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PANEL II

Capacity-building on mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.

Written statement*
submitted by

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preparing the ground for implementation through various interventions; and monitoring and learning lessons for reviewing and improving interventions until gender parity in enrolment and retention is achieved and girls as well as boys derive the full social, economic and political benefits of education. The experiences of its staff responsible for implementation at the regional and district levels are important for reflecting on capacity-building.

Efforts to Promote and Mainstream Girls' Education in National Efforts

7. There are provisions for gender equality, freedom from discrimination and accessible education for all in Articles 35, 36 and 38 of the 1992 Ghanaian Constitution. Article 38 contains the requirements for free, compulsory and universal basic education and equal and balanced access to secondary and other pre-university education.
8. In 1996, the ten-year Free Compulsory Basic Education (FCUBE) Programme for all boys and girls of school-going age was developed and its components included improving access and participation; improving teaching/learning quality; strengthening management capacity; and building efficiency into the education system. The Programme Document recognized the importance of ensuring systematic enhancement of girls' education based on the disparities in enrolment and retention between boys and girls. The document therefore stated
9. Over the past decade, there have been complementary interventions to support girls' education and improving gender-sensitivity by the government, development partners and non-state actors. These include the appointment of a Minister for Women and Children's Affairs (of cabinet rank) and a Minister for Basic and Girl Child Education in 2001. The latter position is no longer operational, however. The Ghana Education Service Act also requires that key community management entities of education such as the District Education Oversight Committees (DEOC) and School Management Committees have quotas for women's participation.
10. The public universities have operated affirmative action policies to get more women into tertiary education. The University of Ghana has its Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA) which apart from providing courses in gender studies and undertaking relevant research, also has the mandate to assist the University in engendering its policies, creating gender awareness amongst various categories of staff, building gender capacity in university work and undertaking appropriate outreach activities in partnership with various institutions.
11. Various NGOs have ran credible girl child education support programmes including the Forum for African Women Educationists (FAWE) which is well-regarded for its advocacy efforts to get parents and communities to send their girls to school and identification of the obstacles to girls education. The Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) has worked in various communities through

interventions like provision of transportation (bicycles) and feeding to support girls' education in deprived areas. Other interventions have provided families (particularly women) with micro-credit to enhance family incomes and reduce the need for girls' labour to supplement their parents' earnings.

12. However, the work of the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) is national in scope, collaborative and offers insights into the multi-faceted nature of girls' education.

The Girls Education Unit (GEU)

13. The GEU is made up of its Head Office Staff, with responsibilities for policy direction, resource mobilization, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation functions; its Regional Girls Education Officers (RGEOs) and District Girls Education Officers (DGEOs). The functions of the DGEOs are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Functions of District Girls' Education Officers

TASKS	ACTIVITIES
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overcome constraints

18.

24. Relations with the stakeholders varied. The district education offices were required to provide the staff for the District GEU, financial and logistic support and monitor the DGEOs. Again, they were expected to provide moral support for their programmes. School authorities and heads of institutions were to support efforts to promote girl-friendly school environments, organize the girls for educational activities and support the enrolment of girls. Though most DGEOs indicated that they received some level of support from school authorities, a few heads were not committed. They apparently expected female heads of institutions to be more understanding and supportive of girls' education issues. This had not turned out to be the case and DGEOs and RGEOs were frustrated by "the uncooperative attitudes of some female heads of institutions" (

25. The local authorities (district assemblies and their committees and the regional coordinating councils) were expected to offer support for needy girls like scholarships and other logistics. They were also expected to contribute finances, transport and other resources to support the annual Science, Technology and Mathematics (STME) workshops for girls. There were arrangements in some regions and districts where the local authorities actually provided office equipment, stationery and transport to DGEOs for their activities, particularly monitoring.

26. The work of other government departments and agencies was important for the DGEOs in less direct ways. There had been opportunities for collaboration in terms of protecting and safeguarding the rights of girls on issues like rape, forced marriages, child maintenance, child labour and trafficking. There had been collaboration in organizing advocacy programmes. Networking with these entities had provided invaluable information and entry points.

27. In the face of limited resources, vehicles and logistics available to the decentralized departments had been shared with the DGEOs. Other interventions, particularly economic, had been targeted at women so that they could afford their daughters' fees and free their girls to go to school.

28. Some collaboration with traditional authorities had yielded results. Traditional authorities had issued directives to ban young people from late night shows and wakes (wake-keeping as part of funeral rites), in an effort to protect them. There were instances where traditional authorities had provided DGEOs with platforms (traditional durbars, council meetings and festivals) to undertake critical advocacy on modifying negative traditional practices. Chiefs with educational endowment funds had supported girls. Similar support had been gained from the faith-based organizations – namely scholarships for girls, economic empowerment of women and platforms for advocacy with parents on girls' education.

29. Development partners such as UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP), bilateral partners such as DANIDA and international NGOs including Care International, Action Aid Ghana, Catholic Relief Services and the World University Services of Canada and FAWE had provided support for capacity building, advocacy,

The clear interest of the Ministry of Women and Children's in promoting girls' education. This is evident in the MOWAC Strategic Implementation Plan (2005 to 2008) which has prioritized the total application of th

38. There was insufficient gender awareness and gender analytical capacity amongst the public agencies that worked with children, such as the Departments of Children and Social Welfare. They lacked tools in gender planning, analysis, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation tools.

39. Local authorities were also lagging in their support to children – very few had actually established the Child Panels as required by law. Some assemblies had established women and children’s committees and had included support to girls’ education in their district medium term plans. However, it was not clear the extent to which adherence to these provisions were monitored and integrated into ongoing assembly considerations. Gender analytical capacity is lacking in district assemblies.

40. What were the key lessons learned?

Community involvement in identifying problems, solutions, planning and implementing interventions was useful and created opportunities to use the collective resources that communities had to support girls;

Training of local facilitators to assist the DGEO in work periodically also fostered and sustained community interest.

The girls themselves had to be actively involved in the promoting girls’ education; to make a case for themselves, appeal to their peers and identify critical entry points and not-so-obvious constraints.

A gender focal person needs to have critical lobbying, advocacy, networking and collaboration skills because the work is qualitative, intuitive and does not always pursue rational lines.

Supervision, monitoring, evaluation and reporting are useful tools for the district level officer. While these have traditionally been viewed as punitive, when they are administered in ways that allow the DGEO to be part of the process, they are able to build on their performance and learn lessons better.

Regular stakeholder analysis is useful for identifying and revising the range of possible actors to work with and in what different ways (for instance rural banks were not traditional partners nor were the private sector);

Opportunities to share promising practices by DGEOs (even such as the conduct of this research) could help DGEOs learn from their different experiences.

Conclusions

41. Lessons from the World Bank publication “Building State Capacity in Africa” (2005) indicate that capacity-building must take into account the fact that public administrations are embedded in a complex,

42. Again, it is important to focus on ensuring coherence in all aspects of the assignment – adequate resource flows to support girls’ education, institutionalized checks and balances to see how the innovations in the school environment, homes and communities are working, mapping the trends and lessons and integrating this into policy review.

43. From the experiences shared, issues of leadership capacity (of local authorities, district education di

50. Sequencing and sustaining capacity-building is critical. Therefore, it is essential that the country reviews are regular and provide information on promising practices on promoting girls' education and these are disseminated widely. That information should also provide insights into capacity needs for various categories of actors and who has had which kinds of training. Innovative efforts that have been made, relevant training and information-sharing for the different actors; the incen