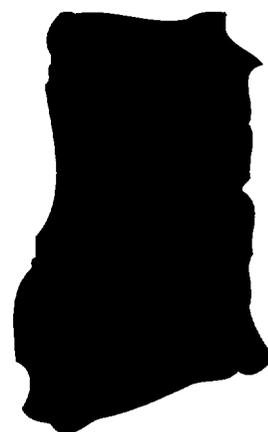




THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION POLICY FORMATION IN AFRICA

The Case of Ghana



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1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 The education reform initiated in Ghana in 1987 has gained international support and recognition for being comprehensive and well-conceived. Within Ghana, the reform has been a central focus of public concern and debate. It stands out as a unique event in the evolution of education in Ghana. Its uniqueness stems from the integration of older policies and concerns with new educational thinking, leading to the formulation of a comprehensive reform.

1.2 The reform arose out of a crisis situation. Ghana's education system in the 1980s was in near collapse and viewed as dysfunctional in relation to the goals and aspirations of the country. Academic standards, support for teachers, instructional materials, schools buildings, classrooms, and equipment had declined with lack of financing and management. By 1985 the system could be described as "clinically dead." These circumstances and government's orientation toward social action favored a radical reform to reverse the downward spiral of educational standards, particularly in basic education. The content and structure of the reform touched all levels of the education system and attempted to address the perennial problems of access, retention, curriculum relevance, teacher training, provision of physical structures, and financing.

1.3 The eight years that have passed since the announcement of the education reform have seen many changes in the system. Yet today, many people believe the reform requires significant adjustments if its objectives are to be realised. This has initiated a new cycle of policy review and analysis.

1.4 This case study examines the initiation of a major education reform and follows it through implementation and review. Specifically, the context of policy formation, implementation processes, and outcomes that characterise the reform are examined. Conclusions and generalisations have been drawn as lessons for the guidance of other African governments and education leaders embarking on similar reforms of their education systems.

2 - CONTEXT OF REFORM

Political

2.1 The swiftness of an undertaking of this magnitude and its freedom from strict adherence to conventional procedures can be explained by the political culture and educational and economic contexts of the time it was conceived.

2.2 In 1981, the Third Republic of Ghana was ousted. The government that came to power was a revolutionary military regime with an agenda of social and economic transformation of the status quo. The new leaders saw education as the vehicle for achieving change and perceived that most Ghanaians supported this strategy, despite persistent opposition from the elite and the bureaucracy.

2.3 By 1987, government had consolidated its power, but in the meantime, problems facing the education sector had worsened as a result of political instability, ad hoc measures, and frequent changes in education policy. Government had become aware of the centrality of problems related to the education sector and the people's expectation for change in this direction. To win political legitimacy, government decided to tackle what successive governments had attempted without success—a significant reform of the education sector.

Economic

2.4 Constrained by decline in revenues government had, for nearly a decade, dramatically cut back financing in the education sector. By 1985, its education budget had declined to one-third its 1976 level. The percentage of GDP going to education fell from 6.4 percent in 1976 to 1.0 percent in 1983 and back to 1.7 percent in 1985. In that time period, education's share of the national recurrent budget fell from 38 percent in 1976 to 27 percent in 1984, when basic education's share of the total education sector budget was 44 percent. In 1986, 88 percent of financial resources went into payment of salaries and allowances, leaving only 12 percent of the recurrent budget for non-wage items. The unit cost for a primary pupil's education dropped from US\$41 in 1975 to US\$16 in 1983.¹ The education sector thus lacked the financial resources needed to expand education services and improve their quality.

Educational

2.5 Conditions within the education sector also provoked the initiation of the reform. Prominent among them was a system unresponsive to the socio-economic changes taking place in the country because of the highly academic nature of its content, processes, and product.

2.6 As a result of Ghana's economic decline and the harsh repressive revolutionary zeal of the military regime that took charge in 1981, a significant number of trained and highly qualified teachers left the country, mostly for Nigeria. By the mid-1980s, as many as 50 percent of teachers in primary and middle schools were untrained. Textbooks, teaching materials, chalk, notebooks, registers, and desks were in short supply. Teaching and learning at the basic education level had deteriorated to the extent that the mass of school leavers lacked literacy skills.² Confidence in the once enviable Ghana's education system was shaken.

2.7 In the face of these setbacks, enrollment declined at all levels. Yet the school-age population was growing. By the 1985–86 school year, about 27 percent of six-year-old children were not in school.³ Enrollment ratios varied across the country, being lowest in the northern part. The attrition rate at the primary

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level averaged about 60.4 percent. About 75 percent of primary school graduates did not go on to secondary school—an alarming rate, considering that there was no substitute apprenticeship training programme for the dropouts. Added to these problems was the long duration of the pre-tertiary course, inadequate procedures for assessing students' progress, and a lack of data needed for meaningful planning, policy, and management decisions.

3 - THE REFORM PROCESS

Leadership

3.1 The political environment in the education sector within which the reform policies were being formulated was tense. The Ghana Education Service Council (GESC), which had the final authority in appointments, promotions, discipline, and other professional matters in Ghana Education Service (GES), had been abolished in the early 1980s, and a new law at that time replaced the GESC with an Education Commission, which had no more than advisory powers. All the executive powers of the proscribed council, therefore, became vested in the Secretary of Education. Thus, professionals enjoyed no protective cover, and no single officer was too strong to be dealt with if he or she stood in the way of the ministry.

3.2 The period following this law witnessed numerous dismissals, interdictions, redeployment, and premature retirements of GES staff. Sometimes officials were punished for their candor. For example, regional directors who told pressmen they had not received enough textbooks and equipment (when government claimed that they had) were dismissed, retired, transferred, or demoted for incompetence. This situation created fear among professionals, who buried their reservations and refrained from comments that could be interpreted as counter to the reform. These affected directors at nearly every level of the ministry as well as heads of institutions.

3.3 Some dismissals were explained by adverse audit findings, others by inadequate qualifications. ⁴A number of officials eventually returned to post. But some measure of damage had been done, as they had been publicly disgraced when their dismissals were announced over radio and television; their return to work did not receive public notice. Their silence thereafter and the silence of others led to a breakdown in communications between the regional, district, and institutional directors on one hand, and the ministry and GES officials at headquarters. By failing to report problems that regional, district, and institutional directors faced, government created the impression that all was ready for the take-off of the reform when this was not so. The whole system operated on authoritarian arrangements characteristic of the revolutionary political milieu, with officials and technocrats carrying out orders without questioning.

Events leading to the adoption of the reform

3.4 Between 1982 and 1985 the reform became part of government's revolutionary rhetoric. In 1983, through the first Economic Recovery Programme and support from a World Bank Health and Education Rehabilitation Project, government injected some urgently needed materials such as stationery items and books, into the education system.

3.5 In 1983 government negotiated with the IMF and World Bank for lending support through a Structural Adjustment Program. As one condition, government agreed it would improve public sector management and, in particular, rehabilitate the decaying education system.

3.6 To do so, it turned to a report issued in 1974, "New Content and Structure for Education" which had never been fully implemented, and convened in 1983 a conference of Directors of Education to appraise the report's suitability for adoption. Participants at the conference noted that the capital outlay proposed in the 1974 report was huge. For instance, it called for building schools and providing equipment at a standard of secondary technical institutions, which had well-constructed workshops, science laboratories, home science blocks, and so on. But the directors at the conference agreed that these capital intensive components had to

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be reduced and proposed that the Planning Division of the ministry devise a five-year plan for implementing the reform within the budgetary constraints of the GES. Thus, the main goals of the plan adopted by the Directors of Education were cost savings and improvement of the curriculum.

3.7 The ministry also asked the Education Commission to review the state of the education system and make recommendations to government. The commission was made up of a cross-section of professionals such as clergy, army personnel, university lecturers, teachers, writers, politicians, lawyers, and educators. It was assisted by three consultants from Nigeria, Kenya, and Brazil. It collected information through a number of channels: (i) visits to institutions; (ii) interviews with individuals and organizations; (iii) advertisements to the general public to submit memoranda or educational literature; and (iv) distribution of questionnaires to individuals and organizations to solicit their views on basic education.

3.8 The commission reviewed the critical mass of reports of nine commissions and committees formed since 1960 on higher education, the structure and content of pre-university education, research, technical and vocational education, and education costs and finances.

3.9 In 1984, the Education Commission issued an initial report, which began with references to an address by Ghana's president to the commission:

The fundamental message of his (Rawlings) inaugural address was that our children must "grow up free from the stultifying influence of the educational oppression which has prevailed for far too long." He observed that a system which denies the majority of children equal educational opportunities, which values conformity before creativity and which encourages self-interest cannot be described as anything other than oppressive. He, therefore, charged the Commission to formulate "recommendations of national policy on education such as will enable the realization of the objectives of the revolutionary transformation of the society in the interest of social justice."

3.10 In 1986, the Education Commission submitted another part of its report to government. It noted among other things, that its proposals represented the views of a cross-section of the population and that

they do not differ in many ways from those made by Dzobo Committee on which the 1974 New Structure and Content of Education in Ghana is based. They can be regarded as endorsing, emphasizing and amplifying those proposals, save in some crucial areas where novel proposals are advanced.⁵

3.11 The commission recommended that the new scheme commence in 1990, with entry into grade one of the first cohort of pupils in the nine-year basic education course. This arrangement would

give the country some breathing space (three years) to prepare the teachers, to procure sufficient textbooks and other teaching materials, to have improved the building and other equipment base, and to have obtained prior commitment to the new scheme. By 1999, the old system would have been phased out as the first Certificates of Basic Education are awarded.⁶

It further concluded that:

The new ideas will have to be explained widely, using all available agencies such as the mass media, Information Services Department, religious organization, Traditional Councils and the revolutionary organs so that they are understood by parents, teachers and the general public ... for a smooth transition to be attained.⁷

3.12 On October 15, 1986, in the face of public and bureaucratic disenchantment with the existing education system and in a spirit of revolutionary zeal, the Secretary of Education pronounced a sweeping policy reform. Assuming that primary schools had been reformed in 1975, its strategic thrust was to start large-scale at the Junior Secondary School (JSS) level rather than piecemeal at the primary level—a decision that raised the eyebrows of critics.

3.13 Critics argued that the reform policies had not been adequately vetted within the education sector. The apparent lack of elaborate consultation can be attributed to the top-down philosophy of government. The regime viewed itself as a government with a decisive policy and action rather than a consultative government.

Therefore, to engage in elaborate discussion and sampling of views from the public would mean a show of weakness and retraction from its role of directing the destiny of the country. Moreover, the Education Commission was representative of the society and working within tight time constraints.

3.14 The commission could argue that the reforms it proposed reflected the content and structure of education proposed and thoroughly discussed in the 1974 report. Yet the final structure and content of the reform approved by government in 1987 was not the same as that proposed in 1974. Even though substantial components of the reform emanated from the 1974 report, the time lapse between 1974 and 1987 was more than a decade, and that period had seen great transformations in societal structures, science, technology, education theory, practice, and so on.

Policy statement

Principles

3.15 The Secretary outlined the principles of the reform: Education is a basic right for every citizen, yet the majority of citizens do not participate in national development because they are not fully literate or well educated. People need a cultural identity and dignity. Education all too often leads to unemployment because it is not geared toward practical skills. Citizens must acquire scientific and technological skills for adaptability, and they need an awareness of their environment.⁸

3.16 The reform measures were to include:

- (a) A reduction of pre-university education from 17 years⁹ to 12 years in order to make funds available to improve access and quality. The 12-year course would consist of a nine-year basic education followed by a three-year senior secondary education, as proposed by the 1974 Reform Commission. This would replace the existing six-year primary, three-year junior secondary, two-year senior secondary lower and two-year senior secondary upper cycles. An estimated 30 percent of junior secondary pupils would continue on to senior secondary schools.
- (b) A philosophy of education would influence national thinking and planning.
- (c) Entrants into teacher training would possess a secondary education.
- (d) Teacher trainees would be paid allowances and treated on a parity basis with all other trainees.
- (e) Local community participation in the provision of basic education would be mobilized without waiting for decentralization to be completely implemented.

Operational guidelines

3.17 To achieve the objectives outlined for basic education, the following operational guidelines were established:

- (a) Each pupil will learn his or her own language plus another Ghanaian language. The local language will be the medium of instruction for the first three years of primary school. English will be taught as a subject from the first year at school and become the medium of instruction in the fourth grade of primary school. The study of Ghanaian languages will be compulsory up to senior secondary school.

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- (b) To ensure that teaching at the basic level does not degenerate into rote learning and memorization of facts and that teaching encourages inquiry, creativity, and manipulation of manual skills, teaching and education will be reoriented to imparting skills rather than purely academic knowledge, which by itself does not promote full development. Continuous in-service training programmes for practicing teachers will eradicate ineffective teaching. Teachers who are untrained and inefficient middle-school leavers will eventually be replaced.
- (c) To minimize the incidence of drop-outs, a national literacy campaign will be mounted, and all Committees for the Implementation of the Junior Secondary School Programme at regional, district, and community levels will be assisted in carrying out the campaign on a continuing basis. When drop-outs cannot reenter the formal system, provision will be made for them in adult and nonformal education programmes.
- (d) All schools, whether private or public, will be expected to run a 40-week school year.
- (e) Progress throughout basic education will be based on continuous and guidance-oriented assessment by teachers and headmasters. Terminal assessment and certification for basic education will be based on 40 percent internal continuous assessment and 60 percent external assessment, to be conducted by the West African Examinations Council. This terminal assessment and certification will form the basis for selection into senior secondary schools and other post-basic training institutions.
- (f) Provision of basic education is the joint responsibility of both community and central governments. The national government will continue, therefore, to rely on and encourage the efforts made by communities to provide infrastructures for schools. It is also expected that various education committees, church and voluntary organizations, as well as private individuals, will continue the vital roles they have so far played in support of the provision of basic education.
- (g) Government will rely on policy-makers and implementers, communities, parents, religious bodies, teachers' organizations, nongovernmental organizations and all well-meaning Ghanaians to join together in partnership to work toward achievement of the national objectives of providing basic education to every Ghanaian child as a right and, thereby, lay a sound foundation for socio-economic development.¹⁰

3.18 The reform also sought to

- (a) Contain and partially recover costs;
- (b) Enhance sector management and budgeting procedures through a merger of planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation functions;
- (c) Decentralize decision-making and supervision from the region to the district and circuit levels, and increase the level of school visitation and supervision;
- (d) Withdraw feeding and lodging subsidies from secondary and tertiary institutions.

3.19 In 1986 government had as a basis for the reform policies the report of the Education Commission (which was based on the 1974 report), and the five-year development plan for the implementation of the reforms submitted by the Conference of Directors of Education on behalf of GES. In line with the major recommendations of these reports and the framework of the Education Structural Adjustment Programme, government began to restructure pre-university education to meet national educational objectives.

Tertiary reform

3.20 The reforms of the tertiary system were started under the first Education Sector Adjustment Credit of 1986, supported through the Second Education Sector Adjustment Credit of 1990, and further elaborated in the 1991 White Paper on University Rationalization.¹¹

3.21 The Ministry of Education requested proposals from the tertiary institutions for inclusion in the proposed project in mid-1990. These proposal and others for system-wide development and financing plans were worked into an integrated and coherent proposal for tertiary education reform and development and presented to a World Bank identification mission in July 1991. In the same year government issued a White Paper on Tertiary Reform.

3.22 Prominent among the features of the tertiary reform are:

- (a) All institutions of higher learning come under the general supervision and direction of the Ministry of Education, especially in the areas of policy formulation and monitoring. Academic autonomy of the institutions, however, remains unchanged.
- (b) The Education Commission is to advise the Ministry of Education on all matters related to tertiary education, to assist in the formulation of policies on the totality of the national education system, and to act as a vehicle for continuous dialogue between government and the tertiary institutions.
- (c) Tertiary institutions such as diploma-awarding institutions are to be restructured to improve cost-effectiveness, upgrade the quality of teaching, and increase output. This involves establishing university colleges from the existing diploma-awarding institutions.
- (d) A university in the north of the country is to be established to increase access to tertiary education and introduce new action-oriented degree programmes in priority areas of development, including agriculture and industry.
- (e) A system of cost-sharing for the financing of tertiary education is established between government, students, and the private sector.
- (f) Tertiary institutions are to adjust their curricula so that, by 1994, they are compatible with that of the new senior secondary school system.
- (g) Distance education is to be pursued as an alternative mode of delivering and increasing access to university education.¹²

Public information campaign

3.23 An important feature of the education reform was a systematic and widespread campaign to inform educators and the public. In 1987, several months after the Secretary's pronouncement of the reform, government organised a forum for stakeholders and other groups to air their views. Participants included the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS), the Trade Union Congress (TUC), the Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools (CHASS), the Association of Principals of Technical Institutes (APTI), Principals Conference (PRINCOF), the Ghana Education Service (GES), and so on. This forum was intended as a campaign to inform these groups about the rationale and structure of the reforms, not to get their input or suggested amendments.

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3.24 As part of the public information campaign, in 1986 the National Planning Committee held a seminar at the University of Science and Technology at Kumasi. Representatives from all district administrations and groups such as revolutionary organs, churches, professional groups, and the Ghana Education Service participated. The aim of this seminar was to sensitize and inform these representatives of the objectives, structure and implications of the reforms so that they could, in turn, educate their membership.

3.25 Another dimension of the public information campaign was use of mass media—newspaper articles, radio discussions, television programs—and meetings with leaders and members of church groups and other organizations. The *Ghanaian Times*, a daily government newspaper, for example, devoted its back page to information and updates on the reforms. Officials at all levels of the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service used public gatherings such as durbars, speech and prize-giving days, Open Days, and other community meetings to educate people on the reforms. One problem emanating from the involvement of political figures in the education drive was that some, in their revolutionary zeal, did not always accurately present the reform to the people. This led to distortions and misrepresentations among the very large illiterate population.

Dissenting views

3.26 The provisions of the reform were not universally accepted. Dissenting views were expressed by the GNAT, NUGS, educators, the Christian Council of Ghana, the Bishops Conference, and other professional bodies, as well as by the general public. The included the following:

- (a) The competence of the average primary-grade-six child was too low to grapple with the junior secondary school curriculum.
- (b) The training of teachers required more time.
- (c) The pace of the reform was too fast.
- (d) Logistics were not well planned.
- (e) The reduction in the duration of pre-university education was too drastic.

3.27 The reform pronouncement had agitated many groups, which submitted their own views to government. Notable among these were GNAT and NUGS. The former, at its congress in November 1986, invited the Vice Chancellor of University of Ghana, Legon, to address its members. The congress used the newspaper as a forum for expressing its reservations and recommendations to government. The NUGS invited the Secretary of Education to explain more clearly the purpose and reason for the reforms. It used the occasion to clarify pertinent points and to offer suggestions. The crux of its recommendations are summarized here:

The NUGS recommends that the Junior Secondary School package should not be implemented in a rush. It proposes that a national Implementation Committee be set up to do feasibility studies and to see to the provision of vital ingredients like school buildings where there are no basic and vital equipment for teaching vocational, technical and science subjects, the required numbers of teachers well schooled in the various demands and challenges of the new system in order not to bungle this fine package. Grave doubts were expressed as to whether the economy could shoulder the burden of having to provide infrastructure, equipment and teaching skills in all schools in the country.¹³

3.28 Generally, dissenting views were not tolerated, creating tension between policy implementers, students of tertiary institutions, academic elites, certain professional bodies, and the Catholic Secretariat, just to mention a few. For instance, students in the tertiary institutions, particularly the universities, demonstrated and submitted memoranda to government on their reservations about the reform. These demonstrations led

to the dismissal from the university of some members of the NUGS Executive Committee and the Students Representative Council of the University of Ghana. This, in turn, led to prolonged struggles between students and government until those who had been dismissed were called back.

3.29 Seven years later, the Education Review Committee (set up in 1994) echoed the concerns about omission of religious education from the curriculum, extension of the senior secondary school programme by at least a year, and the overloaded nature of the curriculum. They contended that if some of these views had been considered and incorporated into the reforms, the abysmal performance of the first cohort of the senior secondary school graduates in 1993 could have been averted.

3.30 An observation by a former GES Director General is illuminating. Instructional time had declined, content of the curriculum had increased, and the available time to the teacher had been further tasked with more paper work generated by the continuous assessment system. Yet government did not allow debate on the package. It appears that the reform took off without clear insight into the state of education in the country.¹⁴ One person commented that the reform was pushed through by “six dedicated very passionate people who believed they had something good to offer the country and went all out to implement their vision.”

4 - IMPLEMENTATION

Institutional strategies

4.1 Based on the belief that the reform at the primary level had begun in 1975, the 1987 reform started at the middle of the education ladder—at the JSS level.

4.2 The implementation of the reform started with a school mapping exercise to gather statistics and information to aid in planning. At the start of the reforms, there had been hardly any data on school sites and population, and the over 4,000 middle schools had been heavily concentrated in a few towns. A committee made up of district assistant directors of education, district political heads (district secretaries), national service personnel, and members of the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) was formed in each of the 110 districts in the country. These committees were to identify the middle schools, determine the distances between them, and propose the new sites for junior secondary schools (JSS). They were also to gather statistics on the number of pupils and teachers, qualifications of teachers, and recommended number of JSSs in each community.

4.3 This was an intensive, useful exercise, which lasted three months in early 1987. Though the involvement of community representatives on the committee made them feel part of the whole exercise, the data tended to be unreliable because they were sometimes biased by the community's self-interest and the methods they used to collect them.

4.4 The analysis of the data—as well as construction of schools—involved a large capital outlay provided by a World Bank sector adjustment loan.

4.5 JSS school buildings were adequate but in poor condition because the middle school buildings that were converted to JSSs had not been renovated for years. In 1986 there were 5,462 middle and JSS schools in the country. After the school mapping exercise some were amalgamated. When the reform took off in September 1987, there were 5,260 JSSs the country. Though the number of schools in 1987 was smaller than that of the previous year, the schools now had a wider coverage, and the distances that students traveled to get to school were much shorter.

4.6 Using the data collected, the daily newspapers published names of teachers and their category and the venue for in-service teacher-training programmes. Throughout the country, the ministry embarked on a massive training drive. Subject-matter experts wrote syllabi and developed textbooks. Teachers were trained for the new syllabi, methodologies appropriate for subjects and themes, and the instructional materials that could be developed.

Teachers

4.7 A large number of Ghanaians who were qualified teachers had left the country during the period of economic decline in the late 1970s, and teachers in many in critical subject areas were not available at the start of the reform. Teachers of science, technical studies, and Ghanaian languages were in critical short supply. In addition to exposure to the new syllabus, teachers urgently needed a change in attitude and improvement in motivation.

4.8 Because the majority of practicing teachers were not qualified, improving teacher training received high priority. The four-year post-middle teacher training programmes were phased out, and there was a

marked increase of intake into post-secondary institutions. Teachers holding the middle school teaching certificate were moved to primary schools. All teachers were given in-service education and training.

4.9 Policy implementers were faced with a situation in which teachers were scarce, yet they could not use post-middle school trained teachers because their level of competence was deemed too low to teach the JSS curriculum. Experienced teachers in the primary schools who were not technically qualified for their positions were replaced. Yet their replacements were not those who knew the methods to do the job, but those with a higher level of academic training who did not know teaching methods. This had serious repercussions on the teaching and learning process. Government's choice of focussing on academic qualifications rather than teaching experience and skills proved to be unfortunate and underscores the need to place the consideration of availability and training of teachers at the heart of reform strategies.

Resources for the reform

Infrastructure

4.10 In Ghana the responsibility for providing school facilities rests on the shoulders of the district administration. The other sources of finance to cover capital costs are the local communities, religious organizations, and foreign donors. The reform of 1987 emphasized the responsibility of the district administration.

4.11 A process was initiated whereby the local communities contributed to the building of JSS schools and workshops. Chiefs and community leaders, in concert with the political wings of government, were to mobilize people for the task. Most communities had not done this by the time the reform began. Their failure was due not to opposition to the programme but to their inability to find the resources to provide school workshops (for practical training) within the space of eight months. As a result, in September 1987, few communities had managed to provide workshops for their schools. Since the thrust of the programme was to depart from theoretical instruction, the absence of workshops made it much harder to offer practical training—a critical objective of the reform.

4.12 The central government provided the equipment and benches for these workshops. Every district received a grant of 10 million *cedis* to provide benches. A standardized design was adopted by the Ministry of Education and local carpenters contracted to produce them. But many did not deliver, and for those who did, there was often no place to put them.

Equipment

4.13 Some technical, agriculture, and science equipment was available in the schools at the start of the reform, but not there was not enough to supply every school in order that all teachers could use the activity/discovery method of teaching emphasized in the curriculum of the new syllabi. Basic tools needed for effective learning were selected by panels of experts. Policy planners imported prepacked and pre-labeled equipment for the schools. The World Bank Sector Adjustment Project provided technical and agricultural tools. About 7,000 kits were imported and supplied to about 5,260 JSS schools, and a surplus is available for newly established schools.¹⁵ The Overseas Development Agency (ODA) provided science equipment. Here again kits were imported prepacked. Each kit contained basic science equipment for use in exposing pupils to science and technology. Every school received a kit. The ministry solicited the help of the military, police, and other organizations to assist with the transportation of the equipment to the schools.

Capacity building

4.14 To consolidate and strengthen the benefits achieved by the reform programme, a Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation Division was established in May 1988 at the Ministry of Education with financial support from UNDP. The division supports the sector-wide programme in budgeting, policy analysis, monitoring, collection and collation of statistical data and analyses, and medium-term planning. The new division:

- (a) Established a statistical database for the whole sector, to form the basis for a comprehensive management system for the entire ministry;
- (b) Established a computer centre to facilitate the treatment and analysis of required data for policy decisions;
- (c) Prepared courses on planning, budgeting, enrollment projections, manpower demand, and micro-planning;
- (d) Organized seminars and workshops for the staff of the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service at headquarters, regional, and district levels in the fields of planning, statistics and budgeting.¹⁶

4.15 Community participation in development projects has been part of Ghana's tradition since independence in 1957. Schools, health centres, public toilets, markets, and drainage systems are constructed mostly through labour mobilized by town and village committees. Although Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) have been set up in all public and private schools in order to raise development funds and mobilize community labour for school-related projects, members of the association are not involved in management issues of the school.

4.16 To get communities more involved in the activities of the schools and thereby sustain the reform, government took two giant steps. First, community leaders were expected, under the World Bank Primary School Development project, to participate in the selection of head teachers of their local schools. District Assembly Common Funds were created in all the districts from which funds are utilized for, among other things, the construction and rehabilitation of school buildings. Decision-making on school facilities, equipment, and furnishing now rested primarily with the district assemblies, which are composed of elected members. It was not uncommon to hear on Radio Ghana and read in the dailies, concerns and measures by communities to reduce school drop-out rate, teenage pregnancies, as well as improvement in the quality of education.

Donor support and coordination

Donor support

4.17 Prior to 1986, a lack of funding had contributed to the failure of most education reforms in the country and kept good reform proposals on the shelf. With its strong ambition to reform the education system, government did not leave any stone unturned in restructuring the nation's economic base to bring it into conformity with the credibility levels required by the World Bank. With this condition met, Ghana had the opportunity of negotiating for credits and grants to finance a colossal education reform. Between the inception of the Education Reform Programme in 1987 and the end of 1994, the sector received approximately \$US400 million in credits and grants from the World Bank, USAID, UNICEF, ODA, and other donors. A greater part of this donor assistance was directed to basic education. It supported the development of new curricula, syllabi, textbooks, in-service training for teachers; it helped to restructure and strengthen management and

to provide classroom pavilions, furniture, and houses for head teachers and teachers. The World Bank alone provided US\$ 232.1 million in credits for seven key projects. This package is one of the largest World Bank funded education programmes in the world.¹⁷

4.18 Apart from the World Bank credits, several donor agencies came to the aid of Ghana in her reform implementation. Table 1 shows the credits and grants provided by the donor agencies and the purpose for which the assistance was granted.

TABLE 1: Donors' support for education reforms in Ghana

DONOR	TOTAL CREDIT/GRANT (US\$ million)	PURPOSE
World Bank	232.1	General improvement of basic secondary and tertiary education
USAID	35.0	Improvement of primary education
AfDB	20.0	Tertiary education
Canadian CIDA	14.0	Basic and technical education
British ODA	8.0	Literacy and teacher training for basic education
Norway	4.0	Literacy and school pavilions for basic education
OPEC Fund	(not specified)	School pavilions and sanitation
WFP	(not specified)	School feeding
UNICEF	(not specified)	Primary and pre-school
Switzerland	(not specified)	Secondary school equipment
The Saudi Fund	(not specified)	Secondary school development
GTZ	(not specified)	Vocational school development
UNDP & ILO	(not specified)	For institutional strengthening

Source: World Bank, 1994 Report on Ghana

4.19 Under its Primary Education Project (PREP), USAID gave Ghana a grant of \$35 million. As noted earlier, the reform of 1987 was conceived as a continuation of the education reform launched by a previous government. Assuming the reform was already in place at the primary level, the reformers in 1987 focussed on the junior and senior secondary levels. But public criticism of weaknesses in primary education attracted the attention of USAID, which wanted to help strengthen the policy and institutional framework required to assure an effective, equitable, and financially sustainable primary education system in Ghana by the year 2000. The PREP project was established in 1990 as a subunit of the Project Management Unit (discussed below). Conditionalities related to school financing, policy formation, and programme implementation were spelt out to ensure that grant funds were properly utilized.

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Donor coordination

4.20 Prior to 1987, donor agencies operated independently of each other. Each stated its own terms and conditions for assistance, without any coordination among them. Moreover, top personnel of the GES, who had access to donor funds, had been prosecuted for embezzling and misappropriating millions of dollars of state funds. In an effort to make better use of all donor funds, the donor agencies demanded that a special unit be established in the ministry. It was intended that the unit would be an integral part of its Office of Evaluation, Planning, Monitoring and Budgeting. But in the press to establish a management body competent to coordinate donor funds, the Project Management Unit (PMU) was formed, independent of the PBME.

4.21 The PMU has four main divisions, each of which is headed by a director and manages a project area. A director-general manages the entire unit. PMU meetings are held weekly. For closer collaboration, the PMU receives regular feedback from its management, procurement, disbursement and civil works sub-units. It shares the expertise among projects in handling all issues affecting the on-going projects.

4.22 The PMU has become a forum for all donor-supported projects. It ensures that objectives and timing are strictly adhered to, monies released expeditiously, and activities monitored constantly. The PMU has eliminated inefficiencies in the implementation process and thus advanced the reform to its present stage. By dint of a monitoring mechanism introduced by the World Bank: (i) funds are released upon the submission of detailed cost estimates, and (ii) the release of further funds is subject to proper accounting for earlier disbursements. It is only after these conditions have been satisfied that further negotiations for more funding are allowed.

Leadership, consultation, and participation during implementation

4.23 A National Planning Committee for the Implementation of the Reforms was created after the forum of late February 1987. Although its membership was supposed to be made up of a cross-section of the population, the committee was not truly representative of the associations from which members were drawn. None of the key institutions or constituted bodies in the field of education was directly or formally represented. These groups were not invited to nominate committee members. Instead, the reform leaders selected individuals. For example, they appointed university lecturers to the committee, claiming these individuals represented the university, even when that was not the case. The reform leaders argued that time constraints and the need for rapid implementation—within the short space of one year—required that they select those who shared views consistent with the reforms. They needed a cadre of officials dedicated to the course of change if government was to be seen as credible by the financial institutions lending support. Thus, as one critic summarized, “bureaucrats became apostles for the propagation and implementation of the reforms.”

4.24 The reluctance of ministry and GES personnel to express critical views can be inferred from the lack of public discussion about two significant events in 1993. Primary school test results (Criterion Referenced Tests—CRT) and secondary examination results (Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination) provided ample reason to believe that the reform was not providing the expected outcomes. The CRT indicated that 95 percent of the sixth grade pupils had not mastered basic skills in mathematics and English. But this was not officially announced in Ghana when results first came out. Also, 95 percent of the candidates who sat for the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination in 1993—the first cohort of secondary students in the reform—failed to qualify to take the university entrance examination. This was made public only by a nongovernmental, noneducational body, the Institute of Economic Affairs, in June 1994.

5 - OUTCOMES—A NEW CYCLE OF POLICY ANALYSIS

5.1 In the light of the evidence and results now emerging from the reform process, this section examines government and public responses to the policies and implementation strategies adopted in the reform and how they have given rise to a new cycle of policy analysis.

5.2 The education reform of September 1987 was fully in place by December 1993. The former middle and secondary school structures had been replaced by the new junior and senior secondary structures. In the 1994–95 school year, the first cohort of the reform was eligible for university admission. Entrance of this cohort into the universities was preceded by structural and curricula modification of the universities' programmes between 1991 and 1993.

Major results of the reform

Learning outcomes

5.3 An important conditionality stipulated in the USAID project was the development and adoption of a policy on assessing students' scholastic achievement in English (reading, writing, oral) and mathematics. A Criterion-Referenced Testing (CRT) programme based on Ghanaian syllabi was developed and adopted for these subjects. A unit was set up in the PMU and charged with the development and administration of curriculum testing on a representative sample of sixth-grade pupils.

5.4 Pupils' performance at the basic level left much to be desired. It was estimated that only about 15 percent of grade six pupils could read. The result of the first CRT in 1992 is revealing. Of 11,488 grade six pupils sampled, only 1.1 percent correctly answered more than 55 percent of the items in mathematics. On the English items, only 2 percent of 11,586 grade six pupils answered more than 60 percent correctly.¹⁸ On the second CRT, conducted in 1993, performance was marginally improved, with correct responses to the same portion of items in mathematics and English at 2.1 percent and 5.3 percent respectively. The poor performance of pupils in English proficiency was confirmed in a similar study by the research team of the Centre for Research on Improving Quality of Primary Education in Ghana (CRIQPEG) based in the University of Cape Coast. The result of that study, conducted in 14 primary schools in the central region of Ghana, indicated that only 5 percent of pupils achieved full mastery of reading, writing, and speaking English.

5.5 Performance at the senior secondary school (SSS) level was also deplorable. Of 42,105 students who took the SSS certificate examination in 1993, 3.9 percent passed in nine subjects and 12.9 percent passed in seven or more subjects.¹⁹ Only 1,354 of the total of 42,105 candidates qualified to enter university. Although university entry requirements should not be the parameter for success or failure of the reform programme, comments from headmasters and headmistresses of senior secondary schools confirmed the low standard of attainment of the SSS students.²⁰

5.6 The confusion and anxiety that these results created among education officials and parents was enough to compel government to call for a prompt review of the entire reform. A popular weekly, *The Statesman*, published the concerns of an eminent educator, Professor Djangmah, once the Director-General of GES.

5.7 The education system still emphasizes academic achievement and access through secondary school to the university as its ultimate goal. No programme exists for terminal students and dropouts at JSS and SSS levels. Hence the great majority of school pupils and their parents measure success in terms of examination

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performance and judge the reform on the basis of examination results. By this measure, the reform has been found wanting.

Teacher education

5.8 One significant effect of the reform is the increase in the number of qualified teachers in the schools. According to government document *Basic Education—A Right*, the number of trained teachers has risen between the 1897–88 and 1992–93 school years from 58 percent to 68 percent at primary level and from 67 percent to 75 percent at the JSS level. For basic education as a whole the percent of trained teachers now stands at 71, but the shortage of trained teachers for vocational and technical skills remains serious. As a consequence, the practical training workshop concept at the JSS and the SSS levels remains a mirage. A survey of JSS and SSS reported that only 24 percent of the schools had functioning workshops.²¹

Enrollments

5.9 Structural changes and the commitment of human and financial resources to improving and expanding basic education have resulted in pupils' increased access to and participation in schooling. After the long period of stagnation prior to the reform, enrollments increased at all levels, and large regional and gender disparities among children in school are being reduced.

5.10 However, with a closer look at the rate of increase at each of three levels—primary, JSS and SSS—a different picture emerges. While enrollments have continuously increased at the SSS level, they declined between 1988 and 1990 at both primary and JSS levels. Although the decline in both cases is attributable to the rising private costs of education, the decline at the JSS level reflects parents' initial negative attitude toward the reform. To avoid JSS completely, some parents forced their wards in sixth grade to take the last session of the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) in 1989–90 so as to gain direct admission to the five-year SSS programme. Thus, while enrollment in the JSS declined sharply in 1990–91, that of the SSS showed a marked increase that same year. With the CEE abolished and the middle school programme scrapped, school enrollment is on the increase again.

5.11 The gross enrollment rate for the six-to-eleven-year-old population, which stood at 73 percent in 1987–88, had risen to 77 percent by 1992–93, leaving 23 percent not in school. Similarly, the first grade enrollment ratio of 84 percent in 1987–88 increased to 86 percent by 1991, but with the introduction of fees at the district level it fell back to 79 percent in 1992. Thus, enrollment declined about 5 percent during the fifth year of the reform, and relatively high dropout rates at the basic level still persist.

Infrastructure

5.12 The effect of the heavy injection of foreign assistance in infrastructure led to the provision of over 1,000 pavilions for the new JSSs. Under the USAID project, the weakest community in each district was selected and given a million *cedis* to improve its school buildings. As a result of improved financial standing through higher taxation and improved revenue collection, some district assemblies have turned their attention to renovating existing schools and building new ones to replace temporary structures. The number of classrooms at the primary level grew from 53,914 in 1988–89 to 58,230 in 1992–93.

5.13 However, the physical structures of both old and new schools are still in deplorable condition. Most of the old structures have not seen any rehabilitation for years. One study found that 50 percent of the primary schools had inadequate classroom furnishings such as desks, chairs, and cupboards.²² Recently there has been an attempt to build quarters for head teachers at some remote primary schools, but this policy has been questioned by the village communities. Why pay 7 million *cedis* to house one person when pupils and teachers must survive in dangerous classroom sheds open to the vagaries of weather?

Change of political context

5.14 In April 1992, a change in Ghana's constitution replaced the Provisional National Defence Council (PDNC) with the National Democratic Congress (NDC). The accompanying change in the political, economic, and education context has ushered in a new orientation to the education reform. The government now has a constitutional obligation to provide universal, free basic education by the year 2020. This task requires enormous financial and human resources, much of which must come from outside the Ministry of Education. Cabinet leadership has also changed since the new constitution, bringing in a new minister.

5.15 The education sector is now in a second cycle of policy analysis—one that is being carried out in a manner notably different from that of the mid-1980s. Thus, the arbitrary dismissals, compulsory retirements, and unexpected transfers that characterized reform implementation under the military regime have given way to a new order. This has allowed a more open and critical review of the education system than was tolerated at the outset of the reform.

5.16 Furthermore, the liberalization of the economic and political system in Ghana and the performance of government in its overall reform has enhanced its image and increased its leverage with donors. Donors are prepared to give more financial support to the reform. A condition of that support is additional critical data and analyses that will initiate a new policy adjustment framework.

5.17 It is against this background that the educational leadership has organized a series of fora, studies and seminars involving a cross section of the society, stakeholders in the education system, and donor agencies to strengthen the knowledge base. Public pressure has also influenced the change in policy climate.

Consultations

5.18 In 1992, before the senior secondary students had performed so poorly on the December 1993 examination, the Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools (CHASS) had argued that three years was not enough time to complete the syllabus. Through the Minister of Education, they petitioned government for an initial extension of the three-year SSS programme to four years to enable them to prepare adequately the first cohorts for the secondary school leaving examination. The lack of textbooks, late arrival of core instructional materials, and lack of adequate teacher participation in the new curriculum had deprived students of optimum preparation. Still suspicious of the intentions of the CHASS, government did not accept its recommendations. With the shocking results on the examination, the critics of the reform were vindicated, and government became more sensitive to concerns of the education establishment and the public.

5.19 In March 1994 the Ministry of Education organized a one-day National Forum on Basic Education to the Year 2000 for about 150 representative educators, including teachers, head teachers, circuit and district supervisors, government departments outside the Ministry of Education, donors, and technical specialists, to review reform policies and experience. The Minister of Education established the purpose of the forum by noting that:

Since 1988 we have been able to reorganize the financing and rehabilitate the infrastructure of the education system. But today we see that this is not enough. In spite of the excellent work that has been started, pupils are not learning what is expected. The great majority of primary-6 pupils are functionally illiterate in English and Mathematics. Without functional literacy pupils won't gain comprehension and skills in other subjects, they won't be prepared for further education, nor will they be prepared for the world of work. How can we justify continuing expenditures on expanding a system that doesn't lead to learning? Reaching a target of universal participation in primary schooling is not a sensible goal unless that participation leads to learning and skills. To examine strategies for providing effective basic education, to revitalize the teaching and learning in the schools—this is the focus of our policies, and of this forum.

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The document that was produced, *Towards Learning for All*, laid out a broad program of action to be considered for improving the quality and performance in basic education.

5.20 In June 1994 the minister convened a national open forum in Accra that focussed on the secondary education level. In attendance were groups such as GNAT, CHASS, NUGS, and TUC, as well as the general public. At that forum, the minister said:

We have heard a lot from the public and from the media on the results of the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination published by the West African Examinations Council. Views have been expressed by concerned citizens of the country and well-meaning educationists, and more views are still coming in. May I take this opportunity to formally invite institutions and individuals who may feel inclined so to do to submit to my office memoranda, comments and other views to enable the Committee I am putting in place to consider them in the review exercise which will soon be under way. I can assure you that every input will be seriously considered.²³

5.21 This forum and the new ministry leadership led to the formation in July 1994 of an Education Reform Review Committee, composed of 53 educators from all levels of the system, representing key institutions (GES, GNAT, CHASS, post-secondary training institutions, universities, and key donors). The committee, under the chairmanship of a former pro-vice chancellor of the University of Cape Coast, comprised eminent educators from the universities, heads of second-cycle institutions, and officials from the GES headquarters. Members agreed unanimously to set up two subcommittees instead of three, namely Basic Education and Senior Secondary Education. The rationale for setting up one subcommittee for primary and JSS education was to focus on basic education as a composite whole, comprising primary and junior secondary education, thereby ensuring continuity and providing linkages between primary and junior secondary schools. The committee studied memoranda and other documents submitted by the public to get a clear view of what people thought about the issues at stake.

5.22 Among the major terms of reference for the committee were:

- (a) Courses should be arranged to create linkages from primary to junior secondary level and from junior secondary level to senior secondary level;
- (b) The number of compulsory (core) subjects at all levels should be determined;
- (c) The number of optional subjects (electives) at the senior secondary school level should be determined;
- (d) The content of the curricula, syllabi, and their accompanying textbooks and other instructional materials should be examined with regard to their suitability, adequacy, and availability.

5.23 The committee has called for a reduction of subjects taught at the primary school level and an increase in instructional time. Although the report is awaiting government's white paper, the Ministry of Education has issued a statement in the *Ghanaian Times* rejecting the 6-3-4 structure recommended by the committee.

Strengthening the knowledge base

5.24 The first phase of the reform programme in 1987 focused on restructuring and rehabilitating the basic education system. Critical inputs, including textbooks, classrooms, and in-service training were provided. While these inputs were necessary, they did not seem sufficient to transform the behaviour of teachers and the learning of the pupils. The initiation of the second phase of the reform, marked by the consultations of 1994, is focussed on issues of rationalization of curriculum, school management, motivation

of teachers, community participation, and reaching those who are now out of school, as well as continuing to improve the quality of instruction.

5.25 In order to move toward universal enrollment and to estimate the resources required to do so, the ministry has collected data and made projections. It estimates that the proportion of children entering first grade will increase from the 1992–93 level of 85 percent of the age cohort to a 90 percent level by the year 2000. At an annual rate of increase of 157,038 pupils in primary school enrollments, the gross enrollment rate is projected to reach 87 percent by the year 2000, and 100 percent by the year 2005. The ministry's plan calls for sufficient resources to improve learning, not just increase enrollments.

5.26 In July 1994, shortly following the establishment of the National Reform Review Committee, the ministry organized a series of meetings and sector studies called the Ministry of Education–Donor Forum. The purpose of the forum is to help the ministry and donors collaborate on the design and implementation of studies and analyses leading to an education sector strategy. In February 1995, the ministry convened a meeting of all major donors and ministerial divisions to review the status of sector studies and analyses. A workshop followed that defined the following key areas for further, in-depth analyses:

- (a) Teaching and learning, including (i) curriculum, (ii) instructional methods, (iii) assessment of pupil learning, and (iv) teachers and teacher in-service and pre-service training;
- (b) Management and quality assurance, including (i) management functions, and (ii) structures and performance at school, circuit, district, regional and central levels;
- (c) Access, participation and infrastructure, including (i) enrollment projections based on studies of supply and demand specifically for girls, under served areas and for the poor, and (ii) design alternatives for classrooms and facilities.
- (d) Costs and financing, including (i) analysis of unit costs, (ii) the wage bill and staff utilization, (iii) non-wage costs (e.g. texts, materials, in-service training, supervision), (iv) capital costs, (v) cost sharing and cost recovery, and (vi) strategic choices for financing the reform.

5.27 Studies that required field work, such as examining schools, teacher training colleges, and the management system at school, circuit, district, and regional levels were undertaken, and analyses made of the costs and financing of policy proposals. A school mapping exercise is to be launched throughout the districts to look at household demand for education and distribution, location, and adequacy of schools. The data and analyses from this exercise are intended to contribute to an overall sectoral strategy for improving the problems of quality and learning.

5.28 In a simulation of the strategic planning process based on a costing of policy intentions, a capital budget was proposed that put 194 billion *cedis* into basic education. This represents a revolution in patterns of capital expenditure, which have hitherto focussed on secondary and tertiary education.

Institutional issues

5.29 The new policy analysis cycle has involved a number of administrative and institutional changes. Presently there is a bill before parliament to re-establish the Ghana Education Service Council, the abolishment of which in the early 1980s gave the Secretary (Minister) of Education direct and absolute control over staffing and implementation matters. Re-establishment of this council would diffuse power, making the appointment of teachers and professional staff relatively independent of ministerial and political intervention, and re-establish the role of the ministry as policy-maker and the Ghana Education Service as a policy implementer.

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5.30 Another institutional change recently effected is the establishment of a Tertiary Council, replacing many of the functions of the defunct Council for Higher Education. Prior to the reform, tertiary education was given special consideration, and the Council of Higher Education answered directly to the President. But when the reform began, the Higher Education Council was abolished, and its powers were assumed directly by the Minister of Education, who directly controlled the policies and operations of the universities. The establishment of a Tertiary Council brings a wider range of representative institutions and bodies formally into the policy and planning processes.

5.31 A third process underway is the decentralization of power from the central ministry to districts. This process, which reflects a strong political commitment of government, has been adopted to give greater responsibility to districts and communities in the management and supervision of schools. It is expected to result in a greater degree of local participation in school affairs. The new bill for the re-establishment of the Ghana Education Service Council includes the setup of District Education Committees, which are to have planning and oversight functions. An issue yet to be addressed is the disparity between local resource capacities and the new responsibilities intended for districts and communities.

6 - CONCLUSIONS: LESSONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 What lessons can be learned from Ghana's experience? In the first place, the school mapping exercise of 1986, which gathered vital statistical data to enable decisions and management strategies, was useful. Presently, as part of the plans to launch Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) in Ghana, the Ministry of Education is to undertake another large-scale school mapping exercise at the district level to update data and ensure that schools are sited within reasonable distances to population concentrations.

6.2 The involvement of the local communities in locating sites for their schools, as was the case in the school mapping exercise, is commendable. It makes the communities feel a part of the whole process. It also avoids possible litigation and agitation over being side-stepped or left out in the provision of schools.

6.3 Government also ensured that structures are put in place to improve project management skills and supervision. These include the Project Management Unit and the Planning, Monitoring, Budgeting and Evaluation unit. These have contributed in no small way to the level of success achieved with resources provided by the donor agencies.

6.4 The decentralization of education administration to the district levels and the subsequent strengthening of the personnel has facilitated educational delivery. The district officers are now headed by better qualified directors of education and they are assisted by the group of assistant directors. Many decisions can now be made and processed at the district level. Hence, the frustrations teachers and other personnel in the Education Service encountered in carrying almost every small issue to the headquarters level has been minimized. Supervision is bound to improve, and district directorates have some measure of autonomy to initiate education programs within the broader framework of national education goals.

6.5 Though started at the basic level, the reform has tackled all the other levels of education to ensure that changes at the base have their corresponding inputs at the higher levels. Particularly, efforts at increasing access to tertiary education have been commendable. Though much needs to be done, what has been put in place so far is a fair indication that the dream of opening up tertiary education to a larger population will become a reality.

6.6 People generally resist change and will reluctantly relinquish the security that an old system offers. Thus, sufficient time must always be allowed between the intention and proclamation of reform policies and their actual implementation. This allows the populace to become convinced and elicits their voluntary support and participation in the reform process. What is done in a rush often encounters serious problems because it leaves little time to stop and ponder the effects of steps taken, especially in education. Even when responding to a crisis situation, policy-makers must allow sufficient time to analyze the situation and to bring together experts to brainstorm problems and issues. New strategies should be pilot-tested to correct pitfalls before applied on a large scale.

6.7 The economies of developing countries have rarely been strong enough to initiate, support, and sustain reforms that demand a huge financial outlay. Thus, the involvement of donor agencies and bilateral organizations will continue to be necessary for large-scale overhaul of education systems. Governments should therefore put their houses in order, prioritize their needs, and be in a position to negotiate conditionalities that are manageable and will not jeopardize the welfare of their citizenry. On the other hand, a fully adequate financial base may not be necessary before the implementation of an education reform policy. All that may be needed is a strong political will, determination, leadership, and marketability of the reform.

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6.8 There is the need for African countries to develop a culture of tolerance of dissenting views and not always to regard them as “anti-progress.” Those who do not share the same vision as the state’s can sometimes go a long way to enrich proposed policies and create an awareness of weak spots in reasoning. In Ghana, those who raised questions early in the reform about certain questions were later vindicated when the flaws became evident. As an example of how government can respond positively to problems, after the poor results of the first cohort of SSS candidates were released in 1993, consultative bodies were formed to review the education system. Reform is not one short declaration but an on-going activity with flexibility to review strategies as the realities of the circumstances dictate, and it requires ongoing dialogue with all interested parties.

6.9 In systems in which strong elitist opposition is imminent, a top-down, authoritarian approach may be more feasible than piecemeal or gradual transformation. The disadvantage of such an approach, however, is that it can create an atmosphere of fear and kill initiative, creativity, and the spirit of cooperation necessary for the effectiveness of any organization. Without full and open consultations of all those concerned with the education system, the best decisions may not be made, and significant adjustments may be required at a later time. Hence, governments should not be seen to pursue goals at the expense of maintaining harmony among those who implement the programs. When an environment of give-and-take characterizes the implementation of a reform, bottlenecks, inherent weaknesses, and unanticipated issues that might threaten its success can be corrected or avoided.

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1. Ministry of Education, *Education Reforms Programme: Policy guidelines on basic education*. Accra: 1994
 2. UNICEF, *Education Mid-term Review*, Accra, UNICEF, 1993
 3. Ministry of Education, *Education Commission Report on Basic Education*, Accra, August, 1986.
 4. For example, between 1983 and 1995, the position of Director-General of GES has been occupied by six different persons, two of whom did not even have a background in education theory and practice
 5. Ghana, *Report of Education Commission on Basic Education*, 1986, (Preamble No. 4 p. iii).
 6. *Ibid.*, paragraph 193.
 7. *Ibid.*, Paragraph 192.
 8. Ministry of Education and Culture (1986), *The Educational Reforms Programme Policy guidelines on Basic Education*, pp. 2-3
 9. The 17 years used to describe the duration of pre-university education was misleading. It was calculated as follows: six years primary education, plus four years middle school, plus five years secondary education, plus two years sixth form education. In practice, however, most pupils did not attend the full four years of middle school. Some pupils sat and passed the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) in primary six, middle form 1 or form 2 and then left for secondary school. Others sat from JSS form 1, 2 or 3, and still others sat after the sixth or seventh grade from the preparatory schools. Only very weak pupils or those with some peculiar problem ran the full length of the middle school before sitting for the CEE. Thus, in practice, the duration of pre-university education ranged from 13 years or less for those who sat for CEE in primary six to the theoretical maximum of 17 years.
 10. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-10.
 11. Government White Paper on University Rationalization, 1991, pp. 60-61.
 12. *Ibid.* pp. 64-68
 13. The National Union of Ghana Student Reaction to PNDCs New Educational Reforms - Memorandum - 1986.

14. Djangmah, J.S. (1994), *Educational Reforms in Ghana: The Dream and its Implications*. A memorandum to the Education Reform Review Committee, p.5.
15. GES, Basic Education Division, 1987.
16. Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, *Public Investment Programme 1991-1993, Vol. 1, Main Report*, April 1991
17. World Bank (1994), *Ghana: First Education Sector Adjustment Credit (Credit 1744-GH) Project Completion Report No. 12622*, Washington DC.
18. UNICEF, *Education Mid-term Review*, Accra, 1993. Ministry of Education , *Education Reforms Programme: Policy guidelines on basic education*, Accra, 1994.
19. Djangmah, J.S. (1994), *Educational Reforms in Ghana: The Dream and its Implications*, A memorandum to the Education Reform Review Committee,
20. Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools. *Review of Education Programme*, 1992; and *Review of the Education Reform Programme*, 1994.
21. Amenuke, S.K. (1993), *A background paper prepared for the National Programme of Action*.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Report of the Education Reform Review Committee*, 1994, p.3.

The formation of an effective national education policy is central in the approach adopted by many African countries to reform the education sector.

The DAE, in close cooperation with the U.S. Agency for International Development, has supported six case studies on the process of education policy formation in Africa.

The case studies, written by African researchers, reflect a variety of experiences in the cycle of policy formation, articulation, dissemination, and implementation in the following countries: Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritius, Mozambique, and Uganda.