



**Country-Led**  

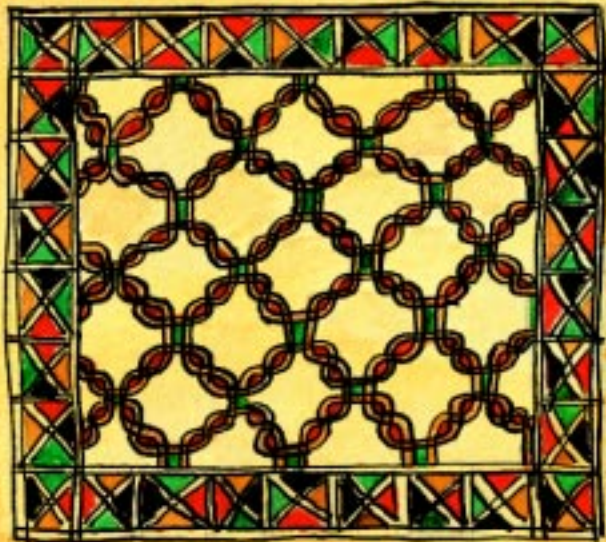
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**Aid Coordination**  

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**in Ghana**  

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*by Harry Sawyerr*

# Country-Led Aid Coordination in Ghana

by Harry Sawyerr



Association for the Development of Education in Africa

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## FOREWORD

Over the decades, Ghana, like other countries in Africa, has struggled to provide basic education to all of her children. Support from international funding agencies is crucial to the development of the education systems of a number of African countries. It is clear, however, that education is the responsibility of the countries themselves. It is they who must take the leadership role in policy-making, implementation, and in coordinating the assistance of funding agencies.

agencies have obligations to their own governments and are—justifiably—restricted by their own interests and regulations in what kinds of assistance they can offer and under what terms. With their wealth of knowledge and experience in policy formation and program implementation, they can make useful contributions, provided that their experience is shared in a spirit of partnership and collegiality. ADEA has tried to promote such partnerships in all of its work. In this way, it has facilitated coordination at the country level. A ministry must have the determination to take the lead in coordinating the support of funding agencies. It must be clear about its goals, engage all stakeholders, including funding agencies, in defining strategies for reaching those goals, and develop and institutionalize mechanisms for communicating about progress and problems.

This is what Ghana has begun to do. Furthermore, this is also the story of the prototype for the on-going United Nations Special System-wide Initiative for Africa which aims at mobilizing resources in a coherent and coordinated fashion behind clear expressions of Governments' capacities to take the lead in policy formulation and the coordination of external funding agencies.

This is the story that Hon. Harry Sawyerr tells in the following pages. It is the story of vision and leadership on the part of a minister who has successfully launched a significant reform of basic education and, in this context, put his country firmly in *the* lead role when it came to managing the contributions of external funding agencies.

Hon. Harry Sawyerr has been a prominent public figure in Ghana for the past thirty years. After serving as Minister for Transport and Communications of the Third Republic and, most recently as Minister for Education, he retired from active political life on March 31, 1997. Within ADEA, Hon. Sawyerr was elected President of the Caucus of African Ministers of Education and Chair of the Bureau of African Ministers of Education in 1995. Through his energy, drive and sheer force of personality he has injected enthusiasm and dynamism into the Caucus of African Ministers and has promoted the ADEA as an effective forum for tackling the numerous problems faced by Africa in the education sector.

Ingemar Gustafsson  
Chair of the ADEA,  
and Director, Policy Secretariat  
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

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I acknowledge with deep gratitude the support, encouragement, and understanding I received from all the representatives of funding agencies assisting in the education sector of Ghana. The informal nature of the relationships we developed brought transparency into our association and assisted in no small way the aid coordination exercise we embarked upon.

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Finally, I would like to thank my daughter, Mrs. Olive Yeboah, who typed the manuscripts over and over again till the final day.

## DEDICATION

**T**his book is dedicated to the hardworking, conscientious and dedicated personnel of the Ministry of Education in Ghana, who worked tirelessly with me during the four years (March 1993 to March 1997) when I was privileged to be their leader. Their support and cooperation helped tremendously to lay the foundation for the Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education Program within a Sector Investment System with the aid of our development partners. I am sure their labours will not be in vain.



## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	African Development Bank
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ADF	African Development Fund
AMA	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
BESIP	Basic Education Sector Improvement Programme
CHASS	Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CRDD	Curriculum Research Development Division
CRIQPEG	Centre for Research on Improving Quality Primary Education in Ghana
CRT	Criterion Referenced Tests
CSPIP	Civil Service Public Investment Programme
DfID	Department for International Development
EFA	Education for All
EIP	Equity Improvement Programme
ERP	Economic Recovery Programme
EU	European Union
FCUBE	Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education
GCE	General Certificate Examination
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GES	Ghana Education Service
GLSS	Ghana Living Standard Survey
GNAT	Ghana National Association of Teachers
GOG	Government of Ghana
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation

HERP	Health and Education Rehabilitation Programme
IDA	International Development Association
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IOC	Implementation Overview Committee
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
JSS	Junior Secondary School
JUSSTEP	Junior Secondary School Teacher Education Project
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
LFSP	Literacy and Functional Skills Programme
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health
MS	Model School
NFED	Non-Formal Education Division
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NIRP	National Institutional Renewal Programme
NUGS	National Union of Ghana Students
ODA	Overseas Development Agency
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exports Countries
PBME	Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation Division
PHC	Primary Health Care
PMU	Projects Management Unit
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PREP	Primary Education Programme
PSDP	Primary School Development Project
PTA	Parent/Teacher Association
PUFMARP	Public Sector Financial Management Improvement Project
SIF	Schooling Improvement Fund
SIP	Sector Investment Programme
SMT	Senior Management Team
SPG	Strategic Planning Group
SQS	School Quality Standards
SRIMPR	Statistics, Research, Information Management and Public Relations
SSS	Senior Secondary School
STEP	Support for Teacher Education Project
TCO	Technical Cooperation Officer

TED	Technical Education Division
TOR	Terms of Reference
TTC	Teacher Training College
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UCEW	University College of Education, Winneba
UNDP	United Nations Development Projects
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

The views and opinions expressed in this volume are those of the authors and should not be attributed to ADEA, to its members or affiliated organizations or to any individual acting on the behalf of ADEA.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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Over the years and especially since 1993, the Ministry of Education has gradually reformed its relationship with funding agencies that have supported major changes in the education sector. Prior to 1986, few funding agencies were in the education sector. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) had been supporting technical Institutes since the late 1960s. The Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic were supporting technical institutes, universities, and experimental junior secondary schools. UNICEF was giving assistance to experimental junior secondary schools. The World Bank was supporting social services, including education. Each funding agency had a bilateral relationship with the ministry: Its education project was managed within a separate unit, and its influence on the ministry's policies and decisions depended entirely upon the personal influence of its representatives on government officials.

In October 1986 the World Bank and UNICEF helped organise a conference of funding agencies in Vienna for the education and health sectors. At this conference, government presented an ambitious education reform strategy. Commitments to support the first phase of the education reform programme came from the British Overseas Development Agency, Norway, OPEC Fund, Switzerland, the African Development Bank and the World Bank. In 1990, USAID came in with support for the development of first Primary Education Programme. With the large-scale reforms and willing support from foreign development agencies, the Ministry of Education, it became evident, would require major changes in how the ministry managed activities supported by funding agencies and how it included agency participation in its policy-making process.

Changes in government's relationship with funding agencies

developed between 1993 and 1997. Through a series of ad hoc meetings, funding agencies began to communicate as a group with the ministry. Eventually, the minister took the lead in coordinating both the management of funding agency projects and their participation in developing policy. The key loci of their collaboration became the Government of Ghana–Funding Agency Consultative Panel meetings and the Projects Management Unit. The former provides a role for funding agencies in policy implementation, and the latter for an efficient system of managing funding agency resources that flow into the ministry.

The convening in February 1997 of government and funding agency officials at the first meeting of the Consultative Panel marked the institutionalization of aid coordination to basic education in Ghana.

Coordination of external assistance has led to a reduction of low priority programmes, better planning of aid missions and less duplication of effort. Because government has made it clear that its Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education programme (FCUBE) is the only programme for basic education over the next ten years, all external funding support for basic education is now being channelled to support that programme. This has led to the various external funding agencies interested in supporting a particular aspect of the programme to work closely together in a cooperative manner with the ministry to support that aspect of the programme in a complementary manner.

In the long process of creating institutional channels to facilitate the participation of funding agencies in FCUBE, the ministry and funding agencies learned several lessons.

- Strong leadership is essential. Political will must be clearly demonstrated in the formulation of goals, plans, and implementation strategies, and leadership from the highest levels must be evident at every stage.
- Funding agencies want to support a ministry and a program that show strong leadership. Clear guidance from government facilitates funding agencies in getting approval from their own agencies of funding for loans and grants. These agencies also appreciate organized, structured means of communicating with each other.
- The establishment of a single unit to procure and disburse funds that flow between funding agencies and the government budget is a more efficient use of local human resources than is an arrangement in which each funding agency has its own project implementation unit. The Projects Management Unit allows ministry staff to specialize and to maximize consistency in administering funding agency activities.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

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### **Events Leading to the Need for Funding Agency Coordination**

**T**he story of funding agency coordination in Ghana is intertwined with the story of education reforms. In the past three decades, Ghana has experienced three major education reforms, the first beginning in 1974, the second in 1987, and the most recent in 1993. During these years, the Ministry of Education gradually reformed its relationship with funding agencies, so that by today, the myriad of international organizations providing assistance to education do so with strong guidance and coordination by the ministry. This is the story of how the ministry took the reins in guiding national reform and foreign aid. It begins with background on early reforms and the advent of significant funding agency assistance. (**Appendix A** presents a time line of reform and aid coordination.)

#### **Reforms in 1974 and subsequent decline**

The story begins in 1974, with the establishment of the Ghana Education Service (the autonomous professional arm of the Ministry of Education), and new curricula, syllabi, and textbooks for primary and junior secondary schools. These new measures were introduced first in primary schools. In junior secondary schools, the reform featured a wide array of technical and vocational subjects and the provision of elaborate workshop and laboratory facilities. Following the completion of changes in 1980 at the primary level, changes at the secondary level were introduced on a small scale.



Political instability and economic decline halted reforms at the secondary level. By 1985, the education system was destitute at every level. The portion of GDP spent on education had fallen from over 6 percent in 1976 to just over 1 percent. The vast majority of primary and junior secondary school children were learning nothing, and in most schools it was difficult to find a sixth or even a tenth grade student who could read very simple words. Most schools had no textbooks, no chalk, and, more often than not, few teachers. In senior secondary schools, mismanagement and inadequate budgets forced boarding schools to close many weeks of the school year.

The three universities had a dire shortage of equipment required for advanced study and were often closed because of student protests, staff demands, and opposition to government. Graduates of other higher-level institutes were not acquiring employable skills and were unable to find jobs upon graduation. Even in the area of adult literacy, where once Ghana had been the trailblazer in Africa, the government program had collapsed. Primers which had been developed in a dozen Ghanaian languages were not even being printed.

At every level of the system, teachers left Ghana for other countries where they could earn better salaries, and untrained teachers took their place in the classroom. A lack of foreign exchange deprived students of textbooks and other supplies. School buildings, furniture, and equipment deteriorated, enrollment levels declined, and drop-out levels rose dramatically.

## **Reforms in 1987**

In 1983 government turned to the World Bank for assistance to its Economic Recovery Program and negotiated lending support through a Structural Adjustment Program. The World Bank first entered the education sector through its Health and Education Rehabilitation Project (HERP), which provided urgently needed books and supplies to the schools.

In 1987 government approved an Education Reform Program which introduced new ways of doing business in the development and implementation of the education portfolio. The World Bank provided the ministry the financial assistance it needed to diversify the curriculum, making it more applicable to life and work, and to provide facilities, particularly in rural areas. Lending instruments (both adjustment and

investment) were flexible, allowing the ministry to implement its own program.

While the 1974 reforms had begun at the primary level, the 1987 reforms started at the junior secondary level with an intensive school mapping exercise involving the support of political as well as education players. To augment the critically short supply of teachers, they were reallocated among levels and given intensive in-service training. Local communities were asked to help rebuild schools, and foreign funding agencies brought in instructional materials, including science kits. To get them more involved in schooling—in keeping with Ghanaian tradition—communities were asked to help select head teachers of their local schools and to create funds for school support, which their elected officials controlled.

At the time the World Bank initiated its support to the reforms with HERP, few other funding agencies were in the education sector. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) had been supporting technical institutes since the late 1960s. The Soviet Union (through barter deals) was running a technical institute, with Russian speaking instructors. The German Democratic Republic was also, through barter deals, providing equipment to technical institutes, universities, and experimental junior secondary schools. UNICEF was giving assistance to experimental junior secondary schools.

In October 1986 the World Bank and UNICEF helped organise a conference of funding agencies in Vienna for the education and health sectors. At this conference government presented its full education reform strategy, including a mass literacy campaign and support to informal sector training. Commitments to support the first phase of the education reform programme came from the British Overseas Development Agency, Norway, OPEC Fund, Switzerland, the African Development Bank, and the World Bank. In 1990, USAID came in with support for the development of first Primary Education Programme.

With the large-scale reforms and willing support from foreign development agencies, the Ministry of Education had entered a new phase in its relationship with funding agencies. This, it soon became evident, would require major changes in how the ministry managed activities supported by funding agencies and how it included agency participation in its policy-making process.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

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### **Improving the Management Structure of Funding Agency Assisted Projects**

**B**y 1993, the reforms were well underway. Their management had become complicated, however, by the significant interventions of at least sixteen major funding agencies. Each agency-assisted project was managed by a separate administrative unit of the ministry, with its own facilities and staff. The proliferation of these Project Implementation Units (PIUs) caused serious problems for the ministry staff. Some of the units did not function properly because ministry funds were not available to staff them adequately, and some staff assigned to the units did not have the training or skills to manage the projects. Senior managers were frequently taken away from their daily responsibilities to support or participate in funding agency supervision missions. One estimate is that out of 52 weeks in the year, as many as 44 weeks of senior managers' time were taken up by various missions from funding agencies, which required the attention of nearly the same set of managers. This wasted much of their time and left little for follow-up actions. Each funding agency had its own conditions and terms that had to be met and its own procurement and disbursement procedures.

In December 1993, the minister merged all of the PIUs into a single unit, the Projects Management Unit (PMU). The new unit was given ten functions:

- To provide effective and efficient professional, technical and management support to the Ministry of Education in implementing

externally funded projects

- To integrate and monitor the formulation and implementation of Rolling Action Plans for all projects
- To provide sound and effective disbursement of external and government funds
- To ensure regular flow of counterpart funds required for implementation of project activities
- To assist in identification, recruitment, and placement of counterpart staff and external and local consultants
- To assist in carrying out needs assessment for in-country and out-country training programmes
- To prepare and provide technical documentation for the procurement of local and international inputs
- To provide necessary support and documentation to funding agencies during their review and monitoring missions
- To facilitate funding agency support and assistance for new projects
- To implement findings and recommendations of external auditors and agency review/monitoring missions.

Within the PMU, a hierarchy of authority was established to ensure proper management procedures, and specialized divisions were created for disbursement, procurement, and civil works. This unit managed all projects with funding agency assistance. A director general was appointed, who reported directly to the minister. The director of finance was asked to manage all funds and advise on the areas to which new funds should be directed. The director of works was made responsible for civil works, notably the construction of many schools and other buildings. Project managers were assigned to each level of education: primary and secondary, tertiary, literacy training and functional skills, and vocational skills and the informal sector.

While project managers attended to the specific needs and interests of the projects to which they were assigned, functions common to all projects were organized by three main schedules:

- A management schedule regulated the preparation and implementation of work plans to ensure adequate support for personnel and contract administration, staff development, supply and management of office consumables, spares, provision of logistical support of office equipment, vehicles, printing, binding, clearing, warehousing, etc.

- A procurement schedule guided the procurement of all goods and services, including the preparation of bidding documents, launching of tenders, analysis and submission of reports and reporting the results to the project manager for funding agencies.
- A disbursements/accounts schedule helped disburse project funds, establish sound financial management arrangement, adequate internal financial control system for project funds; establish complete written record system for project funds; control requests for expenditures, management of accounting system, project finance, budgets, cash flow, etc.

While most funding agencies seemed to welcome the PMU, a representative of one agency contended that funding agencies might better serve the ministry by collaborating and working within its established divisions. Though a PMU is useful when funding agencies are collaborating within a project and programme, he argued, it should not replace established divisions as an implementer of education policy. Its functions should be limited to those of procurement and disbursement. Moreover, in taking on responsibilities beyond those of procurement and disbursement, the PMU leaves divisions within the ministry weakened, as high calibre staff are attracted to the PMU by the agency-funded salary packages it offers.

Yet, the advantages of having the PMU far outweigh the minority view of a single individual. The Government of Ghana and, indeed, all the other funding agencies consider the PMU as a most effective organisation for programme implementation.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

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# **Improving the Process to Coordinate the Participation of Funding Agencies**

While formation of the PMU was a significant stride toward managing agency-financed projects within the ministry, much remained to be done in coordinating funding agency assistance in policy implementation. This began in the context of the third major reform, in 1993.

### **Reforms in 1993**

Following the worldwide conference in 1990 on Education for All in Jomtiem, Thailand, the Ministry of Education took the lead in formulating a National Plan of Action for the education sector. The key problems addressed were poor teaching and learning outcomes, a lack of management efficiency, unsatisfactory and inequitable access and participation, and inadequate financing arrangements. Between May 1993 and March 1994, the minister led the preparation of a strategy paper, “Towards Learning for All: Ghana Basic Education Reforms for the year 2000.” This paper became the basis for the reformulation of priorities and strategies, which reflected four shifts in thinking:

- Increased allocation of resources to primary education, with funds available for non-planned expenditures, including training and supervision.
- Renewed focus on quality improvements in primary, junior secondary, nonformal and pre-school education and on encouraging communities to become partners in education.



- Increased attention to the participation of girls in basic education, both in-school and out-of-school, and to reducing constraints to their enrolment, retention and achievement. The needs of other disadvantaged groups were also highlighted.
- A rationalisation of teacher's post, drawing attention to demand and supply functions and to costs and benefits of teacher preparation in terms of qualifications, type of training, conditions of service, and other elements of motivation.

### **The genesis of funding agency coordination in 1993**

During the preparation of the paper, UNICEF staff in Ghana took the lead in providing technical and financial assistance to the ministry. Teams of specialists and practitioners, including representatives of other funding agencies, were invited to prepare thematic papers on key sector issues. Funding agency representatives met every month at UNICEF; the head of UNICEF's Human Resource Development Programme chaired the meetings.

Participants included officials from the ministries of education and finance, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, the World Bank, the British Council and Britain's Overseas Development Agency (ODA), the European Union, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and other bilateral agencies, including the Swiss, German, Canadian, Dutch, and French. From time to time, key speakers and special guests were asked to interact with the group on specific topics. These guests included representatives of government departments, non-governmental agencies (NGOs), funding agencies, institutions of academic excellence (both national and international), and internationally renowned professionals in the field of education.

This fruitful collaboration between government and funding agencies in writing a strategy paper and national plan persuaded the Ministry of Education and the expanding funding agency community of the need for the ministry to coordinate funding agency participation in policy dialogue and implementation. Such coordination would enable the ministry to define its own priorities and strategies for national development and utilise funding agency contributions to the sector

programme as a whole. It would put an end to discrete funding agency projects that solely reflected the mandates and priority areas defined by their own agencies.

### **The Ministry of Education and Funding Agency Forum, July 1994**

A joint Ministry of Education and Funding Agency Forum was held from July 19 to 22, 1994. This seminal event began the process of developing Ghana's basic education reform, called FCUBE (Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education). The meeting was a turning point in the ministry's relationship with funding agencies: The shift in authority from the funding agency community to the Ministry of Education in defining funding priorities became the driving force for education sector reforms in the country. Leadership from the highest ministerial levels was critical to this effort.

The purposes of the forum were to:

- Gain insights into and consensus on problems in the education sector
- Sensitize funding agencies, implementing agencies, and potential beneficiaries on implications of future policies and programmes
- Enhance coordination funding agency activities and programmes of the Ministry of Education
- Draw attention to good management practices, implementation bottlenecks, and institutional constraints
- Examine the role of the community in the provision and management of education.

The immediate objective of the forum was to identify the main issues for which studies and analyses were required to develop a fully elaborated and costed sector strategy. The strategy would include efforts to strengthen the ministry's capacity to make professional and related technical decisions in programme implementation. Ultimately, ad hoc project interventions would be replaced with a sector-wide approach to programme formulation, providing a more effective framework for funding agency coordination. The process of developing a strategy would also yield new options for financing by funding agencies.

Forum participants identified nine key issues for study and delineated the problems, causes, strategies, and policy options related to each. The issues were the following:

- A regular and disciplined teacher
- Learning achievement; curriculum and materials simplification;

- development, and testing
- Teacher education; pre-service and in-service training
  - Primary 1 intake; Primary 1 through Junior Secondary 3 enrolment targets
  - Health status and ability to learn
  - Textbook provision and community libraries
  - Infrastructure/ rehabilitation
  - Evaluation/MIS/research
  - Costs and financing/ sustainability

(A complete list of issues, problems, causes, strategies, policy options, and key funding agencies is presented in **Appendix B**.)

Forum participants were tasked with conducting studies and analyses needed to address each issue in a sector strategy. A lead funding agency and link persons for follow-up actions within the ministry were identified for each issue. The lead funding agency would provide the management and resources needed to develop a medium-term plan for addressing the issue. The lead agency was not expected to take financial responsibility for full resolution of the issue but simply for preparing the plan to address it over the next few months. This agency would identify which agencies would provide the funds, facilitation, and technical assistance needed to prepare a programme. Such preparation would entail field studies and workshops to highlight the true nature of sector constraints. Link persons were expected to coordinate follow-up actions in the ministry.

The forum succeeded in helping ministry officials and funding agency representatives lay the foundation for collaboration in developing FCUBE. The partnership formed was characterized by openness and frankness in the proceedings and a program that reflected the collective efforts of all relevant stakeholders. This was the keystone of a long-term success story in ministry-funding agency collaboration.

### **A workshop for collaborative FCUBE planning, February–May 1995**

In January 1995 Parliament received a preliminary draft of the basic education sector strategy, FCUBE. But much work remained to be done before a fully developed strategy was in place. In February 1995 the ministry convened a meeting of ministry officials and funding agencies

to review the status of studies that had been agreed upon at the July 1994 forum. The review also took account of the Education Review Commission Report of October 1994 and a number of consultancy reports carried out with funding agency support. At the completion of the review, the ministry asked for a revised work plan for building on studies mapped out in July 1994.

In May, a workshop was conducted over three days to define key areas for further analysis, to create joint ministry-funding agency working groups, and to develop work plans for these studies.

Workshop participants articulated a policy goal for FCUBE: To provide effective teaching and learning in primary and junior secondary school with equity and efficiency, and to expand access and participation to achieve Education for All targets.

They reviewed the studies that had been conducted and organized them into four key areas for further analysis: (1) teaching and learning, (2) management and quality assurance, (3) access, participation, and infrastructure, and (4) costs and financing. Within each of these key areas, the cross-cutting issues of girls' access and participation in basic education and the reduction of regional and urban/rural disparities were considered.

A brief account of these studies reveals the extent of collaboration among ministry officials and funding agencies in their preparation.

- **Teaching and learning:** In this area, three studies were conducted. First, central and district ministry staff worked with the Centre for Research on Improving Quality Primary Education in Ghana (CRIQPEG) at University of Cape Coast and with USAID consultants to study what actually took place in the classrooms of seventeen primary and junior secondary schools. Second, staff of the ministry, the Ghana Education Service, the PMU, and teacher training colleges, supported by ODA, visited four teacher training colleges to study them and recommend improvements. Third, with technical support from UNICEF and USAID, ministry staff surveyed approximately 500 teachers to learn what affects their motivation.
- **Management and quality assurance:** Ministry officials, USAID, and local and international consultants examined management policies, standards, and operations at local, district, regional, and national levels and made recommendations for improving the management system to produce policy objectives. Resources for the review were

provided by the ministry, USAID, and the World Bank. Logistical support came from the ministry's FCUBE secretariat.

- **Access, participation, and infrastructure:** Two studies were conducted and one seminar held in this area. (1) With World Bank support, the ministry surveyed approximately 2,000 primary schools to study their infrastructure and functioning. (2) The World Bank also supported a school mapping study, which included questions about the demand for schooling, especially in under-served areas. (3) The first national seminar on girls' education brought together the First Lady of Ghana, the minister of education, senior officials and regional directors, representatives from 40 districts with low female enrolment, and NGOs involved in girls' education, funding agencies, and representatives of prominent governmental organizations. The outcome of the seminar was embodied in the Accra Accord, which identified key issues, recommendations, and action plans.
- **Costs and financing:** Fourteen top decision-makers in the ministry participated in a workshop, using a simulation framework presented by USAID, to examine the broad policy options for financing proposed education sector reforms. Their report provided a framework for sector policy choices. In addition, the World Bank supported an effort by the ministry's planning department to analyse per-student unit costs at all levels of the education system, the historical patterns of those costs, and a projection of cost alternatives implied by policy intents and choices.

Workshop participants synthesized central findings from the studies in each area. These findings were presented in a status report, which also proposed elements in each area to be considered for a sector strategy. (A detailed account of the studies and findings is presented in **Appendix C.**)

The outcomes of the workshop had several implications for drafting a sector strategy. First, many of the recommendations pointed to a continuing and serious lack of basic infrastructure and materials, while others dealt with issues of content, language, teacher competence and motivation, processes and management. Some recommendations could be implemented relatively easily, without serious implications for the budget. Others would be technically complex, politically difficult and expensive. The next stage of analysis would require that the specific recommendations be examined from a cost-benefit perspective within the

context of the entire strategy.

Second, facilities and equipment, curriculum, teachers' training and behaviour, and system management practices are not independent of each other in their impact on school functioning and student performance. The central role of the individual school and pupil performance, where all these elements have their ultimate impact, needed more attention in a strategy.

Third, the findings from the studies did not make it clear which of the many recommendations—or which subset of recommendations—would result in improved pupil performance and increased access. Some educators would put more emphasis on teacher training, others on reforming the curriculum or improving texts and materials, and others again on the need to improve facilities. All would agree that a class needs a 'good' teacher, a school needs a 'good' head, and that materials and classrooms are critical, but there were different concepts and recommendations about how to bring this about.

Fourth, participants recognized that Ghana cannot afford to do all that is recommended and must make choices about the most cost-effective approach to improving quality and expanding access to school. The studies made it clear that time was needed to learn about the capacity of the school system, to involve teachers in the process of developing new curricula and approaches, to test new materials and textbooks, and to organize training. Moreover, the studies revealed that the system of rewards and punishments for teachers and supervisors was weak, and more discipline in the system was needed before instruction and learning would improve.

Though the development of a sector strategy continued many months beyond the workshop, workshop participants contributed significantly to its direction. In addition to the policy goal and four key areas for further study, they proposed four basic elements of a strategy: (1) to begin with pilot projects in improving management at each level of the system, (2) to define what inputs must be present for learning to take place and get these in place at all schools, (3) to support ongoing statistical analysis of progress toward Education for All, and (4) to develop a framework for public financing of education. (These elements are presented in more detail in **Appendix D**.)

The minister appointed members of the FCUBE secretariat and an oversight committee to coordinate the completion of the analytic studies. Scopes of work for ministry officials who would carry out the

analyses and for funding agency inputs were prepared in each area. A target date of July 1995 was set for completing the studies—a date influenced by both USAID’s and the World Bank’s need for a sector strategy upon which to base further funding.

### **Developing an FCUBE implementation framework, July–October, 1995**

In July, following the May workshop, the minister convened once again a group of ministry officials and funding agency representatives. At the meeting, the joint working groups presented reports on their findings and recommendations. Based on these, the meeting focused on building a plan for implementing FCUBE; the minister called for a special task force to oversee the development of such a plan. Following several months of work by this group, the FCUBE was formally presented to a Ministry and Funding Agency Forum in October, and funding agencies were asked to give feedback. With comments from these agencies incorporated, the strategy was given to Parliament, where it was approved in December 1995.

The FCUBE program was planned for implementation within a ten-year period, beginning in 1996 and running through 2005. It would be implemented in two phases of five years each. The original plan, which was used at the Credit Agreement negotiations with the World Bank, had undergone a number of revisions and was eventually characterized as a “revolving plan,” which would evolve as activities were developed within the FCUBE objectives.

Responsibilities for implementation are best described in terms of the four sets of actors involved: oversight and top management groups, operations implementation units, decentralized functions, and funding agencies.

### **Oversight and management**

Since the FCUBE is a sector-wide programme for basic education, its implementation represents a major part of the regular work of the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service. It requires the active involvement of all operational and support divisions and units within these organizations. Programme management and implementation responsibility are therefore vested in the mainstream management

structures of the ministry and the service. The minister and the top management are ultimately responsible for the achievement of the goals of the FCUBE programme. To ensure that local stakeholders and beneficiaries take a lead in the implementation of FCUBE, the ministry established in mid-1996 four groups to assist and advise them. These are the Implementation Overview Committee, the Senior Management Team, Strategic Planning Groups, and Funding Agencies.

The **Implementation Overview Committee (IOC)** is responsible for the governance of the programme. It gives a sense of direction and ensures that programme implementation is in accord with the overall programme policy and operational plan. Responsible to and chaired by the minister, the IOC was inaugurated in August 1996 and has held regular monthly meetings to review the implementation of the operational plan and to note changes instigated by the Strategic Planning Groups. The committee has wide representation of stakeholders, including the ministry's Ghana Education Service, the ministries of finance and of local government and rural development, the National Institutional Renewal Programme (NIRP), the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), the Civil Service Public Investment Programme (CSPIP), and religious organisations and universities.

Funding agency representatives are participating observers, adding a funding agency perspective to the deliberations and fostering closer ministry and funding agency links. Participation in IOC has been lively and frank and focused on critical implementation issues. Sub-committees of the IOC have been set up for each of the programme's components.

The **Senior Management Team** serves as an advisory body to the minister on the implementation of the FCUBE Programme. It meets at least once in a fortnight to deliberate on high-level strategic issues such as priorities in programme implementation, policy options and costing issues, and to make appropriate recommendation to the minister. The Senior Management Team is made up of the Chief Director of the Ministry of Education, the Special Assistant to the Minister on the FCUBE programme, the Director-General of the Ghana Education Service, the Director General of the Projects Management Unit (PMU), and the National Coordinator for the FCUBE Programme.

In terms of government-funding agency cooperation, the **Government of Ghana-Funding Agencies Consultative Panel** is the most important FCUBE organization. The panel is expected to meet each



year in February and again in July or August. Meetings are chaired by the minister and attended by selected members of the IOC and high-level representatives of the funding agencies working in Ghana. Activities of the funding agencies in support of the FCUBE programme are reported on by the agencies themselves and by senior FCUBE managers. A primary purpose of these meetings is to promote collaboration among funding agencies and government and to avoid duplication of effort.

Together, these groups facilitate a sense of ownership and commitment to FCUBE on the part of all stakeholders, systematic consultation and consensus building, and programme activities designed to encourage active community participation in education and school management. Government ministries (finance, local government and rural development, employment and social welfare, in particular) have been responsive to supporting the coordination of funding agencies.

### **Implementation responsibilities**

The day-to-day implementation of each component of the FCUBE Programme is the responsibility of the **relevant units of the ministry and the Ghana Education Service**. While responsibility for some components is shared by two or more units, a lead unit is always assigned. The units that have responsibility for FCUBE components are: the Training (Teacher Education) Unit; the Curriculum Research Development Division (CRDD); the Project Management Unit (PMU); Supplies and Logistics; the Manpower Management unit; Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, and Evaluation (PBME); Statistics, Research, Information Management and Public Relations (SRIMPR); Administration and Finance; Basic Education; the Inspectorate; District Education offices; and schools. (A table of FCUBE components and the responsible units for each component is presented in **Appendix E**.)

Strategic Planning Groups have been established for each relevant component and sub-component of the program. The first four such groups to be set up are those for training, access and participation, management efficiency, and curriculum. These groups work on policy issues that need to be translated into action plans. The Strategic Planning Group for Training, for example, has worked out the details of the new policy of pre-service training of teachers, which calls for an “in–out–in” strategy. The planning group designed a program that continues teacher training activities while teachers are “out” of their training college. This

group (1) developed a curriculum, distance learning materials and planned for supervision and support of trainees during their “out” periods, (2) structured incentives to motivate them towards improved performance, and (3) set criteria for administering these incentives. At appropriate times, the groups submit their work to the Senior Management Team for consideration and recommendation to the minister.

Implementation responsibilities are spread throughout the ministry. The day-to-day coordination of activities is the job of the **Coordinator of the FCUBE programme** and the **Special Assistant to the Minister on FCUBE**. The coordinator is a member of the Senior Management Team and serves as secretary to the IOC and the semi-annual Government of Ghana-Funding Agencies Consultative Panel Meeting. He apprises these bodies of implementation activities and brings to them emerging issues for resolution. The coordinator is assisted by an office manager and secretarial and other staff. The special assistant facilitates the transition from a conventional project model of funding agency support to the integrated sector programme of FCUBE. The special assistant represents the minister at discussions and meeting where the minister is not present.

Procurement of goods and services for the FCUBE Programme is undertaken by the **Projects Management Unit (PMU)**. The implementing units make specific requests for the procurement of goods and services of the FCUBE coordinator. After verifying that provision has been made in the operational plan for the activity and that the source of funding has been identified, the coordinator submits the request with recommendations to the director-general of the PMU. The director-general is also responsible for the disbursement of the various loans and grants in support of FCUBE and carries out the banking activities for the programme.

### **Decentralizing oversight of FCUBE functions**

To ensure that the FCUBE program is effective at the school level, the Ghana Education Service Council, which was re-authorized in 1996, set up District Education Oversight Committees in each of the 110 districts throughout the country. Each Committee is comprised of: the District Chief Executive, who is the chair; the District Director of Education; the District Director of Health; the District Inspector of Schools; the District

Social Welfare Officer; two representatives (one of whom is a woman) of the District Assembly. In addition, the committee includes a representative from each of the following: the traditional rulers in the district; the Christian and Muslim groups; the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) in the district; the District Parent Teachers' Association (PTA); and one woman identified generally with social development in the district.

The District Education Oversight Committee oversees the physical environment and facilities of the schools in the district, the performance of teachers and students, and the supply of learning materials. More specifically, it concerns itself with the following:

- Conditions of school buildings and other infrastructural requirements of the schools
- Provision of teachers and the regular and punctual attendance of teachers and pupils at the schools
- The proper performance of duties by staff at the schools
- The moral behaviour of staff and pupils and matters relating to general discipline
- Complaints relating to, or coming from teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils
- The environmental cleanliness of schools and facilities therein
- The supply of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials.

In addition, School Management Committees and School Management Boards are being set up in all primary and secondary schools, members of which are residents of the communities served by the schools. Necessary funds to facilitate the work of the Oversight Committees are made available by the central government, the district assemblies and funding agencies through the FCUBE programme.

PTAs continue to assist schools, but to ensure that levies charged by the associations are affordable by parents and guardians, authority has been given to the district assemblies to scrutinize and approve such levies.

It is envisaged that any lack of proper supervision that existed in the past and which contributed to the rather poor performance by pupils and students will be drastically reduced—if not completely eliminated—through the vigilance of the District Education Oversight Committees, which will also ensure judicious utilisation of funds made available for the programme.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

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### **Collaboration in Implementing FCUBE**

Implementation of the FCUBE program officially began in June 1996 with the minister's inauguration of the Implementation Overview Committee. By that time, government had both a policy document and an operational plan. A large and complex program, FCUBE engaged education officials at every level of the ministry, including district officers, teachers, and school community members. International funding agencies play a large role in the program's implementation, as witnessed by the size of their grants and loans and the nature of their interventions.

#### **Funding agency loans and grants**

During the two major reforms that preceded FCUBE (in 1974 and 1987), government had to negotiate with each funding agency for its potential support. The ministry sometimes had to adjust its own implementation plan to accommodate the funding agency's proposed program, and negotiations among different ministries were often tedious. With the advent of FCUBE, that process changed. Within the policy framework and implementation plan agreed upon by government and funding agencies, the latter now find their areas of interest and provide funds in those areas. Each agency has offered to help in its area of comparative advantage.

- The World Bank (IDA) provided a credit of US\$50 million, effective in November 1996. It supports the implementation of all the three components of the FCUBE Programme (enhanced quality of teaching

and learning; management for efficiency; and access and participation).

- USAID made a grant of US\$53 million to help government achieve two strategic objectives: (1) Quality education through Model Schools to develop and refine school quality standards that are cost effective and replicable on a national scale (330 model schools, three in each of the 110 districts in the country will be established); (2) Implementation of improved policies for quality education.
- Germany made a grant of DM41 million for rehabilitation and equipment of 35 Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) and the transformation of six TTCs into Special Primary Teacher Training Colleges.
- The African Development Bank (ADB) made a credit of approximately US\$17.3 million from the African Development Fund (ADF) to construct and equip 500 primary schools.
- The European Union (EU) made a grant of 1.25 billion cedis for the rehabilitation of school buildings and the provision of library books for basic education schools.
- The Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom (formerly ODA) pledged a grant of £15 million to support the implementation of the FCUBE Programme. At the national level, DFID will assist in teacher training. At the district level, it will fund support and supervision systems and build financing and budgeting capacity. At the community and school level, it will support the activities under the Schooling Improvement Fund (SIF).
- UNICEF agreed to continue its support to girls' education, curriculum development, and district- and school-level support.

### **Government and Funding Agency Consultative Panel, February 1997**

Though some funding agencies tend to limit their interventions to central offices of the ministry, others work at district and school levels. It was thus imperative that the ministry coordinate funding agency activities with the FCUBE program. Funding agencies had begun meeting on a monthly basis in February 1996 in UNICEF's offices. In October, the meetings moved to the Ministry of Education, under the chairmanship of the minister.

In February 1997, soon after the FCUBE program was

approved by Parliament and thus officially sanctioned, the minister launched the first meeting of the Government of Ghana and Funding Agency Consultative Panel. The meeting was conducted in a friendly but frank atmosphere. Participants reviewed the status of programme implementation, the operational plan for 1997, future implementation arrangements, and the cost and financing of the programme. They emphasized that FCUBE would be the only basic education improvement programme for Ghana in the coming decade, and all domestic and external sources of technical and financial support for basic education would be applied through it. They reiterated that the various procedures of the implementation process would be harmonised. The meeting was enhanced by the active participation of representatives from other relevant government ministries. A second meeting was planned for about six months later.



## **Summary and Lessons Learned**

**T**he convening in February 1997 of government and funding agency officials at the first Consultative Panel marked the institutionalization of aid coordination to basic education in Ghana. During three years of planning FCUBE and working ad hoc with funding agencies, the minister and his staff had set up a structure of management, oversight, and implementation in which funding agencies were effectively integrated. The key loci of their collaboration are the Consultative Panel meetings and the Projects Management Unit. The former provides a role for funding agencies in policy implementation, and the latter for an efficient system of managing funding agency resources that flow into the ministry.

Coordination of external assistance has led to a reduction of low priority programmes, better planning of aid missions and less duplication of effort. Because government has made it clear that FCUBE is the only programme for basic education over the next ten years, all external funding support for basic education is now being channelled to support that programme. This has led to the various external funding agencies interested in supporting a particular aspect of the FCUBE Programme to work closely together in a cooperative manner with the ministry to support that aspect of the programme in a complementary manner.

The burden of many external visits from funding agency representatives to Ghana has been drastically reduced. The purpose and timing of such visits is now reviewed and controlled. Common reporting and disbursement procedures have been agreed upon and are in place, while discussions on common procurement procedures are in progress.



The expertise and human capacity of the PMU are facilitating the process.

In the long process of creating institutional channels to facilitate funding agency participation in FCUBE, the ministry and funding agencies learned several lessons.

- Strong leadership is essential. In every situation there are people who are ready to criticize without suggesting alternative solutions. There are others who resist change from the status quo and prefer to hold on to old systems. Strong political will must be clearly demonstrated in the formulation of goals, plans, and implementation strategies, and leadership from the highest levels must be evident at every stage.
- Funding agencies want to support a ministry and a program that show strong leadership. Clear guidance from government facilitates funding agencies in getting approval from their own agencies of funding for loans and grants. These agencies also appreciate organized, structured means of communicating with each other. They do not want to duplicate efforts or to make an effort that is outside government's real interest.
- The establishment of a single unit to procure and disburse funds that flow between funding agencies and the government budget is a more efficient use of local human resources than is an arrangement in which each funding agency has its own project implementation unit. The Projects Management Unit (PMU) allows ministry staff to specialize and to maximize consistency in administering funding agency project activities.
- The process of building a forum for ministry officials, funding agency representatives, and other stakeholders in the education system is likely to be a gradual one. In Ghana, funding agencies began to work with each other and with government through a series of ad hoc meetings well before an official structure was established. Thus, the Government of Ghana and Funding Agency Consultative Panel became the institutional culmination of a working relationship that had already evolved.

The stage has been set. The problems have been identified. The strategies have been carefully formulated. The machinery and relevant structures have been put in place. The FCUBE programme has taken off, and monitoring and evaluation for successful implementation properly planned. Above all, the political will to press forward towards the attainment of the final objective is assured. What remains is for each actor

in the field to play his or her part well; the students, the teachers, the head teachers, the School Management Committees, the community of parents, guardians, religious organisations, and traditional authorities, the district inspector of schools, the District Education Oversight Committee, the District Assembly, the Ghana National Association of Teachers, the Implementation Overview Committee meeting monthly and the semi-annual Consultative Panel Meeting. These important stakeholders and formidable structures should combine all their efforts to ensure that the objectives of the Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education Programme are attained and to make aid coordination in Ghana a real success story.

*At the instigation of African Ministers, ADEA has undertaken the publication of reports describing successful African experiences in the field of education, thereby enabling African Ministers to tell their story of how they have dealt with a specific issue in the education sector.*

*This paper on the coordination of external aid to education in Ghana was written by Harry Sawyerr, former Minister of Education in Ghana.*

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