

The Role of Local Non-Governmental Organisations in Basic Education in the Nadowli District of Ghana

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Abstract

Child education is fundamental in sustaining democracies, improving health, increasing per capita income, and conserving environmental resources of nations. Hence education is not viewed as an end in itself but a productive investment. This justifies the investment of both public and private (NGOs) investment in the sector. This paper assesses the contribution of local Non-Government Organisations (NGO) in promoting basic education in the Nadowli District of the Upper West Region, Ghana. The Sustainable Integrated Development Services Centre (SIDSEC), a local NGO operating in the District is used as a case study. Data collection tools include focus group discussion, semi-structured questionnaire, field observation and review of secondary data. This study revealed that SIDSEC has contributed in increasing enrolment and retention as well as performance through its education programmes. Communities (through Parents Teacher Association, School Management Committees and Circle of Women Educators) are at the centre of SIDSEC operations.

Key Words: Local NGOs, Basic Education, SIDSEC, Enrolment, Ghana

1. Introduction

Children, the future leaders of Ghana and the continent at large, are rightly at the center of the development process of many institutions. Basic education has always been an important concern for society and the government. This is because universal literacy and the success of secondary and post-secondary education depend on how extensive and efficient the basic education system of a country is. As a result, basic education is viewed as a service that must be provided to the populace, irrespective of affordability. It is generally considered to be the responsibility of the state to deliver primary education. The 1992 Constitution gives impetus to the provision of education as a basic right for all Ghanaians. Article 38 Sub-Section 2 of the constitution states: “The Government shall within two years after parliament first meets after coming into force of this constitution draw up a programme for the implementation within the following ten years for the provision of a free, compulsory universal basic education”.

There is a tendency towards the generalizing of the importance of basic education in the development arena. This generalization is seen in an excerpt from James Wolfensohn taken from Angela (2000 p. 8). He said ‘that all agree that the single most important key to development and to poverty alleviation is education’. The issue is whether all actually agree to his assertion given the deficiencies in the education sector. The provision of basic education, like most other services delivered by the public sector, suffers from severe deficiencies in its coverage, effectiveness and quality (Lahore University of Management Sciences, 2005). Since the mid 19th Century, Ghana’s education and training system has been repeatedly reformed in various attempts to solve the problem of illiteracy, unemployment / under-employment. Commissions after commissions have recommended that the education and training system should be more orientated towards work. But, the expected outcomes of these programmes – poverty reduction and employment / self-employment creation – have largely not materialized.

Poverty in Ghana is largely a rural phenomenon, with rural poverty running three times as high as urban poverty. Poverty rates are increasing in deprived areas of the country especially in areas where there are extreme poverty. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2007), the contribution of rural savannah to total poverty in Ghana has consistently been increasing. From 33% in 1991/1992, the contribution of Rural Savannah to total poverty increased to 37% in 1998/1999 and has increased further to about 50% in 2005/2006. Poverty has many dimensions; its characteristics include low income, malnutrition, ill health, illiteracy, powerlessness and insecurity. These facets of poverty usually interact and combine to keep a household and at times a community in persistent poverty.

One clear indicator of poverty is the fact that education development in Northern Ghana lags behind the rest of the country (School for Life, 2007) which has its roots in Ghana’s colonial past (the colonial administration sought to limit education in the north). According to King and Palmer (2005) as cited by Palmer (2007), there is long-standing evidence that the effects of schooling on productivity (and hence incomes and poverty reduction) is much more marked when there is a dynamic, supportive environment surrounding schools. Government has a major role to play in the delivery of social services and formal education in particular. In a developing country like Ghana, the state will inevitably have to be the largest provider of education. Recognizing, however, that its resources are inadequate to the task, there is obvious need to complement this with resources from the private sector, NGOs, and other arms of civil society. It is in this regard that Sustainable Integrated Development Services Centre (SIDSEC) was established as a non-profit Non-Government Organisation (NGO) to supplement government

efforts in providing education in the Nadowli District of the Upper West Region. This paper assesses the role of SIDSEC in basic education service delivery in the District.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The emergence of a sound theoretical framework for social development and education in particular provides the knowledge needed and a clear justification to address these inadequacies within the sector. According to Eicher (1998) as cited by Babalola, et al. (2006), the argument in favour of the private sector especially NGOs, involvement in education hinges primarily on the theory of human capital, which states that education is an investment in human beings, which increases productivity and hence recipients' earnings. Like physical capital, human capital has four main characteristics; namely, it is capable of reproducing itself with time; its pay-off time is long; the building-up time is equally long and costly (say about 18 years for medicine), and it depreciates with time. Proponents of the human centred development approach argue that economic growth is not an end in itself, but rather must translate into positive development of the human society that registers positive trends across all the human development indicators such as literacy rates on sustainable basis (Seers, 1969 cited in Agbesinyale and Canterbury, 2008). Samir (2002) continued that sustainable economic progress can only be made once most people become free and capable of interacting, and that can only come about when basic needs (including education) are met. Consequently, a rational and well-informed man (the outcome of education) will therefore determine his level of studies to maximize the difference between its costs and future benefits (differential life earnings) (Babalola et al, 2006).

The theoretical basis of education explains the various reforms within the education sector in Ghana. The Education Reform Programme introduced in 1987/88 and the free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) 1996 programme, have contributed immensely to the structure of Basic Education that we have today and the achievements so far made. Basic Education based on these reforms consisted of 6 years Primary Education followed by 3 years Junior Secondary. The 1987 education reforms set out to improve access to basic education but also emphasized the need to include measures that would improve quality, efficiency, and equity in the education sector (CREATE, 2007). Despite these appreciable gains, analysis of access indicators show that there are still difficulties in reaching a significant proportion of children who do not enroll at all. In particular, gains made in enrolment have been difficult to sustain throughout the 9-year basic education cycle (ibid).

Therefore, in January 2002, President Kuffour inaugurated a Committee to Review the Educational Reforms in Ghana. The Committee submitted a report and a White Paper (*The White Paper on Educational Reforms*) was produced (Government of Ghana, 2004a). The White Paper on Educational Reforms expresses the dissatisfaction of the government with the structure of basic education (six years of primary and three years of Junior Secondary School), and gives implicit and explicit statements about the assumptions which underpin these new reforms:

- Basic education “is inadequate to equip our young people with the basic reading, writing and numeracy skills required for further mass training at the secondary level” (GoG, 2004a: 4);
- Basic education “has failed to deliver its promise [from the 1987 reforms] of comprehensively equipping the youth... with directly employable skills for the world of work” (GoG, 2004a: 4).

- Basic education suffers from a “fundamental weakness... [since] too many subjects are taught at the Primary and Junior Secondary School levels, and poorly taught at that, owing to shortages of qualified teachers and materials” (GoG, 2004a: 4).

Following the review report, universal and compulsory basic education was extended to include two years of pre-school teaching at the Kindergarten (KG) level. This education programme would run from age four to fifteen, eleven years of continuous basic education (that is 2 years of Kindergarten, 6 years of Primary and 3 years of Junior High School). This new basic education system was introduced in the academic year 2007/2008. For the purpose of this paper, basic education is analysed in tandem with SIDSEC operations, hence the analysis is limited to kindergarten and primary.

2.1. A Perspective of NGOs in Basic Education,

In developing countries including Ghana, Non-Governmental Organisations play a very important role in the development process. In sub-Saharan Africa, their contributions are particularly significant in supporting literacy, community schools, health education, early childhood care, skills training and other forms of learning, thus helping people to improve their living conditions. Although the activities of the foreign NGOs in the Third World have received extensive treatment in the literature, the contributions of indigenous or local NGOs in socio-economic development have gone largely unnoticed. The fact is that there are hundreds of such NGOs making positive contributions within their respective countries, but are not known beyond their borders (Badu and Parker, 1994). Local NGOs and their proximity to a community serve as a conduit through which resources from donor/international NGO supported programmes can flow to the community (Yolande, Welmond and Wolf, 2002). NGOs also assist in creating or training school committees and/or parent-teacher associations (PTAs). The study brought to light the common assumption held by donors and international NGOs that stronger local NGOs strengthen civil society; that supporting local NGOs' involvement in education will increase the relevance and sustainability of sector programmes (ibid).

The World Bank's assessment of its role in improving educational access and quality in Ghana through its support to both 1987 and 1995 reforms is generally positive. It concluded that its contributions have led to “revers (ing) the deterioration of the educational system, the number of schools increased, from 12,997 in 1980 to 18,374 in 2000, the basic school enrolment rate increased since the beginning of the reforms by over 10 percentage points, the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) data showed improving attendance rates in primary and public schools” (World Bank, 2004). In Ghana and Northern Region in particular, School for Life, a local NGO as at 2001 operated in eight districts and supported 767 communities out of a total of 2,889 communities (representing 26.5%) in these districts. From 1996 to 2003, School for Life enrolled 50,000 children, of whom 50 percent were girls. The annual enrollment by 2000 was just over 9,000 pupils. The 9,000 students in School for Life each year, if simply added to the 131,000 in public schools, raises the enrolment rate in the Region from 69 percent to 83.3 percent. School for Life targets those locations where there is no public school or where there is very low enrollment in the public primary school (Hartwell, 2004).

2.2. Brief Overview of the District

The Nadowli district is centrally located in the Upper West region of Ghana. It covers a total land area of 2,742.50 square kilometers. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2005),

the District has a population of 82,716 people, with a male / female ratio of 88:100. The youth comprise 46% of the total population, implying a need for increased investments in the provision of facilities for education, health and recreation. The district is typically rural. The District's economy is driven by agriculture, employing nearly 80% of the employable population. Agriculture in the area is characterized by low productivity due to erratic and inadequate rains, high cost of farm inputs, poor soils and the use of non-exotic crops and animal breeds. The result is entrenched poverty among the majority of families in the area. Poverty is characterized by families being unable to provide their basic needs including education, food and health care. The absence of a significant proportion of children in school and also the reported high dropout rates is a manifestation of the prevailing poverty in the communities. Though there have been some improvements in educational development over the last five years, literacy levels in the district, currently at 42%, is still dismal. Children face a number of obstacles in their efforts to obtain basic education. These include poor school infrastructure, inadequate basic teaching and learning materials, untrained teachers and long distances to and from school for both teachers and pupils. This culminates in a high dropout rate especially for girls and a low overall enrolment rate.

2.3. Overview of the Sustainable Integrated Development Services Center (SIDSEC)

Sustainable Integrated Development Services Center (SIDSEC) is a local Non-Governmental organization (NGO), which is registered with the Registrar General's Department and duly recognized by the Department of Social Welfare. The Vision of SIDSEC is to create and sustain conditions in which the poor will have access to the basic necessities of life and become more assertive to overcoming their own problems. In fulfillment of the vision, SIDSEC builds strong and authentic relationship with both local and international organisations in a manner that creates the necessary synergy for experience sharing and learning in project design, planning and implementation. The overall goal of SIDSEC is to promote Development in deprived communities, initially in the Nadowli District of the Upper West Region, with the aim of uplifting the standard of living of the people by enhancing good health and nutrition, education, increased socio-economic activity and assisting in the provision of local infrastructural facilities to ensure the attainment of the above aims. SIDSEC currently supports local initiatives in 12 selected deprived rural communities in the Nadowli District, using participatory methods and processes in all its development work. The population of the target communities ranges from about 2,000 to about 4,000. Currently the direct beneficiaries of SIDSEC activities are boys and girls of school going age, women groups in income generation activities, farmer groups, and teachers in the Nadowli District. These groups have in varied ways benefited from Education, Health, Agriculture and Food Security, Water and Sanitation, as well as Women empowerment and income generation programmes. The Canadian Feed the Children (CFTC) primarily supports the implementation of SIDSEC programmes. Despite the numerous areas of SIDSEC support, this paper focuses on the education programme.

3. Scope and Methodology of the Study

This paper is based on case study of the role of local NGOs (SIDSEC) in the education sector in one of the deprived districts in Ghana (Nadowli District). The study covered all the 12 beneficiary communities. The focus in each community was on the education programme of SIDSEC. Three main sources were used to gather the data, namely; desk study (SIDSEC

reports), interviews (questionnaires for individual beneficiaries) and Focus Group Discussion. The Focus Group Discussion was held with the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), School Management Committees (SMCs) and Circle of Women Educators (CWEs). Using these tools, data were collected, collated and analysed to adequately measure the performance of SIDSEC education programme in the beneficiary communities. Given the qualitative nature of the study, collection and data analysis were done concurrently. However, the closed ended responses with multiple response options underwent multiple response analysis while the open-ended responses were first grouped and categorised before being coded and analysed. Generally, information obtained from FGDs, debates, lesson observation and interviews were analysed qualitatively.

4. Research Findings

4.1. Education Infrastructure

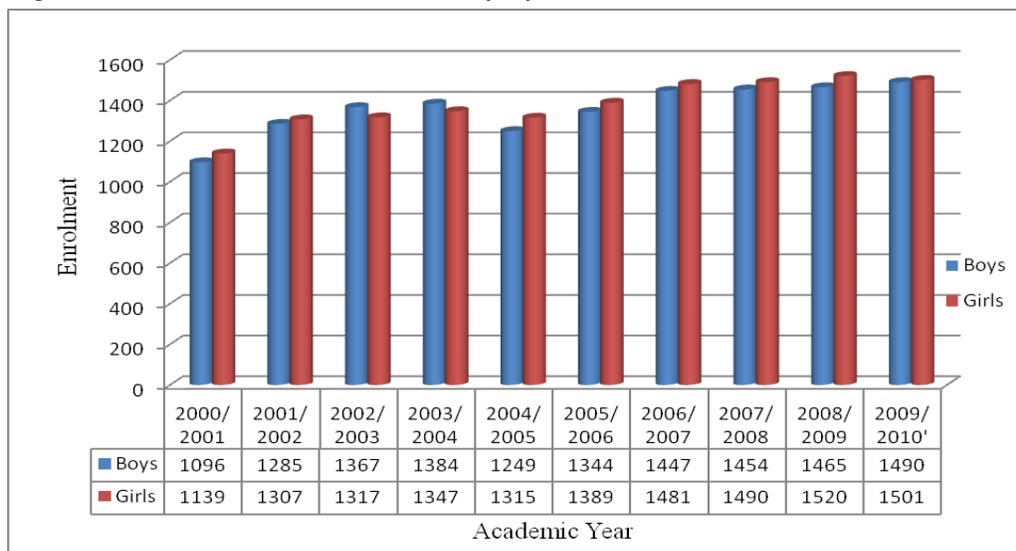
SIDSEC embarked on infrastructure development as part of efforts to improve education in the deprived communities of the District. Since its inception, SIDSEC has renovated 2 number 3-unit classrooms and a 6-unit classroom, constructed a 6-unit classroom with store and office, a 3-unit classroom with office and store, constructed 3 kitchen blocks, constructed and furnished library and installed with solar, toilets and urinary pits, and an eight apartment teachers' quarters installed with solar. These structures are located in different communities. The most recent (2009) structure constructed by SIDSEC is a 3-unit classroom block for Duori primary. These classrooms have been furnished with dual desk by SIDSEC. The study however revealed that due to poor maintenance many tables have broken down resulting in pressure on the existing ones. The average dual desk to pupils is in the ratio 1:2.5, that is, 1 dual desk to 2.5 pupils. The ratio of dual desk to pupils is 1:4 and 1:3 in Serekpere Primary and Chari-Sombo respectively. This has resulted in overcrowding in classrooms. The teachers indicated that with inadequate furniture for the pupils, conducting examination has always been a challenge because the tendency to cheat during examination is high. Schools with adequate furniture are Kulpine, Duori and Nyimbale. These are schools that have recently been supplied with the furniture. The furniture situation at the KG level is even severe.

4.2. Enrolment and Retention Levels

Gross Enrolment

In all the communities, it was not possible to estimate the gross enrolment rate because there is no reliable data on the number of children within school-going-age for the primary level (6 - 11 years). However, available data on the number of children in school show that SIDSEC made some progress towards achieving universal primary education in the communities. In terms of gender parity in education, SIDSEC has made steady progress as shown in Figures 1 and 2. From Figure 1, it is observed that the number of children enrolled for primary education increased from 2235 in 2000/2001 to 2991 in 2009/2010, indicating 33% increase.

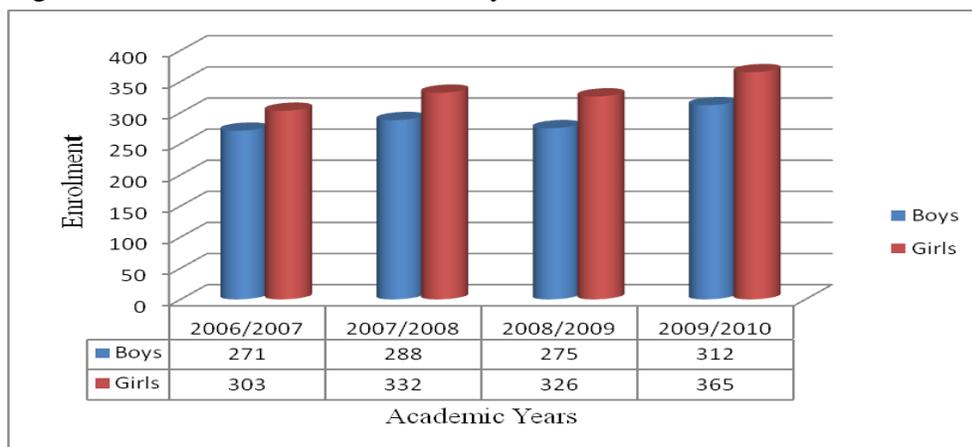
Figure 1: Enrolment Levels in Primary by Sex



4.3. Enrolment at the Kindergarten (KG) Level

The National Action Plan on Education for All sets out that, by 2015, 70% of public primary schools will have 2 Kindergarten classrooms attached (Government of Ghana, 2003). SIDSEC supports five kindergartens. The supports include school lunch, sporting equipment, textbooks, supply of water and sanitation items and capacity building of the teachers. The support, especially the school lunch has increased enrolment significantly. In Sankana, World Food Programme (WFP) supported the school feeding programme prior to SIDSEC intervention. According to the teachers, when WFP withdrew in 2005, about 44% children dropped-out and those who remained run home as early as 10.00 GMT. The teachers could not trace records of enrolment within the period that WFP withdrew. SIDSEC intervened in 2007 and records indicate that enrolment has been increasing with the support of SIDSEC.

Figure 2: Enrolment at the KG level by Sex



4.4. Drop-out Rate and Absenteeism

The school feeding programme of SIDSEC has reduced the drop-out rate as indicated by both parents and teachers. Though there were no data available at the schools on the drop-out rate prior to SIDSEC interventions, the study indicated that drop-out rate has considerably reduced. Presently, the average drop-out rate in all the beneficiary communities stand at 9.7% with a standard deviation of 6.6 above or below the average. Kulpine has a peculiar drop-out (seasonal drop-out). The discussion showed that children usually shirk farming by enrolling in school and drop-out immediately after the farming season to engage in dry season gardening for personal gains. It is therefore possible that with the ongoing construction of an irrigation dam in the community, drop-out rate might go higher if stringent measures are not taken by stakeholders. In terms of absenteeism, an average of 22.4% of pupils absent themselves at least once in a week. It is however higher (24.1%) among boys and lower (20.6%) among girls. Reasons given for absenteeism include; parents sending children on errands and indiscipline among pupils. Discussion with the PTA and SMC revealed that this is on the lower side compared to the period before SIDSEC interventions. They attributed the reduction in absenteeism to sensitization of community members and children, school feeding programme (school lunch) and playing equipment supplied by SIDSEC.

4.5. Gender Parity Index

Gender Parity Index has always been a challenge in rural areas. CREATE (2007) established that in Ghana the gap in boys and girls enrolment widens for children aged 11-16 years, with girls lower by almost 8 percent than boys. The suggestion is that girls enrolling later than the official entry age are also more likely to drop out, especially as they approach adolescence. The Gender Parity Index in the beneficiary communities showed the reverse. The index improved from 1.04 girls to boys in 2000/2001 academic year to 1.01 girls to boys in 2009/2010. It is however higher in Kulpine (1.46 girls to boys in 2009/2010) and lower in Nyimbale (0.8 girls to boys in 2009/2010). During the FGD, the PTA/SMCs and the CWEs indicated that the high enrolment of the girl child is largely attributed to the activities of the CWEs and the school lunch and they therefore called for the sustenance of the school lunch and CWEs activities.

4.6. Capacity Building

Teachers

As part of efforts to improve quality education, SIDSEC built the capacity of teachers. Teachers, mostly untrained ones were trained on lesson note preparation, good teacher-community relation and general lesson delivery methodology. A discussion with Head Teachers showed that the training has improved lesson notes preparation and general delivery of the beneficiary teachers. This has whipped up pupils' interest in learning. They therefore called on SIDSEC to build the capacity of new untrained teachers that have been posted to the schools after the last training.

Table 2: Teacher Situation in Beneficiary Schools

Year	Teachers			Enrolment	Teacher Pupil Ration	
	Trained	Untrained	Total		Specific ¹	General ²

2006/2007	32	32	64	2928	1:91	1:45
2007/2008	30	29	59	2944	1:98	1:50
2008/2009	21	34	55	2985	1:142	1:54
2009/2010	21	25	46	2991	1:142	1:65

Source: Field Study, 2010

¹Specific: Number of trained teachers to pupils

²General: Total Number of teachers to pupils

As indicated in Table 2 the specific teacher pupil (ideal) reduced from 1: 91 in 2006/2007 academic year to 1: 142 in 2009/2010. Similarly the general teacher pupil ratio reduced from 1:45 to 1:65. These ratios are far below the national standard of 1:40 for primary. Two main factors explain this drastic reduction. These are increase in enrolment and high teacher attrition. Under the current education policy, teachers are encouraged to further their education and this has resulted in many teachers leaving the classrooms for further studies. In most cases, those who complete their course of study do not return to the classrooms. Though the PTA and Head Teachers indicated that SIDSEC support has increased contact hours, it could have been better if Teacher-Pupil Ratio had increased.

Table 3: Teacher – Pupil Situation in KG

Academic Year	Total Enrolment	No. of Teachers	Teacher - Pupil Ratio
2006/2007	574	13	1:44
2007/2008	620	11	1:56
2008/2009	601	10	1:60
2009/2010	677	11	1:62

All teachers in the Kindergarten (KG) level in the beneficiary schools are females and none has received professional training on handling KG pupils. That is, they are all untrained teachers. They are mostly people from the communities who voluntarily assist the KGs. Though the New Education Reform Programme puts Kindergarten under basic education, lack of teachers trained to handle KG could defeat the purpose of putting it under basic education. The Teacher-Pupil ratio has reduced from 1:44 in 2007/2007 to 1:62 in 2009/2010. This is due to increase in enrolment without corresponding increase in number of teachers. The teachers indicated that with the supply of teaching and learning material by SIDSEC, there is an improvement in the reading and identification skills of children but it could have been better if a high teacher – pupil ratio was maintained.

4.7. Parent Teacher Associations and School Management Committees

The training of PTAs and SMCs Executives was basically on their core functions. During the FGD with the PTAs/SMCs, they indicated that the training has enlightened them on their functions. They mentioned their functions as:

- Organising PTAs/SMCs meeting regularly

- Ensuring that children of school going age are enrolled
- Contributing to the general running of the school
- Monitoring the attendance of teachers
- Contributing to the general maintenance of school infrastructure and environment
- Seeing to the welfare and progress of the pupils.
- Regular school visit to ensure teachers are at school and teaching.

Some PTA/SMCs are able to carry out their functions successfully. In Samatugu they were able to convince parents to provide uniform for their wards. Records indicate that 88% of the pupils have uniform in Samatugu. The community recognised that SIDSEC school feeding has increased enrolment and retention. As part of efforts to supplement SIDSEC school feeding, the community contributed shea nuts and later sold it to buy beans for the schools. The training has also made PTA/SMC very observant on both pupils and teachers. During monitoring of teachers, a truant teacher was identified. The case was reported to the Circuit Supervisor and the teacher was replaced. In Kulpine, the PTA was able to mobilize the community to plant trees around the school. Despite the successes of the PTA/SMCs, there are still some challenges. These include;

- Truancy of some pupils;
- Unwillingness of some parents to contribute towards school feeding and
- Difficulty in organizing meetings, especially in the rainy season.

4.8. Circle of Women Educators (CWEs)

SIDSEC has identified influential women in the project communities and organised them as CWEs to assist in enrolment campaign, particularly the girl child. This group has been very effective in education delivery. In Takpo, the CWEs convened about 40 girls in the community every fortnight to give them moral education and the importance of education. Both teachers and the PTA/SMCs testified that the activities of the CWEs have reduced teenage pregnancies and improved retention in schools.

4.9. School Feeding

SIDSEC School Feeding Programme serves three interrelated objectives of increasing enrolment and retention, providing one quality meal to pupils and providing market to local agriculture products. The study indicated that the school lunch has increased enrolment and retention significantly. The importance of the programme in increasing enrolment and retention has given communities the fervor to sustain it. They proposed community contribution of food stuff as the best option. This is ongoing in some communities.

4.10. Teaching and Learning Materials

SIDSEC supports school with teaching and learning materials such as exercise books, text books, library books, playing equipments especially for the KG and cupboards. The average Textbook-Pupil Ratio for Mathematics, English and Science is 1:2. However in communities such as Duori, Nanvilli and Takpo, the ratio is 1:3 for all subjects while the ratio in Kulpine is 1:1 for the three subjects.

4.11. Performance of Pupils

The ultimate goal of SIDSEC interventions is to improve quality education, measured at the local level by the performance of pupils. At the KG level, it was observed that the identification and counting skills of pupils have improved. Similarly at the primary level the teachers indicated that performance (the reading skills and counting ability of pupils) had improved. In 2009, a national assignment, dubbed a School Education Assessment was conducted in the district but the results are yet to be sent to the district. Though there are no regular external assessments at the primary level, the performance at the JHS is a reflection of the performance at the primary.

During a Focus Group Discussion in Samatugu (a beneficiary community), a member had this to say *“Punpuni maa lie ɔra”* (It is good flowers that turn into fruits). This implies that the pupil had good foundation at the primary level that enabled them to perform well at the JHS. Samatugu JHS was rated the third best in the district during the 2009 Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Hence the PTA/SMC mobilized parents and awarded all teachers in Samatugu for their hard work.

4.12. Project Sustainability

Sustainability has always been a key principle in SIDSEC interventions. In this regard, a number of measures have been identified and incorporated into its operations. SIDSEC believes in community ownership of the development process and therefore adopts a demand driven approach in service delivery. This implies that the project beneficiaries take the lead, with SIDSEC facilitating the process. To ensure sustainability, SIDSEC adopts an empowering approach in its development interventions in all the beneficiary communities. Priority is given to skills transfer to local community based structures, such as the PTAs, SMCs, CWEs and Economic Groups. This invariably equips the members of the local community with the required stock of knowledge, technical skills and desirable attitudes and motivation to sustain the development interventions of SIDSEC. Discussion with the PTAs/SMCs showed that they are ready to sustain SIDSEC programmes. During a discussion on sustaining the School Feeding Programme (School Lunch) a member of PTA in Samatugu had this to say *“Ye guole ti yeng (You have built our capacity) and we see the link between school feeding and enrolment and will therefore contribute to sustain it. If not on a larger scale, but at least we can sustain feeding at the KG.”*. This is a demonstration of communities’ commitment to sustaining the projects if SIDSEC withdraws its activities in the communities.

4.13. Best Practices of SIDSEC

Demand-Driven Approach: SIDSEC adopts a demand driven approach in service delivery. The communities first express demand for the service and indicate their commitment to participate and sustain the projects. With the education programme in particular, the participation of parents is critical.

Circle of Women Educators: SIDSEC has identified influential women in the communities and trained them to serve as agents of change especially in girl child education and gender dimension of school management. These groups have performed well in enrolling and retaining children especially the girl-child in school. They have also contributed in promoting sex education among girls in the communities.

Integrating Personal Hygiene/water and sanitation in Education: It has been observed that girls spend a greater proportion of their contact hours in search of potable water with its implication on performance. Therefore SIDSEC designed and implemented water and sanitation programme to serve the dual purpose of improving contact hours and promoting good health among pupils. Polytanks, hand washing basins, buckets, towels and drinking cups were supplied to all the beneficiary schools. These items are distributed during personal hygiene campaigns. Besides promoting personal hygiene, the provision of water containers also reduces the time pupils waste during contact hours in search of drinking water. Discussion with the teachers and PTA/SMCs indicated that the provision of water containers has improved contact hours.

Thematic Nature of SIDSEC Support: SIDSEC principle is that, education should not be taken in isolation. The entire social and economic context of the community must be kept in mind in dealing with education. Therefore, apart from education, SIDSEC has improved incomes for a number of households who are now able to acquire basic human needs. This connects education with livelihood because households are able to cater for other education needs (Uniforms, exercise books, sandals) of the wards through their economic activities.

4.14. Development Concerns

Poor data management: Across levels, there is weak data management. This situation is acute at the KG level. This could be attributed to low capacity of staff especially at the KG level. This can affect planning within the sector.

Poor Attendance at PTA Meetings: During the rainy season, attendance at PTA meetings has always been poor. In some communities, general PTA meetings are rarely organised in the rainy season. This implies that school management is barely left in the hands of teachers and at best with PTA/SMC executives.

Poor delivery of lessons by untrained teachers: Untrained teachers who reported after SIDSEC training have difficulty in delivery in class. Moreover, methodology and knowledge of newly introduced subjects such as Information Communication Technology (ICT) and creative arts remain a challenge.

Lack of Motivation of KG Teachers: The teachers at the KG level are mostly volunteers and are not the payroll of Ghana Education Service. Lack motivation (no allowance of any form) for these teachers at times dampens their spirit to work. This could adversely affect the intended purpose of introducing the KG as part of formal basic education.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

SIDSEC has had a very pro-growth strategy since its inception. It is making a significant contribution to the socio-economic scene in and around the communities. In terms of education, it has made strides in increasing enrolment and retention as well as performance through the various activities within the education programme. SIDSEC has also supplied schools with teaching and learning materials including furniture but due to poor maintenance, the teaching and learning could not be sustained to match with the ever increasing enrolment. With excessive demand for SIDSEC services, scaling up will definitely require sourcing funds from other donors to complement that of CFTC. In terms of supplying teaching and learning materials, SIDSEC needs to strengthen its networking with other institutions especially Ghana Education Service to supply text books to the various schools. This will complement SIDSEC support to deliver quality education in the communities. Teachers need to control the proper use of the furniture.

Efforts should also be made to use the capitation grants for maintenance of furniture. These issues should be incorporated into the training of SMCs/PTAs and teachers.

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