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research*, Vol.2, Issue 6, June 2013.

Although the Education Sector has assumed a de facto leadership in the process of bringing convergence into the diverse TVET space, its emphasis on formal training questions its ability to manage the full stream of TVET in Ghana. The establishment of COTVET under the Ministry of Education, while convenient in creating the visibility that TVET needs in the country, has taken away some responsibility and needed resources from Sectors like the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, the Ministry of Agriculture as well as faith-based organizations, where some major skills development and training programmes are provided.

The major impediment here is the distribution of allocated resources for TVET training. By accepting the COTVET arrangement, this meant the Ministry of Finance allocating all the financial resources to the Ministry of Education. By practice or convention, sectors in the governance system do not share their appropriated resources with other sectors even regardless of their delivery related programs. Hence the Ministry of Education could not take from their resources to manage those in the other Sectors which provide TVET training unless the activity is a collaboration where the Ministry of Education is the lead agency. This reality about the financial arrangement has created cracks within the COTVET fraternity as those sectors outside the Ministry of Education began to feel neglected. This is also posing challenges for the GES as the Technical Institutions under the management of the GES also look up to COTVET for resources that the Education Service sometimes cannot provide. By so doing these institutions are compelled to take directives from the Council without recourse to the Director-General of the GES.

It is imperative at this stage of the country's determination to transition into the ranks of industrialized nations to strengthen the TVET system. It is therefore important to take a second look at the COTVET system so that it can be repositioned to give meaning to national commitment to support for all forms of TVET training in the country. Several options come up. The first is the current contention whether the Education Sector can lead in the delivery of all the forms of TVET. Second, is to create a new arrangement that allows the different Sectors to operate within their respective training modes but be coordinated by a body with the capacity to manage the interconnectedness in all the delivery modes needed to keep TVET visible and productive. Such a body, cannot be under the Ministry of Education, considering the evidence of the disagreements as persisting within the COTVET arrangement.

The Ministry of Education, however, is sponsoring two separate Bills in Parliament for the establishment of a TVET Service to manage pre-tertiary TVET and the other to replace COTVET. Unfortunately, when these Bills are passed these bodies would be under the Ministry of Education which would not resolve the issues dividing the TVET front.

Given the foregoing, the delivery of quality TVET in Ghana is hampered by the existence of many uncoordinated actors in TVET work stream, the low interest by private Sector to show real commitment in supporting training and the lack of support to non-formal training centers, where many young persons eventually end when the going gets tough.

A lot of effort is required to bring real meaning and impact to ensure the delivery of TVET in Ghana. The Education Sector, as the de facto leader, needs support to build on its capacity to deliver formal TVET training. At present, the formal TVET under the Ministry of Education has demonstrated some effort as seen in the establishment of ten Technical Universities at the tertiary level training. At the second cycle education level there are forty-seven technical institutions and several secondary technical institutions at the pre-tertiary level. These bold efforts, nevertheless, are not sufficient indications for the Sector to bring under its mandate other forms of TVET delivery, considering that the Ministry of Education could not implement the National Apprenticeship Program which was a non-formal mode of TVET when it was introduced as part of the 2007 Education Reform.

Political parties must dispassionately examine the TVET delivery and ensure that Ghana makes the most out of the many talents and skills of our young persons. The delivery of quality TVET requires an efficient management system with a clear reporting line that efficiently coordinates the three delivery modes and ensures that young persons who desire functional skills can access training and be properly integrated in the world of work.

The lack of clarity in the definition of secondary education must be resolved. The use of secondary education and its quick interpretation to mean grammar type education with TVET institutions considered differently may have to be revisited. What is needed is a redefinition that places secondary education under second cycle education which includes TVET. This was the idea proposed in the White Paper of Government following the Anamoah-Mensah Committee Report on Education Reform. A clear evidence of this absence of a clear definition is the call for in-coming Presidential Candidates to announce a separate Free TVET policy, which in fact should be covered under the Free SHS policy. Should this happen it would further deepen the divide and make it difficult for TVET to be considered a program of choice and importance by learners who complete basic education and have to progress to second cycle institutions for further training.

Non-Formal Education

The recognition of Non-formal Education as a complementary approach to improving opportunities for non-literate young persons to access quality education and training is a positive response to addressing inequality and inequity in access to Education and Training. The Non-Formal Education Division under the Ministry of Education has not received adequate funding support for its program for many years. The increasing numbers of out of school children led to the implementation of a pilot Complementary Basic Education program. This is the group of assorted unskilled human capacity that the country could develop to support the aspiration to industrialize.

Recently Parliament is considering a Bill to establish a Complementary Education Agency, which will replace the Non-formal Education Division (NFED). While this is a laudable idea, the Agency may face the same challenges that the NFED was confronted with. The best part of this new arrangement is the recognition and inclusion of out-of-school children, who hitherto only

received assistance from non-governmental agencies, the most reputable of these being the School for Life. By broadening the scope of work, it will enable the GES to focus on its mandate to promote formal education and support the integration of children who unfortunately are left out but who wish to join the formal stream.

Again, political parties would have to carefully consider how the Agency can be supported to handle its divergent functions towards ensuring that every Ghanaian becomes functional in an inclusive Government that recognizes the needs and skills of each citizen. As is indicated in the Global Education Monitoring Report 2020, all means all¹⁴.

Inclusive and Special Education

According to the Education Strategic Plan 2018-2030, which references the Population and Housing Census 2010 Report, there are 130,00 children in the population age group 4-17 with a variety of disabilities nationally. This data highlights the potential challenges confronting children with disabilities who are enrolled in school under the current state of education provision. Some of these include unsuitable infrastructure, poor teaching and learning materials and stigma. Ghana as a member of UNESCO committed to the adoption of the Inclusive Education and formulated an Inclusive Education Policy in 2013 to guide and define the actions required to achieve inclusivity and equity. Besides, the policy fulfilled the covenant of equity under the SDG 4 in ensuring both access and opportunities for life-long learning for marginalized children (orphans and children forced to live on the street) and those with all forms of disability.

By that, the Education Sector is committed to ensuring that every child who deserves to enjoy his or her entitlement of Education as a right must do so. It also recognizes that special facilities are needed to provide further attention to children with severe disability who cannot cope with integrating with so-called normal children.

The Global Education Monitoring Report, 2020 captioned Inclusion and Education: All means All, draws attention to the persistence of inequality in the distribution of resources and attitudes like stigma, stereotyping and discrimination. This situation is worse where children with special education needs are concerned. In the Ghana context, despite the passing of the Inclusive Education Policy, some systems in the Sector do not support the implementation of the policy. There are still classrooms that are inaccessible to children with disability, Teachers are not well trained and oriented to what it takes to teach in an inclusive environment, and teaching and learning materials are not enough to make the interaction exciting and beneficial. An inclusive education, above all, demands that every child is counted, seen, and permitted to engage in the teaching and learning process.

The Education Sector lacks data to direct its actions at implementing the inclusive education policy. The Annual Education census of school does not include information on Inclusive

¹⁴Unesco: *Global Education Monitoring Report, 2020 Inclusion and Education: All means All*

education and special schools. To guarantee that inclusive education happens, the Education Sector needs to deepen its efforts by gathering accurate and current data to provide inclusive and equitable education. Political parties must use this opportunity to review and develop a new implementation plan for the Sector.

Although there are special schools across the country these are in states that are not conducive to support the objectives and aspirations of the inclusive education policy. The Ministry of Education must demonstrate real commitment if it must show evidence that it is true to its inclusive education policy. Despite the support provided by development partners, such as UNICEF and UNESCO and other benevolent groups, political party manifestos must highlight inclusion so that Government will pay attention to it. What is required is an indication of prioritizing the policy so that children with special education needs can be taken care of and their long-term pursuit of education guaranteed.

Improving Tertiary and Higher Education

Over the past decade, there has been a significant increase in the number of institutions at the Tertiary and Higher Education level. The Tertiary Education Statistics Report, 2015/2016 puts the number of institutions at 164 with a student population at 432,257. The institutions are classified Public Universities and Specialized Professional Institutions, Agric. Colleges, Technical Universities, Private Universities, colleges of Education and Nurses Training Colleges. There is a very flexible offering in public Universities and specialized institutions with programmes taking place under distance and sandwich programmes. The targeted enrolment of students is expected to represent a ratio of students under Arts and Science programmes with a ratio of 40: 60, respectively. Unfortunately, the ratio currently stands as 60:40 for the Arts and Science, respectively. Further work is needed to reverse this situation to reflect the expectations that will take the country to its goal of becoming an industrial country. The inclusion of the 46 Colleges of Education into the tertiary education with affiliations to identified universities, is also expected to transform the quality of teacher training that will impact on learning outcomes at the pre-tertiary education level.

The period under review has not been characterized by disruptions as was the case in previous years. This period of quietness and non-disruption of the academic work has helped to sustain steady progress at this level of education. The emerging potential conflict issue is the plan to pass a Public Universities Bill, which according to opponents of the Bill comes with intentions that are not too clear to actors at this level. The main complaint is that the Bill when passed into Law will threaten academic freedom and shift the poles of authority in the Universities. It is important that political parties examine the Bill and re-negotiate the terms in the interest of peace at the tertiary level.

The tertiary education level also suffers the same challenge of inadequate resources which is affecting access to public institutions. With the increasing demand for tertiary and higher education, political parties would have to identify the appropriate interventions that will enable public universities to take on the increasing number of students desiring to enter Universities.

This challenge is related to the Government's vision for public universities. Our public Universities and by extension all tertiary level institutions should become centers of excellence within their areas of specialization. Political parties could actualize the national aspiration to admit 60 per cent of students into STEM programme and 40 per cent into the Humanities and Arts. Public Universities must be transformed to develop synergistic courses and programmes that would enable our Universities to be centers of excellence in the teaching and learning of Science Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM). This will require more investment into research and competency-based teaching and learning. Tertiary level institutions must be guided to become more independent and autonomous in delivering their services. as part of the long-term support to creating opportunities for life-long learning.

The involvement of private providers at this level has helped to increase access to tertiary education for many young persons who hitherto may have missed the opportunity due to the high numbers of applicants wishing to enter the few public universities. The major handicap here is the absence of strong partnerships between the private and public system. The situation is like what is happening at the pre-tertiary level. This will have to be examined if government would succeed in promoting inclusivity in the delivery of education that would help develop quality human resource for the nations development agenda. Political parties must identify the best ways to support students without fearing that they are investing in private education. A good partnership at this level will be beneficial to the Education Sector.

Management and Finance

Under the ESP 2018-2030, the goal for Management and Finance of the Education Sector seeks to improve planning and management for efficient delivery of education. Over the past decade, Education Sector Management has experienced some shocks due to a lack of clarity in the lines of responsibility between the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service. The former is responsible for policy and the latter for implementing national policies at the pre-tertiary level. Over the last four years, the Ministry of Education has taken over some of the responsibilities of the GES. For example, in the management of senior high schools by denying Heads of schools the chance to inform the selection of candidates into senior high schools and take responsibility for the management of schools.

At the Headquarters, the management of the Ghana Education Service has been taken over by the appointment of management practitioners who do not have any background in education. This is undermining the prospects for Education personnel to rise to such positions as the case has been. In the past, the fact that nobody can be appointed to the senior ranks in the Civil Service, without passing through its administrative ranks seems to be forgotten. As it stands the coordination needed between and among the different Services to manage an effective Civil Service to support the governance processes is increasingly being re-configured to serve the interest of ruling political parties.

Previous Governments have made attempts at reforming the Public Services and another opportunity has arisen to do so if we are determined to build strong institutions. Building a non-

partisan public services ensures that decisions built by consensus which are implemented by public officers can be sustained and improved without any political party feeling aggrieved. This may account for the difficulty in the implementation of the Education Decentralization, which has implications for a strong collaboration and co-ordination between the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Ghana Education Service, and the Local Government Service. Political Parties need to dispassionately revisit Education Decentralization and ensure that its outcome would not be tainted with political interests that cannot stand the test of time. It is worth mentioning that the management and operational structure of the Ghana Education Service under its current Act, Ghana Education Service Act, 1995 (Act 506) is already decentralized in the performance of its responsibilities.

The implications of the current attempt to decentralize education has the potential of fragmenting the teaching profession and subsequently affect the quality of education delivery and the future of teaching as a profession. This an issue that must be properly analyzed. Furthermore, it is in the best interest of teachers not to place the issues pertaining to professionalism in the faculty of the certificate awarding institutions. If Teaching should be a profession its process and professional progression must be managed by the professional groups. As it is, the role of the National Teaching Council in conducting the licensure examination must be reviewed and the Teacher Unions made to identify one organisation to handle Teacher Professional matters.

The Financing of Education still suffers from its annual delay and inadequate resourcing. The allocation of education appropriated funds reveals that the Government discretionary sources contribute 70 per cent of the finances. The remaining 30 per cent is shared by Donors (2.2%), Internally Generated funds (IGF), taking 20.7 per cent, GET Fund (6.8%) and District Assembly Common Funds (DACF) providing 0.4 per cent.

The expenditure allocation on items reveal that Compensation and allowances take 98.1 per cent, Goods and Services, 1.3 per cent and Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) is 0.6 per cent. This structure of expenditure means that there is little left after paying teachers for other important things that will ensure quality education. Political parties must reflect on this expenditure arrangement and find new arrangements that will free resources for goods and services and capital expenditure since these areas determine the realization of quality and job satisfaction for teachers.

According to the Education Sector Performance report, 2019, trends in Sector Expenditure show a gradual reduction in Sector spending since 2015. Education expenditure as a percentage of GDP has been falling since 2015 from 6 per cent to 4.8 per cent in 2018. This situation means that the Government is spending below the minimum threshold set by UNESCO, which is 6 per cent. If efforts are not made to bring the level back to the minimum threshold or even increase it to about 10 per cent, it will be difficult to achieve the goals set under the ESP 2018-2030. In the same manner, Education Sector expenditure as a percentage of the Government of Ghana expenditure also has staggered over the period 2015 to 2018. The expenditures show that in 2015 it was 22.2 per cent, falling to 17.8 per cent in 2016, rising to 20.3 in 2017 and rising marginally to 22 per cent in 2018. These trends do not augur well for a Sector that has ambitious aspirations.

Political parties must consider this situation and improve it if we are determined to achieve our goals.

Challenges of COVID-19 on Education

The COVID-19- pandemic on the Education Sector has seriously impacted the Education Sector, with the closure of all school activities. It has also revealed the consequences of some of the inaction displayed in adopting contemporary education practices that would benefit teaching and learning. The key issues here include, how to position the Education Sector within the new set of national priorities and how to deliver education within the strict contexts of the pandemic's prevention requirements.

At present, the main concern is whether and how schools should be re-opened safely and the consensus to do this incrementally. Beginning with the final years provides an opportunity to test the situation in view of the increasing rate of infection in the country. The new arrangements already highlight the future challenges regarding how to reorganize large classes and the management of space in the schools. Concerning teaching and learning interaction new approaches ought to be introduced to help manage the numbers and ensure that all learners are engaged in the process. The proposals include the introduction and use of technology in teaching and learning. There are serious implications of this, and some school of thought recommends a re-consideration of the one laptop per child arrangement together with the effective management of the internet connectivity across the country.

The Ministry of Education must explore other alternatives to create a platform for learning beyond televising lessons on TV. There should never be a one size fits all approach at this time when a variety of options are available to investigate and test. This is an area where political parties can outdo each other in the search for options. Yet the most important issue here is that there is a clear plan of action that political parties commit to take outlined in their manifestos.

Equity is paramount here as the possibility of some learners being excluded is high. This would affect the assessment of learning if not implemented properly and successfully.

Partnerships and networking are at the center of the response to the impact of COVID-19 on the Education Sector. All the key partners in the Sector, parents, teacher unions, other Public Service Agencies(e.g. gender and social protection, health), development partners and philanthropic groups, must be mobilized to share ideas in identifying and proposing measures to deliver Education during Covid-19.

Another issue that Covid-19 has raised has to do with the order of Government's priorities. The Covid-19 pandemic being a health concern, would without doubt focus attention on health. All the same, there will be shifts in the order of priority for Government. The danger here is the risk of pushing education to the back burner as has been in periods of austerity. As indicated in the foregoing, this could be the period when education is within the top three priorities of Government. This is because, there are new demands to ensure the sustenance of education and

avoiding the potential of schools becoming the new epicenters for the spread of the virus. Political parties ability to manage the present Covid-19 situation would mean the identification of all the critical needs for the Education Sector. Government financial allocations should target the provision of key facilities in schools, particularly at the pre-tertiary level, specifically at early childhood and primary. Among the key needs are water and sanitation and hygiene for which additional facilities are needed to enable easy access and use.

At the Tertiary level almost all the institutions in both private and public systems have initiated their Learning Management Systems to continue offering academic activities as part of completing the academic year. Political parties should explore ways by which Universities will be supported to broaden their modes of academic delivery to respond to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 to the face to face teaching and learning mode.

The Ministry of Education has drafted an Education in Emergency Covid-19 plan. While the plan is not exhaustive enough in addressing and identifying response, it provides some clues to what the Ministry can do. Political parties must avail themselves of the document and fill in the gaps where they exist. There are two important probable responses in the prevention efforts, which are the School response and the Community response. Each of these would require specific actions to make them happen. Schools and Education Offices coordinated by Circuit Supervisors can help in putting together the response on the school side while the District Assemblies through their respect District level structures also develop a response that is generated with the involvement of communities. This is the best way to secure synergy and collaboration to protect the children as they move to and from their homes to school.

The long-term arrangements for schools must be agreed as soon as possible. Political parties must give assurance to the electorate concerning their ability to manage the possibly ever-present COVID-19 by indicating in their manifestos the plans for the management of the pandemic during its presence. This must include the specific roles of citizens in achieving them.

Persistent and Structural challenges

The Education Sector has a variety of persistent and structural challenges that hinders the efficiency of service delivery and expected outcomes. These have created an impression about the Sector being perceived as inefficient and the education system considered below standard. The challenges comprise the following:

1. **Poor infrastructure and teaching and learning materials:** There is a persistent shortage of infrastructure and teaching and learning materials in the school system. This causes disruptions in the activities of the school which contribute to poor pupil learning achievement and attainment. The adoption of the shift and tracking systems is a direct consequence of this challenge which must be tackled with the intention to end its threat to schooling. Political parties must indicate how they intend to achieve this to create confidence in particularly public schools and sustain access to schooling at all levels.
2. **Teacher supply and quality:** Another persistent challenge affecting education

performance is the approach to teacher placement and support. Teachers are at the centre of the delivery of education and the education service has grappled with varying incidences of inadequate supply of teachers leading to the recruitment of non-college trained teachers who tend to be mostly inefficient. At certain points, the appointment of non-college trained teachers, also known as ‘pupil teachers’, assumed a political dimension where political parties considered it a means of providing jobs for their ‘foot soldiers’. With the new trend in teacher professionalism, there is no room for those types of teachers who lack every kind of skill needed to teach. Again, political parties must indicate their readiness to end the recruitment of pupil teachers and promote the effective training of teachers who would be assigned to schools where teachers are lacking. This issue is very much linked to how teachers are supported to perform. For example, availability of teacher accommodation, teacher and learning materials in schools and other teacher motivation arrangements to support teachers in mostly hard to reach and rural areas. Above all there should be new and improved ways for placing teachers without preferential treatment.

3. **Community and Parental support:** This third persistent challenge applies to parental support to their wards and its effects on performance in school. The refusal or failure of some parents to participate in school programmes or even heed calls to discuss the behavior of their wards affect the performance of learners and puts additional pressure on teachers. The failure of communities to demonstrate an interest in the school creates a gap between the school and the community that hinders effective teaching and learning. Annually, parents and community members must be encouraged to support the schools as an opportunity to create interest in schooling. Poor performing schools are often an indication of the lack of support for schools by the community members who every so often also take advantage of school facilities sometimes leading to misuse. Political parties must include actions to facilitate improved community response and parental responsibility. The good performance in private schools can be attributed to the attitude of parents and their readiness to support the schools, where and if necessary.
4. **Management of Education:** The management of the Education system is a significant structural challenge which persistently impedes the effective delivery of service. This is evident in the lack of understanding of the relationship and responsibilities between the Ministry of Education and other public service agencies. The Ministry of Education touts with confidence its policy formulation role but persistently wants to assume the implementation roles of the agencies established to deliver the policies. The regular accusation of ineffectiveness leveled by the Ministry of Education on the agencies they supervise often tends to be a product of political pressure being exerted to influence the work of the agencies. Political parties must apprise themselves of the principles underlining the relationship between the Civil Service and the other public service agencies and make propositions in their manifesto to avoid interference in the work of the agencies and departments in the Public Service. In the end, these implementation roles are assigned to Civil Service personnel, political party functionaries or individuals affiliated to the Ministries. If the Public Service can perform efficiently, political parties

must indicate their readiness to use the supervisory function of the Civil Service to get the results they need as a means to building the strong institutions needed for the national development agenda. There are too many duplicated functions between the Ministry and the Ghana Education Service, and the political parties must address this.

5. **Funding Education in Ghana:** Though Ghana is reckoned as one of the countries in Africa committed to delivering quality education, the funding situation is always challenged by the delay and sometimes lack of finances. Sometimes there is a desire to provide funding, but this commitment is sometimes futile. For example, the GES piloted a base grant in addition to the Capitation grant to support schools. Though the pilot proved quite successful, this has not been formally implemented. Efforts should be made to benchmark allocations to the different items of expenditure under the Education budget. This will ensure that adequate resources are allocated to execute activities under those items. The political parties must carefully examine the Education finance to indicate commitment to the Sector.

These persistent challenges make it difficult to implement performance agreement arrangements since it becomes difficult to demand accountability from teachers when the inputs for delivering their results are held back. The opportunity avails to transform the education Sector once these challenges are confronted dispassionately and constructive well-considered responses are introduced to motivate teachers and build an education system that is fit for purpose and the future.

RECOMMENDATION

The following are some recommendations for policymakers in the Sector to consider. The recommendations are organised under the thematic areas of the sector; access, quality, management and finance.

1. **Access:**

- At the basic education level, every community must have a basic school comprising Kindergarten to Junior High School which is accessible by all children.
- Inclusive Schools must have the infrastructure and teaching-learning materials that will enable the learners with challenges to confidently function in the school
- All schools must have teachers accommodation attached to the school
- Schools must be protected with walls and the employment of at least two security personnel

2. **Quality:**

- Every school must be connected to a power source and internet connectivity
- A basic set of learning materials should be determined and made available to every school.
- Teachers must be deployed using the pupil-teacher ratio. This will ensure value for money and where it must be varied there must be an agreement with the Ministry of Finance
- Given the Free Compulsory Basic Education, schools should be provided with an initial per capita allocation of learning materials. Additional requirement must be covered using the Capitation grant allocated to the school
- There should be clarity in the definition of second cycle education. This will help make a proper distinction between senior High school Grammar and Senior High School Technical Vocational
- The Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service should begin to consider a new classroom architecture for the future. The new design must consider developments such as the impact of the COVID-19 19 pandemic, 21st Century teaching methodologies as well as the introduction of technology in Education.

3. **Management:**

- School Management must be assigned to senior professionals who have service experience and demonstrate the needed skills and competencies for management.
- There should be a return to the management of schools by Headmasters at the Senior High Schools and Technical Institutes, not a proxy headship where Heads of Schools

must resort to the Ministry of Education to take simple discretionary actions.

- The Ghana Education Service structure must be properly restructured for efficiency. This will require a proper job description and clarity of roles. The Ministry of Education cannot take up the roles of the Service and still have officers in place, for example, the creation of a Free Senior High School Secretariat alongside a Secondary Education Division in the GES.
- There should be proper discussion around Education decentralization with the Ministry of Local Government and the Local Government Service. The removal of the sections concerning decentralization in the Pre-tertiary Education Bill was not done properly as it did not remove all the sections on decentralization and neither did it set out the future structure of pre-tertiary level education especially concerning the GES and even the TVET Service.
- The functions of the National Inspectorate Board (NIB) should be properly defined concerning the registration of private schools. The pre-tertiary Education Bill assigns that to the Assemblies and then the Regulatory Authorities Bill also assigns it to NIB. This confusion must be addressed in favor of the Assemblies since registration of private schools is not an inspection function, rather an administrative responsibility that is in the remit of the Ghana Education Service. The NIB is not a decentralized body and so cannot perform such a function in a decentralized system, which is inherent in the structure of the GES.
- The plan to set up a Service for the management of Technical Vocational Education is not cost-effective. It does not show a strategic use of scarce resources, even at a time when Ghana Education Service is being restructured. The example of the Revenue mobilization Agencies is a good example to follow to reduce the duplication of roles.

4. Finance

- Set performance targets for allocated funds to the Education Sector, that is the percentage of resources released and spent.
- Ensure effective value for money assessment for projects and development in the Education Service. There should be an effective management of the compensation allocation to free resources for critical projects needed to improve Sector Performance and learning achievement. A setting aside of 20 per cent for non-salary and released timeously would significantly help the Sector.
- Determine the compensation and allowance allocation of the Education budget around the established teacher recruitment norm, which is also the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR)

For **COVID-19** and the Education Sector, the recommendations to consider are the following:

- Schools should re-open and made to comply with clear guidelines that will direct the 'new normal' in schools
- Schools should be provided with additional sanitation and hygiene facilities where they do not exist. For short term port-a-loos, which is a type of movable toilet are provided together with veronica buckets and sanitizers.

- Information vans should announce the arrangements put in place for schools for a week before schools are opened
- All boarding houses must be sanitized before students are admitted into them
- Explore opportunities to test all Teachers to minimize the potential of spread in schools. Learners should also be tested through arrangements within the communities to reduce spread under a programme of aggressive testing.

CONCLUSION

The Education Sector is at a crossroads. The next decade is the period for reporting on the SDG and demands that the Sector does a lot of introspection and changes that will strengthen the achievements of results and give the Sector a new image, which must reflect on educational attainments across all levels of the system. . While living with COVID-19 and the adoption of 'new normal' lifestyles, the safety of the school environment must be assured as the needed facilities and resources are provided to empower learners and teachers in contributing to the building of a resilient society. Political parties are critical in the future development and the opportunity offered by insights into the Education Sector must lead to a creative and innovative response to the needs of a sector that forms the human resources of a country hungry for a breakthrough in a very challenging and competitive global space.

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