



Girl with sign "To go to School", Ghana. Photot: Kasper Jerichow.

GHANA CASE STUDY

EDUCATION FOR ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Ghana is said to be an oasis of peace and stability and a beacon of democracy in the West African sub-region. However, inequality is a widespread phenomenon and a still growing issue within the country. This inequality is highly affected by the fact that an estimated 800,000 school-aged children (now young people) were out of school between 2004-2007. The majority of these children did not have access to education because there simply were no schools in their communities. The need to intervene and support Out-of-School-Children (OOSC) to use their rights to and in education, and to thereby bridge the inequality gap was essential. Oxfam worked closely together with civil society partners and state agencies, the Education for Change (EfC) programme piloted and advocated for the scale up of the "nine-month mother-tongue literacy" and "Wing school" models under the CBE Policy in Ghana.

1 CONTEXT

Ghana is said to be an oasis of peace and stability and a beacon of democracy in the West African sub-region. The country has held six successful multi-party general elections and also witnessed peaceful hand over of power from one party to another, on two occasions. Economic growth since the year 2000, has been positive, though fluctuating. The annual GDP peaked at 14% in 2013 but has reduced to an average of about 4% in recent years.

In spite of the relative stability and positive economic growth rates, inequality is widespread and growing. Viewed from the education sector, an estimated of 800,000 school-aged children were out of school between 2004 and 2007. The majority of these children could not access education because there were no schools in or near their communities. English used as a medium of instruction hindered learning and either caused drop out or refusal to enrol.

2 EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS

The need to intervene and support Out-Of-School Children (OOSC) to assert their rights to and in education, and to bridge the inequality gap was essential. Working together with other civil society partners and state agencies, the Education for Change (EfC) Programme piloted two approaches aimed at addressing the peculiar factors that underlined the exclusion from school of the majority of the Out of School Children (OOSC).

In 2004, the “nine-month mother-tongue literacy” model developed by School for Life (SfL) was adopted and implemented in deprived communities of the Bole and Sawla-Tuna-Kalba districts of the Northern region. This provided opportunity for OOSC aged 8 – 14 to acquire literacy skills and pursue further education in the public school system. The Wing School model which targets children at their right ages of entering primary school (i.e. age 6) and provides them with the first three years of primary education, also in the mother-tongue, was the second intervention piloted under the Alliance for Change in Education (ACE) project in the Gushegu and Karaga districts. Implementation of the two models was done by Oxfam IBIS in partnership with local civil society organisations and the Ghana Education Service (GES). This strategy facilitated the development of shared thematic competencies and a common understanding of evidence on the extent to which the two models were effective in sending OOSC into schools.

After about seven years of piloting the models, over eight thousand graduates of the nine-month literacy programme and the Wing Schools entered formal school. Comparatively, they performed better than their colleagues who started their education in the formal school.

These results conformed to the findings of an impact assessment of SfL's intervention, which saw over 20,000 OOSC enrol into school with equally high levels of performance in class and significant achievements in education. On the average, 45% of the beneficiaries who continued their education in the formal school were girls.

The achievement of girls' enrolment and transition into formal school was made possible through a number of strategies. Gender analysis was central in all community animation and mobilization activities. The establishment of literacy classes was demand driven, with a major requirement of gender parity at the time of enrolment. Facilitator recruitment specifically favoured young women to serve as role models. And the representation of women in school management committees was higher – 3 women and 2 men.

Spurred by the impressive results and the fact that the two models had proven to be workable in addressing the OOSC phenomenon in Ghana, Oxfam IBIS and SfL facilitated the formation of the Complementary Basic Education (CBE) Alliance. After the formation of the CBE Alliance, individual member organisations (including the implementing CSO partners of Oxfam IBIS) continued with local level influencing of local government authorities to adopt and scale-up the models. Their efforts yielded significant results. GES in the Bole and Sawla-Tuna-Kalba districts bore some of the costs (including provision of learning materials and supervision of classes) of the nine month literacy programme. The Karaga and Gushegu District Assemblies adopted the wing schools, turning some of them into fully fledged primary schools and thereby guaranteeing continued access to school for children from the catchment communities.

The CBE Alliance, working with the Northern Network for education Development (NNED) and the Ghana national Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC) mounted national advocacy for the passage of a CBE policy to provide a framework and state funding for a nationwide implementation of the two models.

Whereas the advocacy effort resulted in the drafting and passage of CBE policy by the Ministry of Education, DFID and USAID provided initial funding of GBP 18 million for the first five years of a nationwide implementation of the policy under the Ghana CBE Programme, which started in 2013. The programme which has so far supported scale of the nine-month literacy programme has benefitted over 120,000 OOSC with over 95% of them transitioning into formal school. It is expected that by the end of the fifth year of the Ghana CBE programme, over 200,000 OOSC will acquire literacy skills and transition into formal schools to continue their basic education.

3 LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Main lessons learned:

- ✓ The provision of mother-tongue education is key to keep children in school.
- ✓ Gender analysis was central in all community animation and mobilization activities. The establishment of literacy classes was demand driven, with a major requirement of gender parity at the time of enrolment.
- ✓ Engaging civil society partners and local state agencies is key for them to be part of the process going forward.
- ✓ The creation of alliances to continue with local level influencing of local government authorities to adopt and scale-up the models is essential.

Whereas Oxfam IBIS and its partners in the CBE Alliance celebrate the passage of the policy and the initial funding of its implementation, it has continued its effort at the challenge of securing earmarked state funding for the implementation of the policy. Alongside, the CBE Alliance is continuing advocacy for government and donors to support the three-year wing school model.

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This case study was written by Zakaria Sulemana, Oxfam IBIS and edited by Sandra Bødker Bejarano, Oxfam IBIS. It is part of a series of papers and reports written to inform public debate on education and inequality policy and development issues. This publication is copyright but the text may be used free of charge for the purposes of advocacy, campaigning, education, and research, provided that the source is acknowledged in full. The copyright holder requests that all such use be registered with them for impact assessment purposes. For copying in any other circumstances, or for re-use in other publications, or for translation or adaptation, permission must be secured and a fee may be charged. E-mail policyandpractice@oxfam.org.uk.

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