

# **Policy Evaluation Studies: Pro-Poor Interventions within the Education Sector**

**Ministry of Education, May 2011**

## Contents

Acknowledgement .....	2
1. Introduction .....	3
2. Methodology.....	5
3. Policy Background.....	8
4. Literature Review .....	11
5. Results.....	13
School Uniform .....	13
Capitation Grant.....	15
Exercise Books.....	17
School Feeding Programme .....	18
6. Impact Assessment .....	20
7. Conclusions and Recommendations.....	23

## Acknowledgement

The Policy Evaluation Study of Pro-Poor Interventions was undertaken to identify any implementation issues relating to these measures, which form the cornerstones of the Ministry of Education's commitment to increasing access to education for Ghana's school children.

We are grateful to Mrs Emelia Aning, Director of PBME who made this study possible through her support and assistance to the Research Team. Mr. Matthew Karikari-Ababio, Head of Monitoring and Evaluation Unit initiated the studies, led the Evaluation Research Team and directed all aspects of the project. Special mention must be made of Mr Bernard Ayensu (PBME), Mr Patrick Arthur (PBME), Mr Ernest Otoo (PBME), Ms Eva Oberg (ODI Fellow) and Mr Elliot Lamptey (PBME).

They were supported by EMIS personnel in the Ministry of Education, GES personnel at the national, regional, district and school level. We wish finally to thank all persons whose ideas, data, encouragement and contributions have enriched this report.

## 1. Introduction

This report considers the implementation of poverty alleviation measures within the education sector, namely the Capitation Grant, School Uniform, Exercise Book and School Feeding programmes. These interventions are cornerstones of the Ministry of Education's commitment to increasing access to education for Ghana's school children. The interventions are designed to stimulate demand for education by removing both the direct and indirect costs for education. The Capitation Grant was introduced to enable schools to stop charging compulsory fees and was thus a crucial policy element in contributing to universal access to free basic education. Free school uniforms and exercise books intend to address the indirect costs of schooling which can otherwise children from poorer backgrounds from sending their children to school. The last intervention, providing a free school meal to all pupils, acts as an incentive for parents to release their children to go to school as part of the daily burden of feeding the child has been absorbed by the school. The report will consider these interventions in three regards:

- Targeting of the resource  
Two of the interventions in question (Capitation Grant and Exercise Books) are universal and there is thus no targeting of resources: each pupil in a Ghana public basic school is entitled to equal coverage. In the case of the School Uniform and School Feeding Programme the interventions are targeted and designed to reach the neediest pupils in Ghana. This report will therefore attempt to ascertain whether this is the case presently.
- Tracking of resource flows  
The impact of any intervention is dependent on the resource flow in question reaching the intended recipient. Previous studies have found evidence of leakage and delays within the distribution channels for the interventions, especially for Capitation Grant (CDD 2010, GNECC 2010) and School Uniforms (GNECC, 2010). This study aims to track the flow of resources from the national level along the distribution chain to the intended recipient.
- Impact of the intervention  
The above policies are by their nature designed to reduce the economic burden on parents for sending their children by school, not only removing the direct costs of education (capitation grant was introduced to stop schools charging fees) but also the indirect costs such as providing uniform and learning materials. Enrollment figures are thus an important consideration in considering whether the policies have been successful but it is difficult to isolate the effects of the individual interventions from wider phenomena within the education sector. As such, the survey exercise included interviewing key stakeholders on their perceived impact of the policies. It was assumed that stakeholders such as Head Teachers who are closely involved with the end use of the interventions to judge the relative value of the different impacts for their impact on enhanced access to education.

The report combines primary research carried out by the PBME team as well as highlighting findings from internal Monitoring and Evaluation and audit activities undertaken by the implementing agencies, alongside findings from a number of external studies which have addressed this question. The primary research includes qualitative and quantitative data collection by members of the PBME division within the Ministry in five of Ghana's southern regions: Greater Accra, Central, Eastern, Western and Volta. In

each region two districts were selected for further study and within each district two schools. Due to the limited time and resources available for this study it was not possible to consider a nationally representative sample and thus the findings from this report cannot be used to make further generalizations, the findings of the realities in the field with regards to the implementation of these interventions is judged to be of significant interest nonetheless.

## 2. Methodology

This study forms part of the MoE's monitoring and evaluation activities. The study aims to investigate the implementation and impact of poverty alleviation measures within the education sector, specifically the capitation grant, school uniform, school feeding and free exercise books programmes. Due to financial constraints all interventions were considered in the same data collection exercise which in turn placed constraints on the number of schools and districts that could be analysed. A major limitation of the exercise was the standard of record keeping at the district level. This meant that for some of the interventions the tracking could not be undertaken fully from Headquarters to the school/pupil level. Interesting findings from the tracking survey are however highlighted where sufficient data could be collected. The poor record keeping means that timeliness of data is a problem for districts. In future studies PBME should therefore allow a longer time horizon for collecting data and provide the districts with more warning and details about what data will be required.

### Sample

Five of the southern regions within Ghana participated in this study: Eastern, Central, Greater Accra, Volta and Western. Two districts were randomly selected within each region and then following an interview with DEO staff two schools were selected in which either all or a majority of the implementations were in place. The full list of districts and attendant schools is outlined in the table below:

REGION	DISTRICT	SCHOOL
Central	Awutu Senya	Awutu D/A Prim
		Awutu D/A JHS
	Assin North	Assin Nduaso Pri
		Wurakese Station Pri
Western	Shamaa	Ata Na Ata Pri
		Inchaban D/A School
	Ahanta West	Ankyernyin Basic School
		Agona D/A Basic School
Greater Accra	Ga South	Ngleshie Amanfrom D/A 3
		Ngleshie Amanfrom D/A 4
	Dangme West	Asebi D/A Pri
		Ayikuma Methodist Basic School
Volta	South Tongu	Dorkploame Primary
		Agbarkofe R/C Primary
	Kpando	Kpando Gabi D/A Primary
		Vakpo Adome Primary
Eastern	Suhum Kraboa Coaltar	Nana Kwaku Gyasi D/A JHS
		Obomofe Densua Meth. Pri
	Asuogyaman	Akwamufie Methodist Pri and JHS
		Apegusu L/A Presby

The constraints outlined above mean that the sample selected is not nationally representative and due to its limited breadth rigorous quantitative analysis is not possible. Although it is therefore not possible to draw wider conclusions from this study in isolation, it is hoped that the findings regarding how these interventions are implemented in the field will be useful in itself.

## **Study design**

The study uses both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Stakeholders were interviewed at GES Headquarters, District Education Offices and at the school level. Survey information was collected on the capitation grant, school uniforms, exercise books and the school feeding programme. The interviews gathered information about the targeting, timelines, extent of resource flows and perceived impacts. In addition to the survey data collected from these stakeholders, financial information and supporting documentation was collected from the head quarters, districts and schools in order to undertake vertical tracking of the resource flows in question. One of the limitations encountered in undertaking this study was the poor record keeping at the district level. As such, comprehensive information was not available for each district; the findings are reported by intervention where information was available.

Tracking of the Capitation Grant focused on the current academic year 2010/11. At the time the field work was undertaken two tranches of the Capitation grant should have reached schools. The exercise book tracking survey focused on the 2009/10 disbursement, which should arrive before the start of the 2010/11 year. Information on flows of school uniform were collected for the period since the policy's inception, the 2009/10 academic year. GSFP is cross sectoral and overseen by the Ministry of Local Government rather than MoE, which means that the distribution process is not managed by the DEOs, but rather by the specially appointed DICs. Due to time and resource constraints it was not possible to visit these bodies in addition to the DEOs in each district and thus adequate information about resource flows was not captured to track this intervention. Data was however collected from the HQ level about targeting and at the school level regarding the impact of the programme.

A survey was developed and undertaken by PBME staff with experience in undertaking field work.

## **Targeting**

Initial interviews with HQ staff and desk research were undertaken to establish the targeting criteria contained within the policies and any operational guidelines attendant to these. Stakeholders at each node within the distribution and allocation schedule were then surveyed on the targeting methods adopted in order to ascertain whether the criteria were being abided by. In the case where there are no formal criteria interviewers aimed to identify what approaches were currently being adopted. In the case of the School Feeding Programme where it is the district assemblies rather than DEOs which make the targeting decisions it was not possible to interview the stakeholders who made the targeting decisions and thus the outcome of the targeting was considered instead. DEOs and the research team

attempted to identify whether the selected schools were appropriate choices for pro-poor interventions within the wider context of the schools in the district.

### *Tracking survey*

The tracking exercise undertaken as a part of this study aims to assess the allocation and distribution of three key educational resource inputs from the central Headquarters level to the school or individual student in the case of the school uniform programme. This is undertaken by charting budget flows and release mechanisms from the centre to the service providers.

Effective tracking of resources is dependent on the quality and availability of data. Numerous studies of the Ghanaian education sector have shown previously that record keeping is poor especially at the school and district level, which complicates the tracking process. The problem of poor record keeping is one that however extends beyond the limitations it places on such a tracking survey, as it also has a direct impact on the efficacy of resource transfers. PETS (2007) found evidence that record keeping increases the efficiency of resource flows in the disbursement of the Capitation Grant. Poor data readiness at the district level proved a major limitation with the tracking survey.

### *Impact*

In order to determine the impact of these interventions on expanding access the enrollment figures are collected at the school level for recent years in order to determine the trend in enrollment growth. The small number of schools included in the sample preclude the data analysis required to identify the causes of any changes in enrollment. Therefore some impressionistic data on the impact of the intervention is collected from the DEOs and Head Teachers using a Linkert scale. The stakeholder is asked to rank the interventions by its relative impact on expanding access.

For two of the interventions supplementary data was collected on the direct impact of the interventions. For Capitation Grant the number of schools that had reverted to charging fees was collected, whilst for exercise books a few classrooms were selected at random within each school and the number of pupils without the correct exercise book was noted. In the case of the latter this is an incomplete measure of the direct impact as the intended exercise book ratio is not 1:1. Thus though there may be sufficient exercise books at present the child in question may not receive their entire allocation over the school year.

Beyond the more detailed data collection exercise undertaken at the schools within the sample, the field team took the opportunity to visit a number of schools within each district as part of on going monitoring to provide more casual observations for PBME internal use.



### 3. Policy Background

#### CAPITATION GRANT

The grant was introduced in order to stop schools charging fees which had become prevalent within Ghana and was thus challenging the government’s commitment to free compulsory universal basic education (fCUBE). The Capitation Grant was initially limited to 53 deprived districts for piloting in the first year, in 2004/05 academic year. In the following year it was rolled out nationwide for all pupils within the public basic education system in Ghana. The original grant value was GH¢3.00, but has since been increased to GH¢4.50 in 2008/09 academic year in an attempt to maintain the economic value of the grant. The initial level was chosen to reflect the fees that were prevalent at the time of introduction of the grant; however the sufficiency of the grant has been the subject of much debate.

Allocation of CG at the school level is determined by enrollment levels. The first tranche of the grant is paid out before up to date enrollment figures for the school year can be collected. As such this tranche is based on the school’s enrollment in the previous year, increased by 6%. Any variation in actual enrollment is then adjusted for in the second and third tranche of funding, due in the second and third term respectively.

The grant includes a contribution towards sports and cultural activities at the district, regional and national level. The chief accountant of GES confirmed that the policy remains that the full amount of the grant should be transferred to the school and it is then the district’s responsibility to reclaim the levy from the school. This policy aims to increase the transparency of the process to make it easier for the school to ensure that they have received the full capitation grant due to the school. The recent MoE internal audit of Capitation Grant however stated that the implementation guideline permit the districts to withhold the sport and cultural fees at the district level.

#### EXERCISE BOOKS

GES allocate free exercise books to all pupils in public Primary schools and JHS. Alongside one general exercise book (Exercise Book 1) there are a number of grade and subject specific books. The full list of exercise books is outlined below alongside the allocations per pupil:

Exercise Book Type	P1 Maths	P1 Writing	P1 Language	P2-P3 Writing	P2-P3 Maths	P2 Language	Ex Book 1		Graph Book (JHS only)	Technical Drawing (JHS only)
							JHS 1 – 3	13		
Number per pupil	3	3	3	3	3	3	P4-6	6	1	1
							P3-4	4		
							JHS 1 – 3	13		

The procurement of exercise books is undertaken during the previous school year and the books should be delivered to schools before the start of the first school term in the subsequent year. As such, the shipment of exercise books considered in this study were procured and disbursed in academic year 2009/10, but for use in 2010/11. The procurement process for 2010/11 is under way pending release of funds from MoFEP to GES.

The exercise books are allocated to schools based on projected enrollments for the following academic year, with the number of exercise books per pupil defined by the above table, which is universal across all public schools in Ghana. The exercise books are procured by the Supply and Logistics division of GES, with all exercise books delivered to the central warehouse. The books are then distributed to the districts by the division's own transportation means.

The provision of exercise books aims to reduce the indirect costs of schooling. For the poorest sectors of society this can be prohibitive enough to prevent children from attending school, or alternately increase the effectiveness of learning amongst these pupils who were already in school, but who were previously unable to participate effectively without an exercise book.

### **FREE SCHOOL UNIFORM**

The free school uniform programme is also a relatively new intervention, currently in the second year of operation. The programme has two slightly distinct components – the provision of sewn uniforms and pre cut uniforms. The sewn uniforms are a targeted intervention, with the uniforms supplied to the regional assemblies based on the regions' respective populations. The assemblies are then tasked with identifying deprived communities within their region and then allocating the uniforms to the respective districts. The districts are then charged with dispensing the uniforms to individual schools. The intervention is not school wide and thus there is an extra level of targeting within the school, by which the Head Teacher must identify those pupils which are most in need of the school uniforms. There are no formal criteria for the targeting to inform the allocation of the school uniforms. A second component of the school uniform programme is the provision of pre cut uniforms. Each district has been allocated 2,000 pre-cut uniforms. The targeting element of this intervention thus only occurs at the district and school level as the Regional Assemblies do not undertake any allocation decisions.

It is intended that the provision of school uniforms would raise the profile of schooling within communities and encourage parents to enrol their children in school.

### **SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME**

The Ghana School Feeding programme is a school wide intervention, but one which is targeted only towards schools with enrolment problems and high levels of poverty in the catchment area. In the Northern regions the WFP operates a School Feeding Programme which also includes the provision of take home rations for girls, to stimulate demand for girls' education. The intervention is targeted at the older years of basic education, where the drop out rates for girls increase as their value within the home also increases. This report however did not address the Northern regions, where these interventions are in place and thus focuses exclusively on the GES Ghana School Feeding Programme.

The criteria for selection of beneficiary schools by the District Assemblies is stipulated in the implementation guidelines for the programme:

- Willingness of community to put up basic infrastructure (e.g. kitchen, storeroom, latrine) and contribute with cash or in kind
- Poor access to potable water
- High community spirit/or community management capability
- Low school enrollment, attendance/retention rate especially for girls.
- Hunger and vulnerability status
- High drop out rate
- Low literacy levels
- Communities/schools not already covered by other school feeding programmes

The GSFP is a cross sectoral intervention, involving the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Local Government. As such, the governance structure and framework for implementing this intervention does not lie solely within educational structures. Due to time constraints only the DEOs and schools were visited. This meant that it was not possible to interview those responsible for making the targeting decisions at the District Assemblies. The researchers however utilized the data available at the district level to ascertain whether the selection of beneficiary schools is broadly in line with the above criteria and thus targeting the neediest communities within the district. Equally, it was not possible to track the flow of funds for the GSFP as it is the DICs rather than DEOs which pay the caterers.

## 4. Literature Review

A number of studies have been undertaken to consider the implementation of the Government's pro-poor interventions. Internal audit documents and monitoring and evaluation exercises undertaken by the implementing divisions were also considered. No M&E activities have been undertaken within the supply and logistics division in recent years due to the funding constraints; however the division is planning to monitor exercise book distribution in 60 districts this year which is a positive development.

### Capitation Grant

A number of studies have tracked the flow of capitation grants from source to school level, including the 2007 Education and Health Sector PETS, GNECC (2010) and CDD (2010). All the studies found evidence of leakage, most notably from the district to school level. The CDD (2010) study found evidence of significant leakage which led to a preliminary audit by the Ministry of Education Audit division to verify the findings. The main findings from these studies include that:

- Flow of CG funds from the GES HQ to the districts is broadly efficient
- Flow of CG from the district to school level reveals significant leakages. There is also widespread retention of the sports and cultural levies at the district level, which contradicts the aim of the policy to transfer all funds to the schools in an attempt to increase transparency.
- Poor recordkeeping at both the district and school level. PETS found that where there was poor record keeping there was greater leakage suggesting that record keeping supports more efficient resource flows.
- As well as leakage all studies have revealed significant delays in the disbursement of the fund, both at the district and school level. The Capitation Grant arrives in three tranches and delays serve to undermine the original intention of the grant, as if schools do not receive the grant on time they may revert to charging fees to cover crucial school costs.

The extensive leakages identified in the CDD (2010) report led to the Chief Director calling for a preliminary audit in three regions Greater Accra, Eastern and Volta Region to ascertain whether a full audit was required. Capitation grant records could only be reviewed at the GES and district level as schools were on vacation. Findings from the audit include:

- No evidence of leakage between GES headquarters and the DEOs: all funds arrived in full.
- 7 of the 10 districts had reported enrolment figures above actual enrolment leading to the release of an excess of funds which was used by the district office.
- In 6 of the 10 districts the DEOs were illegally retaining some of the grant for deductions that are unapproved by GES including examination fees.
- There was delay in payment to the new districts which were carved out of old districts and in some cases the grant was never passed on to the new district.

Existing studies have found it much easier to ascribe a role for the capitation grant in increasing enrolment at basic schools in Ghana than in improving quality. This is in part a reflection of the small

portion the capitation grant represents with respect to the unit cost of basic education. A recent World Bank report (2011) however finds that the initial positive impact on enrollment may in fact be counterbalanced in the longer run by increasing drop out rates as the increase in enrolment cannot sustain per child expenditure and other resources, which the capitation grant itself is too small to fully address. As discussed at the outset of this report, the more limited scope of this report and data collection mean that a rigorous assessment of impact is not possible.

### *Exercise Books*

The free exercise book scheme is only in the second year of operation and no previous studies on the implementation of the programme were found. The Supply and Logistics division of GES, which is responsible for distributing the books from the central level has due to budgetary constraints not undertaken any regular monitoring and evaluation in recent years, however the division is currently planning a monitoring exercise of exercise book supply and distribution in 60 districts.

### *School Uniform Programme*

GNECC (2010) undertook a tracking study which included the free school uniform programme in its first year of operation. Amongst the districts surveyed there had been very limited delivery of school uniforms, with only 5% of schools having received their consignment.

### *Ghana School Feeding Programme*

The majority of previous studies relating to the GSFP focus on the impacts of this cross sectoral policy beyond education. However, issues with the implementation with the GSFP include in existing literature include:

- The targeting mechanism in the GSFP has limited pro poor impact, with only 21.3% of the poor benefitting from the programme (World Bank, 2011).
- Acts of corruption, inappropriate awards of contracts, forged signatures and inflated school enrolment figures etc in the implementation of the GSFP (PWC report, cited in SEND).
- Lack of transparency in programme finance and future plans (VSO).

Monitoring and evaluation undertaken by the GSFP secretariat together with the Ministry of Local Government in selected districts in September 2010 raised the following issues:

- Delays in release of feeding grant
- Feeding interfering with class time
- Quantity of food is inadequate/GHC0.40 is inadequate

## 5. Results

### SCHOOL UNIFORM PROGRAMME

#### Targeting

There are no formal criteria for the identification of deprived communities at the regional level, for schools at the district level or for pupils at the school level. Regional Assemblies were not visited as part of the data collection exercise for this study due to time and resource constraints. The targeting assessment therefore relates to the district and school level.

#### District

Due to the absence of any specific guidelines for the targeting of school uniforms interviews at the DEOs revealed a range of criteria in use. A number of districts focused interventions on schools by remoteness focusing on those located in the hinterlands (Awutu Senya, Assin North, Ahanta West, Dangme West and Shamaa). Other districts targeted communities where most people had no uniforms (Awutu Senya). South Tongu however used the circuit supervisors to undertake a needs assessment in schools and based the distribution on this data.

In the absence of clear criteria it is difficult to assess the success of targeting interventions, though the research team reported feeling confident about the choices made for school uniform. Capture of the intervention by wider political interests was not reported as a concern in any of the districts or schools visited, as compared with the School Feeding Programme. As the allocation of uniforms is undertaken by DEOs themselves this is to be expected. The use of the circuit supervisors in South Tongu represents an effective use of the supervisory structure to provide more direct targeting.

#### School level

At the school level selection of beneficiaries for free school uniforms was based on possession of an approved government uniform and on the standard of the uniform, the degree to which it was tattered. Focusing on the appearance of children at school is not necessarily a direct measure of poverty as many other factors such as the priority ascribed by parents to education and the importance of uniform will affect the current state of a pupil's dress in school. However, some of the head teachers interviewed also explained that they were aware of the socioeconomic status of the majority of their pupils and were thus able to target based on financial need (Ga South and Suhum Kraboa Coaltar). One of the schools also targeted orphaned children (Ahanta West). If the LEAP programme is rolled out nationally it could provide opportunities to target uniforms directly on financial need.

#### Tracking

As Regional Assemblies were not visited in the process of compiling this report it was not possible to track the flow of resources from regions to districts. However, as the pre-cut uniforms are a universal intervention with 2,000 uniforms distributed to each district it is clear that for both districts in Greater Accra the full allocation of uniforms had not reached the districts.

Information on the school uniform programme was relatively weak at the district level. Field staff were only able to access records for seven districts in total. Of these seven districts it was confirmed that in five districts the number of uniforms arriving at the district matched with the number dispatched to schools.

Region	District Name	Arrived at district	Distributed from district
Central	Awutu Senya	8,199	8,199
Central	Assin North	3,040	
Volta	South Tongu	3,986	3,986
Western	Ahanta West	3,567	
Eastern	Asuogyaman	2,019	2,019
Greater Accra	Dangme West	1,090	1,090
Greater Accra	Ga South	383	383

Where it was confirmed that uniforms had been distributed from the districts this did not ensure that the uniforms had been received at the sampled schools within the district. In Dangme West Asebi D/A had been allocated 48 uniforms but had still not received any uniforms. Similarly in Awutu Senya, despite all uniforms being dispatched, in the two schools visited the number of uniforms was lower than the allocation from the district. In Awutu D/A Primary School 40% of uniforms were not accounted for, whilst in Awutu D/A JHS 11% were unaccounted for.

Region	District Name	School	Total		Difference
			Assigned from district	Arrived at school	
Central	Awutu Senya	Awutu D/A Primary School	170	100	-41%
Central	Awutu Senya	Awutu D / A JHS	90	80	-11%
Central	Assin South	Wurakese Station Primary.	200	200	0
Volta	South Tongu	Dorkploame Primary	206	206	0
Western	Ahanta West	Ankyerinyin D/A	200	200	0
Eastern	Asuogyaman	Apegusu L/A Resettlement	40	40	0
Greater Accra	Dangme West	Asebi D/A	48	0	

Another aspect of implementation not captured within the tracking but from interviews with stakeholders at the school level relate to sizing issues. Some schools reported receiving unsuitable sizes, a problem which is exacerbated by the problem of overage enrolment as reflected in the declining NER. It may be necessary to review the current sizing provided if these are based around correct aged

enrolment. A number of schools requested that schools could request specific uniform sizes though it is unclear how this could be managed without over complicating the procurement and disbursement process.

At the district level, delay in payments to local tailors for the pre-cut uniforms was cited as an operational challenge.

The GNECC study found that in the first year of implementation only 5% of schools had received uniforms. As the sample used in this study is not nationally representative it is not possible to make comparisons at the national level. However, it is positive that in contrast with the experience of GNECC only one school on the school uniform programme had not received any uniforms. However there appear to be issues with delay and some leakage of uniforms from the district to school level.

### CAPITATION GRANT

A lack of available data mean that tracking the first stage of the capitation grant flow from Headquarters to the districts was limited to only half the districts under consideration. In line with previous findings four of these districts observed either no or only minimal difference between the funds disbursed from HQ reported by GES and the funds received at the district. Small discrepancies such as that observed in South Tongu could relate to bank charges. The 15% disparity in Asuogyaman district is of greater concern and requires further investigation.

		Disbursed from HQ	Received from HQ	Difference (%)
Central	Assin North	74,442	74,442	0
Eastern	Asuogyaman	35,179	30,598	-15
Greater Accra	Ga South	60,677	60,677	0
South Tongu	South Tongu	33,331	32,887	-1
Ahanta West	Ahanta West	45,588	45,588	0

Although proper implementation of the policy involves transferring all funds to the school level, every district within the sample considered in this study retained a component of the capitation grant for the sports and cultural levies that they are owed. Information about the amount of CG that each district retained was not available however which means that it has not been possible to identify where the disparity between the allocated grant and the amount which arrived at the school is due to retention of these fees or leakage.



REGIONS	DISTRICTS	SCHOOLS	CAPITATION GRANT (1st Tranche 2010/11)		Difference (%)
			Allocated Amt ₵	Actual Amt Received ₵	
CENTRAL	Awutu Senya	Awutu D/A Primary School	475.50	491.00	3
		Awutu D / A JHS	304.50	249.55	-18
	Assin North	Nduaso Primary School	538.50	359.00	-33
		Wurakese Station Primary.	349.50	197.00	-44
EASTERN	Suhum Kraboa Coaltar	Kofi Annor Asante	372.00	331.50	-11
		Nana Kwaku Gyasi D/A JHS	148.50	99.00	-33
	Asuogyaman	Kwamfie Primary & JHS	123.00	103.32	-16
		Apegusu L/A Presby JHS	241.50	202.86	-16
GREATER ACCRA	Ga South	Ngleshie Amanfrom D/A 3 Primary School	522.00	432.76	-17
		Ngleshie Amanfrom D/A 4 Primary	489.00	405.40	-17
	Dangme West	Asebi D/A Primary	163.50	138.43	-15
		Ayikuma Methodist Basic School	529.50	448.31	-15
South Tongu	Agbarkofe R/C Primary	786.00	649.76	-17	
WESTERN	Ahanta West	Ankyerinyin D/A Primary	252.56	177.41	-30

A difference between the allocated and received CG disbursements was observed in all schools. The difference varied between an excess of 3% and a deficit of 44%. Although excesses appear to be counterintuitive previous research suggests it can arise from the payment of arrears. As the permitted sports and cultural levies are a proportion of the grant, if the difference between districts and schools is not uniform across the schools within the same district it suggests that there may be issues of leakage. In Asuogyaman, Ga South and Dangme West the equal deduction suggests that the deduction may be due to the retention of the sports and culture levy at the district level. No firm conclusions can however be made without accessing more data.

### Delay

Existing studies have found that the timeliness of releases has been a problem. Delays were cited as a major problem in all districts and schools. The data was collected in March, yet none of the schools had received the second tranche of their capitation grant, which should have arrived at the start of the second term. Discussions with the Headquarters reveal that the second tranche of CG remains with the Bank of Ghana has yet to be paid out to the districts (in May 2011). This effectively means that no schools will have received a grant for the second term. GES Headquarters staff reveal that the majority of this delay was due to delayed reporting of actual school enrolment by districts which GES requires in order to calculate the appropriate grant for the second and third terms. This information should reach

districts by December, but many districts had not submitted this data by March and GES were required to call and chase districts.

Schools also complained of the capitation grant amount. The initial allocation was based on the fees being charged before the introduction of the grant. Smaller schools cited the need for a base grant that would apply to all schools irrespective of enrolment to account for the greater burden placed on small schools in the absence of such a grant.

### Exercise Books

Records for exercise books at the district level were incomplete for most districts visited. Only Asuogyaman and Ahanta West were able to provide the number of exercise books received for each of the nine types. The difference between the number of books specified in the Supply and Logistics distribution schedule and the number received at these districts was lowest, with only a 1% difference in Asuogyaman and a 5% increase in distribution for Ahanta West. The remaining districts could only present evidence of receipt for some types of exercise books and as no district complained of certain types being missing the large differences witnessed should be attributed to leakage but rather poor record keeping. The delays reported at the Headquarters level may have led to a staggered distribution in some districts which led to confusion of actual receipts at the district level.

Region	District Name	Number assigned to district	Number arrived to district	Difference
Central	Awutu Senya	142224	100000	-30%
Central	Assin North	336519	309208	-8%
Eastern	Asuogyaman	172240	169716	-1%
Volta	South Tongu	165558	101525	-39%
Volta	Kpando	217278	111657	-49%
Western	Ahanta West	199976	209518	5%

Due to the lack of reliability in data for exercise books at the district level, tracking of the resources could not be undertaken from the district to school level effectively. However in order to gain an indication of the relative provision of exercise books for end users, at the school level, the quantity received at the school level was compared with a hypothetical allocation of exercise books based on the current year's enrolment from the EMIS database. It must be clarified that this does not reflect the number of exercise books that was sent to the schools, but is the benchmark for how many exercise books the school *should* have in order to ensure that each child has the number of books stipulated in the allocation policy.

REGIONS	DISTRICT	SCHOOL	Hypothetical allocation using EMIS enrolment data 2010/11	Qty Received	Difference (%)
CENTRAL	Awutu Senya	Awutu D / A JHS	3015	1900	-37
	Assin North	Nduaso Primary School	2003	1760	-12
		Wurakese Station Primary	1680	1828	9
EASTERN	Suhum Kraboa Coaltar	Kofi Annor Asante	1911	1896	-1
	Asuogyaman	Kwamfie Primary & JHS	2481	2544	3
GREATER ACCRA	Ga South	Ngleshie Amanfrom D/A 3 Primary School	2602	2088	-20
		Ngleshie Amanfrom D/A 4 Primary	2500	1956	-22
VOLTA	Kpando	Kpandu Gabi D/A Primary	2670	2316	-13
WESTERN	Ahanta West	Agona D/A Basic School	8150	6906	-15

Although there are some significant disparities between the hypothetical and actual data, some of the school level data did not include all the exercise book types the school should expect (Awutu D / A JHS, Nduaso Primary School, Wurakese Station Primary and Asebi D/A Primary). This suggests that the number of exercise books reported at the school level is an underestimate due to poor record keeping.

Delays in the disbursement of exercise books were cited as a problem by the schools participating in the study. Interviews with the supply and logistics division revealed that this delay in disbursement arose at the head quarters level due to the limited capacity of the transport division. Whilst districts that lie within regions close to the central warehouse could be accessed relatively easily, the division's trucks were not able to access districts lying in more remote regions. Private transportation was thus required; however this had not been budgeted for and thus required the raising of further funds, ultimately mobilized by the Minister, but which inevitably led to a delay in disbursements to these districts.

### School Feeding Programme

The GSFP has been marred with a number of operational problems, including evidence of corruption which led to the Danish government withholding support of the project. The District Education Offices are not charged with selecting the beneficiary schools and thus interviews with district directors could not inform about the process of selection of schools in the feeding programme. The interviews were however used to assess whether the choice of schools were a suitable choice for the deprived criteria set out by the GSFP secretariat given the data available at the district level.

In many cases it is apparent that the criteria have not been used effectively and some DEO staff reported concerns about political capture of the scheme. In Ga South, 14 schools are benefitting from the GSFP, yet interviewers were told that only one of these lies within one of the district's deprived circuits. Interviews at the school level with unit schools on the GSFP revealed that these schools' arguments for being included in the GSFP is based on the fact that they do not have standard

government uniforms and thus cannot benefit from the school uniform programme. Such a rationale should not inform the allocation of GSFP.

Discussions with the GSFP secretariat revealed that they were aware of this limitation with the targeting mechanism adopted within the GSFP. Whether the inappropriate targeting is due to the distribution of political favours, as one interviewee alluded to, or due to a lack of knowledge is unclear. The GSFP secretariat however informed that there will be a change to the targeting of GSFP interventions. Firstly, the allocations to districts will be made on quantitative measures of deprivation. At the school level, the criteria will remain, but now all schools will be checked with the GSFP secretariat before they commence with the GSFP to ensure that the schools fit the criteria.

This new approach is to be applauded, however it will only address the expansion of GSFP and not the current schools enlisted on the programme. Despite the inefficient allocation of resources within this scheme it is very sensitive to attempt to remove or phase out the feeding programme once instituted.

At the district level staff interviewed stated that the coverage of schools was too low. With the targeting mechanism not working effectively at the district level this should be remedied as a priority before more schools are included.

Other concerns highlighted as part of the study address the small amount of money allocated per meal for each child, only 40p. Interviews with the GSFP secretariat however revealed that the focus of the secretariat is to use any additional funds to expand access rather than raise the meal allowance for the caterers at present.

The disruption that the school feeding programme places on the school day was also raised. Considering the widely reported problems of time on task within Ghana's classrooms alongside teacher absenteeism rates, it is crucial that interventions designed to increase enrolment and attendance do not contribute to the problem of low learning hours within the classroom.

## 6. Impact Assessment

The pro-poor interventions are an important part of the government's commitment to expanding access to basic education in Ghana. Enrollment figures are thus an important consideration in considering whether the policies have been successful but it is difficult to isolate the effects of the individual interventions from wider phenomena within the education sector, especially within such a small sample. A cursory consideration of the enrolment rates in the 20 sampled schools reveals that over the period 2006/7 and 2010/11 enrolment has increased in 12 of the sampled schools and remained constant in 1. In light of this limitation, the survey exercise included interviewing key stakeholders on their perceived impact of the policies, at the school and district level. It was assumed that stakeholders such as Head Teachers who are closely involved with the end use of the interventions to judge the relative value of the different impacts for their impact on enhanced access to education.

INTERVENTION	Ranking of interventions by Districts										Total	Rank
	Awutu Senya	Assin North	Suhum Kraboa Coaltar	Asuogyaman	Ga South	Dangme West	South Tongu	Kpandu	Ahanta West	Shamaa		
Capitation Grant	4	2	4	3	4	3	3	4	1	3	31	1 <sup>st</sup>
School Uniform	2	1	3	4	2	2	4	3	2	4	27	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Exercise Books	1	4	1	2	1	1	2	1	3	1	17	4 <sup>th</sup>
School Feeding	4	3	2	1	3	4	1	2	4	2	26	3 <sup>rd</sup>
1st Position= 4pts,      2nd Position=3pts,      3rd Position= 2pts,      4th Position= 1pts												

Capitation grant was selected as the most effective intervention for increasing access by district education staff. This intervention was followed by the School Uniform and School Feeding programme, whilst exercise books were received the lowest ranking across the districts, with only one DEO selecting it as the most effective intervention for increasing access.

INTERVENTION	RANKING BY SCHOOL HEADS											
	Awutu D/A Primary	Awutu D / A JHS	Nduaso Primary	Wurakese Station Primary	Kofi Annor Asante Primary	Nana Kwaku Gyasi D/A JHS	Akwamufie Prim & JHS	Asempanaye Prim & JHS	Ngleshie Amanfrom D / A 3 Prim.	Ngleshie Amanfrom D/A 4 Prim.	Asebi D/A Primary	AYIKURMA VIETROODIST Basic School
Capitation Grant	4	3	2	2	4	4	3	2	3	2	4	2
School Uniform	2	4	1	4	0	0	0	4	1	1	1	3
Exercise Books	3	2	4	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	1
School Feeding	0	0	3	0	0	0	4	0	4	4	3	4

1st Position= 4pts,

2nd Position=3pts,

3rd Position= 2pts,

4th Position= 1pts

If intervention is not operating within school: 0 points.

INTERVENTION	RANKING BY SCHOOL HEADS								TOTAL	RANK
	Dorpkloame Primary	Agbakofe R/C Primary	Kpandu Gabi D/A Primary	Vapko Adome R/C Primary.	Ankyerinyin D/A Primary	Agona D/A Basic School	Ata na Ata D/A Primary	Inchaban D/A Prim Primary		
Capitation Grant	4	3	3	4	3	3	2	2	59	1 <sup>st</sup>
School Uniform	3	0	2	3	2	4	4	4	43	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Exercise Books	2	2	1	2	1	2	3	1	45	2 <sup>nd</sup>
School Feeding	0	4	4	0	4	0	0	3	37	4 <sup>th</sup>

The rankings are slightly different when head teachers are asked about which intervention is most effective in enhancing access. Despite the extensive problems reported about the capitation grant it is still ascribed the biggest effect on increasing access. This is followed by exercise books which by contrast received the lowest overall score amongst DEO staff. The two universal policies are the top choices for the head teachers. School Feeding is then followed by School Uniform.

For a few of the interventions supplementary data was collected in order to provide an indication of whether the policy has been successful in its direct aims. For the Capitation Grant, which was introduced to remove fee charging and thus remove the problem of children being excluded from school

due to non payment, this involved checking whether schools had reintroduced fees. Information on this indicator was only collected at seven schools and it was found that three schools had introduced extra levies. This is an area of concern. It is unclear to what extent the size of the grant, leakage and/or delay have caused the reintroduction of fees though all are likely to place pressure on schools to have to resort to other funding sources.

Another intervention for which data was collected on the direct impact of the policy was that of exercise books. In the schools visited a few classes were selected at random by the researchers and they checked that each child in the classroom possesses a correct exercise book for the subject under study. This is not a complete survey as each child is in fact expected to have a number of exercise books, but it was deemed of interest to assess the intervention in action. The results from this analysis were very promising with the vast majority of pupils in each class possessing a copy of the correct exercise book. Those cases in which pupils were missing exercise books this was explained by teachers as being due to the fact that these pupils were new to the school and thus had not benefitted from the intervention yet. This latter fact does however reveal a limitation of using the previous year's enrollment for the distribution of exercise books. Districts however report redistributing exercise books in light of lower than expected deliveries of exercise books.

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Poor record keeping undermined our ability to track interventions within this study. This issue extends beyond tracking resources however, with poor record keeping likely to undermine effective planning and financial management at the district level. Improving record keeping and information management should be deemed a priority.

### **CAPITATION GRANT**

#### **Targeting**

The CG is currently not targeted but is a universal intervention for each pupil. As Ghana's economy transforms in line with reaching middle income status it may be pertinent to review the universal application of capitation grant, especially in light of the concerns teachers raised about the insufficiency of the fund. The grant may be more effective if targeted to the poorest pupils, providing a larger grant for those most in need.

Structured interviews with school staff supported previous findings that smaller schools in particular found the size of the capitation grant insufficient. These schools suggested that there should be the introduction of a minimum level of CG for each school regardless of size.

#### **Reach**

Tracking capitation grants from the headquarters to school level was undermined by poor record keeping; however there are some cursory findings which support the incidence of leakages within the system identified in a number of previous studies. The full audit currently being undertaken by GES should be given priority consideration once completed and concrete steps taken to address the improprieties identified.

There appears to be some inconsistency between the aims of the intervention and the implementation guidelines regarding the payment of sports and cultural levies to the districts. The Chief Accountant at GES confirmed that the policy remains that the full amount of the grant should be transferred to the school and it is then the district's responsibility to reclaim the levy from the school. This policy aims to increase the transparency of the process to make it easier for the school to ensure that they have received the full capitation grant due to the school. The recent MoE internal audit of Capitation Grant however stated that the implementation guideline permits the districts to withhold the sport and cultural fees at the district level. This contradiction needs to be resolved.

Some evidence was found of the reintroduction of fees within the sampled schools, which counters the initial aim of the intervention. This is an area which requires further study to ascertain the scope of fee charging and to what extent the erosion of the economic value of the grant, the delay in the disbursement of the grant and/or leakages in the grant have caused the return of fees in some schools.

#### **Delay**



The current delays witnessed in the disbursement of capitation grant are placing undue pressure on schools which depend on these funds for crucial activities and support. The process by which enrolment figures are reported back to the headquarters needs to be reviewed as the current system is clearly not working effectively and contributing significantly to the observed delays.

### **EXERCISE BOOKS**

One issue that became apparent in last year's disbursement is the limited transport capacity of the division which led to delays in distribution of exercise books. The districts that lie within regions close to the central warehouse could be accessed relatively easily, but the division's trucks were not able to access districts lying in more remote regions. Private transportation was thus required to ensure delivery to these more remote regions, but this had not been budgeted for and thus required the raising of further funds, which were ultimately mobilized by the Minister, but which inevitably led to a delay in disbursements to these districts. Private transport should perhaps be factored into the costings of the exercise book distribution in light of the poor standard of the division's cars.

### **SCHOOL UNIFORM**

The targeting method undertaken by South Tongu where circuit supervisors undertook a needs assessment of free school uniforms within schools which then fed into the allocation decision was an example of best practice identified within the study and that could be rolled out.

The study raised the issue of the size of school uniforms given the problem of over age children. The extent of this problem should be investigated to address whether a greater range of sizes should be distributed to account for the problem of overage children.

### **GHANA SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME**

The adoption of a quantitative targeting mechanism to identify needy districts will be a welcome improvement to the implementation of the GSFP. As the targeting of schools will continue to use the current guidelines it will be vital to ensure that the schools are all vetted by the GSFP secretariat before joining the programme to prevent the incorrect targeting that has been occurring and thus enhance the pro-poor effect of the intervention.

The lost instruction time due to the GSFP is of concern and should be addressed to ensure that the intervention does not negatively impact on the quality of education.

**Appendix 1: Historical enrolment trends for schools within sample (source: EMIS)**

School Name	Enrolment				
	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
AGBAKOFE R/C PRIMARY	407	415	456	436	436
AGONA D/A PRIMARY SCHOOL	0	866	937	1,007	1,053
AKWAMUFIE PRESBY BASIC SCHOOL	0	0	94	94	70
ANKYERNYIN D/A BASIC SCHOOL	227	229	232	289	259
APEGUSO PRESBY BASIC SHOOOLS	422	210	228	217	225
ASEBI D/A PRIMARY	132	122	122	97	102
ATA NA ATA M/A PRIMARY	69	85	103	122	122
AWUTU D/A KG/PRIMARY	219	247	228	220	201
AWUTU D/C 'A&B' J.H.S	137	0	142	180	238
AYIKUMA METHODIST PRE-SCHOOL & PRIMARY	379	407	360	360	329
DORKPLOAME D/A JHS	178	198	226	49	27
INCHABAN BASIC SCHOOL	298	569	0	361	288
KOFI ANNOR-ASANTE D/A PRIMARY 'A&B'	225	226	231	231	241
KPANDO GABI L/A PRIMARY SCHOOL	284	314	312	324	345
NANKESE NANA KWAKU GYASI D/A J.H.S	120	124	118	118	118
NDUASO M/A KG/ PRIMARY	210	227	238	260	259
NGLESHIE AMANFRO D/A '4' PRIMARY	321	348	330	363	320
NGLESHIE AMANFRO M/A '3' PRIMARY	336	358	327	335	341
VAKPO ADOMI R/C PRIMARY	133	156	146	151	243
WORAKESE-STATION D/A KG/PRIMARY SCHOOL	154	180	172	204	206